



## The Effect of Work Motivation and Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance with Job Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable. The research object was the employees of CV. ReKayasa Engineering Indonesia (REINDO) is located in Pasuruan, East Java. The results show that work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance, but it positively influences job satisfaction. Transformational leadership has a positive effect on both employee performance and job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction positively affects employee performance. The indirect effect analysis indicates that work motivation does not influence employee performance through job satisfaction. However, transformational leadership positively affects employee performance through job satisfaction. These findings suggest that improving transformational leadership and enhancing work motivation can increase job satisfaction and ultimately improve employee performance.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Employee performance is one of the key variables that supports organizations in achieving their goals. Employees with high performance not only contribute to organizational sustainability but also ensure efficiency in human resource management (Massie & Areros, 2018). According to Zin et al. (2023), employee performance is often influenced by various factors derived from both individual and organizational contexts, such as work motivation and leadership.

Work motivation is an important factor influencing employee performance, as it provides both internal and external encouragement for employees to accomplish their tasks effectively. In addition to motivation, leadership plays a crucial role in improving employee performance. As a central figure within the organization, leaders influence how employees respond to job demands through direction, support, and the management of interpersonal relationships (Anggraeni, 2021).

Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership has received considerable attention. Transformational leaders are able to inspire employees, encourage innovation, and create a supportive and comfortable work environment, which in turn enhances employee motivation and engagement (Sasongko et al., 2021).

However, the influence of work motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance is not always direct. Employees tend to perform optimally when they experience satisfaction in their work environment. In this context, job satisfaction acts as a psychological mechanism that bridges internal motivation and external organizational influences on performance behavior.

Mariyatha (2023) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership, work motivation, and employee performance.

Previous studies have reported mixed findings. Ardiaz et al. (2017) and Sasongko et al. (2021) found that work motivation and transformational leadership positively affect both employee performance and job satisfaction, while job satisfaction also positively influences employee performance. In contrast, Feri et al. (2020) reported that although work motivation and transformational leadership positively affect job satisfaction, work motivation has a negative effect on employee performance.

Furthermore, Nurrohmat and Lestari (2021), Salsabilla and Suryawan (2022) confirmed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. Widayati et al. (2017) also reported that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance. However, Gita and Yuniawan (2016) found that the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance was not significant.

Based on these empirical findings, the relationship between work motivation, leadership, and employee performance is not always direct or linear, but may also be influenced by other variables such as job satisfaction. The novelty of this study lies in examining an integrated model that positions job satisfaction

as an intervening variable in the relationship between work motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance. While previous studies tend to examine these relationships separately, this study integrates the three variables into a single structural model to provide deeper empirical insight into the mediation mechanism within organizational contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation refers to internal and external forces that drive individuals to perform certain actions. In the workplace, motivation encourages employees to perform tasks effectively and contribute to achieving organizational goals (Pittaloka & FoEh, 2024). Work motivation may originate from internal factors such as the need for achievement, recognition, and responsibility, as well as external factors, including compensation, work environment, and promotion opportunities (Triono et al., 2021). These factors influence employees' level of motivation, which ultimately affects job satisfaction and performance.

Leadership plays an important role in determining organizational success (Triono et al., 2021). One leadership style widely recognized for improving employee outcomes is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire employees, promote innovation, and create a positive work environment through a clear vision and strong motivation (Feri et al., 2020). This leadership style builds relationships based on trust, respect, and loyalty, encouraging employees to perform beyond expectations (Mardizal et al., 2023). Key characteristics include charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Widayati et al., 2017).

Employee performance refers to the results achieved by individuals in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in terms of quality and quantity (Damayanti et al., 2018). It reflects employees' contributions toward achieving organizational goals within the scope of their authority and responsibilities. Performance evaluation is generally conducted by comparing actual work results with predetermined organizational standards (Handoko & Djastuti, 2015). Indicators commonly used to measure performance include work quality, work quantity, cost efficiency, and task effectiveness (Salsabilla & Suryawan, 2022).

Job satisfaction refers to employees' attitudes and perceptions toward their work, which are influenced by their experiences and expectations (Manda, 2020). For organizations, job satisfaction is essential for improving productivity and promoting positive work behavior. Factors influencing job satisfaction include compensation, work environment, relationships with colleagues, and opportunities for personal and professional development (Feri et al., 2020).

### **Hypothesis Development**

Work motivation plays an important role in improving employee performance. Employees with higher motivation tend to perform tasks more effectively and contribute more significantly to organizational goals (Pittaloka & FoEh, 2024).

H<sub>1</sub>: Work motivation positively influences employee performance.

Work motivation also affects employees' job satisfaction. When employees feel motivated, they tend to experience higher enthusiasm and engagement in their work, leading to increased satisfaction (Handoko & Djastuti, 2015).

H<sub>2</sub>: Work motivation positively influences job satisfaction.

Transformational leadership is known to improve employee performance by providing inspiration, support, and a shared organizational vision (Widayati et al., 2017). Employees who feel valued and supported by their leaders are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of performance (Rosalina & Wati, 2020).

H<sub>3</sub>: Transformational leadership positively influences employee performance.

Transformational leadership also contributes to higher job satisfaction because leaders show concern for employees' needs and encourage their development (Ardiaz et al., 2017). A supportive leadership style creates a positive work environment that enhances employee satisfaction (Sasongko et al., 2021).

H<sub>4</sub>: Transformational leadership positively influences job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has been widely recognized as an important determinant of employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their work tend to demonstrate greater commitment, motivation, and productivity (Febriyana, 2015).

H<sub>5</sub>: Job satisfaction positively influences employee performance.

Work motivation may also influence employee performance indirectly through job satisfaction. Higher levels of motivation can increase employees' satisfaction, which subsequently leads to improved performance (Lusri & Siagian, 2017).

H<sub>6</sub>: Work motivation positively influences employee performance through job satisfaction as an intervening variable.

Similarly, transformational leadership can improve employee performance through job satisfaction. Leaders who inspire and support employees tend to increase satisfaction, which ultimately enhances performance. H<sub>7</sub>: Transformational leadership positively influences employee performance through job satisfaction as an intervening variable.

Based on the theoretical review and previous empirical studies discussed above, the conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

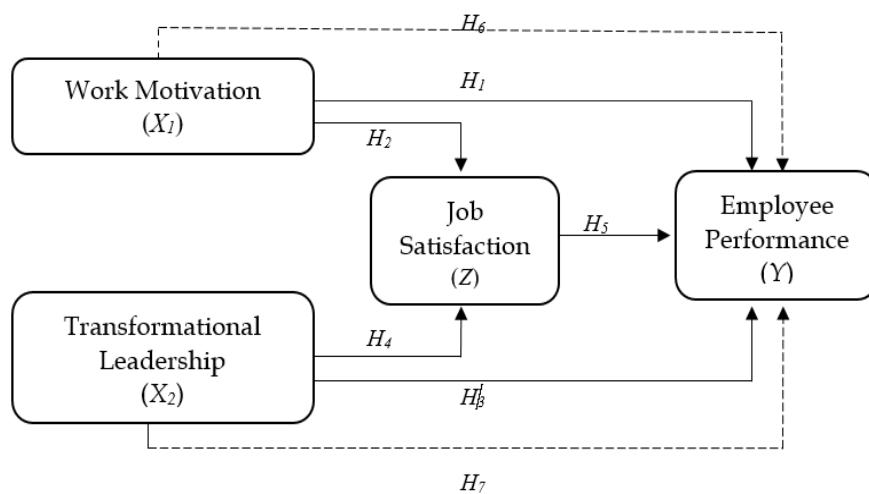


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

This study aims to examine the effect of work motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable.

The population and sample of this study consist of all employees of CV. Rekayasa Engineering Indonesia (REINDO) is a company engaged in providing engineering services for various large-scale projects in East Java, Indonesia. The total number of employees involved in this study is 52.

Primary data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires, using a Likert scale as the measurement instrument. The data analysis technique used to explain the relationships among variables in the research model is variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), known as the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, which is used to test the proposed hypotheses.

The variables and indicators used in this study are as follows:

Table 1. Research Variables and Variable Indicators

Variables	Indicators
<b>Dependent Variable:</b>	
Y: Employee performance	1. Quality of work 2. Timeliness. 3. Work commitment. 4. Team work (Ady & Wijono, 2013)
<b>Independent Variable:</b>	
X <sub>1</sub> : Work motivation	1. Performance bonus 2. Skill development 3. Supervisor recognition 4. Work environment comfort (Gita & Yuniawan, 2016)
X <sub>2</sub> : Transformational leadership	1. Individualized consideration 2. Intellectual stimulation 3. Clear direction from the leader 4. Leader as the main motivator (Widayati et al., 2017)
<b>Intervening Variabel</b>	
Z: Job satisfaction	1. Job duties and responsibilities 2. Relationship with coworkers 3. Working conditions 4. Satisfaction with compensation (Hidayati & Ermiyanto, 2017)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis based on responses from 52 respondents provide a general overview of the characteristics of the respondents involved in this study, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents ( $n = 52$  respondents)

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender:		
Male	48	92,3%
Female	4	7,7%
Age:		
17-25 years	16	30,8%
25-35 years	20	38,5%
35-45 years	13	25%
> 45 years	3	5,8%
Education:		
Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School	38	73,1%
Diploma I (D1), Diploma II (D2), and Diploma III (D3)	12	23,1%
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	2	3,8%

Source: CV. Rekayasa Engineering Indonesia (REINDO)

The gender composition of respondents at CV. REINDO is predominantly male, accounting for 92.3%, while female employees represent only 7.7%. This dominance of male employees is closely related to the nature of the work, which tends to require physical strength and technical skills. Although the proportion of female employees is relatively small, their presence remains important, particularly in administrative functions such as bookkeeping and financial management.

The age distribution of respondents at CV. REINDO shows a relatively diverse workforce. The majority of employees fall within the 25-35 year age group, representing 38.5% of the respondents. Individuals within this age range are generally at a productive stage of their careers and tend to focus on enhancing their skills and professional development. Meanwhile, 30.8% of respondents are between 17 and 25 years old, indicating the presence of a younger workforce that is typically more dynamic and adaptable to organizational changes. Approximately 25% of respondents belong to the 35-45 year age group, who generally possess greater work experience and are able to provide more mature perspectives regarding work motivation and leadership. Only 5.8% of respondents are above 45 years old, suggesting that the company's workforce is largely composed of young and middle-aged employees.

In terms of educational background, the majority of employees at CV. REINDO, accounting for 73.1%, have completed their highest level of education at the elementary, junior high, or senior high school level. This indicates that the company mainly employs workers with a secondary education background. Meanwhile, 23.1% of respondents hold diploma degrees (Diploma I, II, or III), reflecting the presence of employees with more specialized technical competencies. Only 3.8% of respondents hold a bachelor's degree, and none possess postgraduate degrees (master's or doctoral levels).

After describing the characteristics of the respondents, the next stage of analysis involves evaluating the measurement model and the structural model. The analysis includes tests of validity and reliability of the research instruments, assessment of the structural model (inner model), and evaluation of both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results of these analyses are presented in Figure 2 and Table 3.

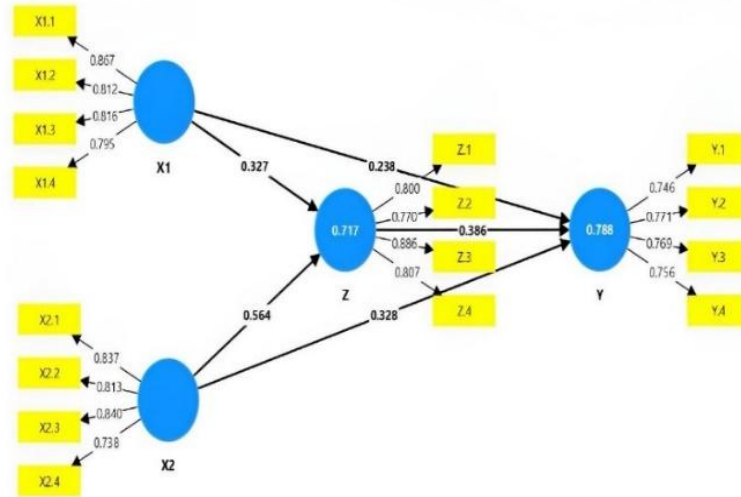


Figure 2. Path Diagram

Table 3. Measurement Model Evaluation

Variable	Indicators		Convergent Validity Test	AVE	Reliability Test		
			Outer Loading		Cronbachs Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho a)	Composite Reliability (rho c)
Work Motivation (X1)	X <sub>1.1</sub>	Performance bonus	0,867	0,677	0,841	0,842	0,893
	X <sub>1.2</sub>	Skill development	0,812				
	X <sub>1.3</sub>	Supervisor recognition	0,816				
	X <sub>1.4</sub>	Work environment comfort	0,795				
Transformational	X <sub>2.1</sub>	Individualized consideration	0,837	0,653	0,822	0,822	0,822

Leadership (X2)	X <sub>2.2</sub>	Intellectual stimulation	0,813				
	X <sub>2.3</sub>	Clear direction from the leader	0,840				
	X <sub>2.4</sub>	Leader as the main motivator	0,738				
Job Satisfaction (Z)	Z <sub>1</sub>	Job duties and responsibilities	0,800	0,667	0,832	0,833	0,889
	Z <sub>2</sub>	Relationship with coworkers	0,770				
	Z <sub>3</sub>	Working conditions	0,886				
	Z <sub>4</sub>	Satisfaction with compensation	0,807				
Employee Performance (Y)	Y <sub>1</sub>	Quality of work	0,746	0,579	0,757	0,757	0,846
	Y <sub>2</sub>	Timeliness.	0,771				
	Y <sub>3</sub>	Work commitment	0,769				
	Y <sub>4</sub>	Team work	0,756				

The measurement model in this study applies a reflective approach to four constructs: work motivation, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The evaluation aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators used. According to Hair et al. (2021), reflective measurement models should meet the criteria of loading factor  $\geq 0.70$ , composite reliability (CR)  $\geq 0.70$ , Cronbach's alpha  $\geq 0.70$ , and average variance extracted (AVE)  $\geq 0.50$ .

The results indicate that all constructs meet these requirements. Work motivation is measured by four valid indicators with outer loadings ranging from 0.795–0.867, and reliability values of CR = 0.893, Cronbach's alpha = 0.841, and AVE = 0.677. The strongest indicator is performance-based bonus (X1.1) with a loading of 0.817, suggesting that result-based compensation plays an important role in motivating employees.

Transformational leadership is also measured by four valid indicators with outer loadings between 0.738 and 0.840. The construct shows adequate reliability (CR = 0.822, Cronbach's alpha = 0.822, AVE = 0.653), with the strongest indicator being providing clear direction (X2.3) with a loading of 0.840, highlighting the importance of clear guidance from leaders.

For job satisfaction, the four indicators show loadings between 0.770–0.886, with CR = 0.889, Cronbach’s alpha = 0.832, and AVE = 0.667, indicating strong convergent validity and reliability. The most representative indicator is working conditions (Z3) with a loading of 0.886, suggesting that the work environment significantly influences employee satisfaction.

Finally, employee performance is measured by four indicators with loadings ranging from 0.746–0.771, and reliability values of CR = 0.846, Cronbach’s alpha = 0.757, and AVE = 0.579. The strongest indicator is timeliness (Y2) with a loading of 0.771, indicating that time discipline is an important benchmark in evaluating employee performance.

Overall, the results confirm that all constructs demonstrate adequate validity and reliability, indicating that the measurement model is appropriate for further structural model analysis. The HTMT discriminant validity test was subsequently conducted to assess whether each construct is empirically distinct from the others in the research model.

Tabel 4. Discriminant Validity

	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	Z	Y
Work motivation (X <sub>1</sub> )				
Transformational leadership (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,742			
Job satisfaction (Z)	0,781	0,846		
Employee performance (Y)	0,768	0,821	0,859	

The HTMT values for all variables are below 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity is established.

Furthermore, table 5 presents the results of the multicollinearity test, which aims to ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other. This test confirms that each independent variable is able to explain the dependent variable independently.

Tabel 5. Multikolinieritas (VIF)

	Z	Y
Work motivation (X <sub>1</sub> )	2,104	2,236
Transformational leadership (X <sub>2</sub> )	2,104	2,415
Job satisfaction (Z)		1,984

The VIF values for all variables are below 5, indicating that the research model does not suffer from multicollinearity issues.

Furthermore, the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) test results, which are used to assess the explanatory power of the structural model, are presented as follows:

Tabel 6. R-square

	R-square
Job satisfaction (Z)	0,717
Employee performance (Y)	0,788

After all constructs met the validity and reliability criteria, the structural model was evaluated using the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) value. R<sup>2</sup> is used to assess the extent

to which the independent variables explain the dependent variables in the model. According to Hair et al. (2021),  $R^2$  values can be categorized as follows: 0.75 and above = strong; 0.50–0.75 = moderate; 0.25–0.50 = weak.

The  $R^2$  analysis results, presented in table 6, can be explained as follows. The  $R^2$  value for job satisfaction is 0.717, indicating that 71.7% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by work motivation and transformational leadership. This value falls into the moderate category, suggesting that the model adequately explains the factors influencing employee job satisfaction. The remaining 28.3% is explained by other variables not included in this study, such as organizational culture, workload, or employees' personal factors.

Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value for employee performance is 0.788, indicating that 78.8% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by work motivation, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction as an intervening variable. This value is categorized as strong, suggesting that the structural model has high predictive power for employee performance. Therefore, the model can be considered reliable for managerial decision-making and as a basis for developing policies aimed at improving employee performance.

After confirming that the data met the required quality criteria, the hypothesis testing results are presented in table 7.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	STDEV	T stat	P values	Conclusion
Direct Effects						
H <sub>1</sub> : The effect of work motivation on employee performance.	0,165	0,165	0,085	1,954	0,051	Not significant
H <sub>2</sub> : The effect of work motivation on job satisfaction.	0,227	0,228	0,081	2,811	0,005	Significant
H <sub>3</sub> : The effect of transformational leadership on employee performance.	0,228	0,231	0,109	2,095	0,036	Significant
H <sub>4</sub> : The effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction	0,392	0,394	0,079	4,937	0,000	Significant
H <sub>5</sub> : The effect of job satisfaction on employee performance.	0,268	0,269	0,101	2,645	0,008	Significant

Indirect Effects						
H <sub>6</sub> : The effect of work motivation on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction.	0,126	0,127	0,067	1,872	0,061	Not significant
H <sub>7</sub> : The effect of transformational leadership on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction.	0,218	0,220	0,098	2,214	0,027	Significant

The hypothesis testing results, based on the path coefficient analysis in Table 7, indicate that the p-value is used to determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected. If p-value < 0.05, the effect is considered significant; if p-value > 0.05, the effect is not significant.

H<sub>1</sub> is rejected, indicating that work motivation does not significantly affect employee performance at CV REINDO. One motivation indicator, opportunities for development and skill improvement, has a relatively low mean score (3.61). Although most employees are aged 25–35 years (38.5%), which is a typical career development stage, limited organizational support may prevent motivation from translating into improved performance. This finding is consistent with Gita dan Yuniawan (2016), who found that work motivation does not directly influence performance and may require mediation by other variables such as job satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub> is supported, showing that work motivation positively affects job satisfaction. The performance-based bonus indicator has a relatively high mean score (3.61), suggesting that employees – particularly those who are married – benefit from bonuses in meeting household needs. This result is supported by Ardiaz et al. (2017), who found that motivation increases job satisfaction when aligned with employees’ personal goals.

H<sub>3</sub> is supported, indicating that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance. The intellectual stimulation indicator has the highest mean value (3.80), which is relevant given that most employees have elementary to high school education (73.1%) and benefit from encouragement to think critically. This finding is consistent with Ardiaz et al. (2017), who reported that transformational leadership can improve performance through shared values and vision.

H<sub>4</sub> is supported, indicating that transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction. The individualized consideration indicator shows a relatively high mean value (3.63), suggesting that employees value personal attention and support from supervisors. This finding aligns with Sasongko et al.

(2021), who stated that transformational leadership can enhance job satisfaction because employees feel appreciated and involved in their work.

H<sub>5</sub> is supported, indicating that job satisfaction positively affects employee performance. The compensation satisfaction indicator has the highest mean score (4.00), reflecting the importance of compensation for employees, particularly those who are married, in meeting family economic needs. Damayanti et al. (2018) Also found that higher job satisfaction increases employee motivation and productivity.

H<sub>6</sub> is rejected, indicating that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work motivation and employee performance. Although motivation influences job satisfaction, the effect is not strong enough to significantly improve performance, which may be related to the relatively low score of the development opportunity indicator (3.61).

H<sub>7</sub> is supported, indicating that job satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The relatively high value of intellectual stimulation (3.80) suggests that leadership that encourages critical thinking can increase job satisfaction and ultimately improve employee performance, consistent with Ardiaz et al. (2017),

The hypothesis testing results, based on the path coefficient analysis in Table 7, use the p-value as the basis for hypothesis acceptance. A p-value < 0.05 indicates a significant effect, whereas a p-value > 0.05 indicates a non-significant effect. The results show that H<sub>1</sub> is rejected, indicating that work motivation does not significantly affect employee performance at CV. REINDO. Although most employees are aged 25–35 years, the relatively low score of the opportunity for development indicator (3.61) suggests limited organizational support for career growth. This finding is consistent with Gita and Yuniawan (2016), who found that work motivation does not directly influence performance and may require mediation by other variables such as job satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub> is supported, indicating that work motivation positively affects job satisfaction, particularly through performance-based bonuses that help employees – especially married employees – meet household needs. This finding is supported by Ardiaz et al. (2017) who reported that motivation increases job satisfaction when aligned with employees' personal goals.

Furthermore, H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are supported, showing that transformational leadership positively affects both employee performance and job satisfaction. The highest indicator score appears in intellectual stimulation (3.80), suggesting that leadership that encourages critical thinking is important for employees with moderate educational backgrounds. These results are consistent with Ardiaz et al. (2017) and Sasongko et al. (2021), who found that transformational leadership improves employee attitudes and performance.

In addition, H<sub>5</sub> is supported, indicating that job satisfaction positively affects employee performance, particularly through satisfaction with compensation (mean = 4.00). This supports the findings of Damayanti et al. (2018), who reported that higher job satisfaction leads to greater employee productivity.

Regarding the mediation effect,  $H_6$  is rejected, indicating that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work motivation and employee performance, possibly due to limited opportunities for employee development. However,  $H_7$  is supported, showing that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, suggesting that effective leadership can enhance employee satisfaction and ultimately improve performance, consistent with (Ardiaz et al., 2017).

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study examines the effects of work motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable, among 52 employees of CV. REINDO. The results show that work motivation does not significantly affect employee performance, which may be related to limited opportunities for employee development and the relatively dynamic work environment where employees frequently move between project sites.

In contrast, transformational leadership positively influences employee performance, particularly through intellectual stimulation, which encourages employees to think more critically. Job satisfaction also has a positive effect on employee performance, especially through satisfaction with compensation. In terms of mediation, job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work motivation and employee performance, but successfully mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, indicating that effective leadership can increase satisfaction and ultimately improve performance.

Companies should evaluate motivational strategies and provide greater opportunities for training and development to better support employee performance. Future research is encouraged to include additional variables, such as organizational culture or individual employee characteristics, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee performance.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

The findings of this study are limited to CV. REINDO and therefore cannot be generalized to other organizations with different policies and employee characteristics. In addition, this study only examines a limited number of variables, while employee performance may also be influenced by other factors such as individual characteristics, organizational culture, and external conditions.

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