

Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and work-life balance on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, at The Rinra Hotel Makassar.

Research Method: This research used a quantitative approach with the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 4) method. The population consisted of all 100 employees of The Rinra Hotel Makassar, and a census sampling technique was applied. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed to examine direct and indirect relationships among variables.

Results and Discussion: The results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction but does not significantly affect employee performance. Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on both job satisfaction and employee performance. Job satisfaction does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance and does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work-life balance on employee performance. These findings indicate that transformational leadership is unable to improve employee performance, either directly or through job satisfaction, whereas work-life balance plays a more dominant role in enhancing performance.

Implications: This study contributes to human resource management theory and practice in the hospitality industry by emphasizing the importance of work-life balance policies. Organizations are encouraged to strengthen supportive work-life balance practices alongside leadership development to improve employee performance.

Keywords: transformational leadership; work-life balance; job satisfaction; employee performance.

Introduction

The hospitality industry in Indonesia has experienced substantial growth alongside the recovery of the tourism sector. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the number of hotels increased by 7.48% in 2024 compared to 2023, with approximately 31,175 businesses operating in the accommodation services sector. As a major metropolitan city in Eastern Indonesia, Makassar plays a strategic role in this development. BPS Makassar City reported a 6.37-point increase in the hotel room occupancy rate (TPK) from 51.95% in 2023 to 58.32% in 2024 (Abdul Hafid, 2024). Despite this positive trend, the hospitality



industry in Makassar continues to face challenges in managing human resources to maintain service quality and competitiveness. Hotel The Rinra Makassar illustrates these challenges through a rising employee turnover rate, which increased from 7.5% in 2022 to 13.33% in 2024, along with declining employee attendance in early 2025. Such conditions indicate potential issues related to leadership practices, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, all of which are critical determinants of employee performance in service-oriented industries (Ruth Silaen et al., 2021).

Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as an effective leadership style for enhancing employee performance. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to prioritize organizational goals over personal interests (Fanni, 2013). Bass et al. (2006) argue that this leadership style is particularly suitable for industries characterized by rapid change and high customer interaction, such as hospitality. Empirical studies support these arguments, showing that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance (Fanni, 2013; Askar, 2025). However, contradictory findings have also emerged, with some studies reporting no significant effect due to the dominance of standardized operational procedures that reduce leadership influence (Hendriawan et al., 2024). Beyond leadership, work-life balance has become an important factor in improving employee outcomes. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to manage work demands alongside personal life responsibilities (Putri et al., 2023). Several studies confirm that work-life balance positively and significantly affects employee performance (Azizah et al., 2023), while others report insignificant effects, suggesting that its impact may depend on contextual and individual factors (Timbuleng & Lumantow, 2023). Furthermore, work-life balance has been shown to enhance job satisfaction, which may, in turn, indirectly improve performance (Rondonuwu et al., 2018; Susanti, 2020), although conflicting results also exist (Lumunon et al., 2019).

Job satisfaction itself plays a crucial role in employee performance. Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional responses to their work and work environment (Nurhandayani, 2022). While several studies indicate a positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance (Fajri et al., 2022), other findings suggest that job satisfaction does not always translate into higher performance (Restiani et al., 2023). These inconsistencies highlight an unresolved theoretical and empirical issue regarding the mediating role of job satisfaction.

Based on the mixed findings of previous studies, a research gap remains in understanding how transformational leadership and work-life balance jointly influence employee performance through job satisfaction, particularly in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this study addresses the research question: How do transformational leadership and work-life balance affect employee performance through job satisfaction at Hotel The Rinra Makassar? The objectives are to examine the direct and indirect relationships among these variables. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated mediation model and its empirical focus on a five-star hotel in Makassar, offering both theoretical contributions to human resource management literature and practical insights for hospitality management.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a strategic role in managing employees as key organizational assets through systematic planning, development, and performance control. Modern HRM has shifted from an administrative function to a strategic, data-driven role focused on talent development, organizational culture, and performance sustainability. Goal-Setting Theory, proposed by



Locke and Latham (1990), underpins contemporary performance management systems by emphasizing clear, specific, and challenging goals to enhance motivation and performance.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes inspiration, motivation, and moral influence to encourage employees to go beyond their personal interests for organizational goals (Danim & Sudarwan, 2004; Bukhari, 2012; Iqbal, 2021). This leadership model comprises four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Robbins & Judge, in Riadi, 2021). Its effectiveness is influenced by managerial experience and organizational support (Bommer et al., 2004). In the hospitality industry, transformational leadership is critical for fostering innovation, commitment, and productivity (Kartono, 2009; Jansen et al., 2008). Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to harmonize work and personal life roles, encompassing time, involvement, and satisfaction balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Ganapathi, 2016). Effective work-life balance enhances employee well-being, motivation, loyalty, and organizational stability, making it particularly relevant in hospitality settings with irregular working hours.

Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional responses to their job conditions and is explained by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes motivator and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1959). High job satisfaction positively affects motivation and performance (Valaei & Jiroudi, 2016; Dousin et al., 2019). Employee performance represents the quality and quantity of work outcomes achieved in line with organizational goals. According to Goal-Setting Theory, performance improves when employees commit clear objectives (Locke & Latham, 1990). Performance is commonly measured through quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence (Robbins, 2006; Afandi, 2018).

Research Method

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among transformational leadership, work-life balance, and employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The research is classified as applied research, as its findings are expected to provide practical contributions for the management of Hotel The Rinra Makassar in improving employee performance through effective leadership and human resource management strategies.

The study was conducted at Hotel The Rinra Makassar, located at Jl. Metro Tanjung Bunga No. 2, Makassar 90122, South Sulawesi, during the period of August–October 2025. The research population comprised all 100 employees of the hotel. Given the relatively small and accessible population, a census (saturated sampling) was employed, including all population members as research respondents. Primary data were collected using a structured closed-ended questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaires were distributed directly to respondents to capture their perceptions of the research variables. In addition, observations and documentation were conducted to support the primary data. Secondary data were obtained from internal company records, academic literature, and relevant previous studies.

The variables examined in this study included transformational leadership (X_1), measured using four indicators: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Kartini Kartono, 2009; Jansen et al., 2008); work-life balance (X_2), measured through time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance (Ganapathi, 2016); job satisfaction (M), measured by job content, compensation balance, supervision quality, and coworker relationships (Afandi, 2021);



and employee performance (Y), measured by work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence (Robbins, 2006).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software. The analysis involved two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to assess construct validity and reliability using factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A; and evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to examine the relationships among latent variables using R^2 values and path significance testing based on t-statistics greater than 1.96 at a 5% significance level. Mediation effects were further assessed using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method to determine partial or complete mediation, following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019).

Results and Discussion

Analysis Result

Research Location Overview

This study was conducted at The Rinra Hotel Makassar, a service and accommodation company established in 2016 in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. The hotel provides high-quality services and is conveniently connected to a shopping center, offering guests comfort and convenience. Guided by its vision to become the leading local hotel network in Eastern Indonesia by delivering premium services with a touch of local pride, the hotel prioritizes excellent service and customer satisfaction. The Rinra Hotel's organizational structure includes key divisions such as General Management, Sales, Marketing, Finance, and Human Resources, all working together to ensure smooth operations and high service standards. With a systematic management approach and skilled personnel, The Rinra Hotel Makassar has become one of the prominent hotels in Eastern Indonesia.

Measurement Model (Outer Model).

The measurement model analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationships between indicators and the latent constructs they measure. In a reflective model, the strength of an indicator is determined by its outer loading, which indicates the extent to which it represents the intended construct (Joseph F. Hair Jr., 2021). An outer loading value of ≥ 0.70 signifies that the indicator has good convergent validity. Based on Table 1, all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, indicating that convergent validity has been met. The Transformational Leadership construct shows outer loadings ranging from 0.823 to 0.908, indicating that all indicators consistently and strongly represent the measured latent construct. For the Work-Life Balance construct, the outer loadings range from 0.775 to 0.892, meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The Job Satisfaction construct shows outer loadings ranging from 0.755 to 0.882, indicating convergent validity. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance construct shows outer loadings ranging from 0.727 to 0.892, indicating strong indicator contributions to the construct. The outer loading analysis indicates that all indicators in the measurement model meet the criteria for convergent validity. Therefore, these indicators are suitable for the next stage of testing, namely composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE), to assess the measurement model's quality comprehensively.



Table 1. Results of Outer Model Testing

Indicator	Job Satisfaction (Y1)	Employee Performance (Y2)	Transformational Leadership (X1)	Work-life balance (X2)
X1.1			0.823	
X1.2			0.837	
X1.3			0.903	
X1.4			0.908	
X2.1				0.892
X2.2				0.790
X2.3				0.853
X2.4				0.775
Y1.1	0.882			
Y1.2	0.818			
Y1.3	0.755			
Y1.4	0.763			
Y2.1				0.892
Y2.2				0.792
Y2.3				0.852
Y2.4				0.775
Y2.5				0.727

After all indicators are confirmed to meet convergent validity, the next step is to test discriminant validity. This test aims to ensure that each construct in the model is clearly distinct from the others and that each indicator reflects only the construct it is intended to measure without overlapping with other constructs.

Table 2. Results of Outer Model Testing

Discriminant Validity Using Factor Correlation Matrix (in Dimension reduction menu)				
Factor Correlation Matrix				
Job Satisfaction		0.806		
Employee Performance		0.223	0.810	
Transformational Leadership		0.290	0.189	0.869
Work-life balance		0.345	0.398	0.085 0.829

The results of the discriminant validity test indicate that all constructs have the square root of AVE values above 0.70 and higher than their correlations with other constructs. Specifically, the AVE values are 0.806 for Job Satisfaction, 0.810 for Employee Performance, 0.869 for Transformational Leadership, and 0.829 for Work-Life Balance. Therefore, all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity, indicating that each construct is clearly distinct and its indicators accurately reflect the construct being measured.

The next step is reliability testing to assess the internal consistency of each latent construct. Reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (ρ_c), ρ_A , and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with the recommended minimum thresholds of ≥ 0.70 for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, and ≥ 0.50 for AVE (Hair et al., 2017).



Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Job Satisfaction	0.826	0.888	0.881	0.650
Employee Performance	0.872	0.907	0.905	0.656
Transformational Leadership	0.895	0.943	0.925	0.754
Work-life balance	0.849	0.883	0.897	0.687

The results of the reliability test indicate that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, ranging from 0.826 to 0.895, indicating good internal consistency. The Composite Reliability (rho_c) values also meet the reliability criteria, ranging from 0.881 to 0.925, while rho_A values range from 0.883 to 0.943, further supporting these results. Additionally, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, ranging from 0.650 to 0.754, indicating that all constructs in this study have high reliability and adequate convergent validity.

Structural Model (Inner Model).

The structural model (inner model) is used to analyze the causal relationships between latent variables according to the hypotheses, with assessments based on R² values, path coefficients, and significance tests. The results of the structural model analysis are presented in the following section.

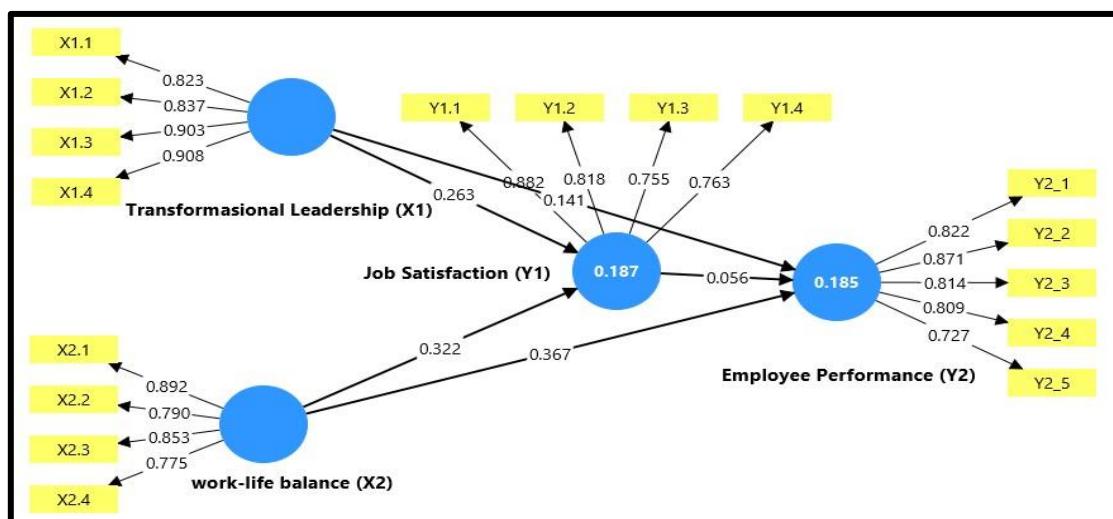


Figure 1. Structural Model (Inner Model)

Based on the structural model diagram above, the following equation can be formulated:

Job Satisfaction (Y1)

$$Y1=0.263X1 + 0.322X2+e1$$

Employee Performance (Y2)

$$Y2=0.141X1 + 0.056Y1 + 0.367X2+e2$$



Evaluation of Direct Effects.

Direct effects refer to causal relationships between independent and dependent variables that do not pass through a mediating variable. In this study, the analysis examined the extent to which transformational leadership and job satisfaction directly affect employee performance, as well as their effects on work commitment, a mediating variable.

Table 3. Direct Effect Test Results

Correlation	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Job satisfaction → Employee performance	0.056	0.082	0.144	0.387	0.699
Transformational Leadership → Job satisfaction	0.263	0.277	0.104	2.539	0.011
Transformational Leadership → Employee performance	0.141	0.138	0.211	0.103	0.169
Work-life balance → Job satisfaction	0.322	0.353	0.089	3.628	0.000
Work-life balance → Employee performance	0.367	0.336	0.178	2.057	0.040

Based on the results of the research hypothesis testing, the conclusions are as follows:

- **H₁:** Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with an original sample value of 0.263, a t-statistic of 2.539 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.011 (< 0.05), thus H₁ is accepted.
- **H₂:** Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with an original sample value of 0.322, a t-statistic of 3.628 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thus H₂ is accepted.
- **H₃:** Transformational leadership has a positive but not significant effect on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.141, a t-statistic of 1.103 (< 1.96), and a p-value of 0.169 (> 0.05), thus H₃ is rejected.
- **H₄:** Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.367, a t-statistic of 2.057 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.040 (< 0.05), thus H₄ is accepted.
- **H₅:** Job satisfaction does not have a significant effect on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.056, a t-statistic of 0.387 (< 1.96), and a p-value of 0.699 (> 0.05), thus H₅ is rejected.

Evaluation of Indirect Effects.

The evaluation of indirect effects assesses the extent to which independent variables influence the dependent variable through a mediating variable. This analysis provides a detailed understanding of the mediating role in either strengthening or attenuating the relationships between variables, thereby



offering a more comprehensive perspective on the pathways of these relationships and their implications for decision-making.

Table 4. Results of the Indirect Effect Test

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.015	0.024	0.046	0.317	0.751
Work-life balance → Job satisfaction → Employee performance	0.018	0.029	0.055	0.326	0.745

Based on the results of the mediation hypothesis testing, the conclusions are as follows:

- **H₆:** Job satisfaction does not mediate the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.015, t-statistic $0.317 < 1.96$, and p-value $0.751 > 0.05$; H₆ is rejected.
- **H₇:** Work commitment does not mediate the effect of job satisfaction on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.018, t-statistic $0.326 < 1.96$, and p-value $0.745 > 0.05$; H₇ is rejected.

Model Fit Test.

The model fit test assesses the extent to which the research model aligns with empirical data and accurately represents the relationships among variables. This procedure ensures that the constructed model is not only statistically significant but also structurally well-fitted overall. In this study, model fit was evaluated using several goodness-of-fit indices, with specific criteria to determine the model's feasibility, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Model Fit Test Results

Indeks Goodness of Fit	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.084	0.084
d_ULS	1.068	1.068
d_G	0.407	0.407
Chi-square	221.706	221.706
NFI	0.770	0.770

The results of the model fit test indicate that the SRMR of 0.084 remains within the acceptable threshold (<0.10), suggesting a reasonably good fit. The d_ULS value of 1.068 and d_G value of 0.407 also indicate an acceptable level of fit. Although the Chi-square value of 221.706 and the NFI of 0.770 do not meet the ideal criteria of 0.90, this is understandable because both indices are sensitive to sample size and model complexity (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Overall, most leading indicators, such as SRMR,



d_ULS, and d_G, are within the recommended limits, indicating that this research model still has an adequate fit for further analysis.

PLS Inner Model Assumptions (VIF).

The inner model assumption test is conducted to ensure that there is no multicollinearity among exogenous variables, which could affect the stability of the path estimates. The test uses the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values ≤ 5 indicating the absence of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, VIF analysis is an important step to ensure that the relationships between variables in the model are accurately interpreted.

Table 6. Model Fit Test Results

Variable	Transformational Leadership	Work-life balance	Employee performance	Job satisfaction
Transformational Leadership			1.000	1.000
Work-life balance			1.000	1.000
Employee performance				
Job satisfaction			1.000	

Based on the analysis results, all VIF values are equal to 1.000, which is well below the maximum threshold of 5 as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). This finding indicates that there are no multicollinearity issues among the exogenous variables in the inner model. Consequently, the estimated path coefficients can be interpreted with confidence, and the PLS model analysis is considered robust and reliable for further evaluation.

R-Square Assessment

The R-square metric is used to assess the extent to which the independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variables in the research model. The R-square value reflects the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the exogenous variables; higher values indicate stronger explanatory and predictive power of the model. Therefore, this assessment plays a crucial role in PLS-SEM analysis by determining the model's capability to explain the underlying phenomenon under investigation.

Table 7. Results of the R-Square Assessment

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee performance	0.185	0.160
Job satisfaction	0.187	0.171

Based on the R-square test results, the R-square values for Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction are 0.185 and 0.187, respectively, indicating that the independent variables in the model can explain 18.5% and 18.7% of the variance in these variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), these values fall within the weak to moderate range, suggesting that the research model has relatively low explanatory power in accounting for the variance in the dependent variables, namely Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction.



F-Square Test.

The F-square (f^2) test is used to assess the relative effect size of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The f^2 value indicates the magnitude of each variable's contribution, categorized as small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35), according to the criteria proposed by Cohen (1988). The results of the f^2 analysis in this study are presented in the following table.

Table 8. F-Square Test Results

Variable Relationships	f-square
Job satisfaction → Employee performance	0.003
Transformational Leadership → Job satisfaction	0.085
Transformational Leadership → Employee performance	0.022
Work-life balance → Job satisfaction	0.127
Work-life balance → Employee performance	0.146

The results of the effect size (f^2) analysis indicate that the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance has an f^2 value of 0.003, suggesting a minimal contribution and falling well below the threshold for a small effect as proposed by Cohen (1988). The relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction yields an f^2 value of 0.085, which is also classified as a small effect. In contrast, its relationship with Employee Performance shows an f^2 value of 0.022, likewise falling within the small effect category. Meanwhile, the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction yields an f^2 value of 0.127, which is categorized as a small effect but approaching a medium effect, and the relationship with Employee Performance yields an f^2 value of 0.146, which is classified as a small-to-moderate effect. Overall, the most significant relative effect in this research model is observed in the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance. In contrast, the most negligible effect is found in the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance.

Discussion

Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The findings indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee job satisfaction at Hotel The Rinra Makassar ($t = 2.539$; $p = 0.011$), with an effect size ($f^2 = 0.085$) categorized as small to moderate (Cohen, 1988). This suggests that leadership behaviors emphasizing inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation enhance employees' perceived job satisfaction. Theoretically, these results align with Bass et al. (2006) and Locke (1990), as well as empirical studies by Judge and Piccolo (2004), Soejanto and Turangan (2025), and Simanjuntak et al. (2021). These studies demonstrate that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in fostering intrinsic motivation and work satisfaction. However, this finding differs from those of Ade Putri Atmajaya Parada (2023), Dwi Astuti and Tri Kusuma (2024), and Deddy (2022), who reported non-significant effects, highlighting the context-dependent nature of leadership effectiveness, influenced by organizational culture, industry, and managerial practices. In practice, this study suggests that managers should strengthen transformational leadership behaviors at all levels to enhance employee satisfaction and operational stability in the hospitality context.



Work–Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The results reveal that work–life balance positively and significantly affects employee job satisfaction ($p < 0.001$), with an effect size of $f^2 = 0.127$ (minor to moderate). This indicates that employees' perceived ability to balance work and personal life contributes meaningfully to their job satisfaction. The findings support Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1960) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), emphasizing that organizational support enhances satisfaction and engagement through reciprocal exchange. This result aligns with Tanuputri (2019), Fiernaningsih et al. (2019), and Djuraidi and Laily (2020). However, it contrasts with Prasetyo and Wardoyo (2023), Findy et al. (2020), and Butarbutar et al. (2022), suggesting that other factors, such as compensation, organizational culture, and career development opportunities, may also influence job satisfaction. In practice, hospitality organizations should implement flexible scheduling, robust leave policies, and responsive managerial support to optimize work–life balance and employee satisfaction.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Transformational leadership has a positive but non-significant effect on employee performance ($t = 1.103$; $p = 0.169$; $f^2 = 0.022$, small). This suggests that, while leadership behaviors are present, they are insufficient to improve performance in the organization's operational context significantly. Theoretically, this aligns with Fiedler's Contingency Theory (1967) and Bommer et al. (2004), which highlight that leadership effectiveness depends on factors such as leaders' attitudes toward change, peer leadership behaviors, and managerial experience. Empirical findings are consistent with Asbari et al. (2020), Purwanto (2019), Sudiantha et al. (2017), and Hasana and Helmi (2023), who reported a limited impact of transformational leadership on performance, emphasizing the role of additional factors such as motivation, culture, and satisfaction. Practically, management should combine leadership development with operational strategies to enhance organizational productivity.

Work–Life Balance and Employee Performance

Work–life balance positively and significantly influences employee performance ($t = 2.057$; $p = 0.040$). This indicates that employees who experience a better balance between work and personal life perform more effectively in operational tasks. The results align with the work–life balance frameworks by Marks and MacDermid (1996), Fisher et al. (2009), Ganapathi (2016), and Kirchmeyer (2000), emphasizing that reduced role conflict, improved psychological resilience, and increased engagement enhance performance. This finding is consistent with Foanto et al. (2020), Pratiwi and Fatoni (2023), and Rahmawati Ulfah (2023). However, it contrasts with Ardiansyah and Surjanti (2020), Meha et al. (2025), and Adetiwas et al. (2024), highlighting the importance of context in determining the strength of this relationship. Practically, organizations should optimize work–life balance policies through supportive facilities, equitable compensation, effective communication, and continuous career development programs.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Job satisfaction does not significantly affect employee performance ($t = 0.387$; $p = 0.699$). This suggests that, while theoretically considered a driver of performance, job satisfaction alone may not translate directly into operational outcomes, likely due to high workload, limited resources, and job risks.



Theoretically, these findings align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), which suggest that motivation and basic needs must be complemented by supportive conditions for optimal performance. Empirical consistency is found with Paais (2018), Putra and Riady (2017), Widya Nastiti (2022), and Fauziek and Yanuar (2021), though contrasting with Pasaribu (2024) and Paparang et al. (2021). Practically, organizations should enhance work facilities, communication, coordination, and supportive leadership to improve performance beyond job satisfaction alone.

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The results indicate that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance ($p = 0.751$; indirect effect = 0.015). This suggests that transformational leadership alone is insufficient to improve performance through satisfaction. Theoretically, this finding partially diverges from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which posits that job satisfaction can influence performance if motivational and hygiene factors are effectively managed. Empirically, this aligns with Nowizar et al. (2025), Henry et al. (2024), and Gimnastiar and Ashary (2024), while contrasting with Roz (2019), Ovianti and Fadli (2022), and Adipra and Surya (2025), who found significant mediation effects. Practically, management should not rely solely on transformational leadership to enhance performance through job satisfaction; workplace environment, facilities, and comfort must also be considered.

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of Work–Life Balance on Employee Performance

Job satisfaction does not mediate the effect of work–life balance on employee performance ($p = 0.745$; indirect effect = 0.018), indicating a very weak mediating role. While work–life balance directly affects performance, its indirect effect via job satisfaction is negligible. Theoretically, this contrasts with conceptual arguments suggesting that balanced work and personal life improve well-being and performance. Prior studies show mixed results: Komari et al. (2022) and Ahmaddien (2024) report positive mediation effects, while Narendra Putra et al. (2025), Asfiah and Dewayani (2024), and Assyahidah et al. (2024) report more substantial direct effects than indirect effects. Practically, organizations should adopt a comprehensive approach to enhance performance, including improving employee well-being, providing a safe and comfortable work environment, and strengthening organizational communication. Work–life balance and job satisfaction alone are insufficient to guarantee optimal and sustainable performance.

Conclusion

This study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, indicating that improvements in transformational leadership practices contribute to higher levels of employee satisfaction. Work-life balance also has a positive, significant influence on job satisfaction, underscoring the importance of a well-managed balance between work demands and personal life in shaping positive employee attitudes. However, transformational leadership shows a positive but insignificant effect on employee performance, suggesting that its implementation has not been sufficiently strong to produce meaningful performance improvements. In contrast, work-life balance has a positive, significant effect on employee performance, underscoring its role as a direct driver of optimal performance. Job satisfaction shows a positive but insignificant relationship with



employee performance, suggesting that satisfaction alone does not automatically translate into higher performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, nor does it mediate the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. These findings suggest that, within the context of this study, employee performance is more strongly influenced by direct work-life balance conditions than by leadership style or job satisfaction as an intervening mechanism.

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