

Transformational Leadership and Work Flexibility Effects on Government Employee Performance with Team Cohesiveness

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effect of transformational leadership and work flexibility on government employee performance, with team cohesiveness as an intervening variable.

Methodology: The research was conducted among 234 employees of the Directorate General of Surveillance for Marine and Fisheries Resources in Indonesia. A quantitative approach was employed using SEM-PLS, with data collected through questionnaires using a simple random sampling method.

Results: The findings show that transformational leadership does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance, whereas work flexibility has a positive effect. However, both transformational leadership and work flexibility significantly influenced team cohesiveness. In addition, team cohesiveness positively affects employee performance and mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and performance and between work flexibility and performance.

Conclusions: This study emphasizes the importance of team cohesiveness in enhancing employee performance in the public sector. Leadership practices and flexible work arrangements are more effective when supported by cohesive team environments.

Limitations: This study is limited to the employees of *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan (Ditjen PSDKP)*, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other organizational contexts.

Contributions: This study provides empirical evidence of the mediating role of team cohesiveness and offers practical implications for policymakers and leaders to enhance performance and employee well-being through transformational leadership and flexible work arrangements.

Keywords: *Employee Performance, Employee Well-Being, Public Sector, Team Cohesiveness, Transformational Leadership*

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1. Introduction

Human resources are one of the most important assets in an organization, as employees act as thinkers, planners, and key drivers in achieving short-term, medium-term, and long-term organizational goals (Haryadi, Prahiawan, Nupus, & Wahyudi, 2021). Optimizing institutional responsibilities in response to the demands of rapid development encourages organizations to pay greater attention to the quality of human resources, particularly in relation to employee performance. Employees who do not experience work comfort, receive insufficient recognition, and lack opportunities to develop their potential tend to

experience decreased focus and concentration at work, which ultimately affects organizational performance ([Piter, 2025](#)).

In line with these dynamics, the Indonesian government has begun implementing flexible work policies through Presidential Regulation No. 21 of 2023 concerning the working days and hours of government institutions and civil servants, which was further strengthened by the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform No. 4 of 2025 regarding the flexible implementation of official duties for civil servants. This work flexibility policy aims to improve organizational and individual performance, as well as the quality of life of civil servants, through measurable performance assessments supported by the optimization of digital-based government systems. Changes in work patterns, increasing workforce expectations, and continuous demands for innovation require organizations to adopt more flexible and adaptive technology-based human resource management strategies. The emergence of remote working concepts and flexible working hours provides opportunities for employees to remain productive while simultaneously presenting challenges related to performance management, communication, collaboration, and team cohesiveness ([Metris, Rasyiddin, & Rismanto, 2025](#)).

Several studies in Indonesian government institutions have reported that transformational leadership significantly influences employee performance and organizational outcomes. Research conducted in local government agencies and public institutions, such as *Satuan Kerja Perangkat Daerah (SKPD)* and tax offices, demonstrates that transformational leadership enhances employee cohesiveness and performance ([Nur, 2017](#); [Susilowati, 2021](#)). In addition, studies in government-related institutions indicate that work flexibility can influence employee performance, although the results are inconsistent ([Siskayanti & Sanica, 2022](#)). Furthermore, team cohesiveness has been shown to contribute to employee performance in central government institutions ([Listyarini, 2024](#)). These findings suggest that leadership, flexibility, and team dynamics are important factors in public sector performance; however, their interrelationships require further examination.

The *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan*, an echelon I unit under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, has implemented flexible work policies in terms of location and working time. However, several challenges have emerged in their implementation, such as employees being difficult to contact while working from anywhere or from home, delays in task completion, attendance at online and offline meetings reaching only approximately 50%, and declining team cohesiveness. These conditions have affected civil servants' performance, as reflected in the decline of several organizational performance indicators in 2024 compared to 2023. The decline in organizational performance at Ditjen PSDKP in 2024 is reflected in several key indicators compared with 2023. The Organizational Performance Score decreased from 112.28% to 111.30%. The percentage of international cooperation implementation fell from 100% to 80%, while the completion rate of the *Norma, Standar, Prosedur, dan Kriteria (NSPK)* declined from 120% to 100%. In addition, audit findings by the Supreme Audit Agency increased from 0.03% to 0.10%, and procurement compliance dropped from 90.98 to 85.05. The Budget Implementation Performance Indicator also slightly decreased from 91.79 to 90.93. These trends indicate a weakening of performance and governance quality.

Declining performance, both at the individual and group levels, can significantly impact organizations. Performance refers to the results achieved by employees in terms of both quality and quantity, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them ([Guslina, 2025](#)). Employee performance reflects the ability of employees to carry out assigned tasks effectively, encompassing quality and quantity of work output, attendance, and timeliness ([Bethabara, Fatimah, & Emilisa, 2024](#)). Employee performance is a key element, as optimal performance enables employees to contribute maximally to the achievement of organizational goals ([Afianto, Budiati, & Kusnilawati, 2024](#)).

Amid rapid environmental changes, adaptive leadership is crucial for maintaining and improving employee performance. Organizational leaders must be able to lead flexibly, accelerate change processes, and foster a culture of innovation. Transformational leadership is widely recognized for

enhancing employee motivation and engagement, thereby contributing positively to job performance ([Jiatong et al., 2022](#)). Organizations led by transformational leaders tend to have more innovative employees who feel valued and demonstrate strong organizational commitment ([Northouse, 2025](#)). In addition to leadership, Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) are an important factor influencing employee performance. Work flexibility allows employees to determine their working time and location according to their tasks and responsibilities, thereby improving their work–life balance and productivity ([Ridho & Oktavianor, 2024](#)). Although many studies indicate the benefits of work flexibility for performance and employee well-being, previous research findings remain inconsistent, with some studies reporting significant positive effects and others finding no significant impact ([Musarofah & Djawoto, 2024](#); [Siskayanti & Sanica, 2022](#)).

Furthermore, team cohesiveness is an important characteristic of workgroups that supports the achievement of organizational performance ([Robbins & Judge, 2016](#)). Team cohesiveness enables interaction, cooperation, and mutual influence among members in the pursuit of shared goals. In the context of work flexibility and transformational leadership, team cohesiveness is considered a potential mediating factor in the relationship between these variables and employees' performance. Although previous studies in Indonesian public institutions have examined transformational leadership, work flexibility, and team cohesiveness separately ([Listyarini, 2024](#); [Nur, 2017](#); [Siskayanti & Sanica, 2022](#)). Limited research has integrated these variables within a single analytical framework by positioning team cohesiveness as a mediating mechanism. Moreover, inconsistent findings regarding the direct effects of leadership and flexibility on performance indicate the need to explore indirect pathways in the public sector.

Based on the performance issues observed at the *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan* and the inconsistent findings of previous studies regarding the effects of transformational leadership and work flexibility on performance, this study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and work flexibility on employee performance, with team cohesiveness as an intervening variable. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of human resource management, particularly in public sector organizations.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Transformational leadership is regarded as an important factor in enhancing organizational performance through leaders' ability to motivate, inspire, and direct subordinates to achieve shared goals ([Wibisono, 2022](#)). Numerous studies have shown that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, as it fosters positive working relationships, increases motivation, and provides clear direction and vision ([Fortuna, 2024](#); [Piter, 2025](#)). In organizational settings, transformational leadership is essential for improving employee performance. The stronger the transformational leadership style, the higher the level of employee performance ([Hayati & Rini, 2025](#)).

Through intellectual stimulation and idealized influence, transformational leaders encourage subordinates to think creatively, demonstrate commitment, and perform optimally in addressing organizational challenges ([Nasution & Sibuea, 2025](#)). In the public sector, transformational leadership is particularly important because of bureaucratic structures and formalized procedures that may limit employee initiative. Studies in government institutions have shown that transformational leaders enhance employee engagement and performance, which supports organizational adaptability ([Nur, 2017](#); [Susilowati, 2021](#)). Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₁: Transformational leadership affects employee performance

2.2 Work Flexibility and Employee Performance

Employee performance is a key indicator of an organization's success in achieving its strategic objectives. Therefore, employees need to be continuously encouraged to align their work standards with organizational expectations to achieve the organization's vision and mission ([Budiono, Husen, &](#)

[Suparno 2025](#)). In this context, work flexibility has become a critical issue in modern human resource management, particularly in the face of changing work patterns. Several studies indicate that work flexibility does not always have a direct impact on performance, especially in work-from-home settings, where comfort and autonomy in determining working time and location are not necessarily followed by increased productivity ([Siskayanti & Sanica, 2022](#); [Sitorus & Siagian, 2023](#)).

However, other studies suggest that work flexibility can improve performance when supported by psychological factors such as motivation and job satisfaction ([Musarofah & Djawoto, 2024](#)). In addition, workplace flexibility has been shown to enhance work–life balance and productivity, which positively affect organizational performance, although it may also generate negative outcomes if not managed properly ([Bhusan & Sar, 2020](#)). Flexible workspaces have also been found to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance by improving job satisfaction, collaboration, and communication among employees ([Raza, 2023](#)). In public sector organizations, the implementation of work flexibility requires careful coordination due to the structured procedures and formal accountability systems. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H₂: Work flexibility affects employee performance

2.3 Transformational Leadership and Team Cohesiveness

Transformational leadership has been shown to foster team motivation and cohesiveness by empowering and inspiring members to collaborate toward shared goals ([Greimel, Kanbach, & Chelaru, 2023](#)). Previous studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly affects employee cohesiveness, as it enhances cooperation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation among employees ([Nur, 2017](#)). Furthermore, transformational leadership has been shown to influence group cohesiveness, as transformational leaders possess unique capabilities to build more cohesive teams through their behaviors and characteristics. Empowering, inspirational, and supportive leaders can create a harmonious work environment, strengthen cooperation, and foster team solidarity ([Patoding, 2024](#)). Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₃: Transformational leadership affects team cohesiveness

2.4 Work Flexibility and Team Cohesiveness

Work flexibility can strengthen team cohesiveness by providing autonomy and accommodating individual needs, thereby encouraging more effective communication and collaboration among team members ([Pasupuleti, 2024](#)). However, in remote work contexts, work flexibility may present challenges such as social isolation, digital fatigue, and blurred work–life boundaries. Therefore, organizations must cultivate a supportive work culture to maintain positive relationships and sustain team cohesiveness. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₄: Work flexibility affects team cohesiveness

2.5 Team Cohesiveness and Employee Performance

Team cohesiveness is a key factor in enhancing team effectiveness and performance. Research has shown that team cohesiveness positively and significantly affects team performance. Highly cohesive teams tend to be more effective and capable of achieving performance targets more successfully, as strong cohesion encourages supportive behaviors and the development of shared norms that enhance performance ([Chaudhary, Chopra, & Kaur, 2022](#); [Wang, Xu, & Liu, 2024](#)). Teams with high levels of cohesiveness are also more adaptable in their response to change ([Ejaz, Shafique, & Qammar, 2024](#)). Moreover, team cohesiveness has a reciprocal relationship with performance, in which cohesiveness can predict future performance, and high performance further strengthens it. In government institutions, team cohesiveness is crucial because of the need for coordination and regulatory compliance. Research has shown that cohesive teams improve performance and organizational effectiveness ([Braun, Kozłowski, Brown, & DeShon, 2020](#); [Listyarini, 2024](#)). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₅: Team cohesiveness affects employee performance

2.6 The Mediating Role of Team Cohesiveness

Team cohesiveness functions as a relational mechanism that connects leadership behavior and work policies to the performance outcomes. When leaders provide support and organizations implement

flexible work arrangements, employees tend to develop stronger interpersonal bonds and shared commitments, which facilitate higher performance. Transformational leadership operates directly and indirectly through social mechanisms within teams. By fostering trust, mutual respect, and shared goals, transformational leaders strengthen team cohesion. High levels of cohesiveness promote collaboration, open communication, and psychological safety, which ultimately enhance employee and organizational performance (Mi, Zhang, Li, & Li, 2021; Patoding, 2024; Zhao, Qu, & Li, 2021). Therefore, the influence of transformational leadership on performance may operate indirectly through strengthening team cohesiveness.

Similarly, work flexibility may indirectly influence performance through team cohesiveness. Flexible work policies reflect organizational trust and autonomy, which can reinforce collective responsibility and cooperation within teams (Nawaz, Khan, & Ali, 2023; Wulandaru, Ningtiyas, & Nasrulloh, 2025). When effectively managed, such flexibility enhances team interaction and shared commitment, thereby improving work effectiveness and employee performance. Moreover, flexibility that supports work–life balance contributes to employee well-being, which further reinforces engagement and performance (Lee, Kim, & Choi, 2025). Thus, the impact of work flexibility on performance may depend on its ability to foster stronger team cohesiveness rather than merely providing autonomy.

Based on the above arguments, team cohesiveness is positioned as an intervening variable that mediates the effects of transformational leadership and work flexibility on employee performance. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

- H_6 : Transformational leadership has an indirect effect on employee performance through team cohesiveness
- H_7 : Work flexibility has an indirect effect on employee performance through team cohesiveness

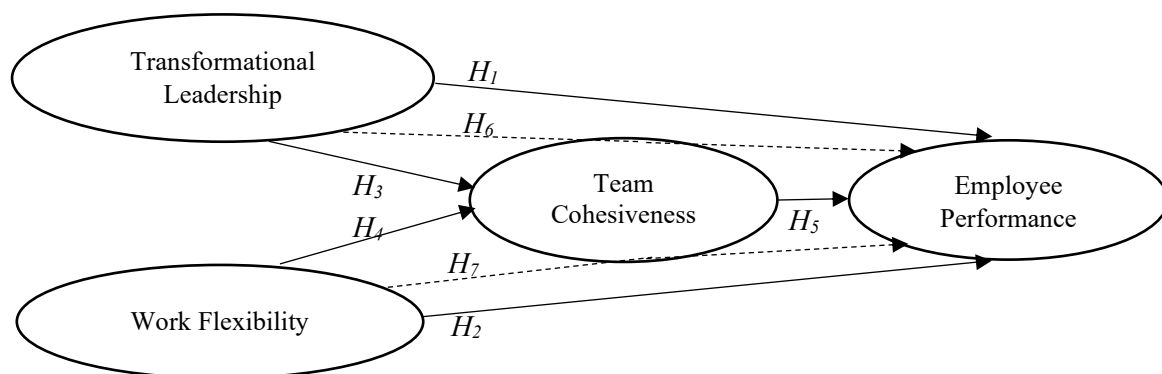


Figure 1. Research design

The figure 1 above illustrates the research design for studying the relationships between transformational leadership, work flexibility, team cohesiveness, and employee performance. It shows the hypothesized pathways between these variables, with transformational leadership and work flexibility acting as independent variables influencing team cohesiveness, which in turn affects employee performance. The arrows represent the directional relationships, while the hypotheses (H_1 - H_7) indicate the proposed links between the constructs.

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the effects of transformational leadership and work flexibility on employee performance, with team cohesiveness as an intervening variable in the study. The research population comprised all civil servants at the *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan (Ditjen PSDKP)*, who implemented a flexible working system. A total of 234 employees participated as respondents, selected using a saturation sampling technique. Although saturated sampling allows the inclusion of all

accessible members of the target population, this technique may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the Ditjen PSDKP. The characteristics of the institution, organizational culture, and implementation of flexible work policies may differ from those of other government agencies. Therefore, the results should be interpreted within the specific institutional context of this study's setting.

Table 1. Variable operationalization

Variables	Indicators	Scale	Source
Transformational Leadership (X_1)	Idealized Influence; Inspirational Motivation; Intellectual Stimulation Individualized Considerations.	Interval 1–10	(Jiatong et al., 2022)
Work Flexibility (X_2)	Time Flexibility; Location Flexibility; Task Flexibility; Workload Flexibility.	Interval 1–10	(Egole & Stella, 2020)
Team Cohesiveness (Y)	Task Cohesiveness; Social Cohesiveness.	Interval 1–10	(Ejaz et al., 2024)
Employee Performance (Z)	Work Quality; Work Quantity; Timeliness; Effectiveness; Independence.	Interval 1–10	(Robbins & Judge, 2016)

Data were collected using closed-ended questionnaires distributed online using Google Forms. The research instrument was developed based on the dimensions and indicators of transformational leadership, work flexibility, team cohesiveness, and employee performance, adapted from the prior literature. Measurements were conducted using an interval scale ranging from 1 to 10, applying an agree–Disagree Scale, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 10 represents Strongly Agree for all variables. The operationalization of the research variables is shown in Table 1.

Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the assistance of SmartPLS software version 4.0. The PLS-SEM approach was chosen because it does not require multivariate normal data distribution and is suitable for models involving latent variables with relatively small sample sizes. The analysis included the evaluation of the measurement and structural models, as well as hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping technique. Hypotheses were accepted if the t-statistic value exceeded 1.96 at the 5% significance level.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this study comprised 234 employees from the central units of the *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan (Ditjen PSDKP)*. Respondent characteristics were analyzed based on age, gender, education level, length of service, and job category. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were aged 41–50 years (95 individuals, 40.6%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (88 individuals, 37.6%), 20–30 years (27 individuals, 11.5%), and 50–60 years (24 individuals, 10.3%). Based on gender, respondents were predominantly male, with 147 individuals (62.8%), while female respondents accounted for 87 individuals (37.2%).

Regarding education level, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (S1), totaling 133 individuals (56.8%), followed by a master's degree (S2) with 62 individuals (26.5%), senior high school or equivalent with 26 individuals (11.1%), and a diploma (D3) with 12 individuals (5.1%). In terms of length of service, the majority of respondents had worked for 11–20 years, totaling 115 individuals

(49.1%), followed by 0–10 years (78 individuals, 33.3%), 21–30 years (33 individuals, 14.1%), and 31–40 years (8 individuals, 3.4%). Based on job category, respondents were predominantly functional officials, totaling 134 individuals (57.3%), followed by implementing staff with 85 individuals (36.3%), structural officials with 9 individuals (3.8%), and Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) with 6 individuals (2.6%).

4.1.2 Instrument Testing

The validity of the instrument in this study was examined using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach in two stages. Convergent validity was assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), with a loading factor threshold of greater than 0.70. Discriminant validity was evaluated using cross-loading values, where each indicator was required to have a higher correlation with its associated construct than with other constructs, this can be seen in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Items	Transformational Leadership (X_1)	Work Flexibility (X_2)	Team Cohesiveness (Y)	Employee Performance (Z)	Status
X_1 1	0,814				Valid
X_1 10	0,905				Valid
X_1 11	0,877				Valid
X_1 12	0,889				Valid
X_1 13	0,726				Valid
X_1 14	0,847				Valid
X_1 15	0,868				Valid
X_1 16	0,907				Valid
X_1 2	0,842				Valid
X_1 3	0,892				Valid
X_1 4	0,794				Valid
X_1 5	0,874				Valid
X_1 6	0,929				Valid
X_1 7	0,908				Valid
X_1 8	0,903				Valid
X_1 9	0,888				Valid
X_2 1		0,775			Valid
X_2 10		0,764			Valid
X_2 2		0,789			Valid
X_2 3		0,784			Valid
X_2 4		0,735			Valid
X_2 5		0,804			Valid
X_2 6		0,796			Valid
X_2 7		0,782			Valid
X_2 8		0,818			Valid
X_2 9		0,765			Valid
Y1			0,871		Valid
Y10			0,909		Valid
Y11			0,919		Valid
Y12			0,907		Valid

Y13			0,717		Valid
Y14			0,802		Valid
Y15			0,770		Valid
Y16			0,829		Valid
Y17			0,755		Valid
Y2			0,879		Valid
Y3			0,906		Valid
Y4			0,861		Valid
Y5			0,907		Valid
Y6			0,903		Valid
Y7			0,925		Valid
Y8			0,936		Valid
Y9			0,891		Valid
Z1				0,865	Valid
Z10				0,869	Valid
Z11				0,830	Valid
Z12				0,907	Valid
Z13				0,843	Valid
Z14				0,890	Valid
Z15				0,730	Valid
Z2				0,790	Valid
Z3				0,866	Valid
Z4				0,920	Valid
Z5				0,905	Valid
Z6				0,894	Valid
Z7				0,913	Valid
Z8				0,904	Valid
Z9				0,911	Valid

Table 3. Cross loading results

Items	Transformational Leadership (X_1)	Work Flexibility (X_2)	Team Cohesiveness (Y)	Employee Performance (Z)
X_1 1	0,814	0,594	0,652	0,562
X_1 10	0,905	0,620	0,675	0,545
X_1 11	0,877	0,652	0,636	0,524
X_1 12	0,889	0,662	0,672	0,528
X_1 13	0,726	0,514	0,541	0,382
X_1 14	0,847	0,607	0,633	0,439
X_1 15	0,868	0,639	0,638	0,463
X_1 16	0,907	0,667	0,687	0,520
X_1 2	0,842	0,598	0,632	0,579
X_1 3	0,892	0,623	0,674	0,522
X_1 4	0,794	0,600	0,554	0,423
X_1 5	0,874	0,609	0,616	0,479

X ₁ 6	0,929	0,601	0,683	0,523
X ₁ 7	0,908	0,573	0,622	0,514
X ₁ 8	0,903	0,639	0,693	0,542
X ₁ 9	0,888	0,580	0,664	0,484
X ₂ 1	0,560	0,775	0,545	0,439
X ₂ 10	0,547	0,764	0,626	0,537
X ₂ 2	0,566	0,789	0,569	0,392
X ₂ 3	0,489	0,784	0,544	0,371
X ₂ 4	0,481	0,735	0,556	0,527
X ₂ 5	0,584	0,804	0,669	0,518
X ₂ 6	0,532	0,796	0,543	0,439
X ₂ 7	0,666	0,782	0,765	0,554
X ₂ 8	0,525	0,818	0,627	0,604
X ₂ 9	0,524	0,765	0,572	0,646
Y1	0,644	0,703	0,871	0,567
Y10	0,685	0,692	0,909	0,658
X ₁ 1	0,814	0,594	0,652	0,562
Y11	0,659	0,722	0,919	0,646
Y12	0,641	0,702	0,907	0,649
Y13	0,537	0,553	0,717	0,469
Y14	0,581	0,617	0,802	0,553
Y15	0,519	0,580	0,770	0,683
Y16	0,631	0,597	0,829	0,590
Y17	0,619	0,562	0,755	0,543
Y2	0,683	0,729	0,879	0,649
Y3	0,704	0,729	0,906	0,662
Y4	0,699	0,681	0,861	0,635
Y5	0,656	0,726	0,907	0,629
Y6	0,671	0,699	0,903	0,639
Y7	0,665	0,709	0,925	0,631
Y8	0,669	0,709	0,936	0,617
Y9	0,635	0,711	0,891	0,608
Z1	0,500	0,554	0,620	0,865
Z10	0,518	0,596	0,719	0,869
Z11	0,544	0,573	0,711	0,830
Z12	0,532	0,604	0,672	0,907
Z13	0,473	0,599	0,634	0,843
Z14	0,502	0,566	0,614	0,890
Z15	0,392	0,397	0,421	0,730
Z2	0,516	0,562	0,601	0,790
Z3	0,508	0,594	0,665	0,866
Z4	0,494	0,553	0,578	0,920
Z5	0,494	0,577	0,590	0,905
Z6	0,516	0,574	0,568	0,894

Z7	0,570	0,588	0,600	0,913
Z8	0,522	0,574	0,601	0,904
Z9	0,478	0,581	0,598	0,911

4.1.3 Data Analysis

Tabel 4. R-Square results

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Team Cohesiveness (Y)	0,680	0,677
Employee Performance (Z)	0,532	0,526

Table 4 shows that the R-square value for team cohesiveness is 0.677 (67.7%), indicating that variations in team cohesiveness can be explained by transformational leadership and work flexibility, while the remaining 32.3% is influenced by other variables not included in this study. Meanwhile, the R-square value for employee performance is 0.526 (52.6%), indicating that variations in performance can be explained by transformational leadership, work flexibility, and team cohesiveness, with the remaining 47.4% being influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this research.

Tabel 5. F-Square results

Variables	Team Cohesiveness (Y)	Employee Performance (Z)
Transformational Leadership (X_1)	0,232	0,002
Work Flexibility (X_2)	0,406	0,044
Team Cohesiveness (Y)		0,160

Table 5 indicates that the F-square value of transformational leadership on team cohesiveness is 0.232, reflecting a moderate effect size. The F-square value of transformational leadership on employee performance was 0.002, indicating a weak effect. The f-square value of work flexibility on team cohesiveness was 0.406, which represented a strong effect, while its effect on employee performance was relatively small, with an f-square value of 0.044. Furthermore, the f-square value of team cohesiveness on employee performance was 0.160, indicating a moderate effect.

4.1.3 Path Analysis

Path analysis was obtained from the bootstrapping results of hypothesis testing. The values displayed in the figure represent the t-statistic values, which indicate the relationships among variables and between variables and their indicators. Path analysis of this research is shown in Figure 2 below.

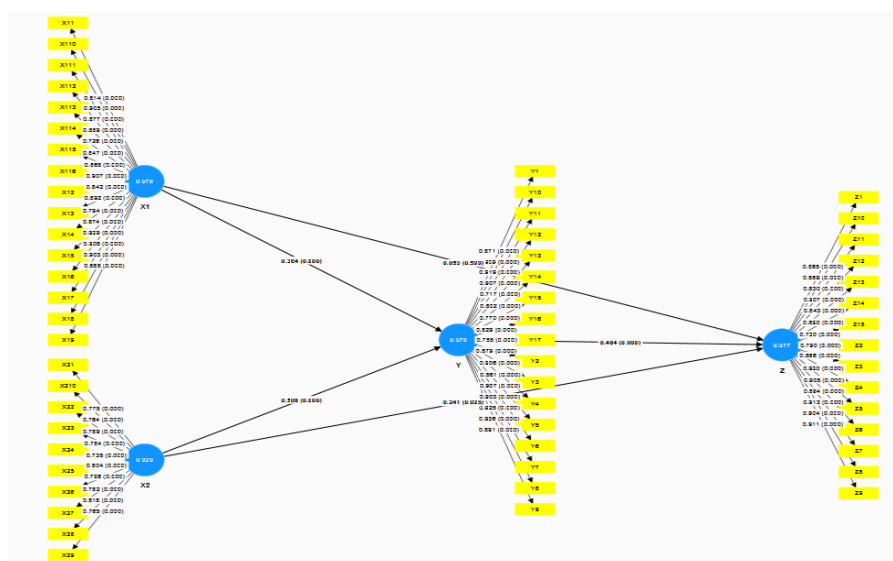


Figure 2. Path diagram of T-Statistic values (bootstrapping)

Table 6. Hypothesis testing based on path coefficients

Variables	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Remarks
$X_1 \rightarrow Z$	0,053	0,526	0,599	Not significant
$X_2 \rightarrow Z$	0,241	2,244	0,025	Positive and significant
$X_1 \rightarrow Y$	0,384	3,917	0,001	Positive and significant
$X_2 \rightarrow Y$	0,508	5,756	0,001	Positive and significant
$Y \rightarrow Z$	0,484	4,107	0,001	Positive and significant
$X_1 \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z$	0,186	3,062	0,002	Positive and significant
$X_2 \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z$	0,246	3,095	0,002	Positive and significant

Table 6 indicates that while transformational leadership does not have a direct effect on employee performance, it does have a positive and significant effect on team cohesiveness. Work flexibility has a positive and significant direct effect on employee performance and team cohesiveness. Furthermore, team cohesiveness positively and significantly affects employee performance. The results of the indirect effect testing show that transformational leadership and work flexibility have positive and significant effects on employee performance through team cohesiveness as an intervening variable.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The effect of transformational leadership on employee performance showed an original sample value of 0.053, indicating a positive but weak relationship. The statistical test results reveal a t-statistic value of 0.526 (< 1.96) and a p-value of 0.599 (> 0.05), indicating that transformational leadership does not significantly affect performance. This condition is influenced by the performance management system at Ditjen PSDKP, which is formally structured and standardized in nature. Employee performance is largely determined by measurable target-setting, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms, including the performance allowance system. Within this framework, the role of the leaders is relatively limited. Therefore, although respondents perceive transformational leadership positively, its influence does not directly translate into improved employee performance.

This finding is inconsistent with those of previous studies by [Fortuna \(2024\)](#) and [Piter \(2025\)](#), which found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. However, the present study supports the findings of [Susilowati \(2021\)](#), who reported that transformational leadership does not significantly affect performance. Nevertheless, leaders are still required to build strong interpersonal relationships with subordinates to foster mutual respect, trust, and togetherness, as well as possess systematic thinking skills, experience, and knowledge in formulating work plans ([Wibisono, 2022](#)).

4.2.2 The Effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Performance

The effect of work flexibility on employee performance had an original sample value of 0.241, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results show a t-statistic value of 2.244 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.025 (< 0.05), indicating that work flexibility has a significant effect on employee performance. These results suggest that well-managed work flexibility can enhance employee performance at the *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan*. Providing employees with autonomy to prioritize tasks, determine work methods, adjust working hours, and manage workload volume with supervisory approval as stipulated in performance contracts supported by adequate technology and infrastructure, can reduce psychological pressure, increase intrinsic motivation, and strengthen a sense of ownership toward the work. These conditions ultimately contribute to improved employee performance and productivity.

This finding is consistent with those of [Musarofah and Djawoto \(2024\)](#), [Raza \(2023\)](#), and [Garibaldi and Hayati \(2022\)](#), who indicated that work flexibility positively and significantly affects employee performance through increased job satisfaction, communication, and productivity.¹ However, this result contrasts with the findings of [Siskayanti and Sanica \(2022\)](#), who suggested that work flexibility does

not always lead to improved performance during work-from-home arrangements. In addition, the present study differs from the research by [Istifarah, Fajri, and Purwanto \(2025\)](#), who found that flexible working hours did not directly influence employee performance but instead operated through a mediating variable, namely work-life balance. Additionally, [Bhusan and Sar \(2020\)](#) emphasize that although workplace flexibility can enhance performance and employee well-being, improper implementation may lead to negative outcomes.

4.2.3 The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Team Cohesiveness

The effect of transformational leadership on team cohesiveness showed an original sample value of 0.384, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results revealed a t-statistic value of 3.917 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating that transformational leadership has a significant effect on team cohesiveness. This finding indicates that transformational leadership grounded in values and ethics can foster trust and respect, instill enthusiasm and motivation, appreciate diverse perspectives, and demonstrate commitment to shared goals, thereby enhancing team cohesiveness. Team members are encouraged to exert their best efforts, collaborate in problem-solving, and develop a sense of pride and attachment as integral members of the team in accomplishing organizational tasks.

This result is consistent with the findings of [Patoding \(2024\)](#), who indicated that transformational leadership significantly influences group cohesiveness. Transformational leaders possess unique capabilities to build cohesive teams through their behaviors and characteristics. Such leadership creates an environment in which team members feel inspired, supported, and motivated to work collaboratively toward shared objectives, directly contributing to increased team cohesiveness in both task-related and social dimensions ([Efriliansyah, 2023](#)).

4.2.4 The Effect of Work Flexibility on Team Cohesiveness

The effect of work flexibility on team cohesiveness had an original sample value of 0.508, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results show a t-statistic value of 5.756 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating that work flexibility has a significant effect on team cohesiveness. This finding is consistent with research [Pasupuleti \(2024\)](#), which demonstrates that work flexibility can strengthen team cohesiveness by providing autonomy and accommodating individual needs, thereby encouraging better communication and collaboration among team members.

4.2.5 The Effect of Team Cohesiveness on Employee Performance

The effect of team cohesiveness on employee performance shows an original sample value of 0.484, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results revealed a t-statistic value of 4.107 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating that team cohesiveness significantly affects employee performance. This finding underscores the importance of team cohesiveness in supporting optimal employee performance within work units ([Listyarini, 2024](#)). This aligns with [Chaudhary et al. \(2022\)](#) study, which found that team cohesiveness has a positive and significant effect on virtual team performance, and research [Ejaz et al. \(2024\)](#), which highlights the role of team cohesiveness in enhancing adaptive employee performance. [Braun et al. \(2020\)](#) further demonstrated that team cohesiveness and coordination jointly influence team performance, reflecting a reciprocal relationship in which cohesiveness predicts future employee performance, whereas strong performance subsequently reinforces team cohesiveness.

4.2.6 The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance Mediated by Team Cohesiveness

The effect of transformational leadership on employee performance, as mediated by team cohesiveness, shows an original sample value of 0.186, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results revealed a t-statistic value of 3.062 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05), indicating that transformational leadership has a significant effect on employee performance through team cohesiveness as a mediating variable. This finding is consistent with [Patoding \(2024\)](#), who argued that inspirational and motivating transformational leadership strengthens interpersonal relationships within teams, enhances collaboration, and creates a more harmonious work environment. As a result, team cohesiveness becomes stronger and contributes to improved performance. Furthermore, [Mi et al. \(2021\)](#)

and [Zhao et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasized that transformational leaders create inspiring, supportive, and challenging work environments that foster more cohesive teams through enhanced collaboration, psychological safety, and strong goal commitment, ultimately leading to higher performance.

4.2.7 The Effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Performance Mediated by Team Cohesiveness

The effect of work flexibility on employee performance, as mediated by team cohesiveness, has an original sample value of 0.246, indicating a positive relationship. The statistical test results show a t-statistic value of 3.095 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05), indicating that work flexibility significantly affects employee performance through team cohesiveness as a mediating variable. This finding aligns with study [Sitorus and Siagian \(2023\)](#), which suggests that work flexibility does not directly influence employee job satisfaction, despite providing autonomy over working time and location. However, when team cohesiveness was the mediating variable, work flexibility had a significant effect on performance. Increased flexibility that strengthens team cohesiveness subsequently leads to improved employee performance.

4.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for public sector management, particularly in government institutions that implement flexible work policies. First, the insignificant direct effect of transformational leadership on employee performance suggests that leadership development programs in public institutions should not only focus on individual motivation but also emphasize strategies to strengthen team cohesiveness and collaboration. Leaders should actively facilitate team-building activities, regular coordination forums, and structured communication channels to ensure that employees remain aligned with shared goals, despite flexible work arrangements. Second, because work flexibility significantly influences both team cohesiveness and employee performance, public sector organizations should design clear and structured flexible work guidelines. This may include establishing measurable performance indicators, mandatory coordination schedules, digital monitoring systems, and hybrid work protocols that maintain accountability while preserving the flexibility of the workers.

Third, the strong mediating role of team cohesiveness indicates that flexible work policies should be accompanied by initiatives that foster interpersonal trust and collaboration among team members. Government agencies can implement periodic in-person meetings, cross-unit collaboration programs, mentoring systems, and internal digital collaboration platforms to maintain strong team dynamics. Overall, the results suggest that flexible work policies in the public sector should not be implemented solely as administrative adjustments but as part of an integrated management strategy that combines transformational leadership practices and structured team development to sustain employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the hypothesis testing results, this study indicates that transformational leadership does not have a direct effect on employee performance at Ditjen PSDKP, suggesting that performance improvement in public institutions is not solely determined by leadership style but is also shaped by structured performance management systems. In contrast, work flexibility has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, indicating that autonomy in managing the working time and location can enhance motivation and responsibility. The findings also reveal that both transformational leadership and work flexibility significantly influence team cohesiveness, which, in turn, positively affects employee performance. Importantly, team cohesiveness serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the effects of transformational leadership and work flexibility on performance.

These results emphasize that performance enhancement in the public sector depends not only on leadership practices and flexible work policies but also on the organization's ability to foster and sustain cohesive teams within the organization. From a managerial perspective, public sector organizations should prioritize leadership development programs that emphasize team-building competencies, trust-building practices, and effective communication in flexible work environments. In addition, flexible

work policies should be supported by clear guidelines, structured coordination mechanisms, and measurable performance indicators to ensure accountability while maintaining the autonomy of employees. Strengthening team cohesiveness through structured collaboration and supportive leadership is essential for sustaining employee performance in the evolving public sector work environment.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the research was conducted within the central units of a single government institution, namely, the *Direktorat Jenderal Pengawasan Sumber Daya Kelautan dan Perikanan (Ditjen PSDKP)*. Although the use of saturated sampling ensures adequate representation within the institution, the findings may reflect specific organizational characteristics, leadership dynamics, and flexible work implementation practices that differ from those of other public sector organizations. Second, this study employed a cross-sectional research design that captured the relationships among variables at a single point in time. Consequently, the results do not fully reflect the possible dynamic changes in leadership practices, team cohesiveness, and employee performance over time. Third, the data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response or social desirability bias. Although statistical procedures were applied to ensure reliability and validity, the perception-based measurement approach may not entirely represent the objective performance outcomes.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research should expand the scope of this study by involving multiple government institutions or conducting comparative analyses across public sector organizations to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies between public and private sector settings may provide deeper insights into the contextual differences in leadership effectiveness and flexible work implementation. Subsequent studies may extend the research model by incorporating additional variables, such as organizational culture, employee engagement, work–life balance, or Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of employee performance dynamics. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how leadership practices and flexible work policies influence team cohesiveness and performance over time, particularly in the context of ongoing bureaucratic and digital governance transformations.

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Author Contributions

The contributions of the authors to this study are as follows: MNH was responsible for the conceptualization of the research, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, and the writing of the original draft. SA contributed to the methodology, validation, supervision and provided critical revisions for the manuscript, including the review and editing of the paper. Both authors gave their final approval of the manuscript.

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