

## Enhancing Employee Performance Through Communication and Transformational Leadership: A Mediation Study on Job Satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** This research seeks to examine the influence of communication, transformational leadership, and work satisfaction on staff performance in the East Java Provincial Plantation Service. Furthermore, it analyzes the correlation among communication, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction to comprehend their impact on workplace dynamics.

**Methodolog:** A quantitative methodology was used, with data gathered via surveys administered to 117 workers, selected using a total sampling method. Path analysis was used to elucidate the links among the examined variables, facilitating a thorough comprehension of the direct and indirect influences of communication and leadership on work satisfaction and employee performance.

**Findings:** The results indicate that communication and transformational leadership significantly influence employee performance. Job satisfaction is also positively correlated with performance, meaning that employees who experience higher job satisfaction tend to perform better. Additionally, communication and transformational leadership have a strong impact on job satisfaction, suggesting that effective communication and inspirational leadership styles enhance overall employee satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** This study underscores the crucial role of communication and transformational leadership in improving both job satisfaction and employee performance. In government institutions like the East Java Provincial Plantation Service, fostering a culture of open communication and strong leadership can lead to a more motivated and productive workforce. The findings suggest that prioritizing these elements can enhance organizational effectiveness and contribute to institutional success.

**Keywords:** Communication; Transformational Leadership; Job Satisfaction; Employee Performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

The function of human resources (HR) is critical to the success of every business. crucial in a business setting. Consideration, maintenance, and development of human resources are essential for producing good performance. Performance is a key part of human resource management that needs to be handled well. Managing performance helps ensure employees are motivated, skilled, and working toward the company's goals. When done right, it boosts productivity and contributes to the success of the organization. Therefore, managing employee performance is essential for long-term success, because the evaluation of work performance or employee performance is a benchmark for the success of human resources in the organization. The performance of an employee will be seen from how an employee shows his work performance, this is accompanied by a sense of responsibility for duties and work (Yang et al., 2020).

The East Java Provincial Plantation Office plays a crucial role in advancing the plantation sector within the region (Kusuma et al., 2024). The East Java Provincial Plantation Office's responsibilities encompass several key areas: agricultural development and monitoring, where it oversees and supports the growth of plantation practices; extension and education, focusing on providing vital training and information to farmers; and plant disease supervision and control, which involves monitoring crop health and implementing measures to prevent and manage plant diseases that could impact yields. For example, during a recent outbreak of *Phytophthora infestans* a fungus that severely damaged coffee crops in the region the office swiftly intervened by deploying experts to educate farmers on effective disease management practices, thereby preventing significant economic losses. Additionally, the office is involved in market monitoring and development to ensure that plantation products are effectively marketed and to identify new opportunities. For instance, it recently facilitated access to international markets for small-scale coconut farmers, opening avenues for higher export demand. It also engages in research and development to drive innovation and improvements within the sector, such as introducing drought-resistant crop varieties that have proven essential in adapting to climate change challenges. Through these diverse functions, the East Java Provincial Plantation Office aims to enhance the plantation industry, improve farmer welfare, and contribute to regional economic growth and sustainable development, ensuring that the sector remains resilient amidst evolving agricultural and environmental challenges (Sjahza & Asmit, 2019).

The State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is a human resource in a government organization which is one of the important elements in carrying out organizational activities. Where every organization will always try to hire workers who are experts in their fields. If an organization's human resources work well, it will be able to fulfill its objectives. Performance, sometimes known as job performance, is the end result of an employee's efforts to complete his assigned tasks in a timely and efficient manner. Employee performance is subjective since workers vary in their skill sets and the degree to which they can carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the expectations of their superiors. (Hennekam et al., 2020).

An organization's success is heavily dependent on the performance of its personnel. The success of the business is directly proportional to the quality of its employees. On the other side, a drop in business output could result from subpar work by individual employees. Employee performance, in theory, is the end result of the amount and quality of work that employee does while performing his job obligations as assigned. (Cao et al., 2024), While according to (Gunasti, 2020) Work that is highly related to the organization's strategic goals,

provides value to customers, and helps the economy thrive is what drives performance. So, performance is all about showing up to work and getting things done.

In the workplace, effective communication is needed both between employees and employees with leaders. Effective communication in the workplace can have a significant impact on job satisfaction levels and employee performance (Munir, Muhammad Fachmi, 2020). According to (Giusino et al., 2023) The term "communication" refers to the two-way exchange of ideas and information that allows one person to comprehend the other. So from the description above, it can be concluded that communication is the process of delivering messages from a communicator to communicants or sending messages from one party to another party to get mutual understanding. Everyday interactions, and particularly those at work, rely on people being able to communicate with one another. When employees are able to express themselves clearly and concisely, the company as a whole benefits, and vice versa. Thus, it is anticipated that communication will be successful in line with the intended objectives of the company. (Sukarja & Rahmat, 2019). Empirical studies that strengthen communication relationships with employee performance are conducted by Fransiska & Tupti, (2020) findings that The effectiveness of the North Labuhanbatu Population and Civil Registration Office's staff is greatly affected by the quality of their communication. Based on previous research, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows: H1: That there is an influence between communication and employee performance.

A government organization also needs a leader who inspires change and empowers subordinates to achieve high goals, to improve themselves and improve the process. Such leadership is called transformational leadership. According to (Sofiah Sinaga et al., 2021), that When it comes to politics, transformational leadership has a beneficial effect on job happiness. This is because the correct leadership style may impact the contentment of linked people's positions, including every employee who works under that leader. Consequently, enhancing employee performance is a process in which transformational leadership is crucial, in addition to transformational leadership Systematics can be influential, where a leader enters into part of the structure (formal leader) that affects the amount of authority possessed and the limits of influence are carried out by people, work and relationship patterns (Mayora & Purwanto, 2019). Researchers in the field of applied psychology have shown that transformational leadership has a positive effect on worker productivity. Simatupang, (2021), Results showed a strong correlation between transformative leadership and productivity in the workplace. This is the second theory that has been developed from prior studies: The second hypothesis is that transformative leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on productivity in the workplace.

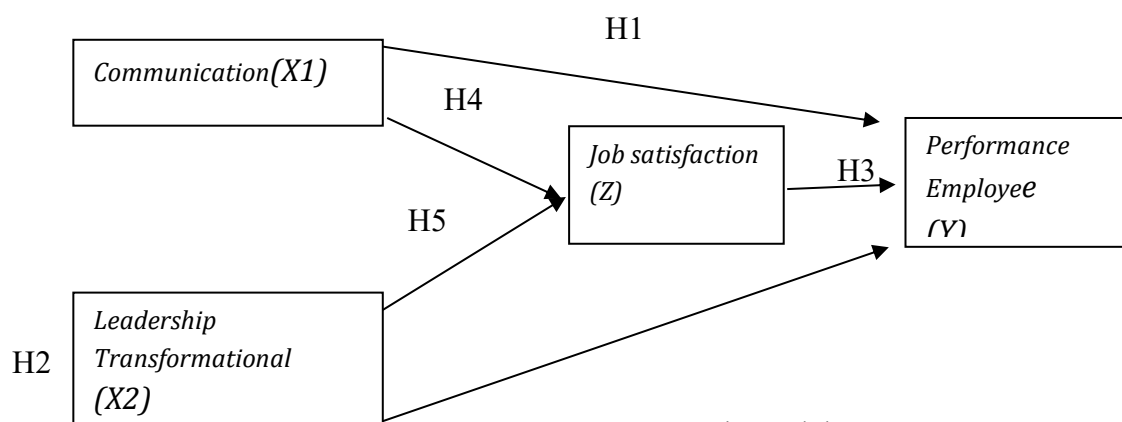
To improve employee performance, one of the influential factors is job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction is an important factor that must be considered by companies because it has a major impact on productivity, retention, and company image. So to optimize job satisfaction must create employee welfare. Various problems often arise related to employee performance, including employees feeling dissatisfied with their work because workers feel uncomfortable, lack of work maintenance, which ultimately causes worker performance to decline (Suganjar & Hermawati, 2020). Employees who have job satisfaction, in order to have a good impact on performance, job satisfaction must always receive more attention from organizational leaders (Fitrianto, 2020). Empirical studies that strengthen the relationship of job satisfaction with employee performance are conducted by (Wahyuni, 2023), findings that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance of Taman Rahayu Bekasi Village Office. Based on previous research,

the third hypothesis is formulated as follows: H3: There is an influence between job satisfaction and employee performance.

A person who is emotionally satisfied with his or her employment is one who enjoys coming to work each day. Whether it's indoors, outdoors, or a mix of the two, there are many ways to enjoy one's profession. (Olafsdottir & Einarsdottir, 2024). These problems then result in a decrease in employee job satisfaction which will have an impact on decreasing the performance of employees (Bennani, 2024). In fact, employees who feel satisfied in their work tend to improve their performance in proportion to what the organization has given them (Susanto, 2022). One that affects job satisfaction is communication. If communication between employees is intense and effective it will affect work loss. According to research conducted by (Hadiyatno, 2023), the findings found that communication has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of Balikpapan City Health Office employees. Based on previous research, hypothesis four is formulated as follows: H4: There is an influence between communication and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction will increase, one of which is with transformational leadership. Transformational leaders tend to motivate and inspire their subordinates with a strong and compelling vision. This can create a higher sense of engagement and increase job satisfaction, as employees feel connected to a larger organizational purpose (Wahyono et al., 2021). Transformational leaders often give higher levels of autonomy and responsibility to their employees. Not only does this increase an individual's sense of ownership and responsibility towards their work, but it can also increase job satisfaction because they feel in control of their work. (Safitri & Jaenab, 2023). The relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction is reinforced by previous research (Ackhriansyah, 2020), the findings of transformational leadership research have a partial positive effect on employee performance.

Based on the explanation above, the purpose of the study is to determine the effect of (1) communication on employee performance (2) transformational leadership on employee performance (3) job satisfaction on employee performance (4) communication on job satisfaction and (5) transformational leadership on employee job satisfaction at the East Java provincial plantation office. This study uses the model depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates communication and transformational leadership that affect employee performance and job satisfaction and job satisfaction affect employee performance.



**Figure 1** Research Model

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Improving employee performance remains a major concern in organizational management, especially in public sector institutions such as the East Java Provincial Plantation Office. Communication and transformational leadership have been widely recognized as important factors that affect employee performance, with job satisfaction playing a role as a mediating variable (Al Khajeh, 2018; Juma et al., 2021). This section reviews the current literature related to communication, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and relationships of the three in the context of improving employee performance.

### **Communication and Employee Performance**

Effective communication is a fundamental element in organizational success and employee performance improvement. Clear, open, and two-way communication strengthens employees' understanding of the organization's roles, expectations, and goals, thereby improving work performance (Mazzei, Butera, & Quarantino, 2019). Cutting-edge research shows that good internal communication can build trust, reduce ambiguity, and create a positive work environment (Men & Yue, 2019). In the public sector, effective communication has been shown to support service efficiency and work productivity (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2020). Organizations with strong internal communication practices tend to have higher levels of employee engagement and performance (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021).

### **Transformational Leadership and Its Impact**

Transformational leadership, as developed by Bass and Avolio, has now been extensively studied in the context of modern organizational change. Transformational leaders are able to provide inspiration, motivation, and intellectual stimulation that encourage maximum employee engagement (Zhang et al., 2020). This approach encompasses four main dimensions: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention. Recent studies have shown that leaders with a transformational style create an innovative and supportive work environment, which significantly impacts employee performance improvement (Khan, 2022; Elsharnouby & Elbanna, 2021). In the context of plantation services, transformational leadership is essential for managing operational challenges and increasing workforce motivation.

### **Job Satisfaction as a Mediation Variable**

Job satisfaction is an important factor in increasing employee motivation and performance. According to the updated definition by Tadić Vujčić et al. (2018), job satisfaction reflects the positive feelings that arise from the evaluation of one's work experience. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory remains relevant, but contemporary research emphasizes the importance of balancing intrinsic factors (such as recognition and achievement) and extrinsic factors (such as salary and working conditions) in shaping job satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). Recent empirical studies show that effective communication and transformational leadership have a direct impact on increased job satisfaction which ultimately drives better employee performance (Ocampo et al., 2020; Khalid et al., 2021). In the public sector, high job satisfaction correlates with better service and employee loyalty (Bani Melhem et al., 2020).

### **The Role of Job Satisfaction Mediation**

The mediated role of job satisfaction in the relationship between communication, transformational leadership, and employee performance has been extensively researched in the context of modern organizations. Recent studies show that transformational leadership has a strong influence on job satisfaction which ultimately improves employee performance (Azeem et al., 2021). Effective communication also contributes to job satisfaction, strengthening its position as a mediating variable in the relationship model (Al-Ghazali, 2020). In the plantation service sector, where motivation and workforce efficiency are critical, understanding this mediation role is crucial for effective human resource management policies and strategies.

The existing literature supports the hypothesis that communication and transformational leadership positively impact employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Organizations aiming to enhance performance must focus on fostering open communication channels and adopting transformational leadership practices. Future research should explore context-specific variables influencing this relationship in the East Java Province Plantation Service.

### **METHOD**

This research involved a quantitative approach, using a structured questionnaire as the main tool to gather primary data from respondents. The subjects of the study were all 117 employees of the East Java Provincial Plantation Office, and the total sampling method was applied, meaning the entire population was included in the study. The variables measured were employee performance, job satisfaction, communication, and transformational leadership. Employee performance was assessed using indicators such as quality, quantity, and working time. Job satisfaction was measured through factors like work itself, promotion, supervision, and relationships with co-workers. Communication was evaluated based on intensity and effectiveness, while transformational leadership was assessed by setting an example, encouraging performance, and maintaining a harmonious work environment (Škarpich et al., 2020).

Direct distribution of questionnaires measuring each respondent's level of agreement using a Likert scale allowed for the gathering of data. Respondents' views on the factors under study could be clearly evaluated using the scale, which ran from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Communication, transformational leadership, work satisfaction, and employee performance were the factors under investigation, and path analysis was the principal tool for analyzing their interrelationships. First, we ran validity and reliability tests to make sure the data was accurate and trustworthy. Descriptive statistical analysis was also employed to summarize the data and provide insights into patterns and trends. The final analysis was performed using SPSS software version 26, enabling a thorough evaluation of the impact of communication, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction on employee performance. This approach ensured a detailed understanding of how these factors interact and influence overall employee outcomes at the East Java Provincial Plantation Office.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient as a tool to assess data validity, the research instrument shows that all statement items have validity coefficients that exceed the critical value ( $r$  table) at a significance level of 0.05. So, all statements are valid which means they have construct validity. Can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1** Validity Test Results

Variabel	Total statement items	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Sig	Information
Communication (X1)	2	0, 891	0,000	Valid
Leadership Transformational (X2)	3	0, 691	0,000	Valid
Job satisfaction (Z)	4	0, 775	0,000	Valid
Performance Employee Y)	3	0, 805	0,000	Valid

Source: Data processed by the author 2024

The reliability test using Cronbach's alpha methodology, deeming the questionnaire trustworthy if it achieved a Cronbach's alpha score of  $> 0.60$ . The dependability outcomes of all dependable variables are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Reliability Test Results

Item-Total Statistics				
	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Standart Alpha	Information
X1	2	0,742	0,60	Reliabel
X2	3	0,,452	0,60	Reliabel
Z	4	0,780	0,60	Reliabel
Y	3	0,726	0,60	Reliabel

Source: Data processed by the author 2024

**Table 3** Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Variabel	Indicator	Mean	Interval
Communication	Communication intensity	3,7521	High
	Communication effectiveness	3,9744	High
Transformational Leadership	Setting an example	3,5043	High
	Encourage Subordinate performance	3,2735	Medium
	harmonize the work	3,5897	High

	environment		
Job Satisfaction	The work itself	3,2650	Medium
	Promotion	3,1111	Medium
	Supervision	3,1197	Medium
	Co workers	2,8974	Medium
Employee Performance	Quality	3,8034	High
	Quantity	3,8376	High
	Working Time	4,0513	High

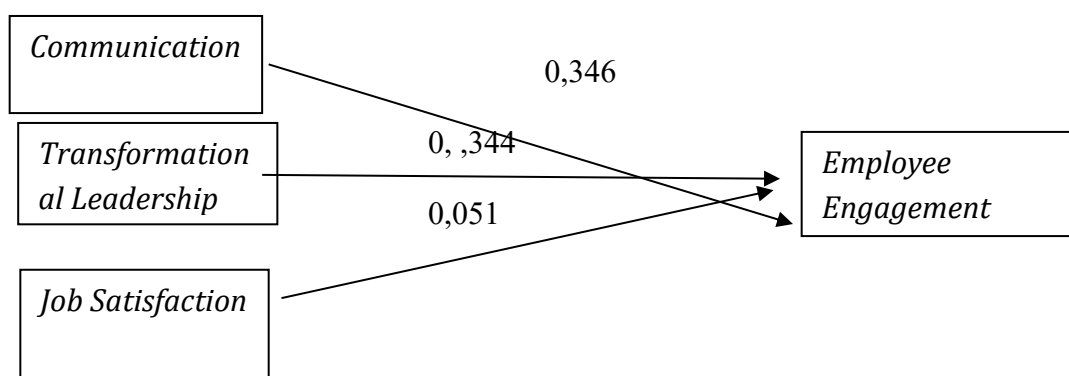
Source: Data processed by author 2024

The Communication Effectiveness Indicator received the highest rating in the communication assessment with a score of 3.97. Similarly, the indicator harmonizes the work environment which has the highest Transformational Leadership assessment of 3.59. In terms of employee performance, the Working Time indicator obtained the highest value with a value of 4.05. In addition, the indicator of 3.2650 received the highest job satisfaction assessment with a value of 3.26. The results of hypothesis testing are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4** Results of Substructure Path Analysis 1 ( X1, X2, Z Against Y)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4,821	,939		5,132	,000
	X1	,346	,097	,302	3,559	,001
	X2	,344	,077	,383	4,493	,000
	Z1	,051	,047	,083	1,093	,027

Source: Data processed by author 2024



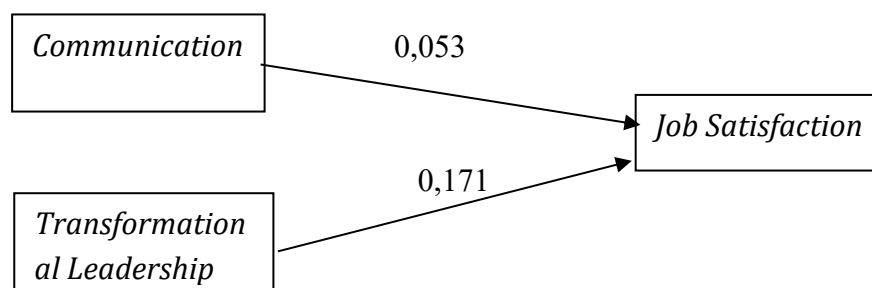
**Figure 2** Path analysis ( X1, X2, Z Terhadap Y)



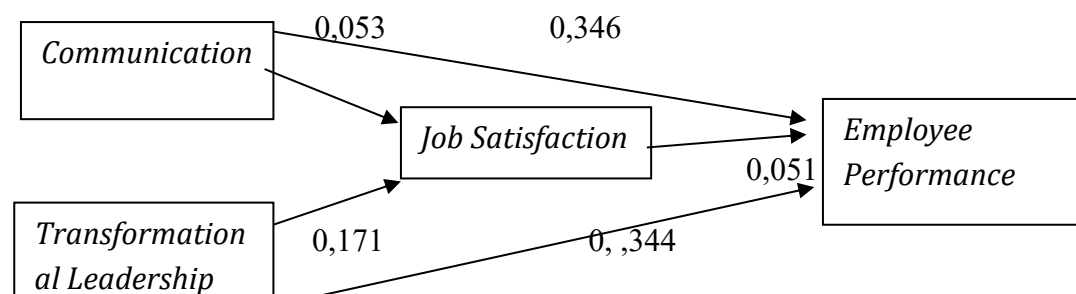
**Table 5** Results of Substructure 2 Path Analysis ( X1, X2 Against Z)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	10,204	1,616		6,315	,000
	X1	,053	,194	,029	,276	,003
	X2	,171	,152	,118	1,126	,002

Source: Data processed by author 2024



**Figure 2** Path analysis ( X1, X2, Against Z)



**Figure 3** Path analysis

Tables 4 and 5 confirm the validation of the H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses. Path analysis was used to assess how job satisfaction variables mediated the relationship between communication and transformational leadership to employee performance (Figure 3).

The test results confirm receiving H1, that is, employee performance is positively and significantly affected by communication. It is indicated that high and low performance can be influenced by the size of communication carried out by employees and leaders. From the average value of descriptive statistical analysis, all communication indicators obtained a fairly high average value, as well as employee performance. This indicates that the East Java Provincial Plantation Office ensures that employees and employees with effective and intense leaders communicate well so as to have a significant impact on improving employee performance. When employees easily communicate, the feeling of comfort and pleasure with the work environment will also grow. Communication is one of the factors that can boost

performance. Several previous studies have also strengthened the statement that there is a significant influence between communication on employee performance. This research is in line with previous research conducted by (Dasmadi, 2021; Pasaribu, 2021; Zaidun et al., 2020).

The test results confirm receiving H2, that is, transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This indicates an increase in transformational leadership that has the potential to lead to improved performance. In the East Java Provincial Plantation Office, we always maintain good relations with employees and leaders who are always role models for employees. Based on the mean value of descriptive statistical analysis, the highest indicator of transformational leadership is harmonizing the work environment which shows the statement that employees will work hard if they have leaders who can harmonize the work environment. This means that when leaders can harmonize the work environment automatically, there will be an increase in employee performance. The results of this study add credence to the idea that transformational leadership significantly and positively affects worker productivity. (Agustine Pariesti et al., 2022; Ariffin, 2019; Deddy, 2022; Parlindungan et al., 2021; Saragih et al., 2022).

Results from the tests that validated H3 indicate that job satisfaction has a positive and statistically significant influence on productivity in the workplace. This suggests that workers will naturally put forth their best effort to accomplish objectives if they are happy with their job. The degree to which workers are happy doing their primary tasks for their employer has a direct bearing on how well they do their jobs. (Wahyuni, 2023). In the East Java Provincial Plantation Office, employees feel satisfied at work because the work itself is according to the field. . This makes the atmosphere more pleasant and productive. The results of the study are relevant to the research conducted by (Adha et al., 2019; Arisandi & Aprianti, 2022; Purnamarini, 2021; Rosmaini & Tanjung, 2019; Wahyuni, 2023) Where research findings there is an influence between job satisfaction and employee performance.

The H4 Hypothesis test shows that there is a positive and significant influence of communication on employee job satisfaction in the East Java Provincial Plantation Office. The in-depth results of this study show that effective and intense communication will result in good job satisfaction as well. Communication interaction between employees and leaders can increase satisfaction so as to motivate employees to continue to grow. The findings of the study reinforce previous research conducted (Fikri et al., 2022; Marshall, 2020; Ulfa & Surenda, 2021).

The test results confirm receiving H5, that job satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by transformational leadership. This means that when employees have motivational transformational leaders, job satisfaction can be achieved well as well. Transformational leadership has a very important meaning because it can be a driver for employees, because having leaders who can harmonize the work environment will make them feel at home to work (Grošelj et al., 2020). Having transformational leadership that can harmonize the work environment, and encourage subordinate performance is very good for work productivity. The findings of the study reinforce previous research conducted (Deddy, 2022; Hasibuan, 2019; Ignatius Soni Kurniawan et al., 2022; Lukita, 2019; Safitri & Jaenab, 2023; Zulfikar et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from this study show that employee performance plays an important role in the success of the organization, and several key factors affect this performance. Effective communication, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction are essential in ensuring high levels of performance among employees. Communication helps in building understanding and cooperation in the workplace, which is essential for achieving organizational goals. Transformational leadership motivates employees, fosters job satisfaction, and encourages employees to do their best. Job satisfaction, in turn, is directly related to improving employee performance, and organizations need to prioritize employee well-being to increase productivity. Therefore, the East Java Provincial Plantation Service needs to focus on improving communication, leadership, and job satisfaction to ensure organizational success and employee performance in the long term.

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