

## The Role of Transformational Leadership, Work Discipline, and Motivation in Improving Employee Performance at SMP Islam Gondanglegi, Malang Regency

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### Abstract

**Introduction/Main Objectives:** This study examines the simultaneous influence of transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation on employee performance in an Islamic junior high school context. Human resource quality is a key determinant of educational institution success, yet many schools face challenges in optimizing employee performance.

**Background Problems:** Educational institutions often struggle with inconsistent work discipline, varying motivation levels, and leadership practices that do not fully encourage employee engagement. This research asks: Do transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation simultaneously affect employee performance at SMP Islam Gondanglegi?

**Research Methods:** A quantitative survey method was used with saturated sampling of all 35 employees (teaching and non-teaching staff) at SMP Islam Gondanglegi, Malang Regency. Data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) and analyzed using multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) with SPSS.

**Finding/Results:** The results indicate that transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation each have a positive and significant partial effect on employee performance (t-count > t-table,  $p < 0.05$ ). Simultaneously, the three variables explain 72.4% of the variance in employee performance (F-count = 27.84,  $p < 0.001$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.724$ ).

**Conclusion:** Effective transformational leadership, strong work discipline, and continuous motivation significantly improve employee performance in social-based educational institutions. School management should implement leadership strategies and policies that foster engagement and professional development.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership, work discipline, work motivation, employee performance, educational management.



## Introduction

Human resources (HR) are the primary driving force behind organizational success, including in educational institutions. HR encompasses individuals who contribute energy, ideas, skills, and creativity to achieve organizational goals (Sariningrum & Febrian, 2023). Effective HR management is crucial for improving organizational performance. In schools, success is not only determined by facilities but also by the quality and performance of educators and staff (Zahro & Hastuti, 2024). School employees—both teaching and non-teaching—collaborate to support educational activities. Their performance is influenced by leadership style, work discipline, and work motivation (Askiyanto et al., 2023; Manuk et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership, work discipline, and motivation positively affect employee performance by increasing commitment, responsibility, and productivity (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Robbins & Judge, 2019). However, most research has focused on the corporate sector, leaving a gap regarding social-based or non-profit educational institutions, which often face financial limitations. SMP Islam Gondanglegi is a free junior high school in Malang Regency serving underprivileged families. It strives to maintain educational quality through strong discipline, a religious environment, and staff dedication. Among 25 junior high schools in Gondanglegi District, competition demands continuous HR performance improvement.

This study offers novelty by analyzing the simultaneous influence of transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation on employee performance in a social-based Islamic junior high school. It aims to contribute to HR management in education and provide practical insights for school management.

## Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population consisted of all 35 employees (teaching and non-teaching staff) at SMP Islam Gondanglegi, Malang Regency. Saturated sampling was used, meaning the entire population became the sample. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed from indicators of each variable, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was tested for validity (Pearson correlation) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70). Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using SPSS. Hypothesis testing included t-test (partial effect), F-test (simultaneous effect), and coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The regression equation is:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = employee performance,  $X_1$  = transformational leadership,  $X_2$  = work discipline,  $X_3$  = work motivation.

## Result

### Descriptive Statistics

Respondents' perceptions of each variable were generally positive. For transformational leadership, the mean for "Agree" category was 14.27, and "Strongly Agree" was 8.82. Work discipline had means of 15.00 (Agree) and 13.14 (Strongly Agree). Work motivation had means of 19.14 (Agree) and 8.86 (Strongly Agree). Employee performance had means of 17.00 (Agree) and 7.86 (Strongly Agree). No respondents selected "Disagree" for any variable.

## Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression yielded the following equation:

$$Y = 3.42 + 0.35X_1 + 0.41X_2 + 0.38X_3$$

All independent variables had positive coefficients. The t-test results showed:

- Transformational leadership: t-count = 3.89, p = 0.001
- Work discipline: t-count = 4.52, p < 0.001
- Work motivation: t-count = 4.10, p < 0.001

All t-count values exceeded t-table (2.032), indicating significant partial effects. The F-test gave F-count = 27.84 (p < 0.001), exceeding F-table (2.92), confirming simultaneous significance. Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.724, meaning 72.4% of employee performance variance is explained by the three independent variables.

## Discussion

The positive and significant influence of transformational leadership on employee performance aligns with Bass and Avolio (1994) and Manuk et al. (2024), who found that inspiring and motivating leadership enhances employee commitment and effectiveness. Work discipline's strong effect supports Tanjung and Sunarto (2022), where disciplined employees showed higher efficiency and adherence to rules. Work motivation's significant role corroborates Askiyanto et al. (2023) and Luthans and Doh (2018), indicating motivated employees are more engaged and productive. The high R<sup>2</sup> (72.4%) suggests these three factors collectively drive performance in social-based educational institutions, where financial incentives may be limited. This finding extends previous corporate-focused research (Zahro & Hastuti, 2024; Sariningrum & Febrian, 2023) to the non-profit school context. The results also align with Robbins and Judge (2019) that leadership, discipline, and motivation form a synergistic triad for organizational behavior.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation positively and significantly influence employee performance both partially and simultaneously at SMP Islam Gondanglegi. The three variables explain 72.4% of performance variance, underscoring their critical role in social-based educational institutions. School management should strengthen transformational leadership practices, enforce work discipline consistently, and sustain motivation through recognition and professional development. Limitations include the single-school sample and cross-sectional design; future research should expand to multiple institutions and incorporate longitudinal or qualitative approaches. Additionally, exploring mediating variables such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment is recommended.

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