

Leadership and Organizational Performance Employees' Motivation as Mediating Variable

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Abstract

The article aims to assess the impact of leadership style on motivation and organizational performance. The empirical study was conducted in the General Fertilizers Company in Homs-Syria. The objective is to evaluate the influence of four selected traditional leadership styles, namely authoritarian, transformational, democratic and laissez-faire, on organizational performance by considering employees' motivation as a mediating variable. This article is characterized by a descriptive design with a quantitative method. It uses deductive reasoning. Four hundred thirteen valid questionnaires were collected from Google Forms. The questionnaire passed through a purification process through an exploratory factor analysis EFA and highlighted statements possessing the highest contribution. The confirmatory factor analysis CFA proved that the four leadership styles impact employee motivation and organizational performance. The model fitness was validated using the CFA indices, including the GFA, IFI, and RMSEA. These indices were significant, and a critical ratio (C.R.) validated the research hypotheses.

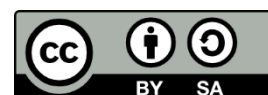
Keywords: Leadership, Motivation, Organizational performance

1. Introduction

Economic fallouts, the financial and social crisis has drastically affected the organizational dynamics and human resources. During the past decade, numerous leadership categories and classifications have emerged. However, classical leadership styles have been elaborated by academics and practitioners. Alrowwad et al. (2020) and Jaleha & Machuki (2018) focused on leadership and motivation as antecedents to organizational performance. Leadership influences followers (subordinates) to reach goals (Madanchian et al., 2021; Arif & Akram, 2018). The source of this influence may be formal due to a leader having a managerial rank in an organization or informal such as non-authorized leadership. The latter is the influence ability arising outside the formal organizational structure. The informal leadership structure is critically significant since it results from an informal interaction between leaders, followers, and the situation (Liu et al., 2022). The leadership process embraces these elements. Leadership is considered essential for organizational effectiveness. Thus, leadership contributes significantly to organizational sustainability. It contributes to organizational accomplishment. Leadership is a success facet. Abbas & Daniel (2019) investigated the role of employees' engagement on performance and verified that organizational performance is affected by this engagement resulting from democratic leadership. Hence, leadership is an employee behavioral change factor that affects employee performance and the business. Leaders must know how their actions and decisions can positively or

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Talented leaders are a valuable asset. They motivate the workforce, improve organizational performance and increase profits. However, productivity and performance will decrease if top management doesn't have a well-thought-out strategy and the needed information to make informed decisions (Rawashdeh et al., 2021). Organizations are interested in paying particular attention to human capital, the most critical organizational resource for remaining competitive (Mrak & Kvasić, 2021). However, job satisfaction is an essential component that managers who wish to attract and retain the best resources must be considered, failing which, the impacts associated with job dissatisfaction must be addressed. Therefore, employee motivation is a significant challenge (Alrowwad et al., 2020; Morales et al., 2012; Abbas & Daniel, 2019).

This article assesses how leadership style affects organizational performance in the General Fertilizers Company in Homs-Syria. The objective is to evaluate the effect of four traditional leadership styles on motivation and performance at the organizational level, respectively. Authoritarian, transformational, laissez-faire and democratic leadership were explicitly selected. Employees' motivation was assessed as a mediating variable in a conceptual framework composed of leadership styles (independent variable) and mediation organizational performance (dependent variable). Consequently, it examines the statistical influence of these leadership styles on the employee's motivation and organization in Syrian organizations.

Through a quantitative study, this research proposes to answer two essential questions. It postulates that leadership styles influence employees' motivation, which, in turn, promotes organizational performance. The first question is: what is the influence of the four selected styles of traditional leadership (authoritarian leadership, transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and democratic leadership) on organizational performance through the mediating role of motivation in the General Fertilizers Company in Homs-Syria? The second to be explored is: To what extent does employee motivation mediate the relationship between the above-cited leadership styles and organizational performance?

This research has a theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this research is a pivotal review of leadership categories and an implicit academic analysis of leading theories. It advances two classical theories, namely those of Fayol, Blake and Mouton. It provides updated theoretical information on leadership styles, motivation and organizational performance. This article is considered an updated source for future studies. Due to the lack of recent studies, it can be classified as a humble contribution to the online Library. Most online articles embracing the concept of leadership styles and organizational performance are outdated, namely, those highlighting motivation as a mediating factor in this relationship. The analyzed conceptual Framework is a theoretical and statistical interpretation of leadership styles' influence on motivation and organizational performance. The first section focuses on these variables in its theoretical aspects.

Practically, this research investigates leadership styles and organizational performance of the General Syrian Fertilizers Companies by considering employee motivation as a mediating variable. Its measures the relationship between these variables from the perspective of field employees.

This research is structured in five sections. The first section presents the problem statement, objectives and leading questions. The second section proceeds to a detailed review of leadership theories. This section defines the selected variables. The third section presents the research methodology and approach. The fourth section demonstrates results and discussions. The fifth section denotes the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

Leadership has been defined according to various points of view. The traditional leadership school views this concept as motivation, compliance, respect, and cooperation. Leaders exercise authority over followers to elicit cooperation (Sawaeen & Ali, 2020). Traditional leadership is constructed on the contribution of the manager-leader in strategic planning. It emphasized leaders' roles in objectives formulation and sustaining implementation efficiency. Leadership is defined as an ability denoting the leader's ability to listen, observe,

and use their experience as a starting point to encourage communication. Leadership establishes processes and transparency in decision-making. Classical leaders express their practical views, values and visions clearly without imposing them (Ereedi & Durgun, 2020).

The analysis of leadership styles led to the rising leadership behavioral theories while considering situational leadership and contingency theory as the foundation. The latter is combined with (Taylorism) (Alblooshi et al., 2020) as the traditional theory of organizational management methods and the traditional school of Henry Fayol. These theories refer to individuals' abilities to inspire, stimulate, motivate, and encourage subordinates to increase their involvement and contribution to organizational effectiveness (Alblooshi et al., 2021). Leadership is a process influencing organizational activities to direct their efforts toward achieving objectives and enhancing performance (Dike & Madubueze, 2019).

2.1 Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are applied methods of managing, directing, and motivating followers. Leadership styles govern implemented strategies to achieve organizational goals. Leadership is a behavioral strategy of change leaders use to persuade, inspire, and guide their subordinates (Veerasundar & Maideen, 2019).

Blake and Mouton developed a managerial grid indicating the manager's attention to production and resources (Hania Zeidan, 2009). Leadership styles are determined by the degree of managerial interest in employees and their productivity (Rao, 2017). These two dimensions identify five leadership styles providing information on the degree of attention towards each dimension. According to Blake and Mouton, the democratic style is the best leadership style (Nikezi et al., 2013).

However, this research focuses on four classical leadership styles. The intermediate style also referred to as middle-of-the-road management, aims to balance the demands of the human element and the production (results) demands of production (Burke, 2021). Therefore, it is characterized by adequate performance by maintaining employees' morals satisfactorily (Hai & Van, 2021). However, this research focuses on four classical leadership styles. Lewin's study demonstrates the effect of leader behavior on employee motivation and organizational performance (Costa et al., 2023). According to this study, democratic leadership generates the best organizational performance. It sustains increased productivity, reduces social dysfunctions, and improves the social climate and the working atmosphere. Garg et al. (2018); Coman et al. (2021) presented these four forms of leadership.

2.1.1 Transformational Leadership

Proactive transformational leaders make their followers aware of their shared interests. Leaders with a transformational approach support their subordinates in achieving extraordinary goals (Thanh & Quang, 2022). Transformational leadership is "a process by which leaders and followers elevate each other to higher levels of morality and motivation." In other words, transformational leadership includes managers' proactive behavior. Those managers-leaders concentrate on collective benefits and goal attainment. Transformational leaders instigate employees' followers to outperform initial expectations (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). This leadership style encourages subordinates to induce crucial transformations. The latter should rise above their self-interest by changing employees' self-esteem, principles, interests, morale and values (Sarwar et al., 2022). The transformational leadership style gives excellent importance to subordinates. It focuses on social relations to results/production factors. Mutual trust between the leader and the followers is fostered through transformational leadership (Tuffour et al., 2022). These leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage their people. These pioneers support their staff as they innovate, create, and transform in ways that foster success and progress on all levels—personal, professional, and organizational (Bagga et al., 2023).

2.1.2 Authoritarian Leadership

It is expressed by the authority and the pressure exerted on the collaborators. Initially, the authoritarian style of leadership promotes performance. However, it leads to employee mistrust. It occasionally hides acts of rebellion and dampens the group's spirit. The authoritarian leader maintains distant relationships and does not trust his collaborators (Pizzolitto et al., 2023). Motivating and involving people is created on fear. Managers adopting this leadership approach focus on the carrot stick theory. Managers believe that employees are motivated to accomplish tasks when fearing punishment effectively. Very centralized, it is a fundamental management mode by fear (Wang et al., 2019).

Bodla et al. (2019) and Shaw et al. (2020) emphasize that team spirit and decision-making are centralized at the organization's top management. This style can generate staff hostility toward organizational goals and, thus, social conflict (Siddique et al., 2020). The authoritarian task-focused style concerns production output without attention to the human element. The risk of sacrificing employees' human needs to gain production is significant. This style is directive and conducive to demotivation and tension (Huang et al., 2023).

2.1.3 Democratic Leadership

The democratic leadership style pays great attention to both production and the human factor. This style emphasizes collective problem-solving while evaluating possible alternatives before decision-making (Hilton et al., 2021). Employees' relationship as individuals-actors in organizations is characterized by trust and respect. Democratic leaders are passionate and sacrifice time and effort to learn, notably if trainees demand time to acquire rules. Democratic leadership promotes a positive social climate and friendly relations (Assey et al., 2022). It promotes employees' commitment of employees and produces satisfactory results (Jin et al., 2022). Leaders encourage, motivate, and involve subordinates and take their advice. This style is characterized by the absence of tension in the team and less production compared to the autocratic style but of better quality. However, Jin et al. (2022) and Hilton et al. (2021) pointed out that the democratic leadership style can be classified as the highest effective style for managers to exercise power (Wachira et al., 2018).

2.1.4 The Laissez-Faire Leadership

Leaders adopting laissez-faire leadership care about final results. Those managers give their subordinates little to no direction. Leaders believe that subordinates should enjoy freedom of action. Employees enjoy complete discretion over decisions while possessing resources and tools to accomplish their work (Ali & Ullah, 2023). Leaders with laissez-faire thoughts expect followers to solve problems independently but must take responsibility for employees' decisions and actions (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2021).

The laissez-faire style pays little attention to the human factor (Diebig & Bormann, 2020). Organizational results are mediocre because employees remain paradoxically dependent on leaders. Due to managerial leniency and laxity, employees constantly search for information and instructions to accomplish their tasks (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2022).

2.2 Employees Motivation

Motivation denotes personal, social, and economic, social factors leading employees to invest themselves fully in carrying out assigned professional missions. Motivation describes a state of being prompting individuals to invest their strength and time in objectives and goals pursuit. Need satisfaction is an essential motivational facet for employees (Tsvangirai & Chinyamurindi, 2019). Needs vary depending on the individual, circumstance, organization, business type, risks (Habanik et al., 2020), educational background, experiences, skills, working conditions and environment. Hence, employees have motivational factors (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

Factors enhancing employee motivation are equitable compensation, incentives, bonuses, fringe benefits, empowerment, collaborative decision-making, trust, and supervision quality. Additional facets include appropriate working relations, recognition, growth opportunities, needs identification and fulfillment (Mensah & Tawiah, 2016).

The highest level of motivation is called intrinsic motivation. It is self-determined because the employee derives personal satisfaction from his professional activity. It is the task to be performed that motivates employees. Then, when factors independent of the person intervene, we speak of extrinsic motivation (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Here, the benefit of the exercise of the missions which fall to him will be the source of motivation for the employee (EMBA & McCurry, 2021). The company encourages its employees through economic incentives and, possibly, other benefits (Garad et al., 2022). Motivated employees achieve better results and thus directly increase organizational financial turnover. Support for employee motivation encompasses organizational actions aiming to positively influence employees' desire for performance. The optimum result is increased commitment and productivity with organizational missions.

Vroom's theory of motivation can be summed up in 3 points: valence, instrumentality and expectation. The Vroom approach goes beyond traditional reflections on the satisfaction of needs. It goes beyond Maslow's approach with the five levels of his pyramid of needs (from survival to self-actualization) and beyond Herzberg's approach with hygiene factors (Kurniawati & Raharja, 2023). The expectancy theory goes beyond short-term satisfaction to long-term motivation.

2.3 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is “the capability to achieve strategic and operational objectives while meeting the expectations and needs of its stakeholders (Akpa et al., 2021). Yet for SJelača et al. (2022) and Imran et al. (2022), organizational performance is measured using employees' ability to achieve objectives and adapt to their environment. Organizational performance is seen as the result of actions and activities to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Therefore, the organization is appraised by its performance (Dobre, 2013). Objectives are quantified (volume of activity, ROI, profitability, operating result). To achieve the objectives set, organizations must do the right things (effectiveness), do things well (efficiency) at the right time (time), and the optimal cost/benefit (economy) (Nuseir & Refae, 2022; Migdadi, 2022).

To attain organizational performance, it is required to rely on favorable conditions, utilize the appropriate management methods and tools, employ the appropriate management skills, and ensure stakeholder satisfaction. Managers should reduce risk and stress to improve organizational performance (Madanchian et al., 2021).

Organizational performance is based on efficiency and effectiveness as key indicators. Efficiency is linked to the ability to achieve the objectives the management team sets. The better a company performs, the more efficient its management (Lee et al., 2022). Conversely, efficiency represents the means used to achieve the targeted objectives (Mrak & Kvasić, 2021). Organizations are implementing the balanced scorecard method to manage performance. The latter is assessed, traced and measured in two essential dimensions. The first is the financial dimension measured by the return-on-investment ROI shareholder Customer Service (Epure, 2016). The second dimension is related to social responsibility. Organizational performance embraces customer service effectiveness and communication (Olan et al., 2022).

Additional dimensions include human and cultural facets, information technology, exploitation of natural resources, economic factors, organizational measures, size of target markets, management philosophy, and organizational culture, such as goals, values, beliefs and standards (Jeong & Kim, 2022). It can be extended by incorporating organizational climate, motivating behavior and teamwork. Organizational performance assessment is based on the company's structure and technological and financial resources (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022).

2.4 Leadership Styles, Motivation and Organizational Performance

Leadership and motivation determine organizational success. Organizational performance depends on actual leadership practices (Triyanto et al., 2021). Leadership styles influence performance significantly, consequently, organizational performance (Idris et al., 2022; Ismuhadjar et al., 2017). Therefore, leadership styles significantly affect organizational aspects, including employee motivation, performance, operations, and results. Leadership is a state of personal influence driving individuals or groups of people to accomplish leaders' objectives (Irwan et al., 2020).

Therefore, leadership styles influence organizational performance implicitly and explicitly. Leaders adapt their style to different situations and use the best techniques to motivate employees. Leaders know that different styles change employees' behaviors, altering the organization. The role of leadership in establishing and maintaining a positive work environment. Different leadership styles, such as autocratic style, democratic style, and transformational style, have varying impacts on organizational performance (Niken et al., 2022; Mustikaningrum et al., 2022; Tarliman et al., 2022).

Leadership creates a positive work environment. Leaders create an environment encouraging collaboration, creativity and innovation. They must also resolve conflicts and disputes quickly and efficiently while maintaining a productive work atmosphere. Good leaders can create an environment where employees feel supported and valued (Idris et al., 2022).

A leader's behavior produces motivational mechanisms influencing employees' behavior and performance. Husein et al. (2022), Niken et al. (2022) and Idris et al. (2022) have shown that leadership style has a significant relationship with organizational performance. Consequently, leadership styles, namely transformational; authoritarian; democratic and laissez-faire leadership, positively influence organizational performance. Accordingly, the hypotheses are formulated:

- H.1: Leadership styles influence organizational performance positively
- H.2: Leadership styles influence employees' motivation positively
- H.3: Transformational Leadership influences employees' motivation positively
- H.4: Authoritarian leadership influences employees' motivation positively
- H.5: Democratic leadership influences employees' motivation positively
- H.6: Laissez-faire leadership influences employees' motivation positively

2.5 The Mediating Role of Employees' Motivation

Motivation is a critical organizational behavior (Irwan et al., 2020). A leader's capacity to motivate employees is a critical duty or function of leadership competencies (Ismuhadjar et al., 2017; Tarliman et al., 2022). Motivation is a significant key to individual behavior, performance, and, thus, organizational performance. Employee motivation, especially in the public sector, is a significant challenge. High performance is critical in determining an organization's growth, development, stability and future success. Motivation is measured by an employee's vitality degree, determination, commitment and innovation at the workplace. Indeed, motivation should be exhibited in their daily tasks to boost organizational growth and performance. The right motivation formula is grounded on applied leadership practices as antecedents. This formula leverages employees' creativity and productivity. Hence, when organizations motivate their workforce well, results are translated into excellent performance. Motivation strengthens the relationship between leadership, competitiveness and performance of organizations. Lack of motivation leads to disengagement, increased absenteeism and even turnover. (Dunan et al., 2020; Simanungkalit et al., 2022; Husein et al., 2022). Accordingly, the hypothesis is formulated:

- H.7: Employees' motivation influences employees' motivation positively
- H.8: Motivation mediates the relationship between leadership and organizational performance.

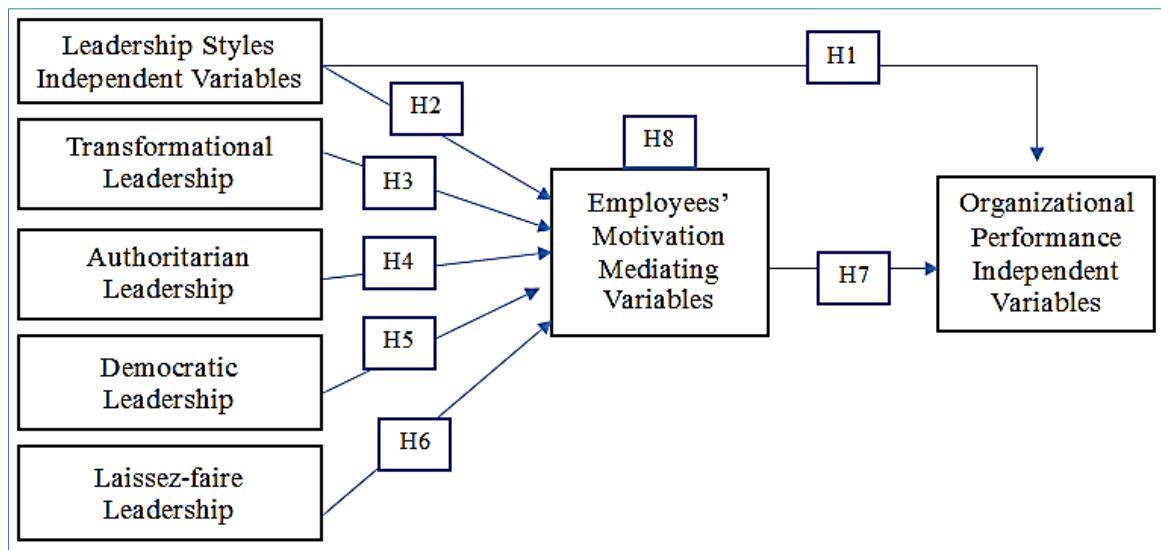


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology

The analytical descriptive approaches with a quantitative method characterize the research. Deductive reasoning is applied. A questionnaire verified hypotheses and examined statistical relationships between variables. It examines the relationship between variables to test hypotheses and answer research questions. A questionnaire was distributed to employees of General Fertilizers Company in Homs as a selected sample. The questionnaire was published on Google forms. The distribution was completed electronically to save time and effort in collecting, arranging and coding information. The questionnaire was assessed on the five-point Likert scale. It consisted of four sections distributed as follows.

Table 1 Variables Measurements

Section	Variables	Measurements
One	Leadership Styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laissez-Faire Leadership Transformational Leadership Democratic Leadership Authoritarian Leadership 	Twenty-eight statements were distributed among seven phrases for each dimension. (Sawaeen & Ali, 2020; Dike & Madubueze, 2019; Alblooshi et al., 2020; Alrowwad et al., 2020; Jaleha & Machuki, 2018)
Two	Employees motivation	Seven statements (Rao, 2017; Tsvangirai & Chinyamurindi, 2019; Habanik et al., 2020; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009)
Three	Organizational performance	Ten statements (Imran et al., 2022 ; Dobre, 2013; Nuseir & Refae, 2022; Migdadi, 2022)
Four	Demographics	Gender, department, education level, and years of experience

The population in this empirical research entails all employees of the General Fertilizers Company in Homs, whose number is / 5000 / workers, according to the latest statistics issued by the institution at the beginning of 2023. Simple random sampling was chosen to select the sample. The Stephen Thompson equation determined the sample number, and according to this equation, it was shown that the volume of the appropriate sample is 356 individuals. The latter is considered suitable for this research. However, 413 valid questionnaires were collected as used. The equation used to determine the sample is denoted in Equation (1).

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1 - p)}{[[N - 1 \times (d^2 \div z^2)] + p(1 - p)]}$$

Equation 1 Steven Thompson Equation (Hassan et al., 2021; Ali & Ullah, 2023)

The reliability and validity were tested and re-tested for each set of variables. The questionnaire underwent an exploratory factor analysis using a principal component analysis PCA. SPSS and AMOS programs were used for statistical analysis to test the model. A Confirmatory factor analysis with path analysis and structural equation modeling was conducted after the EFA to test the hypotheses. The confirmatory factor analysis is used to compare several models.

4. Findings and Interpretations

The principal component analysis eliminated the least relevant statements and verified the nature of the variable's dimensionality. The measurement of sampling adequacy is verified via the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index (constructs are significant due to values > 0.5). Besides, Cronbach's alpha assessed the scales' reliability with a significance level higher than 0.5.

A factor analysis with a varimax rotation was performed on all items to validate the measurement scale. The reduction of the list of items was carried out based on three criteria. The PCA was operated iteratively by successively by first eliminating items with poor community (less than 0.5). Second, items having factorial weights after rotation were less than 0.5 were excluded. Third, items correlated with several factors whose factorial weights were less than 0.3 were excluded from the analysis.

Table 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

	Factor loading	KMO	Cronbach alpha	AVE	MSV	ASV
Democratic leadership		0.719	0.673	55%	0.4	0.4
Managers build good and trusting relationships with team members	0.827					
Managers set a positive example of professional behavior and ethics	0.805					
Managers provide the necessary support and guidance to the team to develop their skills and achieve their career aspirations	0.680					
Managers encourage employees to exchange ideas and opinions	0.629					
The leader delegates critical responsibilities to subordinates	0.681					
Authoritarian leadership		0.674	0.766	66%	0.39	0.35
Goal setting and action planning are exclusive to managers	0.756					
Managers criticize the team's performance without giving constructive feedback	0.741					
Top management does not involve team members in making important decisions	0.651					
Managers enforce the schedule to ensure the task or project is completed on time.	0.633					
Transformational leadership		0.721	0.789	0.67%	0.33	0.31
Managers always stimulate employees on an intellectual level. For instance, they motivate them to enroll in continuous education	0.647					
The leader follows an intellectually stimulating approach, encouraging creativity and innovation.	0.631					
Managers engage the team in the mission and set attainable goals	0.603					
Managers are role models in support of increasing employees' productivity.	0.684					

Laissez-faire leadership	0.612	0.695	0.63%	0.35	0.32
Managers do not change anything as long as things are working fine.	0.742				
Managers believe in the capabilities of the members and consider them capable of achieving results without the need for continuous supervision	0.724				
Managers give complete freedom to the subordinates for decision-making in the organization.	0.651				
Employees Motivation	0.833	0.784	56%	0.46	0.39
Managers provide opportunities for promotion and professional development to employees	0.774				
Managers encourage innovation and creativity among employees and give them the freedom to develop their skills	0.728				
Leaders adopt incentive programs such as trips or gifts to enhance motivation and dedication to work	0.471				
Organizational Performance	0.727	0.789	55%	0.49	0.45
Managers approach employees positively and encourage them to overcome difficulties and achieve organizational goals	0.845				
Managers provide clear instructions to the employees and provide them with the necessary support to achieve this goal, which has affected the increase in productivity in the organization	0.792				
Managers encourage creative thinking and give employees the freedom to experiment with new ideas, which has the effect of improving the quality of operations	0.750				
The leader faces challenges and failures positively and turns them into opportunities for learning and development in the organization	0.559				

Finally, based on eigenvalues, democratic leadership has retained five items distributed over, explaining 55% of the total variance and a significant value for KMO and Cronbach alpha. The final structure resulting from the factor analysis is presented in Table 2. The factorial solution retained shows good statistical reliability and internal consistency for all dimensions retained. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted after validating the normality distribution to confirm this structure.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix and Normality Distribution

	Democratic leadership	Authoritarian leadership	Transformational Leadership	laissez-faire leadership	Employees Motivation	Tolerance	VIF
Democratic leadership 1						0.563	1.776
Authoritarian leadership	.105*	1				0.944	1.059
Transformational Leadership	.244**	.162**	1			0.816	1.226
Laissez-faire leadership	.489**	.504**	.293**	1		0.646	1.548
Employees Motivation	.277**	.173**	.139**	.153**	1	0.732	1.366
Organizational Performance	.137**	.346**	.156**	.272**	.250**		

Table (3) supports a positive correlation between laissez-faire, democratic, transformational and autocratic leadership with employee motivation and organizational performance. Results support a robust positive relationship between motivation and organizational performance between institutional performance (Pearson Correlation range from 0.250 to 0.537, Sig < 0.01).

Table (3) denoted the collinearity statistics and verified the normality distribution of data. Tolerance is a measure of multicollinearity, measured between 0 and 1. VIF is a measure of versatility and reflects the approximate opposite of Tolerance. VIF is calculated using the following relationship: $VIF = 1 / \text{Tolerance}$. Multicollinearity in data is high if Tolerance is less than 0.1 and the value of VIF is greater than 10. Therefore, statistical actions must be taken to reduce it. The Tolerance and VIF values are within a safe range, indicating no problem with multicollinearity in this model.

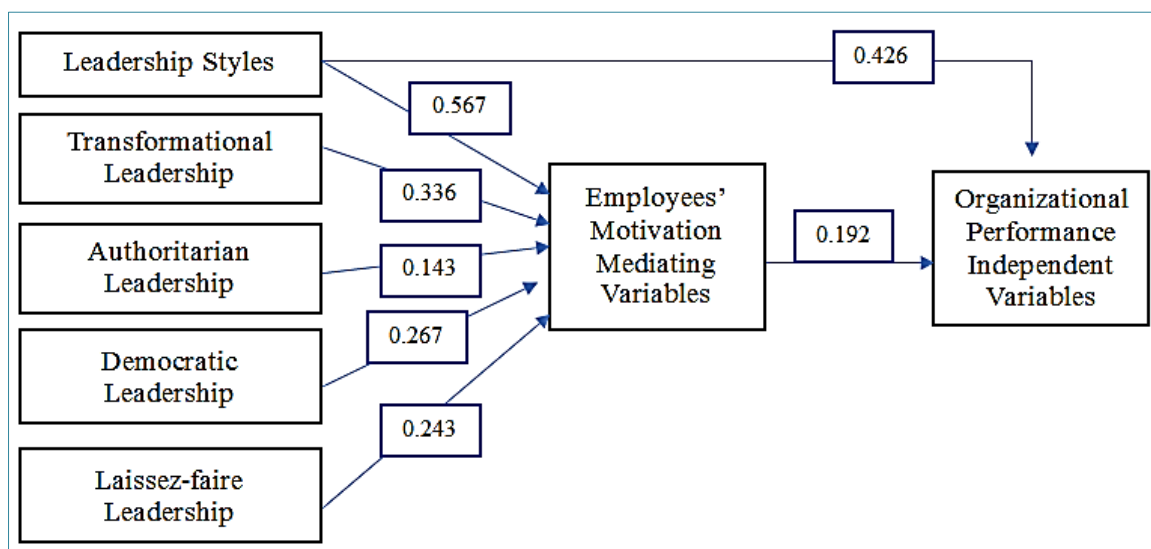


Fig. 2 Conceptual Framework with β Coefficient

The regression model fits the observed data well. It is, therefore, valid. The model is of satisfactory quality. It can be considered explanatory of the concept of organizational performance of Syrian organizations. The variable influence is significant at $p < 0.001$, meaning there is less than 0.1% chance of being wrong in asserting the model. Therefore, leadership styles and employee motivation help explain organizational performance. Therefore, the eight initial alternative hypotheses are supported while rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, the four leadership styles and employee motivation as variables explain the variation of organizational performance as the dependent variable.

Table 4 Fit Indices

Fit indices	Threshold	Results
χ^2	< 3	1.9
GFI	>0.9	0.998
AGFI	>0.9	0.989
CFI	>0.9	1.000
NFI	>0.9	0.985
TLI	>0.9	1.001
RMSEA	< 0.05	0.008

The model is a perfect fit when fit indices meet the threshold criteria. For instance, the CFI, Comparative Fit and goodness of fit indices specify a perfect fit if it reaches a value of 1.0, and a value less than 0.9 indicates a poor fit. Results summarized in Table 4 reveal good fit indices (RMSEA close to 0.05 and a raw and adjusted GFI greater than 0.9 for all the samples in this research).

It is also important to point out that structural modeling of a method effect enabled us to improve the psychometric qualities of the scale. For example, the RMSEA value drastically declined from 0.785 to 0.008.

Table 5 Regression Weights

			E	S.E.	C.R.	β	P	Results
Leadership styles	→	Organizational Performance	.484	0.063	7.725	0.426	0.00	Supported
Leadership styles	→	Employees' Motivation	.827	0.008	6.795	0.567	0.00	Supported
Transformational Leadership	→	Employees' Motivation	.398	0.057	7.026	0.336	0.00	Supported
Authoritarian leadership	→	Employees' Motivation	.468	0.057	8.257	0.143	0.00	Supported
Democratic leadership	→	Employees' Motivation	.627	0.108	5.795	0.267	0.00	Supported
The laissez-faire leadership	→	Employees' Motivation	.733	0.088	8.358	0.243	0.00	Supported
Employees' Motivation	→	Organizational Performance	.787	0.092	8.600	0.192	0.00	Supported
Leadership styles x Employees' Motivation x Organizational Performance			.574	0.075	7.669	0.289	0.00	Supported

Table (5) specifies that the values obtained from the P-value of (0.000) represent a very high significance. Values obtained from the index are positive, testifying to a positive impact between the variables. From this fact, we can conclude that the eight proposed hypotheses are statistically supported. Besides, results were confirmed in the structural equation modeling and supported the hypotheses.

The results of statistical tests indicate that the scales are reliable. Moreover, according to Kotian et al. (2022) and Frost (2023), the threshold of acceptability of Cronbach's alpha is empirically defined from 0.6 to 0.8 for an exploratory study. As this research shows, all the scales have an acceptable reliability beyond 0.6. Leadership can be a demanding role. However, leaders can manage and motivate their teams and make efficient decisions. Nowadays, leaders rely on their experience to detect challenges encountered at work. Experience leaders are developing effective problem-solving strategies to solve them.

Leaders, whether transformational, democratic or authoritarian, ensure the achievement of organizational goals. The latter is achieved by setting vibrant, attainable goals. Nevertheless, Leaders must be able to explain their objectives to team members. Leaders should formulate action plans to inspire and encourage them to reach those objectives. Furthermore, leaders should progress their ability to monitor and progress the development by offering coaching and feedback.

Leadership traits explicitly influence performance, including a leader's talents and abilities and team dynamics. The development of leadership-related strategies is a crucial component of successful organizational performance. Consequently, leadership and motivation are fundamentals antecedent to organizational performance. Organizations must set up good working conditions to stimulate it and communicate sufficiently with teams.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article was extracted from a master's thesis. It has critically scrutinized the influence of leadership styles on motivation and organizational performance. The quantitative method was grounded on a questionnaire. Employees of the General Fertilizers Company in Homs completed the latter. The empirical results verified

that the four leadership styles (transformational, authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership) directly influence organizational performance. Besides, results support that the above-cited leadership styles indirectly influence performance through employee motivation. The model fitness was validated by CFA indices, namely the GFA, IFI and RMSEA, validated the model fitness. These indices and a critical ratio C.R. were significant and supported the research hypotheses.

Hence, leadership and performance are mediated by motivation. It is measured as a vital factor in organizational sustainability. Leaders set goals and objectives and motivate employees. Good leaders have the qualities and skills to inspire and motivate the workforce and create an environment that fosters creativity and innovation. The impact of leadership on performance is highly dependent on the leader's ability to communicate effectively, inspire and motivate employees to achieve their goals.

Motivation is important because the leader's ability to motivate employees is a critical duty or function of leadership competencies. Leadership begins with the initial effort to recruit a new employee and continues through the induction process every day until the employee leaves the organization. This process is developed by the manager/leader who motivates the new employees and once again highlights the importance of leadership to the organization.

Employee motivation is a valuable organizational asset. It maintains and enhances its performance growth. Employees' motivation helps to accomplish higher organizational performance. Therefore, organizations aiming to improve their performance are applying motivation practices. Employee motivation is considered the key to organizational performance effectiveness. Motivation acts as a behavioral indicator and individual performance. The latter contributes to organizational performance.

Leaders are often expected to adapt quickly to organizational and professional changes. A leader must be able to adapt their strategy to new demands or situations to leverage effectiveness. Adopting change consists of being open to new ideas or ways of working. Employees feel valued as members of a group. They recognize that relationships based on security, trust, support and cooperation are part of the company's priorities. Employees should have a voice to feel accepted. Their opinion should be valued and taken into account. Managers should listen to them and respect their ideas. The difference between an acceptable leader and an exceptional leader often lies in emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence corresponds to the ability to identify and manage one's emotions and those of the people around us. Therefore, adopting a comprehensive and timely development strategy is crucial to keep employees engaged and encourage personal development. Managers could improve organizational performance by adopting the following strategies.

- Develop the critical job skills they need to succeed on your team and let them learn about different areas.
- Behavioral profiling is mandatory to gain in-depth knowledge of preferred working methods and learning environments. It encourages collaboration and foster communication.
- Regularly organize personal qualities training to develop specific behaviors and personality traits.
- Regularly provide constructive feedback that considers their performance within the company.

Accordingly, this research clarified the relationship between leadership styles, employee motivation and organizational performance and validated the conceptual Framework. The latter verified the role of independent (leadership styles), dependent (institutional performance), and mediating variables (motivation). Organizations can use the findings to identify best practices to improve performance and achieve sustainable success. The study also helps to show that motivation is an essential factor in improving performance and can be used as a mediator to improve the relationship between leadership styles and performance.

This research spotted light on the importance of leadership, and it has underlined needed leadership skills. Managers should train potential leaders on improving these skills and develop their capabilities to

improve organizational performance. Recommendations can contribute to improving organizational performance. It is considered a managerial reminder of the role of employees' motivation in enhancing their competitive advantage.

The results of this research perfectly match the study of Alrowwad et al. (2020), Jaleha & Machuki (2018) and Mrak & Kvasić (2021) on the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance in private-sector institutions. Transformational, authoritarian and democratic leadership styles positively correlated with organizational performance. This research confirmed the results of (Irwan et al., 2020; Triyanto et al., 2021; Mustikaningrum et al., 2022; Niken et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2022). Both studies confirmed that transformational leadership positively influences organizational performance and has a strong positive relationship with democratic leadership.

The current study's results differed from the study of Sihombing et al. (2022), Jabarzadeh et al. (2019) and Li & Wang (2021) on the style of transformational leadership and its role in improving performance. The study confirmed that only authoritarian leadership influences organizational performance the most. The current study showed a negative relationship with transformational leadership.

This research project is not without limitation, even if results can be generalized to Syrian organizations making its implementation a future value for improving leadership styles, employee motivation and organizational performance in this sector. This topic represents a significant challenge for leaders in business and management. It requires more research and study to understand the mechanisms that lead to improving performance and to identify the best leadership styles that can be followed to achieve this goal. First, the studies dealing with leadership are primarily quantitative, the results of which are based only on employees' perceptions, limiting knowledge in the field to a certain extent. No doubt, adding qualitative data to quantitative data would add to the robustness of the results.

Indeed, the research topic invites future researchers to emphasize leadership behavioral approaches. These include reflections centered on the analysis of the different styles of leadership and their impact on satisfaction and organizational performance.

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