



Dual-Pathway Transformational Leadership and Civil Servant Performance: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation

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ABSTRACT: This study is grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory and Social Exchange Theory, which explain that leadership behaviors influence employee performance through reciprocal relationships and motivational mechanisms. The research aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation, within the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency. A quantitative explanatory design with a cross sectional approach was employed. The population consisted of 56 civil servants, and a census technique was applied to include all respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires measured on a five point Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares. The results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant direct effect on civil servant performance and a positive and significant effect on work motivation. Work motivation also significantly influences performance and mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and performance through complementary mediation. The coefficient of determination shows moderate explanatory power, while predictive relevance values confirm adequate model prediction. Furthermore, transformational leadership is validated as a second order construct formed by inspiration, admiration, and empowerment, with inspiration demonstrating the strongest contribution. The novelty of this study lies in modeling transformational leadership as a higher order construct and explaining its dual pathway mechanism in improving performance within regional public sector institutions.

KEYWORDS: Civil Servant Performance, Public Sector, Transformational Leadership, Work Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Public sector organizations play a strategic role in ensuring the effectiveness of development programs and the delivery of public services. The success of public organizations is largely determined by the performance of civil servants as the main drivers in implementing government policies and programs (Hidayat et al., 2024). In the context of regional development, the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs (PKPP) of Dharmasraya Regency have significant responsibilities in infrastructure provision, spatial planning, housing development, and land management. The effectiveness of these institutions is closely related to the performance of civil servants in carrying out their duties professionally, efficiently, and responsively to public needs. Employee performance in the public sector reflects the level of effectiveness and efficiency in achieving organizational objectives. Performance refers to the quality and quantity of work achieved by employees in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them (Mangkunegaran, 2021). In Indonesia, civil servant performance evaluation is regulated through the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number 6 of 2022, which emphasizes both work results and work behavior as indicators of performance assessment. Work outcomes include aspects of quality, quantity, timeliness, cost efficiency, and outcomes, while work behavior encompasses service orientation, commitment, initiative, teamwork, and leadership. These indicators demonstrate that civil servant performance is not solely determined by technical competence but also by psychological and behavioral factors within the organization.

Preliminary observations on civil servant performance at the PUPR and PKPP Offices of Dharmasraya Regency during 2022–2024 indicate that although the percentage of employees categorized as “Very Good” has increased, there has also been a rise in employees with performance below expectations. This condition suggests that employee performance has not yet reached an optimal level. The increasing complexity of tasks, high workload demands, and pressure to deliver quality public services require leadership capable of motivating employees and fostering higher levels of engagement and commitment. Without effective leadership and adequate



motivational support, organizations may face declining productivity, reduced work enthusiasm, and suboptimal service delivery outcomes. Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as an important factor influencing employee performance (Rony et al., 2023). Transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend personal interests for organizational goals by providing vision, encouragement, and empowerment (Azmi et al., 2024). Conceptually, transformational leadership is multidimensional, consisting of inspirational motivation, admiration or idealized influence, and empowerment (Behling & McFillen, 1996). These dimensions collectively form a higher-order construct representing the overall leadership style that stimulates employees' psychological attachment and willingness to perform beyond formal job requirements. In public sector organizations, transformational leadership becomes particularly relevant as civil servants are expected to maintain performance not only through formal authority but also through intrinsic motivation and value-based commitment.

Work motivation is another critical factor affecting employee performance (Irwan et al., 2020). Motivation represents the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain work-related behavior (Diefendorff et al., 2022). Motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of persistence, responsibility, and performance outcomes. In the public sector context, motivation plays a central role in translating leadership influence into actual performance improvements (Tambunan et al., 2025). Leaders who provide inspiration, recognition, and empowerment are more likely to enhance employees' motivation, which in turn encourages better performance achievement. The relationship between transformational leadership, work motivation, and employee performance can be explained through Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano et al., 2017). This theory posits that relationships within organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges between leaders and employees. When employees perceive supportive and inspiring leadership behaviors, they feel obligated to reciprocate through positive attitudes and improved performance. In addition, motivation theories, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, explain that motivational factors such as recognition, achievement, and personal growth contribute to increased job satisfaction and performance (Herzberg et al., 2017). Therefore, transformational leadership may influence performance directly and indirectly through increased work motivation, forming a dual-pathway mechanism.

Previous empirical studies provide mixed findings regarding these relationships. Pires et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership and work motivation significantly influence employee performance, and motivation mediates the relationship between leadership and performance. Similarly, Ekhsan and Setiawan (2021) reported a positive and significant effect of transformational leadership on employee performance. However, Norawati et al. (2025) found that transformational leadership did not significantly influence performance, indicating inconsistencies in empirical findings. Regarding motivation, Lango et al. (2024) and (2022) confirmed that work motivation positively affects employee performance, whereas Martua and Pragiwani (2024) reported insignificant results. Furthermore, studies examining mediation effects also show inconsistent outcomes, where some studies confirm the mediating role of motivation (Podlog et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022), while others report no mediating effect (Sudarmadi & Santosa, 2025).

These inconsistencies highlight the existence of a research gap, particularly in the public sector context where leadership dynamics and motivational mechanisms may differ from private organizations. Moreover, previous studies generally examine transformational leadership as a single construct, whereas its multidimensional nature suggests the need for a higher-order construct approach to better capture its comprehensive influence. Therefore, this study adopts a second-order construct perspective in examining transformational leadership and investigates the dual-pathway mechanism through which leadership influences civil servant performance both directly and indirectly via work motivation. Based on the theoretical and empirical considerations above, this study aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance, with work motivation acting as a mediating variable. The research focuses on civil servants at the PUPR and PKPP Offices of Dharmasraya Regency. By integrating transformational leadership as a higher-order construct and testing the mediating role of work motivation, this study is expected to contribute to the development of public administration literature, particularly in explaining the psychological mechanisms underlying performance improvement in public sector organizations.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design aimed at examining the effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation as a mediating variable. The research adopted a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a single point in time to obtain an empirical description of the



relationships among variables under study (Sugiyono, 2020). The quantitative explanatory approach was selected to test causal relationships among latent variables and to explain the dual-pathway mechanism through which transformational leadership influences employee performance. The object of this research was civil servants working at the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs (PKPP) of Dharmasraya Regency. These institutions were selected due to their strategic role in supporting regional infrastructure development and public service delivery, which require optimal employee performance. The population of this study consisted of all civil servants employed in both departments, totaling 56 employees, excluding the researcher. Considering the relatively small population size, this study applied a census or saturated sampling technique, in which all members of the population were included as respondents. The census approach was chosen to ensure comprehensive data representation and to minimize sampling bias.

The study utilized primary data collected directly from respondents through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of a series of statements designed to measure transformational leadership, work motivation, and civil servant performance. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement instruments were adapted from established previous studies to ensure construct validity and reliability. Civil servant performance was measured using 20 items adapted from the in-role and organizational citizenship behavior scales developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) and Van Dyne et al. (1994), reflecting employees’ effectiveness in completing tasks, achieving targets, and demonstrating positive work behavior. Work motivation variable was measured using three dimensions, namely need for achievement, need for power, and need for affiliation, consisting of 15 measurement items adapted from Steers et al. (1976). In this study, transformational leadership was conceptualized as a second-order construct consisting of three first-order dimensions: inspiration, admiration (idealized influence), and empowerment, measured using 15 items adapted from Behling et al. (1996).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software. SEM-PLS was selected due to its suitability for predictive research objectives, complex structural relationships, and its capability to estimate higher-order constructs effectively (Hair et al., 2019). The measurement model evaluation included testing convergent validity through outer loading values greater than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50. Construct reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha values above 0.70, while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The structural model evaluation involved assessing path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2), as well as hypothesis testing through bootstrapping procedures. The significance of relationships among variables was determined based on t-statistic values greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019). The second-order construct of transformational leadership was modeled using the repeated indicator approach, in which indicators from the first-order dimensions were reused to estimate the higher-order construct, enabling a comprehensive assessment of transformational leadership effects through both direct and indirect (dual-pathway) mechanisms.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

This section describes the demographic profile of respondents involved in this study. The characteristics of respondents are presented based on gender, age, educational level, workplace, and length of service. A total of 56 civil servants from the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs (PKPP) of Dharmasraya Regency participated in this research. The summary of respondent characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Respondent Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	37	66.1
	Female	19	33.9
	Total	56	100
Age	20–30 years	6	10.7
	31–40 years	9	16.1
	41–50 years	30	53.6



Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
	51–60 years	11	19.6
	Total	56	100
Education Level	Senior High School / Equivalent	12	21.4
	Diploma	4	7.1
	Bachelor’s Degree (S1)	26	46.4
	Master’s Degree (S2)	14	25.0
	Total	56	100
Workplace	Department of PUPR	44	78.6
	Department of PKPP	12	21.4
	Total	56	100
Length of Service	0–10 years	7	12.5
	11–20 years	19	33.9
	21–30 years	24	42.9
	>30 years	6	10.7
	Total	56	100

Source: Researcher Data Processing (2024)

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 37 individuals (66.1%), while female respondents totaled 19 individuals (33.9%). In terms of age distribution, most respondents were between 41–50 years old, comprising 30 individuals (53.6%), followed by those aged 51–60 years with 11 individuals (19.6%), 31–40 years with 9 individuals (16.1%), and 20–30 years with 6 individuals (10.7%). Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor’s degree (S1), totaling 26 individuals (46.4%). This was followed by respondents with a master’s degree (S2) at 14 individuals (25%), senior high school or equivalent education at 12 individuals (21.4%), and diploma-level education at 4 individuals (7.1%). Based on workplace distribution, the majority of respondents worked at the Department of PUPR, totaling 44 individuals (78.6%), while 12 individuals (21.4%) worked at the Department of PKPP. Finally, in terms of length of service, most respondents had worked for 21–30 years (42.9%), followed by 11–20 years (33.9%), 0–10 years (12.5%), and more than 30 years (10.7%).

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct reliability and validity were assessed to ensure that the measurement model demonstrates adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. The evaluation was conducted by examining Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2019), a construct is considered reliable and valid when the values of Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability exceed 0.70 and the AVE value is greater than 0.50. The results of the construct reliability and validity assessment are presented in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Transformational Leadership	0.932	0.941	0.593
Civil Servant Performance	0.951	0.956	0.609
Work Motivation	0.952	0.958	0.677

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

Based on Table 2, all constructs demonstrate satisfactory levels of reliability and validity. The Cronbach’s Alpha values range from 0.932 to 0.952, while Composite Reliability values range from 0.941 to 0.958, indicating strong internal consistency among the measurement items. Furthermore, all constructs show AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.593



to 0.677. These results confirm that each construct adequately explains the variance of its indicators and that the measurement model meets the requirements of construct reliability and convergent validity, allowing further analysis of the structural model.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated to ensure that each construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. The assessment was conducted using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct with the correlations between constructs. According to Hair et al. (2019), discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs. The results of the discriminant validity test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	Transformational Leadership	Civil Performance	Servant Work Motivation
Transformational Leadership	0.770		
Civil Servant Performance	0.576	0.780	
Work Motivation	0.540	0.682	0.823

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

Based on Table 3, the square root of AVE values for transformational leadership (0.770), civil servant performance (0.780), and work motivation (0.823) are greater than the correlations between constructs. These findings indicate that each construct has adequate discriminant validity, confirming that the constructs measure distinct concepts within the research model. Therefore, the measurement model satisfies the discriminant validity requirement and is appropriate for further structural model evaluation.

Table 4. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	Transformational Leadership	Civil Performance	Servant Work Motivation
Transformational Leadership			
Civil Servant Performance	0.586		
Work Motivation	0.555	0.699	

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

In addition to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The HTMT approach is considered a more stringent criterion for evaluating discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. According to Hair et al. (2019), discriminant validity is established when HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90. The results of the HTMT analysis are presented in Table 4.

Structural Model Evaluation

After confirming that the measurement model met the reliability and validity requirements, the structural model was evaluated to assess the explanatory power and predictive relevance of the proposed model. The structural model assessment includes the evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by the exogenous variables in the model. The results of the R^2 evaluation are presented in Table 5.



Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Civil Servant Performance	0.526	0.508
Work Motivation	0.292	0.279

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

Based on Table 5, civil servant performance has an R² value of 0.526, indicating that transformational leadership and work motivation explain 52.6% of the variance in civil servant performance. Meanwhile, work motivation has an R² value of 0.292, indicating that transformational leadership explains 29.2% of the variance in work motivation. According to Hair et al. (2019), these values indicate a moderate level of explanatory power.

Predictive relevance was evaluated using the Stone–Geisser Q² value obtained through the blindfolding procedure. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Construct	Q ²
Civil Servant Performance	0.304
Work Motivation	0.188

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

As presented in Table 6, all Q² values are greater than zero, indicating that the structural model has adequate predictive relevance and acceptable predictive capability for the endogenous constructs.

The effect size (f²) was assessed to determine the magnitude of the influence of each exogenous construct on endogenous constructs. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Effect Size (f²)

Construct	Civil Servant Performance	Work Motivation
Transformational Leadership	0.129	0.412
Work Motivation	0.409	

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

Based on Table 7, transformational leadership has a small effect on civil servant performance (f² = 0.129) and a large effect on work motivation (f² = 0.412). Furthermore, work motivation shows a large effect on civil servant performance (f² = 0.409). Referring to Cohen (1988), these findings indicate that transformational leadership plays a substantial role in enhancing work motivation, which in turn strongly contributes to improving civil servant performance. Overall, the structural model demonstrates adequate explanatory power and predictive relevance, supporting further hypothesis testing.

Second-Order Construct Assessment (Transformational Leadership)

In this study, transformational leadership is modeled as a second-order construct reflected by three first-order dimensions: inspiration, admiration (idealized influence), and empowerment. The assessment of the higher-order construct was conducted by examining the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values of each first-order dimension toward transformational leadership. The results of the second-order construct evaluation demonstrate that all three dimensions contribute positively and significantly to the formation of transformational leadership. This indicates that each dimension plays a meaningful role in representing the higher-order construct.



Table 8. Second-Order Construct Assessment Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values
Inspiration → Transformational Leadership	0.389	20.124	0.000
Admiration → Transformational Leadership	0.308	13.699	0.000
Empowerment → Transformational Leadership	0.382	19.966	0.000

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

As shown in Table 8, all path coefficients are positive, with t-statistics exceeding the critical value of 1.96 and p-values below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019), confirming statistical significance. Among the three dimensions, inspiration exhibits the strongest contribution to transformational leadership, followed by empowerment and admiration. These findings confirm that transformational leadership is adequately and reliably represented by its underlying dimensions and can therefore be treated as a valid second-order construct for subsequent structural model analysis.

Structural Model Results

To examine the proposed hypotheses, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The bootstrapping technique generates empirical t-statistics and p-values to determine whether the estimated path coefficients are statistically significant. In this study, a relationship is considered statistically significant when the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, indicating significance at the five percent level as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). The results of the direct and indirect path estimations are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Structural Model Path Coefficients

Relationship	Path Coefficient (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values
Transformational Leadership → Civil Servant Performance	0.285	4.211	0.000
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation	0.533	5.903	0.000
Work Motivation → Civil Servant Performance	0.530	7.563	0.000
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation → Civil Servant Performance	0.282	4.627	0.000

Source: Data Processing with SmartPLS (2026)

The results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant direct effect on civil servant performance. In addition, transformational leadership significantly influences work motivation, and work motivation, in turn, exerts a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance. Moreover, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance through work motivation is also statistically significant. This finding confirms that work motivation functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and performance. Since both the direct effect and the indirect effect are significant and operate in the same direction, the mediation can be classified as complementary mediation, in accordance with the framework proposed by Zhao et al. (2010). This suggests that work motivation strengthens and reinforces the effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance, rather than fully substituting the direct relationship.

Figure 1.3 presents the results of the structural equation modeling analysis, illustrating both the measurement model and the structural relationships among variables.

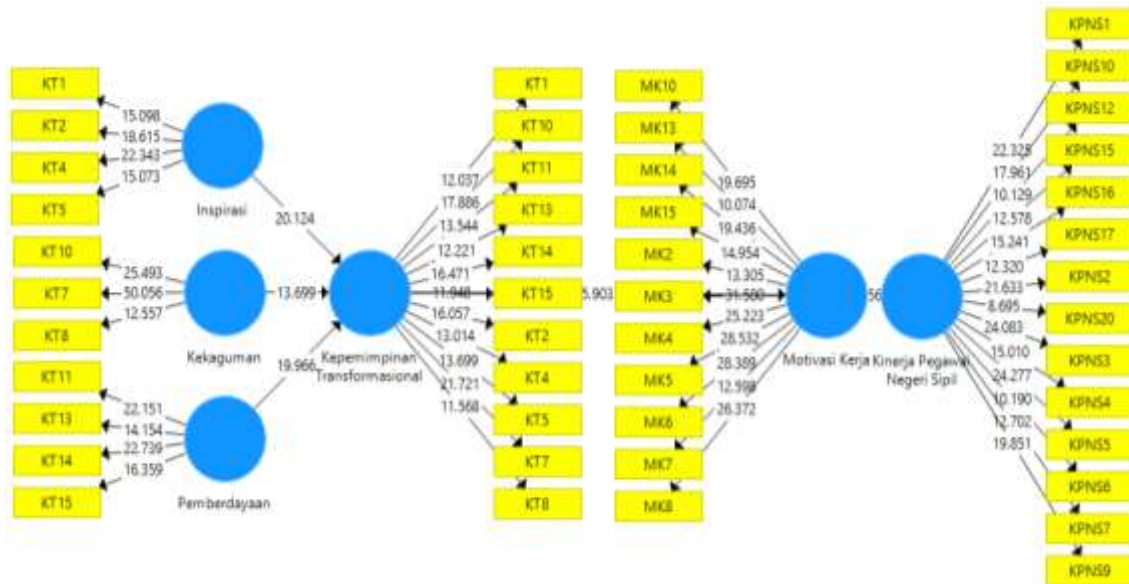


Figure 1.3 Structural Model Path Coefficients

Transformational Leadership and Civil Servant Performance in Dharmasraya Regency

Transformational Leadership Theory proposed by Bass (1985) explains that leaders can elevate followers’ performance beyond expected standards by articulating a compelling vision, providing inspiration, demonstrating moral integrity, and encouraging intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders align individual interests with organizational goals, thereby fostering stronger commitment and discretionary effort. This theoretical perspective suggests that leadership is not merely a formal authority mechanism but a psychological influence process capable of shaping employee attitudes and performance outcomes. In parallel, Social Exchange Theory introduced by Homans (1958) posits that workplace relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges. When employees perceive supportive and empowering leadership behaviors, they feel obligated to reciprocate through positive work attitudes and enhanced performance. These theoretical foundations provide a clear explanation for why transformational leadership is expected to influence civil servant performance.

In this study, civil servant performance is conceptualized as the quality and quantity of work achieved in carrying out assigned duties and responsibilities. Mangkunegara (2021) defines performance as work results achieved both in terms of quality and quantity, while Aksoy and Bayazit (2022) and Marisya et al. (2023) emphasize that performance reflects the degree of task accomplishment according to predetermined standards within a specific period. In the context of the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency, performance represents the effectiveness of civil servants in implementing infrastructure development programs, managing spatial planning, delivering housing services, and administering land affairs. The empirical findings of this study confirm that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance.

This result is consistent with previous empirical studies conducted by Pires et al. (2023), Japriani et al. (2025), Ekhsan and Setiawan (2021), and Lee et al. (2023), which demonstrate that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee performance across various organizational contexts. When leaders demonstrate inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, employees tend to exhibit higher levels of responsibility, initiative, and commitment to organizational objectives. Furthermore, Hajjali et al. (2022) identifies leadership as one of the primary determinants of employee performance, alongside motivation and ability. Within bureaucratic institutions such as PUPR and PKPP, where accountability, procedural compliance, and public service standards are critical, transformational leadership functions as a strategic mechanism to strengthen discipline, collaboration, creativity, and responsiveness. Thus, the positive relationship identified in this study reflects not only statistical significance but also theoretical coherence and contextual relevance within regional government institutions.



Transformational Leadership and Work Motivation

The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on work motivation among civil servants at the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency. This finding confirms that leadership behavior serves as a critical organizational stimulus that shapes employees' internal drive to perform. Motivation in this research is understood as the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain work behavior toward organizational objectives, as described by Hajiali et al. (2022) and Layek and Koodamara (2025). In public sector institutions characterized by formal procedures and regulatory structures, leadership plays a decisive role in transforming routine task execution into purposeful and committed performance. From a theoretical perspective, the influence of transformational leadership on work motivation can be explained through McClelland's Need Theory, which posits that human behavior is driven by the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power (Siok et al., 2023). Transformational leaders stimulate the need for achievement by articulating challenging goals and encouraging excellence. They strengthen the need for affiliation by fostering trust, collaboration, and collective identity within work units. They also activate the need for power constructively by delegating authority and empowering employees to take responsibility for strategic programs. In addition, Social Exchange Theory introduced by Homans (1958) explains that when employees perceive supportive and inspiring leadership behaviors, they feel obligated to reciprocate with positive attitudes and stronger motivation. Thus, transformational leadership becomes a psychological trigger that activates motivational energy within bureaucratic settings.

Empirical findings from previous studies reinforce this theoretical explanation. Pires et al. (2023), Ekhsan and Setiawan (2021), Norawati et al. (2025), Lango et al. (2024), and Cendiawan and Indradewa (2024) consistently report that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee motivation across different organizational contexts. These studies demonstrate that leadership behaviors not only influence structural outcomes but also shape internal psychological states that determine work enthusiasm and persistence. The present study extends this empirical evidence to the context of regional government institutions in Dharmasraya Regency, confirming that inspirational communication, empowerment, and ethical leadership practices significantly strengthen civil servants' motivation in carrying out infrastructure development and public service responsibilities.

Work Motivation and Civil Servant Performance

The results of this study indicate that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance. This finding reinforces the theoretical perspective that motivation represents a central psychological force directing individual behavior toward the achievement of organizational objectives. Mangkunegara (2021) explains that performance is fundamentally determined by two main factors, namely ability and motivation, where motivation functions as the driving energy that determines the intensity, direction, and persistence of work behavior. In the absence of sufficient motivation, even employees with adequate competence may fail to achieve optimal performance levels. Therefore, within public sector institutions, motivation becomes a decisive factor in translating competence and formal authority into measurable work outcomes.

From a conceptual standpoint, motivation reflects internal and external forces that stimulate employees to exert effort in completing their duties. Karepesina (2023) argues that increased motivation leads directly to improved performance outcomes because motivated individuals demonstrate stronger commitment, higher responsibility, and greater perseverance in achieving targets. Similarly, Iddrisu and Mohammed (2025) emphasize that leadership attitudes and organizational support significantly shape motivational intensity, which subsequently influences performance effectiveness. In the context of the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency, motivated civil servants are more likely to demonstrate proactive behavior in supervising infrastructure projects, ensuring compliance with technical standards, maintaining transparency in land administration, and delivering responsive public services. Motivation therefore operates not only as an internal psychological state but also as a catalyst for productive and accountable work behavior.

Empirical evidence further strengthens this conclusion. Previous studies conducted by Nawawi et al. (2023), Mohammed (2024), Sedik (2021), and Banin et al. (2020) consistently demonstrate that work motivation significantly enhances employee performance across various organizational settings. These findings collectively suggest that motivation functions as a strategic determinant of organizational effectiveness rather than merely an individual psychological attribute. In regional government institutions where performance is closely linked to public accountability and development outcomes, the presence of strong work motivation ensures that civil servants maintain persistence, accuracy, and service orientation in fulfilling their responsibilities. Consequently,



strengthening motivational factors within bureaucratic environments becomes an essential strategy for improving overall institutional performance and supporting sustainable regional development.

The Mediating Role of Work Motivation

The mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between transformational leadership and civil servant performance can be explained through Social Exchange Theory proposed by Homans (1958). This theory posits that relationships within organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges in which individuals respond to favorable treatment with positive contributions. Transformational leadership behaviors such as inspirational communication, empowerment, and individualized consideration represent positive organizational treatment that generates a sense of obligation among employees. Civil servants who perceive supportive and value-based leadership are more likely to internalize organizational goals, which enhances their motivational drive. In this exchange mechanism, leadership acts as the initiating stimulus, work motivation becomes the internal psychological response, and performance emerges as the tangible outcome of reciprocal behavior. The empirical findings of this study confirm that work motivation significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and civil servant performance. The mediation pattern is complementary, as both direct and indirect effects are significant and operate in the same positive direction, consistent with the framework of Zhao et al. (2010). This indicates that transformational leadership strengthens performance not only through direct behavioral influence but also by activating employees' internal motivational mechanisms. The results align with motivational theories such as McClelland's theory of needs and Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which emphasize that recognition, achievement, empowerment, and personal growth serve as key drivers of improved work outcomes.

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with prior empirical studies conducted by Ikhsanida et al. (2025), Azra et al. (2024), Noruliyanto et al. (2024), and Lango et al. (2024), which demonstrate that work motivation functions as a critical bridge linking transformational leadership to performance. In the context of the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency, this mediating mechanism indicates that leadership effectiveness is strengthened when it successfully enhances employees' psychological engagement. Therefore, improving civil servant performance requires leadership practices that not only direct tasks but also cultivate sustained motivational energy within the organization.

Dominance of the Inspirational Dimension in the Context of Regional Government Institutions

The empirical results of this study indicate that the inspirational dimension demonstrates the highest loading in forming the second order construct of transformational leadership within the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency. This dominance can be understood by considering the structural and bureaucratic characteristics of regional government institutions. Public sector organizations are generally characterized by formalized procedures, hierarchical coordination, regulatory compliance, and routine administrative processes. Such conditions may reduce flexibility and weaken intrinsic enthusiasm if leadership is limited to procedural control. In this context, inspirational motivation becomes a strategic leadership mechanism that connects routine bureaucratic tasks with broader public service missions and long term regional development objectives. Bass (1985) explains that inspirational motivation enables leaders to elevate followers' awareness of collective goals and encourage commitment beyond personal interests. Within infrastructure and housing agencies, where programs are often technical and long term in nature, visionary communication helps civil servants interpret their responsibilities as meaningful contributions to community welfare rather than merely administrative obligations.

The predominance of inspiration is also closely related to the demographic characteristics of respondents, most of whom are between 41 and 50 years old and have relatively long tenure in government service. Employees with extended years of service may experience procedural fatigue or work saturation in bureaucratic environments. Under these circumstances, inspirational leadership functions as a psychological revitalization mechanism that restores engagement and strengthens organizational commitment. Northouse (2021) argues that leaders who articulate an appealing and meaningful vision are able to enhance collective efficacy and stimulate discretionary effort among employees. Although empowerment also shows a substantial contribution to transformational leadership, its role appears to complement inspirational influence. Empowerment reflects trust, delegation of authority, and encouragement of initiative, which are essential for improving responsiveness and adaptability in public service delivery. Guarana and Avolio (2022) emphasize that empowerment supports intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, enabling employees to participate actively in problem solving. However, empowerment tends to produce optimal results when preceded by clear direction and



motivational framing. Without inspirational guidance, delegated authority may not generate coherent and performance oriented outcomes.

Meanwhile, admiration or idealized influence, although statistically significant, contributes slightly less than inspiration and empowerment. This dimension reflects ethical integrity, consistency between words and actions, and exemplary behavior demonstrated by leaders. In public institutions that emphasize accountability and transparency, ethical leadership remains fundamental for maintaining legitimacy and institutional trust. Ytterstad and Olaisen (2023) explains that idealized influence fosters respect and credibility, which are crucial for sustaining long term organizational stability. Nevertheless, in the operational context of infrastructure and housing agencies, civil servants may respond more intensively to leadership behaviors that directly stimulate motivation and clarify collective purpose. The predominance of inspiration therefore suggests that transformational leadership in Dharmasraya Regency operates primarily through symbolic and motivational mechanisms that align bureaucratic routines with public value creation. This finding supports the argument of Robbins and Judge (2024) that transformational leadership is context dependent and may manifest differently across organizational settings. In regional government institutions facing administrative complexity and public accountability pressures, the articulation of shared purpose emerges as the central pillar of leadership effectiveness.

Contextual Implications for Public Sector Institutions

In the bureaucratic environment of PUPR and PKPP Dharmasraya Regency, civil servant performance plays a strategic role in supporting regional development. As emphasized by Mangkunegara (2021) and Iswahyudi et al. (2023), performance reflects the effectiveness of employees in fulfilling responsibilities according to established standards. High performance ensures transparency, accountability, and successful implementation of infrastructure and housing programs. This study confirms that improving civil servant performance requires strengthening transformational leadership and enhancing work motivation simultaneously. Leadership acts as the initiating factor, while motivation serves as the reinforcing mechanism. Therefore, leadership development programs in regional government institutions should focus on enhancing inspirational communication, ethical integrity, empowerment practices, and personalized attention to employees. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that civil servant performance in the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency is shaped by a dynamic interaction between transformational leadership and work motivation. By grounding the findings in Social Exchange Theory and established performance and motivation theories, this study provides a comprehensive explanation of how leadership influences performance within Indonesian public sector institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of transformational leadership on civil servant performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable, within the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning and the Department of Housing, Settlement Areas and Land Affairs of Dharmasraya Regency. Based on the empirical findings, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, transformational leadership has a positive and significant direct effect on civil servant performance. This finding indicates that leaders who are able to inspire, provide direction, demonstrate integrity, and empower subordinates contribute directly to improving the quality and quantity of work outcomes. In the context of regional government institutions responsible for infrastructure and public service delivery, transformational leadership strengthens employees' commitment to organizational goals and enhances their effectiveness in carrying out assigned duties. Second, transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on work motivation. Leaders who articulate a clear vision, foster enthusiasm, and provide individual support are able to stimulate higher levels of psychological engagement among civil servants. This result confirms that leadership behavior functions as an important organizational stimulus that shapes employees' willingness to exert effort in achieving collective objectives. Third, work motivation has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance. Employees who demonstrate higher levels of motivation tend to show stronger responsibility, initiative, and persistence in completing their tasks. This finding highlights that motivation serves as a key psychological mechanism linking leadership practices to performance outcomes in public sector organizations. Fourth, work motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and civil servant performance. The mediation is classified as complementary mediation, meaning that transformational leadership influences performance both directly and indirectly through work motivation. This indicates that leadership effectiveness in improving performance is strengthened when it successfully enhances employees' internal drive to work. Furthermore, the assessment of transformational leadership as a second-order construct



confirms that it is adequately represented by its underlying dimensions, namely inspiration, admiration or idealized influence, and empowerment. Among these dimensions, inspiration shows the strongest contribution in shaping transformational leadership within the studied institutions. This suggests that the ability of leaders to communicate a compelling vision and foster collective enthusiasm plays a central role in enhancing motivation and performance among civil servants.

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