

The Influence Of Transformational Leadership On Employee Performance With Work Motivation As An Intervening Variable At PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam

Original Article

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of transformational leadership style on employee performance and examines the role of work motivation as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was used with path analysis based on Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The research sample consisted of 94 employees of PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam who were selected through purposive sampling techniques. The results showed that transformational leadership style had a significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.656$; $T = 6,884$; $P = 0.000$) and work motivation ($\beta = 0.543$; $T = 5,429$; $P = 0.000$). However, work motivation had no significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.198$; $T = 1,759$; $P = 0.079$) and did not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership style and performance significantly ($Z = 1.587$; $P = 0.112$). These findings confirm that the direct influence of transformational leadership styles on employee performance is stronger than the indirect influence through work motivation.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam is one of the strategic units that plays an important role in the provision of national electrical energy. As part of PT PLN (Persero), this unit is responsible for ensuring the continuity of reliable and efficient electricity supply in its operational area. In carrying out their functions, employee performance is a determining factor for the success of the organization. Global challenges such as increasingly fierce industry competition, technological advancements, and demands for efficiency and innovation require companies to continue to improve the quality of their human resources. One of the approaches that is believed to be effective to deal with these challenges is the application of the right leadership style. Transformational leadership is a modern leadership style that is oriented towards individual change and development in the organization. According to Burns (1978) and Bass (in Harsoyo, 2022), transformational leadership is characterized by four main dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders are able to inspire, set an example, encourage creativity, and pay attention to the individual needs of employees. Various previous studies (Lestari et al., 2023; Maryen et al., 2023) show that transformational leadership styles have a positive effect on employee satisfaction and performance in various sectors.



However, the influence of transformational leadership on performance does not always occur directly. Psychological factors such as work motivation are often the intervening variables that bridge the relationship. Work motivation reflects both internal and external motivations that affect employee enthusiasm and commitment at work. According to (Robbins and Judge, 2020), motivation has an important role in determining the level of productivity, satisfaction, and loyalty of employees to the organization. The research findings of (Nurfaeda et al., 2022) also show that intrinsic motivations (such as a sense of achievement and responsibility) as well as extrinsic motivations (such as incentives and rewards) contribute significantly to performance improvement. In the context of PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam, the application of transformational leadership is very relevant to face operational challenges, increase efficiency, and transform towards clean energy and digitalization through the development of smart grid technology. A leadership style that is able to build employee motivation and work commitment is believed to improve performance continuously. However, there have not been many studies that have specifically examined the relationship between transformational leadership, work motivation, and employee performance in the state-owned energy sector.

Based on these gaps, the study entitled "The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance with Work Motivation as an Intervening Variable at PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam" aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership style on employee performance, as well as examine the role of work motivation as a mediating variable in PT. PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam. Theoretically, this study is expected to strengthen the literature on the mechanism of the relationship between leadership and performance, especially by including motivational variables as intervening factors in the context of technical-operational-based public organizations. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for management in designing effective leadership strategies and HR development programs, so as to improve employee performance and support the achievement of organizational goals optimally.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership style is a leadership approach that emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage subordinates to transcend personal interests to achieve organizational goals. Transformational leaders not only direct but also instill a strong vision, provide individual attention, and stimulate creativity and innovation in the work environment (Armansyah, 2022; Wardani, 2022). Charisma, personal attention, and the ability to align future visions with the needs of team members are the main factors that distinguish this leadership style from other styles (Iswahyudi, 2023; Mulia, 2021).

Factors that influence transformational leadership styles include personal experiences, values and beliefs, personality, and the context and characteristics of leadership tasks (Warman, 2022; Subhan, 2022). Personal values such as integrity and fairness are the main foundation in forming leadership patterns that are effective and adaptive to various organizational situations. The application of transformational leadership styles provides significant benefits for organizations, including increased efficiency, work motivation, and loyalty of subordinates, as well as the creation of a positive and collaborative work climate (Usman, 2020; Sundari, 2022). Transformational leaders are seen as able to foster a collective work spirit and encourage team members to actively participate in achieving a shared vision.

The main characteristics of transformational leadership include four aspects, namely charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. Charisma gives rise to attraction and trust in leaders, inspirational motivation fosters collective spirit, intellectual stimulation encourages innovation, while individual attention

strengthens interpersonal relationships and the development of subordinate potential (Bass, in (Purba, 2021; Riani et al., 2023)). These four dimensions form the basis of leadership behavior that is able to bring positive and sustainable change in the organization.

2.2. Work Motivation

Work motivation is an internal and external drive that moves individuals to act and achieve certain goals in their work. The term motivation comes from the word *movere* which means drive or driving force (Duha, 2020). According to (Febriana and Rahmat, 2024), motivation is a potential force in humans that can be influenced by internal and external factors, such as monetary and non-monetary rewards, which have an impact on performance. (Suswanti, 2022) added that motivation arises from inspiration and enthusiasm that fosters sincerity and seriousness in work, while (Hasibuan, 2020) emphasized that motivation is the main driving factor in a person's behavior to work hard for optimal results. In an organizational context, work motivation is very important because it can affect the productivity and effectiveness of the company. According to (Manihuruk and Tirtayasa, 2020), work motivation is divided into two types, namely positive and negative motivation. Positive motivation encourages subordinates through rewards for achievements, while negative motivation uses the threat of punishment as a form of encouragement. A similar view is conveyed by (Indriyani and Solihin, 2022), who distinguish between the "carrot" and "stick" approaches in motivating employees.

The purpose of work motivation, according to (Manihuruk and Tirtayasa, 2020), includes increasing morale, productivity, loyalty, discipline, and a harmonious work atmosphere. (Febriana and Rahmat, 2024) added that motivation also aims to reduce absenteeism, improve welfare, and strengthen employee responsibility for their duties. Various motivational theories have been put forward to explain the factors that drive work behavior. Among them are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which emphasizes the fulfillment of basic needs to self-actualization; McGregor's X and Y theories which describe positive and negative views of human behavior; Alderfer's ERG theory that divides needs into existence, attachment, and growth; Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory which distinguishes motivational and hygiene factors; Vroom's Theory of Hope which highlights the relationship between effort, results, and rewards; and McClelland's Three Needs Theory which focuses on the need for achievement, power, and affiliation (Duha, 2020).

Indicators of work motivation, according to (Farhan and Indriyaningrum, 2023; Suriani et al., 2023) include reciprocity, working conditions, work facilities, and recognition of achievements. These factors can increase employee morale and job satisfaction, which ultimately has a positive impact on organizational performance. Thus, work motivation has a strategic role in shaping productive behavior and is oriented towards achieving organizational goals.

2.3. Employee Performance

Employee performance is the result of work achieved by individuals in a certain period based on standards or goals that have been set (Adhari, 2020). Performance not only reflects work output, but also behavior and contribution to the achievement of organizational goals (Rerung, 2019; Silaen et al., 2021). According to Sinaga (2020), performance is influenced by various factors that support the effectiveness of task implementation, such as ability, motivation, work environment, and leadership style. Thus, employee performance is an important indicator of the overall success of the organization.

The goal of employee performance, according to (Silaen et al., 2021; Herawati & Ermawati, 2020), is to align individual achievements with organizational goals. Through

performance measurement, organizations can assess achievements, provide awards, increase responsibility, and motivate employees to contribute better to the company's targets. Performance is influenced by ability and motivation factors, where ability includes technical and educational competencies, while motivation is related to internal and external motivation to achieve optimal work results (Suwato, 2020; Adhari, 2020). Harmonious working relationships, organizational support, and job suitability also play a role in improving employee performance (Rismawati, 2020).

Effective performance standards must be realistic, measurable, specific, mutually agreed upon, and time-oriented (Agustina et al., 2023; Yeni et al., 2024). In addition, according to (Fauzi, 2020), good standards must be relevant to work, sensitive to performance differences, and reliable by all parties in the organization. Performance appraisal functions as an evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness and productivity of employees' work based on set standards (Rismawati, 2020; Budihardjo, 2024). Through this process, companies can provide feedback, design training, and strengthen human resource management systems (Nur'Aini, 2020; Rani, 2020).

The benefits of performance appraisal include increasing motivation, job satisfaction, and understanding of expected standards, as well as strengthening communication between employees and management (Adhari, 2020; Nur'Aini, 2020). Good judgment is also the basis for career development and increased organizational productivity. According to (Yulianto, 2020), the main indicators of employee performance include quality, quantity, punctuality, effectiveness, and independence. These five aspects are used to measure the extent to which employees contribute to the achievement of organizational goals efficiently and sustainably.

2.4. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is described as follows:

H1: Transformational Leadership Style (X) has a significant effect directly on Work Motivation (Z)

H2: Work Motivation (Z) has a significant effect directly on Employee Performance (Y).

H3: Transformational Leadership (X) has a significant impact on Employee Performance (Y)

H4: Transformational Leadership Style (X) has a significant effect indirectly on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Motivation (Z)

3. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a path analysis method based on Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) to test the influence of transformational leadership style on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable. The research population was 124 employees of PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam, with a sample of 94 respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques. The respondent criteria include active employees with a minimum of six months of service and over 18 years of age.

Primary data were collected through a Likert scale questionnaire (1–5) that measured respondents' perception of research variables, while secondary data were obtained from literature, scientific journals, and company documents. Using the Likert scale, the variables to be measured are described in variable indicators, and each indicator has statement items. Respondents were asked to choose one of five alternative answers provided, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. Here are the meanings of notation on the Likert scale: 1. SS (Strongly Agree): Indicates a very good, very high, or very large level of perception 2. S (Agree): Indicates

a good, high, or large level of perception. 3. N (Neutral): Indicates a sufficient or neutral level of perception. 4. TS (Disagree): Indicates a level of poor, low, or undesirable perception 5. STS (Strongly Disagree): Indicates a very poor, very low, or very small level of perception.

The variables analyzed included: Transformational Leadership Style (X): the leader's ability to provide ideal influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Work Motivation (Z): the individual's motivation to work optimally based on the need for achievement, affiliation, and awards (Hasibuan, 2020). Employee Performance (Y): employee work results measured from quality, quantity, timeliness, and responsibility (Mangkunegara, 2015). The analysis was carried out through two stages, namely descriptive analysis to describe the respondent profile and research variables, and quantitative analysis of SEM-PLS to test the direct and indirect relationship between variables.

Table 1. Variable Operational Definition

Variable	Indicators	Kind	Source
Transformational Leadership Style (X)	Idealized Influence	Unobservable	Bass & Avolio (1994); Harsoyo (2022)
	Inspirational Motivation		
	Intellectual Stimulation		
	Individualized Consideration		
Employee Performance (Y)	Quality of Work	Unobservable	Mangkunegara (2015)
	Working Quantity		
	Timeliness		
	Responsibility		
Organizational Culture (Z)	Need for Achievement	Observable	McClelland (in Hasibuan, 2020); Farhan & Indriyaningrum (2023)
	Need for Affiliation		
	Need for Power		
	Incentive & awards		
	Work environment Supporting		

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Distribution of Respondents' Answers

The results of the study processed using SmartPLS based on data from 94 respondents showed that all research variables — Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Employee Performance — had excellent indicator validity with an outer loading value above 0.70. The Transformational Leadership Style variable consists of 12 indicators with loading values between 0.718–0.919, indicating that all dimensions such as ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration are well represented. This shows that employees consider leadership in the company to be transformational. The Work Motivation variable has a loading value between 0.926–0.978, which indicates a high level of work motivation among employees. Respondents showed an encouragement to achieve, responsibility, and enthusiasm to develop in their work. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance variable shows a loading value between 0.933–0.968, indicating that employee performance is at an excellent level. This is reflected in productivity, punctuality, and high quality of work.

Overall, these results illustrate that PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam employees have a positive perception of their leadership style, work motivation, and performance, which is in line with the organization's goals in improving the effectiveness of human resources.

4.2. Data Analysis

a) Outer Model Test Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity is tested through the loading factor value with valid criteria if > 0.70 (Chin, 1998 in Ghozali, 2011).

Table 1. Validity Test Results (Loading Factor)

Variable	Indicators	Loading	Information
Transformational Leadership Style	X.1	0.761	Valid
	X.2	0.857	Valid
	X.3	0.873	Valid
	X.4	0.718	Valid
	X.5	0.853	Valid
	X.6	0.854	Valid
	X.7	0.781	Valid
	X.8	0.812	Valid
	X.9	0.829	Valid
	X.10	0.919	Valid
	X.11	0.833	Valid
	X.12	0.845	Valid
Employee Performance	Y.1	0.937	Valid
	Y.2	0.950	Valid
	Y.3	0.968	Valid
	Y.4	0.933	Valid
	Y.5	0.952	Valid
	Y.6	0.951	Valid
	Y.7	0.950	Valid
	Y.8	0.958	Valid
	Y.9	0.944	Valid
	Y.10	0.957	Valid
	Y.11	0.961	Valid
	Y.12	0.951	Valid
Work Motivation	Z.1	0.970	Valid
	Z.2	0.969	Valid
	Z.3	0.926	Valid
	Z.4	0.976	Valid
	Z.5	0.971	Valid
	Z.6	0.964	Valid
	Z.7	0.968	Valid
	Z.8	0.975	Valid
	Z.9	0.966	Valid
	Z.10	0.978	Valid
	Z.11	0.974	Valid
	Z.12	0.972	Valid

Source: data processed, 2025

The entire loading factor value > 0.7, so all indicators are declared valid. Furthermore, the Discriminant Validity test shows that the cross-loading value shows that each indicator has a higher correlation to its construct compared to other constructs. Thus, all variables meet the criteria of discriminant validity (Hussein, 2019).

Table 3. Construct Reliability Test Value

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Transformational Leadership Style	0.960	0.965	0.696

Work Motivation	0.990	0.991	0.905
Employee Performance	0.991	0.992	0.915

The Reliability Test shows that all variables show a Composite Reliability value of > 0.70, which means that this research instrument is reliable and consistent in measuring the construct in question.

b) Test inner model (structural model)

The internal evaluation of the model aims to see the relationship between latent variables with the R² and Q² indicators.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The R² value indicates how much the exogenous variable can explain the endogenous variable.

Table 4. Value of Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Endogenous Variable	R ²	Interpretation
Employee Performance (Y)	0.669	Strong
Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2025)		

The determination coefficient (R² = 0.669) showed that 66.9% of employee performance variations could be explained by transformational leadership styles and work motivation, with the explanatory power category strong.

Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Table 5. Predictive Relevance Test Value (Q²)

Endogenous Variable	Q ²	Interpretation
Work Motivation	0,295	Medium predictive relevance
Employee Performance	0,516	Strong predictive relevance
Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2025)		

Since the Q² values on both variables are greater than zero (Q² > 0), the predictive relevance test values (Q² = 0.295 and 0.516) indicate that the model has good predictive capabilities.

Effect Size (f²)

The effect size (f²) test was carried out to determine the magnitude of the relative influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable in the structural model. The value of f² is calculated based on the change in the value of R² if a construct is omitted from the model.

Table 6. Test Value Effect Size (f²)

Endogenous Variable	Q ²	Interpretation
Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0,538	Huge effect
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0,049	Small effects
Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2025)		

The effect size test (f²) showed that leadership style had a large influence (0.538) on performance, while work motivation had a small effect (0.049).

Multicollinearity Test (VIF Value)

The multicollinearity test is performed to determine whether there is a high correlation between independent variables that can disrupt the stability of the structural model. In the Partial Least Squares (PLS) model, the multicollinearity indicator is evaluated using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value.

Table 7. Construct VIF Value

Endogenous Variable	VIF Value	Interpretation
Leadership Style → Employee Performance	2.412	Multicollinearity does not occur
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	2.412	Multicollinearity does not occur

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2025)	
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The VIF value = 2.412 indicates the absence of multicollinearity between variables.

Path Coefficient

The path coefficient test was carried out to determine the direction and magnitude of the influence between constructs in the structural model. The path coefficient shows the direct relationship between variables, as well as the amount of contribution of one variable to another.

Table 8. Test Value Effect Size (f^2)

Endogenous Variable	Line Coefficient (β)	Interpretation
Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0.656	Strong and positive direct influence
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.198	Direct influence
Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2025)		

Based on the path coefficient test, transformational leadership style had a strong and positive effect ($\beta = 0.656$) on employee performance, while work motivation had a positive but weak influence ($\beta = 0.198$)

c) Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing in SEM-PLS is carried out through a bootstrapping process to determine the significance of the relationship between constructs. The indicators used in this test are T-statistical values and P-values, with the following decision-making provisions:

Table 9. Hypothesis Test Results

Code	Relationship Pathway	Original Sample (O)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Information
H1	Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0.656	6.884	0.000	Accepted
H2	Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.198	1.759	0.079	Rejected
H3	R ² Employee Performance = 0.669	66.9% of the variation is explained by X and Z			Accepted
H4	Leadership Style → Motivation → Performance	0.183	1.763	0.078	Rejected

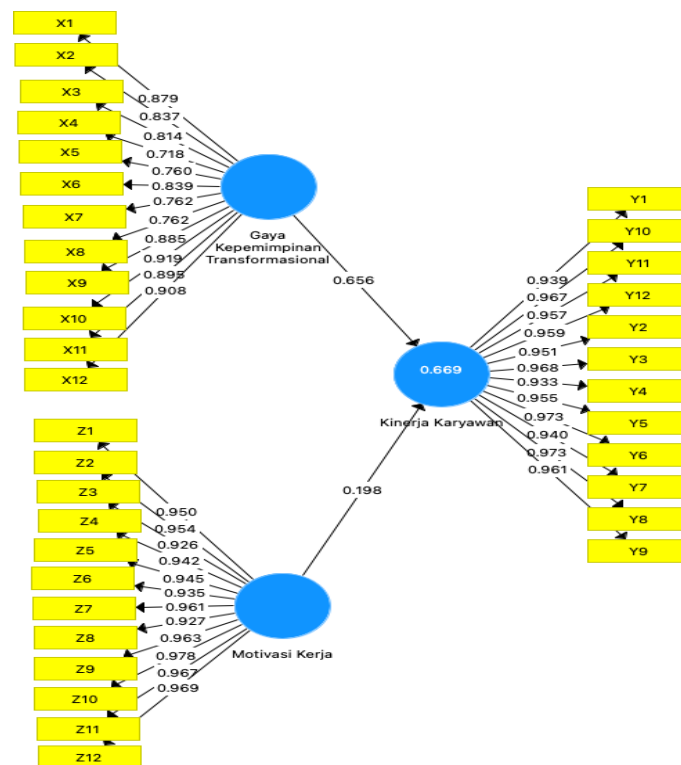


Figure 2. Model PLS

Interpretation of the results:

H1 accepted: Transformational leadership style had a significant effect on performance ($p = 0.000$).

H2 rejected: The effect of work motivation on performance was not significant ($p = 0.079$).

H3 accepted: The combination of the two explains 66.9% of the performance variation.

H4 rejected: Work motivation does not mediate the relationship between leadership style and performance

Overall, the results show that transformational leadership style is a dominant factor in improving employee performance compared to work motivation.

4.3. The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership style has been shown to have a strong and significant influence on performance improvement (coefficient 0.656; T-statistic, 6,884; P-value 0.000). These findings support the theories of (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Robbins & Judge, 2017) that inspiring, communicative, and visionary leadership can increase employee commitment and productivity. The effect size value ($f^2 = 0.538$) shows that leadership has a large effect on performance. In practical terms, leaders who inspire, individual attention, and intellectual encouragement are proven to be able to create a productive and collaborative work environment.

4.4. The Role of Work Motivation as an Intervening Variable

Work motivation did not play a significant role in mediating the relationship between leadership style and performance (coefficient 0.183; T-statistic, 1,763; P-value 0.078). This suggests that while leadership can influence motivation, the impact of motivation on performance is not strong enough. Theoretical analyses based on Maslow, Herzberg, and McClelland suggest that the bureaucratic and regulatory conditions of the company may limit

the actualization of employees' intrinsic motivations. Thus, the effect of leadership on performance is more dominant directly than through motivation.

4.5. The Effect of the Combination of Transformational Leadership Style and Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results of the simultaneous test showed that the combination of the two variables had a significant and strong influence on performance ($R^2 = 0.669$). This means that 66.9% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by transformational leadership styles and work motivation together. Although the influence of motivation on individuals is not significant, its presence strengthens the model when tested simultaneously. This supports the theory of organizational behavior that performance is the result of an interaction between external factors (leadership) and internal (motivation).

4.6. Contribution of Transformational Leadership Style and Work Motivation to Employee Performance

Effect size (f^2) analysis showed that transformational leadership styles contributed significantly (0.538) to performance, while work motivation contributed only small (0.049). Thus, leadership style is the most dominant factor in improving employee performance. However, motivation still plays a supporting role that can be strengthened through increasing intrinsic aspects such as recognition, responsibility, and self-development.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the transformational leadership style had a significant effect on employee performance at PT PLN Nusantara Power Bukit Asam, with a path coefficient of 0.656 and a T-statistic value of 6.884. This confirms that visionary, inspiring, and individual development-oriented leadership is able to improve employee performance in a real way. In contrast, work motivation has not been shown to play a mediating role in the relationship between leadership style and performance (P-value 0.078). However, simultaneously, both variables were able to explain 66.9% of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.669$), with the dominant contribution coming from transformational leadership styles ($f^2 = 0.538$).

Based on these results, management is advised to strengthen transformational leadership competencies at all managerial levels through training that emphasizes the ability to inspire, communicate effectively, and individualize attention to employees. For further research, it is recommended to add other variables such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, or work stress, and consider a mixed methods approach to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. Theoretically, this study reaffirms the importance of transformational leadership in improving performance, while showing that the effectiveness of work motivation as a mediator is strongly influenced by the organizational context and work culture.

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