

## The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Employee Performance, and Perceived Meaningfulness of Work

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### ABSTRACT

*This research was conducted to explore the effects of Transformational Leadership Style on employee performance, Transformational Leadership Style on work motivation, work motivation on employee performance, Transformational Leadership Style on employee performance with motivation as a mediating variable, Transformational Leadership Style on perceived meaningfulness of work, and perceived meaningfulness of work on work motivation. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method, distributing online questionnaires to 325 employees working in the administrative staff section of manufacturing industry head offices in the DKI Jakarta area. Respondents for this study were selected using a purposive sampling method. The data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique. The results of this study indicate that Transformational Leadership Style has no direct effect on employee performance; however, it has a significant effect on work motivation. Work motivation, in turn, influences employee performance and mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and employee performance. Furthermore, Transformational Leadership Style affects the perceived meaningfulness of work, while the perception of meaningfulness of work significantly affects work motivation. The managerial implications of this research suggest that company management should strengthen employees' work motivation to encourage greater creativity and improve overall performance.*

**KEYWORDS** Transformational Leadership Style; Work Motivation; Employee Performance; Perceived Work Meaningfulness.



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### INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, business competition among companies is becoming increasingly intense. One of the key determinants of success and effective resource management within organizations lies in human resources or, more specifically, employee performance. In both commercial and public sector organizations, employee performance has become a crucial concern in achieving organizational goals. Employee performance reflects patterns of behavior and serves as the foundation for actions that align with organizational objectives. When employees' behaviors and actions are consistent with these goals, companies can achieve their objectives more effectively.

One of the factors that plays a significant role in shaping employee performance is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership describes the process through which leaders motivate their followers to work toward collective goals. This leadership style extends beyond transactional relationships by focusing on providing inspiration and attention to individual needs. It fosters trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward leaders, motivating employees to exert greater effort than expected. Employees who experience such leadership tend to feel more motivated and perform better. Thus, work motivation emerges as a vital factor supporting improved employee performance. Motivation is one of the keys to an organization's

success, maintaining strong work continuity and helping it endure and adapt (Hoch et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2011; Omolo, 2015).

Previous research by Anindita (2019) stated that Transformational Leadership Style has a considerable impact on organizations, as it encourages employees to gain confidence and improve their performance. This finding is consistent with several other studies reporting that Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Bastari et al., 2020; Casmun et al., 2021; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021).

The influence of work motivation on employee performance has also been widely studied. Several researchers found that motivated employees are more likely to enhance their performance, emphasizing motivation as a key driver of productivity (Anindita, 2019; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021). However, other studies have reported inconsistent results, showing that varying levels of motivation do not significantly affect employee outcomes (Cut Ali & Yanuar Rahmat Syah, 2019; Karyono et al., 2020; Sidabutar et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have explained that employee performance is influenced by other mediating variables, one of which is work motivation. Work motivation serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and employee performance (Bastari et al., 2020; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021). In research conducted by Oh and Roh (2019), it was found that the clarity of an individual's self-concept acts as an antecedent to the perception of work meaningfulness, which subsequently affects work motivation. Yet, high levels of transformational leadership can moderate the indirect relationship between self-concept clarity and work motivation through the perception of meaningful work. Given the importance of perceived work meaningfulness to employee motivation, well-being, and effective work behavior (Oh & Roh, 2019), this study incorporates work meaningfulness as a variable to explore its relevance to Transformational Leadership Style and Work Motivation.

The perception of work meaningfulness refers to an individual's understanding of their job as having a higher purpose or calling. Individuals who view their work as a calling experience greater job satisfaction and tend to dedicate more time to their duties, even when external rewards are limited. While most previous studies on work meaningfulness have focused on the service sector, this study investigates its relevance in the manufacturing industry—an environment typically characterized by structured processes rather than creativity-centered work.

Despite the growing body of literature, several research gaps remain unaddressed. Most existing studies on Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance have focused on service-sector organizations, with limited empirical investigation in the manufacturing industry, particularly among administrative staff at the head office level. Few studies have simultaneously tested a full mediation model that includes Perceived Meaningfulness of Work as both an outcome of leadership and an antecedent of Work Motivation. Moreover, inconsistent findings regarding the direct effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance indicate underexplored contextual factors. No prior study has comprehensively examined Work Meaningfulness among administrative employees in the Indonesian manufacturing sector, and existing leadership research in Indonesia has predominantly focused on managerial levels, neglecting non-managerial administrative staff.

The novelty of this research lies in being the first to specifically examine Perceived Meaningfulness of Work as a variable influenced by Transformational Leadership and

subsequently affecting Work Motivation among Indonesian manufacturing administrative staff. It provides empirical evidence for a full mediation model in which Work Motivation mediates the leadership–performance relationship while testing the antecedent role of Transformational Leadership on Work Meaningfulness and its effect on motivation. The study focuses on a unique population operating under highly structured SOPs, contrasting with the creative environments typically associated with transformational leadership research. It also addresses inconsistent findings by demonstrating that, in routinized work settings, the effect is fully mediated rather than direct, contributing to the limited body of knowledge on Work Meaningfulness in the Asian manufacturing context and extending predominantly Western-based literature.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance, Transformational Leadership Style on Work Motivation, Work Motivation on Employee Performance, Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance with motivation as a mediating variable, Transformational Leadership Style on the perception of job satisfaction, and Perceived Meaningfulness of Work on Work Motivation. It is expected that this research will contribute to the development of human resource management theory and offer positive managerial implications for improving employee performance.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method by distributing online questionnaires to collect data. The measurement used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The measurement of the Transformational Leadership Style variable was adopted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio, adapted by Rothfelder et al. (2012), which includes four dimensions: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The instrument consisted of 23 question items, one of which was found to be invalid. The Work Motivation variable was adopted from Tan, Hong et al. (2011), encompassing dimensions of achievement, advancement, and recognition, and contained 14 questions. The Employee Performance variable was adopted from Koopmans et al. (2016) in Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2019), comprising Task Performance, Contextual Performance, Counterproductive Behaviors, and Adaptive Performance dimensions, with a total of 18 questions, of which 5 were invalid. The Perception of Work Meaning variable was adopted from Steger et al. (2012), including three dimensions—positive meaning, meaning-making through work, and greater-good motivations—with 10 questions, two of which were invalid.

Respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method in the manufacturing industry. The sampling criteria included employees working at the head office in the administrative department with at least three years of work experience, representing employees in the DKI Jakarta area. This criterion was based on the assumption that a three-year tenure provides sufficient time to observe leadership styles within the company. In addition, the respondents comprised staff-level employees aged 22–31 years, with a minimum educational attainment of a diploma

This study applied quantitative analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) method, with data processed and analyzed through LISREL 8.8 software. Since this study

employs SEM, the minimum sample size was determined to be at least five times the number of items in the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the total sample used in this study consisted of 325 respondents.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data used in this study were obtained from questionnaire responses collected from 325 employees working as administrative staff at the head offices of manufacturing companies in the DKI Jakarta area. The characteristics of the respondents in this study included the type of industrial sector, work period, department, gender, age, and last education level. All respondents were administrative staff members who had worked for at least three years. The majority (59.1%) of respondents were male, while 40.9% were female. Most respondents (55.4%) were aged 27–31 years, and the remaining 44.6% were aged 22–26 years. In terms of educational background, the majority (94.8%) held a Strata-1 (S1) degree, while the remaining 5.2% held a diploma qualification.

The validity and reliability of the construct measurements in this study were tested following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2014). The initial validity test identified eight invalid indicators—those with a loading factor value below 0.50—namely GKT8 (0.38), KNJR14 (0.01), KNJR15 (0.18), KNJR16 (0.10), KNJR17 (0.17), KNJR18 (0.09), PKK8 (-0.14), and PKK10 (0.48). These eight invalid indicators were subsequently removed from the model, and the validity test was re-conducted. The revised construct met the validity criteria, with all indicators in each variable showing loading factor values greater than 0.50.

The construct reliability (CR) and variance extracted (VE) values were found to meet the recommended thresholds. According to Hair et al. (2014), CR values should exceed 0.60 and VE values should exceed 0.50. In this study, all variables met these criteria: Transformational Leadership (CR = 0.97; VE = 0.54), Work Motivation (CR = 0.93; VE = 0.59), Employee Performance (CR = 0.93; VE = 0.51), and Perception of Work Meaning (CR = 0.94; VE = 0.67). Further details on construct validity and reliability testing are presented in Appendix 5A.

The structural analysis aimed to determine the value of  $R^2$  in each equation, which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by its independent variables. Based on the results of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis, the first model showed that the Work Motivation variable was jointly influenced by Perception of Work Meaning and Transformational Leadership, with an  $R^2$  of 0.88. This indicates that 88% of the variance in Work Motivation can be explained by these two variables, while the remaining 12% is explained by other factors not included in this study.

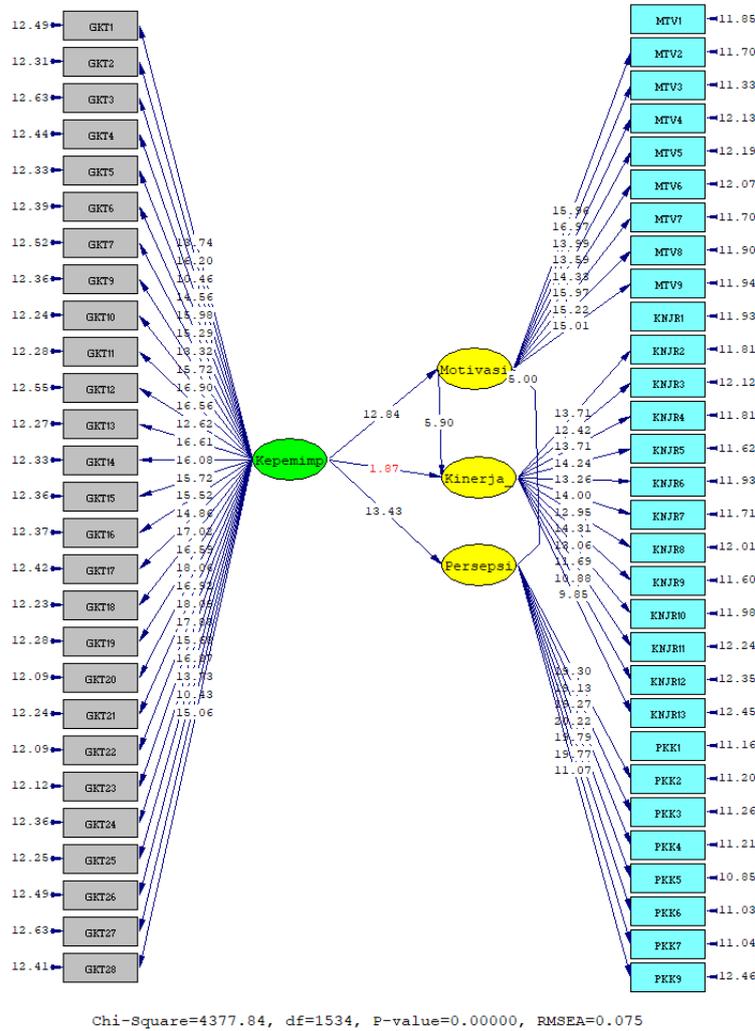
The second analysis revealed that Employee Performance was collectively influenced by Work Motivation and Transformational Leadership, with an  $R^2$  of 0.79. Thus, 79% of the variance in Employee Performance can be explained by Work Motivation and Transformational Leadership, while 21% can be attributed to other unobserved variables.

The third analysis found that Perception of Work Meaning was influenced by Transformational Leadership, with an  $R^2$  of 0.55. This means that 55% of the variance in Perception of Work Meaning can be explained by Transformational Leadership, while the remaining 45% is explained by other factors outside the scope of this study.

Based on the results of the model fit analysis, most goodness-of-fit indices—including Chi-square, RMSEA, ECVI, AIC, CAIC, Fit Index, Critical N, and Goodness of Fit—indicated

a good level of model fit. Although a few indices showed marginal and poor fit levels, the overall results demonstrated that the model achieved acceptable compatibility (goodness of fit). Complete data related to model fit indices are presented in Appendix 5D.

The following are the results of the research as illustrated in the following T-Value diagram:



**Figure 1. Path Diagram T- Value**  
Source: SEM test results (2023)

**Table 1: Hypothesis Test of Research Model**

Hipotesis	Hypothesis Statement	Nilai T-Value	Information
<b>H1</b>	The positive influence of transformational leadership style on employee performance	1,87	The data does not support the hypothesis
<b>H2</b>	The positive influence of transformational leadership style on work motivation	12,84	The data support the hypothesis
<b>H3</b>	Work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance	5,90	The data support the hypothesis
<b>H5</b>	Transformational leadership has a positive effect on the perception of work meaningfulness	13,43	The data support the hypothesis

<b>H6</b>	The perception of work meaning has a positive influence on work motivation	5,00	The data support the hypothesis
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Source: SEM Lisrel processed data (2023)

Based on the hypothesis test table above, it can be seen that 4 variables have a T-Value above 1.96 which means that the data in this study has supported the hypothesis that was built. Meanwhile, 1 variable has a value in T-Value below 1.96 which means that it does not support the hypothesis that is built. Complete information about the SEM analysis in this study can be seen in Appendix 5B.

Furthermore, hypothesis 4 (mediation test) in this study was tested by the Sobel Test procedure (1982). The sobel test is carried out by testing the strength of the indirect effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) through the mediation variable (Z). The decision-making in this mediation test is, if the sobel t-statistical value is  $> 1.96$  or the p-value  $< 0.05$ , then the hypothesis is accepted or mediation is accepted. In this study, the calculation of the t-value of the sobel statistics was confirmed by using the calculation of the Sobel Test Calculator through: <http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm>.

**Table 2 Results of Mediation Analysis Through Sobel Test**

Hipotesis	Hypothesis Statement	Y-Statistic Sobel	P-Value	Information
<b>H4</b>	Transformational leadership style has a positive effect on employee performance with motivation as a mediator	5,310	0,001	The data support the hypothesis

Source: Sobel test results through <http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm> (2023)

This study investigates the influence and relationships between Transformational Leadership Style and Employee Performance, Transformational Leadership Style and Work Motivation, Work Motivation and Employee Performance, Transformational Leadership Style and Employee Performance through Work Motivation as a mediating variable, Transformational Leadership Style and Perception of Work Meaning, as well as Perception of Work Meaning and Work Motivation.

In the first hypothesis test (H1), the results showed that Transformational Leadership Style had no direct effect on Employee Performance. In this context, Transformational Leadership Style does not directly influence the performance achievements of administrative staff in manufacturing companies. This can be explained by the nature of the employees' work, which is already regulated by the company's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). As a result, employees may not require a transformational leader to communicate work goals or provide motivational encouragement to be innovative and creative in achieving organizational outcomes. According to Bass and Avolio (1990), Transformational Leadership Style plays a crucial role in motivating employees and shaping an innovative and creative work culture. Therefore, this leadership style does not significantly affect the direct performance outcomes of administrative employees in manufacturing firms.

In the second hypothesis test (H2), it was found that Transformational Leadership Style has a positive influence on Work Motivation. This suggests that transformational leaders—who

serve as inspirational figures capable of building strong emotional connections with subordinates—foster greater confidence, which enhances employees' willingness to contribute to organizational success. This result aligns with previous studies indicating that transformational leadership strengthens subordinates' confidence, motivation, and desire to develop their skills and contribute more effectively to the organization (Bastari et al., 2020; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021; Pongpearchan, 2016).

In the third hypothesis test (H3), Work Motivation was found to have a positive influence on Employee Performance. This indicates that the stronger the motivation among administrative staff, the better their performance outcomes. The satisfaction derived from achieving work goals serves as a key factor influencing individual performance. This finding supports earlier research suggesting that the intrinsic or extrinsic desire to work acts as a fundamental stimulus driving employees toward achieving organizational objectives (Anindita, 2019; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021; Pongpearchan, 2016).

Work Motivation was further shown to act as a mediating variable in the relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Employee Performance (H4). This implies that motivation strengthens the link between leadership and performance among administrative employees in the manufacturing sector. Transformational leaders who provide encouragement and personal attention to their employees enhance both the quality and quantity of job performance according to assigned responsibilities. These findings reinforce prior studies that concluded effective performance results from multiple contributing factors, with motivation being one of the most important. Through motivation, employees are expected to work harder and more enthusiastically to achieve high performance aligned with organizational expectations (Anindita, 2019; Bastari et al., 2020; Ekhsan & Setiawan, 2021).

In the fifth hypothesis test (H5), Transformational Leadership Style was shown to positively influence Perception of Work Meaning. Transformational leaders create an atmosphere in which work feels more meaningful and prevent employees from perceiving their tasks as dull or monotonous, thereby encouraging them to pursue organizational goals. Such leadership fosters employees' sense of purpose and connection to their work. These findings align with studies that indicate the Perception of Work Meaning influenced by transformational leadership is a key determinant of an organization's long-term success (Demirtas et al., 2020; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2016).

In the sixth hypothesis test (H6), Perception of Work Meaning was shown to have a positive effect on Work Motivation. Among manufacturing employees working in head office administrative roles, meaningful work experiences stimulate enthusiasm and drive toward achieving organizational goals. The more employees perceive their work as meaningful, the greater their motivation to perform effectively. This aligns with previous research emphasizing that Work Meaningfulness enhances employee motivation because an individual's sense of clarity and coherence about their role significantly shapes their perception of work as purposeful and intrinsically rewarding (Oh & Spirit, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study largely supports previous findings, confirming that Transformational Leadership influences Work Motivation, which in turn affects Employee Performance. Specifically, the results confirmed that Transformational Leadership impacts performance

indirectly through the mediating role of Work Motivation. Additionally, the study found that Transformational Leadership affects the Perception of Work Meaningfulness, which subsequently influences Work Motivation. However, one key hypothesis differed from prior research: the finding that Transformational Leadership has no direct effect on Employee Performance. This indicates that leadership alone is not a sufficient driver of performance among administrative staff. Therefore, a crucial managerial implication is that company management should focus on strengthening Work Motivation to enhance employee creativity and, in turn, improve overall performance. Future research is recommended to address the limitations of this study, which examined only four variables—Transformational Leadership, Employee Performance, Work Motivation, and Work Meaningfulness. Subsequent studies should consider incorporating additional variables, expanding the scope beyond administrative staff at a single manufacturing head office in DKI Jakarta to include field operational employees and other industries or regions, and exploring further strategies for enhancing Employee Performance.

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