

The Effect Transformational Leadership Style on Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Trust At PT Varia Usaha Beton

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ABSTRACT

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Transformational leadership style, job performance, trust in leader

This research aims to test and analyze the influence of transformational leadership style on job performance through trust at PT Varia Usaha Beton. This research uses quantitative methods. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with a saturated sample, in which the entire population is used as the sample with 40 respondents. Data were analyzed using partial least squares (PLS) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results show that transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on job performance. Transformational leadership style also has a positive and significant effect on trust in leader. Furthermore, trust in leader has a positive and significant effect on job performance. The path analysis further reveals that trust in leader functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership style and job performance.

INTRODUCTION

The development of National Strategic Projects, including the relocation of the capital city to Nusantara, has significantly accelerated growth in Indonesia's construction sector to promote equitable development across regions (Statista, 2024). In particular, the island of Java has experienced rapid expansion in construction activities due to the implementation of these initiatives. This dynamic environment requires construction companies, such as PT Varia Usaha Beton, to continuously enhance employee job performance in order to remain competitive

Amid increasing industry competition, construction firms are expected to strengthen their competitiveness through the optimal development of human resources. Well-structured planning in education, training, and human resource management plays a vital role in improving individual

competencies, which in turn supports the achievement of overall organizational performance (Sulasmi, 2020; M.L. Makalew et al., 2021).

Leadership style plays an important role in influencing job performance and employee trust towards leaders (C. C. Lee et al., 2023). Transformational leadership has been widely recognized in previous studies as a leadership style that positively influences both job performance and employee trust. However, the findings in the existing literature remain inconsistent—some studies have reported significant effects, while others have found no significant relationship (Kitta & Salim, 2022; Usprech & Palmert, 2023). Several studies indicate a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance (Lai et al., 2020; Jiatong et al., 2022; Ugwu, 2019). However, differing findings have also emerged in some studies showing that the relationship is not

significant (Eliyana et al., 2019; Meng et al., 2020; Mustaqfirin et al., 2022; Ratnasari et al., 2024).

Transformational leadership is also known to contribute to the increase of employee trust through empathetic behavior, personal support, and inspiring communication (Khattak et al., 2020; Zhang, 2023; Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Several studies support the existence of a positive and significant relationship between this leadership style and trust (Islam et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2024). On the other hand, trust in leaders has proven to be an important factor that affects job performance (Sarwar et al., 2023; Nabilla et al., 2023). In fact, Trust in leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing job performance. Nevertheless, few studies have specifically examined the mediating role of trust in the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance (C. C. Lee et al., 2023).

This research was conducted at PT Varia Usaha Beton, a subsidiary of PT Semen Indonesia Beton that has been engaged in concrete production since 1991. The company has a vision to become the preferred choice for customers in the international market with the slogan "Your Concrete Partner," which is realized through the enhancement of human resource quality, particularly in the HR and General Division. This division plays a strategic role in supporting operational efficiency and employee development. PT Varia Usaha Beton has implemented various leadership-related initiatives, such as open position announcements and an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which align with the principles of transformational leadership. However, the impact of these practices on employee performance and trust has not yet been empirically investigated.

Performance evaluations show an increasing trend in the number of employees with high performance during the 2022–2024 period, indicating the success of development programs and the positive influence of the applied leadership style. In addition, a culture of trust serves as an important foundation in driving performance. PT Varia Usaha Beton emphasizes the principles of trust, transparency, and active participation of all employees in the organizational process. Division leaders play a vital role in building trust through open communication and providing solutions to work-related challenges.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to analyze “the effect of transformational leadership style

on job performance: the mediating role of trust at PT Varia Usaha Beton”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is supported by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that the relationship between leaders and subordinates is based on reciprocal exchange. When leaders demonstrate care, inspiration, and support through transformational leadership, employees tend to respond by increasing their trust and contributing positively through improved job performance.

Transformational Leadership Style and Job Performance

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can influence employees through an inspiring vision, individual attention, intellectual stimulation, and high motivation. This leadership style is considered effective in enhancing employees' job performance through various positive mechanisms. Lai et al. (2020) state that transformational leadership instills holistic and collective goals that are important for supporting both individual and organizational performance. This is in line with the findings of Nurjanah et al. (2020), which show that this approach can improve employees' positive attitudes towards their work.

Furthermore, transformational leadership encourages employees to work harder by providing constructive feedback and inspiring creative thinking in facing work challenges (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The role of leaders as mentors who care about employee development also contributes to improved job performance. Mubashir & Siddiqui (2023) add that transformational leadership ensures active participation and employee engagement in the organizational process, which supports the achievement of performance and sustainable growth.

H1: Transformational leadership style has a significant positive on job performance
Transformational Leadership Style and Trust

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in building trust between leaders and employees through an approach that emphasizes support, individual attention, and freedom in decision-making (Afsar & Masood, 2018). This leadership style encourages employees to demonstrate positive work behaviors, to act according to values they believe in, and to be open to changes within the organization. In this context,

employees find it easier to trust their leaders because they feel involved and supported in their development (Zhang, 2023). Trust is established when leaders demonstrate consistency in actions that support the well-being and common interests, rather than solely personal interests (Khattak et al., 2020).

Furthermore, transformational leadership is capable of enhancing trust by encouraging employees' awareness of the importance of organizational goals and the leaders' concern for their needs. The leaders' example and commitment to the organization's values strengthen the emotional bond known as affective trust, which directly impacts loyalty and work motivation (Khattak et al., 2020; Wahyuningdias et al., 2022). Thus, transformational leadership has consistently proven to have a positive and significant influence on trust in leader.

H2: Transformational leadership style has a significant positive on trust

Trust and Job Performance

Trust is a fundamental element in the relationship between leaders and employees that directly impacts individual performance in the workplace. Employees who trust their leaders tend to feel more psychologically secure, show high loyalty, and are encouraged to contribute their best to the organization (C. C. Lee et al., 2023). In a work environment rooted in trust, communication becomes more open, coordination is more effective, and interpersonal barriers can be minimized. Trust also creates a sense of ownership towards the organization, which strengthens employees' commitment to carrying out their tasks and responsibilities optimally.

Several recent studies show that trust has a positive and significant relationship with job performance. Trust in leaders can encourage employees to work consistently, exceed established standards, and display proactive and responsible work behaviors (Sarwar et al., 2023; Kadarusman & Bunyamin, 2021). On the other hand, organizational trust creates a supportive work climate, where employees feel valued and trusted, thereby increasing work motivation and productivity (Rahmat & Listihana, 2023; Nabilla et al., 2023). Thus, the trust built between employees and the organization as well as its leaders becomes one of the determining factors for long-term performance success.

H3: Trust has a significant positive on job performance

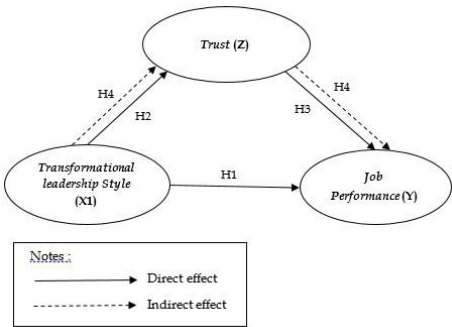
The Role Of Trust Mediating

Transformational leadership has been shown to have a significant impact on job performance, particularly through the role of trust as an important mediating variable. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to reach their maximum potential through personal attention, a clear vision, and positive encouragement (Khattak et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020). When employees feel supported and cared for, their trust in the leader increases. This trust in the leader, in turn, affects employees' motivation, commitment, and work enthusiasm, which ultimately leads to improved performance.

Trust acts as a psychological bridge that reinforces the effect of transformational leadership on job performance. Leaders who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and concern for employees' needs are able to create a work climate filled with trust, encouraging active participation and teamwork (Wang et al., 2016; Wahyuningdias et al., 2022). This trust creates a sense of security and enhances employees' readiness to achieve their best performance, making trust an essential element in the relationship between transformational leadership style and employee performance (Fareed et al., 2022).

H4: Trust mediates the influence between transformational leadership style and job performance

Figure 1. Research framework



METHOD

Data Analysis

This research uses a quantitative method. The research was conducted at PT Varia Usaha Beton located in The Royal Business Park, Tambak Oso,

Sidoarjo, East Java. This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships among transformational leadership, trust, and job performance. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for complex models with mediating variables and is effective in predictive and exploratory research (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, PLS-SEM is appropriate for small sample sizes and does not require normal data distribution, making it ideal for this study, which involved 40 respondents from PT Varia Usaha Beton (Hair et al., 2019).

Measurement

In this study, the number of statements submitted is 19 statements. The transformational leadership style is measured using 4 dimensions based on Bass & Avolio (1994) which are Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration. Trust is measured using 3 dimensions based on Mayer et al. (1995) which are Ability, Integrity, and Benevolence. Job performance is measured using 2 dimensions based on Motowidlo & Van Scotter (1994) which are Contextual Performance and Task Performance.

RESULT

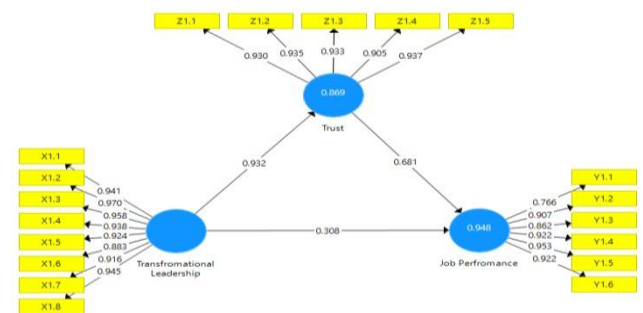
Respondent Description

In this study, the characteristics of the respondents are described based on their status, length of service, gender, age, and level of education. Based on gender, the majority of respondents are male, with 26 individuals (65%) out of the total respondents, while females account for 14 individuals (35%). Based on age, 18 respondents or 45% of the sample are above 41 years old, 8 respondents (20%) are between 36 and 40 years old, 7 respondents (18%) are between 26 and 30 years old, 5 respondents (13%), and the fewest respondents (2%) are between 20 and 25 years old. Based on education, 22 respondents or 55% of the total have a bachelor's degree (S1). 2 respondents have a master's degree (S2) (5%), 7 have high school or vocational school education (SMA/SMK) (18%), and 9 have a diploma (D3) (23%). Based on the status, 34 respondents, or 85% of the sample, are married. 6 respondents, or 15% of the total, are unmarried. The majority of respondents are married. Based on the length of service, the majority of the respondents, 26 individuals or 65%, have worked in this organization for more than 10 years.

Measurement Model

Convergent validity and discriminant validity are used to ensure that the indicators used genuinely measure the intended construct. According to Ghazali (2014), an indicator can be considered valid if it has a correlation value (loading factor) above 0.70. However, indicators with loading values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still acceptable as quite valid. Based on Figure 2, all indicators for each variable in this study show outer loading values exceeding 0.70. This indicates that every statement used to measure the variables in this study has met the validity criteria.

Figure 2. Measurement Model



Composite reliability (CR) was assessed to check internal consistency in this study. Ghazali (2014) suggested a cutoff value of 0.70 for CR. In this study, the composite reliability (CR) values range from 0.958 to 0.982, where these results exceed the recommended value of 0.7. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) is used to test the internal consistency of indicators in a construct, and can strengthen the results of reliability tests obtained from Composite Reliability (CR) values. In other words, the CA value serves as an additional evaluation tool to ensure that all indicators in a variable consistently measure the same concept. The CA value in this study ranges from 0.947 to 0.979, where the result exceeds 0.70.

Casuality Test Results

Causality testing is conducted to determine whether there is an influence relationship between one variable and another variable in a research model. A variable can be said to have an effect if the test shows a t-statistic greater than 1.96 (Ghozali, 2014). Evaluation of the structural model is conducted by examining the significance values to understand the influence relationships between variables, obtained through bootstrapping techniques. The results of the

hypothesis testing, for both direct and indirect effects, are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing for Direct Effect and Indirect Effect

Variabel	Sampel Asli	T Statistik	P Values
<i>Transformational leadership style -> Job performance</i>	0,308	2,058	0,040
<i>Transformational leadership style -> Trust</i>	0,932	31,395	0,000
<i>Trust -> Job performance</i>	0,681	4,565	0,000
<i>Transformational leadership style -> Trust -> Job performance</i>	0,634	4,777	0,000

Based on the results of the structural model analysis using bootstrapping presented in Table 1, all relationships among variables show significant results. The effect of transformational leadership on work performance has a t-statistic value of 2.058 and a pvalue of 0.040, indicating a significant effect at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$), thus the hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, transformational leadership style also has a significant impact on trust in superiors, with a t-statistic of 31.395 and a p-value of 0.000, which means this relationship is highly significant. Trust in superiors regarding work performance has also proven to be significant with a t-statistic of 4.565 and a p-value of 0.000. In addition, the mediating effect of trust between transformational leadership styles and work performance shows significant results, with a t-statistic value of 4.777 and a p-value of 0.000, supporting that trust acts as a mediating variable in that relationship.

DISCUSSION

The results of the statistical analysis in this study show that Transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on job performance both directly and indirectly through trust as a mediating variable. From empirical tests, it shows that Transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on job performance, thus Hypothesis 1 is accepted. The results of this study are in line with previous findings, as stated by Kitta & Salim (2022),

Virgiawan et al. (2021), Lai et al. (2020), Jiatong et al. (2022), and Ugwu (2019), that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on job performance. The application of this leadership style makes employees feel valued, close to their leaders, and more free to express ideas. Descriptive statistical results show an average score of 4.03, which falls into the high category, reflecting that the leaders are perceived to have a clear vision, serve as role models, and pay attention to employee development.

From empirical tests, it shows that Transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on trust, thus Hypothesis 2 is accepted. This research is in line with the findings of Khattak et al. (2020), Afsar & Umrani (2020), Islam et al. (2021), as well as M. C. C. Lee et al. (2024) and Zhang (2023), which state that transformational leadership has a positive impact on trust. Leaders who serve as role models, appreciate employee contributions, and guide without judgment can naturally build trust among subordinates. The descriptive statistical results show an average trust score of 4.22, which is considered high. This reflects that leaders are perceived to have credibility, moral values, and concern for the well-being and development of employees.

Empirical test results show that trust has a positive and significant impact on job performance, thus Hypothesis 3 is accepted. This finding is consistent with the research by Sarwar et al. (2023), which states that trust creates a moral responsibility for employees to reciprocate leaders' positive treatment with good performance. Kadarusman & Bunyamin (2021) also found that trust enhances work enthusiasm due to a sense of safety and comfort while performing tasks. Similar results were documented by Rahmat & Listihana (2023) and C. C. Lee et al. (2023), stating that trust strengthens open communication, work coordination, and efficiency. The average trust score based on descriptive analysis is 4.22, indicating that the level of employee trust in their superiors is relatively high. This condition fosters comfort at work and reduces the fear of making mistakes, thereby positively impacting performance.

The results of the empirical test show that trust mediates the relationship between transformational leadership style and job performance, thus Hypothesis 4 is accepted. This finding emphasizes that trust in supervisors acts as a psychological bridge that

strengthens the influence of transformational leadership on achieving optimal performance. This study supports the findings of C. C. Lee et al. (2023), which state that trust in supervisor is a significant mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership style and job performance. When leaders consistently demonstrate transformational behaviors, employees will develop trust that fosters loyalty and performance. Similar findings were also reported by Indah et al. (2024), who concluded that trust significantly mediates the influence of transformational leadership style on job performance. Descriptive results support these findings, with an average score of transformational leadership at 4.03, trust at 4.22, and job performance at 4.25, all of which fall into the high category and are closely related.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that, in general, transformational leadership style, trust, and job performance are in the high category. However, the dimension of intellectual stimulation has the lowest score, and therefore needs to be improved so that employees can think critically and reflectively. The high level of trust shows that consistent, fair, and caring leadership behavior needs to be maintained and supported by open communication. Regarding job performance, although the average is high, task performance indicators can still be improved by encouraging employee involvement in decisionmaking. For future research, it is suggested to expand variables such as organizational commitment or job satisfaction, use a longitudinal approach, and test these findings in other industrial sectors to broaden the generalization of results.

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