

Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Job Satisfaction within the Solidarity Initiative for Refugees in Turkana, Kenya

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Abstract

The humanitarian sector in Kenya is experiencing increasing employee disengagement, necessitating an urgent understanding of how leadership practices contribute to job satisfaction in under-resourced humanitarian organizations. This study explored the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction among employees in Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR), a humanitarian agency in Turkana, Kenya. It focused on: Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The research was grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory, Leader-Member Exchange Theory, and Job Demands-Resources Model. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, targeting the entire population of 67 SIR employees through a census approach, with structured questionnaires as the primary data-collection instrument. Data were processed in SPSS Version 29 and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. Results demonstrated that Inspirational Motivation ($\beta = .319, p < .05$) exerted the strongest positive influence, followed by Individualized Consideration ($\beta = .289, p < .05$), Intellectual Stimulation ($\beta = .279, p < .05$), and Idealized Influence ($\beta = .140, p < .05$). All dimensions were statistically significant predictors of job satisfaction. An important finding was the remarkably low mean score for fair treatment of all employees ($M = 2.45$), indicating a considerable leadership gap within the organization. The study revealed that transformational leadership techniques collectively improve job satisfaction in humanitarian settings. Recommendations include implementing ethical supervisory conduct policies, structured mentoring programs, and cross-departmental innovation forums. Future research should investigate the moderating role of cultural factors and the longitudinal effects of transformational leadership on employee job satisfaction in Kenya's humanitarian sector.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Humanitarian Organizations*

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1. Introduction

Leadership is widely acknowledged as a central determinant of employee motivation, organizational productivity, and overall workforce outcomes. Scholars have consistently emphasized that effective leadership strategies shape employee behavior, drive performance, output, and influence organizational success (Hilton et al., 2021). Among the various leadership models advanced over the past decades, transformational leadership has emerged as particularly significant. Research demonstrates that transformational leadership has a meaningful and positive influence on employees' job satisfaction, especially in knowledge-based organizations (Iddrisu, 2024). First conceptualized by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), transformational leadership is characterized by the capacity to inspire organizational change by articulating compelling visions, motivating followers, and fostering close relational ties with employees committed to collective organizational goals (Harbera, 2025).

Today's workforce increasingly prioritizes meaningful work, personal development, and alignment with organizational purpose. Within these evolving expectations, transformational leaders act as catalysts, empowering employees and transcending transactional exchanges by offering individualized support, motivating communication, and promoting intellectual development (Breevaart et al., 2014; Sun & Henderson, 2017). This leadership style appeals directly to employees' values and aspirations, operating through relational, human-centered engagement rather than through authority or control. Empirical studies consistently affirm that transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and employee voluntary effort, functioning as a powerful mechanism for improving organizational performance outcomes (Abolnasser et al., 2023).

Job satisfaction itself is a multifaceted construct defined as the degree of employee contentment with their workplace environment, responsibilities, and overall sense of fulfillment (Asghar & Oino, 2018). It is shaped by intrinsic factors such as meaningfulness, recognition, and achievement as well as extrinsic factors including compensation, supervisory quality, working conditions, and leadership style (Aljumah, 2023). Transformational leadership influences job satisfaction through both categories. Scholars have demonstrated that employees who perceive their leaders as ethical, visionary, and supportive report higher levels of job satisfaction (Putra et al., 2023; Guo, 2022). However, these positive relationships necessitate continued contextual analysis.

Transformational leadership operates through four interrelated behavioral dimensions. Idealized influence entails leaders modeling ethical behaviors that inspire trust and admiration (Ystaas et al., 2023). Inspirational motivation involves articulating meaningful, compelling visions that clarify organizational purpose and motivate follower engagement (Fries et al., 2021). Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity, innovation, and independent problem-solving, enhancing employees' sense of contribution and autonomy. Individualized consideration involves recognizing employees' individual needs and aspirations, thereby cultivating environments where employees feel valued and supported (Fries et al., 2021). Together, these behaviors form the foundation through which transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction.

Within humanitarian organizations, employees have historically derived satisfaction from the intrinsic meaning of their work, which directly contributes to alleviating human suffering. However, recent evidence indicates that this intrinsic foundation has been eroded due to increasing emotional labor, burnout, and organizational pressures (Cheong et al., 2024). In

Kenya, the humanitarian sector faces heightened operational demands, driven by donor accountability requirements, recurrent crises such as droughts and refugee influxes, and expanding community needs. These pressures have contributed to a shift from relational, developmental leadership styles toward transactional management practices that prioritize measurable outputs over employee well-being (Singh et al., 2022). As a result, humanitarian organizations in Kenya experience elevated turnover - reaching up to 40% within the first three years of an employee joining the organization (ILO, 2021), reflecting a profound misalignment between employees' intrinsic motivations and organizational support systems (Njuguna, 2023).

Despite its demonstrated value, transformational leadership is not without limitations. Excessive reliance on charisma or inspirational appeals may obscure the need for operational clarity, especially in complex and resource-limited environments (Ystaas et al., 2023). Employees require structured guidance and procedural clarity. When transformational leadership is implemented without appropriate managerial infrastructure, it may inadvertently create confusion or dissatisfaction (Fries et al., 2021). Consequently, organizational effectiveness requires a strategic balance between transformational inspiration and transactional structure.

The global trends of transformational leadership reveal notable cultural variations. In egalitarian Scandinavian contexts, participatory decision-making and gender egalitarianism enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership (Schaufeli et al., 2021). In collectivistic societies such as Japan, China, and South Korea, transformational leadership aligns well with cultural norms emphasizing group cohesion (Bracht et al., 2023). In contrast, some developing countries, including Indonesia, continue to favor paternalistic leadership due to entrenched bureaucratic traditions, limiting the applicability of transformational approaches (Rahmi, Basuki & Rajjani, 2020).

Within Africa, the effectiveness of transformational leadership varies across regional contexts. Studies in Southern Africa show positive outcomes related to inclusivity and diversity management (Chinyamurindi, 2022), while in Nigeria, transformational leadership enhances resilience and adaptive capacity (Olokundun et al., 2022). Moroccan organizations are increasingly shifting from traditional leadership models to transformational approaches as part of broader modernization efforts (Elbanna et al., 2020). Nevertheless, scholarship indicates a significant gap in African-centered research, with limited empirical studies documenting transformational leadership in African humanitarian environments (Nguyen et al., 2021; Mazanai & Fatoki, 2023).

In Kenya's private sector, transformational leadership has proven highly effective. However, in humanitarian sectors, bureaucratic structures and resource constraints reduce leadership flexibility, underscoring the importance of examining transformational leadership within specific organizational contexts (Abwao, 2023; Milelu, 2019). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a valuable theoretical lens for understanding how transformational leadership operates in resource-constrained sectors. According to this framework, supportive leadership, autonomy, and social support function as essential job resources that help employees buffer the negative effects of heavy workloads, emotional labor, and operational constraints (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). In Kenya's humanitarian organizations, where job demands are exceptionally high, transformational leadership may serve as a critical mechanism for enhancing employee resilience, reducing burnout, and improving satisfaction (Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Pletzer et al., 2023).

Given these dynamics, this study investigated the influence of transformational leadership on employee job satisfaction within the context of the Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR). Building on global and regional scholarship, the study aimed to identify the specific transformational leadership behaviors that most effectively enhance job satisfaction within Kenya's humanitarian sector, thereby contributing to improved organizational stability and performance.

1.1 Problem Statement

Humanitarian organizations in Kenya continue to face persistent challenges, including declining job satisfaction, high turnover, and weakened employee engagement, despite global evidence indicating that transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction (Judge & Piccolo, 2020). Research indicates that up to 40% of humanitarian workers in Africa leave their roles within three years of joining the organization, largely due to poor leadership, highlighting a critical organizational vulnerability (ILO, 2021). In the Kenyan context, transactional leadership remains common, failing to meet employees' psychological needs for autonomy, recognition, and meaningful work (Njuguna, 2023). As a result, intrinsic motivation is increasingly overridden by stress, burnout, and operational pressures, contributing to reduced satisfaction and higher turnover (Afulani et al., 2021; Odhiambo, Muathe & Bula, 2025).

Despite substantial global scholarship, four major gaps limit understanding of transformational leadership within Kenya's humanitarian sector: the dominance of Western-centric studies, limited focus on non-profit and humanitarian environments, insufficient evidence on how transformational leadership's four dimensions operate under Kenyan humanitarian conditions, and limited studies in volatile, resource-constrained settings (Chinyamurindi, 2022; Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Pletzer et al., 2023).

This study addresses these gaps by contextualizing leadership theory for Kenyan socio-cultural realities, offering insights into how transformational leadership can enhance job satisfaction in mission-driven organizations, strengthen HR practices in the humanitarian sector, and guide adaptive leadership in environments defined by insecurity, resource scarcity, and unpredictable operational demands.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of transformational leadership on employees' job satisfaction in SIR, with the specific objective of assessing how each of the four dimensions affects job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The literature reviewed draws on three foundational theories: Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978), Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (Petrilli, 2024), and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) - to explain how leadership shapes employee job satisfaction, particularly in high-pressure humanitarian contexts. Transformational Leadership emphasizes the role of ethical role modelling, inspirational vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support in elevating intrinsic motivation and enhancing satisfaction. LMX Theory complements this by showing how high-quality leader–follower relationships foster trust, support, and psychological safety, translating leadership behaviors into daily experiences that influence wellbeing (Garg et al., 2024). The JD-R Model further explains how employees' satisfaction depends on the balance between job demands and the resources provided, highlighting the importance of leadership in supplying motivational

and psychological resources that buffer workplace strain (Schaufeli et al., 2022). Together, these theories show that transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction when supported by strong relational exchanges and sufficient job resources, while also acknowledging limitations such as overreliance on leader charisma, potential favoritism, and resource constraints common in humanitarian settings.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Inspirational Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Leaders who articulate a compelling vision, communicate shared goals, and provide a meaningful framework significantly enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction across diverse contexts through Inspirational Motivation. Mazanai and Fatoki (2023). Empirical studies demonstrate strong positive effects in mission-driven and resource-constrained environments, though these outcomes are moderated by factors such as resource availability, communication quality, employee autonomy, and alignment between organizational values and practices. The review also identified substantial research gaps in African and humanitarian settings, where cultural dynamics, persistent resource shortages, and prolonged crises may weaken or alter the influence of inspirational motivation (Salim et al., 2024). These gaps justify further investigation within organizations like SIR to understand how visionary leadership contributes to morale and satisfaction amid high job demands.

2.2.2 Idealized Influence and Job Satisfaction

Idealized Influence is a core dimension of transformational leadership, emphasizing leaders' roles as ethical, value-driven role models who inspire trust, psychological safety, and commitment among employees. Empirical studies across sectors consistently show that leaders who model ethical decision-making in complex, resource-constrained situations provide crucial guidance that helps employees navigate moral distress (Ahmed, 2022), thereby significantly enhancing job satisfaction, although cultural variations also shape these outcomes. Evidence from humanitarian contexts in Africa highlights the importance of ethical leadership in resource-constrained environments marked by ethical dilemmas and reveals that misalignment between leaders' values and organizational practices can erode trust and satisfaction. Notably, the study identified a major research gap in understanding idealized influence within Kenyan humanitarian settings, underscoring the need for context-specific analysis of how ethical role modeling shapes morale in crisis-driven, culturally diverse settings.

2.2.3 Intellectual Stimulation and Job Satisfaction

Intellectual stimulation, a transformational leadership dimension, enhances employees' job satisfaction by encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving. Empirical studies show that intellectually stimulating leaders reduce burnout, strengthen autonomy, and foster knowledge sharing, leading to higher satisfaction across sectors and cultural contexts. Khan et al. (2020). The effectiveness of intellectual stimulation is highly dependent on supportive structures such as training, resources, and organizational readiness; however, these may backfire when employees face heavy workloads, rigid hierarchies, or insufficient developmental support. Evidence from African humanitarian settings highlights additional challenges, including resource scarcity and crisis-driven demands that can limit leaders' ability to provide meaningful intellectual stimulation. These gaps underscore the need for context-specific research within Kenyan humanitarian organizations such as SIR, where innovation is essential yet often constrained by demanding operational environments.

2.2.4 Individualized Consideration and Job Satisfaction

Individualized consideration is exhibited through personalized support, mentorship, and recognition. This significantly enhances employee job satisfaction by fostering trust, psychological safety, and a sense of being valued (Chen & Liu, 2023). While individualized consideration has been shown to buffer emotional strain and foster psychological safety among humanitarian workers, its sustainability is often challenged in crisis-driven environments, where leaders face exhaustion and must manage dispersed teams, thereby making consistent individualized support difficult to maintain (Ugwu, 2021). These gaps highlight the need for context-specific research within organizations like SIR, where staff face intense emotional and operational pressures.

3. Methodology

A descriptive correlational research design was adopted. The study employed a census approach, targeting all 67 SIR employees across all hierarchical levels, employment categories, and three geographical locations, ensuring comprehensive population coverage and eliminating sampling error. A concise questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics were used to test relationships between transformational leadership dimensions and job satisfaction using two analytical approaches. Pearson correlations to examine the strength of bivariate relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable, and Multiple linear regression analysis to assess the collective and individual effects of the four transformational leadership dimensions on employee job satisfaction.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Inspirational Motivation, and Job Satisfaction

	S.D	D	N	A	S.A	Mean	Std. Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
My supervisor communicates a clear and compelling vision for our humanitarian work.	0.3	2.6	2.0	23.2	71.9	4.64	0.69
My supervisor provides timely updates when program goals or priorities change.	0.3	0.7	4.3	36.5	58.1	4.51	0.65
My supervisor shows confidence in the team's ability to overcome challenges.	0.3	5.0	6.6	43.7	44.4	4.27	0.82
My supervisor helps me understand the importance of my work in improving beneficiaries' lives.	0.0	1.7	7.0	46.7	44.7	4.34	0.68
The link between our programs and the broader mission is clearly reinforced by leadership.	0.7	1.7	4.6	33.4	59.6	4.50	0.72

The descriptive results indicate that SIR employees perceive their supervisors as highly effective role models who embody the organization's values and mission.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Idealized Influence and Job Satisfaction

	S.D	D	N	A	S.A	Mean	Std. Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
My supervisor acts with integrity even in difficult humanitarian situations.	0.0	5.6	5.3	59.6	29.5	4.13	0.75
Leadership behavior in my organization reflects the values we promote in the community.	0.7	7.3	22.8	60.9	8.3	3.69	0.75
My supervisor keeps their word and follows through on commitments.	0.0	24.5	14.2	50.7	10.6	3.47	0.98
My supervisor treats all staff members with respect, regardless of rank or background.	0.3	76.2	6.6	11.9	5.0	2.45	0.89
My supervisor consistently demonstrates moral courage when making difficult decisions.	0.7	5.3	37.4	46.7	9.9	3.60	0.77

The descriptive results on the dimension of idealized influence indicated a significant concern about equitable treatment within SIR organizational culture, representing a critical area for leadership development.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics, Intellectual Stimulation and Job Satisfaction

	S.D	D	N	A	S.A	Mean	Std. Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
My supervisor encourages me to think creatively when solving problems.	0.7	3.0	4.6	51.0	40.7	4.28	0.75
My supervisor encourages our team to challenge existing assumptions when working on projects.	0.7	1.3	8.3	52.6	37.1	4.24	0.71
My supervisor supports calculated risk-taking when it may lead to improvement.	1.0	8.9	19.2	52.6	18.2	3.78	0.88
My team is encouraged to continuously improve our work processes.	0.7	10.6	26.5	43.4	18.9	3.69	0.92
My supervisor creates an environment where staff can grow and develop their skills.	0.0	1.0	5.3	53.0	40.7	4.33	0.62

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics, Individualized Consideration, and Job Satisfaction

	<u>S.D</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>S.A</u>		
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean	Std. Dev
I receive constructive feedback that reflects my unique strengths and gaps.	0.7	3.0	4.6	51.0	40.7	4.28	0.75
My supervisor acknowledges my contributions publicly or privately in meaningful ways.	0.7	1.3	8.3	52.6	37.1	4.24	0.71
I feel safe raising personal or professional concerns without negative repercussions.	1.0	8.9	19.2	52.6	18.2	3.78	0.88
My supervisor supports access to training, coaching, or stretch assignments.	0.7	10.6	26.5	43.4	18.9	3.69	0.92
My views are considered in decisions that affect my work.	0.0	1.0	5.3	53.0	40.7	4.33	0.62

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between all four transformational leadership dimensions and employee job satisfaction at SIR. Results as presented in Table 5 indicate that all four dimensions showed a statistically significant positive correlation with employee job satisfaction ($p < .05$, $n = 67$), with Inspirational Motivation recording the strongest relationship ($r = .538$), followed by Individualized Consideration ($r = .500$), Intellectual Stimulation ($r = .482$), and Idealized Influence ($r = .308$).

Table 5: Correlation Results

		Inspirational Motivation	Idealized Influence	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration	Employee Job Satisfaction
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation		1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation			1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Individualized Consideration	Pearson Correlation				1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Employee Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.308**	.482**	.500**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	67	67	67	67	67

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration jointly and significantly predicted employee job satisfaction among staff at Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) in Kenya.

Model Summary

The results in Table 6 indicate that the four transformational leadership dimensions jointly explained 57.2% of the variance in employee job satisfaction ($R^2 = .572$, adjusted $R^2 = .546$, $R = .756$).

Table 6: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R-	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756a	.572	.546		.33021
a. Predictors: (Constant), Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration					
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Job Satisfaction					

Analysis of Variance

The ANOVA results in Table 7 indicate that the four transformational leadership dimensions collectively and significantly predicted employee job satisfaction at SIR, $F(4, 62) = 95.016$, $p < .05$.

Table 7: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.440	4	10.360	95.016	.000b
	Residual	30.982	62	.109		
	Total	72.422	66			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Job Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration						

Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficient results in Table 8 indicate that all four transformational leadership dimensions significantly predicted employee job satisfaction at SIR.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.442	.198		2.232	.029
	Inspirational Motivation	.301	.062	.319	4.871	.000
	Idealized Influence	.128	.045	.140	2.851	.006
	Intellectual Stimulation	.258	.054	.279	4.756	.000
	Individualized Consideration	.274	.074	.289	3.703	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Job Satisfaction

Based on the multiple linear regression results, it was concluded that all four transformational leadership dimensions jointly and significantly predicted employee job satisfaction at SIR, $R^2 = .572$, $F(4, 62) = 95.016$, $p < .05$, with Inspirational Motivation as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .319$, $p < .05$). Inspirational Motivation was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .319$, $t = 4.871$, $p < .05$), followed by Individualized Consideration ($\beta = .289$, $t = 3.703$, $p < .05$), Intellectual Stimulation ($\beta = .279$, $t = 4.756$, $p < .05$), and Idealized Influence ($\beta = .140$, $t = 2.851$, $p < .05$).

4.4 Discussion

The study found that Inspirational Motivation was the strongest predictor of employee job satisfaction at SIR ($\beta = .319$, $p < .05$). This finding is consistent with Salim et al. (2024), who reported that supervisors who articulate a compelling vision and reinforce organizational purpose significantly enhance employee engagement and satisfaction in mission-driven organizations. Similarly, Mazanai and Fatoki (2023) established a strong positive relationship between inspirational motivation and performance outcomes in African NGOs, a finding that aligns with the present study's results within a comparable humanitarian context. However, the current study recorded a comparatively moderate correlation ($r = .538$), which contrasts with the stronger associations reported by Iddrisu (2024) in knowledge-based organizations in Ghana, suggesting that resource constraints and crisis-driven demands at SIR may moderate the influence of visionary communication on employee satisfaction.

Individualized Consideration was the second strongest predictor of employee job satisfaction at SIR ($\beta = .289, p < .05$). This finding corroborates Chen and Liu (2023), who demonstrated that personalized mentorship and recognition by leaders significantly enhanced psychological safety and job satisfaction in healthcare settings in China, a high-pressure professional environment comparable to humanitarian work. The present finding also aligns with Ugwu (2021), who confirmed that individualized attention and relational support buffer emotional strain and improve well-being among humanitarian workers. In contrast, the inconsistent access to coaching and developmental support identified in this study reflects the challenge noted by Cheong et al. (2024), who observed that crisis-driven workloads often prevent leaders from sustaining consistent individualized engagement, thereby limiting its full effect on employee satisfaction.

Intellectual Stimulation also significantly predicted employee job satisfaction at SIR ($\beta = .279, p < .05$), consistent with Khan et al. (2020), who found that intellectually stimulating leadership strengthens employee autonomy, reduces burnout, and fosters knowledge sharing, leading to higher satisfaction across varied organizational settings. This finding further aligns with Fries et al. (2021), who found that leaders who encourage creative problem-solving positively influence employee motivation and fulfillment in complex organizational environments. However, the limited emphasis on continuous improvement practices observed at SIR echoes findings from Tummers and Bakker (2021), who cautioned that intellectual stimulation yields diminishing returns when organizational infrastructure is insufficient to support innovation, a condition frequently encountered in resource-constrained humanitarian contexts.

Idealized Influence recorded the weakest predictive effect on employee job satisfaction at SIR ($\beta = .140, p < .05$), largely driven by the notably low mean score on equitable treatment of all staff ($M = 2.45$). This finding contrasts with Guo (2022), who reported a strong positive relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction in Chinese public organizations, in which institutional accountability mechanisms reinforced consistent leader conduct. Similarly, Ahmed (2022) demonstrated that ethical role modeling by leaders reduces moral distress and increases satisfaction in humanitarian contexts; however, the present study suggests that when equitable treatment is perceived as inadequate, the overall effect of idealized influence on satisfaction is substantially weakened. These contrasting outcomes align with Ystaas et al. (2023), who noted that idealized influence has the least consistent effect across organizational settings when structural fairness norms are absent, underscoring the need for formal ethical conduct policies within SIR to complement leadership behaviors.

5. Conclusion

This study offers a significant contribution to the growing body of knowledge on transformational leadership within humanitarian settings in Kenya. Humanitarian organization leaders, HR professionals, and policymakers can leverage these findings to formulate evidence-based guidelines and policies that promote ethical leadership practices, strengthen workplace well-being, and enhance organizational efficiency in mission-driven environments.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends several leadership interventions to strengthen employee job satisfaction at SIR, emphasizing the need to reinforce ethical, mission-centered communication through regular supervisory forums that connect daily work to the organization's humanitarian mandate. To address gaps in equitable treatment, it calls for a clear supervisory conduct policy, supported by 360-degree feedback and accountability mechanisms, that enhances respectful, values-driven leadership. The study further recommends structured mentoring, coaching, and

training programs to strengthen developmental support and psychological safety, and proposes cross-departmental innovation forums and capacity-building initiatives to fully realize the benefits of intellectual stimulation. Collectively, these measures aim to strengthen all dimensions of transformational leadership and create a more supportive, equitable, and engaging work environment at SIR.

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