



The effect of career development and transformational leadership on employee performance with employee engagement as a mediation variable in the general department of the regional secretariat of Malang city

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Apr 26, 2026

Revised Apr 30, 2026

Accepted May 18, 2026

Keywords:

Career Development;
Employee Engagement;
Employee Performance;
Transformational Leadership.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze how career development affects employee engagement, how transformational leadership shapes employee engagement, how career development contributes to employee performance, how transformational leadership impacts employee performance, and how employee engagement relates to employee performance. Beyond these direct relationships, this study also investigates whether employee engagement serves as a mediating variable between career development and employee performance, as well as between transformational leadership and employee performance. A total of 141 employees were involved as research respondents, with SmartPLS employed as the primary tool for data analysis. The findings reveal that career development exerts a significant effect on employee engagement, while transformational leadership demonstrates a positive contribution toward employee engagement. Regarding performance outcomes, both career development and transformational leadership proved to have meaningful impacts on employee performance. Employee engagement likewise emerged as a significant determinant of employee performance. In addition, the results confirm that employee engagement functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between career development and employee performance, as well as in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of an organization in reaching its objectives is largely determined by how well its employees perform their roles and responsibilities. According to Robbins & Judge (2019) performance can be understood as the outcomes produced by an individual or group within an organizational setting, carried out in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities, with the overarching purpose of fulfilling organizational goals. Among the various factors that contribute to the enhancement of employee performance, career development holds a particularly significant position. Dessler (2017), describes career development as a continuous process through which individuals strive to strengthen their professional competencies and work-related skills as a means of attaining the career objectives they aspire to achieve. Structured and sustainable career

development can increase employee motivation, competence, and ultimately contribute to improved performance. In the context of the General Section of the Malang City Regional Secretariat, career development programs are still not optimal. This is evident from the lack of training programs tailored to employee career development needs, the lack of clarity in career paths that employees can take, and the absence of a comprehensive performance appraisal system that can serve as a basis for career development. This condition has the potential to reduce employee performance. These conditions may create uncertainty regarding employees' future career prospects, which can influence work motivation, job satisfaction, and employees' commitment to the organization. As a consequence, employees may become less proactive in completing tasks and may not be able to perform optimally. If these conditions persist, they may hinder organizational effectiveness and the achievement of institutional goals. Research results Kamara et al. (2024) and Ho et al. (2025) found that career development impacts employee performance. Research result Nurwulandari & Suwatno (2017) found that career development programs have an impact on work engagement. Similarly, Pangaila et al. (2024) shows that the better the career path offered by an organization, the greater the employee's engagement in carrying out their duties. This contrasts with the results of other research. Singal (2023) who found that career development did not affect employee engagement.

Apart from career development, leadership factors also play an important role in influencing employee performance. The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Bass & Riggio (2006), highlighting the capacity of a leader to inspire, motivate, and nurture the potential within their followers. Based on field observations, the leadership approach applied in the General Section of the Malang City Regional Secretariat appears to remain predominantly transactional and has yet to fully adopt transformational leadership principles. This can be observed through communication patterns that remain one-directional, limited employee participation in organizational decision-making, and insufficient efforts by leaders to cultivate the individual potential of their staff. Such conditions carry the risk of suppressing employee creativity and innovation, which in turn may negatively affect the organization's overall performance. Several studies, including those conducted by Armilasari et al. (2023), Lempoy et al. (2025) and Almazrouei & Alnahhal (2025), have demonstrated that transformational leadership contributes positively to employee performance. However, this stands in contrast to the findings of Riansyah et al. (2023), whose research concluded that transformational leadership does not produce a significant effect on employee performance. Transformational leadership itself places considerable emphasis on values, vision, and personalized attention to each individual, thereby directly influencing the psychological dimensions of employees, including their level of work engagement. This is supported by findings from Kurniawan & Wulandari (2023), Riansyah et al. (2023), and Herminingsih & Hamidah (2024), all of whom found that transformational leadership has a meaningful influence on employee engagement.

These findings confirm that leaders' role in providing vision, inspiration, and motivation can increase employee engagement within the organization. Nevertheless, enhancement in employee performance is not solely determined by career development and transformational leadership, as the degree of employee engagement also plays a significant role. According to Schaufeli et al. (2006), employee engagement refers to a positive psychological condition that is characterized by three core dimensions, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption in carrying out work. Employees who possess a high level of engagement tend to exhibit stronger loyalty, greater creativity, and superior performance outcomes. A number of studies, including those by Gentari et al. (2023), Pratama & As' ad (2025), Armilasari et al. (2023), and Riansyah et al. (2023), have confirmed that employee engagement carries a substantial impact on employee performance. In contrast, a differing perspective was presented by Maslina et al. (2023), whose study concluded that employee engagement does not exert a significant influence on employee performance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used is determined by the object and purpose of the research, because it explains the influence that occurs between research variables and then tests the previously formulated hypothesis, so this research uses the explanatory research method. According to

Sugiyono (2022) population is defined as the entire object or subject of research that has certain qualities and characteristics in accordance with the research objectives, thus enabling researchers to draw conclusions from the data obtained. In the context of this research, the population that is the focus is all employees who work in the General Section of the Regional Secretariat of Malang City, with a total of 141 people. Considering that the population size is relatively affordable for comprehensive research, the researcher did not use a limited sampling technique, but instead made all members of the population as respondents. Thus, the number of research samples is identical to the population, namely 141 employees, and the method used is a census technique, which allows the data obtained to be more comprehensive and representative of actual conditions in the field. The operational definition of the research variables is explained as follows: Employee performance is the results achieved by an employee in carrying out his/her work, taking into account the quality and quantity of output produced, in accordance with the responsibilities entrusted to him/her. Performance indicators refer to the opinions of employees. Mangkunegara (2019), consist of: quality of work, quantity of work, implementation of tasks and responsibilities. Career development is a planned process undertaken by individuals and organizations to improve employees' abilities, competencies, and job opportunities, so they can optimally achieve their career goals. In this study, career development was measured using indicators adapted from Rivai (2017), namely: career planning, individual career development, organizationally supported career development and the role of feedback.

Transformational leadership represents a leadership approach that is characterized by a leader's capacity to influence, inspire, motivate, and bring out the full potential of subordinates in order to attain performance levels that surpass organizational standards. Within the scope of this study, transformational leadership was assessed through four indicators put forward by Bass & Riggio (2006), which encompass idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention. Transformational leadership is considered to have a stronger influence on employee engagement because leaders interact directly with employees in daily work situations through motivation, inspiration, attention, and emotional support. Such interactions can foster employees' psychological attachment, sense of belonging, and enthusiasm toward their work more immediately compared to career development programs, which are generally long-term and administrative in nature. Therefore, transformational leadership tends to produce a more direct and stronger effect on employee engagement. Employee engagement is a positive psychological state characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and full involvement in work. Indicators of employee engagement refer to the opinions of employees. Schaufeli et al. (2006), namely: enthusiasm, dedication and absorption. SEM PLS and descriptive analysis were employed in this investigation. A statistical method for summarising and characterising a data set's fundamental features is descriptive analysis. Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is a multivariate analytical approach employed to explore both the relationship between latent variables (constructs) and their corresponding indicators, as well as the interconnections among constructs within a unified research model (Hair et al., 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The respondents in this study were employees working in the General Section of the Malang City Regional Secretariat. The research instrument, a questionnaire, was distributed online via Google Forms and obtained 141 usable responses, as they were complete and valid.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Description	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	98	69.5
Woman	43	30.5
Age		
< 25	15	10.6
25 – 35	47	33.3
36 – 45	49	34.8
> 45	30	21.3
< 25	15	10.6

Description	Total	Percentage (%)
Level of education		
High School/Vocational School	18	12.8
Diploma	24	17.0
Bachelor degree)	79	56.0
Postgraduate (S2)	20	14.2
Length of work		
< 5 years	22	15.6
5 – 10 years	41	29.1
11 – 15 years	46	32.6
> 15 years	32	22.7

Based on gender characteristics, the majority of respondents were male employees (69.5%), while female employees accounted for 30.5%. This composition may influence the research results because male and female employees can have different perspectives regarding career opportunities, leadership approaches, and work engagement. Employees may also differ in their responses to organizational support and communication patterns implemented by leaders. In terms of age, most respondents were between 36–45 years old (34.8%) and 25–35 years old (33.3%). Employees within these productive age groups generally tend to have higher career aspirations and stronger motivation for self-development. As a result, they may place greater importance on career development opportunities and transformational leadership practices that support their professional growth. Younger employees may also demonstrate higher adaptability and engagement toward organizational changes compared to older employees.

Educational background may also contribute to the variation in responses. The majority of respondents held bachelor's degrees (56.0%), indicating that most employees possess relatively adequate educational qualifications. Employees with higher educational backgrounds generally have greater expectations regarding career advancement, leadership quality, and organizational support. Consequently, they may be more sensitive to the availability of career development programs and leadership effectiveness in the workplace. In addition, work experience or length of service may influence employees' perceptions and attitudes toward the organization. Most respondents had worked for 11–15 years (32.6%) and 5–10 years (29.1%). Employees with longer work experience tend to have a deeper understanding of organizational culture, leadership patterns, and career systems within the institution. Such experience may affect their level of engagement and performance because employees who have served longer are often more familiar with organizational expectations and work procedures. Therefore, respondent characteristics contribute to the diversity of perceptions and responses in this study, which ultimately influence the variation in research results related to career development, transformational leadership, employee engagement, and employee performance.

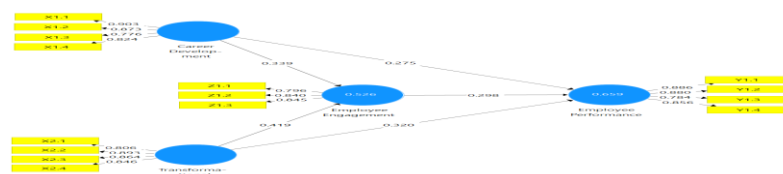


Figure 1. Output SmartPLS

Referring to the convergent validity assessment conducted through outer loading values, it can be observed that all indicators across the research variables yielded values exceeding the established cutoff threshold of 0.70. This outcome suggests that every indicator utilized in the study is sufficiently capable of reflecting the constructs it is intended to measure. The hypothesis testing procedure in this study was carried out with the aim of determining the degree to which Career Development and Transformational Leadership variables contribute to Employee Performance. The analysis encompassed not only the direct relationships among variables but also the indirect relationships facilitated through the mediating role of Employee Engagement. In doing so, this testing procedure offers a more thorough understanding of the structural influence mechanisms that operate within the research model. The outcomes derived from both direct and indirect

influence analyses are elaborated in the subsequent section.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Influence	Path coefficients	t- statistics	p-values	Result
H1	Career Development → Employee Engagement	0.339	2.776	0.006	Supported
H2	Transformational Leadership → Employee Engagement	0.419	3.507	0.000	Supported
H3	Career Development → Employee Performance	0.275	2.499	0.013	Supported
H4	Transformational Leadership → Employee Performance	0.320	2.812	0.005	Supported
H5	Employee Engagement → Employee Performance	0.298	4.605	0.000	Supported
H6	Career Development → Employee Engagement → Employee Performance	0.101	2.062	0.040	Supported
H7	Transformational Leadership → Employee Engagement → Employee Performance	0.125	3.040	0.002	Supported

The Effect of Career Development on Employee Engagement

Career development significantly impacts employee engagement because it provides a clear direction for their future within the organization. When employees perceive opportunities for growth, they tend to be more motivated at work. Their sense of belonging to the organization is strengthened because the career opportunities align with their personal aspirations. Dessler (2017) explains that career development is a series of activities undertaken by organizations to help employees plan and manage their career paths so they align with the organization's needs. In this manner, employees are no longer merely fulfilling their professional obligations, but also develop a genuine emotional attachment toward the work they carry out.

Employee engagement is often influenced by the clarity of the career path offered by the company. Employees who perceive opportunities for promotion or competency improvement will be more enthusiastic about carrying out their duties. This aligns with research by Nurwulandari & Suwatno (2017) and Angelina & Rini (2026) which confirms that career development programs influence employee engagement. The results of this study support the research of Pangaila et al. (2024), who found that career development positively influences employee engagement. When employees have the opportunity to develop their skills, they are better prepared to face work challenges. Therefore, career development can strengthen organizational competitiveness through increasingly competent employees. Career development contributes not only to the enhancement of technical competencies, but also to the psychological well-being of employees. Those who feel recognized and appreciated through opportunities for training and professional growth tend to experience considerably higher levels of job satisfaction. This directly impacts engagement levels because employees feel recognized. According to Dessler (2017), an effective career development program aligns individual and organizational goals, creating harmony between employee needs and agency targets. Employee involvement in this program makes employees more proactive in taking initiatives. Ultimately, this creates a more productive and collaborative work climate.

Employees who perceive clear career prospects find it easier to collaborate with coworkers because they share the same motivation for growth. A sense of pride in working for the organization also emerges because they perceive fairness in career management. These research findings support Pangaila et al. (2024) who showed that employee engagement increases significantly when employees perceive fair treatment in career development opportunities. With this sense of engagement, employees more easily adapt to changes in company policy or strategy. This makes the organization more adaptive in facing external dynamics. Consequently, the more effectively career development is implemented within an organization, the greater the level of employee engagement that is likely to emerge as a result. These research findings do not support this Singal (2023) who found that career development did not affect employee engagement.

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Engagement

Transformational leadership has been shown to exert a meaningful influence on employee engagement, whereby a greater degree of transformational leadership practice by a leader

corresponds to an elevated level of employee engagement within the organization. This relationship emerges as a result of the transformational leader's ability to cultivate a work environment that is both inspiring and motivating, driven by the communication of a clear and purposeful organizational vision. When employees are able to comprehend and feel a strong connection to the vision that is effectively conveyed by their leader, they naturally develop a deeper sense of belonging toward both the organization and their responsibilities. Furthermore, transformational leaders tend to offer personalized attention to each individual employee by actively listening to their needs and personal aspirations. This approach leads employees to feel genuinely appreciated as distinct and valuable contributors within the organizational setting.

Transformational leaders typically instill clear goals, build trust, and encourage healthy team collaboration. This makes employees feel valued, cared for, and given opportunities for growth. According to Bass & Riggio (2006), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders work with followers to improve motivation, morale, and performance by shifting individual values and goals to align with the interests of the organization. Thus, transformational leadership not only directs but also inspires and motivates employees. This is a key factor in increasing long-term employee engagement. Transformational leaders tend to emphasize the importance of setting a good example for their subordinates. This exemplary behavior makes it easier for employees to respect and trust the decisions made by the leader. Furthermore, leaders encourage employee creativity in solving problems independently, so that employees feel they have a significant role in the organization. With the confidence and autonomy provided, employees become more emotionally engaged with their work. The outcomes of this study are consistent with the findings of Kurniawan & Wulandari (2023), which demonstrated that transformational leadership holds a significant influence over employee engagement. As the implementation of transformational leadership becomes increasingly pronounced, the level of employee engagement within the organization tends to strengthen correspondingly.

In addition to serving as a role model, transformational leaders also fulfill an important function in delivering inspirational motivation to their subordinates. Such motivation is commonly expressed through the articulation of a vision that encourages employees to elevate their performance. Employees who feel inspired tend to perceive their work as more meaningful and closely aligned with the broader objectives of the organization. This condition drives employees not merely to meet their professional obligations, but to contribute from a place of genuine internal motivation. These findings are in line with those of Riansyah et al. (2023) and Fadhilah et al. (2026), who concluded that transformational leadership contributes to an increase in employee engagement. Similarly, the results of this study are consistent with Herminingsih & Hamidah (2024), who explained that intellectual stimulation provided by transformational leaders plays a role in shaping employee engagement. This reinforces the notion that employee engagement can be cultivated when leaders create an environment that accommodates the growth of ideas and creative thinking. Bass & Riggio (2006) further emphasize that individualized attention constitutes a fundamental pillar of transformational leadership, which helps explain why this leadership approach is capable of deepening the emotional bonds employees develop with their organization.

The influence of transformational leadership on employee engagement is also evident in how leaders establish effective two-way communication. Transformational leaders are typically open to subordinate input and employ a participatory approach in decision-making. Thus, employees feel their voices are heard and have a real influence on organizational processes. This active involvement increases employee ownership of their work and the organization as a whole. Findings by Kurniawan & Wulandari (2023) and Riansyah et al. (2023) strengthen evidence that transformational leadership fosters employee engagement.

The Impact of Career Development on Employee Performance

Career development demonstrates a considerable influence on employee performance, suggesting that the more comprehensive and well-structured the career development programs offered by an organization, the greater the level of performance that employees are to achieve. Organizations that provide learning opportunities, job promotions, and ongoing training make employees more motivated to improve their skills. Rivai & Sagala (2019) explain that career development is a conscious effort made by an organization to prepare employees to be able to fill

higher or more complex positions in the future. Thus, career development not only benefits the individual but also supports the sustainability of the organization. Employees who see a clear career path will demonstrate greater dedication to their work. This certainly has an impact on increasing productivity and achieving organizational goals. Research by Kamara et al. (2024), Mardianty & Sari (2025), Alvito & Nastiar (2025), Hosen et al. (2024), and Putra & Husein (2026) shows that targeted career development significantly impacts employee performance. This confirms that a planned career development strategy can produce better work output. Therefore, career development is a key factor driving improved employee performance.

Organizations that support their employees' career development typically provide training and workshops relevant to job demands. These facilities enable employees to improve their technical and non-technical skills as needed. The results of this study support Ho et al. (2025) assertion that organizations that invest resources in career development programs can achieve higher and more consistent employee performance. This means that career development not only improves individual competency but also strengthens the organization's competitiveness. This further emphasizes the importance of career development as a managerial strategy.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership has been found to exert a notable influence on employee performance, whereby the more effectively a leader applies transformational leadership principles, the higher the performance outcomes demonstrated by employees. This relationship is largely attributed to the capacity of transformational leaders to inspire and motivate their subordinates to surpass standard performance expectations through the articulation of a clear and challenging organizational vision. Transformational leaders are able to foster a work environment that encourages employees to maximize their potential by offering consistent support, building trust, and granting the freedom to explore innovative approaches. Through the application of intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders push employees to engage in creative thinking, critically evaluate existing work methods, and identify newer solutions that are both more effective and more efficient in practice. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can improve employee performance. Northouse (2015) explains that transformational leadership creates a relationship between leaders and subordinates with the goal of creating positive change within the organization. Transformational leaders encourage employees to view organizational goals as shared objectives that need to be achieved. In this way, employees are more motivated to work beyond personal interests for the collective good. This can increase employee commitment and productivity in carrying out their duties. Ultimately, this creates synergy that impacts overall organizational performance. The findings of this study are in accordance with those of Armilasari et al. (2023), Fadhilah et al. (2026), and Almazrouei & Alnahhal (2025), whose research demonstrated that transformational leadership exerts a positive influence on employee performance.

Transformational leadership can foster employee confidence in carrying out their duties. Leaders who provide emotional and intellectual support make employees feel valued and empowered. This confidence has a positive impact on the quality of work produced. Northouse (2015) emphasized that transformational leaders work to shift individual values and goals to align with the interests of the organization. With this alignment of values, employees will be more enthusiastic in making their best contributions. This constitutes one of the key factors that accounts for the ability of transformational leadership to bring about improvements in employee performance. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are not in agreement with those of Riansyah et al. (2023), whose research concluded that transformational leadership does not produce any significant effect on employee performance.

The Influence of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance

Employee engagement significantly influences employee performance, indicating that the higher the level of employee engagement with the organization, the greater their contribution to achieving optimal performance. Engaged employees typically demonstrate loyalty, high motivation, and a willingness to exceed expectations. This is in line with the view Schaufeli et al. (2006) which states that employee engagement is characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption, which in turn improves performance. Thus, engagement serves not only as a psychological aspect

but also has real implications for achieving work results. Passion drives employees to have high energy at work, dedication fosters commitment, while absorption keeps employees fully focused on their work. These three aspects contribute to improving the quality and quantity of work output. Employees who maintain a strong emotional connection to their work are inclined to invest greater effort in the completion of their assigned tasks. This serves as one of the primary reasons why employee engagement occupies a critical position in determining overall performance outcomes.

The research findings of Gentari et al. (2023) reinforce the view that employee engagement significantly contributes to improved performance. Employees with high levels of engagement are more likely to be loyal, disciplined, and results-oriented. Engagement creates an intrinsic drive to achieve without having to rely solely on external motivation. Therefore, engaged employees are more consistent in achieving organizational targets. A high level of engagement also helps reduce absenteeism and increase productivity. Therefore, employee engagement can be considered a key determinant of employee performance. Research by Pratama & As'ad (2025) shows that employee engagement plays a significant role in driving organizational effectiveness. The results of this study also support those of Armilasari et al. (2023) and Fadhilah et al. (2026), who found that employee engagement is closely related to improved performance through motivation and commitment. The outcomes of this study are likewise consistent with the findings of Riansyah et al. (2023), who similarly underscored that employee engagement represents a critical determinant in driving improved performance outcomes. Employees who demonstrate a high degree of engagement in their work are better equipped to sustain concentration, thereby reducing the likelihood of errors occurring. Moreover, a strong sense of dedication nurtures loyalty among employees, which in turn reinforces their overall commitment to the organization. With a solid level of commitment established, employees are naturally inclined to uphold their productivity and maintain the quality of their work. This suggests that engagement does not merely affect the psychological dimension of employees, but also carries a substantial impact on their performance. As such, engagement stands as a significant indicator in the broader evaluation of human resource management practices. In contrast, the findings of this study diverge from those of Maslina et al. (2023), Nguyen & Nguyen (2023), and Juyumaya et al. (2024) who concluded that employee engagement does not yield a significant effect on employee performance.

The Influence of Career Development on Employee Performance Through Employee Engagement

Career development significantly impacts employee performance through employee engagement. This demonstrates that a good career development program not only directly impacts competency and skill development but also fosters a sense of emotional and psychological engagement in employees toward their work. Employees who perceive opportunities for development tend to be more motivated, committed, and demonstrate high levels of loyalty to the organization. This sense of engagement then becomes a crucial factor in encouraging employees to contribute their best, resulting in improved performance. Thus, employee engagement acts as a bridging mechanism between career development and performance achievement, requiring organizations to address both aspects simultaneously to achieve optimal work results. This is in line with the view Rivai & Sagala (2019) emphasized that career development is a systematic effort by an organization to prepare employees to be able to occupy higher or more complex positions. The employee engagement formed through this career development program then becomes a driving force that drives performance improvement. Emotionally engaged employees will demonstrate higher commitment, greater motivation, and a willingness to make their best contribution to the organization. Employees will be more proactive in developing skills, more innovative in solving problems, and more accountable for their work results. In other words, employee engagement acts as a catalyst that transforms career development investments into tangible performance improvements. This mediating relationship suggests that organizations cannot expect optimal performance improvements simply by providing career development programs without considering how those programs affect employee engagement. Therefore, career development strategies must be designed not only to improve employee competency but also to strengthen their emotional and psychological bonds with the organization, ultimately optimizing individual and overall organizational performance. Research Results Pratama & As'ad (2025),

Armilasari et al. (2023), and Riansyah et al. (2023) found that employee engagement influences employee performance.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance Through Employee Engagement

Transformational leadership significantly influences employee performance through employee engagement. This suggests that employee engagement plays a crucial role as a psychological mechanism explaining how transformational leadership can improve employee performance. These findings indicate that transformational leadership does not automatically result in improved performance but rather requires an internalization process that creates a strong emotional and psychological bond between employees and the organization. When transformational leaders successfully inspire, motivate, and provide individualized attention to employees, this triggers a positive emotional response that increases their sense of belonging, commitment, and engagement with their work and the organization. The growing engagement then becomes a strong foundation for improved employee performance. Employees who feel valued and supported tend to work harder, with more enthusiasm, and demonstrate high dedication. Transformational leaders don't just rely on formal instructions, but also lead by example, build trust, and motivate subordinates to exceed targets. According to Bass & Riggio (2006), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders work with their followers to improve motivation, morale, and performance by shifting individual values and goals to align with the organization's interests. Transformational leadership fosters a sense of belonging to the organization. This sense of belonging strengthens employee engagement, as they perceive their work as having greater meaning. Ultimately, this engagement becomes a positive energy that contributes to improved performance. In other words, transformational leadership impacts performance not only directly but also through its mediating role in employee engagement. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Kurniawan & Wulandari (2023), Riansyah et al. (2023), and Herminingsih & Hamidah (2024), which indicate that employee engagement is positively impacted by transformational leadership. The engagement fostered by an inspirational leadership style can make employees more committed to their work. Employees who feel fully engaged in their work due to inspirational leadership tend to achieve more optimal performance. This engagement stems from the pride, dedication, and enthusiasm conveyed by the leader. Transformational leaders who emphasize long-term vision and effective communication create a conducive work atmosphere. This atmosphere supports employees' self-development and maximum contribution to the organization.

Implications

The relatively small mediation coefficient indicates that employee engagement plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between career development, transformational leadership, and employee performance. This means that although employee engagement contributes to improving employee performance, its influence is not the only mechanism through which career development and transformational leadership affect performance. These findings imply that career development and transformational leadership also have direct effects on employee performance beyond employee engagement. In addition, the small mediation coefficient suggests that there may be other variables outside the research model that more strongly influence employee performance, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, work environment, compensation, or organizational commitment. Therefore, organizations should not rely solely on employee engagement strategies to improve performance. Instead, employee engagement should be strengthened simultaneously with other organizational factors, including effective leadership practices, fair reward systems, supportive work environments, and clear career management systems, in order to achieve more optimal employee performance.

4. CONCLUSION

Career development has been shown to have a significant impact on employee engagement, indicating that the better an organization provides career development paths, the higher employee engagement in their work. Second, transformational leadership has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on employee engagement, where visionary, inspiring, and motivating leaders

tend to encourage employees to be more engaged in their work. Career development has also been shown to have a significant impact on employee performance. This reflects that employees who perceive clear career opportunities within the organization are motivated to improve their performance to achieve higher targets. Similarly, transformational leadership also has a significant impact on employee performance, as leaders who are able to motivate, serve as role models, and build strong emotional connections can drive tangible performance improvements. Furthermore, employee engagement itself has been shown to have a significant impact on performance, where employees with high levels of engagement characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and full absorption tend to contribute more optimally to achieving organizational goals. Career development has been shown to have a significant impact on employee performance through employee engagement as a mediating variable. When organizations provide clear and structured career development opportunities, employees feel valued, have positive expectations for the future, and develop a deep sense of belonging to the organization. The engagement formed from positive perceptions of career development opportunities then becomes a driving force, encouraging employees to demonstrate optimal performance, be proactive in taking initiatives, and commit to making the best possible contribution to achieving organizational goals. Transformational leadership has been shown to significantly impact employee performance through employee engagement. When transformational leaders apply an inspirational approach, individualized attention, and intellectual stimulation, this elicits a positive emotional response that strengthens employee engagement with the organization. The resulting engagement then becomes a driving force that encourages employees to perform beyond expectations and make extra contributions to achieving organizational goals.

Based on the findings of this study, employee engagement plays an important mediating role in strengthening the influence of career development and transformational leadership on employee performance. Therefore, organizations should focus on increasing employee engagement through several strategic efforts. First, organizations should improve career development programs by providing clear career paths, training opportunities, mentoring, and competency development to strengthen employees' motivation and attachment to the organization. Second, leaders should consistently apply transformational leadership practices through open communication, motivation, employee involvement, and recognition of employee contributions to enhance employees' emotional connection with their work. Third, organizations should create a supportive work environment that encourages collaboration, participation, and innovation. Finally, fair performance appraisal systems and regular evaluations of employee engagement are necessary to maintain employee commitment, motivation, and overall organizational effectiveness. Future research is recommended to test this model in different organizational contexts, such as private companies, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and state-owned enterprises, to examine the consistency of the relationships among career development, transformational leadership, employee engagement, and employee performance. Future studies may also include additional variables, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, compensation, and work environment, as well as use larger samples and longitudinal approaches to obtain more comprehensive results.

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