Transformational leadership on work engagement: The mediating role of work-life balance

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
	Implementing a suitable leadership style can increase work engagement. Work-life balance is necessary to support transformational leadership in improving work engagement. This study examines how transformational leadership affects work engagement, using work-life balance as a mediating factor. 44 respondents represent the study's sample, and the population focus is Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Agency employees. The study's findings show that transformational leadership positively influences work engagement. Work-life balance is positively influenced by transformational leadership. Work engagement is positively influenced by work-life balance. Transformational leadership and work engagement are mediated by work-life balance.

1. Introduction

As social beings, humans will be interdependent with each other (Tomasello, 2014). Therefore, it is impossible to separate organizational activities from human activities. An organization is controlled by many individuals who work together continuously to achieve a goal (Blanchard, 2018). Then, the purpose of human resource management in the organization is to maximize employee productivity to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively (Hassan, 2016) and ensure that the organization has qualified and competent employees.

Every organization needs a leader. Leaders are optimistic and confident individuals with a clear vision, mission, and high moral standards (Kolzow, 2014). The success of an organization in achieving its goals will depend on the individuals who drive it, including the leader (Blanchard, 2018). This is because leaders drive organizational change and strongly influence their employees (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Therefore, a leader must motivate employees to work together to achieve organizational goals (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016).

Of course, a leader uses more than one leadership style, where a leader's decision-making process is based on the situation and conditions surrounding it.

Transformational leadership refers to increasing employees' motivation to achieve goals and encourage development (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leaders increase employees' awareness of problems in the organization, increase self-confidence, motivate employees to achieve and ultimately increase their sense of involvement. Transformational leaders can inspire and persuade their employees to achieve greater potential to be more involved in every organizational activity (Saeed et al., 2019). Research conducted by Li et al. (2019) and Monje-Amor et al. (2020) proves the link between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Transformational leadership fosters followers' motivation to go beyond their interests, offers constructive feedback, facilitates the development of creativity and innovation, and demonstrates attention to followers' needs (Buil et al., 2019).

According to Eldor (2016), work engagement refers to employees' desirable state of being characterized by participation, dedication, excitement, attentiveness, and high levels of productivity at work. Actions that support and motivate employees are one factor that can increase employee engagement (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). The level of employee engagement significantly impacts several aspects, especially an organization's productivity. More performance is not required for maximum organizational performance; nations also need actively engaged employees committed to their work.

Work-life balance is when an individual's personal life and work can be balanced, resulting in improved performance (Oosthuizen et al., 2019). Employees who achieve work-life balance often have the flexibility to adjust between their work and personal interests (Galea et al., 2014). From the employee's perspective, balancing work and personal or family obligations is a choice (Khan & Fazili, 2016). Employees who balance their work and personal lives have a work-life balance. As a result, employees tend to experience increased job satisfaction, which leads to improved performance (Siengthai & Pila-Ngarm, 2016). Employees with work-life balance tend to perform better and highly engage with their work. When employees can balance their work and personal lives, it can benefit both the employee and the company (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Research conducted by Haar et al. (2017) and Dinh (2020) proves the link between work-life balance and employee engagement.

In this study, work-life balance mediates between transformational leadership and work engagement. That is, work-life balance is expected to explain the helping role of transformational leadership in increasing employee engagement. This phenomenon suggests that transformational leadership can influence employees' perceptions of the balance between work and personal life, affecting their level of work engagement. Employees who implement work-life balance and engage effectively in their work will achieve high performance (Shah et al., 2020). The balance between the time and energy employees devote to work and personal activities can maintain a sense of harmony in life (Lomas, 2021). Leaders who exercise transformational leadership are closely associated with better work-life balance and improved employee performance resulting from a high sense of work engagement. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory proposed by Truss et al. (2013) states that interactions between leaders and employees can affect the development and quality of relationships between leaders and members can be different. Employees will feel more involved under strong leadership and reciprocate their leaders' treatment by providing maximum performance results.

Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Agency is a regional agency responsible for overseeing trade and government activities in the industrial sector in the Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It also manages government-owned industrial and trade assets in the Yogyakarta region. The role of

the Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Agency is to regulate industry and trade and identify apparatus and peer resources in the field of industry and trade. The data published by the Yogyakarta Regional Planning and Development Agency shows that the industrial sector's contribution value to the value of Yogyakarta's Gross Regional Domestic Product from 2020 to 2024 continues to increase. In addition, data on the handling of consumer complaints from 2020 to 2024 is also considered perfect because all complaints received by the Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Office can be handled and resolved properly. Based on this review, the researcher can conclude that the Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Agency, in the last five years, has been said to have improved its performance, so the researcher is interested in further researching its relation to employee involvement to achieve these results. The previous research has tested employee engagement in various organizational settings, such as those conducted by Hayati et al. (2014), who examined hospital employees; Gözükara and Şimşek (2015), examined college employees; and Winasis et al. (2021), who examined banking industry employees.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development
2.1. Literature Review
2.1.1. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has recently become a very popular leadership style concept (Ahmad et al., 2020). Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can encourage employees to exceed expectations, inspire, and improve their abilities. Leaders with transformational style influence the beliefs and values of their employees with their charismatic role, take risks by implementing ideas from employees, recognize the needs of employees, and provide motivational inspiration to them. Transformational leadership generally conveys a compelling vision and mission, provides exemplary examples, encourages the presence of innovations, and increases trust and interaction among employees (Perko et al., 2016). Transformational leadership inspires and guides employees in the face of uncertainty and empowers them to carry out their responsibilities effectively (Azim et al., 2019). Transformational leaders will focus on improving employee commitment and performance (Hashim & Latiff, 2018).

2.1.2. Work Engagement

Work engagement is the feeling of a strong and real connection to work and the belief that employees can cope effectively with work demands (Chikobvu & Harunavamwe, 2022). Another definition states that work engagement is the emotional, cognitive, and physical satisfaction from work (Kašpárková et al., 2018). Employees with high work engagement have high morale levels, are enthusiastic, and are satisfied in performing their tasks (Tanwar, 2017). Workplace engagement is important to wellbeing and happiness (Kaul & Sen, 2015).

2.1.3. Work-life Balance

Work-life balance refers to the satisfaction employees experience when they can effectively manage their responsibilities at work and home (Oosthuizen et al., 2019). Implementing a work-life balance is important in improving employee productivity (Aisyah et al., 2021). Work-life balance combines role overload and work-family interaction (Khan & Fazili, 2016). Work-life balance is an individual's ability to simultaneously manage the emotional, behavioral, and time demands of work, personal responsibilities, and family (Choudhary & Shrivastava, 2015). Therefore, work-life

balance is important; it is a condition in which individuals face potential conflicts due to demands on time and energy to create satisfaction (Bukowska et al., 2021).

2.2. Hypothesis Development

2.2.1. Positive Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement

A leader is supposed to provide support and motivation to his employees (Breevaart et al., 2014). Previous research has examined how and why employees engage in work and found that leadership style is an underlying factor (Milhem et al., 2019). Transformational leadership is the ability of leaders to motivate and support employees to achieve maximum results (Andriani et al., 2018). Previous research conducted by Monje-Amor et al. (2020) and Gemeda and Lee (2020) found that transformational leadership is directly related to employee work engagement. Transformational leadership is associated with positive organizational outcomes as it plays an important role in the development of engagement (Schmitt et al., 2016). The conceptualization of transformational leadership describes several ways that it can be used to influence employee engagement (Hawkes et al., 2017). Buil et al. (2019) say that transformational leadership can strengthen engagement by offering individualized consideration to employees. Transformational leadership was also shown to build follower engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014).

H$_1$: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Work Engagement

2.2.2. Positive Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work-life Balance

Transformational leadership can improve employees' work-life balance, thereby increasing employee commitment (Amira et al., 2024). Work-life balance refers to the conscious effort made by employees to maintain a harmonious balance between their work and personal lives (Gautam & Jain, 2018). Research conducted by Hayati (2022) determined that transformational leadership has a beneficial and substantial impact on achieving work-life balance. Transformational leadership can potentially improve balance and coherence in employees' lives (Miao & Cao, 2019). Transformational leadership is a concept that refers to leaders who support, motivate, and empower employees to develop their skills (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leadership can be associated with Family Supportive Supervisory Behaviour, which can be sympathetic to employees' desires in terms of achieving work-life balance and believes that resolving employees' work-family issues is part of the leader's role (álvarez-Pérez & Carballo-Penela, 2015). A transformational leader knows when employees need to balance work with personal or family interests.

H$_2$: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Work-life Balance

2.2.3. Positive Effect of Work-life Balance on Work Engagement

Employees who can maintain a work-life balance will have a sense of high levels of employee engagement within the organization, stronger dedication, and improved performance (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). Work engagement is an individual's mental state when they feel satisfaction and can actively participate in their work (Bakker, 2017). Previous research from Haar et al. (2017) and Dinh (2020) found that work-life balance positively affects employee engagement. Brauner et al. (2019) argue that employees with high work demands and low levels of control tend to be vulnerable to decreased performance. The relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement can be explained using social exchange theory (Slack et al., 2015). The theory explains that companies care and provide opportunities for their employees so that employees will show certain attitudes and behaviors. Social exchange theory

applies to work-life balance when employees feel the company helps balance their work and personal lives (De Kort & Poell, 2016). When the company gives employees attention, employees will respond with high employee engagement.

H₃: Work-life Balance Has a Positive Effect on Work Engagement

2.2.4. Positive Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement through Work-life Balance

Previous research has discussed the role of work-life balance as a mediator of transformational leadership relationships on employee work engagement. Haar et al. (2017) found that work-life balance fully mediates leadership on work engagement. Factors that can increase employee engagement are the support and motivation of a leader. Employee engagement is inseparable from the leadership style applied by a leader. Transformational leadership can encourage employees to pay attention to their own interests, thus helping them be more creative and innovative while paying attention to the needs of their employees (Buil et al., 2019). Leaders are also motivated to achieve performance that exceeds expectations by changing employee attitudes, beliefs, and values (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Transformational leadership allows companies to improve employee performance in a dynamic work environment. Transformational leadership is an effective leadership style that encourages employee behavior and roles. Previous research results show that transformational leadership positively affects employee engagement (Monje-Amor et al., 2020). The high work demands felt by employees make them easily exhausted and spend more time working. The many demands from family and work can trigger a conflict when one role requires complex time and behavior and results in difficulty meeting the needs of the other role (Kossek & Lee, 2017). Work-life balance is how employees balance the demands of work with other demands such as family, hobbies, and social life (Khan & Fazili, 2016). Transformational leadership will strengthen the influence of employee work-life balance on employee engagement in the organization (Hayati, 2022).

H₄: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Work Engagement through Work-life Balance

2.3. Research Framework

Figure 1 depicts the relationship between the dependent variable (work engagement), the mediation variable (work-life balance), and the independent factors (transformational leadership). It also displays the study framework.
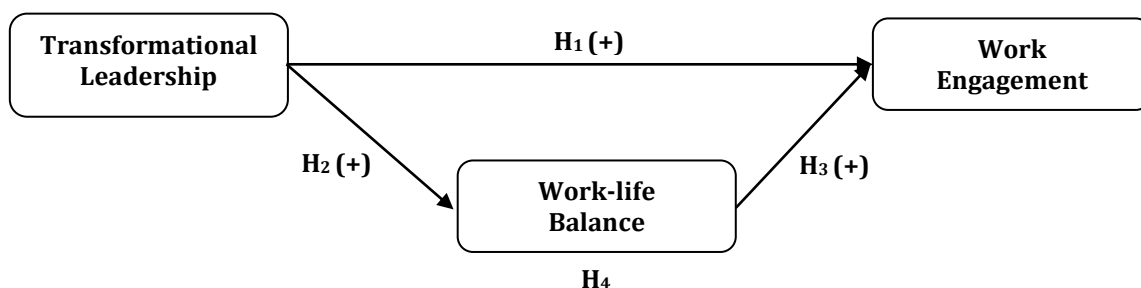

Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Research Method
3.1. Population and Sampling Method

The respondents in this research were employees of the Industry and Trade Agency of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The sampling method was the saturated sample method, which

used the entire population as a research sample. In total, 44 research samples were acquired.

3.2. Data Collecting Method

The researchers used questionnaires to collect information from the respondents. Furthermore, surveys were used to evaluate the accuracy and consistency of the information provided by respondents (Groves et al., 2011). The transformational leadership (TL) variable indicator uses 19 items adopted from Bass and Avolio (1990). The work engagement (WE) variable uses 11 items adopted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The work-life balance (WB) variable uses 7 items adopted from Omar (2013).

3.3. Data Analysis Method

The Smart PLS version 4 was the statistical test instrument employed in this study. Convergent validity shows the relationship between reflective indicators and their latent variables. The loading factor value for each indicator represents the measurement of the outer model. A loading factor of more than 0.6 indicates that an indicator is appropriate, according to Hair et al. (2020). The reliability value between the build's indicators is then calculated using composite reliability. A variable is considered good if the composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha are greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2020). Bootstrap resampling was used as a guideline to examine the mediation in this research hypothesis. According to Hair et al. (2020), the hypothesis is accepted if the p-value, which represents the result of the hypothesis test, is less than 0.05.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Validity Test

Figure 2 represents the measuring model. This study examined how transformational leadership impacts work engagement and how work-life balance mediates these factors.
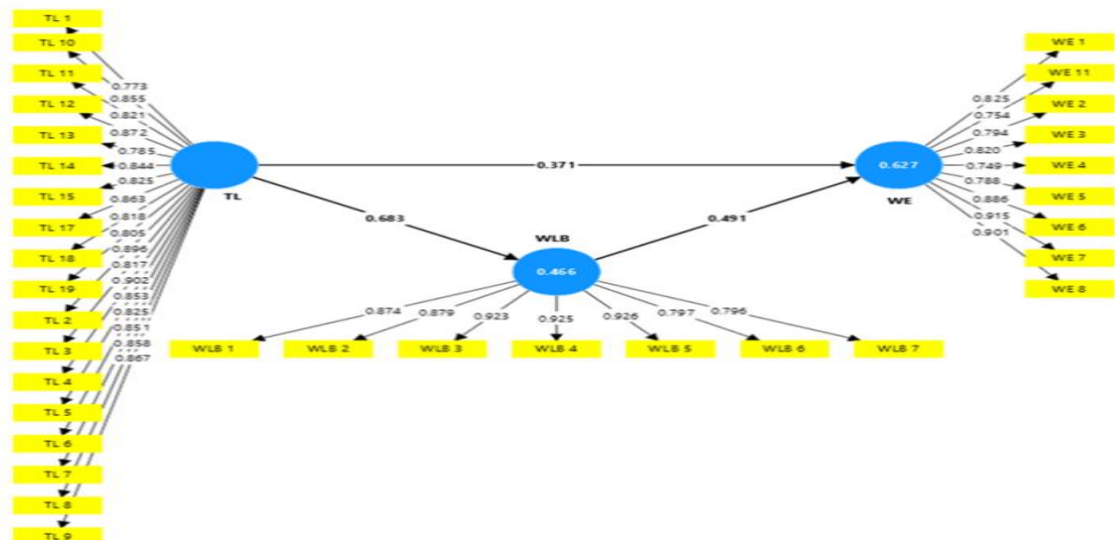

Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 1 presents the indicators of the valid research variables. Indicators representing each variable were declared valid if they had a loading factor greater than 0.6. However, several indicators were invalid in this study and had to be eliminated

because the loading factor value was less than 0.6.

Table 1. Validity Test Result

Indicator	Transformational Leadership	Work Engagement	Work-life Balance
TL 1	0.773		
TL 2	0.896		
TL 3	0.817		
TL 4	0.902		
TL 5	0.853		
TL 6	0.825		
TL 7	0.851		
TL 8	0.858		
TL 9	0.867		
TL 10	0.855		
TL 11	0.821		
TL 12	0.872		
TL 13	0.785		
TL 14	0.844		
TL 15	0.825		
TL 17	0.863		
TL 18	0.818		
TL 19	0.805		
WE 1		0.825	
WE 2		0.794	
WE 3		0.820	
WE 4		0.749	
WE 5		0.788	
WE 6		0.886	
WE 7		0.915	
WE 8		0.901	
WE 11		0.754	
WB 1			0.874
WB 2			0.879
WB 3			0.923
WB 4			0.925
WB 5			0.926
WB 6			0.797
WB 7			0.796

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

4.2. Reliability Test

Table 2 shows the reliability test results. Although every variable in this study has a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.6 and a composite reliability value greater than 0.7, it is all considered reliable.

Table 2. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational Leadership	0.978	0.976
Work Engagement	0.947	0.942
Work-life Balance	0.953	0.949

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

4.3. Hypothesis Test

Table 3 presents the hypothesis testing. The hypothesis test's findings show that transformational leadership impacts work engagement. Transformational leadership influences work-life balance, which in turn influences work engagement. Work-life balance also acts as a mediator between transformational leadership and work engagement.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Value
Transformational Leadership → Work Engagement	0.371	0.385	0.144	2.577	0.011
Transformational Leadership → Work-life Balance	0.683	0.684	0.086	7.906	0.000
Work-life Balance → Work Engagement	0.491	0.487	0.161	3.039	0.003
Transformational Leadership → Work-life Balance → Work Engagement	0.335	0.330	0.112	2.987	0.004

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

4.4. Discussion

4.4.1. The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement

Transformational leadership has a positive impact on work engagement. This study's results align with research conducted by Enwereuzor et al. (2018) and Lai et al. (2020) that shows that transformational leadership is directly related to employee work engagement. Transformational leadership has long been theorized to play an important role in engagement and continues to be further analyzed on the relationship between leadership and engagement (Blomme et al., 2015). Transformational leadership encourages work engagement by providing access to adequate information, opportunities, support, and resources (Monje-Amor et al., 2020). Leaders who apply a transformational leadership style will tend to increase the work engagement of their employees (Thanh et al., 2022). This means that when a leader can stimulate and inspire employees to achieve maximum results and develop their abilities, employees will feel satisfaction and have work involvement in the organization (Andriani et al., 2018).

4.4.2. The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work-life Balance

Transformational leadership has a positive impact on work-life balance. This research aligns with Falola et al. (2018) and Charoensukmongkol and Puyod (2024), which show a positive relationship between transformational leadership and work-life balance. This means that when leaders can apply transformational leadership styles that motivate and encourage employee performance and understand their employees' personal conditions, they can achieve a work-life balance. Transformational leadership can stimulate and inspire employees to balance two roles: roles as employees and roles in their personal lives. Usually, employees prioritize their work over their personal or family life (Obiageli et al., 2015). A transformational leader can reduce work pressure that can negatively affect employees' work-life balance because employees' work-life balance is necessary to ensure that employees can provide maximum performance (Obiageli et al., 2015). Employees who benefit from help, sympathy, and benevolence from their leaders tend to have high levels of work-life balance (Falola et al., 2018).

4.4.3. The Effect of Work-life Balance on Work Engagement

Work engagement has a positive impact on work-life balance. This research aligns with De Kort and Poell (2016) and Haar et al. (2017), which found that work-life balance positively affects employee engagement. Brauner et al. (2019) stated that employees with high work demands are at risk of decreased performance. The importance of leaders paying attention to employees' working time can improve mental health and allow them to align their work-life balance. Employees who feel a high work-life balance and meet their expectations are more willing to be involved in work, and vice versa. According to Falola et al. (2018), when employees can manage their personal lives, they will increase their engagement and productivity at work. Slack et al. (2015) explained that social exchange theory can be found when employees show certain attitudes when the company pays attention and provides opportunities to employees.

4.4.4. The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement Through Work-life Balance

Transformational leadership mediated by work-life balance positively impacts work engagement. This research aligns with Haar et al. (2017), who found that work-life balance fully mediates transformational leadership on work engagement. According to Haar et al. (2017), leadership in work engagement is mediated by work-life balance. A leader's encouragement and support are two things that can improve employee engagement. Employee engagement and a leader's style of leadership are directly related. While keeping an eye on their needs, transformational leadership can assist employees become more creative and inventive by encouraging them to focus on their interests (Buil et al., 2019). Additionally, by influencing workers' attitudes, convictions, and values, leaders inspire them to perform above and beyond expectations (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Through transformational leadership, businesses may enhance worker performance in a fast-paced workplace. One of the best theories of leadership for promoting employee roles and behavior is transformational leadership. According to earlier studies, transformational leadership raises employee engagement (Monje-Amor et al., 2020). Employees who experience high work expectations become easily weary and put in more time at the office. When one duty requires complex time and behavior and makes it impossible to meet the needs of the other role, the multiple demands from work and family can lead to conflict (Kossek & Lee, 2017). According to Khan and Fazili (2016), work-life balance refers to how people manage the demands of their jobs with those of their families, hobbies, and social lives. The impact of work-life balance on employee engagement within the company will be amplified by transformational leadership (Hayati, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to determine how work engagement is impacted by transformational leadership in relation to work-life balance. The results show how work-life balance and work engagement are positively impacted by transformational leadership. Work-life balance acts as a mediating factor between work engagement and transformational leadership. Based on these results, it can be seen that transformational leadership is able to encourage the creation of work-life balance. Transformational leaders are able to understand the role of an employee in addition to having work responsibilities, also has personal or family responsibilities, so that leaders will provide flexibility to employees to balance these two roles. When employees feel the role of leaders who are able to understand employees to carry out work-life balance, they will feel job satisfaction and engagement. The existence of

employees who are recognized and cared for by leaders makes them feel involved in the organization, so their performance will also increase.

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