

Improving Employee Performance at Pt. Hop Lun Indonesia Based on Transformational Leadership: The Role of Employee Engagement and Employee Empowerment as Intervening Variables

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on the employee performance of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, with employee engagement and employee empowerment as intervening variables. The research background is based on the phenomenon of suboptimal employee performance over the past four years, despite the company operating in the competitive textile industry. The research method employed is explanatory research with a quantitative approach. The study population consists of all employees of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, totaling 135 people, with a census technique resulting in 120 respondents who met the criteria. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on both employee engagement and employee empowerment. Furthermore, both employee engagement and employee empowerment have a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Transformational leadership also significantly influences employee performance, both directly and through the mediating roles of employee engagement and employee empowerment. These findings reinforce the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing engagement, empowerment, and employee performance in the textile industry environment. This research provides practical implications for the management of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia in formulating more effective human resource development policies.*

Keywords: Employee; Engagement; Leadership; Transformational.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization, the trade war and intense competition between the United States (US) and China (China) have had a significant impact on the global economy, including Indonesia. This conflict is characterized by increased reciprocal import tariffs, leading to economic uncertainty, disruptions to global supply chains, and a decline in global export demand. Indonesia, as a developing country, has felt the impact, such as fluctuations in the rupiah exchange rate and weakening investment, but has also seen opportunities for industrial relocation and new export markets.

Changes are occurring in almost every sector of human life. The rise of science and technology has resulted in increasingly fierce business competition facing every company. This forces every company or organization to empower and optimize all company assets, especially

human resources, which are strategic assets, so that the company is not crushed by the tide of competition. Companies, both large and small, cannot keep up with the fierce competition of business because they do not have an effective human resource management strategy. Companies that are not supported by high-performing human resources will not have long-term business continuity. Maintaining business continuity requires the performance of human resources or employees working within a company (Putu Eka Nopiyani, 2024).

Studies on employee motivation show that motivation levels are directly related to performance. Maslow's theory states that employees whose basic needs are met tend to perform better. Meanwhile, Herzberg, through his two-factor theory, explains that there are factors that can increase satisfaction (motivators) and factors that can reduce it. According to Avolio, (2021) Effective leadership can improve employee performance by providing clear direction, support, and motivation. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiration and empowerment, has a significant impact on individual performance within an organization. Northouse, (2022) defines transformational leaders as individuals who influence followers to achieve higher personal and organizational goals through inspiration, motivation, and attention to employee development. These leaders possess charismatic qualities that motivate and engage their followers. *Employee Engagement* Employee engagement refers to the level of employee engagement and commitment to their work, which is influenced by factors such as intrinsic motivation and a positive relationship with the leader. Recent research shows that transformational leaders can increase employee engagement through their positive influence and motivation. Research conducted by Salanova et al. (2020) shows that transformational leaders significantly influence employee engagement because they are able to provide a motivating vision, pay attention to individual needs, and create a supportive work environment. Leaders who are inspiring and provide opportunities for growth will increase employee engagement levels.

Hu et al., (2021) also found that transformational leadership style is positively related to employee engagement levels, especially when leaders are able to demonstrate a clear vision and provide feedback that supports employee development. *Employee Empowerment* refers to giving employees autonomy, control, and the ability to make decisions that affect their work. Recent research shows that transformational leaders play a critical role in empowering employees by recognizing their abilities and granting them greater responsibility. Wang et al., (2021) found that transformational leaders can increase employee empowerment by giving them the freedom to take initiative, providing opportunities for development, and creating self-confidence in employees. In addition, Ismail & Ibrahim, (2021) researched that empowerment promoted by transformational leaders increases employee job satisfaction and performance because employees feel they have a greater role in work decisions and processes, which increases their sense of responsibility and commitment to their work.

Employee performance is a crucial factor in determining the success of an organization. Organizations that consistently improve employee performance will have a sustainable competitive advantage, increase productivity, and contribute to the achievement of long-term organizational goals. However, in practice, improving employee performance is not a simple task. It requires appropriate managerial strategies that can encourage employee motivation,

engagement, and satisfaction. Amidst the increasingly competitive and complex dynamics of the business environment, companies need to implement more innovative and adaptive approaches to improve employee performance. One increasingly popular approach is employee engagement, employee empowerment, and transformational leadership, which are believed to have a significant impact on employee performance. However, several studies disagree, including research conducted by Suryani and Sari (2021), which argues that Transformational leadership did not show a significant influence on employee performance, while remote work had a significant influence. Research conducted by Sari and Suryani, (2017) argues that Transformational leadership does not have a direct significant effect on employee performance, but has a significant effect on job satisfaction.

Transformational leadership and employee performance often occur because the relationship between leadership style and employee performance is not always significant, as explained previously. However, in many cases, research shows that employee engagement can be an important factor that mediates or moderates this relationship. In situations where transformational leadership does not directly improve employee performance, the level of employee engagement may be the key linking the two. Related research that points to employee engagement as a solution, according to Slemp & Vella-Brodrick (2013), shows that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee engagement, and in turn, higher employee engagement leads to improved performance. These findings support the idea that employee engagement can be a powerful mediator between leadership style and performance. Additionally, research by Alfes et al. (2013) found that employee engagement is considered a significant factor influencing employee creativity and innovation in the workplace. This creativity and innovation, in turn, can improve employee performance. These studies show that although transformational leadership can improve employee performance, employee engagement serves as a link that explains this relationship more comprehensively. In cases where transformational leadership does not directly affect employee performance, employee engagement can act as a mediator that moderates or enhances the influence of leadership on performance outcomes. Therefore, companies can improve employee performance by focusing more on developing employee engagement through an inspirational and empowering leadership style.

2. Research Methods

This study uses an explanatory research method with a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2017), explanatory research is a research method that aims to explain the position of the variables studied and the influence between one variable and another. This quantitative approach is based on the philosophy of positivism, which is used to research specific populations or samples and collect data using research variables (Sugiyono, 2017). These variables include transformational leadership, employee engagement, employee empowerment, and employee performance. The data collection method in this study used open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires via Google Forms. Questionnaire statements whose answers have been limited by the researcher are called closed-ended questionnaires. Questionnaire statements that give respondents freedom to answer are called open-ended

questionnaires (Kuncoro, 2003). The questionnaire was compiled based on indicators of the variables in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondent Overview

The respondents of this study were permanent employees (not daily contracts or outsourcing), had worked for at least 6 months (to understand the work culture and leadership style), had a direct superior whose leadership style could be assessed, and were not at the top management level (to be able to assess the superior, not themselves) totaling 135 respondents. This study was conducted by providing questionnaires indirectly (google form) to all employees of PT. Hop Lun Indonesian and took approximately one month until all questionnaires were collected by 100 percent. The questionnaires were given to 135 employees of PT. Hop Lun Indonesian. The results of the questionnaires that met the criteria were 120 with a presentation 89 percent, which can then be tested and analyzed, while 15 percent did not meet the criteria and needed to be eliminated. The return rate of questionnaires that can be further processed is presented below:

Data Collection Results Table

Criteria	Amount	Presentation
Questionnaires distributed	135	100%
Number of questionnaires that do not meet the criteria	15	11%
Number of questionnaires that meet the criteria	120	89%

The table above explains that of the total 135 questionnaires distributed, 11 percent of them did not meet the criteria or 15 and 89 percent met the criteria or 120. Demographics in this study include gender, status, age, and education.

Respondent Demographics Table

Information	Total	Presentation
Number of Samples Analyzed	120	100%
Gender		
Man	49	41%
Woman	71	59%
Status		
Permanent employees	0	0%
Non-Permanent Employees	120	100%
Age		
20-30	31	26%
31-50	74	62%
>50	15	12%
Education		
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	29	24%

D1	9	8%
D3	15	12%
S1	65	54%
S2	2	2%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

The description of the research variables is intended to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the research variables. *Transformational Leadership (TL)*, *Employee Engagement (EEG)*, *Employee Empowerment (EEM)* and *Employee Performance (EEP)*. This description includes an explanation of the perception index values and the research findings in the field. Based on the data collected from the questionnaire respondents, the respondents' answers were summarized and then analyzed to obtain descriptive information about each variable.

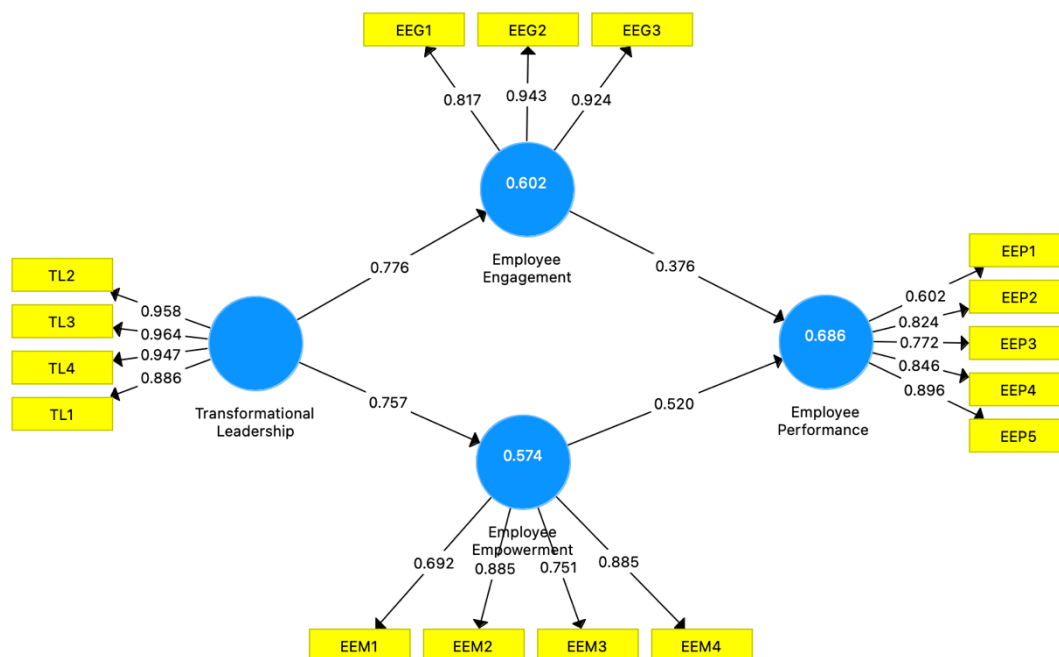
This study uses index numbers to describe empirically obtained data. Index numbers are used to determine the degree of respondents' perception of the variables studied. Data collection was conducted using interval measurements with the following provisions:

- The lowest rating score is 1 for strongly disagree.
- The highest rating score is 10 for strongly agree.
- Index value: $(\%F1x1) + (\%F2x2) + (\%F3x3) + (\%F4x4) + (\%F5x5) + (\%F6x6) + (\%F7x7) + (\%F8x8) + (\%F9x9) + (\%F10x10) / 10$.

F1 is the frequency of respondents who answered 1, F2 is the frequency of respondents who answered 2 and so on. F10 is the frequency of respondents who answered 10 from the scores used in the question. Respondents' answers do not start from 0 but from 1 to 10, so the index numbers obtained start from 1 to 10 with a range of 9 without 0. To facilitate interpretation, in this study the answer scores are converted into units of 100. Based on the three box method approach (Ferdinand, 2014), a range of 90:3 will produce a range of 30. Therefore, the measurement of respondents' perceptions of the indicators of this study uses an index value with a range of 3, namely:

- 10.00–40.00 = low criteria
- 40.01–70.00 = medium criteria
- 70.01–100.00 = high criteria

3.2. Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping)



Structural Model Testing Image

This study tested seven hypotheses on *inner model*. The causal relationships developed in the model are tested through the null hypothesis that states that the regression coefficients for each relationship are equal to zero through a t-test as in regression analysis. To determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected, this can be done by observing the significance values between constructs, t-test. *Values* and *p-values*. In this way, the measurement estimates and standard errors are no longer calculated with statistical assumptions, but are based on empirical observations. In this method *bootstrapping* in this study, the hypothesis is accepted if the significance value of *t-values* > 1.96 and or *p-value values* < 0.05, then H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected and vice versa. To determine the influence of a variable, it can be seen through the path coefficient with the criteria if the path coefficient below 0.30 gives a moderate influence, from 0.30 to 0.60 is strong, and more than 0.60 gives a very strong influence.

Hypothesis:

- H1: Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on Employee Engagement.
- H2: Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on Employee Empowerment.
- H3: Employee Engagement has a positive influence on Employee Performance.
- H4: Employee Empowerment has a positive influence on Employee Performance.

Path Coefficient Table

			Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Note
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	<i>Employee Engagement</i>	->	0.776	27,987	0,000	Accepted
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>	->	0.757	9,152	0,000	Accepted
<i>Employee Engagement</i>	<i>Employee Performance</i>	->	0.376	3,422	0.001	Accepted
<i>Employee Empowerment</i>	<i>Employee Performance</i>	->	0.520	5,426	0,000	Accepted

Source: processed primary data, 2025

Based on the table above, the results of data processing show that:

1) First Hypothesis Testing Results

In this study, the first hypothesis tested whether there was a positive influence between transformational leadership and employee engagement. The results of this test indicated a strong path coefficient ($O = 0.776$) and a t-statistic of $27.987 > 1.96$. p-value $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has a positive relationship influence on employee engagement (H1 is accepted). This positive path coefficient indicates that the better and stronger the transformational leadership possessed by an employee of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, the higher the employee engagement will be. Therefore, the final conclusion of the first hypothesis, which states that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee engagement, is accepted.

2) Results of the Second Hypothesis Test

In this study, the second hypothesis tests whether there is a positive influence between transformational leadership and employee empowerment. The results of this test indicate a strong path coefficient ($O = 0.757$) and a t-statistic of $3.422 > 1.96$. p-value $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has a positive relationship influence on employee empowerment (H2 is accepted). This positive path coefficient indicates that the better and stronger the transformational leadership possessed by an employee of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, the higher the employee empowerment will be. Therefore, the final conclusion of the second hypothesis, which states that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee empowerment, is accepted.

3) Results of the Third Hypothesis Test

In this study, the third hypothesis tests whether there is a positive influence between employee engagement and employee performance. The results of this test indicate a strong path coefficient ($O = 0.376$) and a t-statistic of $3.422 > 1.96$. p-value $0.001 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that employee engagement has a positive relationship influence on employee performance (H3 is accepted). This positive path coefficient indicates that the better and

stronger employee engagement an employee of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia has, the higher employee performance will be. Therefore, the final conclusion of the third hypothesis, which states that employee engagement has a positive influence on employee performance, is accepted.

4) Results of the Fourth Hypothesis Test

In this study, the fourth hypothesis tests whether there is a positive influence between employee empowerment and employee performance. The results of this test indicate a strong path coefficient ($O = 0.520$) and a t-statistic of $5.426 > 1.96$. $p\text{-value } 0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that employee empowerment has a positive relationship influence on employee performance (H4 is accepted). This positive path coefficient indicates that the better and stronger employee empowerment an employee of PT. Hop Lun Indonesia has, the higher employee performance will be. Therefore, the final conclusion of the fourth hypothesis, which states that employee empowerment has a positive influence on employee performance, is accepted.

The results of the hypothesis test of indirect influence through employee engagement and employee empowerment as mediating variables using SmartPLS software can be seen in Table below:

Table Results of Indirect Effect Hypothesis Test

	Original (O)	Sample T	Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Note
Transformational Leadership -> Employee Empowerment -> Employee Performance	0.394	4,553		0,000	Accepted
Transformational Leadership -> Employee Engagement -> Employee Performance	0.292	3,392		0.001	Accepted

Source: processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table, the indirect influence on this research model can be seen as follows:

- The indirect influence of the transformational leadership variable on employee performance through employee empowerment as a mediating variable has a path coefficient (O) of 0.394 with a statistical value of $4.553 > 1.96$ and $p\text{-value } 0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that employee empowerment moderately mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.
- The indirect influence of the transformational leadership variable on employee performance through employee engagement as a mediating variable has a path coefficient (O) of 0.292 with a statistical value of $3.392 > 1.96$ and $p\text{-value } 0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that employee engagement moderately mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

3.3. Discussion and Results of Hypothesis Research

- 1) Influence *Transformational Leadership* to wards Employee Engagement.

Test results show that transformational leadership can have a positive impact on employee engagement. The better and stronger the transformational leadership of PT Hop Lun Indonesia's leaders, the higher employee engagement will be.

This is in accordance with previous research that has been studied by several researchers, including: Hoch et al., (2018) states that transformational leadership serves as a trigger for employee engagement, especially in changing contexts. Transformational leaders can adapt their style to provide the support employees need across different situations and work environments, which increases their engagement. These adaptive leaders can create a work environment that is more responsive to employee needs, which in turn increases their engagement. Karakas et al., (2017) Research shows that transformational leadership can increase engagement by creating a more positive, customer-focused service culture. Transformational leaders who demonstrate empathy, effective communication, and concern for employee well-being help create a work environment that increases employee engagement. Employees who feel valued and inspired by their leaders are more likely to provide excellent service to customers and are more engaged in the organization.

2) Influence *Transformational Leadership* to wards Employee Empowerment.

Test results show that transformational leadership can have a positive impact on employee empowerment. The better and stronger the transformational leadership of PT Hop Lun Indonesia's leaders, the greater employee empowerment.

This is in accordance with previous research conducted by several researchers, including Goleman (2017), who in his book on emotional intelligence explains that transformational leaders with high emotional intelligence can strengthen employee empowerment through more empathetic and caring means. These leaders can understand the emotional needs of employees, which allows them to provide greater support and create a work environment that supports empowerment. In this way, transformational leaders not only give employees the freedom to act, but also provide them with the appreciation, enlightenment, and attention needed to increase employee self-confidence and autonomy. (Hoch et al., 2018) Their research shows that transformational leadership can support employee empowerment in an increasingly global and diversified work environment. Transformational leaders who provide clear direction and listen to employee input create an empowering work culture. In this case, empowerment means giving employees the authority to make decisions that impact their work outcomes, as well as enabling them to grow and contribute to the organization's larger goals.

3) Influence *Employee Engagement* towards Employee Performance.

Test results show that employee engagement can have a positive impact on employee performance. The stronger and better employee engagement at PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, the higher employee performance.

This is in accordance with previous research that has been studied by several researchers, including: Bakker & Demerouti, (2014) developed the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which suggests that employee engagement mediates the relationship between job resources

and employee performance. When employees have sufficient resources (such as management support, autonomy, or opportunities for growth), they are more engaged in their work. Engaged employees use their energy and psychological resources to address job demands, enabling them to work more productively and deliver higher performance. This model demonstrates that employee engagement links the availability of job resources to better performance. According to a 2017 Gallup report, companies with high levels of employee engagement demonstrate better performance in terms of productivity, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Gallup noted that engaged employees produce 22% more productivity than their disengaged counterparts. Furthermore, they are more likely to stay with the company longer, reducing employee turnover rates, which positively impacts the organization's long-term performance.

4) Influence *Employee Empowerment* towards Employee Performance.

Test results show that employee engagement can have a positive impact on employee performance. The stronger and better employee engagement at PT. Hop Lun Indonesia, the higher employee performance.

This is in accordance with previous research that has been researched by Wang et al., (2021) observed that in the context of knowledge-based organizations, employee empowerment can play a crucial role in creating competitive advantage. They added that empowerment involving access to information, training, and managerial support can help employees reach their full potential. In the long run, this can contribute to improved individual and team performance. According to Lee et al. (2020), they examined the relationship between employee empowerment and employee performance in the era of technology-based organizations. Their research findings indicate that effective employee empowerment can increase organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and ultimately improve employee performance. One important finding of this study is that empowerment not only has a direct impact on individual performance but can also improve teamwork and collaboration, ultimately contributing to the achievement of organizational goals.

Transformational leadership itself refers to the process of building commitment to organizational goals and empowering followers to achieve those goals. Transformational leadership theory studies how leaders transform organizational culture, restructure organizations, and implement management strategies to achieve organizational goals. Transformational leadership is leadership that can create fundamental change and is grounded in religious values, systems, and culture to foster innovation and creativity among followers in order to achieve a predetermined vision (Iqbal, 2021).

Transformational leadership is said to play a crucial role in improving employee performance. This can be seen when a leader possesses a strong transformational attitude and traits, setting a positive example for their subordinates (Nur et al., 2021).

According to Weiher et al., 2016, the indicators of transformational leadership are:

1. Ideal/charismatic leadership, meaning a leader who is admired, respected, and trusted.

2. Inspirational motivation, meaning the ability of transformational leaders to motivate and inspire employees to feel optimistic about the organization's future goals.
3. Intellectual stimulation, meaning behaviors that stimulate problem-solving and careful and creative consideration of the issues at hand.
4. Individualized consideration, meaning recognition of employee needs, individual attention, and training.

When employees are emotionally committed to a company, it can be said that employee engagement is created within the company. Companies with high levels of employee engagement are seen in their employees who work not only for a salary or for career advancement, but also for performance based on achieving organizational goals (Kruse, 2012). Umihastanti (2022) argues that employee engagement is an individual's willingness to go the extra mile for the company to achieve its vision and mission, through which employees contribute more to the company.

According to Schaufeli & Bakker (2016), there are three indicators of employee engagement:

1) Vigor

This can be assessed by the enthusiasm a person displays for their work, as evidenced by their high energy and stamina. This includes a willingness to put in serious effort, as well as persistence and perseverance in the face of challenges.

2) Dedication

This refers to the strength of one's feelings of attachment to one's work, leading to a constant sense of enthusiasm and pride in one's work, filled with a sense of meaning.

3) Absorption

Characterized by concentration and seriousness in work, enjoying the work so that time seems to pass quickly while working and finding it difficult to leave. There is a strong interest in completing what is required of the work.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership on employee engagement and employee empowerment, as well as its impact on employee performance at PT. Hop Lun Indonesia. Based on the results of data analysis conducted using the PLS-SEM method, the following conclusions can be drawn: Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement, which indicates that the better the transformational leadership implemented, the higher the employee involvement in work. Transformational Leadership also has a positive and significant effect on Employee Empowerment, meaning that this leadership style is able to increase employees' sense of belonging, self-confidence, and responsibility in their work. Employee Engagement is proven to have a positive effect on Employee Performance, indicating that more engaged employees will show better work performance. Employee Empowerment has a stronger effect on Employee Performance than Employee Engagement, proving that employee empowerment is very important in creating optimal performance. Thus, employee engagement and employee empowerment are proven to be effective mediating variables in bridging the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance.

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