

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Improving Employee Performance Through Career Development and Organizational Communication in Educational Staff at Ibnu Sina University, Batam

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze and prove the role of Transformational Leadership in improving Employee Performance through Career Development and Organizational Communication among non-teaching staff (educational personnel) at Ibnu Sina University, Batam. The population of this study consisted of all non-teaching staff at Ibnu Sina University Batam, with a total sampling technique resulting in 111 respondents. Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires. Data analysis employed the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results indicate that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Furthermore, Transformational Leadership is proven to have a significant effect on Career Development and Organizational Communication. Mediation test results show that Career Development and Organizational Communication significantly mediate the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance. Among the two mediating variables, Organizational Communication has a more dominant mediating influence in boosting employee performance. The managerial implications of this study emphasize the importance for university leaders to continue strengthening transformational leadership styles and providing certainty in career paths to ensure that staff productivity and responsibility remain at the highest level.*

Keywords: Career Development; Employee Performance; Organizational Communication; Transformational Leadership.

1. Introduction

Employee performance reflects an individual's ability to complete tasks effectively and efficiently in accordance with organizational standards. Optimal performance is not only determined by technical competence but also influenced by the human resource management system, leadership, and the communication climate established within the organization (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). In the context of higher education, the performance of educational staff plays a strategic role because it is directly related to the quality of academic and administrative services, as well as the satisfaction of the academic community. One important factor believed to influence employee performance is career development.

Career development is a systematic process designed by organizations to improve employee competency, readiness, and career advancement opportunities through training, career planning, and job promotions (Dessler, 2021; Wibowo, 2020). Employees with clear career paths tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, loyalty, and work commitment, positively impacting both individual and organizational performance (Putranti & Harianti, 2022).

In addition to career development, organizational communication also plays a crucial role in shaping employee work effectiveness. Effective organizational communication fosters a shared understanding of goals, roles, and responsibilities, and facilitates coordination between units (Keyton, 2017). Open, two-way communication between leaders and employees can increase trust, reduce errors, and encourage employee engagement in achieving organizational goals (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

One factor believed to play a crucial role in bridging this relationship is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership style capable of inspiring, motivating, and developing employee potential through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders play a strategic role in creating a fair career development system and fostering open and effective organizational communication. Through visionary and inspirational leadership, leaders can encourage employees to optimally utilize career development opportunities and respond positively to organizational communication, ultimately resulting in improved employee performance (Wang et al., 2022; Teoh et al., 2022). Therefore, transformational leadership is considered relevant to be tested as a mediating variable explaining how and through what mechanisms career development and organizational communication influence employee performance.

2. Research Methods

The purpose of this research is to provide an explanation. According to Sugiyono (2019), explanatory research is a research technique that seeks to explain the location of the variables studied and the interactions between them. Since the purpose of this research is to verify the

hypothesis, it is reasonable to assume that the results will shed light on the nature of the relationship between the hypothesized independent factors and their dependent variables. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to evaluate the hypothesis for the research purpose. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is an equation model based on components and variance, as stated by Ghazali (2018).

This research is a quantitative study with an explanatory approach, aiming to explain the causal relationships between variables based on the testing of formulated hypotheses. The explanatory approach was used because this study not only describes phenomena but also examines the direct and indirect influences between transformational leadership, career development, organizational communication, and employee performance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Career Development

The research results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on career development. This finding indicates that the transformational leadership style implemented by leaders at Ibnu Sina University, Batam, is able to encourage the career development of educational staff more effectively. Leaders with transformational characteristics tend to provide motivation, inspiration, and individual attention to subordinates, thereby increasing career development opportunities for employees within the organization.

Theoretically, the results of this study align with the transformational leadership theory proposed by Bass and Avolio, which states that transformational leaders are able to increase individual motivation and development through four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Through these dimensions, leaders can encourage subordinates to develop their potential and enhance professional competence, ultimately supporting their career development.

The results of this study also align with previous research, which found that transformational leadership has a significant influence on employee career development. Leaders who provide a clear vision, support competency development, and opportunities for capacity building will encourage employees to develop their abilities and better plan their careers within the organization.

In the context of Ibnu Sina University Batam, these results demonstrate the crucial role of leadership in creating a work environment that supports the career development of educational staff. Leadership that provides direction, support, and opportunities for competency development will increase employee motivation to develop their careers within the institution.

3.2. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Communication

The research results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational communication. This finding suggests that a transformational leadership style can improve the quality of communication within an organization, both vertical communication between leaders and subordinates and horizontal communication between work units.

Theoretically, transformational leadership has the ability to create an open, participatory, and inspiring communication environment. Transformational leaders tend to encourage more effective information exchange, provide constructive feedback, and build harmonious working relationships with subordinates. This aligns with organizational communication theory, which states that communication effectiveness is greatly influenced by the leadership style implemented within an organization.

The findings of this study are also supported by several previous studies, which have shown that transformational leadership can improve the effectiveness of organizational communication. Transformational leaders are able to create a more open and transparent communication climate, thereby improving work coordination among organizational members.

In the context of Ibnu Sina University Batam, this study demonstrates that university leadership plays a crucial role in building an effective organizational communication system. Good communication between leadership and educational staff improves work coordination, clarifies the division of tasks, and minimizes misunderstandings in the execution of tasks.

3.3. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The results of the hypothesis testing show that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance in educational staff at Ibnu Sina University, Batam, with a path coefficient value of 0.248 and a P-Value of 0.002 (<0.05).

These findings indicate that the stronger the transformational leadership style implemented by university leaders, the higher employee performance will be. Leaders at Ibnu Sina University Batam have successfully carried out their role as agents of change through intellectual stimulation. Based on descriptive analysis, the indicator of leaders providing creative encouragement (X.3) has a very high score (4.541). This proves that when leaders provide freedom for staff to innovate in completing administrative tasks, staff tend to feel more empowered and responsible (Y.4), which ultimately increases overall work effectiveness.

3.4. The Role of Career Development in Mediating the Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The results of the mediation analysis showed that Career Development significantly mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance (P-Value 0.000). Transformational leadership at this university not only provides direction but also focuses on developing the long-term potential of educational staff. Transformational leaders encourage the creation of relevant training programs (Z1.1), which has the highest descriptive score of 4.550.

Having certainty in career planning and support for competency development makes staff feel valued. This sense of appreciation serves as a bridge (mediator) for staff to optimize the quality of their work (Y.1). Without a clear career development system, a good leadership style alone will not be enough to drive maximum performance among educational staff.

3.5. The Role of Organizational Communication in Mediating the Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

Research data proves that Organizational Communication acts as a significant mediating variable with a P-Value of 0.000 and an indirect coefficient of 0.182. This finding confirms that a transformational leadership style requires effective communication channels to transform the leader's vision into concrete actions in the field. Communication openness (Z2.2) which has an average score of 4.486 indicates that leaders are able to create a healthy two-way communication climate. Transparent communication minimizes information barriers, so that educational staff can understand work targets clearly and on time (Y.2). Organizational communication acts as a strengthening factor in relationships that accelerates the influence of leadership in boosting organizational performance achievements.

3.6. Integration of Multiple Mediation Models: Dominance Analysis

In this double mediation model, the study compares the effectiveness of career development (Z1) and organizational communication (Z2) in improving the performance of educational staff.

Based on the Specific Indirect Effects value, it was found that both mediation paths have almost equal strength, but the path through Career Development ($O = 0.183$) has a slightly higher coefficient than the path through Organizational Communication ($O = 0.182$). This provides an important finding for Ibnu Sina University Batam that although communication is very vital, the tangible aspects of career development (training, competency-based promotion, and future planning) are slightly stronger driving factors for educational staff to show their highest dedication.

Overall, the integration of this model proves that to achieve superior educational staff performance, Ibnu Sina University Batam must combine a transformational leadership style with systematic career system strengthening and supported by effective information transparency.

4. Conclusion

Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance among educational staff at Ibnu Sina University, Batam. This proves that leadership that provides role models and intellectual motivation can directly improve the responsibility and quality of staff work. Career Development is proven to significantly mediate the effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance. The right leadership style encourages the creation of a good career development system, which in turn boosts employee performance. Organizational Communication is proven to significantly mediate the effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance. Open two-way communication between leaders and staff is a vital tool in transforming the leadership's vision into effective work target achievement. Integratively, the Career Development variable has a slightly stronger mediation value than organizational communication, indicating that the certainty of the staff's professional future is a major driving factor in the performance improvement model within this university environment.

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