

## **Transformational Leadership and Employee Work Engagement in Public Sector Organizations: The Mediating Roles of Job Satisfaction and Employee Motivation**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement through job satisfaction and employee motivation at the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs of East Kutai Regency. This research uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 61 employees using a saturated sampling technique. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, employee motivation, and work engagement. However, job satisfaction and employee motivation do not have a significant direct effect on work engagement. Furthermore, job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Meanwhile, employee motivation partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. These findings indicate that transformational leadership plays an important role in increasing employee work engagement. Leaders who are able to provide inspiration, support, and clear direction can encourage higher levels of employee involvement in their work. Therefore, organizations need to strengthen the implementation of transformational leadership to improve employee engagement in the workplace.

*Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Employee Motivation.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Employee work engagement has become an important issue in organizational management, particularly in public sector institutions where employee dedication and involvement play a crucial role in delivering public services. Work engagement refers to a positive and fulfilling work-related psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees who demonstrate high levels of work engagement tend to show greater enthusiasm, commitment, and active involvement in their work activities. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence employee work engagement is essential for organizations seeking to improve employee performance and service quality.

Leadership is widely recognized as one of the most influential factors shaping employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership has gained considerable attention in organizational studies. Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach in which leaders inspire and motivate employees to achieve higher levels of performance by providing vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Leaders who apply transformational leadership are able to build trust, inspire employees, and encourage them to contribute beyond their formal job responsibilities. As a result, transformational leadership is often associated with positive employee outcomes, including increased motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

In addition to leadership, employee engagement may also be influenced by internal psychological factors such as job satisfaction and employee motivation. Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional responses toward various aspects of their work, including supervision, compensation, work environment, and relationships with colleagues. Meanwhile, employee motivation represents the internal drive that encourages individuals to exert effort in achieving work goals. Employees who experience higher levels of satisfaction and motivation are generally more likely to demonstrate stronger dedication and involvement in their work activities.

The relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement can be explained through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory. This theory suggests that employee engagement develops when employees receive sufficient job resources that support their psychological well-being and work motivation. Job resources such as leadership support, autonomy, and opportunities for development play an important role in stimulating motivation and fostering work engagement. In this context, transformational leadership can be considered an important job resource that provides direction, inspiration, and psychological support for employees, which may ultimately enhance employee engagement.

Previous studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership plays a significant role in increasing employee engagement. For example, research conducted by Manalo et al., (2020), Siahaan et al., (2021), and Wardani et al., (2025) found that transformational leadership positively influences employee work engagement by encouraging motivation, trust, and dedication in the workplace. In addition, several studies suggest that job satisfaction and employee motivation can act as important psychological mechanisms that explain how leadership influences employee engagement.

However, empirical findings regarding the mediating roles of job satisfaction and employee motivation remain inconsistent. Some studies report that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement. For instance, Abolnasser et al., (2023) found that transformational leadership improves employee engagement through increased job satisfaction. Similarly, Dahliana & Ramli, (2026) reported that job satisfaction strengthens the influence of leadership on employee engagement and performance. On the other hand, several studies indicate that job satisfaction and motivation do not always show significant effects on employee engagement. These inconsistencies suggest that the mechanisms linking transformational leadership and work engagement may vary depending on organizational context.

Furthermore, studies examining these relationships in public sector organizations, particularly in local government institutions, remain relatively limited. Public sector organizations often have unique characteristics, including bureaucratic structures, formal procedures, and different motivational dynamics compared with private sector organizations. These characteristics may influence how leadership styles affect employee attitudes and engagement. Therefore, investigating the roles of job satisfaction and employee motivation in

explaining the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement within public sector organizations becomes an important research agenda.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership on employee work engagement through job satisfaction and employee motivation among employees of the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs of East Kutai Regency. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the mediating roles of job satisfaction and employee motivation in the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement, particularly within the context of public sector organizations.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership style in which leaders inspire and motivate employees to achieve higher levels of performance by providing a clear vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. According to Bass & Riggio, (2020), transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their followers and generate awareness and acceptance of the organization's mission and goals. Leaders who apply transformational leadership encourage employees to develop their potential, increase their motivation, and contribute beyond their formal job responsibilities. As a result, transformational leadership is often associated with positive employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, motivation, and work engagement. Northouse, (2021).

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction reflects an employee's positive emotional response toward their job and various aspects of the work environment. Spector, (2022), defines job satisfaction is simply how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. Similarly, Robbins & Judge (2022), job satisfaction is a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. A person with a high level of job satisfaction has positive feelings about their job, while a person with a low level has negative feelings.

### **Employee Motivation**

Employee motivation refers to the internal drive that encourages individuals to exert effort in performing their work tasks and achieving organizational goals. According to McClelland's theory of needs, motivation is influenced by three primary needs: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. Individuals with strong motivation are more likely to demonstrate persistence, enthusiasm, and commitment in their work Robbins & Judge, (2023). motivation is the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal.

### **Work Engagement**

According to Shuck, (2019), employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. And then, according to Segalla, (2021), employee engagement is about how to achieve the company's strategic goals by creating developing human resources, and every level starting from staff, managers, and executives is fully activated in their work so they can give their best effort.

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership style that inspires employees through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Bass & Riggio, (2020). This leadership style is not only oriented toward achieving organizational goals, but also toward fostering employees' personal growth and

psychological well-being. Job satisfaction, meanwhile, reflects employees' positive evaluation of their job and work environment, including supervision, coworker relations, and job characteristics. Robbins & Judge, (2023).

Siahaan et al., (2021) found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among employees in public organizations. Likewise, Abolnasser et al., (2023) reported that transformational leadership contributes to higher job satisfaction through leader support and employee empowerment. Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** Transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction.

Transformational leadership can enhance employee motivation by providing inspiration, support, and opportunities for development. According to Northouse, (2021), transformational leaders strengthen employees' trust, commitment, and willingness to achieve organizational goals through vision, encouragement, and empowerment. Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership positively influences employee motivation. Riyanto et al., (2021); Siahaan et al., (2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** Transformational leadership positively affects employee motivation.

Job satisfaction reflects employees' positive feelings toward their job and work experience. Employees with higher job satisfaction tend to show more positive attitudes, stronger commitment, and greater involvement in their work. Robbins & Judge, (2023). Work engagement is a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Shuck, (2019). Employees who feel satisfied with their job are more likely to be enthusiastic, dedicated, and fully involved in carrying out their work. Previous studies also support this relationship, showing that job satisfaction has a positive effect on work engagement Riyanto et al., (2021); Abolnasser et al., (2023); Alvionita & Puspa, (2025). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3:** Job satisfaction positively affects work engagement.

Employee motivation refers to the internal drive that influences the intensity, direction, and persistence of effort in achieving work goals. Robbins & Judge, (2023). Employees with higher motivation tend to show greater energy and involvement in their work. Work engagement is a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Schaufeli, (2021). Motivated employees are more likely to be enthusiastic and actively involved in their work activities. Previous studies have also reported a positive relationship between employee motivation and work engagement (Siahaan et al., 2021; Riyanto et al., 2021; Alvionita & Puspa, 2025). Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4:** Employee motivation positively affects work engagement.

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership style that encourages employees through vision, inspiration, and individualized support. According to Northouse, (2021), transformational leaders are able to build employees' involvement by creating meaningful goals and encouraging personal development. Work engagement refers to a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Schaufeli, (2021). Employees who receive support, trust, and inspiration from their leaders are more likely to show higher enthusiasm and involvement in their work. Previous studies also found that transformational leadership positively influences work engagement Manalo et al., (2020); Siahaan et al., (2021); Wardani et al., (2025). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H5:** Transformational leadership positively affects work engagement.

Transformational leadership may influence work engagement not only directly but also indirectly through job satisfaction. Leaders who provide support, inspiration, and attention to employees' needs can create more positive work experiences. According to Robbins & Judge, (2023), employees who are satisfied with their job tend to show stronger emotional attachment and involvement in their work. In this relationship, job satisfaction may act as an important mechanism linking transformational leadership and work engagement. Empirical studies also support this mediating role, showing that transformational leadership can enhance work engagement through job satisfaction Abolnasser et al., (2023); Dahliana & Ramli, (2026). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H6:** Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

Transformational leadership may influence work engagement indirectly through employee motivation. Leaders who provide inspiration, empowerment, and support can strengthen employees' willingness to contribute and perform their tasks effectively. According to Northouse, (2021), transformational leadership encourages employees' internal drive through vision, support, and individualized attention. In line with McClelland's needs theory, such leadership may enhance employee motivation by fulfilling employees' needs for achievement, affiliation, and responsibility. Previous empirical studies also indicate that employee motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement . Riyanto et al., (2021); Siahaan et al., (2021); Wardani et al., (2025). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H7:** Employee motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was used to analyze the relationships among variables through statistical analysis, while the explanatory design aimed to explain the causal relationships between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, employee motivation, and work engagement. The population of this study consisted of employees of the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs of East Kutai Regency. Due to the relatively small population size, this study used a saturated sampling technique (census), in which all members of the population were involved as research respondents. The total population consisted of 62 employees; however, the Head of the Department was excluded from the respondents because the leadership variable was evaluated from the perspective of employees. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 61 employees. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The measurement indicators for each variable were adapted from established theories and previous studies related to transformational leadership, job satisfaction, employee motivation, and work engagement. Data analysis in this study was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing complex relationships among variables, including direct and indirect effects, and can be applied to studies with relatively small sample sizes. The analysis involved two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model was assessed through tests of validity and reliability, while the inner model was evaluated to examine the relationships among the constructs and to test the proposed hypotheses.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### Respondent Profile

This study involved employees of the Cooperative and SME Office of East Kutai Regency as respondents. The respondent profile provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in this study. These characteristics include gender, age, education level, and years of service. Based on the collected data, the majority of respondents were dominated by employees within productive working age and had relatively adequate educational backgrounds. This indicates that the respondents possess sufficient experience and knowledge to provide reliable responses regarding leadership practices, job satisfaction, motivation, and work engagement within the organization. The demographic information of respondents is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	30	49,2
	Female	31	50,8
<b>Age</b>	Kurang dari 30 years	2	3,3
	31-40 years	18	29,5
	41-50 years	26	42,6
	>50 years	15	24,6
<b>Education Level</b>	Senior High School	15	24,6
	Diploma III	3	4,9
	Bachelor's Degree	35	57,4
	Master's Degree	7	11,5
	Doctoral Degree	1	1,6
<b>Employment Status</b>	Civil Servant	33	54,1
	Government Contract Employee	28	45,9
<b>Years of Service</b>	< 5 years	31	50,8
	6 - 10 years	1	1,6
	11 - 15 years	2	3,3
	16 - 20 years	16	26,2
	> 20 years	11	18,0

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The results show that the number of male and female respondents is relatively balanced, with females slightly dominating (50.8%). In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents are between 41 and 50 years old (42.6%), indicating that most employees are in their productive working age. Regarding education level, most respondents hold a bachelor's degree (57.4%), suggesting that employees possess adequate educational backgrounds to understand organizational practices and work-related issues. In terms of employment status, slightly more than half of the respondents are civil servants (54.1%), while the remaining respondents are government contract employees (45.9%). Furthermore, most respondents have less than five years of service (50.8%), indicating that many employees are relatively early in their tenure within the organization.

### Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure the validity and reliability of the research constructs. The assessment included tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), while construct reliability was evaluated using composite reliability (CR). Discriminant validity was examined using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to confirm that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. The results of convergent validity and construct reliability are presented in Table 2, while the discriminant validity results are reported in Table 3.

**Table 2. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability**

Construct	Indicators	Outer Loading	AVE	CR
<b>Transformational Leadership (X)</b>	X1	0,905	0,697	0,901
	X2	0,849		
	X3	0,813		
	X4	0,765		
<b>Job Satisfaction (Y1)</b>	Y1.1	0,827	0,694	0,919
	Y1.2	0,896		
	Y1.3	0,827		
	Y1.4	0,832		
	Y1.5	0,778		
<b>Work Engagement (Y2)</b>	Y2.1	0,842	0,706	0,878
	Y2.2	0,781		
	Y2.3	0,893		
<b>Employee Motivation (Y3)</b>	Y3.1	0,859	0,745	0,897
	Y3.2	0,885		
	Y3.3	0,845		

Source: SmartPLS Output.

As shown in Table 2, all outer loading values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. In addition, the AVE values for all constructs are above 0.50 and the composite reliability values exceed 0.70, indicating adequate convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) as suggested by Henseler et al., (2015). This method is recommended in PLS-SEM analysis to evaluate whether constructs are empirically distinct from one another. According to the recommended threshold, HTMT values should be below 0.90 to confirm adequate discriminant validity. The results of the discriminant validity test are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)**

Construct	TL	JS	WE	EM
<b>Transformational Leadership (TL)</b>	-			
<b>Job Satisfaction (JS)</b>	0,760	-		
<b>Work Engagement (WE)</b>	0,668	0,566	-	
<b>Employee Motivation (EM)</b>	0,656	0,827	0,652	-

Source: SmartPLS Output.

As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. Therefore, the measurement model satisfies the criterion for discriminant validity.

### Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships among the constructs and to assess the predictive capability of the model. The evaluation included collinearity assessment, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and hypothesis testing.

**Table 4. Collinearity Assessment (VIF)**

Relationship	VIF
Transformational Leadership (X) → Job Satisfaction (Y1)	1,000
Transformational Leadership (X) → Work Engagement (Y3)	1,857
Transformational Leadership (X) → Employee Motivation (Y2)	1,000
Job Satisfaction (Y1) → Work Engagement (Y3)	2,572
Employee Motivation (Y2) → Work Engagement (Y3)	2,073

Source: SmartPLS Output.

Collinearity among the predictor constructs was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). As shown in Table 4, all VIF values range from 1.000 to 2.572, which are below the recommended threshold of 5 Hair et al., (2019). This indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern in the structural model.

**Table 5. Structural Model Assessment**

Construct / Relationship	$R^2$	$f^2$	$Q^2$
Job Satisfaction (Y1)	0,447	-	0,289
Employee Motivation (Y2)	0,314	-	0,219
Work Engagement (Y3)	0,380	-	0,211
Transformational Leadership (X) → Job Satisfaction (Y1)	-	0,808	-
Transformational Leadership (X) → Work Engagement (Y3)	-	0,457	-
Transformational Leadership (X) → Employee Motivation (Y2)	-	0,116	-
Job Satisfaction (Y1) → Work Engagement (Y3)	-	0,000	-
Employee Motivation (Y2) → Work Engagement (Y3)	-	0,074	-

Source: SmartPLS Output.

As presented in Table 5, the  $R^2$  values indicate that transformational leadership explains 44.7% of the variance in job satisfaction, 31.4% of the variance in employee motivation, and 38.0% of the variance in work engagement. These results suggest that the model has moderate explanatory power. The effect size ( $f^2$ ) results show that transformational leadership has a substantial effect on job satisfaction ( $f^2 = 0.808$ ) and employee motivation ( $f^2 = 0.457$ ), while its effect on work engagement is relatively smaller ( $f^2 = 0.116$ ). In contrast, job satisfaction and employee motivation show negligible to small effects on work engagement. Furthermore, the

$Q^2$  values for all endogenous constructs are greater than zero (0.289, 0.219, and 0.211), indicating that the structural model has adequate predictive relevance.

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS to examine the significance of the relationships among the constructs. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Criteria
H1	Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction	0,668	9.671	0,000	Supported
H2	Transformational Leadership → Work Engagement	0,365	2.026	0,043	Supported
H3	Transformational Leadership → Employee Motivation	0,560	5.553	0,000	Supported
H4	Job Satisfaction → Work Engagement	0,027	0,147	0,883	Not Supported
H5	Employee Motivation → Work Engagement	0,308	1.926	0,054	Not Supported

Source: SmartPLS Output.

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.668$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding suggests that leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors can enhance employees' satisfaction with their jobs. Furthermore, transformational leadership also has a significant positive effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.365$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ) and employee motivation ( $\beta = 0.560$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that transformational leadership plays an important role in increasing employees' enthusiasm, involvement, and motivation in performing their work. However, the results reveal that job satisfaction does not have a significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.027$ ,  $p = 0.883$ ). Similarly, employee motivation does not significantly influence work engagement ( $\beta = 0.308$ ,  $p = 0.054$ ). These findings suggest that employees' work engagement may be influenced by other factors beyond job satisfaction and motivation.

### Mediation Testing

Mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether job satisfaction and employee motivation mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. The mediation effects were assessed using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS by evaluating the significance of the indirect effects. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Indirect Effects and Mediation Analysis**

Hypothesis	Indirect Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
H6	Transformational Leadership → Job	0.018	0,142	0,887	Not Supported

	Satisfaction → Work Engagement				
H7	Transformational Leadership → Employee Motivation → Work Engagement	0,173	2,003	0,045	Supported

Source: SmartPLS Output.

As presented in Table 7, job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.018$ ,  $p = 0.887$ ). This indicates that although transformational leadership increases job satisfaction, the increase in job satisfaction does not significantly translate into higher work engagement. In contrast, employee motivation significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.173$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ). This finding suggests that transformational leadership enhances employees' work engagement indirectly through increased employee motivation.

### Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. This finding indicates that leaders who demonstrate inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence are able to create a supportive work environment that enhances employees' positive perceptions of their jobs. Employees tend to feel more satisfied when leaders provide encouragement, clear direction, and appreciation for their contributions. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted by Abolnasser et al., (2023); Siahaan et al., (2021); Wardani et al., (2025), which state that transformational leadership plays an important role in increasing employees' job satisfaction by fostering trust, respect, and emotional attachment between leaders and employees. In the context of public sector organizations, supportive leadership practices are essential in maintaining employees' positive attitudes toward their work despite bureaucratic challenges.

### Transformational Leadership and Employee Motivation

Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. This finding suggests that leaders who provide inspiration, clear direction, and individual support are more likely to strengthen employees' willingness to perform their tasks and contribute to organizational goals. In this study, employee motivation was most strongly reflected in employees' drive to gain trust, take greater roles, and assume more responsibility in their work. This indicates that employees tend to be more motivated when leaders provide confidence, involvement, and opportunities to contribute more actively. Transformational leaders who communicate goals clearly and empower employees can stimulate employees' intrinsic motivation and strengthen their commitment to achieving organizational objectives. This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee motivation. Riyanto et al., (2021); Siahaan et al., (2021)

### Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement

Job satisfaction has a positive but insignificant effect on work engagement. This indicates that employees' satisfaction with their job does not necessarily translate into stronger engagement at work. Although employees may feel satisfied with certain aspects of their work, such as relationships with coworkers and the work environment, these conditions may not be sufficient to strengthen their emotional attachment and deeper involvement in their job. In this study, work engagement was most strongly reflected in employees' sense of focus, enthusiasm, and emotional involvement in their work. This suggests that work engagement

is more closely related to the meaning of work and psychological involvement than to job satisfaction alone. In other words, employees may feel satisfied with their job, but this does not automatically lead to higher work engagement. This finding implies that work engagement may be shaped more strongly by other factors, such as motivation and meaningful work experiences, rather than by job satisfaction alone. The result is not in line with previous studies that reported a significant positive effect of job satisfaction on work engagement. Riyanto et al., (2021); Abolnasser et al., (2023); Alvionita & Puspa, (2025). However, this study suggests that job satisfaction and work engagement, although related, do not always develop in a directly significant relationship.

### **Employee Motivation and Work Engagement**

Employee motivation has a positive but insignificant effect on work engagement. This finding suggests that employee motivation has not been strong enough to directly increase work engagement. Although motivated employees are generally more willing to perform their tasks and achieve organizational goals, such motivation does not automatically lead to higher vigor, dedication, and absorption at work. This finding implies that motivation alone may not be sufficient to strengthen employees' work engagement. Work engagement may also be influenced by other factors that more directly shape employees' psychological attachment to their work. This result is **not in line with** previous studies which reported that employee motivation has a significant positive effect on work engagement. Riyanto et al., (2021); Siahaan et al., (2021); Alvionita & Puspa, (2025).

### **Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement**

Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. This finding suggests that leaders who provide inspiration, support, and clear direction are more likely to strengthen employees' psychological attachment to their work. Employees tend to be more enthusiastic, dedicated, and involved in their work when they perceive their leaders as role models who encourage and support their development. In this study, transformational leadership was mainly reflected in leadership example and clarity of direction. This implies that employees are more likely to develop stronger work engagement when leaders demonstrate integrity, provide clear goals, and create a supportive work environment. Such leadership helps employees perceive their work as more meaningful and encourages deeper involvement in their job. This result is in line with previous studies showing that transformational leadership significantly improves work engagement. Manalo et al., (2020); Siahaan et al., (2021); Wardani et al., (2025).

### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

Transformational leadership has a positive but insignificant indirect effect on work engagement through job satisfaction. This indicates that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Although transformational leadership significantly affects job satisfaction, the indirect path through job satisfaction was not strong enough to explain work engagement. This finding suggests that transformational leadership is more likely to influence work engagement directly rather than through job satisfaction. In other words, employees' work engagement appears to be shaped more by the direct role of leadership than by their level of job satisfaction. This result is not in line with previous studies which reported that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Abolnasser et al., (2023); Dahliana & Ramli, (2026).

### **The Mediating Role of Employee Motivation**

Transformational leadership has a positive and significant indirect effect on work engagement through employee motivation. This indicates that employee motivation mediates

the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant and positive, the mediation can be interpreted as partial and complementary mediation. This finding suggests that transformational leadership strengthens work engagement not only directly, but also indirectly by increasing employee motivation. Leaders who provide inspiration, support, and trust are more likely to encourage employees to work with greater energy, commitment, and involvement. In turn, this stronger motivation contributes to higher work engagement. This result is in line with previous studies showing that employee motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement. Riyanto, et al., (2021); Siahaan et al., (2021); Wardani et al., (2025).

## CONCLUSION

This study found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, employee motivation, and work engagement, confirming its crucial role in shaping employees' attitudes, strengthening their motivation, and enhancing their psychological attachment to work. However, job satisfaction and employee motivation were not found to have a significant direct effect on work engagement, despite showing positive relationships. This indicates that these variables alone are not sufficient to directly explain employees' engagement in this context. Furthermore, the findings revealed that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. In contrast, employee motivation was found to significantly mediate this relationship, suggesting that transformational leadership can enhance work engagement both directly and indirectly through the strengthening of employee motivation.

The practical implications of this study highlight the importance for organizations to strengthen transformational leadership practices by providing clear direction, acting as role models, and offering support that encourages employees to actively contribute to organizational goals. Given the significant mediating role of employee motivation, organizations should also focus on strategies to enhance motivation, such as assigning meaningful responsibilities, recognizing employee contributions, and fostering greater involvement in work activities. For future research, it is recommended to incorporate additional variables that may better explain work engagement, including perceived organizational support, meaningful work, autonomy, workload, and organizational culture. Moreover, future studies should consider more comprehensive models by examining additional mediating or moderating variables, as well as expanding research settings and applying longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to obtain a deeper understanding of employee work engagement.

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