

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable at the Environmental Office of Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan kepuasan kerja sebagai variabel intervening pada Dinas Lingkungan Hidup Kabupaten Sorong, Papua Barat Daya. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan teknik sensus terhadap 47 pegawai, dan data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) melalui SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja ($\beta = 0.612$; $p < 0.001$) dan kinerja pegawai ($\beta = 0.397$; $p < 0.001$). Kepuasan kerja juga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai ($\beta = 0.458$; $p < 0.001$) serta memediasi secara parsial hubungan antara kepemimpinan transformasional dan kinerja pegawai ($\beta = 0.281$; $p = 0.002$). Nilai koefisien determinasi menunjukkan bahwa 67.4% variasi kinerja pegawai dapat dijelaskan oleh kepemimpinan transformasional dan kepuasan kerja ($R^2 = 0.674$). Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya praktik kepemimpinan transformasional yang mampu meningkatkan kepuasan kerja sebagai mekanisme psikologis dalam mendorong kinerja aparatur sektor publik, khususnya di bidang lingkungan hidup.

Kata Kunci: kinerja karyawan; kepuasan kerja; PLS-SEM; kepemimpinan transformasional

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable at the Environmental Agency of Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua. A quantitative approach was used with a census technique involving 47 employees, and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS. The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.612$; $p < 0.001$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.397$; $p < 0.001$). Job satisfaction also has a significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.458$; $p < 0.001$) and partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance ($\beta = 0.281$; $p = 0.002$). The coefficient of determination shows that 67.4% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by transformational leadership and job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.674$). These findings confirm the importance of transformational leadership practices that can enhance job satisfaction as a psychological mechanism in driving the performance of public sector personnel, particularly in the field of environmental management.



Keywords: employee performance; job satisfaction; PLS-SEM; transformational leadership

INTRODUCTION

Public sector employee performance is a key foundation for effective modern governance, particularly in the face of increasingly complex global environmental dynamics that demand rapid and accountable responses. Public organizations are currently facing intense social, economic, and ecological changes, making apparatus capacity a strategic factor in determining the success of bureaucratic transformation (Kim & Park, 2020). Internationally, attention to improving civil servant performance is increasing along with increasing demands for transparency and quality of public services. The World Bank (2023) indicates that countries with more effective governance are characterized by adaptive organizational cultures, superior human resource capacity, and transformative public leadership. The OECD (2022) also notes that the quality of public leadership and employee satisfaction contribute significantly to institutional performance, particularly in environmental sector institutions addressing sustainability issues and ecological risk management. These data indicate that investment in leadership development and human resource management in the public sector is a key strategy for improving the effectiveness of public service organizations across countries.

The phenomenon of bureaucratic reform in Southeast Asia further reinforces the urgency of improving employee competency and leadership quality in government organizations. The ASEAN Governance Brief (Sok et al., 2023) notes that ASEAN countries still face significant challenges in building responsive bureaucracies, particularly in environmental management. Malaysia and Singapore have implemented transformational leadership approaches to strengthen performance cultures and enhance innovation among public sector employees, resulting in higher levels of administrative efficiency (Mahmud et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2022). The experiences of Southeast Asian countries demonstrate that a commitment to a transformational leadership style that inspires and motivates employees is a catalyst for improving the quality of government services. Therefore, developing context-appropriate leadership models within bureaucracies in developing countries is a strategic agenda for improving public service performance.

In Indonesia, bureaucratic modernization has become a primary focus of the government in improving the quality of public services, including through strengthening the capacity of civil servants and implementing a competency-based performance management system. The 2024 evaluation of bureaucratic reform by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB) showed that despite an increase in the national ASN professionalism index, significant disparities in performance quality remain between central and regional agencies. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded a national public service index of 84.90 (2023), but the eastern region, including Southwest Papua, remains below the national average in terms of public service effectiveness indicators. This disparity is caused by limited human resource capacity, a lack of leadership training, and more complex socio-cultural and geographical challenges compared to other regions. In the environmental sector, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) (2023) stated that the effectiveness of regional environmental management policies is highly dependent on the capacity of environmental agency employees to carry out their supervisory, education, and technical service functions. Therefore, improving the performance of environmental sector employees is an urgent need to support the achievement of national green development targets.

Specifically in Southwest Papua Province, environmental management challenges are increasing in line with physical development, population growth, and local industrial activities. The West Papua Statistics Agency (BPS) report (2024) shows that the environmental quality index of Southwest Papua Province remains below the national average, particularly in terms of waste management and urban air quality. Sorong Regency, as the administrative center of Southwest Papua Province, has a strategic responsibility to ensure ecosystem sustainability and quality environmental governance. The Sorong Regency Environmental Agency plays a key role in pollution control, waste management supervision, public education, and the implementation of regional environmental policies. However, the regional government's internal performance report (2024) noted that challenges remain in employee discipline, work motivation, cross-work unit coordination, and adaptation to the demands of technology-based public services. This situation indicates that organizational leadership capacity and employee job satisfaction are important factors in driving the improvement of environmental institutions in the region.

Transformational leadership is a relevant leadership approach for improving employee performance because it can drive change, increase motivation, and facilitate the achievement of organizational goals through employee inspiration and empowerment (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). Research in public administration shows that leaders with visionary abilities, individualized attention, and the ability to provide intellectual stimulation have a positive influence on employee work effectiveness (Boamah et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2021). In the context of local government in Indonesia, transformational leadership has been shown to increase employee commitment, work participation, and the effectiveness of public decision-making (Suwanto & Ekowati, 2022). This suggests that a leadership style oriented towards change, empowerment, and individual competency development is important in strengthening the capabilities of regional bureaucracies.

Furthermore, job satisfaction is a psychological variable consistently identified as a significant factor influencing the performance of public sector employees. Job satisfaction theory suggests that employees with high levels of job satisfaction tend to exhibit loyalty, high work motivation, and optimal performance (Judge & Klinger, 2021). Empirical research in the context of public administration also confirms that job satisfaction is a mediating variable between leadership and employee performance, suggesting that effective leadership will increase employee satisfaction and ultimately improve employee performance (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Maulana & Susanto, 2023). In local governments in Indonesia, job satisfaction is related to organizational climate, leadership support, and career development opportunities (Sulastri & Budianto, 2022). Therefore, a thorough understanding of the role of job satisfaction in the context of public organizations in Southwest Papua is crucial for improving the effectiveness of environmental institutions.

Although numerous studies have examined transformational leadership and employee performance in the public sector, research in the Eastern Indonesian context remains relatively scarce. In fact, the social and geographic dynamics of West Papua differ from those in other regions of Indonesia, necessitating a context-based empirical understanding to enrich the public administration literature (Tahir & Rohana, 2021). Furthermore, research on employee performance in environmental agencies remains limited, particularly those that quantitatively examine the mediating role of job satisfaction using the PLS-SEM approach in small populations, as is common in local government agencies. Despite the growing demand for improved environmental sustainability and the effectiveness of regional bureaucracy, such empirical studies are

crucial to identify the role of transformational leadership styles and job satisfaction in driving employee performance in environmental agencies in Sorong Regency.

Despite the growing body of literature examining transformational leadership and employee performance in the public sector, several empirical gaps remain evident. First, most existing studies are concentrated in regions with relatively mature bureaucratic systems, particularly in Western and Central Indonesia, while empirical evidence from Eastern Indonesia remains limited. Second, studies that specifically examine environmental agencies as research objects are still scarce, even though these institutions face unique operational risks, technical demands, and public accountability pressures related to ecological governance. Third, previous research has predominantly applied regression-based approaches, whereas the use of PLS-SEM to examine mediation mechanisms in small-population public organizations remains underexplored. These gaps indicate the need for a context-specific and methodologically appropriate study to explain how transformational leadership influences employee performance through job satisfaction in regional environmental agencies.

This research is also important because the success of public organizations in addressing global and local environmental issues depends not only on technical capacity but also on the quality of leadership and the psychological well-being of employees carrying out tasks at the operational level. Rasool et al. (2021) stated that leadership effectiveness is strongly influenced by the social characteristics of the organization, making contextualization of this research crucial in understanding the dynamics of public sector organizations. In regions like Southwest Papua, which are still in the institutional development stage, employee engagement, motivation, and visionary leadership are crucial for driving organizational performance.

Previous studies have also examined the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance. First, Suwanto and Ekowati's (2022) study, "Transformational Leadership and Public Service Performance in the Indonesian Bureaucracy," examined central and regional government organizations in Java, which have a higher level of bureaucratic maturity. In contrast, this study focused on the Environmental Agency of Sorong Regency in Southwest Papua, located in eastern Indonesia, which has relatively different and more complex bureaucratic performance dynamics and human resource challenges. Second, Maulana and Susanto's (2023) study, "The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction on Leadership and Performance of Public School Teachers in East Java," examined public education sector officials.

The differences lie in the object and context of the study, where this study analyzed environmental agency employees who face technical demands related to waste management, environmental monitoring, and public education on ecological issues, thus significantly differing in their duties and risks. Third, Rasool et al.'s study, "The Mediation Role of Job Satisfaction on Leadership and Performance of Public School Teachers in East Java," examined public education sector officials. The differences lie in the object and context of the study. This study analyzed environmental agency employees who face technical demands related to waste management, environmental monitoring, and public education on ecological issues, thus significantly differing in their duties and risks. Third, Rasool et al.'s study, "The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Leadership and Performance of Public School Teachers in East Java," examined public education sector officials. (2021) entitled "The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance: Evidence from Asian Private Firms" examines private firms in the Asian region. This study emphasizes the importance of social and cultural context in leadership effectiveness. However, this study fills a research gap by focusing on the local government sector in a developing

region, specifically Southwest Papua, thus providing a unique contribution to broadening the understanding of transformational leadership in the context of developing local bureaucracies.

This study provides a novel contribution by empirically testing the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable in the context of the Sorong Regency Environmental Service, Southwest Papua, using the PLS-SEM approach on a census population. In addition, this study enriches the public management literature by providing an empirical perspective from a rarely researched area, thereby broadening the understanding of the dynamics of leadership and public sector employee performance in various geographic and social contexts. This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance in the Sorong Regency Environmental Service, West Papua, and examine the role of job satisfaction as an intervening variable in this relationship.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design that aims to examine the causal relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The quantitative approach was chosen because it can provide empirical evidence through statistical measurements and is able to explain organizational phenomena objectively based on numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population in this study were all 47 employees of the Environmental Service of Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua, who were also used as research samples using a saturated or census sampling technique due to the relatively small population size. This technique is in line with recommendations for research on small-scale public sector organizations to obtain complete data representation and avoid respondent selection bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The research instrument was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, which included indicators to measure the variables of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance.

Variable measurements follow academically validated constructs. Transformational leadership is measured using four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, as developed by Bass and Riggio (2006). Job satisfaction refers to indicators developed based on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967), which has been widely used in public sector research in Indonesia. Meanwhile, employee performance refers to public sector performance measurement indicators that emphasize aspects of work quality, timeliness, effectiveness, and employee responsibility (Mahmudi, 2019). The use of indicators that have been proven theoretically valid aims to achieve strong construct validity and avoid measurement bias, as recommended by contemporary management research (Hair et al., 2021).

The data analysis method used Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS software. The PLS-SEM technique was chosen because it is suitable for small sample sizes, research models with intervening variables, and research oriented towards predicting relationships between variables, thus providing robust estimates even though the data is not perfectly normally distributed (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis was conducted in two main stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. The measurement model evaluation included testing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and factor loading indicators. Structural model evaluation was carried out by testing the path coefficient,

coefficient of determination (R^2), and t-statistic using bootstrapping techniques to assess the significance of causal relationships between variables, in line with modern PLS-SEM hypothesis testing guidelines (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2016).

To address the potential risk of Common Method Bias due to self-reported data, this study conducted a full collinearity assessment as recommended by Kock (2015). The results show that all variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below the threshold of 3.3, indicating that common method bias is not a serious concern in this study.

The research model illustrates a causal relationship in which transformational leadership, as an independent variable, influences employee performance as a dependent variable, and through job satisfaction as an intervening variable. The conceptual diagram reflects a direct path from transformational leadership to employee performance, as well as an indirect path through job satisfaction, which acts as a psychological mechanism that strengthens the influence of leadership. This model is designed based on a theoretical foundation stating that transformational leaders are able to improve performance directly through direction and inspiration, and indirectly through increasing employee job satisfaction (Boamah et al., 2018; Inceoglu et al., 2018). With this model design, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive empirical understanding of the dynamics of leadership and employee performance in the context of local public organizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study describe the characteristics of the respondents, the quality of the instruments, and the output of the PLS-SEM structural model testing. The number of respondents was 47 employees of the Sorong Regency Environmental Service, all of whom were sampled using a census technique in accordance with research recommendations for small-population public organizations (Hair et al., 2021; Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

The census approach provides a comprehensive representation of institutional conditions, enabling the results to comprehensively depict empirical patterns. Demographically, respondents comprised employees with diplomas (D3) and masters (S2) degrees, with the largest percentage at the undergraduate level.

The average length of service of respondents ranged from 3–12 years, reflecting that most employees had sufficient operational experience in regional environmental management tasks. The proportion of structural and executive employees showed a relatively balanced distribution of work, supporting the validity of the representation of organizational perceptions. The average score of respondents' perceptions of transformational leadership was in the high category (mean = 4.12), while job satisfaction and employee performance showed average values of 4.07 and 4.15, respectively, on a 1–5 Likert scale. These descriptive findings indicate a positive trend across all three research constructs.

Evaluation of the measurement model showed that all indicators had external loading values above 0.70, meeting convergent validity criteria. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables were greater than 0.50, while the Composite Reliability (CR) values were above 0.80, indicating good internal consistency. These results confirm the construct validity and reliability according to PLS-SEM model evaluation standards (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1. Outer Loading, AVE and CR

Variables	Indicator	Load	ROAD	CR
Transformational Leadership	TL1	0.875	0.682	0.912
	TL2	0.884		
	TL3	0.821		
	TL4	0.801		
Job satisfaction	JS1	0.838	0.661	0.901
	JS2	0.812		
	JS3	0.849		
Employee performance	Episode 1	0.867	0.701	0.918
	Episode 2	0.842		
	Episode 3	0.846		

Furthermore, the results of discriminant validity through the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) show that all coefficient values are below 0.90, indicating that each variable has the ability to differentiate between constructs. This meets the HTMT requirements as recommended by Henseler et al. (2016) to ensure there is no discrimination bias between variables.

Table 2. HTMT Values

Build	TL	JS	EP
TL	—	0.744	0.681
JS		—	0.709
EP			—

The structural model showed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.674 for employee performance and 0.375 for job satisfaction. This means that 67.4% of the variation in employee performance is explained by transformational leadership and job satisfaction, while 37.5% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by transformational leadership. These values are considered robust for public organization research with limited sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 3. R-Square

Variables	R ²
Job satisfaction	0.375
Employee performance	0.674

The structural model was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. All relationships between variables showed statistical significance with t-values > 1.96 and $p < 0.05$. The direct effect of transformational leadership on employee performance was significant, and partial mediation by job satisfaction was proven.

Table 4. Path Coefficients and Bootstrapping

Track	β	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
TL → JS	0.612	7,384	0.000	Important
JS → EP	0.458	4,927	0.000	Important
TL → EP	0.397	3,885	0.000	Important
TL → JS → EP	0.281	3.121	0.002	Partial

Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

The effect size (f^2) analysis indicates that transformational leadership has a large effect on job satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.60$), a moderate effect on employee performance ($f^2 = 0.21$), while job satisfaction shows a moderate effect on employee performance ($f^2 = 0.26$). These values suggest that leadership plays a substantial role in shaping employees' psychological and performance outcomes. Furthermore, predictive relevance (Q^2) analysis using the blindfolding procedure shows Q^2 values of 0.284 for job satisfaction and 0.412 for employee performance, indicating strong predictive relevance of the structural model.

The SmartPLS structural model visualization shows a positive and significant arrow direction from transformational leadership to employee job satisfaction and performance. The thickness of the line reflects the strength of the relationship, with the influence of leadership on job satisfaction appearing most dominant. The employee performance node has a high R^2 value, indicating a strong contribution of the model to employee performance at regional environmental institutions.

The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees of the Sorong Regency Environmental Service, Southwest Papua, both directly and through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This finding indicates that aspects of leadership that are able to provide vision, inspiration, and individual attention play an important role in improving the quality of work of local government officials, especially in the environmental sector which demands high responsibility for public issues. The path coefficient from transformational leadership to employee performance is $\beta = 0.397$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating that an increase in leadership style that guides and empowers employees has a direct impact on the effectiveness of task implementation. This is in line with the view of Bass and Riggio (2006) who stated that transformational leaders are able to increase psychological energy and employee productivity through moral exemplary behavior, motivation, and communication of long-term vision.

Furthermore, the coefficient value of transformational leadership on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.612$; $p < 0.001$) strengthens the indication that a leadership style that supports and motivates subordinates significantly increases employees' positive perceptions of the work environment. This finding is in line with research by Inceoglu et al. (2018) which explains that leaders with a transformational style are able to increase employees' positive affection towards the organization through individual attention and appreciation for individual contributions. In the context of the Sorong Regency Environmental Service, employees who feel cared for, given space to develop, and appreciated tend to view their work as a real contribution to environmental sustainability, thus increasing their enthusiasm and perseverance in completing daily tasks.

From a performance perspective, the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance ($\beta = 0.458$; $p < 0.001$) illustrates that job satisfaction is a key psychological element that determines the quality of employee output in the public sector. Judge and Klinger (2021) explain that job satisfaction drives affective engagement and a sense of belonging to the organization, which directly supports individual work effectiveness. In local government agencies such as the Environmental Agency, job satisfaction can be seen from employee compliance in carrying out field inspection procedures, the timeliness of preparing environmental monitoring reports, and employee capacity in providing environmental information services to the public with a positive and

professional attitude. Thus, this finding confirms that improved performance is not solely influenced by bureaucratic regulations but is highly dependent on the positive psychological state of employees in carrying out their public functions.

Partial mediation of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.281$; $p = 0.002$) indicates that the effect of transformational leadership on performance is partially mediated by increased employee satisfaction, but its direct effect remains significant. Thus, effective leaders not only provide structure and direction but also create a pleasant and meaningful work environment for employees. This finding supports the Affective Events Theory model, which states that positive emotional conditions and experiences in the workplace trigger productive behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This means that leaders who are able to create a climate of openness, appreciation, and opportunities for self-development contribute to high motivation and pride among employees in carrying out public service duties in the environmental sector.

The results of this study also showed an R^2 value of 0.674 for employee performance, indicating that 67.4% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by transformational leadership and job satisfaction. This value is considered robust in socio-organizational research (Hair et al., 2021). This means that in the environmental sector bureaucracy in Eastern Indonesia, leadership and employee psychological factors have a dominant contribution to performance compared to potential structural factors such as facilities or regulations. Although work infrastructure plays a significant role, employee morale, motivation, and sense of mission are more significant in driving the effectiveness of public services, especially in administratively developing areas, such as Sorong Regency.

The results of this study are highly relevant to the dynamics of public institutions in Southwest Papua, where most work units face limited facilities, environmental technical demands, and social burdens in interacting with local communities regarding environmental education. In this context, transformational leadership plays a compensatory role in overcoming resource limitations by stimulating work motivation, creating meaning, and stimulating employee commitment to achieving high performance despite operational constraints. This aligns with the findings of Sulastri and Budianto (2022), who highlighted that a work environment based on emotional support and appreciation has a significant influence on civil servant performance in developing regions.

Furthermore, the strong relationship between transformational leadership and indicators of discipline, work attendance, and service quality in this agency suggests that employees respond to a leadership style that emphasizes not only control but also provides vision, inspiration, and personal encouragement. This leadership style helps create a cooperative organizational culture and encourages initiative and innovation in the implementation of programs such as cleanliness campaigns, domestic and industrial waste inspections, and environmental quality monitoring. This aligns with the OECD (2022) recommendation on the importance of adaptive leadership styles in strengthening local governments' capacity to address complex public issues.

The results of this study also imply that increasing job satisfaction and strengthening transformational leadership practices are effective strategies for enhancing the professionalism of civil servants and improving the quality of environmental governance. Leadership competency development programs, a collaborative work culture, and performance reward mechanisms can be prioritized in strategies to improve the performance of public organizations. This approach is relevant to the direction of national bureaucratic reform policy, which emphasizes the development of an adaptive work culture, agile governance, and strengthening the

human resources of civil servants to boost the effectiveness of government agencies (KemenPAN-RB, 2024).

Overall, the results of this study confirm that public sector employee performance is not solely determined by regulations and administrative controls but is also significantly influenced by the quality of leadership and employee psychological well-being in the workplace. Transformational leaders in local government agencies, such as the Sorong Regency Environmental Agency, have been shown to drive high performance by creating a positive work climate and empowering employees. This study reinforces the literature on modern public management, which states that government sector transformation requires a shift from a command-and-control leadership style to visionary and inspirational leadership based on public service values (Kim & Kim, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). Therefore, enhancing leadership capacity and job satisfaction is a key strategy in building effective public organizations, particularly in the environmental sector, which demands integrity, commitment, and a high level of responsiveness to ecological challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance at the Environmental Service of Sorong Regency, West Papua, both directly and through job satisfaction as an intervening variable. Leaders who are able to provide vision, emotional support, and individual recognition have been shown to improve the quality of employee performance in carrying out public service functions in the environmental sector. Furthermore, job satisfaction has been shown to be a psychological mechanism that strengthens the influence of leadership on employee performance, indicating that feelings of being valued and respected in the workplace encourage employees to work more effectively, responsively, and professionally.

These findings have important implications for developing public sector human resource management policies at the local level. Leaders in government agencies, particularly in the environmental sector, need to optimize transformational leadership approaches by emphasizing exemplary behavior, open communication, and employee potential development. Local governments are advised to organize leadership development and employee capacity building programs, as well as implement performance-based reward systems to strengthen employee internal motivation. Furthermore, the creation of a positive work climate through strengthening organizational communication, supporting supervision, and upholding public ethical values needs to be continuously developed to ensure the sustainability of long-term employee performance improvements. The findings provide important policy implications for local governments, particularly in Southwest Papua. Strengthening transformational leadership competencies among agency heads should be prioritized through structured leadership development programs and merit-based promotion systems. In addition, local governments are encouraged to design policies that enhance job satisfaction, such as fair performance appraisal systems, transparent career development, and supportive work environments. These strategies are essential to improve bureaucratic performance and ensure effective environmental governance at the regional level.

This study has several limitations. First, the relatively small sample size, although appropriate for PLS-SEM, limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the studied institution. Second, the use of cross-sectional data restricts the ability to capture dynamic changes in leadership behavior and employee performance over time. Future

research is encouraged to employ longitudinal designs, include additional psychological variables such as organizational commitment or work engagement, and expand the research scope to multiple regional environmental agencies to enhance external validity.

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