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Article

Moderating role of transformational leadership in the relationship between work conflict and employee performance

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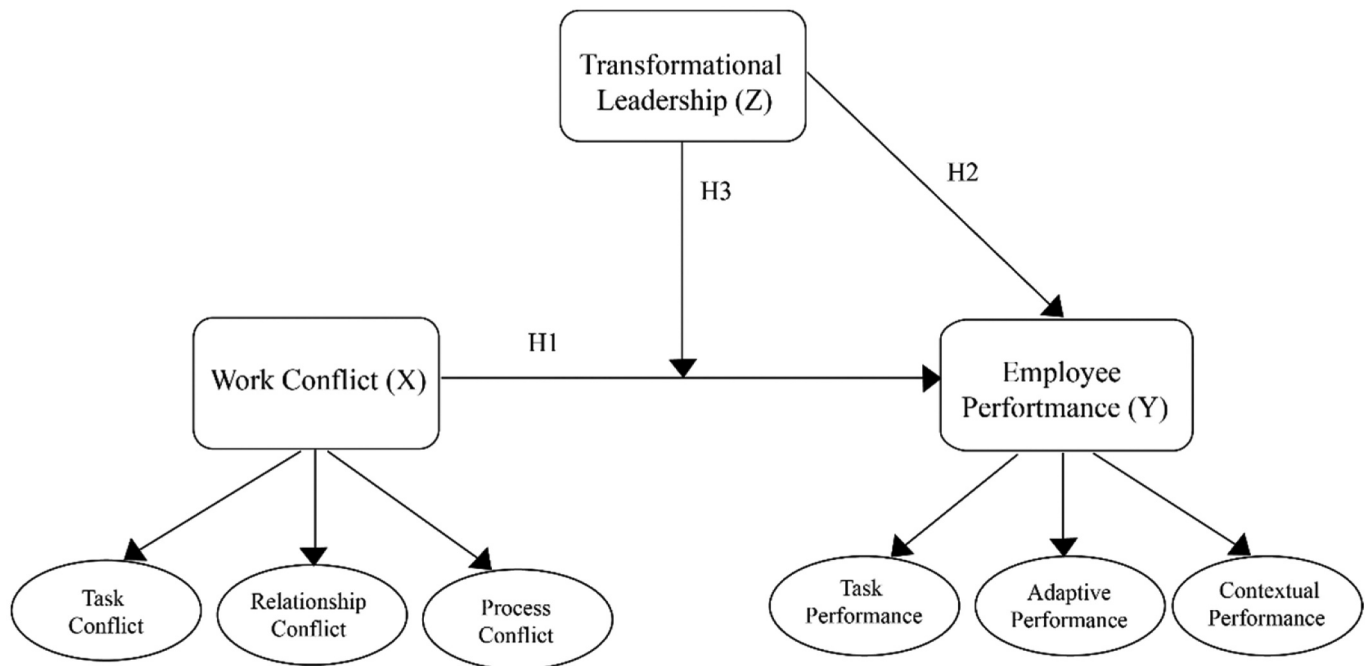
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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Moderating role of transformational leadership in the relationship between work conflict and employee performance

Budhi Haryanto¹, Anastasia Riani Suprpti¹, Asep Taufik² and Rakotoarisoa Maminirina Fenitra^{3*}

Abstract: This study aims to test the role of transformational leadership in moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance at Railway Company. The sample in this survey is 150 employees of a railway company's operations management center selected using a non-random sampling method. The data were collected through an online survey through WhatsApp and email. Partial Least Square–Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was implied to explain the relationship among the conceptualized variables in this study. The results revealed a negative relationship between. The results show that there is a negative link between work conflict and employee performance. In addition, transformational leadership has been found to negatively ease the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. This study also finds that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Based on the results, this study therefore concluded that transformational leadership is a variable conceptualized to partially ease the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. This study also describes the theoretical and practical implications, as well as future research opportunities.



Budhi Haryanto

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This work examines the link between work conflict, transformational leadership, and employee performance. The moderating role of transformational leadership was also investigated. Based on the survey conducted in Indonesian Railway Company, the employee performance is influenced by work conflict and transformational leadership. This work also demonstrated that transformational leadership moderated the impact of work conflict on employee performance. The findings concluded that work conflict should be managed and mitigated when a leader or an organization strives for higher employee outcome. In doing so, transformational leadership should be adapted by the leader to minimize the impact of work conflict on the employee outcome. In addition, this particular leadership style has a critical role in increasing employee performance.

Subjects: Business, Management and Accounting; Leadership; Human Resource Management

Keywords: work conflict; transformational leadership; employee performance; railway company; Indonesia

1. Introduction

Existing literature explains that work conflicts become unavoidable phenomena within an organization (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jungst & Blumberg, 2016; Nesterkin & Porterfield, 2016). Some of the causes of these phenomena are disputes, conflicts, and incompatibilities between employees in the workplace. It is interesting to investigate because these phenomena occur in multiple enterprises and affect the overall performance of the enterprise. Therefore, work conflicts must be managed and resolved to create and achieve maximum employee performance. Several studies have uncovered a relationship between labor conflict issues and employee performance in exchange for work conflict resolution researchers (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jungst & Blumberg, 2016; Pregernig, 2017). First, Jehn and Mannix (2001) followed by H W. Lee et al. (2018) state that less work conflict will affect performance improvement. Their study at various organizations and business schools in the found three types of conflict: relationships, tasks, and process conflicts. The study found that by focusing on patterns of conflict over time, conflicts of all kinds in high-performance groups are generally rare. The strength of the study by Jehn and Mannix (2001) lies in the ability to examine conflicts at various stages of the group. Second Jungst and Blumberg (2016) focused their research on graduate students in the Dutch International Business Program. Their research explains that reducing work conflict can improve employee performance. In addition, their research explains the mitigating role of social network quality. When employees have access to high-quality social networks, the negative relationship between task contention and performance becomes less important. Third, a study by Pregernig (2017) on graduate students in the Faculty of Business Administration at a large university. The results show that reducing competition has an impact on improving performance. The study also outlines that team members tend to empathize with those who agree rather than those who disagree. Therefore, relationship conflict leads to lower level of performance. Fourth, Rezvani et al. (2019) conducted a survey on the project teams of three large construction projects (two dam projects and one hydroelectric power plant project). The study explains that high performance can be achieved by reducing conflicts inside the company. Relationship conflict leads to lack of communication, ineffective information exchange, reduced creativity in completing complex tasks, and passive behavior among team members. After all, these lead to poor performance. Based on this past evidence, this current study finds inconsistencies in results, and what is known about this phenomenon is seen from the perspective of developed countries. Therefore, in the Indonesian context, there is a need for a broader research in this area specifically in Railway Company which allows the present researcher to develop a model that is relevant with the setting of the study.

In this context, employee performance is defined as the result of the work that employees have done to perform their tasks and activities. This work conceptualizes employee performance as an accomplishment, work result, or work outcomes (Pradhan & Jena, 2017; Pregernig, 2017; Rezvani et al., 2018), task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Task performance is indicated by employees who can perform tasks and responsibilities appropriately and on time. Adaptive performance is the ability of employees to adapt to changes in the company. Thus, employees always find the right solution for every problem. Contextual performance is implemented through support, empathy, empathy, and knowledge sharing with colleagues. In recent years, there have been various research that raises concerns about work conflict and job performance in the Indonesian context. First, Endila (2017) conducted a study on employees in Tanah Datar Regency, wherein work conflict caused by employee gaps and misunderstandings impact goal achievement and employee performance, this was identified in financial management. Second, a study conducted by Sari (2018) on employees of a freight

forwarding service company in Jakarta examines the impact of work conflict on the employee performance and leadership style as the moderator. Task-oriented (initial structure) and human-oriented (consideration) were focused on leadership style variables. The study explains that conflict is positively related to employee performance, and leaders could manage conflicts into a more beneficial and functional condition. Third, Ma'sum & Surjanti's (2017) research on employees of an Indonesian Railway Company in Surabaya has focused on eight areas including organizational culture, employee performance, and leadership style variables. The results of this study show that transformational leadership becomes the leadership characteristic in Railway Company and has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Organizational culture is also found to have a significant effect on employee performance. Ma'sum & Surjanti (2018) argue that leadership is a critical factor in improving employee performance. In an organization, employee performance depends on leadership. At both the group and organizational levels, leadership can play an important role in systematically improving employee performance. Therefore, employee performance is essential to the organization because it helps organization achieve their noble goals and grows them. Understanding the mechanisms and factors that can influence it is essential to enable leaders to develop effective strategies for improving individual performance. Transformational leadership is creative and charismatic leadership (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Wang et al., 2021). It is positioned as a moderating variable because it holds a vital role in increasing or decreasing the impact of workplace conflict on employee performance (see, Ayoko & Callan, 2010; Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; H W. Lee et al., 2018). As a leadership type with charismatic characteristics, transformational leadership is attractive, inspiring, and motivating. They also have the ability to intellectually stimulate, enhance employee understanding and personal consideration, listen, care, pay attention, and assist their subordinates (Wang et al., 2021). A limited number of studies support the role of transformational leadership in weakening the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. First, a study by H W. Lee et al. (2018) emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in conflict management to improve team creativity in large Korean companies. Second, Masood and Javed (2016) investigated how transformational leadership plays an important role in building employee trust. Third, Ayoko and Konrad (2012) argue that effective transformational leadership eliminates the negative effects of work conflict, followed by leaders playing an important role in conflict management and achievement plays. Consistently, Ayoko and Callan (2010) state that a leader has an important role in managing conflicts and obtaining higher performance. As a result of this early evidence, past research has highlighted the importance of leadership style in employees performance, particularly transformational leadership. However, it can be concluded here that there is no conclusive opinion neither on the model nor on the conceptualized variables, each of which is in-condition depending on the problem that is of interest to the researcher at that time. This study offers the opportunity to design various models related to the problems of employees of Indonesian railway companies because there are not many studies that broaden the horizons of railway companies.

This concept sheds light on the role of transformational leadership in moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. This concept is developed based on a temporary observation which suggests that the intervention of leaders who instill empathy, protection, well-being, motivation, and other behaviors as transformative leaders strengthens the relationship between labor disputes and employee performance. Therefore, transformational leadership in this study is conceptualized as the moderating variable in this study, meaning the degree of workplace conflict and performance depends on the level of transformational leadership. As transformational leadership increases, the relationship between labor disputes and employee performance weakens. Otherwise, lower transformational leadership will strengthen the relationship between work conflict and employee performance (see, Ayoko & Callan, 2010; Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Masood & Javed, 2016).

An issue proposed in this study is work conflict that is occurring at the Indonesian Railway Company. The results of a preliminary study done in Indonesian Railway Company indicate several findings, i.e. (1) Lack of superior's attention on their subordinate that leads to conflicts

among employees without a proper solution. (2) Different working styles between superiors and subordinates. Superior prefers prompt completion of tasks, while subordinate needs to be cautious and thorough, resulting in the superior assumption that their subordinate work slowly. (3) Misunderstanding between superiors and subordinates or among subordinates when discussing daily tasks. (4) Disagreements between employees in a division or among divisions. (5) Employees frequently humiliated each other, disrupting cooperation among employees and creating a disadvantageous work environment. These issues have become the concern of superiors in resolving work conflicts that happen systematically (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). This study is conducted to explain the superior's role in resolving workplace conflict in Indonesia Railway Company.

This study classifies work conflict in Indonesian Railway Company into three dimensions proposed by Jehn and Mannix (2001) namely task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict. Task conflict is a conflict-related to disagreement and dissent at work that frequently occurs when an employee is asked to complete a job that is not his/her responsibility. This condition often occurs when there is a large gap in the technical skills that create work interdependence. Relationship conflicts result from conflicts, tensions, and emotional states between employees. At Indonesian railway companies, employee sympathy and lack of sympathy, employee humiliation, and misunderstandings have created relationships. After all, process conflicts are caused by conflicts in the working process. This type of conflict is often associated with employees who are asked to do irresponsible work. Observations often indicate disagreements about how work is completed. There are also disagreements about the division of tasks and responsibilities between employees. Based on temporary observations, Indonesian railway companies are not showing optimal performance due to labor disputes. Therefore, this study proposes the concept of mitigating the role of transformational leadership in reducing the impact of increasing labor disputes on employee performance. In short, this study conceptualizes a model that explains the impact of labor disputes on employee performance degradation or improvement that can be strengthened or weakened by the presence of transformational leadership. With the aims to understand the relationship between work conflict and the impact of leadership style (transformational leadership) on employee performance. The moderating role of transformational leadership on the relationship between work conflict and employee performance was also examined. Hence, the findings of this study hope to expand the body of knowledge in this topic, particularly in the context of railway company in Indonesia.

2. Literature review

2.1. Leadership theory

The model developed in this study is based on the leadership theory that explains a leader's behavior in managing an organization from a cognitive framework perspective (Western Governors University, 2020). This behavior is related to attitudes and actions in the exchange process between leader and subordinate or employee. Existing literature explains that cognitive schemes, and map managers are called managers at the end of the cognitive matching process and therefore need to meet the cognitive expectations of their subordinates (Conrad, 2000). An ideal leader's personality and character must be born of a social process, meaning that all human characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of an individual are the result of social evaluation so that they deserve to be called a leader (Nonaka et al., 2000). Leader characters can also be developed from past experiences with certain qualifications, known as the supersets or prototype leaders (see Epitropaki & Martin, 2004, 2005; Epitropaki et al., 2013; Fraser & Lord, 1988). This leader's prototype underscores a typical ideal leader in terms of his actions, actions, and specific attitudes, and his subordinates will follow him without questioning his authority (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987). In this context, a leader refers to a leader with transformational qualities that constantly inspire and guide their followers to achieve better and more innovative change to achieve common goals (Avolio et al., 1999; Wang et al., 2021). This process also includes the leader's participation in resolving various employee conflicts that might disrupt the overall organizational performance

(Adiwantari et al., 2019). This concept serves as the basis for developing the conceptual modeling framework for this study. It explains the causal relationship between the role of transformational leadership in alleviating the relationship between labor disputes and employee performance.

2.2. Employee performance

According to Dessler (2009), employee performance is an employee's work achievement. Pradhan and Jena (2017) explain that the dimension of performance can be divided into three parts, i.e., task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance. Furthermore, Pradhan and Jena (2017) define work performance as accomplishment and effectiveness in performing tasks to achieve corporate or organizational goals. Employee performance is a multi-dimensional factors (Sendawula et al., 2018). Task performance includes all the basic tasks that need to be performed as part of the job description and the responsibilities for the basic tasks (Daryoush et al., 2013). First, task performance requires higher cognitive abilities and is primarily facilitated by task knowledge. Task knowledge is the knowledge or technical principle needed to achieve performance and has the ability to complete the task (Srihadi et al., 2019). Additionally, task skills or the ability to apply technical knowledge in completing a task or work without supervision are also required. Capability or inherent ability at work is another vital component in task performance that should be implemented to facilitate job performance, both in a new and a familiar job from a person's experience (Srihadi et al., 2019). Under the organizational scope, task performance is a comprehension between superior and subordinate in completing a given task (see also, Pregernig, 2017; Rezvani et al., 2018). Second, adaptive performance is an employee's ability to adapt and give a necessary boost for a dynamic working environment (see Masa'deh et al., 2018). Employee's ability is the key to attaining adaptive performance and efficiently handling unstable working conditions, such as organizational restructuring, changes in one's basic job, and technology transformation (see also Notanubun et al., 2019). Third, contextual performance is a pro-social behavior or helpful and unselfish attitude shown by the employee in the working environment. For example, employees are expected to have this behavior even when it is not explicitly mentioned in their job description (Rezvani et al., 2019). This expectation falls under pro-social or extra-role behavior categories. This type of behavior is directed toward an individual, group, or organization that interacts with an organizational member when they perform their organizational duty. This behavior aims to motivate the individual, group, or organizational progress as their target (see also, Claro et al., 2018).

Prior literature review indicates that maintaining a high working standard, handling tasks without too much supervision, being enthusiastic in working, completing many tasks to achieve an organizational goal, obtaining confidence in their high performance from colleagues, and other performance indicators can be observed on the employee who finishes the job on time (Dessler, 2009). Moreover, adaptive performance can be observed from employees' actions to share knowledge for effective work, manage changes well under any circumstances, handle job effectively under changes, develop mutual understanding to find feasible solutions, comfort in adjusting to job, and handle organization changes well from time to time (Alfatha & Yuniawan, 2018; Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Besides, contextual performance is indicated by giving assistance to colleagues if necessary, taking extra responsibility, having sympathy and empathy toward colleagues in trouble, actively participating in discussion and work meetings, praising colleagues for their excellent work, obtaining satisfaction from assisting others in their organization, sharing opinions and ideas, maintaining good coordination, guiding new colleagues, and communicating effectively with colleagues in solving problems and making decisions (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

To illustrate, another study conducted by Almatrooshi et al. (2016) divided performance into organizational and employee performance. Organizational performance is the achievement or work result achieved by an organization in achieving its target and goal. Organization relies heavily on the skills and abilities of leaders to carry out their strategies. Company performance is related to employee performance and is an important factor in forming a good working team to achieve the company's goals (Sobirin, 2014). Employee performance and leadership style are key factors

that influence performance. Managers need to do their best to improve employee performance in order to succeed (Imran et al., 2012). In this work, the dimension of performance refers to Pradhan and Jena (2017) study. The constructs implied in this research are focused and limited on employee's performance under an assumption that Indonesian Railway Company is reflected in that employee's performance. The dimensions of performance employed in this study are task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance (Dessler, 2009).

2.3. Work conflict

According to Stoner and Wankel (1988), a work conflict is dissent between two or more members in an organization. Another definition of workplace conflict is a dispute that occurs due to a discrepancy or disagreement among employees at work (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Conflicts in the workplace are categorized into three categories, i.e., task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Task conflict is a conflict related to the content of an ongoing task or disagreement or dissent at work. Relationship conflict involves an employee's relationship regarding their relationship, tension, and emotional state (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Process conflict is defined as a conflict surrounding the method or process of completing an assignment and task. Jehn and Mannix's study shows that anxiety from interpersonal disputes could hinder performance. The majority of the existing studies only focused on the level of static conflict and overlooked different conflict patterns at any time. The main strength of Jehn & Mannix's (2001) study is its ability to assess the conflicts during different phases in the group life cycle. The use of cross-sectional measures of conflict will likely result in different findings and interpretations. However, in general, all kinds of conflicts appeared less on high-performing groups.

Pfajfar et al. (2019) asserted that work conflicts can be divided into two dimensions, i.e., functional and dysfunctional conflicts. Functional conflict refers to the diversity of opinions, ideas, and viewpoints among members, while dysfunctional conflict is related to the negative effects of individual relationships. Conflicts are considered functional if their effects are beneficial and provide the company with an advantage in improving performance. It is considered dysfunctional if its impact is degrading employee performance and causing financial loss to the company. Well-managed conflicts can turn into functional conflicts (Claro et al., 2018; Pfajfar et al., 2019). Another study categorizes conflicts into two parts, i.e., destructive and constructive conflict (Riaz & Junaid, 2014; Rydenfalt et al., 2017). Destructive conflict is described as a conflict that causes a negative impact on the company. Constructive conflict refers to a conflict that has constructive nature so that it can bring a positive impact on the company and has corrective nature. Considering these types of work conflicts presented by previous studies, in the context of Railway companies.. This present work conceptualized conflicts into three dimensions similar with reference to Jehn and Mannix (2001) including task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict.

The First dimension is relationship conflict, which involves personal problems such as dislike among employees and other feelings (i.e. disturbed, frustrated, annoyed, and hateful). Indicators of relationship conflict can be observed from relationship tension, interpersonal incompatibility, emotional-related feelings (irritated, afraid, and hateful feelings), and miscommunication. Second, task conflicts are indicated by the presence of disputes regarding ideas, uncertainty, conflicting opinion, and disagreement at work. Task conflict is indicated by the frequently happening dispute related to ideas, disagreement, and conflicting opinions at work (see, Jehn, 1995). The third dimension is process conflicts which refer to the ones specifically related to the issues of task and responsibility distribution at work. This type of conflict is different from task conflict because task conflict is related to the content and goal of work, while process conflict is related to the method and process of work. Process conflict is indicated by disagreement on who should do the job, a dispute in responsibility to complete a task, and disagreement on how to complete the task.

2.4. Work conflict and employee performance

Jehn and Mannix (2001) demonstrated that high work conflict will lead to performance decline. Their study divides work conflicts into relationship conflict, task conflict, and process conflict. Relationship conflict limits information delivery in the group because group members will spend time and power to focus on each other instead of solving group problems. Relationship conflict also limits group members' cognitive function by increasing stress and anxiety level. On the other hand, task conflict has positive and significant effects on group performance at a particular time (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). When a group is given a complex cognitive task, they will benefit from diverse ideas and opinions. Various ideas and opinions will improve the quality of the decision-making process. According to Jehn and Mannix (2001), the last type of workplace conflict is process conflict. The study results show that groups with a higher level of process conflict have a lower level of group performance because time-consuming consideration will interfere with company operation. Generally, all kinds of disputes are less likely to emerge in high-performing groups.

Moreover, Jungst and Blumberg (2016) explain that employee performance improvement can be achieved through reducing workplace conflict. Conflict at the workplace can interfere with employee performance because it causes tension and antagonism and distracts members' attention from their current tasks. Preventing conflict in the workplace is not an easy task. Thus, this phenomenon could easily affect employee performance. However, the study also finds that a conducive work environment could encourage employees to see the conflict more positively (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). Jungst and Blumberg (2016) also found that work conflict can improve decision quality and employee performance because people will face the problem, learn to use different perspectives, and be more creative in a conflict. Work conflict also improves individual creativity and problem-solving ability because individuals face disagreement, prompting a critical attitude towards their personal ideas (Jungst & Blumberg, 2016). As a result, the increase in conflict leads to the decline in performance because group members will develop favoritism in the group creating a view that their group is better than the others (Pregernig, 2017). Thus, causing tension, friction, and hostility. The members of each of these small groups tend to bond with their group members but keep a distance from other group members, thus, causing relationship conflict in the company. The members of these small groups are facetious towards other group's comments and opinions. Eventually, the increasing relationship conflict will decrease the organizational performance. Rezvani et al. (2018) explain that high performance can be achieved by reducing company conflicts. Work conflict has a relationship toward performance improvement, with the high-performing group having a lower level of overall process conflict, while the underperforming group has a higher level of overall process conflict. It is also worth noting that the increase in process conflict is soaring in the underperforming group. Relationship conflict causes lack of communication, effective information exchange, creativity in finishing complex tasks, and passive behavior among team members (Rezvani et al., 2019). Therefore, it will result in poor performance. Based on the arguments proposed, the following is the formulated hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: There is a negative relationship between work conflict and employee performance

2.5. Transformational leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence a group to achieve an intended goal or purpose (Robbins, 2003). Transformational leadership is defined as a leader's ability to shift workability, motivation, pattern, and values perceived by subordinates so that they could optimize their performance to achieve the organizational goal (B. M. Bass, 1985). According to B. M. Bass (1985), the transformational level of a leader is measured from the leader's influence on their subordinates. Each leadership style has advantages and disadvantages for the organization. Masa'deh et al. (2016) study focuses on two leadership styles, i.e., transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that motivates and inspires employees to achieve

better performance (Escortell et al., 2020). On the other hand, transactional leadership is a leadership style that makes employees complete their work and encourages subordinates' loyalty through reward and punishment (Masa'deh et al., 2016). Therefore, in a transactional leadership style, subordinates are expected to obey the leaders and follow their orders. B.M. Bass (1990) argues that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership due to their higher contribution in motivating their group members than transactional leaders. From employees' point of view, the transformational leader creates relatively higher satisfaction than the transactional leader because employees need more than a payment for their jobs to achieve job satisfaction. Attention, intellectual stimulation, and advice from their leader are other psychological dimensions that build employees satisfaction (Arnold, 2017).

Transformational leadership is an important factor in maintaining a high group's performance and morale in an organization where a conflict is present because transformational leadership could manage emotional conflict effectively (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Nurjanah et al., 2020). Transformational leadership leads to a positive relationship with subordinates, work performance, and creates an effective leader (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). Transformational leadership is a critical leadership style with the ability to motivate subordinates and adapt to a better and more innovative method to achieve company goals (Wang et al., 2021). Transformational leadership facilitates the majority of informational exchanges, inspires, and motivates members through communication, and stimulates intellectual development by stimulating members' intelligence, knowledge, and learning process (Wang et al., 2021).

Transformational leadership is categorized into three elements, i.e., charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Wang et al., 2021). Charisma is shown by a leader possessing attractiveness that inspires and motivates others with three indicators: creates enthusiasm to complete a task, obtains subordinates' full trust, and encourages subordinates to give ideas and opinions. Intellectual stimulation is a leadership element that improves understanding and creates a new perspective in viewing each problem (Soliha & Hersugondo, 2008; Wang et al., 2021). It is indicated by thinking ideas that are never asked by subordinates, encouraging subordinates to think about old issues in a new way, and providing subordinates with a new way to finish the job. Individual consideration is a leadership element that always listens, takes care of, and provides exceptional attention, motivation, and encouragement for their group members. This element can be indicated by giving personal attention to a subordinate who looks neglected, finding out what their employee wanted and helping them achieve it, and giving appreciation when subordinates work well (Dessler, 2009). Several studies have examined and confirmed that transformational leadership and employees are associated. A study conducted by Chen et al. (2017) at manufacturing and IT industry in Beijing, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi explains that leadership behaviors are charisma, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. These leadership behaviors make subordinates aware of work values, stimulate work motivation, and change their perception of a problem (Chen et al., 2017). It can increase the ability to solve a problem and eventually achieve high performance. Transformational leadership can encourage a team's innovative behavior, for example, a transformational leader can create an innovative team atmosphere, motivate subordinates to work extra, and encourage the creative behavior of the team. Transformational leadership can also encourage employees to achieve long-term goals by creating innovative team goals. Although excessive task conflicts negatively affect performance, a transformational leader can reduce or prevent the negative effect because it will build the long-term vision and objective of the company. At the same time, transformational leadership inspires team members to find new knowledge through charisma and encourages the team through individual consideration, which helps team members resolve differences and misunderstandings (Chen et al., 2017). Therefore, it can reduce the negative effect of conflict.

The study by H W. Lee et al. (2018) at a large company in South Korea emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in conflict management to improve the team's creativity. According to H W. Lee et al. (2018), transformational leadership that focuses on the team tends to boost the

positive effect of task conflict by collecting and integrating team members and ensuring that they are directed to common goals. In other words, a team with transformational leadership has a better ability to be involved in the efforts to utilize debates and discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of ideas at work to improve creativity. Also, Masood and Javed (2016) asserted that transformational leadership has a vital role in improving employee's trust and its moderating role on the effect of conflict toward trust. The moderation effect of transformational leadership signifies that leadership is a positive element in building trust and commitment in an organization. Subordinates have more confidence in transformational leader's ability to handle task issues in the workplace. This belief encourages subordinates to build self-confidence and confidence in other employee's work quality. The moderating role of transformational leadership demonstrates the importance of leadership in influencing other organizational variables (Masood & Javed, 2016).

Leadership is an important factor that influences conflict in a work team. In a study in Australia, Ayoko and Konrad (2012) state that transformational leadership is an important factor in maintaining the high performance and morale of a group when the organization's condition is in conflict. The transformational behavior of a leader is helpful to reduce the negative effect of conflict on group performance. Task and relationship conflict are negatively related to performance and effective transformational leadership. They reduce the negative impact of the conflicts to zero. A leader with transformational behavior can minimize the negative impact of task and relationship conflict on group performance, while a less skilled leadership will result in worse performance under conflict. Therefore, the development of leadership is very important for organizational performance (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Masood & Javed, 2016; H W. Lee et al., 2018). In relation to the arguments that have been put forward, there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Masood & Javed, 2016; H W. Lee et al., 2018). This means that the higher the transformational leadership, the higher the employee's performance. This means that when in an organization, transformational leadership shows its participation in solving all problems that occur, it will have a direct impact on employee performance. The following is a hypothesis formulated to describe the argument.

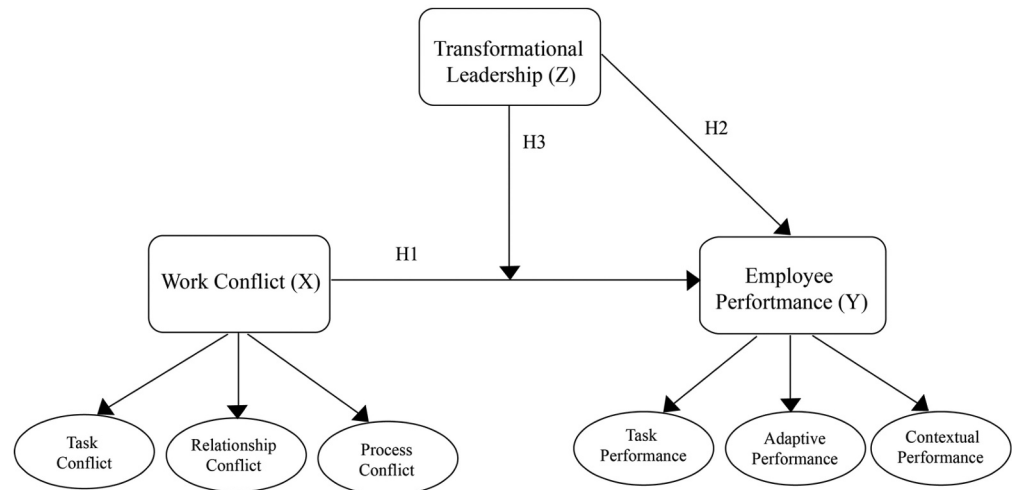
Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

Additionally, Ayoko and Callan (2010) suggested that a leader needs to manage conflicts to create high performance. A leader acts as a bridge connecting team members to achieve performance. Employee's reaction toward conflict emphasizes leadership as a moderator between conflict and performance. Good leadership will influence employees in doing their work. Therefore, a leader is believed to change their followers and the situation they are facing. Based on the arguments discussed above, the following is the formulated hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Transformational leadership moderates the effect of work conflict on employee performance.

The relationship between variables as hypothesized can be presented in Figure 1, which illustrates the moderating role of transformational leadership. The model explains that the level of employee performance of an organization, whether in the form of task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance, is influenced by the level of work conflict that occurs, both task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict. The process of this relationship is getting stronger or weaker depending on the participation of transformational leadership in resolving the conflict.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



3. Research methodology

3.1. Population and sampling

The employees' attitudinal behavior at Indonesia Railway operation control center is an interesting object to study. In this study, 150 employees were selected as samples using a convenience sampling technique. Self-administrated survey questionnaire was distributed to the Indonesian Railway Company. Pilot study of 30 respondents were conducted to minimize the bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The questionnaires contain two sections: the first section consists of demographic profiles of the respondents including, age, gender, and position. The second section contains a behavioural and attitudinal questions using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 Strongly Agree. Partial least squares (PLS) version 3.0 is a statistical method chosen to explain the relationship between variables as formulated in the hypothesis. This method was chosen for several reasons, including being able to show the significance of the path estimation without regard to the normality of the data and can be applied to both large and small samples (see, J. F. J. Hair et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

All items and questions asked in the second section were adopted from prior study. Work Conflict (X) is a difference of opinion between two or more organization members (Stoner & Wankel, 1985). This variable has three dimensions: (1) Task conflict; differences of opinion that arise from different points of view related to the task being carried out. (2) Relationship conflicts; differences of opinion that arise involving relationships between employees. (3) Process conflict; differences of opinion that arise regarding the ways and processes in carrying out tasks or works. Task conflict and relationship conflict are measured using the items adapted from Jehn (1995) on a 5-point Likert's scale, while process conflict measurement items were adapted from Shah and Jehn (1993) and measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Employee performance (Y) is the ability of employees to carry out their duties (Dessler, 2009) and has 3 dimensions: (1) Task performance, namely the ability of employees to carry out tasks to achieve company goals. (2) Adaptive performance, namely the ability of employees to adapt and provide the necessary encouragement for work in a dynamic work environment. (3) Contextual performance is pro-social behavior shown by employees in the work environment. Transformational leadership (Z) is defined as the leader's ability to make changes in workability, work motivation, work patterns, and work values from subordinates to optimize their ability to achieve organizational objectives (B. M. Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) on a 5-point Likert's scale. The MLQ was developed to assess various leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Employee performance in this study is measured using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) adapted from Koopmans et al. (2013) and measured using a 5-points Likert's scale. The measuring items were adopted from

Table 1. Characteristic of the respondents

Profile	Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	111	74
	Female	39	26
Age (Years Old)	21–30	13	8.7
	31–40	92	61.3
	41–50	42	28
	51<	3	2
Education (Degree)	High School	101	67.4
	Diploma	8	5.3
	Bachelor	41	27.3
Working experience	1–10 Years	13	8.7
	11–20 Years	92	61.3
	21–30 years	42	28
	31 Years <	3	32
Total		150	100

Bass and Avolio (1990), namely enthusiasm, full confidence, self-expression, thinking of ideas, motivation, new ways, attention, desire, appreciation.

4. Result

4.1. Statistical descriptive

The result of collected data in Table 1 describes that the majority of the respondents have Senior High School education (66.70%), followed by bachelor and diploma, most of the respondents have worked for 11–20 years (61.30%), 21–30 years (28.00%), and 1–10 years (8.70%), with the lowest proportion of employees who have worked more than 30 years (2.00%). The description of the respondent shows the individual profile used to justify the results of the study. This is necessary to avoid interpretation bias, towards the results obtained, if the model is applied to different objects and settings. Differences in results may occur, and this is something that is common or commonly referred to as empirical evidence from a study due to differences in the characteristics of the respondent's profile.

4.2. Measurement model analysis

Partial Least Squared Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was considered in this study as it is appropriate with the model and objective of the study (Dash & Paul, 2021). This approach includes measurement model analysis to explain the validity and reliability of the study data, secondary confirmatory factor analysis to explain the validity and reliability of each dimension identification, and general method bias tests to explain increasing possibility of bias due to respondent data collection and structural equation model analysis to test the hypothesis (Henseler et al., 2016). The results of the validity and reliability tests are presented in Tables 2 and 3 which show the loading factor value ranging from 0.76 to 0.907 so that the internal validity is good, the Cronbach's Alpha value ranges from 0.778 to 0.894 which means that the reliability is good, as well as the Composite Reliability (CR) value that ranges from .858 to .915 which indicates good reliability as well, while the average variance extract (AVE) value between 0.562 and 0.700, recommends a discriminant validity that is good. The test results of the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis which ranged from 1,000 to 1,148 indicate that there is no multicollinearity, so the correlation is not significant for the regression equation (Tables 2 and 3). Finally, discriminant validity was measured by comparing the correlation coefficient between AVE and this variable, as shown in Tables 4 and 5, the square root of the AVE of each construct is higher than the correlation coefficient, which indicates good discriminant validity among the potential variables.

Table 2. Convergent validity and reliability analysis results (Continue to Table 3)

Item	λ	t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Work Conflict (Jehn, 1995; Shah & Jehn, 1993):						
Task Conflict (Jehn, 1995)			.884	0.885	.609	1.000
C.1: Conflict often occurred regarding idea in job	.822	23.442				
C.2: Disagreement often occurred in job	.907	49.385				
C.3: Conflicting opinions often appear in job	.868	39.860				
C.4: Misunderstanding often occurred in job	.847	29.635				
Relationship Conflict (Jehn, 1995)			.778	.858	.603	1.000
C.5: Relationship tensions often occurred in job	.689	13.772				
C.6: Personal incompatibility often occurred	.801	18.340				
C.7: Emotional responses often appeared (annoyance, fear, hate) in job	.856	37.739				

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Item	λ	t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
C.8: Miscommunication occurred oftentimes	.751	18.609				
Process Conflict (Shah & Jehn, 1993)			.785	.875	.700	1.000
C.9: Disagreement on who must do something at work often occurred	.857	34.975				
C.10: Disagreement on responsibilities in completing certain tasks often occurred	.847	25.135				
C.11: Disagreement on how to perform a job often occurred	.804	22.654				
Transformational Leadership ^b (Bass & Avolio, 1990)			.889	.915	.643	1.148
TL.1: My leader makes me enthusiastic about performing my tasks	.768	15.434				
TL.3: My leader encourages his/her subordinate to share their ideas and opinions	.857	26.229				

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Item	λ	t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
TL5: My leader motivates his/her subordinates to consider old issues using new perspectives	.808	20.702				
TL6: My leader provides new means in solving tasks	.823	25.289				
TL8: My leader finds what his/her subordinate wanted and try to help them in achieving it	.739	13.862				
TL9: My leader provided awards when I worked well	.812	27.79				

Note: ^a deleted items, Loading Factor (λ); Cronbach Alpha (α); Composite Reliability (CR); Average Extracted Variance (AVE); Variance Inflation Variance (VIF); t-value (t)

Table 3. Convergent validity and reliability analysis results (Second part of Table 2)

Measure and constructing items		t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Employee Performance (Koopmans et al., 2013);						
Task Performance (Koopmans et al., 2013) ^b			.836	.885	.609	1.000
P.1: I always maintain a high-performance standard	.617	7.931				
P.3: I am high spirited in working	.772	22.350				
P.4: I could complete many tasks to achieve organizational objectives	.796	18.295				
P.5: I always completed my tasks on times	.866	35.911				
P.6: My colleagues believe that I am a high-performing employee	.827	31.936				
Adaptive Performance (Koopmans et al., 2013)			.857	.895	.589	1.000
P.7: I always share my knowledge for an effective work	.847	29.899				
P.8: I always manage changes in jobs well in any situation	.788	30.885				

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

Measure and constructing items		t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
P.9: I always believe that mutual understanding can lead to feasible solutions	.816	30.279				
P.10: As time goes by, I respond well to organizational changes	.576	9.452				
P.11: I always believe that mutual understanding can lead to feasible solutions	.763	18.657				
P.12: As time goes by, I respond well to organizational changes	.792	20.303				
Contextual Performance (Koopmans et al., 2013)			.894	.915	.562	1.000
P.13: When someone asks or need it, I always help my colleagues	.759	14.940				
P.15: When my colleagues are in problems, I always show sympathy for them	.825	32.230				
P.16: I actively participate in work discussion and meeting	.819	34.494				

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

Measure and constructing items		t	α	CR	AVE	VIF
P.17: I always praise my colleagues for their excellent job	.598	12.885				
P.18: I always get high satisfaction in helping others in the organization	.729	20.253				
P.19: I always share my opinion and idea	.830	27.761				
P.20: I always maintain a good coordination	.737	27.409				
P.22: I always communicate effectively with my colleagues to solve issues and make a decision	.740	20.621				

Note: ^a deleted items, Loading Factor (λ); Cronbach Alpha (α); Composite Reliability (CR); Average Extracted Variance (AVE); Variance Inflation Variance (VIF); t-value (t)

Table 4. Discriminant validity using fornell-lacker criterion

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transf. Leadership	4.02	.054	.802						
Adapt. Perf.	4.17	.016	.655	.768					
Contex. Perf.	4.14	.008	.733	.660	.750				
Task Perf.	4.00	.018	.573	.709	.752	.780			
Rel. conflict	2.31	.011	-.392	-.365	-.480	-.492	.777		
Proc. conflict	2.14	.021	-.350	-.363	-.460	-.485	.761	.836	
Task conflict	2.48	.011	-.252	-.308	-.418	-.503	.797	.700	.862

Table 5. Discriminant validity analysis using second-order factor

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adapt. Perf.	.768					
Context. Perf.	.660	.750				
Task Perf.	.709	.752	.780			
Relat. conflict	-.365	-.480	-.492	.777		
Process conflict	-.363	-.460	-.485	.761	.836	
Task conflict	-.308	-.418	-.503	.797	.700	.862

Table 6. Reliability analysis on second-order factors

Second-Order Factor	First-Order Factor	λ	AVE	α	CR
Work Conflict	Task conflict	.928	.569	.923	.935
	Relation conflict	.933			
	Process conflict	.877			
Work Perf.	Task Performance	.868	.500	.943	.952
	Adaptive performance	.925			
	Context. performance	.956			

Note: Loading Factor (λ); Cronbach Alpha (α); Composite Reliability (CR); Average Extracted Variance (AVE); Variance Inflation Variance (VIF); t-value (t)

4.2.1. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis

According to the previous explanation, employee performance consists of three dimensions, namely task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance, while work conflict consists of three dimensions, namely relational conflict, process conflict, and task conflict. To build and test a second-order factor model, this study used SmartPLS 3.0 to calculate factor loading, a Cronbach, CR, and AVE, and the results indicated good reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Tables 5 and 6).

4.2.2. Common method bias testing

Notwithstanding, there is a possibility of bias and information error related to the items being drafted, and this has the potential to affect the internal validity of the results obtained in this behavioral study using self-reported measurements (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Principal component factor analysis was conducted to detect the possibility of such bias, and the test results indicated that the largest variance value shown before factor rotation was 35.30%–45%. This shows that no single factor is loaded on all measures, so the bias of the common method shown is not a serious problem in this study.

4.3. Structural equation model analysis

SmartPLS 3.0 is a statistical tool used to test the relationship between hypothesized variables, and this can be seen in the structural equation model (Hair et al., 2013). The coefficient of determination (R^2) and the effect size test (f^2) are the core criteria in evaluating the structural equation model.

4.3.1. Main effect testing

The relationship between variables that explain the main effect is shown in hypothesis 1 which examines the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. The results of the analysis showed significant and negative results ($\beta = -.267$, $SD = .053$; $t = 5.169$) (see, Table 6). The negative relationship pattern can be interpreted that the higher the work conflict, the lower the employee's performance, and

Table 7. Main effect analysis result

Variable	Standardized coefficient	SD	t-value	p value
Work conflict	-.267	.053	5.169	.000
Transformational leadership	.626	.058	10.867	.000

Note: Dependent variable: Employee Performance

vice versa, the lower the work conflict, the higher the employee's performance. Thus, hypothesis 1 which is conceptualized is supported in this study. Furthermore, the outer loading results obtained indicate that the most dominant dimension of work conflict, which affects employee performance, is relationship conflict (loading = .933), next is task conflict (loading = .928), and the last is process conflict (loading = .877) (see, [Table 5](#)). It can also be explained here that the work conflict that occurs is included in the low-medium category (mean value for relationship conflict = 2.31; mean value for task conflict = 2.48; mean value for process conflict = 2.14) (see, [Table 3](#)). This shows that the conflicts that occur are still relatively easy to control and can be managed properly. Meanwhile, the outer loading results obtained indicate that employee performance is the most dominant dimension, namely contextual performance (loading = 0.956), next is adaptive performance (loading = 0.925), and lastly is performance task (loading = 0.868). Furthermore, the mean values obtained for the three dimensions of employee performance can be categorized as good (mean for task performance = 4.00; mean for adaptive performance = 4.17; mean for contextual performance = 4.14; [Table 4](#)). Furthermore, hypothesis 2 which conceptualizes the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance is also supported in this study. The results obtained indicate a significant and positive relationship ($\beta = .626$, $SD = .058$; $t = 10.867$; [Table 7](#)) which indicates that the higher the role of transformational leadership, the higher the employee's performance, and vice versa, the lower the role of transformational leadership, the lower the employee's performance.

4.3.2. Moderation effect testing

The conceptualized moderating effect can be explained through hypothesis 3, which explains the role of transformational leadership in moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. The results of the analysis showed a significant and negative moderating relationship ($\beta = -0.220$, $SD = 0.057$; $t = 3.863$; [Table 8](#)) so that hypothesis 3 is supported. A negative relationship pattern can be interpreted that the higher the role of transformational leadership, the weaker the relationship between work conflict and employee performance, on the contrary, the lower the role of transformational leadership, the stronger the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. The results of the analysis of the interaction effect (work conflict \times transformational leadership) showed a relatively high coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 64.50\%$). This means that transformational leadership makes a high contribution in weakening the relationship between conflict and performance. In addition, the size effect shown also indicates a strong influence ($f^2 = 0.525$), which means that transformational leadership has a strong role in weakening the relationship between work conflict and employee performance ([Table 8](#)). It

Table 8. Interaction effect test results

Variable	β	STDV	t	p	R^2	f^2
Work Conflict	-.209	.054	3.887	.000	25.20	.453
Trans. Leadership	.638	.056	11.638	.000	52.50	.138
Work Conflict \times Trans. Leadership	-.220	.057	3.863	.000	64.50	.525

Note: Standard Coefficient (β); STDV Standard Deviation (STDV); t-value (t); P-value (p); $R^2 = .25$ (weak); .50 (moderate); .75 (strong); $f^2 = .02$ (low); .15 (moderate); .35 (high)

is also explained here, that in addition to a significant moderating relationship, a significant and positive direct relationship was also found between transformational leadership and employee performance ($\beta = 0.638$, $SD = 0.056$; $t = 1.638$; Table 8). These results indicate that the moderating role of transformational leadership is partial or also called partially moderation. Thus, the result explains that transformational leadership not only plays a role in weakening the relationship between work conflict and employee performance but also improves employee performance.

5. Discussion

This study provides insight for the Indonesian Railway Company as well as for related organizations that have potential work conflicts. These findings should be considered when developing an effective strategy and policies to improve employee performance. In the present context, work conflict referred to the conflicts caused by three factors, namely relationship conflicts, task conflicts, and process conflicts. The results show that of the three conflicts, relationship conflicts have the greatest impact on employee performance. These conflicts arise because of different interests among employees such as pressure from friends, friendship incompatibilities, and emotional responses that occur in friendships. Task conflicts are the following types of conflicts that occur in the workplace that are caused by employee incompatibilities when processing work tasks such as incompatibility of ideas in work, differences of opinion in assignments, different opinions, misunderstanding in tasks. The latest types of conflicts that occur are process conflicts that often include discrepancies about who should assign for a particular duty, discrepancies about responsibility to complete a particular task, and discrepancies about how they work.

Accordingly, leader must understand these three types of conflicts in the order in which they arise, and companies must make policies to minimize the occurrence of each of these conflicts as much as possible. The idea is to create a work environment that promotes coexistence among employees, such as a program to promote friendship or a creative program that brings employee in group in order to reduce the occurrence of relationship conflicts. Meanwhile, regarding the emergence of task conflicts, leaders need to determine clear job descriptions for each section and employee, so that employees know exactly about their duties and responsibilities, so that there are no more conflicts or discrepancies due to different interpretations of tasks. For process conflicts as the last conflict that contributes to employee performance, the company must determine the flow of tasks that must be carried out by each employee so that there are no more disagreements between employees related to the work process.

The findings of this study indicate that the conflict that occurs in the company is still in the low-medium category for each type of conflict. This means that conflicts exist and occur but are still at a low-medium level. As a result, each type of conflict is relatively easy to control, and it is still relatively easy to find an effective solution. Hence, leaders may need to pay attention to the factors that cause the emergence of the conflict. This is essential in finding the right and efficient solution before the conflict research a high level. Furthermore, the findings of this study also provide insight that the worst impact of task conflict is the poor performance of employees. The negative relationship between task conflicts and employee performance found in this study is important information that needs to be pointed out in the fact that increasingly uncontrolled conflict has an impact on employee performance that is fact that increasingly uncontrolled conflicts negatively impact employee performance. Meanwhile, the type of employee performance that is most affected by work conflict is contextual performance, followed by adaptive performance, and finally task performance.

Contextual performance is the type of performance that is pro-social behavior shown by employees in the work environment such as paying attention to coworkers, participating together, helping friends at work, and other pro-social behaviors that make the work atmosphere pleasant (Alfonso et al., 2016; Imani et al., 2020). The result is in line with prior study indicating that this type of performance is most affected if work conflict occurs (Pregernig, 2017; Rezvani et al., 2017); contextual performance, followed by adaptive performance, and finally task performance. Moreover, similarly to Park and Park (2019), Marques-Quinteiro et al. (2019), and Javed et al. (2017) adaptive performance is affected by work conflict. In other words, adaptive performance is performance related to the ability of employees to adapt and

provide the necessary encouragement to work in a dynamic work environment, such as the willingness to share knowledge, the willingness to manage change, the willingness for mutual understanding to achieve the best solution, and the ability to respond to changes that occur at the same time. As a consequence, the company atmosphere becomes more comfortable. Finally, task performance is employee performance related to the ability of employees to carry out tasks to achieve company goals such as the desire to maintain high performance, willingness to handle work, high morale at work, willingness to complete work well, and the desire of other employees to improve task performance (Ariani, 2013). This study provides empirical evidence that the performance achieved by the company is included in the good category for the three types of employee performance. This requires a sustainable strategy to maintain this already good performance, in addition to minimizing work conflicts, leaders also need to think about other creative stimuli to improve employee performance.

Furthermore, this study provides insight related to the findings that explain the role of transformational leadership in improving employee performance. First, it was found that there is a direct relationship between the role of transformational leadership and employee performance. Supporting the prior findings, a positive relationship indicates that the company needs a transformational leader, namely a leader who can create a high sense of enthusiasm in work, can encourage subordinates, share ideas from subordinates, motivate subordinates, and respect subordinates and other transformational leader traits that make employees individualized (Alhashedi et al., 2021; Bureau et al., 2021; Goodwin et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2011). This kind of leader is needed by employees so that their existence affects them at work. Second, in addition to its direct effect on employee performance, this study also finds that transformational leadership plays a role in moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance. Therefore, conflicts that have an impact on employee performance can be weakened by the intervention of a transformational leader. Leaders can relieve work conflicts that occur so that the emergence of these conflicts can be appeased so that they do not have too much influence on employee performance.

In addition, this study can provide leaders with an understanding of the stimuli that need to be considered related to work conflicts that can affect employee performance in a company. It turns out that transformational leadership is a figure whose role is needed to reduce the emergence of work conflicts so that their impact can be minimized. Transformational leadership is very necessary in a company, because its existence in addition to providing coolness and comfort at work, its existence can also weaken the conflict relationship and employee performance that occurs. All three hypotheses conceptualized in this study were supported. First, hypothesis 1 which conceptualizes a negative relationship between work conflict and employee performance confirms the regularity of the phenomenon of a negative relationship to the relationship of the two variables as conceptualized in several previous studies (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jungst & Blumberg, 2016; Pregernig, 2017; Rezvani et al., 2018). This indicates that work conflict is a key variable that needs to be observed because its emergence can affect employee performance in various companies with different background factor profiles. Furthermore, transformational leadership is the next key variable that needs to be examined because its role has been shown to significantly affect employee performance (hypothesis 2) and its role in moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance (hypothesis 3; Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Masood & Javed, 2016; H W. Lee et al., 2018). Although the conceptualized hypothesis is supported in its testing, the concept still requires further testing, because this research is only limited to employees of the Indonesian railway company, so to increase its generalization, the concept still requires further studies in different companies with different background factor profiles.

6. Conclusion

This study emphasizes that workplace conflict is a stimulus conceptualized to be negatively related to employee performance, meaning that the higher the work conflict, the lower the employee's performance and vice versa. This study also underlines that the conceptualized transformational leadership is proven to significantly and negatively moderate the relationship between work conflict and employee performance, which means that the higher the role of transformational leadership, the weaker the relationship between work conflict and employee performance and vice versa. However,

the results obtained also indicate a direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. It can be concluded here that the transformational leadership conceptualized in this study is a variable that acts as a partial moderating variable, which means that in addition to moderating the relationship between work conflict and employee performance, transformational leadership is also positively related to employee performance. This relationship shows that the higher the transformational leadership, the higher the employee's performance.

Moreover, this study has twofold contributions. First, theoretically, this research contributes to the field of organizational behavior, especially cognitive leadership theory, which initially describes a cognitive process model that must be equated between leaders and subordinates to achieve organizational performance. In this study, a model was developed more specifically to explain the important role of transformational leadership in influencing conflicts within a company so that it does not negatively impact organizational performance. The model produced in this study has gone through a rigid testing process so that the correctness of the model can be justified methodologically. Practically, this research contributes to the professional fields in developing a strategy to improve organizational performance through employee conflict management and the need for transformational leadership roles to reduce workplace conflicts and prevent them from developing further and affect organizational performance. In the case of Indonesian Railway Company, although the work conflicts that arise are still in the low-medium category, it is suggested that management should continue to monitor and control the sources of conflict, whether the source of conflict comes from tasks, relationships, or the work implementation process. In this way, conflicts that occur do not develop and decrease employee performance.

Notwithstanding, limitation were acknowledged in this study. Several invalid items were dropped from the research model. This happened to the three items used to measure transformational leadership (TL.2: My leader gets full trust from their subordinates, TL.4: My leader tries to think of an idea their subordinates have never asked for before, and TL.7: My leader gives personal attention to subordinates who seem to be neglected). Three items used to measure work conflict were also dropped from the analysis (P.2: I can handle tasks without much supervision, P.14: I am always happy to take on additional responsibilities, and P.21: I always mentor new colleagues outside of work). This invalid result is not theoretical evidence but rather empirical evidence, meaning that in the objects and settings studied, the items are invalid, but if applied to different objects and settings, there is a possibility that these items will become valid. For future research, this study provides a reference for concepts that were developed and tested again in a different and broader context than the objects observed in this study. This expansion of context needs to be done as an effort to increase the generalizability of the model constructed in this study, therefore, providing empirical justification to apply the model to different contexts and different objects.

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