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The Influence of Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Job Satisfaction on Marketing Performance

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to test the inconsistency of research findings from previous studies regarding what aspects influence salesperson performance. This study also used a quantitative approach by involving 67 respondents, namely the sales force of PT Erlangga Semarang Branch using a questionnaire. This questionnaire was then analyzed using the Partial Least Square technique with the help of SmartPLS software. The results of this study show that the performance of market personnel is not influenced by transformational or transactional leadership styles. Rather, both leadership styles will affect marketers' performance if job satisfaction becomes the mediator between them. This study also proves that job satisfaction also affects the performance of marketers at PT Erlangga Semarang Branch. This result certainly provides new insights for PT Erlangga Cabang Semarang and other companies that understanding employee job satisfaction is one of the factors so that leadership style and performance are connected.

Keywords

Job Satisfaction, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

Every organization or business requires effective management to create optimal work productivity and efficiency in operational processes. Achieving organizational goals is highly dependent on the existence of a structured and directed management system. In this context, the role of a leader becomes very crucial, because the leader is responsible for formulating a vision, setting a strategic direction, and designing a blueprint that will be a guideline in achieving the goals that have been set. In that context, leaders at the team level, supervisors, line managers, and top managers are one of the keys to a company's success in achieving its goals. In a business world where competition is increasingly dynamic, leadership is very important to make employees more productive. A leader's leadership will determine the positive involvement of employees in what the company wants to achieve (Rahmi & Mulyadi, 2018; Dünneberger & Păunescu, 2019).

Transformational leadership is known as a style that emphasizes intrinsic motivation or motivation to employees themselves through providing vision, inspiration, and emotional support. Meanwhile, transactional leadership emphasizes the relationship between leaders and employees through rewards or punishments along with clear rules for giving them, as has been revealed in the research owned by Sukhdev et al. (2014). Although both have different mechanisms, both have been shown to have a significant influence on employee productivity levels, even transactional leadership in one case showed a more substantial impact on employee performance compared to transformational leadership (Kebe et al., 2024).

The publishing industry is currently facing major challenges due to the rapid development of technology and digitalization. In addition to having to adapt to the paperless trend, the graphic industry is also affected by fluctuations in paper supply that disrupt smooth production. Studies show that limited paper supply leads to higher prices and decreased distribution, which is further exacerbated by the reduction in the number of suppliers due to the paperless movement. This condition significantly changes the competitive landscape in the publishing industry, demanding new innovations and strategies to stay relevant (Apriansyah et al., 2023). Publishers can no longer rely solely on selling printed books, but must also be able to create an engaging and interactive reading experience, comparable to digital media, in order to survive and thrive amidst market changes. In Indonesia's increasingly competitive publishing industry, salespeople play a critical role in communicating the value of products amid rising production costs and pressure from low-priced digital alternatives. This challenge is compounded by consumers' tendency to turn to pirated products due to high prices, as well as a lack of public awareness of the negative impacts on the media industry ecosystem (Widowati, 2022). PT. Penerbit Erlangga, as one of the biggest key players in the publishing industry in Indonesia, also faces similar challenges. The Semarang branch, which has a marketing coverage area in part of Central Java, plays a strategic role in maintaining and expanding the company's market share in the region.

Before conducting the main research, the researchers first conducted a preliminary survey to gain an initial understanding of the leadership style applied in the work environment. The preliminary survey was conducted using a questionnaire with closed questions arranged on a Likert-style agreement scale of 1 (one) meaning disagree to 4 (four) meaning strongly agree. The population in this preliminary survey was all 67 marketing employees at the Erlangga Publisher Semarang Branch Office. The survey results showed that employees responded positively to transactional and transformational leadership styles. This shows that they expect active involvement from superiors in the form of support while carrying out their duties.

The pre-survey resulted on how the majority of employees feel the implementation of transactional leadership in the workplace. This is reflected in the high level of employee approval of the behavior of leaders who reward good performance (90.9% of the employees sampled), punish poor performance (89.4% of the employees sampled), set clear work expectations (90.9% of the employees sampled), provide constructive feedback (92.4% of the employees sampled), and help when facing work problems (92.4% of the employees sampled). This finding indicates that in addition to their intrinsic needs being met through recognition and support, the existence of a structured and fair reward and punishment scheme also creates a sense of comfort and motivation at work. In the other hand, the pre-survey also indicate that the majority of employees perceive transformational leadership in the workplace. This is reflected in the high level of agreement with the behavior of leaders who provide an inspiring vision (100% of the employees sampled), motivate achievement beyond routine tasks (100% of the employees sampled), encourage creativity and innovation (97.0% of the employees sampled), show appreciation towards individual employee (98.5% of the employees sampled), and support for individual development (90.9% of the employees sampled).

Although transformational and transactional leadership has been implemented, it was known for a fact that the sales achievement results are still unstable and are still at a sufficient level. It was found that in the last 4 years, the average sales achievement results of the sales force were unstable, as evidenced by a decrease of 4.5% in 2022. Then, the average sales achievement in 2020, 2022, and 2023 only fell into the "sufficient" criteria. The highest achievement was obtained in 2021 and 2023 with an average sale of 88.9% falling into the "sufficient" criteria.

Research gaps were also found, such as no significant influence between transformational leadership and employee performance -as in the research of Insani (2020), and leaders with a transactional system did not affect nurse performance -as found in the research of Chrisshyaren and Erdiansyah (2023), and Aqmarina et al. (2016). These gaps motivated the research raised in this thesis to conduct further investigations, whether leadership, both transformational and transactional, is in accordance with the leadership needed by employees in the publishing industry if they want to improve employee performance. After that, an analysis was also carried out whether satisfaction is a factor that mediates the relationship between leadership and employee performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Leadership is the act of giving influence and direction to others, including guiding and fostering good relationships within a group or organization. With leadership, it is expected that all activities in the organization can run well and according to expectations (Handoko, 2012). Each leader has different traits and characters, so their leadership style also varies and needs to be adjusted to the culture and goals of the organization. Leadership is an individual's ability to influence, motivate, and organize members to interact positively in order to achieve common goals (Veithzal, 2016). Transformational leadership is a process in which leaders motivate and inspire members to achieve common goals through clear coordination and empowerment. Leaders with this style are able to encourage members to go beyond standard performance with a strong vision and ongoing support (Zeng et al., 2022). Therefore, transformational leaders must have the ability to motivate, guide, direct, and influence their members so that organizational goals are achieved (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

According to Hemsworth et al. (2013), the indicators commonly used to measure transformational leadership are Inspiration and Vision (a clear vision that can be

conveyed to employees to motivate them), Individual Influence (the ability to provide individual inspiration to followers), Intellectual Stimulation (the ability to encourage followers to think critically, question the status quo, and develop innovative ideas), Focus on Individual Development (showing concern for individual growth and development), and Empowerment (giving autonomy and authority to followers to make decisions and be responsible for carrying out tasks).

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee performance.

2.2. Transactional Leadership and Employee Performance

According to Sukhdev et al. (2014), transactional leadership is a leadership style that uses a transaction or exchange system in which the leader helps his subordinates in completing work so that the goals desired by the leader are achieved. By using transactional leadership, a leader helps his staff members to be more motivated so that goals are achieved. Transactional leadership emphasizes reciprocal exchange, where leaders provide assistance and consider employees' opinions to complete their work (Gazali & Zainurrafiqi, 2023). This leadership places emphasis on rewards and control over its members (Angga & Iskandar, 2022). This style focuses on work processes and cooperative relationships so that employees feel valued and motivated through rewards. Leaders with a system like this tend to produce compliance with the leader's directions, but are less able to foster enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation in achieving organizational goals.

According to research presented by Rahayuningsih (2017), there are four indicators in transactional leadership. The first indicator is contingent reward, which is when the leader gives awards or wages to members who successfully complete their work responsibilities. The second indicator is management by exception active, where the leader actively supervises and monitors the work of subordinates to prevent errors from occurring. Third, management by exception passive, which is when the leader only acts after an error occurs, with the aim of continuing to direct the achievement of organizational goals. Finally, the fourth indicator is laissez-faire, which describes a leadership style that gives full freedom to subordinates to complete their work in their own way.

H2: Transactional leadership has a positive effect on employee performance.

2.3. Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Performance is a procedure that ensures that organizational processes and employee productivity are aligned (Asbari et al., 2020; Khasanah & Sasana, 2022; Suparjo & Dana, 2024). Employee performance is measured in terms of work efficiency, quality and quantity of work and work achievement (Rahman, 2020). Employee performance is influenced by their attitudes and personal traits, the organization's appreciation of employee work results and the skills and abilities of the employees themselves (Aflah et al., 2021). Companies must take employee performance development very seriously because employee performance and skills will determine the company's position as a failed or successful company in the market (Nursiti & Sofyandi, 2021; Marpaung et al., 2024).

Employee performance is the result of work that includes quality and quantity according to organizational targets and provisions, which are influenced by employee motivation, management style, and skills (Rivai, 2005). According to Robbins and Coulter (2020), employee performance consists of three main dimensions, namely enthusiasm (motivation and energy in working), dedication (commitment and responsibility to work), and appreciation (meaning and sincerity in carrying out work).

Job satisfaction is a psychological concept that refers to a person's level of pleasure or satisfaction with their work. According to Lerner and Locke (2016), job

satisfaction is an individual's perception of the level of conformity between their expectations or desires and the actual conditions of the work being carried out. Job satisfaction plays an important role in encouraging increased productivity, performance, and maintaining employee sustainability in an organization

According to Apriyani et al. (2018), there are several indicators of job satisfaction. The first is job responsibility, which is the extent to which a person's work can provide a sense of satisfaction. Second, wages or compensation, which is the amount of compensation received according to the work done and is considered appropriate. Third, supervision, which is the presence of a superior who consistently provides direction and instructions while working. Fourth, co-workers, which are individuals or groups who support and help each other in completing work, which can be a source of enthusiasm and encourage employees to provide maximum work results.

H3: Job satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between transactional leadership and employee performance.

H5: Job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance.

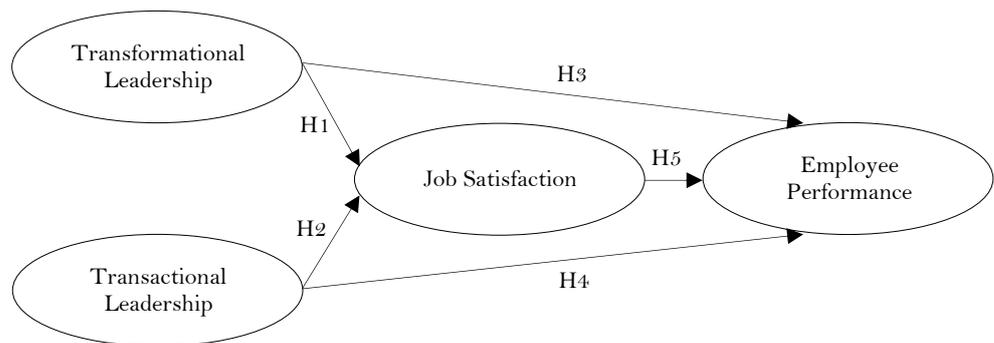


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Figure 1. above shows that the direction of this research is to examine whether the determined variables influence each other. The framework was created to make it easier for readers to see direction of influence of the variables. This study being conducted to see whether transformational and transactional leadership impacted employee performance while mediated by job satisfaction.

3. Methods

The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach, which allows researchers to summarize data, calculate average values, identify patterns, make predictions, and test causal relationships between variables. The population used is the total of all sales staff at the Erlangga Publisher Semarang Branch, totaling 67 people. Of that number, 8 people have worked for less than one year, 2 people have worked for between one and two years, and the majority, namely 57 people, have worked for more than ten years. All employees in this department are male. Because the population is considered small, sampling will be carried out by census.

In the process, researchers use various aids. Such as using a questionnaire to collect answers from respondents. The questionnaire contains a series of statements that respondents will later answer. To determine the answer, the study used a 4-point Likert scale. Where these points will be used to measure the respondent's level of agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The range of agreement on this scale starts from point 1 (strongly disagree) to point 4 (strongly agree).

Researchers also used the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach with the help of Smart PLS software. The reason for using it is because this approach is considered effective for measurement with a small sample size. There are several stages of testing carried out in this study. First, is a validity test which has the aim of measuring the extent to which the research instrument/indicator can be a good measuring tool for variables. Furthermore, the reliability test is to measure the consistency of the indicators in the variable. Then the Multicollinearity Test, to determine whether there is a correlation or not in a study. Then, researchers can also see the direction of the relationship between variables is positive or negative by using the path coefficient test. The F-Square test is also used to see the strength of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent. The strength is divided into three categories, namely low, medium, and high. Then, to see the feasibility of a study, you can use the goodness of fit test. Finally, researchers use the T test to see if there is a significant influence between variables. The relationship can be said to be significant or influence if the p-value <0.05.

4. Results

After understanding the background of the research, it is necessary to understand that the direction of the research is determined to test several hypotheses about the relationship between variables. There are three types of variables involves, namely dependent variables, independent variables, and mediating variables. First, the dependent variable is the employee performance variable, which is measured through nine statement indicators, each symbolized by the code KIN1 to KIN9. Next, the independent variables. First, transformational leadership, which is measured through ten question indicators with the symbols KTF1 to KTF10. Second, transactional leadership, which consists of nine indicators, each symbolized by the symbols KTS1 to KTS9. The last is the mediating variable. is a job satisfaction variable and there are 10 question indicators which are given the symbols KEP1 to KEP10.

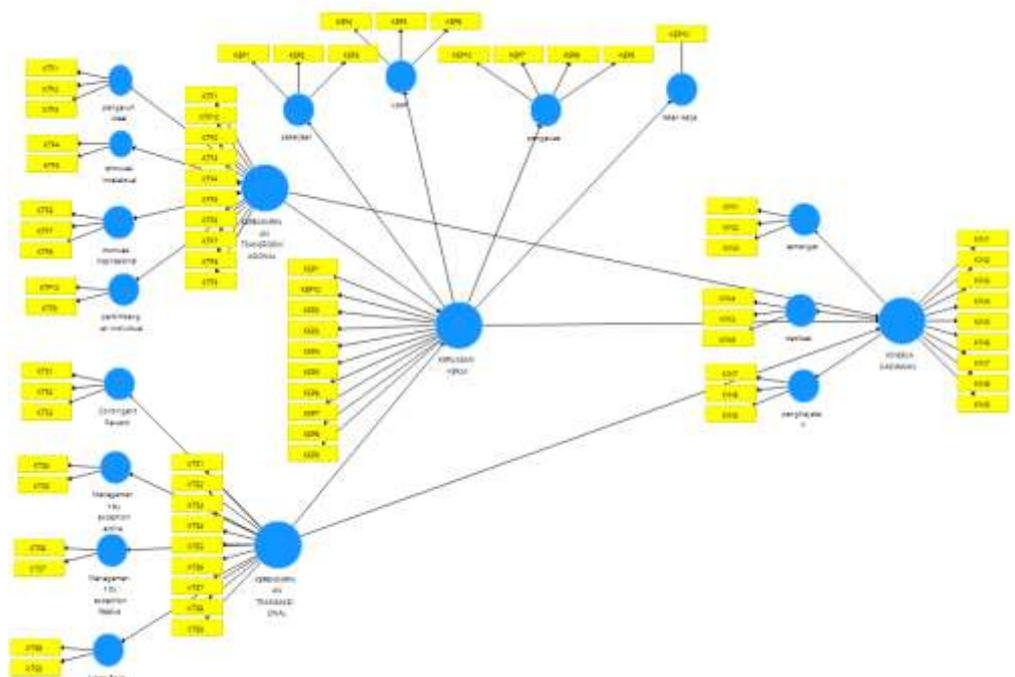


Figure 2. Research Model

Figure 2 shows a number of visual elements that represent the components in the research model. The variables and their dimensions are depicted using blue circular objects, with large sizes for the main variables and small sizes for the accompanying dimensions. The indicators that measure each variable are symbolized by yellow rectangles and placed around the related variables. The direction of the relationship between variables, which reflects the research hypothesis, is visualized through black arrow lines. These hypotheses will then be tested empirically by the researchers in the data analysis stage.

Based on the validity test, it was found that all outer loading values on each indicator based on its variables had values above 0.60. This value means that all indicators presented are valid (Ghozali, 2018). Furthermore, the researchers also conducted a test on the validity of the indicators on each dimension in the variable. It was found that all outer loading values were above the threshold of 0.60, meaning that the indicators have sufficient convergent validity. As a result, the measurement instruments used in this study are considered valid and acceptable for further testing. Meanwhile, for reliability testing, that all dimensions in each variable have a Cronbach Alpha value above 0.70. Therefore, all variables are reliable.

Next, a multicollinearity test was conducted to see the correlation in each relationship between variables. It was found that all VIF values between variables had a value <5. This means that there is no multicollinearity between variables. After confirming that there is no multicollinearity, the researchers continued with the path coefficient test. It was found that the entire relationship among the variables tested with the research model showed a positive path coefficient value because it was in the range of 0 to 1. Thus, all relationships between these variables are positive. Then the goodness of fit test was conducted afterwards to see how good the statistical model was.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Test

Variable	AVE	R ²
Job Satisfaction	.621	.744
Employee's Performance	.554	.733

From Table 1. we can see the results of the goodness of fit test with the attached AVE and R2 values. These values are then entered into the following formula:

$$GoF = \sqrt{\text{Average of AVE} \times \text{Average of R}^2}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0,344 \times 0,545}$$

$$GoF = 0,434$$

The findings indicate that e-wallets act as both enablers and disruptors in the financial lives of Generation Z. The convenience and immediacy of digital transactions align with the expectations of a generation accustomed to instant gratification and mobile-first experiences. However, this convenience often comes at the cost of reduced financial discipline. This is in accordance with the findings of Liu et al (2021) who found that the ease of digital transactions increases shopping intensity, because users feel that the spending process feels unreal and has minimal obstacles. The frictionless nature of digital payments reduces the salience of each spending act, leading to a gradual erosion of spending awareness and budget consciousness. Lestari et al (2021) also emphasized that many digital wallet users among students tend not to evaluate their spending habits due to the absence of strong visual feedback as with cash use.

From a behavioral economics standpoint, the design of e-wallet applications appears to lower the psychological barriers to spending. This aligns with Thaler's (1985) theory of mental accounting, which posits that individuals categorize and treat money differently based on its source and intended use. By transforming money into digital units displayed on a screen, e-wallets minimize the emotional weight

associated with spending, effectively decoupling consumption from the psychological “pain of paying.” As a result, users are more likely to engage in spontaneous and unnecessary purchases, often without immediate awareness of their financial consequences. Kim and Choi (2003) also explained that non-cash payments reduce the perceived value of the money spent, so that individuals find it easier to make expenditures without considering long-term economic value.

In addition to mental accounting, hyper-personalization and algorithmic nudging are emerging features that further amplify spending behavior. Many e-wallet platforms employ behavioral data to deliver targeted offers, location-based discounts, and time-sensitive promotions. These features utilize concepts from choice architecture, subtly guiding user decisions without overt coercion. Liu et al (2021) research notes that this personalization strategy encourages the formation of new shopping preferences that are not always based on needs, but rather due to repeated exposure to promotional stimuli. While effective from a business perspective, such practices can blur the boundary between user empowerment and manipulation particularly for a digitally fluent yet financially inexperienced generation (Khasanah & Sasana, 2022; Marpaung et al., 2024; Suparjo & Dana, 2024)

Another critical theme that emerges from the literature is the role of habit formation. Repeated exposure to reward mechanisms, push notifications, and app-based incentives conditions users to form routine spending behaviors. Over time, these habits can become automatic and decoupled from conscious financial planning. This is particularly concerning for Generation Z, whose consumption patterns are still developing and are highly susceptible to external influence. This is also supported by research conducted by Lestari et al (2021) which shows that repeated exposure to promotions and cashback systems contributes to the formation of unconscious consumer habits, especially among young users.

Importantly, the reviewed studies suggest that digital payment systems must incorporate tools for financial planning, self-monitoring, and user feedback. Dashboards, spending summaries, budget alerts, goal-setting features, and savings reminders are examples of technological interventions that could help users maintain control over their spending. This is supported by research by Kim and Choi (2003) which suggests the importance of integrating financial control features in digital systems to balance impulsive tendencies that arise due to easy access to payments. These tools can serve as digital nudges a counterbalance to the promotional nudges driving consumption. Additionally, gamification elements could be reoriented from spending incentives toward saving challenges or budgeting achievements.

On the educational side, policy interventions are urgently needed to address the financial literacy gap. Integrating financial education into school curricula, particularly at the secondary and university levels, is essential. Education should not only focus on theoretical concepts but also on practical digital finance competencies, such as managing mobile payments, identifying spending traps, and using in-app budgeting tools effectively. Collaborations between fintech companies and educational institutions could help develop accessible, engaging, and context-relevant content.

Moreover, a broader ethical discussion is warranted concerning the design and regulation of e-wallet platforms. Developers and policymakers must consider the long-term behavioral effects of persuasive design strategies. A shift toward human-centered fintech which prioritizes users’ financial well-being over short-term engagement metrics is necessary to ensure that digital innovation supports sustainable economic behavior rather than undermines it. In sum, while e-wallets offer significant advantages in terms of efficiency and inclusion, their influence on the financial behavior of Generation Z must be critically assessed and proactively managed. Designing systems that empower rather than exploit user behavior will be key to unlocking the full potential of digital finance in a socially responsible way.

5. Conclusion

Based on this study, transformational and transactional leadership styles do not have a direct impact on individual work performance. However, job satisfaction serves as a significant intervening variable in this relationship. This means that leadership effectiveness in enhancing employee performance occurs indirectly—primarily through the improvement of job satisfaction. Employees who feel satisfied with their work environment, receive appreciation, and gain meaningful support from their leaders are more likely to perform better. Therefore, leadership styles that focus on creating a positive, supportive, and rewarding workplace atmosphere play a crucial role in driving overall organizational performance. Transformational leaders who inspire, motivate, and recognize employees' contributions, as well as transactional leaders who provide clear expectations and rewards, must prioritize employee satisfaction as a core element of their leadership strategy. Improving job satisfaction not only enhances individual productivity but also fosters employee loyalty and engagement. This underscores the importance of integrating human-centered leadership approaches to build a more effective and high-performing workforce. Organizations should therefore invest in leadership development programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, communication skills, and employee well-being to ensure that leadership positively influences performance through the enhancement of job satisfaction.

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