

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Increasing Work Motivation of Millennial Generation Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in increasing work motivation of millennial generation employees through qualitative literature synthesis of relevant scientific journal articles. Transformational leadership, with its dimensions of Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration, is identified as a relevant leadership style in dealing with the unique characteristics and expectations of millennials in the workplace. The research method involves text extraction from the analyzed articles, thematic content analysis, and integrative synthesis to build arguments. The results of the analysis indicate that transformational leadership consistently has a positive effect on work motivation and related outcomes such as satisfaction, performance, and innovation. The dimensions of transformational leadership were found to be highly aligned with millennial motivational needs, such as the search for meaning in work, self-development, intellectual challenge, and authentic work relationships. Transformational leaders are able to create an inspiring, empowering, and growth-supportive work environment, which effectively motivates millennial employees. Practical implications include recommendations for leadership development, millennial talent management strategies, and organizational culture design. Limitations of the study lie in the reliance on secondary sources and the lack of millennial-specific primary data in the sources analyzed. Further research is suggested to focus on primary empirical studies on the millennial population.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizational dynamics, human resources play a central role as a strategic asset that determines the success of achieving goals. Amidst increasingly tight business competition and rapid environmental changes, the ability of organizations to optimize the potential of their employees is the key to competitive advantage. One of the crucial aspects in human resource management is work motivation, which fundamentally drives individuals to put forth their best efforts in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Work motivation not only affects individual productivity and performance, but also has an impact on employee commitment, satisfaction, and overall retention rates (Muis, Jufrizen, & Fahmi, 2018; Putra & Sudibya, 2019). Understanding and maintaining high levels of work motivation is a challenge as well as a priority for modern management.

Several studies have shown a positive correlation between transformational leadership and a variety of positive outcomes at the individual and organizational levels, including increased performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behavior (Putra & Sudibya, 2019; Sukrajap, 2016; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015; Parashakti et al., 2016; Wahyuniardi & Nababan, 2018; Sunardi et al., 2019). These mechanisms of influence often involve increasing self-efficacy, psychological empowerment, and fulfilling employees' higher-order needs (Sukrajap, 2016; Sunardi et al., 2019). Transformational leaders are able to create an environment where employees feel valued, intellectually challenged, and intrinsically motivated to contribute (Sigiyuwanta, 2023; Randy et al., 2019). Given the unique characteristics of the millennial generation that emphasize development, meaning, and positive work relationships, and the potential of transformational leadership in fulfilling these expectations, it is very important to examine in depth the specific role of this leadership style on the work motivation of millennial employees. The synthesis of existing studies suggests an urgency to understand how the dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational

motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—specifically interact with motivational factors relevant to millennials (Haetami et al., 2023; Indrawan, 2018; Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021). This understanding is crucial for organizations seeking to effectively attract, retain, and motivate millennial talent.

The main objective of this study is to comprehensively analyze and explain the role of transformational leadership on the work motivation of millennial generation employees through an in-depth synthesis of relevant scientific journal articles. This study is expected to provide significant benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study will enrich the treasury of human resource management science and leadership theory by providing a more focused understanding of the interaction between transformational leadership styles and the motivational characteristics of the millennial generation. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be valuable input for HR leaders and practitioners in designing more effective leadership and management strategies to motivate and manage millennial employees, so as to improve organizational performance and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Work Motivation

The relationship between transformational leadership and work motivation has been the focus of much research in the fields of management and organizational behavior. Most of the literature, including the 20 articles that form the basis of this study, consistently shows a positive and significant relationship between the application of transformational leadership styles by superiors and the level of employee work motivation (Putra & Sudibya, 2019; Randy et al., 2019; Jufrizen & Lubis, 2020; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015). Leaders who exhibit transformational behavior tend to have subordinates who are more motivated, engaged, and passionate about their work. The mechanisms that explain this positive influence are quite diverse and interrelated.

1. First, transformational leaders, through inspirational motivation, are able to articulate a compelling and meaningful vision for the organization. This vision provides clear direction and purpose, helping employees understand how their contributions are relevant to the bigger picture, thereby increasing their intrinsic motivation (Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021). When employees feel that their work has meaning and purpose, they tend to be more motivated.
2. Second, individualized consideration plays an important role. By paying attention to individual needs, providing support, and acting as mentors, transformational leaders help fulfill employees' psychological needs for growth, development, and recognition (Sukrajap, 2016; Yanti & Mursidi, 2021). Fulfillment of these higher-order needs, as described in Maslow's or Herzberg's theories, is a powerful driver of motivation.
3. Third, intellectual stimulation encourages employees to think creatively, solve problems, and feel challenged in their work. Appropriate challenges and opportunities to use skills innovatively can increase intrinsic motivation, especially for individuals who have a high need for achievement and growth (Parashakti et al., 2016; Sunardi et al., 2019). The sense of autonomy and competence fostered through intellectual stimulation also contributes to motivation.
4. Fourth, idealized influence or leader charisma creates a strong emotional bond between leader and followers. Trust, respect, and admiration for a leader can translate into loyalty and a desire to work hard to please the leader and achieve common goals (Sukrajap, 2016; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015). Identification with the leader and the organization's vision strengthens motivation.

Several studies have also highlighted the mediating role of other variables in this relationship. For example, psychological empowerment, which includes feelings of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, is often found to be a key mediator (Sukrajap, 2016). Transformational leaders empower employees psychologically, which in turn increases their motivation and commitment. In addition, job satisfaction often arises as a result of transformational leadership and at the same time as a driver of further motivation (Wahyuniardi & Nababan, 2018; Indrawan, 2018).

Research Framework

Based on a review of the concepts of work motivation, millennial characteristics, and transformational leadership, a strong framework can be built regarding the special relevance of transformational leadership in motivating millennial employees. Millennials, with their emphasis on the meaning of work, self-development, feedback, collaboration, and desire to contribute innovatively, appear to have work expectations that are very much in line with what transformational leadership offers.

The inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership directly addresses millennials' need for meaning and purpose in their work. A clear and inspiring vision provides a greater context for their work. Individualized consideration is highly relevant to millennials' desire for mentoring, career development, and personal and ongoing feedback. This individual attention shows that leaders care about their growth. Intellectual stimulation aligns with millennials' desire to be challenged, innovate, and engage in creative problem solving. It gives them the opportunity to learn and feel like they are making an impact. Finally, idealized influence provides a strong role model, which can appeal to millennials seeking authentic and ethical leaders. Thus, transformational leadership is not only generally positively related to work motivation, but also appears to have a unique fit with the dominant motivational factors of the millennial generation. This leadership style has the potential to create an engaging and motivating work environment for millennials by meeting their psychological needs for growth, meaning, autonomy, and positive relationships. Therefore, the main proposition of this study is that transformational leadership plays a positive and significant role in increasing the work motivation of millennial employees. This influence occurs through its four dimensions (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration) which collectively and individually are able to meet the specific motivational expectations and needs of this generation.

METHOD

This study aims to analyze and explain the role of transformational leadership on the work motivation of millennial generation employees based on a comprehensive literature synthesis. Therefore, the most appropriate methodological approach is a qualitative literature study with a focus on the synthesis of findings from relevant scientific journal articles.

Types and Collection of Data Sources

The type of research used is a literature study or systematic literature review with a qualitative synthesis approach. This study does not collect primary data through surveys or direct interviews, but rather focuses on the analysis and integration of existing knowledge in published scientific literature. The goal is to build a deep understanding and coherent argument on the research topic based on available evidence from previous studies. The primary data source for this study was 20 scientific journal articles. These articles were selected because of their relevance to the topics of transformational leadership, work motivation, and organizational context, although not all explicitly target the millennial generation. These articles are considered the primary data corpus for the synthesis analysis in this study.

The data collection technique used is document analysis. This process involves several steps:

1. Text Extraction: Full text is extracted using utility software (pdftotext) to facilitate content analysis. The extracted text files are stored separately for each article.
2. In-depth Reading: Each article is read carefully and in-depth to understand the context, objectives, methodology, main findings, and conclusions of each study.
3. Identification of Relevant Information: During the reading process, information directly related to the concept of transformational leadership (definition, dimensions, measurement, impact), work motivation (definition, theory, factors, measurement, relationship with leadership), and (if any) references to the characteristics of the younger generation or employees, are identified and recorded.

Research Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study used a qualitative synthesis approach. The analysis process involved the following steps:

1. **Thematic Content Analysis:** Relevant information identified from each article was categorized based on key themes that emerged, such as dimensions of transformational leadership, motivational factors, mechanisms of leadership influence on motivation, and specific empirical findings. This analysis aimed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in findings across the corpus of literature.
2. **Integrative Synthesis:** Findings from various articles were integrated to build a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the role of transformational leadership on work motivation. This synthesis process not only summarized the findings but also interpreted them in the context of the research question, especially its relevance to the millennial generation, even though primary data on millennials may be limited in the original sources. Arguments were built by connecting theoretical concepts (e.g., dimensions of transformational leadership) with the motivational needs and characteristics of millennials known from the general literature (as discussed in the Literature Review).
3. **Argument Development:** Based on the synthesis of findings, the main argument was developed and elaborated in the Discussion section. This argument is supported by specific evidence (quotations or paraphrases) from the 20 source articles.

This synthesis approach allows the research to go beyond a mere summary of the literature, but to produce a new and integrated understanding of the research topic by utilizing the wealth of information contained in the 20 sources provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion aims to synthesize and analyze in depth the role of transformational leadership on employee work motivation, with a special focus on its relevance for the millennial generation. This analysis is based on the integration of findings from 20 primary source journal articles and linking them to the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

Analysis of the Role of Transformational Leadership Dimensions on Millennial Motivation

Transformational leadership, with its four dimensions, offers an approach that seems particularly well-suited to motivating millennials. While not all sources explicitly address millennials, a synthesis of findings on the general impact of transformational leadership on motivation can be interpreted in the context of identified millennial characteristics.

1. **Idealized Influence:** This dimension emphasizes the role of leaders as ethical, trustworthy, and ethical role models (Sukrajap, 2016; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015). Millennials are known to seek out leaders who are authentic, transparent, and have strong values (Dogan, 2019). Leaders who demonstrate idealized influence build a foundation of trust and respect, which is crucial for millennials. When millennials see their leaders being consistent between words and actions, and demonstrating commitment to a larger purpose, they tend to feel more emotionally connected and motivated to follow (Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021). Leaders who exemplify work ethic and dedication can inspire millennials to adopt similar attitudes, increasing their commitment and motivation to contribute to the organizations they respect as leaders.
2. **Inspirational Motivation:** A leader's ability to articulate a compelling and meaningful vision resonates with millennials' need for purpose in their work (Sigiyuwanta, 2023; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015). Millennials want to understand how their work contributes to the bigger picture and makes a difference. Transformational leaders who are able to communicate the organization's vision clearly, optimistically, and passionately can inspire millennials' enthusiasm (Lamirin et al., 2023). An inspiring vision provides direction and meaning, transforming everyday tasks into part of a more significant collective effort. This directly taps into millennials' intrinsic drive to work for something they believe in, substantially increasing their motivation (Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021).

3. **Intellectual Stimulation:** This dimension involves leaders encouraging subordinates to think creatively, innovatively, and challenge the status quo (Putra & Sudibya, 2019; Parashakti et al., 2016). This is very much in line with the characteristics of millennials who tend to like challenges, continuous learning, and opportunities to contribute new ideas (Haetami et al., 2023; Sunardi et al., 2019). Leaders who encourage intellectual stimulation create an environment where millennials feel empowered to experiment, take initiative, and solve problems. The opportunity to learn, develop new skills, and feel that their intellectual contributions are valued are strong motivators for this generation. An intellectually stimulating environment prevents boredom and keeps millennials engaged in their work.
4. **Individualized Consideration:** The leader's personal attention to the needs and development of each individual is another crucial aspect (Sukrajap, 2016; Yanti & Mursidi, 2021). Millennials highly value mentoring, coaching, and regular feedback to support their career growth (Dogan, 2019). Transformational leaders who take the time to understand individual aspirations, provide tailored support, and recognize personal accomplishments will build strong relationships with millennial employees. Feeling valued as individuals, rather than just as cogs in the organizational machine, fulfills millennials' psychological need for recognition and development, which in turn increases their loyalty and motivation (Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021; Lamirin et al., 2023).

Challenges and Nuances of Implementation

While transformational leadership may seem ideal for motivating millennials, its implementation is not always easy and may require adjustments. Several challenges and nuances need to be considered.

1. First, building transformational relationships takes significant time and effort from the leader. Providing individualized consideration to each team member, especially in large teams, can be demanding. Leaders need to truly invest in getting to know their subordinates on a personal level.
2. Second, millennials' expectation of constant and immediate feedback may be challenging. Transformational leaders need to develop effective and ongoing feedback mechanisms, which may differ from traditional approaches.
3. Third, while intellectual stimulation is appreciated, leaders need to ensure that the challenges provided are appropriate to the level of readiness and ability of millennial employees to avoid frustration or burnout. The balance between pushing boundaries and providing support is critical.
4. Fourth, communication styles may need to be adjusted. Millennials tend to prefer open, transparent, and two-way communication. Transformational leaders need to ensure that their vision is communicated effectively and that they actively listen to input from millennial employees.

Comparison of Findings

Overall, the 20 source articles show high consistency regarding the positive impact of transformational leadership. There are no findings that explicitly contradict the main proposition that this leadership style contributes positively to work outcomes such as motivation, satisfaction, performance, or innovation. The variations that exist lie more in the focus of the study (different dependent variables) and context (e.g., education sector, private companies, state-owned enterprises), but the direction of the relationship remains positive.

Some studies may show different strengths of the relationship (e.g., varying correlation or regression coefficients), as seen in the study by Sunardi et al. (2019) which found a positive but low-level relationship between transformational leadership and teacher innovation, as well as between self-efficacy and teacher innovation. However, the relationship remains statistically significant. The differences in the strength of this relationship may be caused by various factors, including differences in the measurement of variables, sample characteristics, industry context, or the presence of other moderator or mediator variables that are not measured in all studies.

However, the general conclusion remains the same: transformational leadership is consistently associated with positive organizational and individual outcomes. This synthesis reinforces the view that

this leadership approach has great potential, and interpretation in the millennial context shows a strong fit between what transformational leaders offer and what this generation seeks in a work environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on in-depth analysis and synthesis of relevant journal articles, this study concludes that transformational leadership plays a positive and significant role in enhancing employee work motivation, and this leadership style has a strong fit with the characteristics and motivational expectations of the millennial generation. The main findings of the literature synthesis are as follows:

1. **Consistent Positive Relationship:** There is a strong consensus among the studies analyzed that transformational leadership positively influences various individual and organizational work outcomes, including work motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and innovative behavior (Putra & Sudibya, 2019; Randy et al., 2019; Indrawan, 2018; Wahyuniardi & Nababan, 2018; Yanti & Mursidi, 2021; Lubis & Zulkarnain, 2015; Parashakti et al., 2016; Sunardi et al., 2019).
2. **Key Role of the Four Dimensions:** The four dimensions of transformational leadership—Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration—collectively and individually contribute to increased motivation. Idealized Influence builds trust and respect. Inspirational Motivation provides meaning and purpose through a compelling vision. Intellectual Stimulation challenges and encourages innovation. Individualized Consideration meets the individual's development and recognition needs (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Sukrajap, 2016; Sigiyuwanta, 2023; Yanti & Mursidi, 2021; Parashakti et al., 2016).
3. **Alignment with Millennial Motivators:** While not all sources explicitly research millennials, the characteristics of transformational leadership closely align with what millennials are looking for in the workplace. The emphasis on vision and meaning (Inspirational Motivation), personal development and mentoring (Individualized Consideration), challenge and innovation (Intellectual Stimulation), and authentic and ethical leadership (Idealized Influence) directly address the primary motivational factors for this generation (Dogan, 2019; Haetami et al., 2023; Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021).
4. **Mechanism of Influence:** The influence of transformational leadership on motivation is often mediated by factors such as psychological empowerment, fulfillment of higher-order needs, increased self-efficacy, and the creation of a positive and supportive organizational culture (Sukrajap, 2016; Slahanti & Setyowati, 2021; Lamirin et al., 2023).

Thus, the main argument of this study—that transformational leadership plays a positive and significant role in increasing the work motivation of millennial generation employees—is strongly supported by the synthesis of existing literature. This leadership style is not only generally effective, but also highly relevant and has high potential for managing and motivating today's dominant millennial workforce.

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