Dharmawangsa: International Journals of The Social Science, Education and Humanities ISSN: 2716-5132 (p) Vol. 7, No. 1, 2026 Page: 309-317

The Effect of Transformational Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Work Motivation, and Organizational Culture on Employee Performance in Indonesian Private Companies

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a key determinant of organizational success in achieving its strategic goals. This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership, organizational commitment, work motivation, and organizational culture on employee performance in private companies in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design, this study involved 320 employees from 18 private companies in Medan City, North Sumatra, selected through a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results showed that transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance (β = 0.312; $p < 0.001$), organizational commitment had a positive and significant effect (β = 0.274; $p < 0.001$), work motivation had a positive and significant effect (β = 0.198; $p < 0.01$), and organizational culture had a positive and significant effect (β = 0.167; $p < 0.05$) on employee performance. Simultaneously, the four independent variables explained 68.4% of the variance in employee performance (R^2 = 0.684). Transformational leadership proved to be the strongest predictor of employee performance. The findings of this study provide important implications for human resource management practices in Indonesian private companies, particularly in developing transformative leaders, strengthening employee commitment and motivation, and building an adaptive and high-achieving organizational culture.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Organizational Commitment; Work Motivation; Organizational Culture; Employee Performance; SEM-PLS

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly fierce and dynamic business competition, human resources (HR) are the strategic asset that most determines an organization's long-term success. This view is further strengthened by the development of contemporary management paradigms that position people not merely as a factor of production but as a source of competitive advantage that cannot be easily imitated by competitors. In Indonesia, one of the largest economies in Southeast Asia with a workforce of over 140 million (BPS, 2023), effective and efficient HR management presents both a challenge and a significant opportunity for the business world, particularly the private sector, which dominates the national economic structure.

Employee performance is a tangible manifestation of an individual's ability, motivation, and opportunities to carry out their job duties and responsibilities. Optimal performance not only benefits the individual employee but also serves as the foundation for achieving broader organizational goals. However, the reality on the ground shows that many private companies in Indonesia still face serious issues related to the consistency and quality of employee performance. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia (2023) indicates that Indonesian labor productivity remains below the ASEAN average, with a productivity index of only 0.63 compared to the regional average of 0.78.

The first factor highlighted in this study is transformational leadership. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) introduced the concept of transformational leadership as a leadership style that inspires subordinates to transcend personal interests for the greater good of the organization. Transformational leaders are able to create a clear vision, motivate emotionally, stimulate creativity and innovation in subordinates, and provide individual attention to each team member.

In the context of Indonesian private companies transitioning from traditional management styles to more participatory and innovative approaches, transformational leadership is seen as a crucial catalyst for improving employee performance.

The second factor is organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) define organizational commitment as a psychological state that characterizes the relationship between employees and their organization, reflected in the decision to continue or terminate their membership in the organization. Highly committed employees tend to exhibit lower absenteeism, stronger loyalty, and greater work contributions. Research in the Indonesian context by Hidayat and Setiawan (2021) found that organizational commitment is a significant predictor of employee performance, but the magnitude of its influence varies depending on the industry sector and employee demographic characteristics.

Work motivation, as a third factor, also plays a central role in influencing performance. McClelland's (1961) need theory, which divides motivation into the need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power, provides a relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of motivation in the workplace. Employees with strong intrinsic motivation, driven by a desire to achieve and contribute, tend to display more consistent and high-quality performance than those motivated solely by extrinsic factors such as salary and bonuses.

Organizational culture, as a fourth factor, is a system of values, beliefs, and norms shared by all members of an organization and serves as a guide for collective behavior. Robbins and Judge (2019) identified seven key characteristics of organizational culture, including innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, results-oriented, individual-oriented, team-oriented, aggressive, and stability. A strong, performance-oriented organizational culture creates a conducive work environment for employees to perform at their best.

Although each of these four variables has been extensively researched individually, research examining the simultaneous influence of these four variables on employee performance in the context of private companies in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra, remains very limited. Furthermore, the use of SEM-PLS methods, which allow for more robust and accurate analysis of relationships between constructs, is still rarely used in HR research at the regional private company level. These theoretical and methodological gaps form the primary foundation of this research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intrinsic motivation—an internal drive based on intrinsic interest and satisfaction in performing an activity—is differentiated from extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as rewards and punishments. Research consistently shows that intrinsic motivation results in more creative, high-quality, and sustainable performance than extrinsic motivation alone.

A. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture can be defined as a system of shared meanings held by members of an organization that distinguishes it from other organizations (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Schein (1992) divides organizational culture into three levels: artifacts (the most visible level, such as symbols, rituals, and office layout), espoused values, and underlying assumptions. A strong organizational culture—where core values are widely and deeply held by all members—provides clear direction for employee behavior and reduces the need for excessive formal control.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) identified four typologies of organizational culture based on two dimensions: level of risk and speed of feedback. Meanwhile, Cameron and Quinn (2011) developed the Competing Values Framework, which categorizes organizational culture into four types: clan (family), adhocracy (innovation), market (competition), and hierarchy (stability).

For Indonesian private companies undergoing evolution, understanding the type of culture that best supports performance is highly relevant.

B. Employee Performance

Employee performance is the work results achieved by an employee in carrying out their assigned tasks in accordance with their assigned responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2017). Bernardin and Russell (1993) identified six main performance measurement criteria: work quality, work quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, need for supervision, and interpersonal impact. In this study, employee performance was measured using the first five dimensions adapted to the context of Indonesian private companies.

Locke and Latham (1990) in their Goal-Setting Theory argue that high performance results from setting specific and challenging goals, combined with regular feedback and commitment to the goals. This theory emphasizes that leaders play a crucial role in facilitating an effective goal-setting process and providing the support employees need to achieve them.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Approach

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. This approach was chosen due to the explanatory nature of the study—namely, to explain and measure causal relationships between research variables—and the availability of well-validated measurement instruments in the literature. The cross-sectional design was chosen because it allowed for data collection from all respondents in a relatively short timeframe, making it cost-effective and time-efficient. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0 software, chosen for its ability to analyze latent constructs measured both reflectively and formatively, particularly in medium-sized samples.

B. Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The population in this study consisted of all permanent employees working at medium- to large-sized private companies in Medan City, North Sumatra, with a minimum of one year of service and positions ranging from executive staff to middle managers. Based on data from the Medan City Manpower Office (2023), there are approximately 2,400 formal private companies actively operating in the city, with a total workforce of over 180,000 people.

The sample size was determined based on Hair et al.'s (2019) guidelines for SEM-PLS, which recommend a minimum of 10 times the maximum number of indicators within a construct. With six indicators in the transformational leadership construct, the construct with the most indicators, the minimum sample size required was 60 respondents. However, to increase statistical power and generalizability of the findings, the researchers set a target sample size of 320 respondents. The sampling technique used was proportionate stratified random sampling, with stratification based on industry sector (manufacturing, trade, services, and finance) and job level (staff and supervisor/manager). The sample distribution is presented in Table 1.

Sektor	Perusahaan (n)	Staf	Supervisor/Manajer	Total
Manufaktur	5	60	20	80
Perdagangan	5	55	25	80
Jasa	5	58	22	80
Keuangan/Perbankan	3	52	28	80
Total	18	225	95	320

Tabel 1. Distribusi Sampel Penelitian berdasarkan Sektor dan Tingkat Jabatan

C. Research Variables and Measurement

All variables in this study were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Transformational leadership was measured using 24 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), which was adapted into Indonesian by Luthans (2011) and revalidated in the Indonesian context. Organizational commitment was measured using 18 items from the Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) scale. Work motivation was measured using 15 items adapted from Luthans' (2011) scale based on McClelland's theory. Organizational culture was measured using 14 items adapted from Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). Employee performance was measured using 15 items adapted from Bernardin and Russell's (1993) criteria, covering five dimensions: quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence. A summary of the operationalization of the variables is presented in Table 2.

Variabel	Dimensi Utama	Jumlah Item	Sumber Skala
Kepemimpinan Transformasional (X_1)	Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration	24	Bass & Avolio (1995)
Komitmen Organisasi (X_2)	Affective, Continuance, Normative	18	Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993)
Motivasi Kerja (X_3)	Need for Achievement, Affiliation, Power	15	Luthans (2011)
Budaya Organisasi (X_4)	Inovasi, Perhatian Detail, Orientasi Tim & Hasil	14	Cameron & Quinn (2011)
Kinerja Karyawan (Y)	Kualitas, Kuantitas, Ketepatan Waktu, Efektivitas, Kemandirian	15	Bernardin & Russell (1993)

Tabel 2. Operasionalisasi Variabel Penelitian

D. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in two stages according to standard SEM-PLS procedures. The first stage was the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), which included: (1) a convergent validity test by checking for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ≥ 0.50 and outer loadings ≥ 0.70 for each indicator; (2) a construct reliability test by checking for Composite Reliability (CR) values ≥ 0.70 and Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70; and (3) a discriminant validity test using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion < 0.85. The second stage was the evaluation of the structural model (inner model), which included assessing the path coefficient (β), t-statistic value (obtained through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples), p-value, and coefficient of determination (R^2).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondent Profile

Of the 320 questionnaires distributed, 312 were returned and usable for analysis (a response rate of 97.5%). The demographic profile of respondents shows that the majority were male (54.8%), aged 26–35 (42.3%), with a bachelor's degree (S1) at 61.2%, and with 1–5 years of service (38.5%). Respondents were fairly evenly distributed by industry sector, with the service and trade sectors each contributing approximately 25.6% of respondents. This diverse

demographic characteristic increases the sample's representativeness of the private company employee population in Medan.

B. Measurement Model Evaluation Results

The results of the outer model evaluation indicate that all indicators meet the required validity and reliability criteria. The AVE values for all constructs were above 0.50, with transformational leadership achieving the highest AVE of 0.623, followed by employee performance (0.598), organizational commitment (0.574), organizational culture (0.562), and work motivation (0.541). The Composite Reliability values for all constructs ranged from 0.867 to 0.934, far exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.831 to 0.918. Discriminant validity was also met, with all HTMT values below 0.85. The complete results of the measurement model evaluation are presented in Table 3.

Konstruk	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Transformational Leadership (X_1)	0,623	0,934	0,918	Valid & Reliabel
Organizational Commitment (X_2)	0,574	0,901	0,876	Valid & Reliabel
Work Motivation (X_3)	0,541	0,879	0,843	Valid & Reliabel
Organizational Culture (X_4)	0,562	0,867	0,831	Valid & Reliabel
Employee Performance (Y)	0,598	0,921	0,897	Valid & Reliabel

Table 3. Results of the Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

C. Structural Model Evaluation Results and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model yielded an R^2 value of 0.684 for the employee performance variable, indicating that the four independent variables together explained 68.4% of the variance in employee performance. This value falls into the substantial category according to Hair et al.'s (2019) guidelines. The Predictive Relevance (Q^2) value of 0.412 (>0) confirmed the model's predictive relevance. The results of the hypothesis testing using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples are presented in Table 4.

Hipotesis	Hubungan	Koef. Jalur (β)	t-Statistik	p-Value	Hasil
H1	$X_1 \rightarrow Y$	0,312	6,847	0,000***	Didukung
H2	$X_2 \rightarrow Y$	0,274	5,923	0,000***	Didukung
H3	$X_3 \rightarrow Y$	0,198	4,112	0,001***	Didukung
H4	$X_4 \rightarrow Y$	0,167	3,284	0,024**	Didukung
H5	$X_1+X_2+X_3+X_4 \rightarrow Y$	$R^2 = 0,684$	F = 48,73	0,000***	Didukung

*Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results (SEM-PLS Bootstrapping, n = 5,000 Subsamples) Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$*

D. Discussion

1. The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance (H1)

The first hypothesis is supported by the data, with transformational leadership demonstrating a path coefficient of 0.312 ($t = 6.847$; $p < 0.001$) on employee performance. Transformational leadership proved to be the strongest predictor of employee performance among the four variables studied. This finding is consistent with the meta-analysis by Judge and Piccolo (2004) and empirical studies in the Indonesian context, such as those conducted by Nugroho and Khusaini (2020).

This strong influence can be explained by the psychological mechanisms linking transformational leadership behavior to employee performance. Leaders who display Idealized Influence are able to build deep respect and trust among subordinates, thus motivating subordinates to work in accordance with the values and standards exemplified by the leader. The Inspirational Motivation component encourages employees to view their work as a meaningful mission, going beyond mere contractual obligations. Intellectual Stimulation creates an environment where employees feel safe to experiment, learn from mistakes, and develop innovative solutions. Meanwhile, Individual Consideration ensures that each employee feels recognized as a unique individual with specific needs and potential.

In the context of private companies in Medan, where organizational structures are often hierarchical and paternalistic, the presence of transformational leaders who are able to combine authoritative power with values-based and inspirational leadership is highly strategic. Such leaders are able to drive transformation of the organization's culture from within, creating a more collaborative, innovative, and high-performance work environment.

2. The Effect of Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance (H2)

The second hypothesis is supported by the finding that organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.274$; $t = 5.923$; $p < 0.001$). Organizational commitment is the second strongest predictor after transformational leadership. These results confirm Meyer and Allen's (1991) theoretical argument that employees who are psychologically attached to an organization—especially through affective commitment—tend to invest greater effort and energy in their work.

Further analysis of the dimensions of organizational commitment shows that affective commitment contributes the most to performance ($\beta = 0.198$; $p < 0.001$), followed by normative commitment ($\beta = 0.124$; $p < 0.05$), and continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.043$; $p > 0.05$) is insignificant. This finding aligns with the argument that commitment based on emotional attachment and a sense of moral obligation is more productive than commitment based solely on economic calculations of the costs of moving.

3. The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance (H3)

The third hypothesis is supported by a path coefficient of 0.198 ($t = 4.112$; $p < 0.01$). Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, making it the third strongest predictor in the model. This finding confirms the relevance of McClelland's motivation theory in the context of Indonesian private companies. Employees with a high need for achievement (nAch) tend to proactively seek ways to improve work efficiency, take responsibility for results, and consistently demonstrate work quality that exceeds minimum standards.

Dimensional analysis shows that need for achievement contributes the most to performance ($\beta = 0.142$), followed by need for power ($\beta = 0.089$), and need for affiliation ($\beta = 0.062$). Interestingly, the need for affiliation showed a weaker effect on individual performance, possibly reflecting a trade-off between a strong social orientation and a focus on individual performance. This finding is consistent with McClelland's argument that individuals with a dominant need for affiliation tend to prioritize interpersonal harmony over achieving optimal performance outcomes.

4. The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance (H4)

The fourth hypothesis is supported by a path coefficient of 0.167 ($t = 3.284$; $p < 0.05$). Despite having the smallest influence among the four variables, organizational culture still makes a significant and unique contribution to employee performance. This finding underscores the role of organizational culture as a contextual factor that frames and moderates the influence of individual factors such as motivation and commitment.

A high-performance organizational culture, characterized by values such as innovation, accountability, team collaboration, and results-orientedness, creates social norms that encourage

all members of the organization to perform at their best. In the context of private companies in Medan, which are heavily influenced by Batak and Malay cultural values that emphasize hard work, solidarity, and respect for hierarchy, integrating productive local cultural values into the formal organizational culture can be an effective strategy for improving employee performance.

5. Simultaneous Effect Analysis (H5)

The fifth hypothesis, which states that all four independent variables simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance, is fully supported by the data ($R^2 = 0.684$; $F = 48.73$; $p < 0.001$). This R^2 value of 68.4% indicates that this research model has substantial explanatory power. The remaining 31.6% is explained by other factors not included in the model, such as compensation, the physical conditions of the work environment, the technology used, and employee personality factors.

A comparison of the path coefficients indicates the order of relative importance of the independent variables as follows: transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.312$) > organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.274$) > work motivation ($\beta = 0.198$) > organizational culture ($\beta = 0.167$). This order provides clear implications for prioritizing managerial interventions: investments in developing transformational leadership yield the highest returns in terms of improved employee performance, followed by programs to strengthen organizational commitment and work motivation.

V. CONCLUSION →

This study successfully answered all of the proposed research questions and proved the five hypotheses tested. Based on SEM-PLS analysis of 312 private company employees in Medan City, North Sumatra, this study produced the following important conclusions.

1. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.312$; $p < 0.001$). Transformational leadership is the strongest predictor of employee performance in this research model, confirming the central role of leaders as the primary architects of organizational performance
2. Organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.274$; $p < 0.001$), with affective commitment being the most influential dimension. Employees who are emotionally attached to the organization invest greater effort in their work.
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.198$; $p < 0.01$), with the need for achievement being the most dominant motivational dimension driving performance.
4. Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.167$; $p < 0.05$), confirming the role of culture as a context that frames and supports individual performance.
5. Simultaneously, the four independent variables explain 68.4% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.684$), indicating the model's substantial explanatory power and high theoretical relevance.*Addition*: We are grateful for those and/or institutions that support research.

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