

Transformational Leadership and Work Competence: A Path to Enhanced Employee Performance

Kepemimpinan Transformasional dan Kompetensi Kerja: Jalan Menuju Peningkatan Kinerja Karyawan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to analyze the influence of transformational leadership style and work competency on employee performance. The research method used is quantitative research with associative research type. The population in this study were all employees of the PPIC Dept. PT XYZ with a total research sample of 70 employees. The sampling technique uses saturated samples and uses collection techniques with observation instruments, questionnaires and interviews. Then the data was analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS version 29 software. The results of the research partially showed that transformational leadership style had no significant influence on employee performance and work competency had a significant influence on employee performance. The research results simultaneously show that transformational leadership style and work competency have a significant effect on employee performance. The implication of this research is that it is necessary to improve employee performance, develop programs, train and improve leadership systems.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership Style, Job Competency, Employee Performance

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan transformasional dan kompetensi kerja terhadap kinerja karyawan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kuantitatif dengan jenis penelitian asosiatif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah seluruh karyawan Dept PPIC PT XYZ dengan jumlah sampel penelitian sebanyak 70 karyawan. Teknik pengambilan sampel menggunakan sampel jenuh dan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan dengan instrumen observasi, kuesioner dan wawancara. Kemudian data dianalisis dengan analisis regresi linier berganda dengan menggunakan software SPSS versi 29. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara parsial gaya kepemimpinan transformasional terhadap kinerja karyawan tidak berpengaruh signifikan dan untuk kompetensi kerja terhadap kinerja karyawan berpengaruh signifikan. Hasil penelitian secara simultan adalah gaya kepemimpinan transformasional dan kompetensi kerja berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya meningkatkan kinerja karyawan, mengembangkan program pelatihan dan memperbaiki sistem kepemimpinan.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Kompetensi Kerja, Kinerja Karyawan

1. Introduction

Human resources (HR) are the core element in achieving organizational objectives, as they possess the unique capability to mobilize other resources to create a competitive advantage. Employee performance is a crucial indicator of the effectiveness of HR management, reflecting the

extent to which individuals contribute to the success of an organization (Krisnawati & Bagia, 2021). High-performing employees help organizations achieve their vision and sustain growth, whereas poor performance hinders organizational progress and may lead to unmet goals (Nurjaya, 2021). Thus, improving employee performance remains a key priority for companies seeking long-term competitiveness and operational excellence.

PT XYZ Karawang is a manufacturing company engaged in the production of spare parts for motor vehicles and motorcycles, supplying several automotive industries in the Karawang–Bekasi industrial zone. Based on data from the HRD Department (2024), employee performance in the Production Planning and Inventory Control (PPIC) Department during 2023 did not meet expectations. Out of 70 employees, only 2 individuals (2.9%) achieved the company's performance target of 90%, while the rest fell below expectations. This indicates that employee performance in the PPIC Department remains suboptimal and requires serious attention from management, especially in terms of leadership and work competence improvement.

The low level of employee performance may be influenced by several factors such as decreased motivation, lack of discipline, and insufficient guidance from leaders to help employees reach their full potential. Nandang, Jamaludin, and Wanta (2021) identified that leadership style and work environment significantly affect employee stress and job performance. Similarly, Kurniawan, Qomariah, and Cahyono (2021) found that leadership and competence directly enhance work motivation and performance. These findings highlight the importance of leadership quality and employee competence as key determinants of productivity and organizational success.

One of the leadership approaches considered effective in improving employee performance is transformational leadership. This leadership style emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and develop subordinates to achieve collective goals beyond individual interests (Mark & Rafferty, 2022). Transformational leaders act as role models who foster trust, encourage innovation, and guide their teams to perform at their highest potential (Bakker et al., 2023). They not only direct employees but also empower them, creating a sense of ownership and shared purpose that leads to higher engagement and productivity.

However, the implementation of transformational leadership within PT XYZ's PPIC Department appears to face several challenges, including unclear organizational vision, limited communication, lack of employee development support, and inadequate role modeling from leaders. Lindert, Zeike, Choi, and Pfaff (2022) noted that transformational leadership is less effective when leaders fail to maintain strong communication or ensure the psychological well-being of their subordinates. Thus, to maximize its impact, leaders must consistently demonstrate integrity, communicate effectively, and create an empowering work environment that encourages employees to contribute their best efforts.

Beyond leadership, work competence also plays a vital role in shaping employee performance. Competence refers to the combination of knowledge, technical skills, and behavioral attributes that enable individuals to perform tasks effectively (Hajiali et al., 2022). Herawati, Lestari, and Yuniningsih (2023) emphasized that employee competence significantly contributes to performance outcomes, especially when supported by strong leadership and work ethics. At PT XYZ, however, there remains a gap between the current competencies of employees and the evolving demands of their work, particularly as the company integrates new technologies and production methods.

A major challenge identified during observation is the lack of adequate training and professional development programs. Many employees have not received sufficient opportunities to upgrade their skills in line with technological and operational changes. According to Jun and Lee

(2023), organizational support for creativity and adaptability is essential to promote innovative behavior and enhance performance. Therefore, structured and continuous competency development through training, mentoring, and evaluation is necessary to prepare employees for dynamic industrial environments.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance. Deng et al. (2023) showed that effective transformational leadership increases motivation and commitment to organizational goals, while Nasir et al. (2022) confirmed that leadership combined with organizational innovation significantly enhances performance, especially in small and medium enterprises. Similarly, Meiryani et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership remained impactful in improving employee outcomes even under remote working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies underline the versatility of transformational leadership as a powerful driver of performance in various organizational contexts.

Despite these findings, a research gap still exists, particularly in the context of Indonesia's manufacturing industry. Most previous studies have been conducted in the public or service sectors (Herawati et al., 2023; Krisnawati & Bagia, 2021), while limited attention has been given to manufacturing departments such as PPIC, which play a critical role in supply chain coordination and production efficiency. Moreover, mediating variables such as work engagement and psychological empowerment, highlighted in studies like Huang et al. (2025), have not been extensively explored in local industrial contexts. This indicates a need for deeper empirical examination of how leadership and competence jointly affect employee performance in manufacturing environments.

Considering these issues, the present study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and work competence on employee performance in the PPIC Department of PT XYZ Karawang. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical focus on the manufacturing sector, integrating two critical variables—leadership style and work competence—as key determinants of performance. The study seeks to provide theoretical insights and practical recommendations for organizations to strengthen adaptive human resource strategies that foster sustainable employee performance and long-term organizational growth.

2. Literature Review

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership describes a leader's ability to influence, motivate, and guide individuals or groups toward achieving shared goals in a given context (Mark & Rafferty, 2022). This leadership style is particularly effective in aligning employees' beliefs, behaviors, and aspirations with broader organizational objectives that often surpass initial expectations. Through their vision and charisma, transformational leaders foster commitment, innovation, and performance improvement among their subordinates (Rehmani et al., 2023; Nasir et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership is characterized by four main indicators: (1) **charisma**, reflecting a leader's personal magnetism and ability to inspire others to support organizational goals enthusiastically; (2) **inspirational motivation**, referring to a leader's skill in articulating an inspiring future vision and motivating employees toward it; (3) **intellectual stimulation**, which involves encouraging creativity and innovative problem-solving; and (4) **individualized consideration**, which entails showing empathy, offering personal support, and fostering employee growth and career development (Lindert et al., 2022; Meiryani et al., 2022). In essence, transformational leadership

plays a crucial role in driving organizational success through influence, motivation, and direction, enabling employees to reach higher levels of achievement (Sulastri, 2023; Supardi & Anshari, 2022).

Job Competence

Competence refers to an individual's demonstrable attributes—including knowledge, skills, and behaviors—that enable effective performance in the workplace. According to Abdi and Wahid (2018, as cited in Krisnawati & Bagia, 2021), employees with higher competence levels tend to produce superior work outcomes. Competence encompasses several dimensions, including skills, knowledge, social roles, self-image, and attitudes, illustrating that it extends beyond technical expertise to include personal and interpersonal factors. This multidimensional perspective emphasizes that developing competencies is essential for achieving optimal performance (Widayanto & Nugroho, 2022; Sinambela & Lestari, 2021).

Competence not only enhances task execution but also fosters adaptability and innovation, which are critical for organizational competitiveness. Kurniawan, Qomariah, and Cahyono (2021) highlight that leadership and competence together improve employee motivation and performance, while Krisnawati and Bagia (2021) empirically confirmed that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, enhancing employee competencies through training, mentoring, and experience is an effective strategy to improve both individual and organizational outcomes.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is defined as the result of work achieved by individuals or groups within an organization according to their roles, responsibilities, and authority, in line with organizational objectives (Nurjaya, 2021). Performance involves measurable indicators such as work quality, communication skills, timeliness, capability, and initiative. Daryanto and Bintoro (as cited in Prasetyo et al., 2021) argue that performance is a systematic effort to ensure organizational goals are met efficiently and effectively, while maintaining ethical and legal standards. Employee performance thus reflects the balance between inputs (such as competence and motivation) and outputs (such as productivity and quality).

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership significantly influences employee performance by inspiring followers to transcend personal interests for organizational success (Mark & Rafferty, 2022; Meiryani et al., 2022). When employees feel inspired, valued, and empowered by their leaders, they demonstrate greater enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment, leading to improved work quality and productivity (Nasir et al., 2022; Pranada, 2022). Studies consistently show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on performance across various organizational contexts (Supardi & Anshari, 2022; Sulastri, 2023).

According to Randy, Agung, and Kuraesin (2019), transformational leadership motivates employees intrinsically, fostering a sense of belonging and accountability. Similarly, Lindert et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership enhances psychological well-being, which in turn supports sustained employee performance. Furthermore, Rehmani et al. (2023) demonstrated that transformational leaders stimulate innovation, leading to higher individual and collective performance outcomes. These findings affirm that transformational leadership is a critical determinant of employee effectiveness and organizational success.

The Effect of Competence on Employee Performance

Job competence represents an employee's ability to perform work effectively through a combination of technical skills, experience, and professional attitude (Krisnawati & Bagia, 2021). Employees with higher competence levels tend to achieve better outcomes, as they can handle complex tasks with confidence and accuracy (Sinambela & Lestari, 2021). Kurniawan et al. (2021) argue that competence enhances both motivation and performance, suggesting that capability development is integral to sustaining high performance.

Research by Widayanto and Nugroho (2022) further shows that competence contributes to better work motivation, which indirectly boosts performance. Thus, there is a direct and positive relationship between competence and performance—employees with strong knowledge, technical proficiency, and positive work attitudes are more likely to meet or exceed organizational expectations.

The Effect of Transformational Leadership and Competence on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership and work competence together form a synergistic mechanism that significantly enhances employee performance. Transformational leaders inspire and guide employees, while competence provides the necessary foundation for effective task execution (Razaq et al., 2025). When leaders communicate a compelling vision, foster intellectual engagement, and recognize individual strengths, employees are more motivated to perform at their best (Nasir et al., 2022; Supardi & Anshari, 2022).

Yanti and Mursidi (2021) found that transformational leadership and competence jointly have a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Similarly, Razaq et al. (2025) confirmed that leadership and competence, when mediated by employee well-being, improve both individual and organizational productivity. These findings are reinforced by Herawati et al. (2023), who observed similar effects within government institutions. Therefore, integrating transformational leadership practices with competence development strategies can foster productivity, innovation, and long-term organizational growth.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical and empirical relationships discussed, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on the performance of PT XYZ employees.

H2: Work competence has a positive and significant effect on the performance of PT XYZ employees.

H3: Transformational leadership style and work competence together have a positive and significant effect on the performance of PT XYZ employees.

3. Methods

This study applies a quantitative approach with an associative research design. The associative method aims to identify the relationship between two or more variables and determine the strength of their influence. In this context, the study seeks to examine how transformational leadership style (X1) and work competence (X2) affect employee performance (Y) within the PPIC Department of PT XYZ. By utilizing a quantitative approach, the research collects numerical data that

can be analyzed statistically to measure the relationship and degree of influence between these variables accurately.

The population in this study consists of all employees of the PPIC Department of PT XYZ, totaling 70 individuals. A population is defined as a group of subjects that share specific characteristics chosen by researchers for analysis and conclusion drawing. Since the total population is fewer than 100 employees, the study uses a saturated sampling technique, meaning all members of the population are included as the research sample. This approach ensures that the data obtained represent the entire population accurately.

Sampling was conducted using a simple random sampling technique, where each employee had an equal chance of being selected as part of the study. This method was chosen to avoid bias and to ensure that every member of the PPIC Department had the same opportunity to participate, regardless of position or status within the department.

The data collection process used a population survey method through questionnaires and direct observation at the research site. The questionnaire was distributed to all employees in the PPIC Department and contained statements related to transformational leadership style, work competence, and employee performance. Respondents were asked to provide their responses using a five-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and a score of 5 indicated "strongly agree." In addition to questionnaires, direct interviews were also conducted with several employees to gain deeper insights and qualitative validation of the quantitative data.

For data analysis, this study employed multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS version 29. This statistical method was selected to evaluate the extent to which transformational leadership style and work competence influence employee performance, both individually and simultaneously. The analysis began with classical assumption testing to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical criteria.

The classical assumption tests conducted include the normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. The normality test assesses whether the residuals of the regression model are normally distributed, ensuring the data are appropriate for parametric analysis. The multicollinearity test determines whether there is a high correlation among independent variables, which could distort the regression results. The heteroscedasticity test evaluates whether the variance of the residuals is consistent across observations; the absence of heteroscedasticity indicates that the model has stable variance and produces reliable estimates.

Once the classical assumption tests were satisfied, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to measure the effect of transformational leadership and competence on employee performance. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to explain the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be predicted from the independent variables. The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1, where a higher value indicates a stronger relationship and better explanatory power of the model.

To test the partial effect of each independent variable on employee performance, a t-test was conducted. The t-test examines whether transformational leadership style and work competence individually have a significant influence on performance. A significant t-value indicates that the variable has a meaningful impact on employee performance when other variables are held constant.

Additionally, an F-test was used to determine the simultaneous effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The F-test compares the explained variance with the unexplained variance in the model to evaluate whether the regression as a whole is statistically

significant. A significant F-value indicates that at least one independent variable contributes meaningfully to explaining changes in employee performance.

Overall, this methodology was designed to comprehensively assess the relationships among transformational leadership, work competence, and employee performance at PT XYZ. The combination of a quantitative approach, complete population sampling, structured questionnaires, and robust statistical analysis provides a reliable foundation for drawing conclusions and recommendations based on empirical data.

4. Results and Discussion

Validity Test

The results of the validity test indicate that statements related to work motivation (X1), work discipline (X2), and employee performance (Y) have a validity coefficient exceeding the critical value of 0.30. A validity coefficient above this critical threshold signifies a strong correlation between each statement and the variable it measures. Consequently, each statement regarding transformational leadership, work competence, and employee performance is considered valid and reliable for this study. This strong validity assures the credibility of these statements, confirming their suitability for accurately measuring the variables of interest.

Reliability Test

Reliability indicates the consistency and dependability of an instrument in measuring the same variable across various contexts and times. In this study, a high reliability value demonstrates the consistency of the instrument, showing that repeated use under similar conditions would yield consistent results. The Cronbach's alpha value exceeded 0.6, affirming that the instrument is reliable, allowing for accurate statistical analysis and conclusions about the studied variables. Reliability evaluation, thus, is crucial in establishing the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected.

Classical Assumption Test Results

Normality Test

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Test	Kolmogorov Sample Result	Significance Level	Outcome
Normality Test	0.094	> 0.05	Normally Distributed

Source: Results of SPSS 29 analysis processed by researchers, 2024.

In this normality test, a significance level above 0.05 is considered normal. Here, the Kolmogorov sample result is 0.094, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data follows a normal distribution.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test shows that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for variables X1 and X2 is below 10, and the tolerance value exceeds 0.1. Specifically, X1 and X2 have a VIF of 1.865 (below 10) and a tolerance value of 0.539 (above 0.1), confirming the absence of multicollinearity in the data.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity is absent if points are evenly spread above and below the center line in the plot, without forming a specific pattern. The diagram confirms the absence of heteroscedasticity in this dataset.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

The multiple linear regression model is given by the equation:

$$Y = a + b_1 \cdot x_1 + b_2 \cdot x_2$$

With values:

$$Y = 9.690 + 0.163 \cdot X_1 + 0.486 \cdot X_2$$

Here, the constant $a = 9.690$ reflects the base level of employee performance, unaffected by other variables. The coefficient $b_1 = 0.163$ suggests that for each unit increase in transformational leadership (X_1), employee performance increases by 0.163 units. Likewise, $b_2 = 0.486$ signifies that each unit increase in work competence (X_2) boosts employee performance by 0.486 units.

Determination Test

Table 2. Determination Test Results

Model Summary	R Square	Explanation
Determination	0.543	54.3% variance explained

Source: Results of SPSS 29 analysis processed by researchers, 2024.

The R Square value of 0.543 indicates that transformational leadership style (X_1) and work competence (X_2) collectively explain 54.3% of the variance in employee performance, leaving 45.7% influenced by other factors not included in this study.

T-Test

Table 3. T-Test Results

Variable	Sig. Value	t-Value	t-Table Value	Outcome
Transformational Leadership (X_1)	0.073	1.832	1.996	No significant influence
Work Competence (X_2)	0.001	5.168	1.996	Significant influence on performance

Source: Results of SPSS 29 analysis processed by researchers, 2024.

The t-test results indicate that transformational leadership style (X_1) does not significantly impact employee performance, with a t-value of 1.832, which is below the critical value of 1.996. In contrast, work competence (X_2) shows a significant influence on employee performance with a t-value of 5.168, exceeding the critical threshold, and a significance level of 0.001, which is less than 0.05.

F-Test

Table 4. F-Test Results

Variables	Sig. Value	F-Calculated	F-Table Value	Conclusion
X_1 (Leadership) & X_2 (Competence)	0.001	21.452	3.13	Significant influence on employee performance

Source: Results of SPSS 29 analysis processed by researchers, 2024.

The F-test results reveal that transformational leadership style (X1) and work competence (X2) have a significant collective influence on employee performance, with a significance level of 0.001 (below 0.05) and an F-calculated value of 21.452, which exceeds the F-table value of 3.13. This result supports the importance of both factors in enhancing employee performance.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that employee performance within the PPIC Department of PT XYZ is shaped by both transformational leadership style and job competence, although their effects manifest differently. Transformational leadership, despite its theoretical potential to inspire, motivate, and elevate employee engagement, was found to have an insignificant impact on performance in this particular organizational context. This finding suggests that leadership behaviors focused on vision and inspiration alone may not be sufficient to drive measurable performance outcomes unless they are supported by other enabling factors such as communication quality, organizational support, and employee readiness. Research by Bakker et al. (2023) and Deng et al. (2023) supports the view that the impact of transformational leadership can vary depending on situational and contextual conditions, including team dynamics and organizational structure. Similarly, Lindert et al. (2022) highlight that while transformational leadership contributes positively to employee well-being and motivation, its direct link to performance often depends on how effectively leaders translate vision into actionable goals and tangible support.

In contrast, job competence emerged as a critical determinant of employee performance. Employees who possess strong job-related knowledge, technical proficiency, and problem-solving abilities tend to perform better, demonstrating higher levels of productivity and accuracy. Studies such as those by Krisnawati and Bagia (2021), Hajiali et al. (2022), and Herawati et al. (2023) consistently affirm that competence directly enhances performance outcomes because skilled employees can adapt to challenges, maintain quality standards, and execute tasks efficiently. Competence not only influences individual output but also contributes to collective departmental performance, fostering an environment of professionalism and continuous improvement.

When transformational leadership and job competence are considered together, their combined effect produces a significant and positive impact on employee performance. This synergy highlights that leadership effectiveness is amplified when employees are competent, confident, and capable of translating leadership direction into action. Transformational leaders who encourage development, provide clear feedback, and support skill enhancement enable competent employees to maximize their potential. As Razaq et al. (2025) and Huang et al. (2025) emphasize, leadership that integrates empowerment and competence-building creates a more resilient and high-performing workforce. Similarly, Meiryani et al. (2022) and Nasir et al. (2022) show that employees under transformational leaders who also invest in competence development exhibit stronger motivation, creativity, and commitment, all of which enhance organizational performance.

These findings underscore an important implication for organizational management at PT XYZ: employee performance improvement requires an integrative approach that combines leadership practices with competence development strategies. Leaders should not only focus on inspiring and motivating employees but also on facilitating skill-building, providing resources, and aligning roles with individual capabilities. Competence acts as the foundation upon which leadership effectiveness is built, transforming vision into operational success. As studies by Rehmani et al. (2023), Jun and Lee (2023), and Supardi and Anshari (2022) suggest, transformational leadership

that emphasizes mentoring, empowerment, and capability development can unlock higher levels of engagement and innovation.

In essence, the findings from this research affirm that while transformational leadership alone may not yield immediate performance gains, its true value emerges when combined with high employee competence. The interaction between these two factors fosters a culture of growth, adaptability, and excellence within the organization. Strengthening competence through training, performance feedback, and skill-based development, supported by visionary leadership, can therefore serve as an effective pathway toward sustained performance enhancement in the PPIC Department of PT XYZ.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that transformational leadership style individually has no significant impact on employee performance in the PPIC Department of PT XYZ. However, work competence partially has a positive and significant impact on employee performance in the department. Furthermore, the combined effect of transformational leadership style and work competence has an overall positive and significant impact on employee performance. These findings suggest that improvements in employee performance within the PPIC Department can be more effectively achieved through a combined focus on leadership development and competency enhancement.

Improving employee performance can be achieved through the application of transformational leadership styles and the enhancement of work competencies. The results of this research provide guidance for company leaders to develop employee development strategies that focus on skill enhancement and leadership quality. Additionally, the HR management team at PT XYZ should identify areas of competency that need improvement and design training programs aligned with transformational leadership principles to achieve sustainable performance improvement. Finally, the study results can encourage PT XYZ's management to enhance existing leadership strategies by integrating transformational elements into a broader leadership model, fostering an innovative organizational culture, promoting employee growth, and ultimately improving the overall performance of the PPIC department.

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