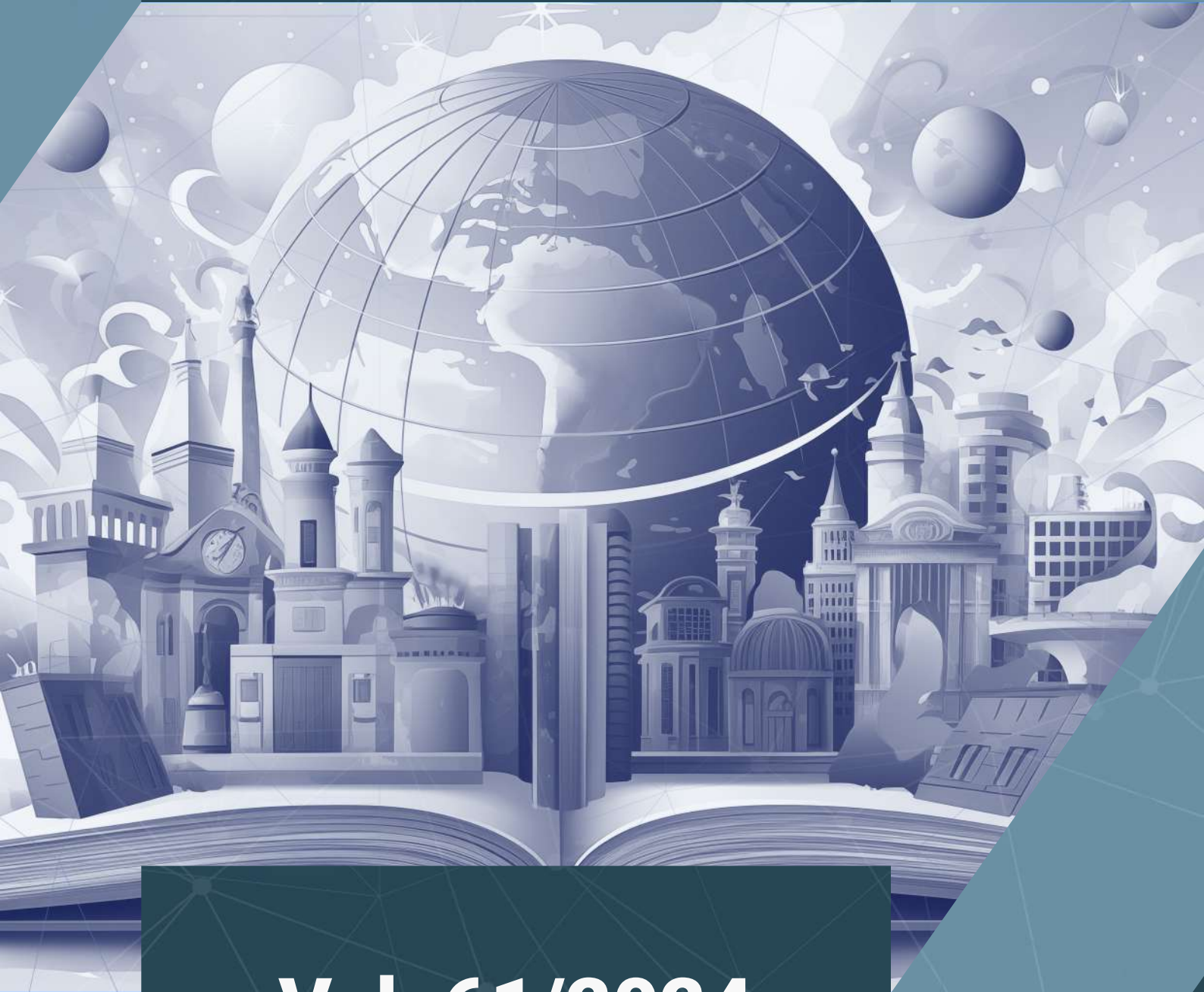




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The Importance of Transformational Leadership in Creating Work Engagement to Improve Employee Performance: A Case Study of a Private University in Jakarta

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Abstract. This study aims at answering the questions how the work engagement of employees is in each department, what strategy is employed to improve employee performance and what type of leadership is expected by the staff. This study employed a case study approach of a qualitative research design. In this study a semi- structured interview is used to understand how participants experienced the phenomenon. The results of this study prove that work engagement will not be owned by every employee if it is not led by a transformational leader who can provide motivation and guidance to his subordinates and make the work atmosphere comfortable, so that his subordinates will feel they have a sense of belonging, towards the organization. This research also proves that transformational leaders always trust their staff and encourage them to be creative and innovative. Thus the performance of employees will increase and the organization will be more advanced with its human resource assets. This study provides insight into a view to improve the employee performance through work engagement and the role of transformational leadership and offers recommendations for future research.

Keywords. Employee performance, transformational leadership, work engagement

Introduction

Employees are one of the most important assets for the company. With employee satisfaction with the company, it is possible for employees to provide the best for the company. Not only that, employees also have an important role in the company's business development, such as increasing the company's competitiveness, providing innovation, maintaining the company's image and increasing company revenue. Good human resource management is management that can improve employee performance so that it can realize company goals.

One of the determinants of the company's success is the performance and productivity of employees. Every organization or agency will always be efficient to achieve company goals. One way is to improve employee performance. The definition of performance is the work achieved by an employee in accordance with the authority and responsibility of each employee during a certain period (Simanjuntak et al., 2015). Performance is a very important part and the connection between performance and the success of a company is getting clearer, where when a company has employees who perform poorly, the company will automatically find it difficult to develop and compete with other companies.

Getting maximum employee performance is the hope of all companies. One of the things that companies need to know is what factors cause employee performance to increase and in accordance with company goals. There are three factors that affect the performance of employees according to Simanjuntak (2005), the first is the individual factor, namely the ability and skills to do work, the second factor is the organizational support factor. Support is provided in the form of organization, provision of work facilities and infrastructure, comfortable working environment, as well as working conditions and conditions. The third factor, namely management support, company performance and everyone's performance is also highly dependent on the managerial ability of the management or leaders, either by building a safe and harmonious work system and industrial relations, as well as by developing worker competencies, as well as by growing the motivation of all employees to work hard. Work optimally. According to Bakker et al. (2006), employees who have higher work engagement tend to be more creative, more productive and willing to work extra.

Many factors affect employee performance, one of the factors that is often studied by previous researchers is work stress experienced by employees. Several research results show that work stress affects the rise or fall of employee performance such as research conducted by (Nicholas, Obasi, & Anene, 2017) and (Masihabadi, Rajaei, Koloukh, & Parsian, 2015). Explained that work stress is a dangerous physical and emotional response that occurs when the demands of the work carried out are not in accordance with the capabilities of resources or the needs of workers so that it can cause poor health. Aamodt (2010) explains that stress is a psychological and physical reaction to certain life events or situations. As for the organizational level, stress causes fatigue, increased use of drugs and alcohol, decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and increased turnover. Stress at work that often occurs will cause employees to have poor work engagement at the company where they work. Employees who have poor work engagement with the company can harm the company because of a decrease in employee welfare and productivity (Shuck & Jr., 2014). Employees who do not have work engagement to the company where they work, will easily resign from the company and look for work in another company.

Work engagement on employees can be influenced by several factors. McBain (2007) mentions that several factors that can influence work engagement are (1) organizational culture factors or organizational culture factors, (2) leadership factors or leadership factors, and (3) work environment factors or working life factors. Of the three factors mentioned above, there is one factor that greatly influences employee work engagement, namely the leadership factor. Leadership is a process of influencing other people in an organization so that they can carry out their duties well in achieving their goals (Bangun, 2012). Jung & Avolio (2000) conducted a study on 194 working students, found that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership. Transformational leadership essentially has the following characteristics: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual attention (Yukl, 2005). Each type and style of leadership has advantages and disadvantages, so there is no single type or leadership style that is most successful to be applied in all situations and circumstances. But logically, leaders who do not put emphasis on and can embrace and provide high motivation to their subordinates make their subordinates comfortable, so that they will grow a feeling of respect, and feel that what they are doing is important and beneficial for the agency and itself.

Universities as higher education institutions where prospective future leaders study, need quality human resources, who have good work engagement, and leadership skills. This

study aims to answer the questions: 1) How is the work engagement of employees in each department, 2) What are the strategies to improve performance and 3) What kind of leadership is expected by the staff. The results of this study will make a major contribution to improving employee performance through work engagement and improving the quality of leadership in higher education. The results of this study will also be useful for those who have an interest in higher education.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leader who can stimulate and inspire subordinates to achieve extraordinary results and in the process develop their leadership capacity (Arnold and Loughlin, 2010). Transformational leaders help their subordinates grow and develop by responding to individual needs to align individual, leader, group, and company goals. Meanwhile, Cheung and Wong (2011) define transformational leadership as a leadership style that seeks to transform the values adopted by subordinates to support the vision and goals of the organization. With the transformational leadership style, it is hoped that values can be transformed and good relations between members of the organization can be built, so that a climate of mutual trust arises among members of the organization. This type of transformational leader is suitable for dynamic organizations, which emphasize change and innovation and compete fiercely with other companies in the international scope.

Other experts say that transformational leadership is a situation in which followers of a transformational leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader, and they are motivated to do more than expected (Yukl, 2013). Transformational leaders transform and motivate followers by making them more aware of the importance of the results of a job, encouraging them to prioritize the organization or team over self-interest, and activating their needs at a higher level (Yukl, 2013).

Another expert who also provides a definition related to transformational leadership is Colquitt et al. (2015), who explained that transformational leadership is leadership that involves inspiring all of its members to commit to a shared vision that gives meaning to the development of their own potential and issues from a new perspective. This transformational leadership style is able to increase employee creativity (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Shin and Zhou, 2003), can increase employee satisfaction and performance (Vecchio et al., 2008), be able to increase employee organizational affective commitment (Avolio et al., 2004; Whittington et al., 2004), able to improve the performance of tasks owned by employees and create good organizational citizenship behavior (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006; Wang et al., 2005), able to minimize employee absenteeism (Richardson and Vandenberg, 2005). Loon et al. (2012) examines the function of the transformational leadership style is to create the desire of employees to work better in the company.

Loon et al. (2012) is a researcher who examines the dimensions that determine transformational leadership style. He suggested that the dimensions that determine the transformational leadership style are idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavior, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Loon's definition of Idealized influence attributed is that transformational leaders demonstrate self-confidence and instill emotions (such as dignity, integrity, and respectability), self-centeredness, and respect for their followers, while idealized influence behavior is a goal-oriented transformational leader and they encourage job completion based on a collective sense

of beliefs, values, goals, and missions. Individualized consideration is transformational leader who recognizes the needs of their followers and provide them with personal guidance and development. Inspirational motivation is a transformational leader who is optimistic, visionary, and passionate about work. Lastly, Intellectual stimulation is a transformational leader who encourages innovation and creative problem solving.

There are several consequences arising from the transformational leadership style, namely increasing employee creativity (Cheung and Wong, 2011). In addition, the skills and work motivation possessed by employees will also increase (Zopiatis and Constanti, 2012) and employees will have more respect for leaders within the company (Krishnan, 2012). Meanwhile Michaelis et al. (2010) argue that the consequence of transformational leadership is an increase in employee creativity so that companies can further increase innovation in selling products or services.

Work Engagement

There are several researchers who put forward the notion of work engagement, namely Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) who say that work engagement is a positive feeling, motivation and work related to psychological states characterized by enthusiasm, dedication and appreciation. In this case, work engagement can be interpreted as a state of well-being or satisfaction in work which is characterized by high levels of energy. Other researchers who define work engagement as a motivational concept, where engaged employees feel compelled to struggle to face work challenges are Bakker and Leiter (2010). Therefore, work engagement can be interpreted as a positive state where working conditions are described by the presence of vigor (high energy levels, resilience, desire to try, and not giving up in the face of challenges), dedication (marked by feeling valued, enthusiastic, inspiring, valuable and challenging) and absorption (characterized by full concentration on a task), as stated by Schaufeli, et al. (2002). Meanwhile, Wellins and Concelman (2005) state that work engagement is a force that can motivate employees to be able to improve performance at a higher level, this energy is in the form of commitment to the organization, a sense of job ownership and pride, more effort (time and energy). Enthusiasm and interest.

Simon (in Kimberly, 2013) suggests that the factors that influence work engagement are: a. Motivation is a potential strength that exists in a human being, which can be developed by himself, or developed by a number of outside forces (Winardi, 2001), b. Social Support (Santrock, 2006) which suggests that social support is an information or response from other parties who are loved and loved, who value and respect and include a communication relationship and interdependent situations, c. Work environment that can affect employees in carrying out tasks such as temperature, humidity, ventilation, lighting, noise, cleanliness of the workplace and whether or not work equipment is adequate (Isyandi, 2004), d. Decision making is characterized by a computer-based interactive system that utilizes data and models to solve unstructured problems, e. Psychological well-being employees which is a condition where individuals have positive attitudes towards themselves and others, and can create and manage an environment that is compatible with their needs (Ryff, 1989).

There are 3 factors that are the main causes of work engagement, namely: 1. Job Resources (physical, social, and organizational aspects of work that allow individuals to reduce job demands and psychological and physiological costs associated with the job), 2. Salience of Job Resources (how important or useful are the work resources owned by individuals), 3. Personal Resources (characteristics possessed by employees such as personality, nature, age,

etc.) Engaged employees will have different personal characteristics from other employees because have higher extraversion and conscientiousness scores and lower neuroticism scores. Factors that affect work engagement are job resources, salience of job resources and personal resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

Employee performance

Robbins (2001) suggests that performance is the amount of effort an individual puts out on his job. Meanwhile, according to Bernandi & Russell 2001 (in Riani 2011) performance is a record resulting from the function of a particular job or activity over a certain period of time. Employee performance is defined as the ability of employees to perform certain skills (Sinambela et al, 2012). Withmore (1997 in Mahesa 2010) suggests that performance is an expression of a person's potential in fulfilling his responsibilities by setting certain standards. In other words, performance is one of the total collections of work that exists in workers, which can be evaluated. By looking at employee performance, we can find out how far the employee's ability to carry out the tasks assigned to him. Therefore, it is necessary to determine clear and measurable criteria that are used as a reference.

Factors that affect performance include (Sedarmayanti in Widodo, 2015:133) are attitudes and mentality (motivation, work discipline, and work ethic), education, skills, leadership management, income level, salary and health, social security, climate work, facilities and infrastructure, technology, achievement opportunities.

Meanwhile, according to Mangkunegara (2015:67) the factors that affect performance are:

- a. The ability factor and reality ability (knowledge and skills) means that employees with an IQ above the average (110-120) and adequate education will more easily achieve the expected performance.
- b. Motivational factors in the form of an employee's attitude in dealing with work situations. Motivation is a condition that moves employees to achieve work goals.
- c. Individual factors consisting of: a. Abilities and skills. An ability is a trait (innate or learned) that allows a person to do something mentally or physically. Skills are great compensation.
- d. Demographic factors consisting of gender, race, and culture meanwhile, in measuring employee performance, certain criteria have been determined. Schuler and Jackson 2004 (in Harsuko 2011) say that there are 3 types of criteria to measure employee performance, namely:
 - 1) Criteria based on the nature (personal characteristics of an employee), including loyalty, reliability, communication skills, and leadership skills,
 - 2) Criteria based on behavior focused on work that requires interpersonal relationships for example whether the HR is friendly or pleasant,
 - 3) Results-based criteria, which are increasingly popular and focus on what has been achieved or produced rather than how something was achieved or produced.

Other researchers who also argue about performance measurement criteria are Bernandin & Russell (2001) in Riani (2011) which state that performance measurement is determined by: a). Quantity of Work, b). Quality of Work, c). Job Knowledge, d). Creativeness, e). Cooperation, f). Dependability, g). Initiative, and h). Personal Qualities. Meanwhile, Prawiro Sentono (2008:126), suggests that performance can be assessed or measured by: a) Effectiveness, ie if group goals can be achieved with planned needs, b) Responsibility, is an inseparable part

or as a result of ownership of authority, c) Discipline, namely obeying applicable laws and regulations, d) Initiative, relating to the power of thought, creativity in the form of an idea related to the company's goals.

Another researcher who also suggests about performance measurement is Robbins (2007), which states that the aspects to measure employee performance individually are as follows: a). Quality of work as measured by the perfection of tasks on the skills and abilities of employees, b). The quantity of work which is the number / unit / cycle of activities produced, c). Timeliness, which is the level of activity completed at the beginning of the stated time, from the point of coordination with the output results and maximizing the time available for other activities, d). Effectiveness which is the level of use of organizational resources (manpower, money, technology, raw materials) is maximized with the aim of increasing the results of each unit in the use of resources, e). Independence which is the level of an employee who will be able to carry out his work functions, f). Work commitment which is a level where employees have a commitment to work with the agency and employee responsibilities to the office. Comparison in employee performance measurement indicators according to the researchers can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Work Performance Indicator

| Schuler & Jackson (2004) in Harsuko (2011) | Bernardin and Russell (2001) in Riani (2011) | Prawirosentono (2008:126) | Robbins (2007) |
|---|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| a. Criteria based on Personal Characteristics | a. Quantity of Work | a. Effectiveness | a. Work Quality |
| b. Behavior Based Criteria | b. Quality of Work | b. Responsibility | b. Work Quantity |
| | c. Job Knowledge | c. Discipline | c. Punctuality |
| | d. Creativeness | d. Initiatives | d. Effectiveness |
| | e. Cooperation | | e. Commitment |
| | f. Dependability | | |
| | g. Initiatives and Personal Qualities | | |

Source: Compiled by authors from various sources

Methodology

This is a qualitative research with a case study approach. Case study research method is one type of research that can answer several issues or objects of a phenomenon, especially in the branch of social science. For example in the branch of sociology, case research is used as a qualitative research design to evaluate events or situations in the real world (real situation). When viewed from the point of view, the case study is a qualitative research method based on human understanding and behavior based on differences in values, beliefs and scientific theory (Polit & Beck, 2004; Borbasi 2004). Hodgetts & Stolte (2012) explain that case studies of

individuals, groups, communities help to show the important things of concern, the social processes of society in concrete events, the experiences of stakeholders.

Yin (2002) defines a case study as a research process. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p.16). A research case study aims to examine research questions and problems, which cannot be separated between the phenomenon and the context in which the phenomenon occurs.

The case study approach, according to Yin (2002) is used by considering (a) the focus of the research is to answer the "how" and "why" questions; (b) researchers cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the research; (c) researchers want to cover contextual conditions because they believe they are relevant to what is being studied; unclear boundaries between phenomena and contexts. Hartley (2004) explains that case studies can be used in several contexts.

First, in a broader context, such as an organization, for example, when explaining job insecurity in cases of organizational setbacks, researchers can explore job insecurity, how employees experienced different things, how the organization takes actions to improve these conditions. So that case studies can be useful for exploring processes or behaviors that arise. Therefore, this research uses a case study approach because the context used is an organization, namely a private university in Jakarta with a case raised that is related to transformational leadership to implement work engagement at the university so that employee performance can increase. Gay and Airasian (in Emzir 2011) explain that observations, interviews, personal and official documents, photographs, recordings, pictures, and informal conversations are sources of qualitative data. The most commonly used sources are observations, interviews, and documents). The type of interview used is included in the in-depth interview category, which is more free in its implementation when compared to structured interviews, known as semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this type of interview is to find problems that are more open, where the parties invited to the interview are asked for their opinions and ideas. Sugiyono (2010) explains that in qualitative research, the sampling technique that is often used is purposive sampling.

In this study, 8 staff from 4 departments, namely the Academic Department, Human Resources Department, Marketing Department, and Program Department were interviewed to obtain data on how to implement work engagement in their respective departments, and what kind of leaders according to the staff could encourage staff to improve their performance. In addition, 4 managers were also interviewed with the aim of knowing more deeply whether they also apply work engagement to the staff they lead and what their strategies are in leading their subordinates so that they can improve their performance. Interviews with each informant were carried out between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

The data analysis method used is the Miles and Huberman model data analysis method (Sugiyono, 2010), namely the activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and take place continuously until complete, so that the data is saturated. Miles and Huberman explained that the analysis phase in qualitative research generally starts from data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Sugiyono (2010:249) explains that data reduction is a sensitive thinking process that requires intelligence and a high breadth and depth of insight. After the data is reduced, the next step is to present the data. In qualitative research, data presentation can be done in the form of brief descriptions, relationships between categories, flowcharts, and the like. The form of data presentation chosen is in the form

of a table. Sugiyono (2010) explains that the initial conclusions put forward are still temporary, and will change if no strong evidence is found to support the next stage of data collection. However, if the conclusions raised at an early stage are supported by valid and consistent evidence, then the conclusions put forward are credible conclusions.

Result and Discussion

From interviews with staff, information was obtained that there are only 2 departments (Academic and HR Departments) which indicate that they are led by transformational leaders, namely leaders who create a pleasant working atmosphere so that employees are not stressed even though there is quite a lot of work and can create understanding at the same time. to their subordinates with work engagement. In addition, a supportive work environment such as a Comfortable, clean, quiet workspace, their leaders can also motivate and inspire their subordinates (Loon et al., 2015). Transformational leaders also always provide guidance if employees encounter obstacles or difficulties in their work, and not only scold their subordinates, so as to improve employee performance (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006; Wang et al., 2005), but guide their subordinates and involve them in solving problems.

“I am grateful for having a leader who has a very good leadership spirit. He is a leader who always motivates both collectively, when there are meetings or briefings, or individually when I or my friends are having family or personal problems. I feel very comfortable working in this department after being led by Mr. X, so I work harder and feel ashamed if I often don't attend. (RE-Academic Staff)

“The atmosphere at my workplace is quite comfortable, the workspace is clean, the air conditioner can also function properly, it is clean and there is air freshener. In addition to a very supportive work environment, leadership also plays a very important role in creating a conducive work atmosphere. The leader in my department understands his men very well. Especially during the pandemic, each staff has problems in their families. I am grateful to have a leader who understands the condition of his staff, and always motivates me so that I am still excited to work.” (UK-Human Resources Staff)

Meanwhile, staff from the other 2 departments said that their leaders rarely provided motivation, and did not want to know about the difficulties faced by their subordinates. Their leaders also do not want to provide input or solutions if there are problems, but rather scold their subordinates and immediately give sanctions. These two leaders have never tried to create work engagement for their subordinates.

“My leader never motivates his subordinates. If there are staff who encounter problems in their work, the leadership only calls and scolds them but does not provide solutions on how to solve them. Working with situations like this makes me often stressed, so I don't have the enthusiasm to come to work. Moreover, I work in the marketing department where the target is to get as many students as possible. Leaders should provide input on strategies that must be carried out during this pandemic in order to keep getting students” (RG-Marketing Staff)

“My manager never motivates his subordinates, especially during a pandemic like now where every employee must have problems in his family. Leaders also never build a solid work team. Each employee works individually. With a work system like this, employees get stressed quickly, there is no comfort in the workplace which ultimately makes us not have a sense of belonging to the institution.” (HI- Program Staff)

The four staff also said that the leader they expect is a leader who always motivates his subordinates, who can transmit values so that his subordinates will have the awareness to work well and have shame if they do not complete the tasks entrusted to them (Yukl, 2003). They also hope that leaders will give them the freedom to be creative and innovate and appreciate the work of their subordinates more as stated by Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009) and Shin and Zhou (2003).

Meanwhile, of the four managers interviewed, only 2 showed a transformational leadership style, namely the Academic Manager and the Human Resources Manager. This is in accordance with what their staff said. Meanwhile, the factors that become performance measures for Academic and Human Resources Managers are Quality of Work, Quantity of Work as stated by Bernardin & Russell (2001) in Riani (2011) and Robbins (2007), effectiveness as stated by Prawirosentono (2008:126) and Robbins (2007), and Personal Qualities as stated by Bernardin & Russell (2001) in Riani (2011) and Schuler and Jackson (2004) in Harsuko (2011). Meanwhile, for the Marketing Manager and Program Manager, only Quality of Work and Quantity of Work are important factors to measure the performance of subordinates. For the last 2 managers, personal qualities are not an important factor. As long as they can work to meet the targets set, it means that their performance is considered good, and those who do not reach the set targets will be given a warning and if they still repeat their mistakes will be punished.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the results of this study prove that work engagement will not be owned by every employee if it is not led by a transformational leader who can provide motivation and guidance to his subordinates and make the work atmosphere comfortable, so that his subordinates will feel they have a sense of belonging towards the organization. This research also proves that transformational leaders always trust their staff and encourage them to be creative and innovative. Thus the performance of employees will increase and the organization will be more advanced with its human resource assets. This research is limited to researching only transformational leadership. Therefore, for future research, researchers suggest that a comparison be made between transformational leadership and transactional leadership in creating work engagement to improve employee performance with different approaches.

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