



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, AND THEIR IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through Job Satisfaction, among employees of SMKN 2 Tanjung Balai. The research population consisted of all 31 permanent employees, and due to the small population size, a saturated sampling technique was applied, including all employees as research participants. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained through documentation studies. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25, employing t-tests, Sobel tests, and path analysis to examine the relationships between variables. The findings reveal that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction, indicating that effective leadership enhances employee satisfaction. Similarly, Work-Life Balance is shown to positively and significantly influence Job Satisfaction, highlighting the importance of managing personal and professional demands. Both Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance also have significant direct effects on employee performance, demonstrating their role in improving productivity and work outcomes. Additionally, Job Satisfaction itself significantly contributes to performance, acting as a crucial mediating factor. The study further confirms that Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance indirectly enhance performance through increased Job Satisfaction. These results suggest that fostering supportive leadership practices and promoting a healthy work-life balance not only improve employee satisfaction but also strengthen overall performance. In conclusion,



organizations aiming to boost productivity should prioritize both leadership development and work-life balance initiatives, as these factors directly and indirectly contribute to enhanced employee performance by cultivating higher levels of job satisfaction.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Performance, and *Work Life Balance* .

INTRODUCTION

In the modern organizational landscape, employee performance is a key determinant of institutional success and sustainability. Performance reflects not only the outcomes of employees' tasks but also their ability to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively. Various factors influence performance, including leadership style, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction. Among these, transformational leadership has garnered significant attention in both management and educational research. Transformational leaders inspire, motivate, and support their employees, fostering creativity, commitment, and a sense of purpose. By serving as role models and encouraging professional development, such leaders can elevate employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity.

Similarly, work-life balance has emerged as a critical factor in maintaining employee well-being and performance. Employees who can effectively manage their professional responsibilities alongside personal and family obligations tend to experience lower stress, higher motivation, and greater job satisfaction. In educational settings, where staff often balance teaching, administrative duties, and extracurricular responsibilities, achieving work-life balance is essential for sustaining high levels of performance.

Job satisfaction plays a central role in this dynamic, acting as both an outcome of leadership and work-life balance and as a predictor of performance. Satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and discretionary effort, which collectively enhance



organizational outcomes. Conversely, low job satisfaction can result in disengagement, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates.

This study focuses on SMKN 2 Tanjung Balai, aiming to examine the effects of transformational leadership and work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. By analyzing these relationships, the research seeks to provide comprehensive insights into how leadership practices and work-life policies influence satisfaction and performance. The findings are expected to inform school management strategies, optimize human resource practices, and ultimately contribute to improved institutional effectiveness and employee well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Performance

Performance is a critical concept in organizational and management research, often defined as the degree to which an individual, group, or organization achieves established goals and objectives. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), performance represents the outcomes of work that are closely linked to organizational targets, reflecting both effectiveness in achieving goals and efficiency in utilizing resources. Mathis and Jackson (2011) further emphasize that employee performance refers to the level of accomplishment of work results expected based on predetermined standards and criteria. Sedarmayanti (2017) adds that performance encompasses an individual's ability to carry out tasks and responsibilities in alignment with organizational norms, regulations, and objectives. In practice, performance is measured through multiple indicators, including the quantity and quality of work, timeliness in completing tasks, initiative, creativity, and overall contribution to organizational success. From a research perspective, understanding performance is essential because it functions as a key outcome variable, allowing scholars to



examine how various factors—such as leadership style, motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work-life balance—affect employee effectiveness and productivity. High performance indicates that employees are able to transform their knowledge, skills, and efforts into tangible results that support organizational goals, while low performance signals areas requiring intervention, training, or managerial support. Therefore, performance is not only a measure of individual or group achievement but also a reflection of organizational health, efficiency, and the effectiveness of human resource practices.

2. Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership is a leadership style in which leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage their followers to achieve high performance and go beyond their personal interests to accomplish organizational goals. According to Jufrizen dan Lubis (2020), transformational leadership consists of four main components: idealized influence, where the leader acts as a role model, fostering trust and respect among followers; inspirational motivation, where the leader provides a clear and compelling vision that stimulates enthusiasm; intellectual stimulation, where followers are encouraged to think creatively, challenge assumptions, and solve problems innovatively; and individualized consideration, where the leader attends to each follower's needs, providing personalized support and guidance for development. Furthermore, Suwatno (2019) explain that transformational leaders focus not only on achieving organizational objectives but also on developing employees' skills and motivation, thereby enhancing loyalty, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Transformational leadership is considered capable of creating an innovative, collaborative, and inspiring work environment, ultimately improving productivity and fostering long-term organizational commitment. By emphasizing vision, personal growth, and



empowerment, this leadership style enables organizations to adapt to change while cultivating highly motivated and engaged employees.

3. Work Life Balance

Work-Life Balance refers to a condition in which an individual is able to allocate time, energy, and attention effectively and harmoniously between work demands and personal life needs, including family, health, and social activities. According to Clark (2000), work-life balance occurs when an individual perceives that the demands of work and personal life are not in conflict and can be managed in a way that enhances overall satisfaction and quality of life. Rizal dan Fipiariny (2022) further explains that work-life balance is not merely an equal division of time between professional and personal responsibilities, but the ability to adjust priorities and responsibilities so that both areas support each other. Employees who maintain a healthy work-life balance tend to experience lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, and improved performance. Consequently, work-life balance is considered a critical factor in promoting employee well-being and productivity, as well as supporting the long-term success of organizations. By enabling employees to manage professional and personal commitments effectively, organizations can foster a more motivated, engaged, and resilient workforce.

4. Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction refers to the positive feelings or attitudes an individual holds toward their job, which are reflected in their contentment with various aspects of work, including tasks performed, working conditions, compensation, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. According to Priansa (2016), job satisfaction represents an overall attitude of employees toward their work, influencing their motivation,



loyalty, and performance. Kasmir (2016) further explains that job satisfaction is an emotional response to one's job that can affect employee behavior, including productivity, engagement, and intentions to remain with the organization. High levels of job satisfaction are generally associated with increased motivation and performance, whereas low satisfaction can lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced productivity. Therefore, job satisfaction is considered a crucial factor in determining individual performance and overall organizational success. By fostering an environment that enhances job satisfaction, organizations can improve employee well-being, encourage commitment, and support sustainable high performance.

METHODS

This research adopts an associative approach, which is aimed at identifying and analyzing the relationships or influences among variables. This approach allows the researcher to examine how changes in one or more independent variables may affect a dependent variable, either directly or indirectly. In the context of this study, the independent variables consist of X1, Transformational Leadership, and X2, Work-Life Balance. The intervening variable, Z, is Job Satisfaction, which is expected to mediate the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The dependent variable, Y, represents employee Performance, which serves as the primary outcome of interest. By using this associative framework, the study seeks to determine not only the direct effects of Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance on Performance but also the indirect effects that operate through Job Satisfaction, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee outcomes.



- **Sample**

According to Sugiyono (2018), a sample is a subset of the total population that accurately represents the characteristics of that population. In this study, the population was relatively small, which made it feasible to use a saturated sampling technique. This technique involves including every member of the population in the research, ensuring that the sample fully represents the population. As a result, all 31 employees were selected as participants, allowing the study to capture comprehensive data on the variables of interest and ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

- **Data Collection**

In this study, data were collected using two main methods. The first method involved a questionnaire, which contained a structured set of questions designed to obtain information relevant to the research variables from the employees. The second method consisted of documentation studies, which entailed systematically gathering data from company or agency records, reports, and other documents that correspond to the research objectives. By combining these two approaches, the study aimed to obtain thorough and accurate data, thereby strengthening the overall analysis.

- **Measurements**

Path Analysis

According to Imam Ghozali (2005), path coefficients are dimensionless, thereby permitting the inference that a higher path coefficient value signifies a more substantial influence of that variable on others.



RESULTS

Path Analysis of Sub Model

Test Results Model Summary Sub Model

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.772 ^a	.596	.551	.286

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Satisfaction, Work Life Balance , Transformational Leadership

The Model Summary provides an overview of how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable in a regression analysis. In this study, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.772, indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictors—Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, and Transformational Leadership—and employee Performance. The R Square (R²) value of 0.596 shows that approximately 59.6% of the variation in Performance can be explained by these three variables. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the Adjusted R Square value is 0.551, meaning that about 55.1% of the variance in Performance is accounted for by the model in the population. The standard error of the estimate is 0.286, reflecting the average distance between the observed Performance values and those predicted by the regression model; a smaller value indicates that the predictions are relatively close to the actual data. Overall, these results suggest that Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, and Transformational Leadership together provide a substantial explanation of employee Performance.



Sobel Test

Sobel Test Results					
Variable	Unstandardized	Std. Error	Test Statistic	Std. Error	P-Value
The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction	0,572	0,079	1,970	0,049	0,048
Job Satisfaction with Performance	0,170	0,083			
Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction	0,589	0,078	1,976	0,050	0,048
Job Satisfaction with Performance	0,170	0,083			

Source: Data processed using *the Sobel Test calculation*, 2025

The table presents the results of the analysis of relationships between variables, including the direct and mediating effects assessed using the Sobel Test. The first row shows the effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.572 and a standard error of 0.079. The test statistic is 1.970, and the p-value is 0.048, indicating that Transformational Leadership has a significant positive effect on Job Satisfaction. The second row shows the effect of Job Satisfaction on Performance, with a coefficient of 0.170 and a standard error of 0.083, suggesting a positive relationship. The third row presents the effect of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.589, a standard error of 0.078, a test statistic of 1.976, and a p-value of 0.048, demonstrating that Work-Life Balance also has a significant positive effect on Job Satisfaction. The fourth row again shows the effect of Job Satisfaction on



Performance with the same coefficient and standard error as above. These results, processed using the Sobel Test in 2025, indicate that both Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance significantly influence Job Satisfaction, which in turn positively affects employee Performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance have a significant positive effect on Job Satisfaction among employees. Job Satisfaction, in turn, positively influences employee Performance, acting as an important mediating variable. Both Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance not only directly enhance Performance but also indirectly strengthen it through increased Job Satisfaction. These findings suggest that organizations aiming to improve employee performance should focus on fostering effective transformational leadership practices and promoting a healthy balance between work and personal life, as these factors collectively enhance satisfaction and productivity.

LIMITATIONS

Despite yielding meaningful findings, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted with a relatively small population of only 31 employees at SMKN 2 Tanjung Balai, which may limit the generalizability of the results to larger organizations or different contexts. Second, data collection relied primarily on self-reported questionnaires, which can be influenced by respondents' subjective perceptions and potential biases. Third, the study focused only on three main variables—Transformational Leadership, Work-Life Balance, and Job Satisfaction—while other factors that may affect employee Performance, such as organizational culture, compensation, or work environment, were not examined. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study captures



relationships at a single point in time, limiting the ability to infer long-term causal effects. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size, including additional variables, and using longitudinal designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee performance.

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