

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE ANALYSIS IN INCREASING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership style in an effort to increase employee engagement at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu Medan. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study delves deeply into how transformational leadership practices are applied and their impact on employee engagement in international airport environments. Data collection is carried out through interviews with leaders and employees, direct observation of work interactions, and documentation studies related to employee development policies and programs. The results of the study reveal that the implementation of the transformational leadership style at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu Medan has succeeded in creating a positive work environment and increasing employee engagement, which is characterized by a high level of dedication, work spirit, and a sense of belonging to the company.

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### INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive era of globalization, the success of an organization depends heavily on the quality of human resources and leadership. Human resources are an important element in a company. All processes in a company or organization will not be able to run well if the organization does not have or lacks human resources in carrying out a process in the organization (Rizky, 2022). Leadership according to Griffin and Ebert in (Nasution & Chaerul, 2024; Wijono, 2018) is the process of motivating others to work hard to achieve company goals.

One of the important aspects of human resource management is employee engagement, which has been shown to have a significant impact on organizational productivity and performance (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). According to (Gheisari et al., 2014), employee involvement is an important factor for companies in increasing cooperation between teams in employee participation to achieve organizational goals. Employee engagement is an employee's emotional feelings towards the organization and the actions they take to ensure the organization succeeds; Employees who are already

committed to the company show care, dedication, enthusiasm, accountability, and focus on results according to Allen, in (Pratiwi & Rizky, 2024; Sihombing, 2018).

One leadership style that has received widespread attention is transformational leadership, which focuses not only on achieving goals but also on individual development and positive changes in organizational culture (Sucahyowati et al., 2023). Transformational leadership style has been widely researched as one of the key factors in building employee engagement. According to (Bass & Riggio, 2016) transformational leaders are able to inspire and motivate employees to achieve performance that exceeds expectations through four main components: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Previous research by (Rahman et al., 2021) shows that transformational leadership styles have a positive correlation with employee engagement levels in the service sector. However, the implementation of transformational leadership styles in the Indonesian aviation industry, especially in the context of airport management, is still not widely explored. The operational complexity of international airports involving various stakeholders and the demands of 24-hour service require a leadership approach that can optimize employee potential. The transformational leadership style is seen as an appropriate approach because of its ability to create a shared vision, build trust, and encourage innovation (Avolio & Yammarino, 2020).

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership styles in increasing employee engagement at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanam. Therefore, the leadership aspect of transformational style needs to be further reviewed to understand its relationship in terms of increasing *employee work engagement*.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research methodology used is a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with leaders at various levels of management and employees, direct observation of leadership practices in the field, and documentation studies related to leadership development policies and programs in the company. The study involved 50 respondents consisting of 10 leaders at the managerial level and 40 employees from various divisions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A leader is a figure who plays an important role related to the future of a company. A leader is declared successful and has effective leadership if the company successfully carries out tasks and achieves goals according to the company's goals. Each leader has a variety of different leadership styles (Angelia & Astiti, 2020). The application of transformational leadership style in a company or organization alludes to the improvement of various interrelated aspects in the formation of work engagement. The relationship formed between transformational leadership style and work engagement includes improving performance, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing absenteeism & turnover (Mujjasih & Ratnaningsih, 2011)

Based on the theory (Avolio & Bass, 2004), transformational leadership is characterized by four main components, namely ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. In the field, it was found that the leaders of PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu had applied the four components with various variations and intensities. In terms of idealized influence, leaders at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu show the ability to be good role models for their employees through consistent and ethical behavior. This is in line with the opinion (Robbins & Judge, 2015) that transformational leaders must be able to demonstrate high moral and ethical standards. However, in practice, there are still some obstacles where not all middle leaders are able to consistently display the expected ideal behavior.

The inspirational motivation aspect can be seen from the leader's efforts in communicating the company's vision and mission clearly to employees. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) states that clear vision communication is an important factor in building employee engagement. At PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu, leaders regularly hold briefings and meetings to convey work targets and expectations. However, some employees still feel that the vision conveyed is sometimes too abstract and lacks operational.

In the dimension of intellectual stimulation, leaders at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu encourage innovation and creativity of employees through various competency development programs. According to (Saks, 2006), employee ability development is an important antecedent for the creation of engagement. Findings in the field show that the company already has a structured career development system, although it still needs optimization in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

Meanwhile, the aspect of individual consideration is shown through the leader's personal attention to the needs and aspirations of employees. (Kahn, 1990) emphasized that personal attention from leaders contributes positively to psychological meaningfulness which is a prerequisite for engagement. In its implementation at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu, this personal approach has been applied quite well at the supervisor level, but it still needs to be improved at a higher managerial level.

The impact of the implementation of transformational leadership style on employee engagement at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu can be seen from several indicators. Referring to the concept of engagement from (Schaufeli et al., 2002), engaged employees show vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work. The results of the observation show that PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu employees have a fairly high level of energy and resilience (vigor), pride and enthusiasm for work (dedication), as well as good concentration and focus in work (absorption).

Overall, it can be concluded that the implementation of a transformational leadership style at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu has made a positive contribution in increasing employee engagement, although there are still several aspects that need to be improved. These findings support previous studies that prove a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement (Ghadi et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2009).

## CONCLUSION

Leaders who apply a transformational style are proven to be able to inspire, motivate, and encourage employees to develop professionally and personally. Through an approach that focuses on individual development, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation, leaders are able to increase employees' sense of involvement with the company. This is reflected in the increasing dedication, work spirit, and contribution of employees in achieving organizational goals at PT Angkasa Pura Kualanamu Medan.

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