

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Transformational leadership and work engagement in Muslim workers: The moderating role of gender

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of transformational leadership on employee work engagement, seen with gender as a moderator variable. This study engaged 190 Muslim employees as a total sample and used quantitative methods with an explanatory approach with two adaptation scales, the Transformational Leadership Scale by Bas & Avolio (1995) and the Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006). The data analysis technique used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results showed the role of transformational leadership in employee work engagement. However, there is no role of gender as a moderator in the influence of transformational leadership on work engagement. The findings of this study contribute to the literature on transformational leadership by explaining how leadership that motivates and inspires can help employees be more engaged in their work.

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## INTRODUCTION

A company or organization must be able to develop its human resources so that it can produce a quality workforce. Employees who work earnestly can improve the progress of the company. This work behavior is called work engagement. Work engagement has become an important topic of conversation in recent years among companies (Saks, 2006). A survey institute called Gallup presents data showing that employees fall into the engaged category 13%, while employees in the not engaged category 76%, and 11% in the actively disengaged category (portalhr.com 2016). From the data, it is known that employees who are not engaged are higher than employees who are engaged, it can be concluded that most employees still lack the level of work engagement in the company. This work engagement issue has also begun to be noticed in Indonesia, in addition to strong business growth, it turns out that the work engagement in Indonesia is also very low.

The results of the Southeast Asian Nation survey in 2018 show that Indonesia is at the bottom of the list, the results are only 8% of the total employees in Indonesia who are engaged with their work. Another study by Towers Watson in the Global Workforce Study obtained almost the same results. Two-thirds of Indonesian employees are not highly engaged at work. In 2013, only 13 percent of employees in 142 countries felt engaged in their workplace. Including in Indonesia, it was recorded

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that 15 percent of employees felt engaged in the company where the employee worked (Siswono, 2016).

In a company, every employee must be able to increase their work productivity so that the company's goals can be achieved properly. A well-functioning company is the output of healthy, committed and motivated human resources which can also be called "engaged employees" (Shiddhanta & Roy, 2010). Companies must be able to develop their human resources so that they can produce a quality workforce. Work engagement is a positivity, fulfillment of work from the center of the mind characterized by a strong outpouring of energy and mentality during work, enthusiasm in carrying out work and seriousness with full concentration on a job briefly explains the aspects of work engagement namely vigor, dedication, absorption.

Aspects of gender are also related to its role in work engagement. Theoretical support for the relationship between gender diversity and engagement is based on the idea that men and women bring different perspectives, including diversity in creativity and innovation, have diverse market insights, and broader skills in problem-solving and decision-making (Farrell & Hersch, 2001; Shrader et al., 1997; Smith et al., 2006; Watson et al., 1993). Other research has found that gender-diverse teams have better work engagement than single-gender teams (Orlitzky & Benjamin, 2003).

Previous research on work engagement and gender was conducted by (Paradise, 2008) where the results of his research were that gender differences were found to contribute to work engagement where men were more engaged with work because of their position as the main breadwinner in the family, while women were the opposite. In line with this research, (Gardner & Gabriel, 2004) also stated that gender differences affect the high and low levels of work engagement, where the level of work engagement of men is higher than women. Regarding gender differences between men and women, it is also explained (Robbins, 1996), among others, that several psychological studies conducted show that women are more willing to obey authority while men are more aggressive and more likely to have success.

Gender differences can also determine a person's level of engagement. There are conflicting views on work engagement as to who is more engaged with the company, between male and female employees. Gallup research found that women tend to find more satisfaction in work and it is a natural result when women are more engaged than men (Johnson & Development, 2004). The same researchers found no significant difference in employees' work engagement levels when the study was conducted on employees in other countries. Kapoor & Anthony (2013 in Garg, 2014) concluded their research that male employees have a high engagement at work compared to female employees. The results of Sprang et al.'s research (2007) also state that female employees appear to burn out more often due to a lack of engagement compared to male employees. Meanwhile, research (Ariani, 2013) states that there is no difference between genders in employee engagement when working.

Starting from the literature study above, research on the role of transformational leadership on employee work engagement seen from gender as a moderator variable has never been studied. This study aims to see the role of transformational leadership on employee work engagement seen with gender as a moderator variable.

## METHOD

The quantitative method approach used in this research is an explanatory quantitative approach. The research object which is the independent variable in this study is work-engagement. While the dependent variable is transformational leadership and gender is a moderator variable. The research site was PT Pos Indonesia (Persero) Post Office all branches in Medan and Deli Serdang Regency. The

sample size is determined by the Structural Equation Model (SEM) with Confirmatory Analysis Factor (CFA) technique. The sample used in this study was total sampling which amounted to 190 Muslims consisting of 120 male employees and 70 female employees. The confirmatory Analysis Factor (CFA) technique is carried out in 2 ways, namely (1) CFA test per variable, and (2) CFA test with a combined method, which combines exogenous variables with exogenous and endogenous variables with endogenous. To find out that the model created is fit or significant, CFA testing is carried out by consulting or comparing the GOF coefficient results obtained from research with the standard GOF cut-off value in Table 1

**Table 1.** Cutt-off of standard Goodness of Fit

Goodness Of Fit Index	Cut-Off Value
$\chi^2$ Chi-square (df=..., p = 0,05)	< Chi-square tabel
Sig. Probability	$\geq 0.05$
Df	$> 0$
CMIN/DF	$\leq 2.00$
GFI	$\geq 0.90$
AGFI	$\geq 0.95$
CFI	$\geq 0.95$
TLI or NNFI	$\geq 0.95$
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$

The research steps, namely the method used first, are to describe the problems related to the characteristics of the transformational leadership variables and gender as a moderator variable with the dependent variable, namely work-engagement. Second, looking for and determining how the relationship between one variable and another variable being studied.

The data analysis technique in this study uses structural equation modeling (SEM), which is a multivariate technique that combines aspects of factor analysis and multiple regression that allows researchers to simultaneously test a series of interrelated dependency relationships between measured latent variables and constructs and also between latent constructs (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, a two-stage approach or measurement model analysis and structural equation model analysis were used. To simplify and ensure the accuracy of the calculation results, statistical software with Analysis Moment of Structural (AMOS version 23.0) is used.

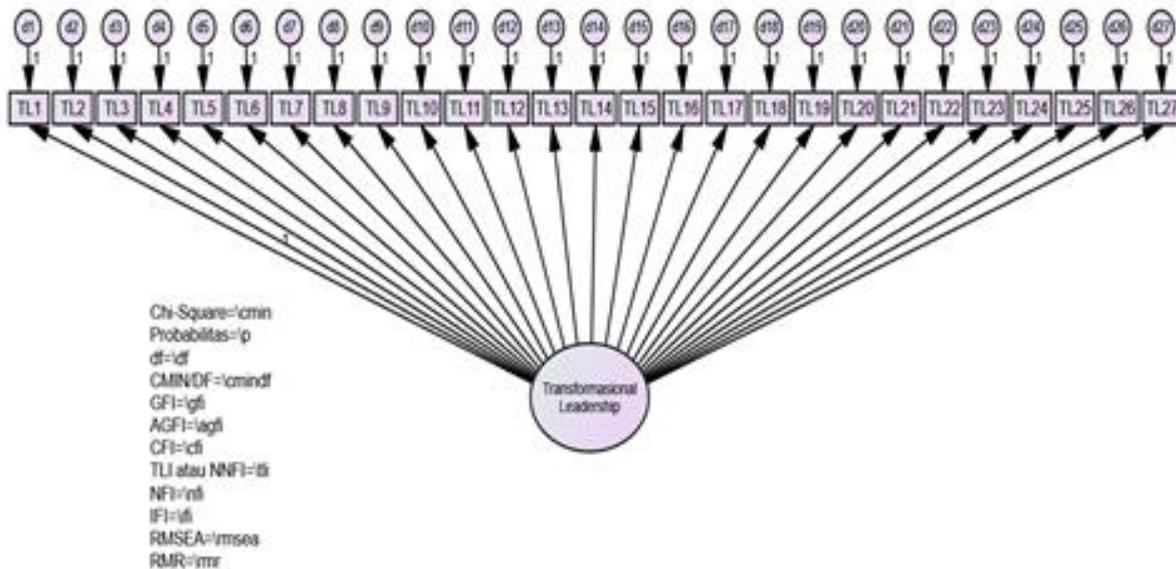
## RESULT

Respondents in this study were employees of the Medan and Deli Serdang Post Offices. The respondents were 190 employees. In the descriptive analysis section, the frequency distribution and percentage of the variables Education, Gender, Marital Status, Employee Status and Length of Service are presented in Table 2.

To test the unidimensionality of the variables or constructs under study, the Confirmatory-Factor Analysis (CFA) technique is used. In the CFA technique, there are two approaches, namely: (1) CFA test per variable, and (2) CFA test with a combined method, which combines exogenous variables with exogenous and endogenous variables with endogenous. To determine whether the model created is fit or significant, CFA testing is carried out by consulting or comparing the GOF coefficient results obtained from research with the standard GOF cut-off value. Transformational leadership constructs or variables are built based on previously synthesized theories. The theoretical synthesis is then developed into conceptual, operational definitions and research variable grids. From the results of the variable grid, a measurement model of the transformational leadership variable is then made as shown in Figure 1.

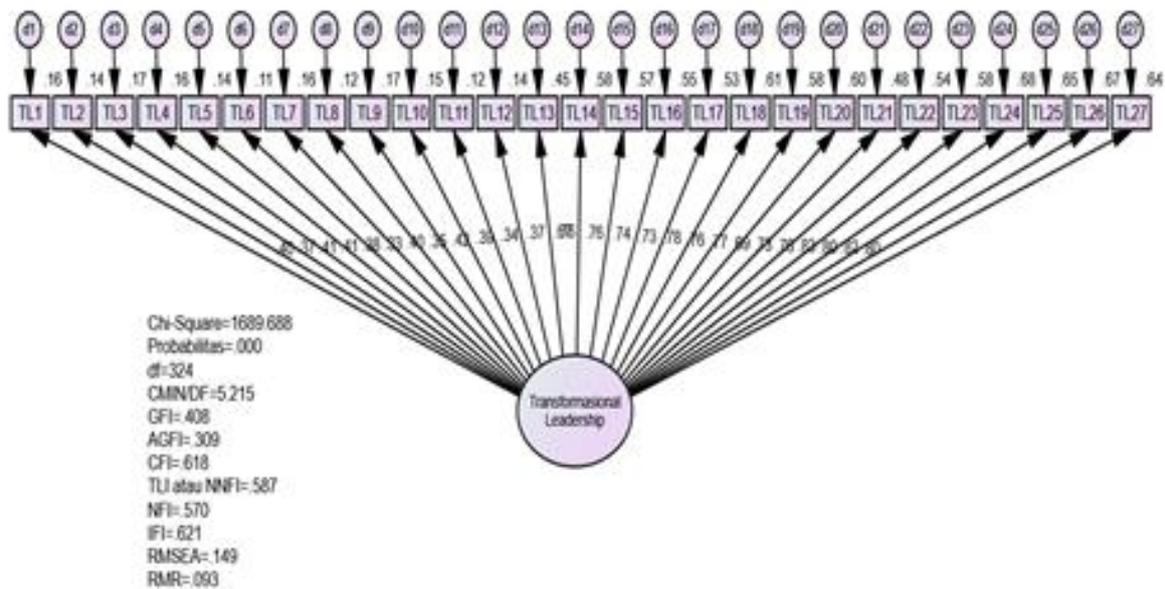
**Table 2.** Demography of research participants

Characteristics	n (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	39 (20.42%)
Female	152 (79.58%)
<b>Age (year)</b>	
< 20	1 (0.52%)
20-29	83 (0.4346%)
30-39	54 (28.27%)
40-49	26 (13.61%)
≥ 50	27 (14.14%)
<b>Educational level</b>	88 (46.07%)
Senior high	
Diploma	18 (9.42%)
Undergraduate	83(43.46%)
Master	2 (1.05%)
<b>Marriage status</b>	
Unmarried	67 (35.08%)
Married	122 (63.87%)
Widow	2 (1.05%)
<b>Employment status</b>	
Permanent	107 (56.02%)
Outsourcing	84 (43.98%)
<b>Year of employment</b>	
< 1	10 (5.24%)
1-5	62 (32.46%)
6-10	38 (19.9%)
> 10	81 (42.41%)



**Figure 1.** Path diagram of transformational leadership

Based on the transformational leadership variable model diagram in Figure 1, then running data with AMOS 23.0 is carried out, and needs to be tested to see the Loading Factor (LF) value of each indicator, and also the GOF value with the Goodness of Fit Test technique to determine whether it meets the significance requirements or not. The results of testing the Loading Factor (LF) and GOF values of the transformational leadership variable Model\_1 diagram as in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Path diagram of transformational leadership (Iteration/stage\_1)

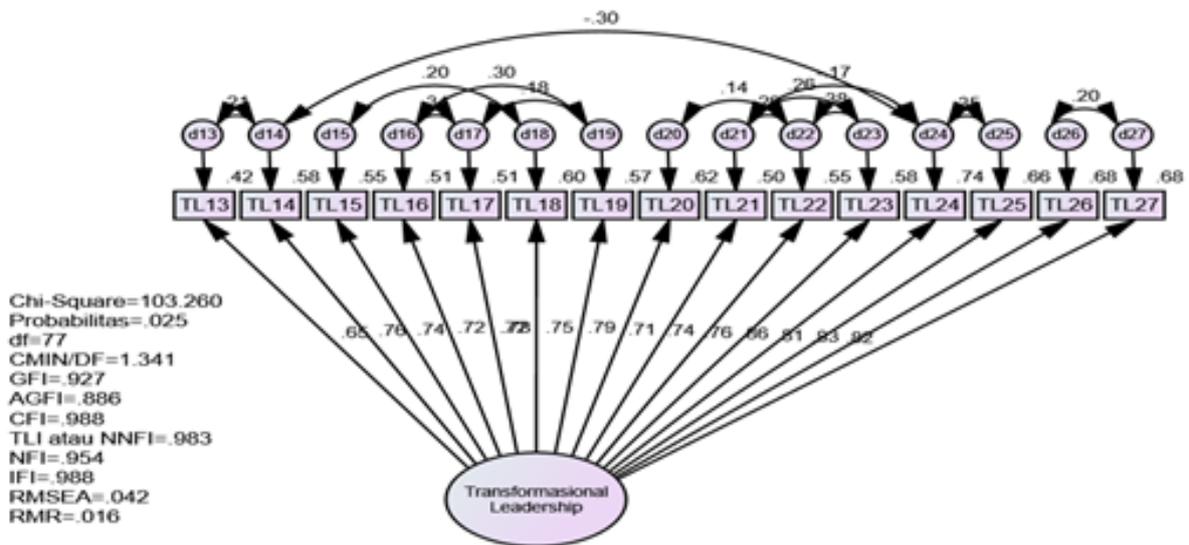
Based on the analysis of transformational leadership variables at the first stage or iteration of Figure 2, it is known that there are still loading factor values of indicators that are smaller than <0.5. The indicators include TL1 until TL12, presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Standardized regressions of transformational leadership

		Estimate
TL1	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.403
TL2	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.370
TL3	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.412
TL4	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.406
TL5	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.376
TL6	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.334
TL7	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.404
TL8	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.349
TL9	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.417
TL10	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.393
TL11	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.344
TL12	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.373
TL13	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.668
TL14	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.759
TL15	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.755
TL16	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.741
TL17	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.730
TL18	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.779
TL19	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.759
TL20	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.774
TL21	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.693
TL22	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.733
TL23	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.762
TL24	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.825
TL25	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.804
TL26	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.816
TL27	<--- Transformational_Leadership	.800

The next step is to discard (drop) indicators that have a loading factor value <0.5. so that in the next stage of analysis, the age variable specifically the TL1 to TL12 indicators is dropped and cannot be included or continued for the next stage of analysis. To get a fit or good model on the

transformational leadership variable in this study, the analysis was carried out through 10 stages or iterations. The 10th iteration model, which is the model that has been fit can be seen in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Path diagram of transformational leadership (Model\_10 fit)

In Figure 3, the Transformational leadership variable is known that all indicators already have a loading factor value > 0.5. Next is to do the GOF test on the transformational leadership variable model\_10 fit diagram. This is in accordance with the opinion of Latan (2012: 49) who quotes the opinion of Hair et.al. (2010) that the use of 4 - 5 goodness of fit criteria is considered sufficient to assess the feasibility of a model, provided that each criterion of goodness of fit, namely absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices and parsimony fit indices is represented. Thus the resulting SEM model can be used to analyze and test the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Work engagement constructs or variables are built based on the research theories described in the previous chapter. Based on this theory, it is then developed into conceptual definitions, and operational definitions and variable grids are made. From the results of the variable lattice, a measurement model of the Work engagement variable can then be made as shown in Figure 4.

In this study, to obtain a fit (significant) measurement model of work engagement variables, up to nine (9) iterations or stages of analysis were carried out. In this case, only the first stage measurement model analysis and the last stage measurement model analysis will be presented. Furthermore, the work engagement variable model diagram above is analyzed with AMOS 23.0 and needs to be tested to see the Loading Factor (LF) value of each indicator, and also the GOF value with the Goodness of Fit Test technique to determine whether it meets the significance requirements or not. The results of testing the Loading Factor (LF) and GOF values of the Model\_1 diagram of the work engagement variable are in Figure 5.

Based on the analysis of work engagement variables at the first stage or iteration of Figure 5 above, it is known that there is still a loading factor value < 0.5 which is found in the WE16 indicator (0.314), and WE17 (0.239).

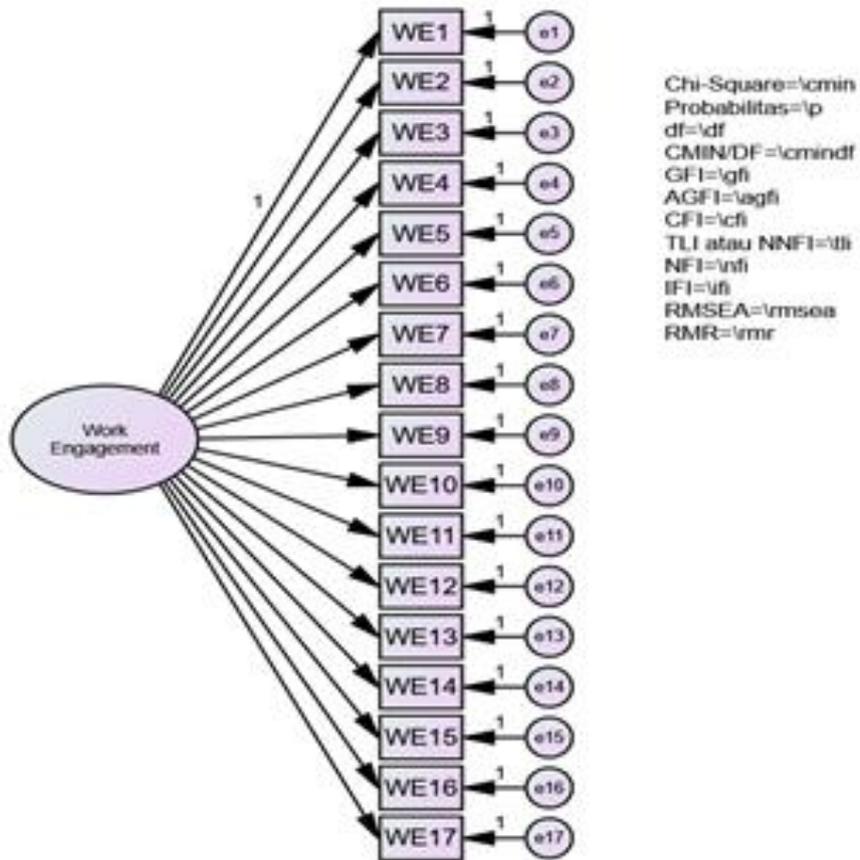


Figure 4. Path diagram of work engagement

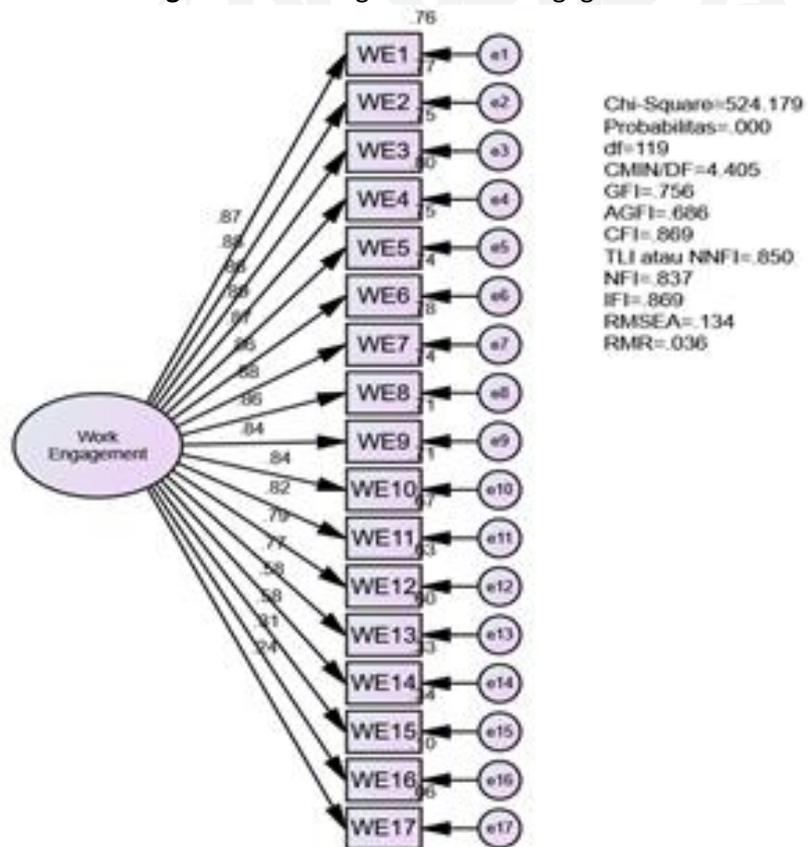
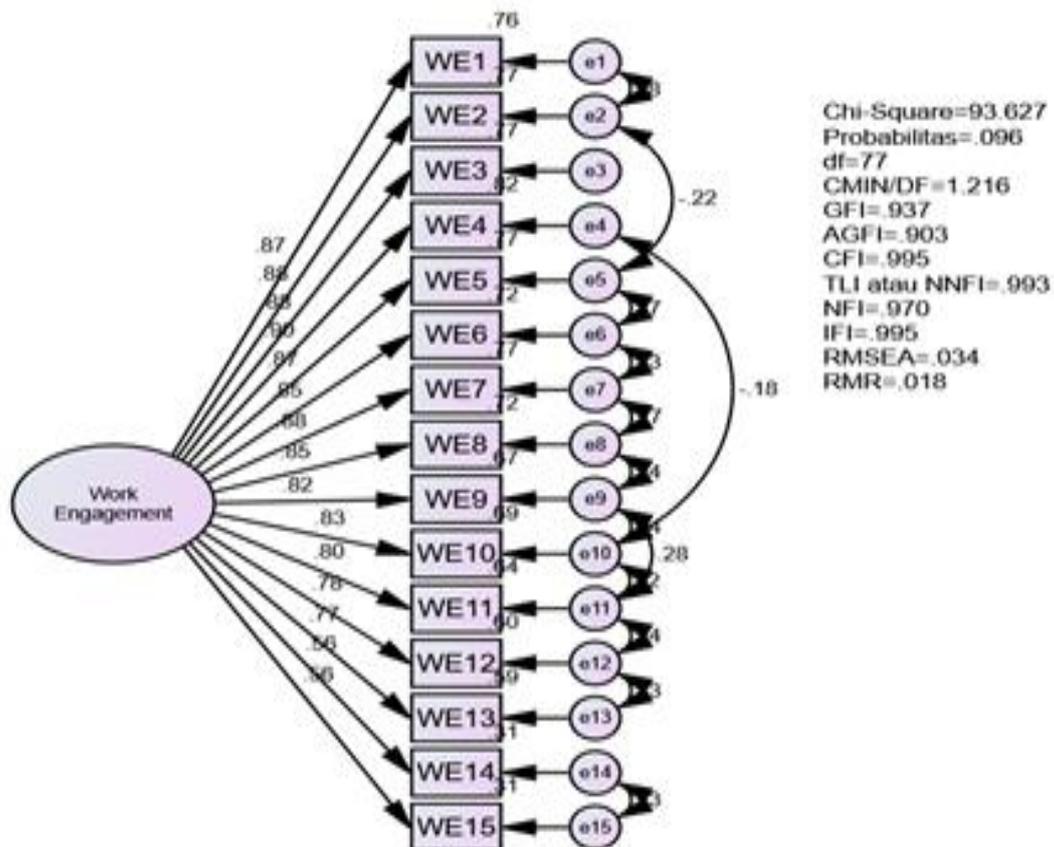


Figure 5. Path diagram of work engagement (Iteration/Stage\_1)

**Table 4.** Standardized regressions of work engagement

			Estimate
WE1	<---	Work_Engagement	.872
WE2	<---	Work_Engagement	.876
WE3	<---	Work_Engagement	.863
WE4	<---	Work_Engagement	.893
WE5	<---	Work_Engagement	.865
WE6	<---	Work_Engagement	.858
WE7	<---	Work_Engagement	.883
WE8	<---	Work_Engagement	.859
WE9	<---	Work_Engagement	.844
WE10	<---	Work_Engagement	.842
WE11	<---	Work_Engagement	.820
WE12	<---	Work_Engagement	.794
WE13	<---	Work_Engagement	.774
WE14	<---	Work_Engagement	.578
WE15	<---	Work_Engagement	.580
WE16	<---	Work_Engagement	.314
WE17	<---	Work_Engagement	.239

The next step is to discard (drop) indicators that have a loading factor value  $< 0.5$ . so that at the next stage of analysis the age variable specifically the WE16 and WE17 indicators are dropped and cannot be included or continued for the next stage of analysis. To get a fit or good model on the Work engagement variable in this study, the analysis was carried out through 9 stages or iterations. The 9th iteration model, which is the model that has been fit can be seen in Figure 6.



**Gambar 6.** Path diagram of work engagement (Model\_9 Fit)

In the figure, it can be seen that all indicators already have a loading factor value  $> 0.5$ . Next is to do the GOF test on the model\_9 fit diagram of the Work engagement variable.

Based on the results of the variable lattice, a measurement model of the gender variable can then be made. Gender in this study will be used as a moderator variable and because gender is only divided into two criteria, namely male and female, the gender variable is not carried out CFA analysis per variable but is directly combined when testing moderation analysis. To determine the complete structural equation model consisting of sub-structural and structural equations, the forming regression coefficients are obtained from the Standardized Regression Weights (Table 5), and the residual value (error of estimates) can be found from the Squared Multiple Correlation (Table 6).

Based on the Standardized Regression Weights), and the residual value (error of estimates) Squared Multiple Correlation can be made a research regression equation = Work engagement = 0.494 \* Transformational leadership - 0.035 \* Gender + e (R2 = 0.094).

After the overall fit of the model and data is acceptable (fit), the next step is the evaluation or analysis of the measurement model. This evaluation is carried out on each measurement model or construct. According to Igbaria et.al. in Wijanto (2008), the factor loading standard  $\geq 0.5$  is very significant, while Ghozali (2008: 135) states that significant factor loading and a standard loading factor  $\geq 0.5$  indicates a good level of convergent validity. Based on the test results, the validity value in the study is valid.

**Table 5.** Standardized regression weights

			Estimate
Work_Engagement	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.308
Work_Engagement	<---	Gender	-.047
Work_Engagement	<---	Moderating_effect	-.001
WE1	<---	Work_Engagement	.874
WE2	<---	Work_Engagement	.881
WE3	<---	Work_Engagement	.878
WE4	<---	Work_Engagement	.904
WE5	<---	Work_Engagement	.875
WE6	<---	Work_Engagement	.846
WE7	<---	Work_Engagement	.876
WE8	<---	Work_Engagement	.848
WE9	<---	Work_Engagement	.818
WE10	<---	Work_Engagement	.828
WE11	<---	Work_Engagement	.803
WE12	<---	Work_Engagement	.776
WE13	<---	Work_Engagement	.767
WE14	<---	Work_Engagement	.557
WE15	<---	Work_Engagement	.560
TL13	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.667
TL14	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.774
TL15	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.764
TL16	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.733
TL17	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.726
TL18	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.784
TL19	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.763
TL20	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.780
TL21	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.703
TL22	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.736
TL23	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.762
TL24	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.846
G	<---	Gender	.995
TL27	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.807
TL26	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.819
TL25	<---	Transformasional_Leadership	.806
Interaction	<---	Moderating_effect	.124
Interaction	<---	e17	.992

Measuring construct reliability in SEM is used composite reliability measure and variance extracted measure (Wijanto, 2008). The acceptable level of reliability is if the Construct Reliability value is  $\geq 0.7$  and the Variance Extract value is  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair et al. in Wijanto, 2008). The results of the data reliability calculation can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 6.** Squared Multiple Correlations

	Estimate
Work_Engagement	.094
Interaksi	.015

**Table 7.** Construct Reliability (CR) and Variance Extract (VE)

Variable	$\lambda \geq 0,5$	$\lambda^2$	Error	CR	VE	Result
				CR $\geq 0,7$	VE $\geq 0,5$	
Work engagement	12.091	9.910	5.090	0.966	0.661	Reliable
Transformational leadership	11.470	8.801	6.199	0.955	0.587	Reliable

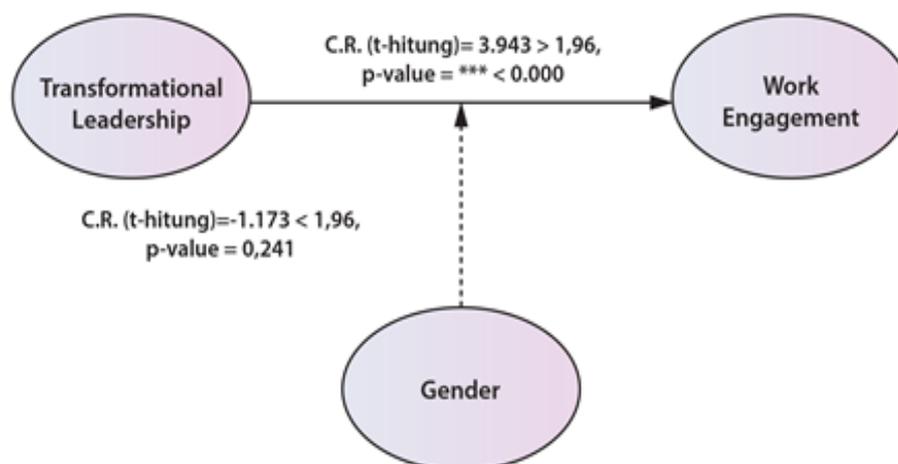
The results of the calculation of the Construct Reliability and Variance Extract above show that the Construct Reliability (CR) of all constructs and dimensions has met the recommended value ( $CR \geq 0.7$ ). The Variance Extract (VE) of most constructs and dimensions has also met the recommended value ( $VE \geq 0.5$ ). Thus it can be concluded that all constructs and dimensions in Model\_Fit have good reliability.

Statistical hypothesis testing is carried out on 8 hypotheses partially. Hypothesis testing uses a Critical Ratio (C.R.) value of  $\geq 1.96$  with a significance level of 0.05 (5%). If the CR value  $\geq 1.96$ , then H1 is accepted, and reject H0. Hypothesis testing is also done by testing the significance probability (p-value) If the result of p-value  $\leq 0.05$ , then H1 is accepted, and reject H0. If the - value has a \*\*\* sign, then the hypothesis is significant at the 0.01 (1%) level. The CR or t value to test the hypothesis partially can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 8.** Regression weights model fit

	Path Coefficients	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
Work_Engagement	← Transformational_Leadership	.494	.125	3.943	***
Work_Engagement	← Moderating_effect	-.001	.001	-1.173	.241

Diagrammatically, the results of hypothesis testing from Table 8 Regression Weights Model Fit above can be seen in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** Path diagram of research hypothesis

Because the C.R or t value of  $3.943 > 1.96$  or the P value with the \*\*\* symbol ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is a role of transformational leadership in employee work engagement. Furthermore, because the C.R value or t count is  $-1.173 < 1.96$  or the P value with the symbol  $0.241 > 0.05$ , then H1 is accepted, and reject H0. Thus it can be concluded that there is no role of gender as a moderator in the influence of transformational leadership on employee work engagement.

Based on the results of the research analysis, it is known that transformational leadership has a positive effect on work engagement seen from the residual value (error of estimates) of 0.494 or 4.94%, with a p-value  $< 0.05$  (\*\*\*) and the value of C.R (T count)  $> 1.96$  (3.943). This means that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement in employees. It is also known that gender does not moderate the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement as seen from the residual value (error of estimates) -0.001 and insignificant, with a p-value  $> 0.05$  (0.241) and a C.R value  $< 1.96$  (-1.173). This means that gender cannot moderate and is not significant in the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement. With the conclusion that the moderator variables in this study can be moderated by other variables.

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to see the role of transformational leadership on employee work engagement seen with gender as a moderator variable. The results showed that there is a role of transformational leadership in employee work engagement. The results of this study are in line with and support previous research conducted by Hawkes, Biggs, and Hegerty (2017), the role of transformational leadership behavior can create higher work engagement. According to the results of the study, the importance of developing transformational leaders is one of the methods by which companies can gain a competitive advantage. The study still has limitations in terms of sample size, which is not too large considering that the sample does not have specifications in one position only.

Based on the results of previous research by Wulandari and Nurtjhajanti (2013), shows that transformational leadership style can also affect work engagement in indicating a conducive company environment. Likewise, the results of research by Astuti, Mimba and Ratnadi (2016) on the performance of the treasurer's expenditure leadership style are associated with work engagement. Furthermore, company leaders apply the principles of transformational leadership to increase employee work engagement, besides that work engagement is used as a means of establishing good relationships and being directly involved with the company, increasing employee contribution and performance, and fostering employees' desire to continue to help other coworkers. Previous research findings that state Transformational leadership affects Work engagement including (Abas & Basri, 2019; Amor et al., 2020; Ratnaningtyas et al., 2021). Employees with high work engagement, when working within the company are able to improve work performance for the better because employees have dedication, optimism, and full concentration when doing their work Tims et al., (2011). Based on the results of this study, the possibility that gender cannot moderate the effect of transformational leadership on employee work engagement is because male and female employees have the same work engagement in carrying out their tasks.

To improve the limitations of this study, in order to further explore matters related to work engagement with a variety of supporting variables that have not been analyzed in this study and replace the moderator variable with other variables, it is hoped that the resulting impact will be maximized. Then, in order to be developed for more varied research subjects, it is recommended that in the further research process, HRD does not interfere and not only employees are used as research subjects.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement in employees, but gender does not moderate the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement in employees. Based on this research, the author can show that when employees tend to be enthusiastic about work, obey the rules and carry out work procedures applied by the company, then employees will be bound to their work and company, employees also feel afraid of losing when they want to leave the company so they tend to stay in the company. On the other hand, employees will also feel a sense of responsibility, enthusiasm and high dedication to remaining in the company. In this case, it is also necessary to have good transformational leadership and clear goals so that employees will be tied to their jobs and feel obliged to stay tied to their jobs.

As a practical recommendation, employees in the company are not only encouraged to employees tend to be enthusiastic about work, obey the rules and carry out work procedures applied by the company, but also given training or training by leaders regarding good work in the company and inspire and guide their employees optimistically with the provisions or regulations.

## DECLARATION

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### Author contribution statement

Wan Mariah contributed to conducting the research design, data collecting, distributing the scales, analyzing the research results and writing the manuscript. Suryani Hardjo served as a supervisor who assisted and approved the research design development, oversaw the data collection process, and reviewed the results and manuscript. Sjahril Effendy contributed as a supervisor who assisted in preparing the research design, controlled the data collection process, distributed the research scale, provided input related to the theoretical discussion, reviewed the results and wrote the manuscript

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### Data access statement

The data described in this article can be accessed by contacting the first author.

### Declaration of interest's statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

### Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

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