

The Mediating Role of Transformational Leadership in the Relationship Between Job Empowerment and Work Engagement Among Employees of a City Local Government Unit

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Abstract—This research shows the mediating role of transformational leadership in the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among employees of a City Local Government Unit in the Philippines. The study utilizes a quantitative descriptive correlational design. This study was conducted with 233 Plantilla employees in the Local Government of Panabo City. Respondents were selected through stratified random sampling. The study revealed that job empowerment, transformational leadership, and work engagement were described as very high. Moreover, job empowerment and work engagement, job empowerment and transformational leadership, and transformational leadership and work engagement revealed significant positive relationships. The mediation analysis showed that transformational leadership partially mediated the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement, as confirmed by the significant Sobel test result. The findings imply that job empowerment directly improves work engagement, while transformational leadership strengthens this effect through vision, support, intellectual stimulation, shared goals, performance expectations, and role modeling. The findings of this study serve as a basis for City LGUs to improve employee engagement and public service delivery through empowerment practices, leadership training, mentoring, participatory decision-making, recognition systems, feedback mechanisms, and regular engagement monitoring.

Index Terms—job empowerment, transformational leadership, work engagement, mediation analysis, local government unit, Philippines.

SDG Indicator: #8, #16

1. Introduction

A. Rationale

Most of the Local Government Unit (LGU) employees encountered many difficulties and concerns in engaging in the workplace, such as approaching issues with clients and coworkers in terms of communication and, occasionally, having to be in the appropriate mode while operating (Sumatra et al., 2023). Additionally, Kang and Hwang (2021) found out that most government employees' conflicts and problems in the

workplace are such free-riding cases whereby some employees may not give their best effort; there can be trust issues, which is a damaging dilemma. This is the case when government employees perceive that challenging responsibilities are inequitable. Communication breakdown could be a problem when there are disparities. The lack of clear vision or strategy in the organization, as well as damaging relationships between the employees and officials, can significantly reduce government employees' interest and lack of awareness of the organization's goals and values by the employees leads to low employee engagement that lack of encouragement and support from supervisors and colleagues can demotivate employees and hinder the level of engagement (Sumatra et al., 2023).

The attitude that LGU employees display at the workplace dramatically determines the services offered to the public. Lack of work culture results in inefficiencies and low productivity; for the services sector, it results in poor delivery of services (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Management problems like corruption, graft, and the like work well to contribute to unethical behaviors affecting public perception and service quality. Such a situation means that citizens can receive poor or below-standard service delivery, which is not in tandem with the attainment of the UN-SDGs, particularly in the areas of reduced inequality and accountable institutions (Nicolas, 2023). According to Simeon (2022), the need to ensure that the central and the local governments work in harmony is well demonstrated by policies such as the Mandanas Ruling in the Philippines. Lack of appropriate coordination may lead to gaps in service implementation, especially since many LGUs are receiving incremental internal revenue. Suppose LGUs cannot effectively and efficiently utilize these resources to provide these services. In that case, there is likely to be a decline in the quality of services, which will affect the achievement of welfare and development objectives within the communities espoused by the UN-SDGs. Proper leadership is crucial for encouraging such behavior among the workers. Perhaps many LGUs have substandard leadership, which often leads to poor

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communication, lack of support, and failure to appreciate employees (Sumatra *et al.*, 2023).

Also, there is a problem with neglecting training or professional development, which also affects the work engagement of LGU employees. Lack of proper skills and knowledge to perform a particular job causes employees to be overwhelmed by the workload and creates a demotivated workforce. This lack of engagement can have a ripple effect on the delivery of public services because, for example, the employees will not bother to look for ways of improving the service delivery, hence the UN-SDGs quality education and decent work and economic growth (Nicolas, 2023).

On the other hand, the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among public employees is an important aspect to consider in understanding their levels of motivation and commitment in the workplace (Khusanova *et al.*, 2021). Empowering public employees in their jobs positively impacts their work engagement. When organizations offer autonomy, resources, and support, employees experience a greater sense of ownership, motivation, and dedication. According to Tersona and Lagura (2025) focus on spirituality in the workplace can improve employee involvement and overall welfare. This, in turn, results in increased levels of work engagement and improved overall organizational outcomes (Khusanova *et al.*, 2021). Based on the studies, poor job empowerment can lead to poor work engagement, which can have negative consequences on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance empowerment and engagement are essential factors that can contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sulistiono *et al.*, 2019). According to Sulistiono *et al.* (2019), poor leadership can decrease job satisfaction and result in poor work engagement, reducing job satisfaction and negatively affecting employee motivation and productivity. In addition, it can decrease organizational commitment and poor work engagement. This can lead to reduced organizational commitment, higher turnover rates, and lower employee loyalty.

B. Statement of the Problem

Moreover, this study aims to establish the significance of transformational leadership as a mediator in the influence of job empowerment on work engagement through following:

1. To describe the level of job empowerment in terms of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact.
2. To describe the level of work engagement in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical factors and ascertain the level of transformational leadership in the LGU's employees.
3. To determine the significant relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among employees in the City Local Government Unit.
4. To determine the significant relationship between job empowerment and transformational leadership among employees in the City Local Government Unit.
5. To determine significant relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement among employees in the City Local Government Unit

and to determine if there is a mediating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between job empowerment and work performance.

C. Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study are the following:

1. There is no significant relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among employees in the City Local Government Unit.
2. There is no significant relationship between job empowerment and transformational leadership among employees in the City Local Government Unit.
3. There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement among employees in the City Local Government Unit.
4. Transformational leadership does not significantly mediate the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among employees in the City Local Government Unit.

D. Theoretical Framework

This study is mainly anchored to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (2015). This theory explains that an employee becomes more motivated and engaged in the work if they are more satisfied with their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In this study, job empowerment is understood through these psychological needs. Self-determination reflects autonomy because employees are allowed to make decisions and exercise control over their work. Competence is developed when employees believe that they have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to perform their duties effectively. This manifests when an employee sees their work as valuable, purposeful, and connected to their personal and organizational value. They feel relatedness, which an employee feels support, collaboration, and positive working relationships within the organization.

In a City Local Government Unit, empowered staff is more likely to be engaged when they feel their work is meaningful, when they are able to do their job, when they have freedom to do their job, and when they are connected to their leaders, colleagues, and their organization's purpose. In such environments, employees will be more likely to show cognitive engagement by paying attention and focusing on work, emotional engagement by being enthusiastic and committed to their work, and physical engagement by being energetic and putting effort into their job. Therefore, it is concluded that Self-Determination Theory is the explanation of how job empowerment can increase work engagement among the employees of the LGU.

On the other hand, the Transformational Leadership Theory of Bass and Riggio (2006) also agrees with the aspects of transformational leadership that the study has covered, namely, the ability of transformational leaders to motivate their employees by setting them a clear vision, giving them individual attention, intellectual stimulation and encouragement, and helping them to achieve group goals, expectations for performance, and role modeling. In this study,

the role of transformational leadership is to mediate between job empowerment and work engagement. Job empowerment provides autonomy, competence, meaning, and impact, but transformational leadership provides direction, encouragement, support, and inspiration, which further strengthens the engagement resulting from job empowerment.

Thus, the transformation process that empowered employees engage in as a result of transformational leadership is the mediator, which enhances employee engagement in their work. Communication of a compelling vision enables workers to see the big picture of their roles. Individualized support by leaders builds employee confidence and relatedness. Leaders who foster intellectual stimulation allow their employees to think outside the box and engage in problem-solving. High-performing leaders foster a culture of team goals and high expectations, guiding employees to focus on the performance of their teams. Thus, transformational leadership is able to enhance motivational outcomes of job empowerment and increase the cognitive, emotional, and physical work engagement of City Local Government Unit employees.

E. Conceptual Framework

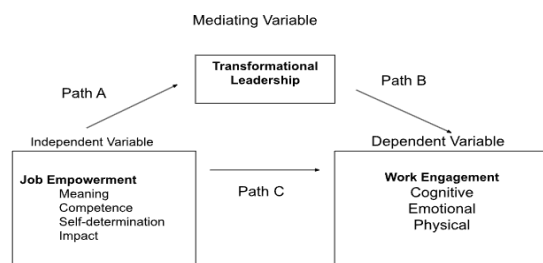


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework showing the relationships among job empowerment, transformational leadership, and work engagement. Job empowerment, the independent variable, includes meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Mohsen, 2014), while work engagement, the dependent variable, consists of cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement (Walker, 2017). Transformational leadership serves as the mediating variable and reflects leadership behaviors such as communicating a clear vision, providing individualized support, encouraging intellectual stimulation, promoting shared goals, setting high-performance expectations, and modeling appropriate behavior (Long, 2020). The framework illustrates the effect of job empowerment on transformational leadership (Path a), transformational leadership on work engagement (Path b), the total effect of job empowerment on work engagement (Path c), and its direct effect after introducing the mediator (Path c'). Previous studies support the positive relationships among these variables (Monje Amor *et al.*, 2021; Khan *et al.*, 2020); however, limited evidence exists on the mediating role of transformational leadership within City Local Government Units, providing the basis for the present study.

2. Method

A. Research Respondent

The respondents of this study were the permanent plantilla employees in the local government unit of Panabo City, Davao del Norte. The study excluded elected officials, top management executives, contractual employees, job order personnel, temporary employees, probationary employees, part-time employees, and employees who were on long leave during the conduct of the study. This ensured that the respondents were stable and permanent employees who manifest prior knowledge about organizational structure and direct experience with the leadership and empowerment practices being examined in the study.

The respondents of the study were employees in the local government unit of Panabo, Davao del Norte. The respondents of the study are likely involved in various roles ranging from administrative to managerial positions, and they all operate within the specific geographic location of Panabo. The respondents already have prior experience operating under public sector rules and regulations. Therefore, they understand the bureaucratic procedures and the processes of the different policies as they practice public administration. They are a product of the organizational culture, values, and policies of the Panabo LGU. Respondents are civil servants with similar outlooks on stability, remuneration, and promotion within the civil service.

Moreover, using Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size was determined based on the proportions that presuppose a dichotomous response for the measured attributes (Yamane, 1973). Through this formula, there were 233 respondents. Moreover, stratified random sampling applied to several collection methods in which sample participants were selected by chance but with a defined selection probability (Lavrakas, 2008). Thus, it was used in this study. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents.

The use of Stratified random sampling was due to respondents coming from different offices and departments of the Local Government Unit of Panabo City. To ensure that all offices are included, each department was considered as one stratum. The number of respondents was proportionally allocated based on the department's share in the total population of 558 plantilla employees. This was achieved by calculating the proportion of the population in each department and multiplying by the desired sample size of 233. The number of respondents per department was determined and the respondents in each stratum were randomly selected from the official list of qualified permanent Plantilla employees. This was done to ensure the sample was proportionate and that all eligible staff in each department had an equal opportunity of selection.

The respondents of this study were Plantilla employees of the Local Government of Panabo City whose have at least two (2) years of continuous services, and experience and exposure towards organizational environment, leadership practices and with informed consent and voluntary participation. The exclusion criteria are the elected officials, top management

executives, contractual employees, job order personnel, temporary employees, probationary employees, part-time employees, employees with less than two (2) years of service and those who were on long leave during the data collection period were excluded from the study because their employment status or limited organizational exposure may not fully reflect the long-term experiences of permanent LGU employees. The respondents also had the option of declining or withdrawing from the study without any repercussions or penalties to their employment. To ensure data quality, questionnaires were eliminated from the final data set if they were significantly incomplete and were not acceptable for statistical analysis and all information collected was treated in strict confidentiality.

The research was carried out in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Panabo, a city in Davao del Norte that has agricultural production and also has a high rate of urbanization. The LGU of Panabo is the one that administers the people and has departments where its employees are to administer the policies and functions in the locality. The work engagement in the LGU of Panabo is centered on the emotional and psychological commitment of the employees in their work, which is reflected in the organizational culture, leadership, and job resources. Even though the majority of employees are intrinsically motivated by the impact of their work on the community, the possible issues related to the higher-ranking processes, pressure, and insufficient materials influence their involvement. The awareness of these factors may be useful in deciding how to support and promote the health of the workers and thus enhance the efficiency of the organization.

B. Materials and Instrument

This study adapted downloadable questionnaires from web sources. It modified the questionnaire for independent variables from the psychological empowerment measurement tool by Spreitzer's (1995) that was utilized in the study entitled *A Study on the Relationship between Communication Skills and Mental Health and Job Empowerment* by Fini and Fini (2016). Moreover, the dependent variable is derived from the study of Employee Engagement Scale utilized by the study entitled *University Research Administrator's Perception of Incivility and the Relationship to Employee Engagement* by Walker (2017), and the mediating variable questionnaire was from the study of Podsakoff Transformational Leadership Scale – Leader Version utilized by the study entitled *The Effect of Transformational Leadership Through Physical Activity on Unit Cohesion* by Long (2020).

The research tools used in the present study were adapted and then validated by a panel of experts before they were administered to evaluate the clarity, relevance, appropriateness and suitability of the items in relation to the objectives and context of the study. All instruments went through the validation process and were deemed to be suitable for the study. The questionnaires were then refined with the comments and recommendations of the validators. Reliability testing was also made by Cronbach's alpha, and all three instruments met the criteria of reliability ($\alpha > .70$), which meant that the three instruments showed satisfactory internal consistency and

reliability.

The mean scores of job empowerment, transformational leadership and work engagement were explained with a five points scale for each of these variables. The mean scores between 4.21 and 5.00 were interpreted as very high this indicates that the items related to the variables are always manifested, showing a high level of agreement and consistent occurrence of the behavior or condition. The next scale was 3.41 to 4.2 were interpreted as high; this indicates that the items are oftentimes manifested, reflecting a frequent but not constant occurrence. Continually, 2.61 to 3.4 was interpreted as moderate this indicates that the items are sometimes manifested, indicating an occasional or moderate level of agreement. The next scale, between 1.81 to 2.6, was interpreted as low; this indicates that the items are seldom manifested, representing a low level of agreement and infrequent occurrence. Lastly, 1.00 to 1.80 was interpreted as Very Low, this indicates that the items related to the variables are not manifested at all, reflecting a complete lack of agreement or occurrence.

C. Design and Procedure

This study applied quantitative research, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational type to find out the level of job empowerment of the employees of City Local Government Unit and to find out the relationships between job empowerment, transformational leadership, and work engagement. A correlational design is used when the researcher would like to establish a relationship between variables, but not manipulate or control them (Bhandari, 2021). The design was suitable from a public administration/organizational point of view as it explored perceptions and experiences of existing perceptions of government employees regarding empowerment, leadership, and engagement in their current organizational context. The study was descriptive and correlational in terms of its objective dimension as it described the level of variables and identified the significant relationship between the variables. In the time dimension, it used a cross-sectional design, where the necessary information was collected from the respondents in one data collection period.

Furthermore, mediation analysis was used to examine the mediation effect of transformational leadership between job empowerment and work engagement. Mediation analysis conceptualizes a potential direct effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable, plus an indirect effect mediated by a third variable: the mediator variable (MacKinnon et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2021). The independent variable in this study was job empowerment, the mediating variable was transformational leadership, and the dependent variable was work engagement. The mediation model allowed the researcher to assess the direct effect of job empowerment on work engagement and the indirect effect that was mediated by transformational leadership. This method directly aimed at the primary aim of the study: to explore the mediating role of transformational leadership between job empowerment and work engagement. The above section says how to prepare a subsection. Just copy and paste the subsection whenever you

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3. Results and Discussion

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A. Level of Job Empowerment among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 1
Level of job empowerment among employees in the city local government unit

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Meaning	0.47	4.53	Very High
Competence	0.52	4.31	Very High
Self-determination	0.50	4.32	Very High
Impact	0.52	4.37	Very High
Overall	0.44	4.38	Very High

Table 1 shows the degree of job empowerment among the employees in the City Local Government Unit (LGU). The average score of 4.38 indicates that the rating of job empowerment is very high. The greatest average is in the Meaning indicator ($M = 4.53$), which means that employees see their work as extremely important and not contradictory to their values. The next one is Impact ($M = 4.37$), which implies that employees feel that they can make a significant contribution to the results of their work. The indicators of Self-determination ($M = 4.32$) and Competence ($M = 4.31$) also show a very high degree of empowerment, which means that employees are confident and independent in their jobs. All the SD of the indicators are 0.44 to 0.52, which shows consistency in the responses and only slight variation in the perceptions of the employees. This implies that employees tend to have the same perception regarding their empowerment at work.

Employees' perception of work being meaningful, competent at their job, having autonomy in making decisions at work and being able to impact organizational outcomes represent a very high level of job empowerment. The results align with Deci and Ryan (2015) who noted that the satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness contributes to better employee motivation and work experiences. In a similar vein, Khusanova et al. (2021) explained that empowerment fosters employees' sense of ownership, motivation and commitment to their work. This finding is also in line with Monje Amor et al. (2021) who established that psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact) are factors that positively influence employees' attitudes and engagement. The results indicate that the general workplace atmosphere for the employees of the City LGU can be considered as one that allows them to work confidently, with discretion and

understand the importance of their role in the organization.

B. Level of Work Engagement among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 2
Level of work engagement among employees in the city local government unit

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Meaning	0.47	4.53	Very High
Competence	0.52	4.31	Very High
Self-determination	0.50	4.32	Very High
Impact	0.52	4.37	Very High
Overall	0.44	4.38	Very High

Table 2 provides the degree of work engagement in three indicators. The general average of 4.42 shows a level of work engagement of the employees to be very high. The Cognitive indicator ($M = 4.49$) has the highest mean score, which indicates that employees are very concentrated and mentally engaged in their work. This is then succeeded by Physical ($M = 4.41$) and Emotion ($M = 4.37$), which also indicate very high rates of engagement in terms of energy and emotional attachment to their work.

The standard deviations (SD) are between 0.46 and 0.58, which shows the moderate level of consistency in the responses, and there is not much variation among the indicators.

Very high levels of work engagement suggest workers are engaged in their work on a cognitive, emotional and physical level. This discovery aligns with Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (2015) that states that employees are likely to be more motivated and engaged if they are able to meet their autonomy, competence and relatedness needs. Likewise, Khusanova et al. (2021) suggested that having autonomy, organizational support, and meaningful work among the employees leads to increased motivation, dedication, and work engagement. This discovery aligns with the Tersona and Lagura (2025) research who noted that good working conditions promote employee engagement and wellbeing. Furthermore, Sulistiono et al. (2019) emphasized that employees' engagement related to positive organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. Therefore, the high level of work engagement among City LGU employees indicates that they are cognitively, emotionally and physically engaged in completing their work tasks.

C. Level of Transformational Leadership among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 3 demonstrates the degree of transformational leadership in six indicators. The total mean score of 4.29 means that the level of transformational leadership in the organization is very high. Group Goals ($M = 4.30$) has the highest mean score, which implies that employees believe their leaders are effective in promoting teamwork and orienting them towards shared objectives. High-Performance Expectations ($M = 4.33$),

Articulating a Vision ($M = 4.40$), and Appropriate Role Model ($M = 4.28$) are also indicators with very high ratings, which means that leaders inspire employees, have high expectations, and act as positive role models.

Table 3
Level of transformational leadership among employees in the city local government unit

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Articulating a Vision	0.57	4.40	Very High
Individualize Support	0.68	4.27	Very High
Intellectual Stimulation	0.66	4.17	High
Group Goals	0.67	4.30	Very High
High Performance Expectations	0.68	4.33	Very High
Appropriate Role Model	0.80	4.28	Very High
Overall	0.57	4.29	Very High

The lowest mean score is Individualized Support ($M = 4.27$) and Intellectual Stimulation ($M = 4.17$), which are in the range of Very High and High, respectively. This indicates that although employees feel that they are supported and encouraged to think critically, there could be a minor improvement in how leaders customize their support and challenge employees with their intellectual faculties. The standard deviations (SD) are between 0.57 and 0.68, which means that although the responses differ slightly, the overall perception of transformational leadership is similar in all employees.

The findings show that employees believe that their leaders have been exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors at the workplace. Leaders are considered visionary, supportive, goal-oriented, and performance-driven, which encourages collaboration and creates clear expectations. This implies that the City Local Government Unit enjoys the benefits of leadership practices that motivate employees, foster teamwork, and enhance a sense of organizational commitment.

The overall level of transformational leadership is very high, which means that employees overall generally feel their leaders are visionary, supportive, goal-oriented, and capable of creating high performance. This result was consistent with Bass and Riggio (2006), who described the way transformational leaders motivate employees as through vision, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, shared vision, high expectations, and role modeling. As stated by Al Draij and Al Saed (2023), transformational leadership also increases employees' sense of empowerment and ownership. Similarly, Khan et al. (2020) observed that transformational leaders promote positive transformation and make employees feel valued, supported and capable of doing well. Moreover, Long (2020) explained transformational leadership as the ability to communicate a compelling vision, to engage in individualized support, to stimulate intellectual growth, to focus on team goals, to establish high-performance expectations, and to exhibit appropriate role modelling behavior. Hence, it is deduced that

the extent to which the transformational leadership practices are manifested within the City LGU is strong, but still needs improvement in individual support and intellectual stimulation.

D. Significance of the Relationship between Job Empowerment and Work Engagement among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 4
Significance of the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement among employees in the city local government unit

Job Empowerment	Work Engagement			
	Cognitive	Emotion	Physical	Overall
Meaning	.667** .000	.546** .000	.617** .000	.699** .000
Competence	.547** .000	.637** .000	.532** .000	.662** .000
Self-determination	.622** .000	.659** .000	.615** .000	.730** .000
Impact	.671** .000	.508** .000	.607** .000	.680** .000
Overall	.716** .000	.672** .000	.677** .000	.792** .000

Table 4 shows the relationships between the indicators of job empowerment (Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) and the work engagement dimensions (Cognitive, Emotion, and Physical). The total correlation between job empowerment and work engagement is 0.792, which implies that there is a very strong positive correlation. Moreover, the greatest correlations are found between Impact and the overall work engagement ($M = 0.730$), especially between the Cognitive ($M = 0.671$) and Physical ($M = 0.607$) indicators. This implies that empowered employees with a sense of impact are most likely to have increased cognitive and physical involvement in their work. In the same way, Meaning also presents a significant correlation with work engagement, with high values in Cognitive ($r = 0.667$) and Physical ($r = 0.617$) engagement, which further indicates that meaningful work makes employees invest more in their mental and physical part of work.

Self-determination and Impact have the least correlation in the Emotion dimension ($r = 0.508$), though it is still a moderately strong relationship. These findings suggest that workers who have a greater perception of autonomy and control over their work are more apt to be emotionally engaged in their work. The results indicate that cognitive, emotional, and physical work engagement could be greatly enhanced by job empowerment, especially through meaningful work and giving employees a sense of impact and self-determination. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory because empowered employees are more likely to be engaged when they experience autonomy, competence, meaning, and impact in their work. The strong positive relationship between job empowerment and work engagement suggests that when employees feel capable, valued, and able to influence work outcomes, they become

more mentally, emotionally, and physically involved in their job. This is consistent with Monje Amor et al. (2021), who found that job empowerment contributes to the conditions necessary for work engagement. Moreover, the positive job empowerment and work engagement correlation suggests that meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact are important factors that can make employees more cognitively, emotionally, and physically engaged in their jobs. This result aligns with Juyumaya (2022) who concluded that psychological empowerment is one of the personal resources connected to greater work engagement. Likewise, Hameli et al. (2023) showed that psychological empowerment plays a pivotal role in enhancing the work engagement of employees. Flores and Maquiling (2024) revealed significant links between psychological empowerment and work engagement among financial managers in the Philippines, suggesting that meaning, competence, and impact are key elements to the importance of work engagement. Recently, Chompukum and Vanichbuncha (2025) found that psychological empowerment has a positive effect on employee engagement, especially when employees feel empowered in their work through the experiences of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. Additionally, the authors of the above study, Zhou & Wang (2026), discovered that psychological empowerment was a significant predictor of subsequent work engagement, creating greater support for the link between psychological empowerment and a more enduring level of engagement over time. These findings are supportive of the present study as it shows that enhancing employees' sense of empowerment can help in maintaining high level of work engagement in the City Local Government Unit.

E. Significance of the Relationship between Job Empowerment and Transformational Leadership among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 5
Significance of the relationship between job empowerment and transformational leadership among employees in the city local government unit

Job Empowerment	Transformational Leadership						Overall
	Articulating a Vision	Individualized Support	Intellectual Stimulation	Group Goals	High Performance Expectations	Appropriate Role Model	
Meaning	.477** .000	.467** .000	.476** .000	.506** .000	.535** .000	.470** .000	.583** .000
Competence	.435** .000	.541** .000	.510** .000	.346** .000	.416** .000	.532** .000	.556** .000
Self-determination	.471** .000	.449** .000	.429** .000	.378** .000	.387** .000	.444** .000	.508** .000
Impact	.361** .000	.318** .000	.352** .000	.350** .000	.480** .000	.263** .000	.419** .000
Overall	.497** .000	.507** .000	.505** .000	.449** .000	.519** .000	.489** .000	.590** .000

Table 5 shows the relationships between the indicators of job empowerment (Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) and the dimensions of transformational leadership (Articulating a Vision, Individualize Support, Intellectual

Stimulation, Group Goals, High-Performance Expectations, and Appropriate Role Model). The correlation between job empowerment and transformational leadership is 0.590 which means that the two variables have a strong positive relationship.

Meaning and Articulating a Vision ($r = 0.477$) are the most correlated, followed by Self-determination and Individualized Support ($r = 0.449$). These findings suggest that employees who feel that their work is meaningful are more inclined to experience transformational leadership through clear vision articulation. Moreover, workers who have greater autonomy are more likely to be supported by leaders who take a personalized approach.

This finding shows that empowerment and transformational leadership are closely related in the organizational setting of the City LGU. From the perspective of Transformational Leadership Theory, leaders who provide direction, support, and opportunities for growth can reinforce employees' sense of empowerment. This supports the idea that employees who experience autonomy, competence, and meaningful work are more likely to perceive their leaders as vision-driven, supportive, and performance-oriented. Moreover, the result of this study is in line with Saira et al. (2021) finding that transformational leadership is positively correlated with psychological empowerment among employees. Likewise, Cheng et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership operates through psychological empowerment, specifically in terms of employees' impact, self-determination, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Farzana and Charoensukmongkol (2024) revealed that psychological empowerment was higher in employees exposed to Transformational leaders, indicating that leadership behaviors and psychological empowerment are closely related. Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2024) found that there was a positive correlation between transformational leadership and the psychological empowerment of employees. These results suggest that transformational leadership and job empowerment are complementary organizational environments that can boost the staff's confidence, autonomy, and participation in reaching organizational objectives, as in the current research study.

F. Significance of the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement among Employees in the City Local Government Unit

Table 6 shows the correlation of transformational leadership indicators (Articulating a Vision, Individualized Support, Intellectual Stimulation, Group Goals, High-Performance Expectations, and Appropriate Role Model) and work engagement dimensions (Cognitive, Emotion, Physical). The total correlation between transformational leadership and work engagement is 0.535, which shows that the two variables have a moderate to strong positive relationship.

High-Performance Expectations and Overall Work Engagement ($r = 0.501$) have the highest correlation, followed by Articulating a Vision and Emotion ($r = 0.464$). This indicates that high-performance expectations and a clear vision are transformational leadership practices that are closely linked with emotional engagement and general work engagement.

Individualized support and Cognitive work engagement ($r = 0.286$) have the least correlation, which means that the relationship is weaker but significant. This indicates that although individualized support by leaders has a positive effect on the emotional and physical engagement of the employees, it has a relatively lower relationship with cognitive engagement.

Table 6

Significance of the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement among employees in the city local government unit

Transformational Leadership	Work Engagement			
	Cognitive	Emotion	Physical	Overall
Articulating Vision	.405** .000	.464** .000	.425** .000	.499** .000
Individualize Support	.286** .000	.442** .000	.286** .000	.395** .000
Intellectual Stimulation	.369** .000	.434** .000	.331** .000	.437** .000
Group Goals	.390** .000	.410** .000	.443** .000	.479** .000
High Performance Expectations	.463** .000	.387** .000	.462** .000	.501** .000
Appropriate Role Model	.285** .000	.459** .000	.264** .000	.393** .000
Overall	.434** .000	.517** .000	.435** .000	.535** .000

G. Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Job Empowerment on Work Engagement as Mediated by Transformational Leadership

Table 7

Regression analysis showing the influence of job empowerment on work engagement as mediated by transformational leadership

Step	Path	B	S.E.	β
1	c	.828	.042	.792***
2	a	.762	.069	.590***
3	b	.084	.040	.104*
4	c'	.764	.052	.730***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p = 0.000$

Table 7 shows the regression analysis of the mediating effect of transformational leadership in the correlation between job empowerment and work engagement. Job empowerment has a direct impact on work engagement (path c), which is significant ($r = .792$, $p < 0.001$). Transformational leadership is also significantly predicted by job empowerment (path a; $\beta = .590$, $p < 0.001$), and work engagement is significantly predicted by transformational leadership (path b; $\beta = .104$, $p < 0.05$). With the addition of transformational leadership to the model, the direct impact of job empowerment on work engagement (path c 7) is still substantial but smaller ($= .730$, $p < 0.001$), which is a partial mediation.

This is further substantiated by the study of Nidhan et al. (2026) which showed that an employee outcome is partially mediated by transformational leadership, which was significantly predicted by employee empowerment in a

follower driven pathway. Similarly, Juyumaya (2022) found a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement, meaning that empowered employees would be more likely to put more effort and commitment into their jobs. In terms of work engagement, Alamri (2023) also revealed that transformational leadership positively affects work engagement ability in public organizations through the motivation of employees and strengthening their orientation to public service. Furthermore, Dina and Tjahjono (2023) showed significant relationships between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and work engagement, indicating a relationship between transformational leadership and empowerment in strengthening employee engagement. Overall, these findings indicate that job empowerment directly enhances work engagement, and that transformational leadership serves as a further leadership mechanism that results in empowered workers to be more engaged in completing their jobs. These findings affirm that job empowerment and work engagement are partially mediated by transformational leadership among the employees in the City Local Government Unit.

H. Results of Statistical Analysis on the Presence (or Absence) of Mediating Effect

A mediation analysis was used to determine if the relationship between job empowerment and work engagement was mediated by transformational leadership. The results showed that the total effect of job empowerment on work engagement was significant Path c, $\beta = .792$, $p < .001$. The factor of job empowerment was also a significant predictor of transformational leadership (Path a), $\beta = .590$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, work engagement was significantly predicted by transformational leadership, $\beta = .104$, $p < .05$ in this case. The direct path between job empowerment and work engagement was also significant when transformational leadership was added to the model Path c-prime, $\beta = .730$, $p < .001$.

The results indicate partial mediation. This is because the direct effect of job empowerment on work engagement remained statistically significant after transformational leadership was introduced into the model, although the effect decreased from $\beta = .792$ to $\beta = .730$. At the same time, the Sobel test showed a significant indirect effect ($z = 2.070964$, $p < .05$). Thus, job empowerment influences work engagement both directly and indirectly through transformational leadership. The mediation is therefore considered partial rather than full because job empowerment continues to significantly predict work engagement even when the mediating effect of transformational leadership is taken into account.

The Sobel test confirmed a significant indirect effect, $z = 2.070964$, $p < .05$, indicating partial mediation. This means that transformational leadership significantly carries part of the effect of job empowerment on work engagement. Therefore, while job empowerment directly influences work engagement, it also indirectly affects work engagement through transformational leadership.

This result supports the theoretical integration of the study. According to Self-Determination Theory, job empowerment can foster work engagement by meeting the four need elements

of autonomy, competence, meaning, and relatedness. Transformational Leadership Theory also goes by the name of the "Four I's" of Transformational Leadership, which involves offering vision, support, encouragement, and performance direction to make leadership a tool for empowerment and promoting better engagement. The partial mediation result shows that the positive effect of empowerment on engagement is amplified by the positive effect of transformational leadership on empowered employees' cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement in work. Also, this interpretation is supported by Nidhan *et al.* (2026) who proved that employee empowerment as a predictor of transformational leadership, and transformational leadership as a mediator between employee empowerment and employee outcomes. Similarly, Nawaz *et al.* (2024) found strong correlations between transformational leadership, employee empowerment and work engagement, and indicated that these variables can mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. In a similar way, Garg *et al.* (2024) determined that transformational leadership and psychological empowerment both convey significant mediation pathways to employee engagement. More recently, Bani and Tjahjono (2025) have found that transformational leadership and psychological empowerment explain workers' engagement in the work through a significant mediating mechanism. The results as a whole support the conclusion that job empowerment is a strong direct predictor of work engagement, whereas transformational leadership is a strong complement to this relationship among city local government unit employees.

Table 8
Results of statistical analysis on the presence (or absence) of mediating effect

Combination of Variables	Sobel z	p-value	Mediation
job empowerment → transformational leadership → work engagement	2.070964	$p < 0.05$	Partial mediation

* $p < 0.05$

4. Implication and Concluding Remark

A. Implication for Practice

For the City Local Government Unit (City LGU). The results suggest that the City Local Government Unit should adopt the complementary approach of enhancing employee empowerment and transformational leadership in order to maintain work engagement. The City LGU can institutionalize programs that offer its employees more opportunities to exercise autonomy, develop competence, and participate in decision-making, and recognize how their work impacts the City's operations and results. Leadership development programs can also focus on setting a clear vision, providing tailored support, intellectual challenge, team-based objectives, challenging performance expectations, and effective role modeling. These practices can be incorporated into current

human resource development, performance management, employee recognition, mentoring, coaching, and organizational development initiatives.

For Other Local Government Units and Public-Sector Institutions. The results can be used as a template for other LGUs and public sector organizations facing the same issues in relation to employee motivation, leadership and engagement. These institutions could implement empowerment practices like participatory decision-making, capability building, employee consultation, mentoring, innovativeness and recognition practices. But these practices need to be customized for the organizational structure, staffing profile and needs of the delivery of services at each institution. Increased empowerment and transformational leadership can play a role to a more committed and engaged public sector workforce.

For Policymakers. The findings evidence policies that value employee empowerment and leadership development as key factors in effective public administration. HR and organizational development policies and practices might be expanded to include items related to employee involvement, competency building, leadership growth, recognition, feedback, and engagement in the workplace. These can also help achieve the goals of the Republic Act No. 11032, which include using efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric government service delivery and SDG 8 - Decent Work, and SDG 16 - Effective and Accountable Institutions.

For Public Administrators. The results can be applied by public administrators to create organizational interventions that promote employee participation in achieving organizational goals. Administrators can give employees appropriate discretion in carrying out their work tasks, opportunities for problem solving and service improvement and access to relevant professional development. Transformational leadership also increases the impact of empowerment on engagement, so supervisors and department heads should help employees to develop their skills, offer guidance and direction, foster innovative thinking, and acknowledge their work and contributions for public service.

For Organizational Leaders. Results highlight the significance of organizational leaders in transforming employee empowerment into enhanced work engagement. The department head, supervisor, and section leader must not only assign tasks but also communicate, offer help, provide intellectual stimulation, and offer opportunities for employees to contribute to the general objectives of the organization. Special provisions can be made for intellectual stimulation and individual support, which were rated as lower than other indicators of transformational leadership. Leaders could then make mentoring, coaching, positive feedback, brainstorming, and employee participation in problem-solving strategies more robust in addressing workplace and service problems.

For Future Researchers. The findings of the study may provide future researchers with an empirical and theoretical basis for examining employee empowerment, transformational leadership, and work engagement in public-sector organizations. The established significant relationships among the variables and the partial mediating effect of

transformational leadership may serve as a reference in developing related conceptual frameworks, research hypotheses, and organizational studies. Future researchers may also use the findings as a basis for identifying additional factors that may influence employee engagement and for examining whether similar relationships exist in other government institutions and organizational settings.

B. Implication for future research

The results of the study give researchers several directions to pursue in future research studies that may further explore the links between job empowerment, transformational leadership, and work engagement. Future research can use other research designs to gain a deeper insight into these variables as the present study used a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational and cross-sectional research design. Using a qualitative design to gain insight into the true experiences of empowerment, leadership practices and work engagement, or using a mixed-method design to incorporate statistical results and a qualitative interview or narrative to account for the different levels of experiences of empowerment and transformational leadership amongst employees, may be used. Longitudinal studies also can be conducted to explore the question of whether the changes in empowerment and leadership practices are associated with enduring changes in work engagement over time.

Further study can be expanded to include more participants and study conditions. This study was conducted on permanent plantilla workers of one City Local Government Unit. To check the results of the above mentioned study, similar studies can be done amongst employees of other cities, municipalities, provincial government, national government agencies, government owned and controlled companies, and other public sector entities to ascertain if the results are consistent across the various administrative environments. In addition, other types of government employees (e.g., contractual, temporary, job order) may be included in future research if applicable in order to assess the association between employment status and perceptions of empowerment, leadership, and engagement. Comparative analysis between two or more LGUs can also be used to uncover differences in the organisation or context which impact on such relationships.

The data collection tools that future researchers could employ are survey questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observations, or document analysis. The approaches could give deeper insight into actual experiences of autonomy, competence, meaningful work, leadership support, intellectual stimulation and engagement for employees in their real workplace. Qualitative information could be especially important in understanding the reasons why some of the indicators were rated relatively low, despite the high overall scores reported in this study, for example, in the case of competence, self-determination, emotional engagement, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support.

Other mediators and/or moderators that may account for the association between empowerment and work engagement could

be explored in future studies. The variables discovered in the present study could be studied, including organizational culture, job satisfaction, psychological safety, public service motivations and employee well being. The researchers can identify whether these factors enhance, moderate, or complete the findings of the relationship between job empowerment and transformational leadership and work engagement. When suitable, more sophisticated statistical techniques like structural equation modeling can also be employed, to examine more complex connections between several organizational factors.

C. Concluding Remark

The process of conducting this study gave the researcher a better understanding of the synergy between employee empowerment, leadership and work engagement in a City Local Government Unit. The key takeaway from the results is that autonomy and responsibility are not enough to make employees engaged. The relationship between job empowerment and work engagement was revealed to be strong and direct, and the existence of transformational leadership further strengthens this relationship. This enabled the researcher to understand that empowerment is more effective when leaders communicate a vision of the future, offer assistance, promote creativity, set shared objectives, and model positive behavior.

Another key takeaway from the study is that leadership cannot take the place of empowerment, it can only supplement it. The results of the partial mediation revealed that the meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact that employees feel in their work can help explain how employees remain engaged even when transformational leadership is not fully responsible for this relationship. But effective leadership offers another way to boost employee motivation and engagement. The realization only reinforces the need to build capable and empowered employees and leaders who can foster employee support, trust and motivation to contribute.

The researcher was also aware that the very high level of job empowerment, transformational leadership and work engagement does not mean that there is no need for further improvement. The relatively low ratings for competence, self-determination, emotional engagement, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support suggest opportunities for the organisation to further strengthen the curriculum. This confirmed the researcher's perception of the process of organizational development as being a continuous one and that even in organizations where the general employee perception is positive, there is a need to continue to strengthen the human resource and leadership practices.

Lastly, the study was found to have enhanced the researcher's understanding of the importance of employees and leaders in public service. Empowerment and engagement within a City Local Government Unit are not just an internal organizational issue, as how employees do their work impacted the quality, efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability of services delivered to citizens. The researcher thus can conclude that the development of an empowered workforce and the enhancement of transformational leadership are not only effective strategies to enhance employee performance but also important ways to

foster responsive and effective local governance.

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