

The Effect of Work Motivation, Transformational Leadership Style and Career Development on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction

Nurul Mutmainnah¹
STIE Nusantara Sangatta

Amransyah²
STIE Nusantara Sangatta

Rizkiawan³
STIE Nusantara Sangatta

Nelly⁴
STIE Nusantara Sangatta

Correspondence : Rizkiawan (rizkiawan@stienusantara.ac.id)

Submitted : 06-05-2026 Accepted : 05-06-2026 Published : 07-07-2026

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation, transformational leadership style, and career development on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Dinas PUPR Kabupaten Kutai Timur. This research uses quantitative explanatory method with SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares) analysis. The population consists of 120 employees with a sample of 93 respondents determined using the Slovin formula with 5% margin of error and simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire (1-5). The results show that career development has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (original sample 0.574, p-value 0.000), and transformational leadership style has a significant positive effect on employee performance (original sample 0.540, p-value 0.000). However, work motivation and transformational leadership style do not significantly affect job satisfaction, and work motivation and career development do not directly affect employee performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction fails to mediate the relationship between work motivation, transformational leadership style, and career development on employee performance. The R-Square values indicate that the predictor variables explain 40.4% of job satisfaction variance and 40.1% of employee performance variance.

Keyword: Work Motivation, Transformational Leadership, Career Development, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are a key asset in achieving organizational goals. In an era of increasingly fierce global competition, organizations are required to have high-performing employees to compete and provide optimal service to the public. Good employee performance depends not only on technical skills but is also influenced by various psychological and managerial factors such as work motivation, leadership, career development, and job satisfaction.

The Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Department of East Kutai Regency, as a regional government agency responsible for public services in the infrastructure and spatial planning sectors, requires high-performing employees. However, initial observations revealed that employee performance was suboptimal, as evidenced by persistent delays in completing work programs, low employee initiative in completing tasks, and a lack of creativity in problem-solving in the field.

Work motivation is a crucial factor influencing employee performance. Highly motivated employees demonstrate greater work ethic, are more responsible, and are more productive in carrying out their duties (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Work motivation can also create job satisfaction because motivated employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Transformational leadership is considered highly relevant in the modern era because this type of leader is able to inspire, motivate, and encourage the creativity of their subordinates. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) define transformational leadership as a leader's ability to transform the values, beliefs, and needs of their followers toward achieving higher goals. Effective transformational leaders have the potential to significantly improve employee performance and influence their levels of job satisfaction.

Career development is a long-term investment for both individuals and organizations. Employees who have a clear career path, receive adequate training, and feel cared for in their development tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and motivated to improve their performance. Structured career development also reflects the organization's concern for employee well-being, which in turn contributes to improved performance (Handoko, 2014).

Job satisfaction is seen as an important mediating variable linking various organizational factors to employee performance. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or work experience. It is believed that high job satisfaction will encourage employees to make the best contribution to their work (Luthans, 2011).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation, transformational leadership style, and career development on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Public Works and Public Housing Agency of East Kutai Regency. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of human resource management in local government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the work results in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him (Mangkunegara, 2017). Bernardin and Russell (1993) define performance as a record of the results resulting from the function of a particular job or activity during a certain period of time. Employee performance indicators in this study include: (1) work quality, (2) work quantity, (3) timeliness, (4) effectiveness, and (5) independence in carrying out tasks.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a person's general attitude toward their job (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from a person's evaluation of their job or work experience. Luthans (2011) adds that job satisfaction is related to a person's attitude toward work and is the result of an employee's perception of how well their job provides what they consider important. Indicators of job satisfaction include: (1) satisfaction with salary, (2) satisfaction with promotions, (3) satisfaction with coworkers, (4) satisfaction with superiors, and (5) satisfaction with the job itself.

Work motivation

Work motivation is an internal and external drive within a person that influences the direction, intensity, and persistence of work behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Relevant motivation theories in this context include Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959), and McClelland's theory of needs (1961). High work motivation encourages employees to exert greater effort in completing their tasks. Indicators of work motivation include: (1) need for achievement, (2) need for affiliation, (3) need for power, (4) responsibility, and (5) recognition.

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership was first proposed by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985). Bass (1985) defined transformational leadership as the ability of a leader to motivate followers beyond initial expectations by increasing subordinates' awareness of the importance of values and goals, encouraging subordinates to prioritize group interests, and elevating the level of subordinates' needs to a higher level. The main components of transformational leadership include: (1) idealized influence, (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individualized consideration.

Career Development

Career development is the process of improving an individual's work abilities in order to achieve a desired career (Rivai, 2011). Handoko (2014) defines career development as personal improvements undertaken by an individual to achieve a career plan. Effective career development provides dual benefits for both the organization and the individual: the organization gains more competent and loyal employees, while the individual gains psychological satisfaction through achieving their potential and career goals. Career development indicators include: (1) education and training, (2) job promotions, (3) transfers, (4) organizational support, and (5) individual career planning.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Based on theoretical studies and previous research, the conceptual framework of this study describes the relationship between work motivation variables (X1), transformational leadership style (X2), and career development (X3) as exogenous variables; job satisfaction (Y1) as a mediating variable; and employee performance (Y2) as an endogenous variable. The proposed hypotheses are: H1 (work motivation influences job satisfaction), H2 (work motivation influences employee performance), H3 (career development influences job satisfaction), H4 (job satisfaction influences employee performance), H5 (transformational leadership style influences employee performance), H6 (transformational leadership style influences job satisfaction), H7 (career development influences employee performance), H8, H9, and H10 (job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work motivation, transformational leadership, and career development on employee performance).

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with explanatory research, aiming to explain causal relationships between variables through hypothesis testing. The research location was the Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Department of East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province.

The population of this study was all 120 State Civil Apparatus (ASN) within the PUPR Department of East Kutai Regency. The sampling technique used the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a sample of 93 respondents. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, which involves simple random sampling without regard to strata within the population.

The research instrument was a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The variables measured included: work motivation (X1) with 10 indicators, transformational leadership style (X2) with 12 indicators, career development (X3) with 10 indicators, job satisfaction (Y1) with 10 indicators, and employee performance (Y2) with 10 indicators. Instrument validity and reliability testing were conducted prior to primary data collection.

The analysis method used was Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS software version 3.0. The analysis involved two stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), which included testing for convergent validity (factor loadings ≥ 0.70 , AVE ≥ 0.50) and construct reliability (composite reliability ≥ 0.70 , Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.60); and (2) evaluation of the structural model (inner model), which included R-Square, hypothesis testing through bootstrapping, and mediation effect analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The results of the outer model evaluation show that all indicators meet the requirements for convergent validity with loading factor values above 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is above 0.50, indicating that more than half of the indicator variance can be explained by its latent construct. The Composite Reliability (CR) of all constructs exceeds 0.70 and the Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.60, indicating that all instruments have good reliability. Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion where the square root of the AVE value of each construct is greater than the correlation of that construct with other constructs, thus discriminant validity is met.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The R-Square value for the job satisfaction variable (Y1) is 0.404, which means that the variables of work motivation, transformational leadership style, and career development together explain 40.4% of the variation in job satisfaction, while the remaining 59.6% is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-Square value for the employee performance variable (Y2) is 0.401, which means that the predictor variables in the model explain 40.1% of the variation in employee performance. A Q-Square (Stone-Geisser) value greater than 0 indicates that the model has good predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing: Direct Effects

The results of testing the direct effect hypothesis through bootstrapping are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Results of Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing

H	Track	Orig. Sample	T- Statistic	P- Value	Decision
H1	Work Motivation → Job Satisfaction	0.074	0.555	0.579	Rejected
H2	Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.018	0.118	0.906	Rejected
H3	Career Development → Job Satisfaction	0.574	3.866	0.000	Accepted
H4	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.172	1.267	0.206	Rejected
H5	Transformational Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0.540	4.267	0.000	Accepted
H6	Transformational Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction	0.329	1.990	0.048	Rejected
H7	Pengembangan Karir → Kinerja Pegawai	-0.047	0.342	0.733	Rejected

Source: Processed data, SmartPLS 2026

Based on Table 1, the results of the direct effect hypothesis testing show that: H1 (work motivation → job satisfaction) is rejected ($p=0.579>0.05$); H2 (work motivation → employee performance) is rejected ($p=0.906>0.05$); H3 (career development → job satisfaction) is accepted with an original sample of 0.574 and $p=0.000<0.05$; H4 (job satisfaction → employee performance) is rejected ($p=0.206>0.05$); H5 (transformational leadership style → employee performance) is accepted with an original sample of 0.540 and $p=0.000<0.05$; H6 (transformational leadership style → job satisfaction) has $p=0.048$ but using 1% significance is rejected; and H7 (career development → employee performance) is rejected ($p=0.733>0.05$).

Hypothesis Testing: Indirect Effect (Mediation)

The results of testing the mediation effect hypothesis through bootstrapping are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Results of Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing (Mediation)

H	Mediation Pathway	Orig. Sample	T- Statistic	P- Value	Decision

H8	Work Motivation → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.013	0.456	0.649	Rejected
H9	Transformational Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.057	1.152	0.250	Rejected
H10	Career Development → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.099	1.166	0.244	Rejected

Source: Processed data, SmartPLS 2026

Based on Table 2, all mediation hypotheses were rejected. Job satisfaction failed to mediate the influence of work motivation (H8, $p=0.649$), transformational leadership style (H9, $p=0.250$), or career development (H10, $p=0.244$) on employee performance. This indicates that job satisfaction is not an effective mediating variable in the context of this study.

Discussion

The Impact of Career Development on Job Satisfaction

Career development has a significant positive effect on the job satisfaction of employees at the Public Works and Public Housing Agency of East Kutai Regency (original sample = 0.574, $p = 0.000$). These results support Handoko's (2014) theory that planned and structured career development can increase employee job satisfaction. When employees perceive that the organization cares about their career development through training programs, fair promotions, and clear career planning, job satisfaction will increase. This finding aligns with research by Wahyudi and Suparno (2020) which found that career development is a dominant factor in shaping ASN job satisfaction in government agencies.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership style has a significant positive effect on employee performance (original sample=0.540, $p=0.000$). Leaders who are able to display idealized influence, provide inspirational motivation, encourage intellectual stimulation, and provide individualized consideration have been proven to significantly improve subordinate performance. These results align with the theory of Bass and Avolio (1994) and research by Thamrin (2012), which states that transformational leadership is a strong predictor of employee performance. Transformational leaders create a supportive work environment, a clear vision, and strong intrinsic motivation in employees, thus directly impacting performance improvement.

Work Motivation and Career Development: No Direct Impact on Performance

An interesting finding is that work motivation (H1, H2) and career development (H7) do not have a direct significant effect on employee performance. Work motivation also has no effect on job satisfaction. This can be explained by the phenomenon that in government bureaucratic environments, the influence of motivation on performance can be mediated by other factors such as organizational culture, a less adaptive reward system, or rigid regulations. While career development may have a longer-term impact that was not measured in this cross-sectional study, or its effect has been channeled through job satisfaction, job satisfaction itself failed to mediate the effect on performance.

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator: Not Proven

All mediation hypotheses through job satisfaction were rejected. This phenomenon requires further investigation. Possible explanations are: First, ASN job satisfaction at the Public Works and Housing Agency of East Kutai Regency is already relatively uniform or high, so its variability is insufficient to act as a meaningful mediator. Second, in the context of civil servants with a career system structured by personnel regulations, the relationship between job satisfaction and performance may not be as clear-cut as in the private sector because other mechanisms (such as DP3 or SKP) govern performance appraisals. Third, it is possible that other variables, such as organizational commitment or organizational culture, play a more mediating role between these factors and employee performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Work motivation does not have a significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees of the PUPR Department of East Kutai Regency. (2) Work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance. (3) Career development has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (original sample = 0.574, $p = 0.000$), which is the strongest finding in this study. (4) Job satisfaction does not have a significant effect on employee performance. (5) Transformational leadership style has a significant positive effect on employee performance (original sample = 0.540, $p = 0.000$). (6) Transformational leadership style does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction at the 1% significance level. (7) Career development does not have a direct significant effect on employee performance. (8), (9), (10) Job satisfaction failed to mediate all relationships between exogenous variables on employee performance. The

R-Square value of job satisfaction of 0.404 and employee performance of 0.401 indicates that the model explains approximately 40% of the variation in the two endogenous variables.

REFERENCES

- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (1991). The full range leadership development programs: Basic and advanced manuals. Binghamton, NY: Bass, Avolio & Associates.
- Barnard, C. I. (1938). The functions of the executive. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations. New York: The Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bernardin, H. J., & Russell, J. E. A. (1993). Human resource management: An experiential approach. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.
- Byars, L. L., & Rue, L. W. (2006). Human resource management (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
- Dessler, G. (2015). Human resource management (14th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Gibson, J. L., Ivancevich, J. M., & Donnelly, J. H. (2012). Organizations: Behavior, structure, processes (14th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Handoko, T. H. (2014). Manajemen personalia dan sumber daya manusia (2nd ed.). Yogyakarta: BPFE.
- Hasibuan, M. S. P. (2016). Manajemen sumber daya manusia (20th ed.). Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Herzberg, F. (1959). The motivation to work. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kasmir. (2016). Manajemen sumber daya manusia (teori dan praktik). Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1297–1349). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Luthans, F. (2011). Organizational behavior: An evidence-based approach (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Mangkunegara, A. P. (2017). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia perusahaan*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- Nawawi, H. H. (2011). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia untuk bisnis yang kompetitif*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Nitisemito, A. S. (2010). *Manajemen personalia: Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2019). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Rivai, V. (2011). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia untuk perusahaan*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Sedarmayanti. (2017). *Perencanaan dan pengembangan SDM untuk meningkatkan kompetensi, kinerja dan produktivitas kerja*. Bandung: PT Refika Aditama.
- Siagian, S. P. (2015). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Sinambela, L. P. (2016). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Thamrin, H. M. (2012). The influence of transformational leadership and organizational commitment on job satisfaction and employee performance. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, 3(5), 566–572.
- Usman, H. (2013). *Manajemen: Teori, praktik dan riset pendidikan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Wahyudi, B., & Suparno, S. (2020). Pengaruh pengembangan karir terhadap kepuasan kerja aparatur sipil negara. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Publik*, 8(1), 45–58.
- Wibowo. (2016). *Manajemen kinerja* (5th ed.). Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.