Transformational Leadership and Lecturers' Work Engagement: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

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Abstract— This study aims to investigate the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement in which self-efficacy acts as a mediating variable. This study applies a quantitative method with a survey design approach using inferential analysis. A set of questionnaires with a Likert scale is used as the main data collection tool. LISREL 8.80 is used for statistical software. 220 lecturers of state polytechnics in west Kalimantan are the samples of this research. This study finds that transformational leadership has positive and significant impacts on self-efficacy and work engagement. This study also finds that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

Keywords— transformational leadership, self-efficacy, work engagement, lecturers, polytechnic.

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1 INTRODUCTION

LOW level of work engagement among many lecturers now becomes a serious issue in many higher education institutions in Indonesia, especially in state polytechnics in West Kalimantan province. The reluctance of the lecturers in finding and implementing new ways of teaching their students and conducting research seems to become one of the main barriers for them to make any innovations. The lecturers do not show extra efforts to devote and invest their energy into their work. This condition, of course, impacts their performances and commitments to contribute well to their institutions. This is in line with the finding of a survey conducted by Gallup Study in 2008 as quoted by Management Study Guide [1]. The finding indicates that disengaged employees believe that they will not have an impact on their organizations since they believe that their work does not contribute to their organizations' growth. The finding of the survey of the Gallup Study also indicates that disengaged employees have other several effects on the organizations. Disengaged employees seem to avoid extra tasks given by their superiors. They appear to have lower motivation to fulfill organizations' vision and have a reluctance to contribute innovations in the workplace. Disengaged employees will disturb the productivity and performance of their organizations.

In the state polytechnics in west Kalimantan, poor work engagement levels of many lecturers can be identified from their low commitment in which they do not try to provide extra efforts on their professional tasks. It can be seen from their punctuality in starting their class. Many of them do not start their teaching on schedule. Besides, their level of attendance in class is unsatisfactory. In some study programs in one of the state polytechnics, the level of lecturers' attendance is below 90%. This, of course, disturbs the goal of the polytechnics in providing better service to their students as their main costumers.

This condition needs serious attention from the leaders of

the polytechnics. The leaders need to play their leadership to make the lecturers have higher work engagement. In this situation, the leaders need to adopt a transformational leadership style to bring the lecturers to have higher motivation in conducting their professional tasks. The roles of the leaders of the polytechnics are needed to make the lecturers engaged in their work. In many studies, transformational leadership style is believed to be able to increase the level of employees' work engagement [2], [3], [4], [5] and other study findings.

Beside playing their roles as transformational leaders, the leaders of the polytechnics also need to pay attention to their lecturers' self-efficacy in performing their professional tasks since the lecturers of the polytechnics seem to show a low level of self-efficacy. It is indicated that they do not have the confidence to perform well in their work. One of the reasons why they have a low level of self-efficacy is that they are not given opportunities to participate in staff development programs or training related to their main duties. The lack of opportunities makes the lecturers find it hard to make better achievements. They also tend to avoid any tasks given to them if they find that the tasks are beyond their competences. As a result, the lecturers do not try to push themselves to become more engaged in their work.

Leaders' improving their lecturers' self-efficacy is essential. There have been many studies that find that the importance of employees' self-efficacy in increasing their work engagement. Cherian and Jacob [6] find that employees' self-efficacy impacts on their performances. Bandura [7] also states that if an employee has a high level of self-efficacy he or she might have the ability to withstand pressure, frustration, and other work problems being faced, and have more concentration on the workplace. Many studies [8], [9], [10], [11], [12] find that there is a clear and positive relationship between employees' self-efficacy and their work engagement.

Based on the description above, the objectives of this study

are as follows:

1. To investigate the impact of transformational leadership on self- efficacy of the lecturers of state polytechnics of West Kalimantan.
2. To investigate the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement of the lecturers of state polytechnics of West Kalimantan.
3. To investigate the impact of lecturers' self-efficacy on work engagement of the lecturers of state polytechnics of West Kalimantan.
4. To investigate whether self-efficacy mediates the impact of transformational leadership on lecturers' work engagement of the lecturers of state polytechnics of West Kalimantan.

The finding of this study is hoped to enrich the body of literature in public organization study and to contribute to the study of human resource management and organizational behavior especially on the study of transformational leadership, employees' self-efficacy, and their work engagement. This study is also hoped to contribute to the polytechnic leaders as the alternative options in making policies in increasing lecturers' self-efficacy and work engagement.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Bass and Riggio [13] state that transformational leadership is one leadership style that is adopted by leaders in many modern organizations. This leadership style is believed to accommodate leaders to bring their employees in facing strong competition in nowadays era. Transformational leadership is also believed to help leaders in articulating the organization vision and motivating their employees to work better and increasing their work satisfaction and commitment toward organization.

Bass and Riggio describe transformational leaders as "those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" [13, p. 3]. They believe that transformational leaders will always provide support and response to their employees' needs by empowering them and balancing the goals of every individual in the organization including the employee, leader, group, and organization goals. According to Certo and Certo [14, p. 384] "transformational leadership is leadership that inspires organizational success by profoundly affecting followers' beliefs in what an organization should be, as well as their values, such as justice and integrity".

Bass and Riggio [13] state that transformational leadership emphasizing on achieving better results by focusing on the four main components of the leadership style – idealized influence (charismatic behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence means that the transformational leaders will act as role models for their followers. Inspirational motivation indicates that transformational leaders motivate and inspire those around them by giving meaning and challenge to their followers. Intellectual stimulation refers to stimulating follow-

ers to become more innovative and creative. Individualized consideration focuses on recognizing the needs of each individual for better achievement and higher growth.

2.2 Self-Efficacy

Bandura in Chen [15, p.7] defines self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to successfully achieve goals and manage environments that affect their lives". Based on Bandura's idea Chen [15] describes that self-efficacy functions as an important factor for employees' behavior which concerns specific purposes through motivation, cognitive, and affective process. Thus, an employee with higher self-efficacy might consider being able to overcome a certain situation by himself or herself.

Bandura [16] explains that self-efficacy has three dimensions – magnitude, strength, and generality. Magnitude refers to the level of tasks in which an individual believes that he or she can accomplish a certain task given to him or her. In a certain task, if there is no substantial problem found, an individual will easily do the task and will have high self-efficacy. Strength relates to the level of strength of an individual's confidence or expectation toward his or her ability. Strong expectations will make the individual withstand though his or her less experience. Generality refers to the extent to which the individual's expectations can be generalized in every situation.

2.3 Work Engagement

Maslach and Leiter in Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá, and Bakker [17] indicate that engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and self-efficacy. Engagement is believed as the opposite of burnout, cynicism, and lack of professional confidence in the workplace. Thomas [18] mentions that work engagement as the condition of an employee who has stable psychological which is influenced by individual interaction and work environment. An employee who is engaged is characterized by the energy of readiness and willingness to give personal energy in terms of physical, cognitive, and emotional expressions.

Schaufeli and Bakker [19, p. 4] explain the work engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is the "levels of energy and mental resilience while working", readiness to devote energy in work, and tenacity in facing troubles. Dedication refers to strong involvement in work, and "experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge". Absorption refers to full concentration and happy to work and "has difficulties with detaching oneself from work"

2.4 Transformational Leadership and Lectrurer's Self-Efficacy

Nielsen and Munir [20] mention that there have many studies found that transformational leadership plays important role in increasing employees' level of self-efficacy. Sutton and Woodman in Nielsen and Munir [20] explain that when a leader has higher expectations and communicates it to his or her high potential employees, they will have a higher level of

self-efficacy. Therefore, the first hypothesis is that transformational leadership has a significant impact on lecturers' self-efficacy.

H1 = Transformational leadership has a significant impact on lecturers' self-efficacy.

2.5 Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement

Hawkes, Biggs, and Hegerty [5] state that the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement can be explained that when employees have the perception that their leaders show transformational leadership, the employees will feel more engaged in their work. Gözükara and Şimşek [21] assume that the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement of employees is because employees feel that work engagement has worthy values for themselves that transformational leaders will easily inspire and motivate the employees to be more engaged to their work. Therefore, the second hypothesis is that transformational leadership has a significant impact on lecturers' work engagement.

H2 = Transformational leadership has a significant impact on lecturers' work engagement.

2.6 Lecturers' Self-Efficacy and and Work Engagement

Bakker and Demerouti [22] explain that self-efficacy can be strongly assumed to be the main component in predicting employees' work engagement. It is believed that employees with higher self-efficacy will have intrinsic motivation to get the goals that make them have better performance and more satisfied in the workplace. This is believed by Burić and Macuka [12] that the theory indicates the role of self-efficacy in predicting employees' work engagement. Therefore, the third hypothesis is that lecturers' self-efficacy impacts on their work engagement.

H3 = Lecturers' self-efficacy has a significant impact on lecturers' work engagement.

2.7 The Mediation of Self-Efficacy on Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement

In this study, it is proposed that self-efficacy can moderate the impact of transformational leadership on lecturers' work engagement. Previous studies have proved that self-efficacy can mediate the relationship between job demands and work engagement [23]. Gong, Huang, and Farh [24] also found that self-efficacy mediated between employee learning orientation and transformational leadership. Nielsen, Yarker, Randall, and Munir [25] also found that self-efficacy mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and well-being. However, a study conducted by Tims and Xanthopoulou [2] found that self-efficacy did not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' engagement. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is that self-efficacy mediates the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement.

H4 = Self-efficacy mediates the impact of transformational leadership on work engagement.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

A survey study was carried out among lecturers of three state polytechnics in West Kalimantan. The data from respondents are confidential. A total of 220 lecturers responded by filling out a set of questionnaires. The questionnaire is distributed to the respondents with direct explanations from the researcher. This study has representative samples for the whole population. The sample includes 141 (64%) male lecturers and 79 (36%) female lecturers. The range of sample ages is from 30 to 55 years old in which 13 lecturers (6%) ≤ 30 years old, 51 (23%) 31 – 35 years old, 75 (34%) 36 – 40 years old, 36 (16%) 41 – 45 years old, 24 (11%) 46 – 50 years old, 17 (8%) 51 – 55 years old, 4 (2%) > 55 years old. Most of the respondents (46%) have been working as lecturers for 6 – 10 years. The responses are reliability and validity measured in which the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.8.

To test the hypothesis, a set of questionnaires is distributed. To measure work engagement, a questionnaire adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker [19] is used in this study. Based on Schaufeli and Bakker's study, the dimensions of work engagement consist of vigor, dedication, and absorption. To measure self-efficacy, a questionnaire from Bandura [16] is adapted. In this study, dimensions of self-efficacy used are magnitude, strength, and generality. Transformational leadership is measured by adapting Bass and Riggio's [13] dimensions – idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. All questionnaire has response categories: 1 = to a very small extent, 2 = to a small extent, 3 = somewhat, 4 = to a large extent, and 5 = to a very large extent.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

The model of the relationship between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and work engagement is tested using Structural Equation Modelling [26] using LISREL 8.7 [27]. In testing the hypothesis, the steps of structural equation modeling are executed. To measure the model fit, fit indexes are used such as RMSEA, NNFI, AGFI, and CFI.

5 FINDING AND DICUSSION

Before continuing to hypothesis test, the data tested to see the data fulfil requirements for the model fit. The test results that Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.060 (< 0.08 = good fit), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 0.96 (> 0.9 = good fit), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.91 (> 0.9 = good fit) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.97 (> 0.9 = good fit). Seeing the results, the data indicate that the fulfilment of requirements for analysis.

After testing the constructs and model fit, the testing hypothesis is done for all variables in this study. As a result, a full model is obtained as shown in Fig. 1. below.
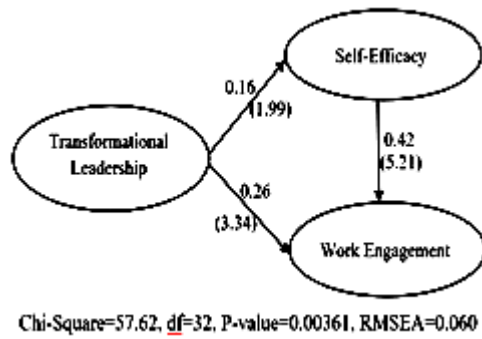
Fig. 1. SEM Model (standardized and t-value model)

All dimensions which measure the whole variables – transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and work engagement – indicate to have reliable and valid constructs, in which the construct reliability (≥ 0.7) and variance extract measure (≥ 0.5) as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Construct

Measurement Model		Construct Reliability (CR)	Extract Variance (VE)	Test Result
Latent Variables	Manifest Variable			
Transformational Leadership	Idealized Influence	0,966	0,882	Valid and Reliable
	Inspirational Motivation			
	Intellectual Stimulation			
	Individualized Consideration			
Self-Efficacy	Magnitude	0,968	0,912	Valid and Reliable
	Strength			
	Generality			
Work Engagement	Vigor	0,950	0,866	Valid and Reliable
	Dedication			
	Absorption			

The first finding shows that transformational leadership impacts on self-efficacy. Statistically, coefficient regression shows 0.16, and the t-value shows 1.99. The finding indicates that there is a significant and positive impact of transformational leadership on self-efficacy. Therefore, H1 is accepted. This finding also indicates that the better polytechnics leaders adopt a transformational leadership style, the higher lecturers' self-efficacy. The lecturers will have more confidence to accomplish their main tasks. This finding is in line with a previous study conducted by Wang, Tsai, and Tsai [28]. They found that transformational leadership positively influenced employee creative self-efficacy and creativity. The impact can be understood when a leader communicates his or her expectation to the employees, the employees will have a higher level of self-efficacy [20].

The second finding of this study shows that transformational leadership has a significant impact on lecturers' work engagement. Statistically, coefficient regression shows 0.26, and the t-value shows 3.34. Therefore, H2 is accepted. The finding indicates that when the leaders of the polytechnics show their higher level of transformational leadership, the lecturers will be more engaged in their work in which they are willing to push themselves to attach to their work. This finding supports the findings of previous studies such as [3], [4], [5].

The third finding indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement in which the data statistically show that coefficient regression is 0.42 and the t-value is 5.21. Therefore, H3 is accepted. The finding indicates that when lecturers' self-efficacy is high they will be more engaged in their work. In other words, the more confident the lecturers, the more spirit they have in working because they feel more connected emotionally and intellectually to what they have to accomplish at the workplace. This finding also supports previous findings such as [11], [12] who find that employees with high self-efficacy will be able to have work-life balance and work engagement, and also find that when teachers with high self-efficacy in their work, they will feel happier, proud, and less angry, more hopefuls to their students.

The fourth finding of this study shows that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement, in which the direct and indirect relationship can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Direct and Indirect Relationship

Direct Relationship	Indirect Relationship
Transformational leadership to work engagement	Transformational leadership to work engagement mediated by self-efficacy
$(0.26)^2 = 0.068$	$0.16 \times 0.42 = 0.067$

It can be seen that the direct relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement is bigger (0,068) than the indirect relationship mediated by self-efficacy (0.067). This shows that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Therefore, H4 is accepted. This finding indicates that when the leaders of the polytechnics like to increase the level of their lecturers' work engagement, they have to increase the level of lecturers' self-efficacy. The efforts of increasing the lecturers' self-efficacy can be done by giving the lecturers opportunities

to get training or staff development programs related to their work. The level of self-efficacy can be also increased by providing knowledge-sharing opportunities to them. This finding supports previous findings of other studies such as [23], [24], [25].

6 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study focuses on measuring the impact of transformational leadership on self-efficacy, transformational leadership on work engagement, self-efficacy on work engagement, and the mediation of self-efficacy of the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. All of the four hypotheses proposed in this study are accepted. This study finds that there is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on self-efficacy, transformational leadership on work engagement, and self-efficacy on work engagement. This study also finds that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

It is suggested that the leaders of state polytechnics in West Kalimantan adapt better the style of transformational leadership so that they can increase the level of the lecturers' self-efficacy and work engagement. This study also suggests that to increase the lecturers' work engagement the leaders need to pay attention to the increasing of lecturers' self-efficacy due to the mediation of self-efficacy in increasing lecturers' work engagement.

For further research, it is suggested that this study might be applicable for other educational institutions, and to improve lecturers' work engagement other variables are suggested to be applied to see other alternatives in increasing work engagement.

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