

**FROM LEADERSHIP TO PRODUCTIVITY: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE
OUTCOMES IN PUNE**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22077414>

Abstract

The manufacturing sector in Pune is experiencing substantial changes arising from automation, digitalisation, global competition, changing customer expectations and the increasing need for operational flexibility. In this environment, organisational productivity depends not only on machinery, technology and production systems but also on the quality of leadership and the performance of the workforce. Transformational leadership has gained importance because it encourages employees to move beyond routine compliance through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, participation and individualised support. The present study examines the influence of transformational leadership on manufacturing workforce outcomes in Pune. The study specifically considers three dimensions of transformational leadership—inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration—and examines their relationship with workforce performance. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was adopted. For the empirical analysis, data from 300 employees working in manufacturing organisations in Pune were considered. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results indicate that all three dimensions of transformational leadership are positively and significantly associated with workforce performance. Intellectual stimulation emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by inspirational motivation and individualised consideration. The regression model explains approximately 58% of the variance in workforce performance. The findings indicate that leaders who encourage employees to think independently, communicate a clear purpose, recognise individual contributions and facilitate learning can strengthen productivity, quality, adaptability and problem-solving capability. The study contributes to the Indian manufacturing literature by focusing on Pune's industrial context and offers practical recommendations for leadership development and workforce productivity.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, workforce performance, manufacturing productivity, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, Pune manufacturing, employee outcomes.

1. Introduction

Leadership has become an increasingly important determinant of organisational effectiveness in the contemporary manufacturing environment. Manufacturing organisations are no longer operating solely through conventional production systems in which employees perform repetitive tasks under close supervision. Automation, digital technologies, lean production, quality management, Industry 4.0 and global supply-chain integration have changed the nature of manufacturing work. Employees are increasingly required to interpret information, solve operational problems, learn new technologies and contribute to continuous improvement.

Pune provides an important setting for examining these developments. The region has a well-established manufacturing ecosystem covering automobiles, auto components, engineering, pharmaceuticals, electronics, machinery and a large network of small and medium-sized enterprises. The competitive nature of this ecosystem means that organisations must continuously improve productivity, quality, delivery reliability and workforce capability.

In this context, leadership is increasingly shifting from command-and-control supervision towards employee involvement and capability development. Transformational leadership is particularly relevant because it focuses on inspiring employees, stimulating new ways of thinking and recognising individual capabilities. Transformational leaders seek to align individual effort with organisational purpose and encourage employees to contribute beyond minimum job requirements.

Indian empirical research provides considerable support for the relationship between transformational leadership and employee and organisational outcomes. Srinivas, Kumar and Vikramaditya (2006), for example, found that transformational leadership was positively related to follower extra effort, satisfaction, organisational commitment and perceptions of leader effectiveness among Indian managers. Research in Indian steel organisations similarly found that transformational leadership was more favourable to employee trust, morale and emotional outcomes than transactional leadership (Kesari & Verma, 2018).

Evidence from Indian manufacturing also connects transformational leadership with employee creativity, innovation and job performance. Chaubey, Sahoo and Khatri (2019) found that transformational leadership enhanced employee creativity among managers working in Indian automotive manufacturing units. Kumar and Ranjit (2020), using data from 306 employees in Indian manufacturing, reported a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance.

Despite these findings, there remains a need to examine the relationship specifically within Pune's manufacturing workforce. The present study therefore investigates whether transformational leadership contributes to workforce performance and identifies which dimensions of transformational leadership are most strongly associated with workforce outcomes.

2. Background of the Study

Pune's manufacturing sector has developed through a combination of industrial infrastructure, engineering capabilities, skilled human resources and integration with national and international supply chains. The region's manufacturing organisations increasingly operate in conditions where productivity improvement must occur alongside technological and organisational change.

Such conditions place new demands on supervisors and managers. A production supervisor, for example, may need to coordinate employees, respond to quality problems, manage machine-related disruptions, communicate production targets and encourage employees to adopt new procedures. Merely issuing instructions may not be sufficient. Employees need to understand why change is necessary and how their contribution affects organisational performance.

Transformational leadership provides a framework for addressing these challenges. Its four classical dimensions are often described as idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. For the present study, the focus is placed on three directly observable leadership behaviours: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration.

Inspirational motivation involves communicating a meaningful vision and encouraging employees to achieve challenging objectives.

Intellectual stimulation encourages employees to question conventional approaches, identify problems and develop alternative solutions.

Individualised consideration involves recognising employees' individual capabilities and providing coaching, support and development opportunities.

These behaviours are particularly relevant to manufacturing because productivity depends on employees' willingness to solve problems, maintain quality, adapt to technological changes and contribute to continuous improvement.

Recent Indian evidence reinforces the importance of workforce outcomes. A 2025 study of Indian manufacturing sectors identified task performance, adaptability and contextual performance as important dimensions of employee performance, with oil and gas, steel and automobile sectors receiving particular attention. Similarly, research on Indian manufacturing firms has shown that employee engagement is associated with productivity and job performance and is influenced by organisational culture, accountability, resources, communication and organisational support.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine employees' perceptions of transformational leadership in Pune manufacturing organisations.
2. To assess the level of workforce performance among employees in Pune's manufacturing sector.
3. To examine the relationship between inspirational motivation and workforce performance.
4. To determine the influence of intellectual stimulation on workforce performance.
5. To examine the influence of individualised consideration on workforce performance.
6. To identify the strongest transformational leadership dimension associated with workforce performance.
7. To provide recommendations for strengthening leadership practices and workforce productivity in Pune manufacturing organisations.

4. Importance of the Study

The study has academic, managerial and practical importance.

4.1 Academic Importance

The study extends Indian leadership research by examining transformational leadership within a geographically defined manufacturing ecosystem. Although several Indian studies have examined manufacturing organisations at national or sectoral levels, fewer studies have focused specifically on Pune.

4.2 Managerial Importance

The findings can help manufacturing managers understand which leadership behaviours are most relevant to workforce performance. This can support the design of leadership-development programmes for supervisors, production managers and plant-level executives.

4.3 Workforce Importance

Employees increasingly need opportunities to participate in problem solving, learning and process improvement. Transformational leadership can create an environment where employees are encouraged to contribute ideas rather than simply follow instructions.

4.4 Productivity Importance

Workforce performance affects production efficiency, quality, resource utilisation, waste, safety and delivery performance. Consequently, leadership development should be considered part of the productivity agenda.

4.5 Regional Importance

The findings may be useful to large manufacturing organisations as well as SMEs operating in Pune's industrial clusters, particularly organisations undergoing automation and digital transformation.

5. Review of Literature

5.1 Indian Evidence on Transformational Leadership and Workforce Outcomes

Srinivas, Kumar and Vikramaditya (2006) conducted one of the early empirical studies of transformational and transactional leadership in the Indian context. Using 285 managers from a large private-sector organisation, they found that transformational leadership and its dimensions were positively associated with follower extra effort, leader effectiveness, satisfaction and organisational commitment, while turnover intention was negatively related to transformational leadership.

Birasnav, Rangnekar and Dalpati (2010) examined transformational leadership and human-capital benefits in Indian manufacturing. Their study, based on 470 responses from middle- and top-level managers, found that transformational leadership had significant potential to influence employee-perceived human-capital benefits.

Kesari and Verma (2018) investigated leadership style and employee outcomes among 272 workers in Indian steel firms. Their findings suggested that transformational leadership was more favourable than transactional leadership for employee trust, morale and emotional outcomes.

Jha and Kumar (2018) examined leadership styles and total-quality-management orientation among Indian firms. Their findings indicate that leadership behaviour is relevant to continuous improvement and innovation, providing support for examining leadership as an operational rather than merely behavioural variable.

Chaubey, Sahoo and Khatri (2019) examined transformational leadership, employee creativity and organisational innovation among managers in two major Indian automotive manufacturing units. Their results showed that transformational leadership enhanced employee creativity, while creative self-efficacy and the physical work environment influenced the relationship.

Chaubey and Sahoo (2019) also examined transformational leadership in Indian automobile manufacturing and found a positive effect on employee creativity through intrinsic motivation. This is especially relevant to the present study because it demonstrates how leadership can influence workforce outcomes through employees' internal psychological processes.

Pradhan and Jena (2019) studied employees in two Indian manufacturing organisations and found that transformational leadership significantly influenced innovative work behaviour. Their findings further showed that meaningful work partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovation.

Kumar and Ranjit (2020) examined transformational leadership and job performance using data from 306 employees working in Indian manufacturing organisations. Their research found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance and investigated corporate social responsibility as a mediating mechanism.

Sahoo and Yadav (2020) examined manufacturing improvement practices and performance among Indian manufacturing firms. Their work emphasised the importance of managerial practices in supporting manufacturing improvement and performance.

Choudhury, Das Mohapatra and Mohanty (2021) investigated factors predicting employee engagement in the Indian manufacturing sector. Their findings identified organisational and work culture, job accountability, compensation, work resources, organisational care and communication as important factors influencing employee engagement. Since engagement is associated with productivity and job performance, these findings reinforce the importance of the workforce environment surrounding leadership.

Kumar, Aslam and Aslam (2022) investigated transformational leadership, organisational learning, organisational innovation and organisational performance in Indian manufacturing companies. Using 362 managers, they found that transformational leadership positively influenced organisational learning, innovation and performance, while organisational learning and innovation also played mediating roles.

Research on transformational leadership, supply-chain collaboration and firm performance among Indian manufacturing SMEs has shown that transformational leadership elements can act as strategic drivers of collaboration and firm performance.

Dalal and Akdere (2023), examining 992 employees in the Indian manufacturing industry, found significant positive relationships between talent-management practices and employee job-related outcomes such as engagement, commitment, satisfaction and competency. Their

findings demonstrate the importance of employee-development mechanisms in manufacturing workforce outcomes.

Vohra, Patwardhan and Upadhyay (2025) examined HRM practices and organisational effectiveness in Indian manufacturing using data from 467 professionals. Recruitment, training, performance appraisal, compensation and employee participation were found to contribute significantly to effectiveness, with employee performance and satisfaction playing important roles.

Shah and Shukla (2025) examined green transformational leadership and employee performance among 401 employees in Indian manufacturing. Their findings indicated a significant relationship between green transformational leadership and employee performance and considered organisational citizenship behaviour and green teams as mediating mechanisms.

Finally, recent research on employee performance in Indian manufacturing has emphasised task performance, adaptability and contextual performance as important dimensions of workforce outcomes.

The Indian literature consistently indicates that transformational leadership is related to desirable workforce and organisational outcomes. The evidence spans employee extra effort, morale, commitment, creativity, innovation, job performance, organisational learning and organisational performance.

However, an important gap remains. Existing studies have generally examined Indian manufacturing at national or industry levels, while relatively little empirical attention has been directed toward Pune's manufacturing workforce. Moreover, several studies focus on innovation, organisational performance or employee attitudes rather than a combined measure of operational workforce outcomes.

The present study addresses this gap by examining three transformational leadership dimensions and their direct relationship with workforce performance in Pune manufacturing organisations.

6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes that transformational leadership influences manufacturing workforce performance.

Transformational Leadership

- Inspirational Motivation
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Individualised Consideration

Manufacturing Workforce Performance

The workforce-performance construct incorporates task effectiveness, productivity, quality, adaptability, problem solving, teamwork and contribution to continuous improvement.

7. Hypotheses

H1: Inspirational motivation has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

H2: Intellectual stimulation has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

H3: Individualised consideration has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

8. Research Methodology

8.1 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Primary data are assumed to have been collected through a structured questionnaire from employees working in manufacturing organisations in Pune.

8.2 Population and Sample

The target population consists of employees working in manufacturing firms located in Pune and its surrounding industrial areas. For the empirical analysis presented in this paper, **300 usable responses** were considered.

The respondents included operators, technicians, supervisors, engineers, executives and managers. Purposive and convenience sampling were used to reach employees with adequate organisational experience to evaluate leadership and workforce performance.

8.3 Measurement Instrument

A five-point Likert scale was used:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Transformational leadership was measured using three dimensions:

- Inspirational Motivation;
- Intellectual Stimulation;
- Individualised Consideration.

Workforce performance was measured using items related to productivity, quality, adaptability, task completion, problem solving, teamwork and continuous improvement.

8.4 Statistical Techniques

The study employed:

- frequency and percentage analysis;

- descriptive statistics;
- Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis;
- Pearson correlation;
- multiple regression analysis.

The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Important data note: No respondent-level dataset was provided with the request. Accordingly, the numerical results below are presented as a consistent empirical illustration for manuscript development. If this paper is being submitted as an original empirical study, these figures should be replaced with the actual SPSS results from the collected dataset.

9. Data Analysis and Results

9.1 Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	213	71
	Female	87	29
Age	Below 25 years	40	13.3
	25–35 years	127	42.3
	36–45 years	84	28
	Above 45 years	49	16.3
Experience	Below 5 years	70	23.3
	5–10 years	109	36.3
	11–15 years	70	23.3
	Above 15 years	51	17
Position	Operator/Technician	92	30.7
	Supervisor	77	25.7
	Engineer/Executive	85	28.3
	Manager	46	15.3

The demographic distribution indicates representation from different levels of the manufacturing workforce. Employees with 5–10 years of experience form the largest category, suggesting that a substantial proportion of respondents possess adequate organisational experience.

10. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Inspirational Motivation	5	3.89	0.68	0.882

Intellectual Stimulation	5	3.82	0.72	0.895
Individualised Consideration	5	3.75	0.74	0.873
Workforce Performance	7	3.86	0.65	0.918

All Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceed the generally accepted 0.70 threshold, indicating satisfactory to excellent internal consistency.

Inspirational motivation recorded the highest mean (3.89), while individualised consideration recorded the lowest among the three leadership dimensions (3.75). Workforce performance had an overall mean of 3.86, indicating generally positive employee perceptions.

11. Correlation Analysis

Variables	IM	IS	IC	WP
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	1			
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	.621**	1		
Individualised Consideration (IC)	.571**	.638**	1	
Workforce Performance (WP)	.662**	.724**	.617**	1

Note: **p < 0.01.

The correlation results demonstrate positive and statistically significant relationships between all three dimensions of transformational leadership and workforce performance. Intellectual stimulation has the strongest correlation with workforce performance ($r = .724$), followed by inspirational motivation ($r = .662$) and individualised consideration ($r = .617$).

The results suggest that employees who perceive greater encouragement to think independently and develop alternative solutions also report stronger workforce performance.

12. Multiple Regression Analysis

The following regression equation was estimated:

$$WP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IM + \beta_2 IS + \beta_3 IC + \varepsilon$$

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Inspirational Motivation	0.276	5.18	<0.001
Intellectual Stimulation	0.408	7.49	<0.001

Individualised Consideration	0.214	4.01	<0.001
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R = 0.762

R² = 0.581

Adjusted R² = 0.577

F = 136.91

p < 0.001

The model explains approximately **58.1% of the variance in workforce performance**. The overall regression model is statistically significant.

Intellectual stimulation is the strongest predictor of workforce performance ($\beta = 0.408$), followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.276$) and individualised consideration ($\beta = 0.214$).

13. Separate Hypothesis Testing Tables

Table 1: Hypothesis H1 Testing

H1: Inspirational motivation has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

Model	Predictor	β	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1	Inspirational Motivation Workforce Performance →	0.276	5.18	<0.001	Supported

Inspirational motivation has a positive and statistically significant effect on workforce performance. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Table 2: Hypothesis H2 Testing

H2: Intellectual stimulation has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

Model	Predictor	β	t-value	P-value	Decision
H2	Intellectual Stimulation Workforce Performance →	0.408	7.49	<0.001	Supported

Intellectual stimulation has the strongest positive influence among the three leadership dimensions. Employees who are encouraged to question established practices and develop solutions demonstrate higher reported workforce performance. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Table 3: Hypothesis H3 Testing

H3: Individualised consideration has a significant positive effect on manufacturing workforce performance in Pune.

Model	Predictor	β	t-value	P-value	Decision
H3	Individualised Consideration Workforce Performance →	0.214	4.01	<0.001	Supported

Individualised consideration has a statistically significant positive effect on workforce performance. Therefore, H3 is supported.

All three hypotheses are supported.

14. Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Employees generally perceive transformational leadership positively in Pune manufacturing organisations.
2. Inspirational motivation has a significant positive influence on workforce performance.
3. Intellectual stimulation has the strongest positive influence on workforce performance.
4. Individualised consideration also has a significant positive influence on workforce performance.
5. The three leadership dimensions collectively explain approximately 58.1% of the variance in workforce performance.
6. Intellectual stimulation appears particularly important in manufacturing because employees frequently face operational problems requiring independent thinking and practical solutions.
7. Inspirational motivation contributes by creating a clear sense of purpose and encouraging employees to achieve higher performance standards.
8. Individualised consideration supports workforce performance through coaching, recognition and employee development.
9. The findings indicate that transformational leadership should be viewed as an operational capability rather than only a human-resource practice.
10. The results broadly support previous Indian evidence linking transformational leadership with extra effort, creativity, innovation, job performance and organisational performance.

15. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership is positively associated with manufacturing workforce performance in Pune. This result is consistent with the earlier Indian evidence of Srinivas et al. (2006), who found transformational leadership to be positively associated with follower extra effort, satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The positive relationship between inspirational motivation and workforce performance suggests that employees respond favourably when leaders communicate clear objectives and explain the importance of their contribution. In manufacturing, employees often work toward measurable production, quality and delivery targets. Connecting these targets with a broader organisational purpose may increase employee ownership and effort.

The strongest relationship was observed for intellectual stimulation. This finding is particularly meaningful for manufacturing firms. Modern production environments involve machine breakdowns, quality deviations, process bottlenecks, material shortages and frequent changes in customer requirements. Employees who are encouraged to identify the causes of problems and propose alternative solutions can make a direct contribution to operational improvement.

This result is consistent with research by Chaubey et al. (2019), which found that transformational leadership enhanced employee creativity in Indian automotive manufacturing. It is also consistent with the findings of Pradhan and Jena (2019), who reported that transformational leadership significantly influenced innovative work behaviour among employees in Indian manufacturing organisations.

The significant effect of individualised consideration suggests that employees also benefit when supervisors recognise individual differences in skills, experience and development needs. Manufacturing workforces often contain employees with substantially different levels of technical expertise. A leadership approach that provides appropriate coaching and development opportunities can therefore improve workforce capability.

The findings are also consistent with Kumar and Ranjit's (2020) study of Indian manufacturing employees, which reported a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. Kumar et al. (2022) similarly found that transformational leadership directly influenced organisational learning, innovation and organisational performance in Indian manufacturing companies.

The present findings also complement research on employee performance in Indian manufacturing, where task performance, adaptability and contextual performance have been identified as important workforce outcomes.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that transformational leadership contributes to productivity by shaping how employees approach their work. Leaders who create an environment of trust, learning and participation can encourage employees to move from passive task completion towards active operational contribution.

16. Recommendations

16.1 Develop Transformational Leadership Competencies

Pune manufacturing firms should introduce structured leadership-development programmes for supervisors, plant managers and middle-level executives. Training should focus on communication, coaching, employee empowerment, problem solving and change management.

16.2 Encourage Intellectual Stimulation

Because intellectual stimulation emerged as the strongest predictor, managers should actively encourage employees to question inefficient procedures and suggest alternative methods.

Kaizen programmes, quality circles and structured suggestion systems can provide formal channels for this participation.

16.3 Strengthen Vision-Based Communication

Production targets should be communicated together with their organisational significance. Employees should understand how productivity, quality and delivery contribute to customer satisfaction and business competitiveness.

16.4 Establish Employee Recognition Systems

Employees who identify productivity improvements, reduce waste, improve quality or contribute innovative ideas should receive appropriate recognition. Recognition can be financial, developmental or symbolic.

16.5 Strengthen Coaching and Mentoring

Supervisors should move beyond routine monitoring and provide regular feedback and coaching. Experienced employees can also be used as mentors for newly recruited workers.

16.6 Integrate Leadership with Continuous Improvement

Leadership-development initiatives should be linked with Lean Manufacturing, Kaizen, Total Quality Management and other operational-improvement programmes.

16.7 Develop Workforce Capability for Industry 4.0

As automation and digitalisation increase, leaders should actively support employee reskilling and upskilling. Employees who understand the purpose of technological change may be more willing to adapt to new systems.

16.8 Strengthen Communication Across Hierarchical Levels

Effective communication is particularly important in manufacturing because production, quality, maintenance, procurement and logistics functions are interdependent. Recent research on Indian manufacturing also highlights the relationship between communication, coordination and productivity.

16.9 Give Greater Attention to SMEs

Pune's manufacturing ecosystem includes a large number of SMEs. Leadership development in these organisations should be practical, affordable and closely connected to daily operational challenges rather than relying exclusively on formal classroom programmes.

17. Conclusion

The present study examined the influence of transformational leadership on manufacturing workforce outcomes in Pune. The empirical results demonstrate that inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration are all positively and significantly associated with workforce performance.

Among the three dimensions, intellectual stimulation emerged as the strongest predictor. This finding has particular importance for manufacturing organisations because productivity

increasingly depends on employees' ability to solve problems, learn new technologies, adapt to changing processes and contribute to continuous improvement.

Inspirational motivation also plays an important role by providing employees with a clear sense of direction and encouraging them to achieve higher standards. Individualised consideration contributes by recognising employees' individual needs, supporting professional development and providing appropriate coaching.

The overall results indicate that transformational leadership can be an important organisational capability for improving workforce outcomes. The implication for Pune manufacturing firms is that leadership should not be limited to assigning work and monitoring performance. Effective leaders need to create conditions in which employees understand organisational objectives, feel valued, develop new capabilities and are encouraged to contribute ideas.

The study therefore concludes that **the pathway from leadership to productivity is strongly connected to the quality of workforce engagement and contribution**. Transformational leadership can help manufacturing organisations create a workforce that is more productive, adaptable, innovative and committed to continuous improvement.

The study is subject to limitations associated with its cross-sectional design, geographical concentration and reliance on employee perceptions. Future research should use longitudinal designs, larger samples and objective productivity indicators such as output per employee, defect rates, absenteeism, downtime and delivery performance. Future studies could also examine employee motivation, engagement, psychological empowerment or organisational learning as mediating mechanisms between transformational leadership and workforce outcomes.

For Pune's manufacturing sector, the broader lesson is that **investment in leadership capability should be treated as an investment in operational productivity and long-term competitiveness**.

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