The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance, with Continuous Improvement as an Intervening Variable, at the Rantau Prapat Class 1B District Court

Hartati T. Sihombing, Kholilul Kholik, Yohny Anwar

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of self-efficacy on employee performance, with organizational commitment serving as a mediating variable, at the Medan Religious High Court. The study employs a quantitative approach through explanatory research. The population consists of 100 employees, all of whom were included in the sample using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results indicate that self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on organizational commitment, with a path coefficient of 0.897 (t = 54.266; p = 0.000). Self-efficacy also has a positive and significant influence on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.840 (t = 32.997; p = 0.000). Furthermore, organizational commitment has a positive and significant influence on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.506 (t = 4.512; p = 0.000). The analysis of indirect effects reveals that organizational commitment acts as a positive and significant mediator for the influence of self-efficacy on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.454 (t = 4.469; p = 0.000). The R^2 values indicate that self-efficacy accounts for 80.4% of the variance in organizational commitment, while self-efficacy and organizational commitment together account for 75.5% of the variance in employee performance. The study concludes that enhancing self-efficacy, coupled with strengthening organizational commitment, serves as an effective strategy for improving employee performance at the Medan Religious High Court.

Keywords: *self-efficacy, organizational commitment, employee performance, PLS-SEM, Medan Religious High Court.*

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Introduction

The success of an organization in achieving its objectives largely depends on the quality of its human resources. Human resources are an essential element in carrying out organizational activities, increasing productivity, and delivering effective and efficient services. In government institutions, employee performance is one of the primary indicators used to assess the success of task implementation and public service delivery. Employees are expected to work professionally, demonstrate discipline and responsibility, and adapt to organizational changes and developments. Siswadhi et al. (2024) explain that transformational leadership is an important aspect to consider in developing the performance of local government organizations. Therefore, improving employee performance requires effective leadership support and organizational management oriented toward continuous improvement.

Employee performance refers to the work outcomes achieved by individuals in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the standards established by the organization. Performance is assessed not only based on the quantity of work completed but also on the quality of work outcomes, timeliness, discipline, responsibility, and the ability to collaborate. Employees with high performance are expected to contribute positively to organizational effectiveness and improvements in public service quality. Dewi and Arquisola (2025) found that transformational leadership has a positive effect on the quality of services delivered by local government employees in Indonesia. This finding indicates that improving employee performance is influenced not only by individual capabilities but also by leadership that provides direction, motivation, and support in carrying out work-related responsibilities.

One factor that can influence employee performance is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes a leader's ability to inspire, build motivation, create positive change, and develop employees' potential to achieve organizational goals. Transformational leaders do not merely provide instructions but also serve as role models who can enhance employees' enthusiasm, commitment, and sense of responsibility at work. Dewi and Arquisola (2025) explain that transformational leadership encompasses four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The implementation of these four dimensions can encourage employees to improve their abilities, develop new ideas, and perform their duties more effectively.

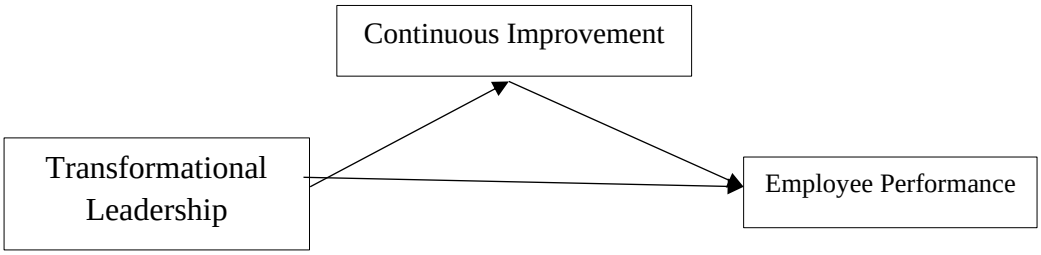
Transformational leadership also plays a role in creating a work environment that supports employee engagement and the achievement of organizational goals. Leaders who establish effective communication, provide opportunities for employees to develop their capabilities, and involve them in decision-making processes are expected to improve work performance. Vila-Vázquez et al. (2024) demonstrate that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee task performance can be explained through psychological mechanisms and work engagement. Meanwhile, Maula et al. (2026) examine transformational leadership, organizational support, and employee performance in Indonesia's public sector by positioning organizational citizenship behavior as a mediating variable. These two studies highlight the importance of understanding the mechanisms that connect leadership with employee performance outcomes.

In addition to transformational leadership, continuous improvement is an important aspect of supporting employee performance enhancement. Continuous improvement is an approach

that emphasizes the gradual, planned, and consistent refinement of work processes to achieve more effective and higher-quality outcomes. Such improvements can be implemented through the evaluation of task execution, identification of problems, simplification of work procedures, competency development, and innovation in service delivery. In government organizations, continuous improvement is necessary to ensure that service processes can adapt to public needs and applicable service standards. Therefore, the implementation of continuous improvement is expected to reduce work errors, improve timeliness, and encourage the optimal achievement.

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework



The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance via Continuous Improvement

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses:

1) H1: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee performance at the Rantauprapat District Court (Class IB).
2) H2: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on continuous improvement at the Rantauprapat District Court (Class IB).
3) H3: Continuous improvement has a positive and significant influence on employee performance at the Rantauprapat District Court (Class IB).
4) H4: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee performance through continuous improvement as an intervening variable at the Rantauprapat District Court (Class IB).

2.2 Research Method

This study employs a quantitative approach to analyze the influence of organizational culture, work motivation, and transformational leadership on employee performance, with continuous improvement serving as an intervening variable. A quantitative approach is utilized to examine the relationships between variables through statistical analysis based on established hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2016). The research was conducted at the Rantau Prapat District Court (Class IB), located at Jalan Sisingamangaraja No. 58, Rantau Selatan, between April and July 2026. The study population consists of all 53 employees; a saturated sampling technique was applied, meaning the entire population was included as the research sample. Primary data were collected via questionnaires using a Likert scale. The research variables include organizational culture (X1), work motivation (X2), transformational leadership (X3), continuous improvement (Z), and employee performance (Y). Data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the aid of SmartPLS 3.0. The

assessment of the measurement model (outer model) involved evaluating convergent validity—requiring a loading factor ≥ 0.70—as well as reliability, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (both ≥ 0.70). Subsequently, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and testing hypotheses through a bootstrapping procedure. The analysis encompassed both direct effects (path coefficients) and indirect effects (specific indirect effects) to identify the mediating role of continuous improvement. Hypotheses are considered significant if the t-statistic is ≥ 1.96 and the p-value is ≤ 0.05, at a 5% significance level.

2.3 Results And Discussion

1). Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The model evaluation is conducted to assess the viability of the research model by testing both the outer model and the inner model. The evaluation results are derived from the PLS Algorithm report generated using SmartPLS software an initial stage in the data processing phase.

a. Convergent Validity

The convergent validity test is performed by examining the loading factor value of each indicator in relation to its corresponding latent construct. An indicator is considered valid if it has a loading factor value greater than 0.70. Based on the data processing results, the convergent validity test for the variablesn transformational leadership, continuous improvement, and employee performance indicates that the majority of the indicators possess loading factor values above 0.70, and can therefore be considered valid.

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

Variabel Laten	Transformational Leadership	Employee Performance	Continuous Improvement
KP1		0,899	
KP2		0,882	
KP3		0,886	
KP4		0,892	
KP5		0,842	
KT1	0,895		
KT3	0,915		
KT4	0,913		
KT5	0,896		
PB1			0,910
PB2			0,903
PB3			0,940
PB4			0,903

The processing results indicate that all indicators have loading factor values above 0.70. Consequently, it can be concluded that all indicators for the variables of transformational leadership, continuous improvement, and employee performance meet the criteria for convergent validity and are suitable for use in further analysis..

b. Uji Descriminan validity

Tabel 2. Uji HTMT

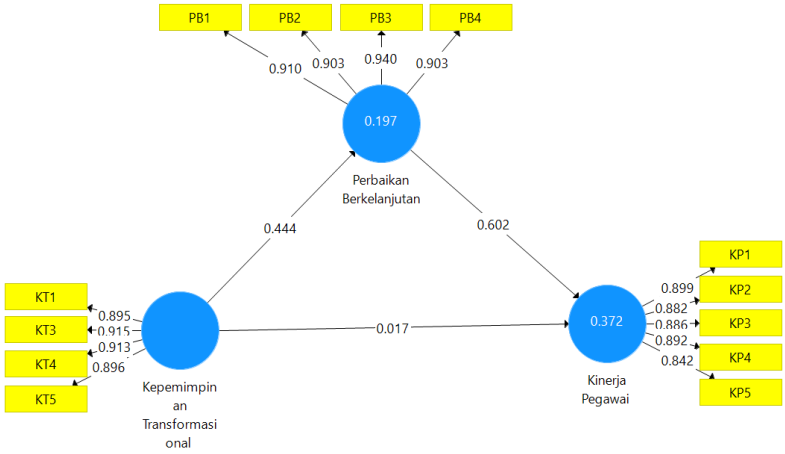
Variabel Laten	Transformational Leadership	Employee Performance
Transformational Leadership		
Employee Performance	0,299	
Continuous Improvement	0,475	0,642

Based on Table 2, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test results indicate that the correlation values are 0.299 between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance, 0.475 between Transformational Leadership and Continuous Improvement, and 0.642 between Employee Performance and Continuous Improvement. All HTMT values fall below the 0.90 threshold; therefore, it can be concluded that all variables meet the criteria for discriminant validity, and each construct is sufficiently distinct..

2). Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

a. Path Coefficient

Once the model evaluation is complete and it is determined that each construct meets the requirements for Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability, the next step is the evaluation of the structural model. This includes assessing model fit, Path Coefficients, and R^2. These tests are used to determine how well the model fits the data. Figure 1 below illustrates the Path Coefficients:



Gambar 1. Path Coefficient

Based on Figure 4.2, which is derived from several valid statements, the results of the path coefficient analysis between latent variables in the structural model are presented in the following path coefficient table.:

Tabel 3. *Path Coeffisient*

Variabel Laten	Employee Performance	Continuous Improvement
Transformational Leadership	0,017	0,444
Continuous Improvement	0,602	

Based on Table 3, the Path Coefficient results indicate that Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.017, and on Continuous Improvement, with a coefficient value of 0.444. Furthermore, Continuous Improvement has a positive influence on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.602. These results show that Continuous Improvement exerts the strongest direct influence on Employee Performance, whereas the direct influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance is relatively very small. However, determining the significance of these influences requires the results of the t-statistic and p-value tests..

3). Construct Validity and Reliability

Following the assessment of construct validity, the next step is to evaluate construct reliability using Composite Reliability (CR) for the blocks of indicators measuring each construct. A construct is considered reliable if its composite reliability value is greater than 0.6. According to Hair et al. (2016), the composite reliability coefficient should ideally be greater than 0.7, although a value of 0.6 remains acceptable. An internal consistency test is not strictly mandatory if construct validity has already been established; this is because a valid construct is inherently reliable, whereas a reliable construct is not necessarily valid (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Table 4. Construct Validity and Reliability

Variabel Laten	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*rho_A*	*Composite Reliability*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Transformational Leadership	0,926	0,932	0,948	0,819
Employee Performance	0,928	0,939	0,945	0,775
Continuous Improvement	0,935	0,939	0,953	0,836

Based on Table 4, the test results indicate that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.926 to 0.935, rho_A values between 0.932 and 0.939, and Composite Reliability values between 0.945 and 0.953. All these values exceed the 0.70 threshold, confirming their reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are 0.819 for Transformational Leadership, 0.775 for Employee Performance, and 0.836 for Continuous Improvement—all of which surpass the 0.50 threshold. Consequently, all constructs meet the criteria for convergent validity and reliability, rendering them suitable for use in the analysis. The results demonstrate that all indicators for the variables of Transformational Leadership, Employee Performance, and Continuous Improvement exhibit a high level of internal consistency. High reliability values indicate that the indicators within each construct are capable of measuring the respective variables consistently. Additionally, the AVE values, which meet the established standards, show that each construct can explain more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Thus, the measurement model is deemed valid and reliable, allowing for the subsequent testing of the structural model (inner model) to analyze the relationships between the variables in this study.

c. R-Square

The inner model (representing inner relations, the structural model, and substantive theory) describes the relationships between latent variables based on substantive theory. The structural model is evaluated using the R-square value for dependent constructs. The R^2 value can be used to assess whether exogenous variables exert a substantive influence on a given endogenous variable (Ghozali, 2018).

Tabel 5. *R Square*

Variabel Laten	***R Square***	***Adjusted R Square***
Employee Performance	0,755	0,750
Continuous Improvement	0,704	0,702

Based on Table 5, the test results indicate that the R-square value for the Employee Performance variable is 0.755, or 75.5%. This suggests that Transformational Leadership and

Continuous Improvement account for 75.5% of the variation in Employee Performance, while the remaining 24.5% is influenced by factors outside the research model. Furthermore, the R-square value for Continuous Improvement is 0.704, or 70.4%, meaning that Transformational Leadership explains 70.4% of the variation in Continuous Improvement, with the remaining 29.6% explained by other factors. The Adjusted R-square values are 0.750 and 0.702, respectively. Consequently, the research model possesses strong explanatory power regarding both endogenous variables. These results demonstrate that the structural model is effective in explaining the relationships between the research variables. A high R-square value indicates that Transformational Leadership and Continuous Improvement, taken together, account for a substantial portion of the variation in Employee Performance. Moreover, the small difference between the R-square and Adjusted R-square values suggests that the model's explanatory power remains relatively stable when accounting for the number of predictors. Thus, the research model is considered to have strong explanatory capacity and is suitable for proceeding to hypothesis testing to determine the significance of both direct and indirect effects among the variables.

4). Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted based on the results of the Inner Model (structural model) analysis, which includes R-square values, parameter coefficients, and t-statistics. To determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected, one examines the significance values between constructs, t-statistics, and p-values. Hypothesis testing for this study was performed using SmartPLS 3.0 software, with the relevant values obtained through bootstrapping. The criteria (rules of thumb) applied in this study are a t-statistic > 1.96, a significance level (p-value) of 0.05 (5%), and a positive beta coefficient. Figure 2 below illustrates the hypothesis testing process:

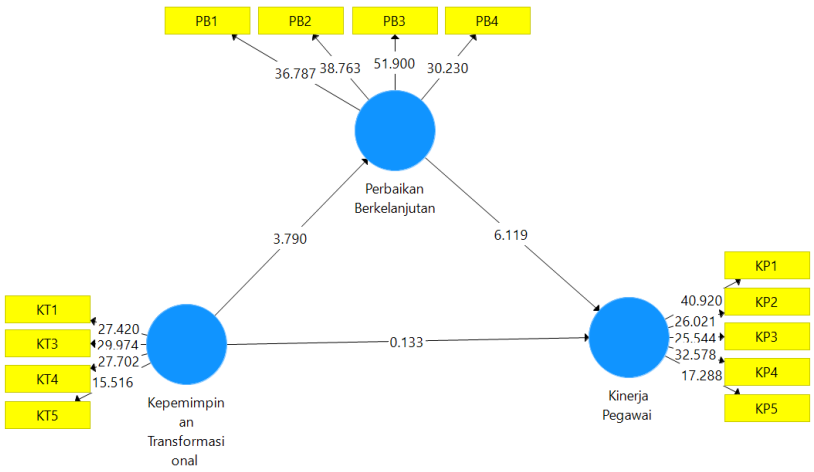


Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

As shown in Figure 2, to determine the structural relationships between latent variables, hypothesis testing must be conducted on the path coefficients by comparing the p-value against the alpha level (0.05) or by checking if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96. The p-values and t-statistics are obtained from the SmartPLS output using the bootstrapping method; the table below presents the direct effects.

Tabel 6. Pengaruh langsung

Variabel Laten	*Original Sample (O)*	*Sample Mean (M)*	*Standard Deviation (STDEV)*	*T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)*	*P Values*
Transformational Leadership -> Employee Performance	0,017	0,014	0,130	0,133	0,894

Transformational Leadership -> Continuous Improvement	0,444	0,445	0,117	3,790	0,000
Continuous Improvement -> Employee Performance	0,602	0,612	0,098	6,119	0,000

Based on Table 6, the results of testing the direct effects between variables using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS indicate two relationships that are positive and significant, and one relationship that is positive but not significant. The explanations for each hypothesis are as follows:

1) The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance (H1)

The first hypothesis (H1) states that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at the Rantau Prapat Class IB District Court. The test results show an Original Sample value of 0.017, a t-statistic of 0.133, and a p-value of 0.894. Since the t-statistic is < 1.96 and the p-value is > 0.05, H1 is rejected. These results indicate that Transformational Leadership has a positive, yet non-significant, effect on Employee Performance.

2) The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Continuous Improvement (H2)

The second hypothesis (H2) states that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Continuous Improvement at the Rantau Prapat Class IB District Court. The test results show an Original Sample value of 0.444, a t-statistic of 3.790, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the t-statistic is > 1.96 and the p-value is < 0.05, H2 is accepted. These results indicate that better implementation of Transformational Leadership leads to an increase in Continuous Improvement within the organization.

3) The Effect of Continuous Improvement on Employee Performance (H3)

The third hypothesis (H3) states that Continuous Improvement has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at the Rantau Prapat Class IB District Court. The test results show an Original Sample value of 0.602, a t-statistic of 6.119, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the t-statistic value is > 1.96 and the p-value is < 0.05, H3 is accepted. This result indicates that the better the implementation of Continuous Improvement, the higher the Employee Performance in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Furthermore, to determine the structural relationships between latent variables, hypothesis testing was conducted on the path coefficients between variables using the bootstrapping method; the table below presents the indirect effects:

Tabel 7. Pengaruh tidak langsung

Variabel Laten	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Transformational Leadership -> Continuous Improvement -> Employee Performance	0,267	0,272	0,084	3,192	0,002

4. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance through Continuous Improvement (H4)

The fourth hypothesis (H4) states that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance, with Continuous Improvement serving as an intervening variable at the Rantau Prapat District Court (Class IB). The test results show an Original Sample value of 0.267, a t-statistic of 3.192, and a p-value of 0.002. Since the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, H4 is accepted. These results indicate that Continuous Improvement significantly mediates the influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance. In other words, the more effectively Transformational Leadership fosters Continuous Improvement, the greater the improvement in Employee Performance.

Discussion

The results indicate that Transformational Leadership has a positive but insignificant effect on Employee Performance at Rantauprapat District Court, Class IB, with a coefficient value of 0.017 and a p-value of 0.894. This finding suggests that the implementation of Transformational Leadership has not been able to directly and significantly improve Employee Performance. This may indicate that improving employee performance depends not only on leadership style but also on the implementation of continuous work system improvement processes.

Furthermore, Transformational Leadership has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on Continuous Improvement, with a coefficient value of 0.444 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This result indicates that leadership capable of providing motivation, inspiration, and support to employees can encourage the development of an organizational culture of improvement. Leaders who provide direction and opportunities for employees to innovate have the potential to improve the effectiveness of task implementation and service delivery.

The results also show that Continuous Improvement has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.602 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This finding indicates that improvements in employee performance can be supported through regular evaluations, refinement of work procedures, competency development, and improvements in service quality. The more effectively Continuous Improvement is implemented, the greater the potential for enhancing employee effectiveness and productivity in carrying out their duties.

In addition, the indirect effect test indicates that Continuous Improvement significantly and positively mediates the effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.267 and a p-value of 0.002. This result indicates a pattern of full mediation, as the direct effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance is insignificant, whereas the indirect effect through Continuous Improvement is significant. Thus, Transformational Leadership can contribute to improved Employee Performance through the implementation of Continuous Improvement.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Continuous Improvement plays an important role in linking Transformational Leadership with Employee Performance. Therefore, Rantauprapat District Court, Class IB, needs to strengthen leadership practices that support work evaluation, innovation, competency development, and continuous service improvement. These efforts are expected to enhance employee performance and support the achievement of organizational objectives effectively and efficiently.

Research Implications

The findings of this study imply that improving Employee Performance at Rantauprapat District Court, Class IB, requires the implementation of Transformational Leadership that encourages Continuous Improvement. Although Transformational Leadership does not have a significant direct effect on Employee Performance, its effect becomes significant through Continuous Improvement as an intervening variable. Therefore, leaders need to strengthen employee motivation, communication, performance evaluation, competency development, and the continuous refinement of work procedures. These efforts are expected to improve the

effectiveness, productivity, and quality of employee services, thereby supporting the optimal achievement of organizational objectives.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted at Rantauprapat District Court, Class IB, it can be concluded that Transformational Leadership has a positive but insignificant effect on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.017 and a p-value of 0.894. Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Continuous Improvement, with a coefficient value of 0.444 and a p-value of less than 0.001. Furthermore, Continuous Improvement has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.602 and a p-value of less than 0.001. The mediation test results indicate that Continuous Improvement significantly mediates the effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.267 and a p-value of 0.002. Thus, Continuous Improvement plays an important role as an intervening variable in enhancing Employee Performance. Therefore, the implementation of Transformational Leadership needs to be accompanied by continuous evaluation, innovation, and work system improvement to support better employee performance and organizational service quality.

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