

The Influence of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

Tri Suparyanto

Universitas Sarjanawiyata Taman Siswa, Indonesia
Corresponding email: trisuparyanto@gmail.com

Abstract

Employee performance is a key determinant of organizational success in achieving strategic goals and maintaining a competitive advantage amidst an increasingly dynamic work environment. This study aims to analyze the impact of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee performance through a literature review approach. The study employs a systematic review method, examining various scholarly articles, academic books, and prior research findings relevant to transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee performance. Literature was selected based on topic relevance, source quality, variable interrelationships, and contributions to the field of human resource management. The acquired secondary data were analyzed using a descriptive-synthesis approach, involving the identification, classification, comparison, interpretation, and synthesis of findings from previous studies. The results indicate that transformational leadership tends to positively influence employee performance through a leader's ability to establish a vision, provide inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, set an example, and offer individualized attention to organizational members. Furthermore, an organizational culture that is strong, adaptive, collaborative, and goal-oriented can shape work values and behaviors that foster increased employee productivity and effectiveness. The synthesis of literature also reveals a complementary relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture, as leadership effectiveness can be reinforced by organizational values and norms that support innovation, engagement, and employee commitment. The study concludes that strengthening transformational leadership practices integrated with the development of a positive organizational culture is a crucial strategy for sustainably enhancing employee performance. These findings imply that organizations should develop leadership competencies while simultaneously building an organizational environment that fosters motivation, innovation, commitment, and optimal performance.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Organizational Culture; Employee Performance

Introduction

The contemporary business environment has undergone substantial transformation due to globalization, rapid technological development, digital transformation, intensified competition, and fundamental changes in workplace arrangements. These developments have encouraged organizations to reconsider the strategic role of human resource management (HRM), shifting its function from conventional administrative activities toward the development of human capital capable of supporting innovation, adaptability, and sustainable competitive advantage. From the resource-based view, human resources represent strategic organizational resources when employees possess valuable knowledge, skills, competencies, experience, and capabilities that are difficult for competitors to replicate (Barney, 1991). Accordingly, effective HRM practices are increasingly essential for ensuring that organizations possess the competencies required to respond to technological disruption and environmental uncertainty. Employee performance is particularly important because individual contributions collectively determine organizational productivity, operational effectiveness, service quality, innovation,

competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. Contemporary HRM therefore requires organizations not only to recruit and develop competent employees but also to establish effective leadership and a supportive internal environment that promotes motivation, engagement, learning, collaboration, and high performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Dessler, 2020). In this context, transformational leadership and organizational culture become strategically relevant because leaders and organizational values can shape employee attitudes and behaviors toward the achievement of organizational objectives.

Transformational leadership has become an increasingly important leadership paradigm in contemporary organizations because it emphasizes a leader's capacity to inspire employees, stimulate positive behavioral change, and align individual interests with broader organizational objectives. Initially conceptualized by Burns (1978) and subsequently developed by Bass (1985), transformational leadership describes a leadership process through which leaders motivate followers to transcend personal interests and achieve performance beyond conventional expectations. This leadership approach is generally characterized by four fundamental dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Idealized influence refers to leaders' ability to serve as credible and ethical role models who gain employees' trust and respect, whereas inspirational motivation involves articulating an attractive organizational vision and communicating meaningful expectations that encourage employees to achieve challenging goals. Intellectual stimulation reflects the leader's capacity to encourage critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and alternative approaches to organizational problems, while individualized consideration emphasizes personal attention to employees' needs, aspirations, competencies, and professional development. Collectively, these dimensions can establish a supportive psychological and organizational environment in which employees are encouraged to contribute beyond their formal job requirements. Empirical and meta-analytic evidence has consistently associated transformational leadership with beneficial employee outcomes, including stronger motivation, organizational commitment, engagement, creativity, and performance (Banks et al., 2016; Hoch et al., 2018). Thus, transformational leadership represents a strategic leadership mechanism through which organizations can mobilize human capital and improve employee performance, particularly in dynamic environments requiring continuous learning, innovation, and adaptation.

Organizational culture constitutes a fundamental mechanism through which organizations shape employee attitudes, behaviors, interactions, and interpretations of appropriate workplace conduct. Schein and Schein (2017) conceptualize organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions developed through collective experiences in addressing external adaptation and internal integration, which subsequently becomes embedded within organizational values, norms, beliefs, and practices. From a human resource management perspective, organizational culture provides a behavioral framework that communicates what an organization considers important, acceptable, and desirable, thereby influencing how employees make decisions, collaborate, solve problems, and pursue organizational objectives. The characteristics of organizational culture can be reflected through dimensions such as innovation, teamwork, results orientation, employee orientation, stability, and adaptability, which collectively determine an organization's capacity to coordinate employee behavior while responding to environmental change (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Hartnell et al., 2011). A strong organizational culture can generate shared meaning and behavioral consistency, whereas an adaptive culture enables employees to respond effectively to technological, competitive, and institutional changes. However, cultural strength alone does not necessarily guarantee superior outcomes; organizational values must also remain aligned with environmental demands and strategic

objectives. When an organizational culture simultaneously encourages innovation, collaboration, employee development, achievement orientation, and adaptability, it can strengthen employees' commitment and create conditions conducive to effective performance. Consequently, organizational culture should be regarded not merely as an internal organizational characteristic but as a strategic intangible resource capable of directing employee behavior and supporting sustainable organizational performance.

Organizational culture represents a fundamental organizational mechanism that shapes employee attitudes, behavioral patterns, work priorities, and ultimately individual performance by establishing shared values and norms concerning how organizational activities should be performed. A culture that emphasizes professionalism, collaboration, innovation, discipline, results orientation, continuous learning, and accountability provides employees with behavioral guidance regarding expected standards of work and encourages greater consistency between individual actions and organizational objectives. From this perspective, organizational culture operates through both normative and motivational mechanisms: shared values establish acceptable patterns of behavior, while collective beliefs and organizational practices can strengthen employees' identification with organizational goals and willingness to contribute to their achievement. Schein and Schein (2017) emphasize that organizational culture develops through shared assumptions that guide how organizational members perceive, interpret, and respond to internal and external challenges. Similarly, Denison and Mishra (1995) demonstrate that cultural characteristics associated with involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission are closely related to organizational effectiveness. Meta-analytic evidence further suggests that particular types of organizational culture are systematically associated with important effectiveness criteria, including employee attitudes and operational outcomes (Hartnell et al., 2011). A supportive and adaptive organizational culture can therefore facilitate knowledge sharing, teamwork, innovative behavior, employee learning, and responsiveness to change, thereby creating conditions that enable employees to perform their responsibilities more effectively. Conversely, rigid or poorly aligned cultures may restrict creativity, reduce motivation, and create behavioral inconsistencies that undermine performance. Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, it can be proposed that organizational culture positively influences employee performance, particularly when organizational values are effectively internalized and aligned with employees' responsibilities and strategic organizational objectives.

Transformational leadership and organizational culture should not be conceptualized as independent organizational phenomena because leadership behavior both influences and is influenced by the cultural environment in which organizational activities occur. Leaders play a central role in creating, communicating, embedding, and reinforcing organizational values through strategic decisions, role modeling, resource allocation, reward mechanisms, and responses to critical organizational events (Schein & Schein, 2017). Transformational leaders, specifically, can strengthen organizational culture by articulating a compelling vision, demonstrating values through idealized influence, generating collective enthusiasm through inspirational motivation, encouraging innovation through intellectual stimulation, and supporting employee development through individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). At the same time, organizational culture can strengthen or constrain leadership effectiveness because existing norms and assumptions influence employees' interpretations of leaders' behavior and their willingness to respond to transformational initiatives. Research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is associated with important employee and organizational outcomes (Banks et al., 2016; Hoch et al., 2018), while organizational culture is also systematically associated with organizational effectiveness (Hartnell et al., 2011). Integrating these perspectives suggests a

complementary mechanism in which transformational leaders cultivate values supporting innovation, collaboration, learning, adaptability, and performance, while a supportive culture institutionalizes those values into everyday organizational practices. Such alignment can establish a conducive work environment characterized by shared purpose, psychological commitment, innovation, and coordinated behavior. Therefore, the integration of transformational leadership and organizational culture provides a stronger conceptual foundation for explaining employee performance than examining either factor in isolation, because leadership supplies the direction and behavioral influence necessary for change, while culture embeds and sustains those expectations within the organizational system.

Result Methods

This study employed a literature review approach to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous empirical and theoretical studies concerning the influence of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee performance. The literature review was selected because it enables the integration of findings from different organizational settings and provides a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical mechanisms underlying the relationships among the investigated variables. Relevant literature was identified from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and SpringerLink, using combinations of keywords such as “transformational leadership,” “organizational culture,” “employee performance,” “job performance,” “leadership and employee performance,” and “organizational culture and performance.” The selection process prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles directly addressing the relationships among the research variables, while seminal books and foundational studies were included to establish the theoretical basis of transformational leadership and organizational culture. The literature selection followed predetermined inclusion criteria, including relevance to the research objectives, clarity of research methodology, availability of sufficient empirical or conceptual evidence, and publication in credible academic sources. Studies that were duplicated, lacked methodological clarity, or were not directly relevant to employee performance were excluded from the synthesis. This structured procedure was intended to enhance the transparency, relevance, and academic rigor of the literature review process (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003).

The selected literature was analyzed using a descriptive and thematic synthesis approach through several stages, namely literature identification, screening, eligibility assessment, data extraction, thematic classification, comparative analysis, and synthesis of findings. Information extracted from each study included authors and publication year, research context, sample characteristics where applicable, methodological approach, dimensions of transformational leadership and organizational culture, employee performance indicators, and major empirical findings. The studies were subsequently categorized into three principal analytical themes: (1) the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, (2) the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance, and (3) the integrative role of transformational leadership and organizational culture in explaining employee performance. The findings across studies were compared to identify recurring patterns, theoretical convergence, inconsistencies, contextual differences, and research gaps. Rather than merely summarizing previous studies individually, the analysis sought to develop an integrative interpretation explaining how leadership behaviors and shared organizational values interact in shaping employee performance. The resulting synthesis was then used to

formulate conceptual propositions and managerial implications regarding the development of transformational leadership and supportive organizational cultures as strategic mechanisms for improving employee performance. This analytical procedure is consistent with literature review methodology that emphasizes systematic evidence integration and theory development from existing knowledge (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2005).

Result and Discussion

Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates a predominantly positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, although the magnitude and mechanisms of this relationship may differ across organizational contexts. Transformational leaders influence employee performance by articulating a compelling vision, providing meaningful direction, demonstrating exemplary behavior, and encouraging followers to transcend narrow self-interest in pursuit of collective organizational goals. The four dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—collectively provide psychological and behavioral mechanisms through which leaders can strengthen employees' willingness and capacity to perform beyond minimum job requirements (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Meta-analytic evidence has demonstrated that transformational leadership is systematically associated with important follower and performance-related outcomes, supporting its relevance as an influential leadership approach in contemporary organizations (Banks et al., 2016; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). These findings suggest that transformational leadership contributes not merely to short-term task accomplishment but also to the development of a work environment that facilitates sustained employee contribution.

A prominent mechanism identified across the literature concerns the capacity of transformational leadership to enhance employee motivation and work enthusiasm. Inspirational motivation enables leaders to communicate an attractive future vision and connect employees' daily responsibilities with meaningful organizational purposes, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation and willingness to exert additional effort. Idealized influence further reinforces this mechanism because employees who perceive their leaders as credible, ethical, and trustworthy role models are more likely to identify with organizational objectives and demonstrate stronger motivation to achieve them. Transformational leadership can consequently shift employee motivation from compliance-based behavior toward more internally driven forms of contribution. Research on transformational leadership has shown that such leadership behaviors are associated with higher follower motivation, satisfaction, and performance because employees perceive their work as more meaningful and experience stronger confidence in achieving challenging goals (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Thus, motivation and enthusiasm constitute important pathways through which transformational leaders translate leadership influence into improved employee performance.

The reviewed evidence also highlights employee engagement and organizational commitment as important mechanisms connecting transformational leadership with performance. Transformational leaders tend to establish supportive relationships, communicate organizational purpose clearly, recognize individual contributions, and provide opportunities for employee development. These conditions can strengthen employees' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in their work. Individualized consideration is particularly relevant because employees who receive coaching, recognition, developmental support, and personal attention from leaders are more likely to perceive themselves as valued members of the organization. At the same time,

transformational leaders can strengthen affective attachment to organizational values and objectives, thereby increasing organizational commitment. Research indicates that transformational leadership is positively related to employee engagement and that engagement can serve as a mechanism through which leadership contributes to desirable work outcomes (Breevaart et al., 2014; Tims et al., 2011). In this sense, transformational leadership contributes to performance not only by directing employees toward organizational targets but also by cultivating deeper psychological involvement and commitment to organizational success.

Another consistent theme concerns the contribution of transformational leadership to employee creativity and innovative work behavior. Intellectual stimulation encourages employees to question established assumptions, reconsider conventional work procedures, experiment with alternative approaches, and develop novel solutions to organizational problems. Rather than penalizing constructive challenges to existing practices, transformational leaders can create an environment in which employees perceive innovation and experimentation as legitimate components of their work. Such conditions are increasingly important in organizations operating under technological disruption, market uncertainty, and rapidly changing customer expectations. Empirical research has demonstrated that transformational leadership can foster employee creativity by influencing psychological conditions and organizational climates supportive of innovation (Gong et al., 2009; Shin & Zhou, 2003). This suggests that the performance implications of transformational leadership extend beyond conventional productivity measures: by stimulating creativity and innovative behavior, transformational leaders contribute to employees' capacity to improve processes, solve complex problems, generate new ideas, and support organizational adaptation.

Finally, the literature suggests that transformational leadership can contribute to both task performance and contextual performance, thereby providing a multidimensional explanation of employee effectiveness. Task performance refers to behaviors directly associated with the execution of formal job responsibilities, including work quality, productivity, accuracy, and achievement of assigned objectives. Contextual performance, by contrast, encompasses discretionary behaviors that support the broader organizational environment, such as cooperation, helping colleagues, taking initiative, maintaining enthusiasm, and contributing beyond formal role requirements. Meta-analytic findings indicate that transformational leadership is associated with performance across individual, team, and organizational levels, although contextual and methodological factors may influence the strength of these relationships (Wang et al., 2011). Overall, the literature synthesis supports the proposition that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance through interconnected motivational, relational, engagement, commitment, creativity, and behavioral mechanisms. Consequently, organizations seeking sustainable improvements in employee performance should consider transformational leadership development as a strategic HRM intervention rather than viewing leadership solely as a supervisory or administrative function.

Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

The synthesis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that organizational culture is an important determinant of employee performance because it establishes shared values, assumptions, norms, and behavioral expectations that guide employees in performing their organizational roles. Organizational culture provides employees with a common framework for interpreting organizational priorities, determining appropriate behavior, and coordinating individual activities with collective objectives. According to Schein and Schein (2017), organizational culture develops from shared assumptions learned by

organizational members in addressing problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which subsequently become embedded in organizational practices and behavior. From this perspective, a strong culture can reduce behavioral ambiguity by communicating standards concerning professionalism, responsibility, discipline, collaboration, and performance. Denison and Mishra (1995) further demonstrate that cultural characteristics such as involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission are associated with organizational effectiveness. The reviewed evidence therefore indicates that organizational culture can positively contribute to employee performance when shared values are aligned with organizational strategy and effectively internalized by employees.

A particularly important finding concerns the role of a results-oriented and professional organizational culture in strengthening task performance. A results-oriented culture emphasizes achievement, accountability, work quality, efficiency, discipline, and the fulfillment of predetermined organizational targets. Such cultural characteristics provide employees with clearer performance expectations and encourage them to prioritize activities that directly contribute to organizational objectives. However, cultural strength alone does not automatically produce superior performance; the values embedded within the culture must be appropriate to the organization's strategic and environmental requirements. Hartnell et al. (2011), through a meta-analytic examination of organizational culture and effectiveness, demonstrated that different cultural orientations are associated with different effectiveness criteria, suggesting that cultural alignment is critical for achieving desirable outcomes. Consequently, organizations that combine clear performance expectations with professionalism, accountability, and supportive management practices are more likely to create behavioral conditions conducive to higher employee productivity, quality of work, timeliness, and effectiveness.

The literature also identifies teamwork, collaboration, and employee orientation as important cultural mechanisms underlying employee performance. A collaborative organizational culture facilitates communication, knowledge sharing, interpersonal trust, coordination, and mutual assistance among employees, thereby reducing barriers to accomplishing interdependent work. Employee-oriented cultures additionally recognize employees as valuable organizational resources by emphasizing development, participation, recognition, psychological support, and involvement in decision-making. These cultural attributes can strengthen employees' sense of belonging and encourage greater willingness to contribute beyond minimum job requirements. Research on organizational culture suggests that cultural characteristics influence organizational effectiveness through their effects on employee attitudes and coordinated organizational behavior (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Hartnell et al., 2011). Therefore, cultures emphasizing teamwork and employee involvement can contribute not only to individual task accomplishment but also to contextual performance, including cooperation, helping behavior, initiative, and voluntary contributions that sustain the broader social and psychological environment of the organization.

Another prominent theme emerging from the literature is the importance of innovation, learning, and adaptability-oriented cultures for employee performance, particularly in dynamic and technology-intensive environments. Organizations increasingly require employees to respond effectively to digital transformation, evolving customer expectations, competitive pressure, and changing work arrangements. An adaptive culture encourages organizational members to remain open to change, continuously develop competencies, exchange knowledge, experiment with new approaches, and respond constructively to environmental demands. Denison and Mishra (1995) identify adaptability as an important cultural characteristic related to organizational effectiveness, while Schein and Schein (2017) emphasize that organizational cultures

continuously evolve through organizational learning and responses to external and internal challenges. Accordingly, cultures that legitimize experimentation and learning can strengthen employee creativity, problem-solving capacity, innovative work behavior, and adaptability. These capabilities broaden the meaning of employee performance beyond routine task completion because high-performing employees in contemporary organizations must also demonstrate the ability to learn, innovate, and adjust their behavior when organizational conditions change.

Overall, the literature synthesis supports the proposition that organizational culture positively influences employee performance, although the relationship depends substantially on the content, alignment, and adaptability of the cultural values being promoted. Cultures characterized by professionalism, results orientation, collaboration, employee involvement, innovation, continuous learning, and adaptability provide complementary mechanisms through which employees can develop stronger motivation, coordinate their activities, improve competencies, and direct their behavior toward organizational goals. Meta-analytic evidence confirms that organizational culture is systematically related to multiple dimensions of organizational effectiveness, although specific cultural orientations may generate different outcomes depending on contextual requirements (Hartnell et al., 2011). This indicates that organizations should not merely attempt to create a “strong” culture, but should develop a culture that is strategically appropriate, employee-supportive, and sufficiently adaptive to environmental change. Consequently, organizational culture can be regarded as a strategic intangible resource within human resource management because it establishes the social and behavioral infrastructure through which individual competencies and motivation are translated into effective performance. When aligned with transformational leadership, such a culture may provide an even stronger organizational foundation for sustaining employee performance and long-term organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

The results indicate that transformational leadership tends to positively influence employee performance through a leader's ability to establish a vision, provide inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, set an example, and offer individualized attention to organizational members. Furthermore, an organizational culture that is strong, adaptive, collaborative, and goal-oriented can shape work values and behaviors that foster increased employee productivity and effectiveness. The synthesis of literature also reveals a complementary relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture, as leadership effectiveness can be reinforced by organizational values and norms that support innovation, engagement, and employee commitment. The study concludes that strengthening transformational leadership practices integrated with the development of a positive organizational culture is a crucial strategy for sustainably enhancing employee performance. These findings imply that organizations should develop leadership competencies while simultaneously building an organizational environment that fosters motivation, innovation, commitment, and optimal performance.

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