

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment in Improving Employee Performance

Nurnaningsih^{1*}, Naulya Dwi Putri², Resha Harisman³, Zelin⁴, Hartati⁵

¹Affiliation and address of affiliation

² Affiliation and address of affiliation

³ Affiliation and address of affiliation

¹Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia

²Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia

³Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia

⁴Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia

⁵Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia

*Correspondence email: nurnaningsihsyarif84@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership on improving employee performance through organizational commitment at the Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) of Parepare City. Amid the challenges of digital-based public services, the role of leaders who can foster innovation and employee loyalty becomes increasingly crucial. A qualitative approach was employed through semi-structured interviews with 12 employees from various service divisions within Disdukcapil Parepare. The data were analyzed thematically using open coding and axial coding techniques with the assistance of NVivo software. Transformational leadership was proven to enhance affective commitment and employee loyalty, which in turn had a positive impact on the quality of civil administration services. Transformational leadership plays a key role in shaping a participatory work culture and improving employee performance through the strengthening of organizational commitment.



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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of bureaucratic transformation and rapid digital advancement, public expectations toward government services have increased significantly. Public services are now expected to be faster, more transparent, easily

accessible, and responsive to citizens' needs. Civil registration services—such as identity documentation and population status confirmation—serve as a fundamental aspect of government functions, directly reflecting the state's presence in the daily lives of its people. Therefore, the quality of services provided by institutions such as the Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) plays a crucial role in shaping public trust and satisfaction with local government performance.

However, in practice, many public sector agencies continue to face challenges related to employee productivity and efficiency. Issues such as stagnant performance, limited innovation, and low levels of employee engagement often hinder the delivery of excellent services. These challenges are closely related to leadership style and the organizational climate established within the bureaucracy. The Population and Civil Registration Office of Parepare City is no exception, particularly in ensuring that civil servants maintain high work motivation, loyalty, and responsibility in carrying out their duties (Robbins et al., 2019).

Recent studies have shown that transformational leadership has a significant influence on improving employee performance in public institutions. This leadership style is characterized by the leader's ability to inspire, show individual consideration, and drive positive change and innovation. A transformational leader does more than administrate—they create a motivational work environment that encourages employees to contribute at their highest potential (Wicaksono, 2024).

Another internal factor that plays a vital role in employee performance is organizational commitment. Especially affective commitment, which reflects the emotional attachment of employees to their institution. Employees with a high level of commitment tend to be more disciplined, result-oriented, loyal, and proactive in completing their tasks. This sense of commitment is strongly influenced by leadership style and the organizational culture that develops within the institution (Rahayu & Berliyanti, 2022)

While the relationship between transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance has been theoretically supported in various studies, there remains a lack of empirical research that examines this connection within the local government context, particularly at the Population and Civil Registration Office of Parepare City. Contextual understanding is crucial to designing effective human resource management strategies at the regional level (Nurnaningsih & Putra, 2022).

Based on this background, this study aims to explore how transformational leadership affects employee performance through organizational commitment as a mediating variable within the Population and Civil Registration Office of Parepare City. By employing a qualitative approach, this research seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically to the enhancement of leadership capacity and the development of human-resource-based public service improvement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review contains a systematic review on previous research that are relevant to the topic. This section contains the strengths and weaknesses of previous research which can be used as an argument that this research is carried out to improve or develop previous research. This section also contains the theoretical basis in the form of a summary of theories from the literature that support the research, as well as an explanation of the basic concepts and principles needed for problem solving. The theoretical basis is in the form of qualitative descriptions, mathematical models, or tools that are directly related to the problems studied. The sources referred to in this section must be included in the sentences/statements referred to and in the references.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is one of the most widely adopted modern leadership styles in both public and private organizations. This type of leadership is characterized by a leader's ability to transform or shift employees' thinking, behavior, and work spirit through personal influence, motivational communication, and attention to individual needs. According to, transformational leadership plays a strategic role in creating an innovative, participatory, and change-oriented work environment

Transformational leaders do more than manage administrative duties—they act as visionaries who direct the long-term goals of the organization and empower employees to think critically, creatively, and responsibly. This style is particularly well suited for public service institutions such as the Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil), where excellent service delivery is expected despite limited resources.

Based on the theory of Bass and Avolio, commonly used in leadership research, transformational leadership includes four main dimensions (Budiwinarto & Faida, 2025):

- a. Idealized Influence: The leader becomes a respected and trusted role model for subordinates.

- b. Inspirational Motivation: The leader provides a compelling vision and instills enthusiasm and team spirit.
- c. Intellectual Stimulation: The leader encourages employees to think creatively and solve problems in innovative ways.
- d. Individualized Consideration: The leader shows genuine concern for the needs, development, and aspirations of each employee.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the degree to which an employee feels psychologically and emotionally attached to their organization and is willing to contribute to its goals. Commitment is not merely about administrative loyalty but also about employees' sense of belonging, loyalty, and involvement in supporting the organization's vision and mission (Sage et al., 2024).

In the context of public bureaucracy, organizational commitment is vital for sustaining the performance of civil servants. Employees with high levels of commitment tend to be more dedicated, stay longer with the organization, and demonstrate positive organizational behaviors.

Referring to Meyer and Allen's three-component model, as supported by recent research from , organizational commitment consists of (Rahayu & Berliyanti, 2022):

- a. Affective Commitment: Emotional attachment to the organization, stemming from feelings of pride, satisfaction, and belonging.
- b. Continuance Commitment: Rational consideration of the costs and risks of leaving the organization.
- c. Normative Commitment: A sense of moral obligation to remain with and support the organization.

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the output achieved by individuals in executing their duties and responsibilities based on predetermined organizational standards. In public institutions like Disdukcapil, performance is not only measured by quantity but also by service quality, responsiveness, accountability, and work behavior. Public employee performance reflects efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency in fulfilling governmental duties (Nur et al., 2025).

Employee performance is influenced by various factors, including individual motivation, leadership style, organizational support, and work culture. In a study by Fitriani and Saputra (2022), transformational leadership

was found to significantly enhance performance when mediated by strong organizational commitment.

Identify the following indicators commonly used in the public sector (Nur et al., 2025):

- a. Quantity of Work: The volume of tasks or jobs completed within a certain time frame.
- b. Quality of Work: Accuracy, thoroughness, and output quality that meets predetermined standards.
- c. Timeliness: The ability to complete tasks within the allocated or scheduled time.
- d. Initiative and Independence: The employee's ability to take proactive actions and generate ideas without waiting for instructions.
- e. Responsibility: The employee's seriousness and accountability in performing tasks according to established procedures and regulations.

3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The research was conducted at the Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) of Parepare City. The informants consisted of 12 employees selected through purposive sampling based on their job positions, years of service, and direct involvement in public service delivery.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide that covered topics such as leadership style of supervisors, level of organizational attachment, and perceptions of work performance. Data were collected during May 2025 and analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 14 software.

Triangulation was carried out through direct observation and analysis of internal institutional documents. Validity was strengthened through member checking and peer debriefing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformational Leadership Drives Positive Work Culture

The results indicate that transformational leadership is consistently reflected in the behavior of organizational leaders at Disdukcapil Parepare. Leaders provide clear direction, support employee development, encourage new ideas, and demonstrate openness to innovation. The leadership style observed is not only administrative in nature but also empowering, participatory, and vision-driven.

This leadership approach contributes significantly to changing employee attitudes and work ethic. Leaders are seen not just as supervisors but as drivers of positive organizational change. This finding aligns with (Budiwinarto & Faida, 2025), who state that transformational leaders foster a participative work climate and improve job satisfaction within public organizations .

Organizational Commitment Emerges from Supportive Work Environment

The study also finds that employees working under supportive leadership tend to show a high level of organizational commitment, especially in the form of affective commitment. Employees feel respected, valued, and emotionally connected to the organization, which encourages loyalty, consistent attendance, adherence to regulations, and cooperative behavior.

This is in line with the findings of (Rahayu & Berliyanti, 2022), who explain that employee commitment in the public sector is influenced by interpersonal relationships with leaders and involvement in organizational decision-making. The more employees feel included and acknowledged, the stronger their attachment to the organization becomes.

Employee Performance Improves Alongside Strong Leadership and Commitment

Employee performance at Disdukcapil Parepare has shown improvements, particularly in the accuracy, timeliness, and responsiveness of public services. These improvements are supported by a more flexible work system and trust from leadership in employees' capabilities.

High employee performance is not only the result of compliance with standard operating procedures, but also stems from intrinsic motivation built through supportive leadership and strong commitment. This study supports the research by (Nur et al., 2025), which found that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance in the public sector.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of transformational leadership in shaping organizational commitment and improving employee performance at Disdukcapil Parepare. Leaders who provide motivation, support innovation, and involve employees in decision-making foster a more engaged and productive workforce. This aligns with Bass and Avolio's theory,

emphasizing idealized influence and inspirational motivation as key drivers of change.

Affective commitment emerged as the strongest form of employee attachment, reinforcing their sense of responsibility and willingness to contribute beyond formal duties. This supports previous studies such as (Nur et al., 2025), who found that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between leadership style and performance.

In the context of local government, especially service-oriented agencies like Disdukcapil, transformational leadership encourages not only better task execution but also initiative and innovation. These results suggest that leadership development focusing on emotional intelligence and participative management can be a strategic approach to strengthening public sector performance.

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