Transformational Leadership as a Driver of Employee Engagement in CSR Programs

Jeje Abdul Rojak

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

A R T I C L E I N F O

Article history:
Received 16 November 2024
Revised 22 November 2024
Accepted 06 December 2024

Key words:
Transformational leadership, Employee engagement, Corporate social responsibility, Qualitative literature review, Organizational behavior.

A B S T R A C T

This research examines the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement in corporate social responsibility programs through a qualitative literature study. By synthesizing findings from various published studies, this review identifies multiple pathways through which transformational leadership influences employee participation in CSR activities. The analysis reveals that employees perceive transformational leadership as affecting CSR engagement through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, role modeling, and supportive psychological climate. Organizational identification, empowerment, effective communication, recognition, capacity building, and meaning creation emerge as key mechanisms linking transformational leadership to CSR participation. The influence proves cumulative and generates positive dynamics in which individual participation reinforces collective engagement. These findings enrich theoretical understanding of leadership and CSR relationships while offering practical guidance for organizations seeking to enhance employee participation in social responsibility initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations face dual demands to achieve economic performance while simultaneously demonstrating responsibility toward the social environment. Such demands drive companies to continuously update human resource management practices to remain competitive amidst rapidly unfolding globalization (Abdullah et al., 2021). Public expectations toward corporations are no longer limited to the provision of quality goods and services, but encompass active participation in resolving social issues (Pawłowska & Márta, 2022). Various enterprises respond to these demands by designing structured social responsibility programs, ranging from philanthropic activities to sustainability initiatives integrated within business operations (Temirova, 2024). The implementation of sustainable supply chain management principles constitutes one concrete form of such efforts, while simultaneously reinforcing the linkage between operational activities and corporate social responsibility (Barzani et al., 2022). Employee involvement in such programs serves as a determining factor of success, given that CSR programs designed without the participation of internal workforces frequently lose the outreach and expected social impacts. Awareness regarding the crucial role of employees encourages management to foster environments supporting active participation, as employees represent the frontline conveying corporate values to external stakeholders. Research indicates that organizational support toward social initiatives influences employee attitudes toward their work and their engagement in voluntary activities. Employees who perceive the company's alignment with social values tend to exhibit greater commitment toward organizational goals (Ismail et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the level of employee participation in CSR varies substantially across companies, necessitating an understanding of the factors driving such engagement. This comprehension is vital for organizations desiring to maximize CSR program impacts through the utilization of available human resources.

The leadership style of organizations is believed to possess a close relationship with employee engagement levels across various initiatives, including social responsibility programs (Bordbar et al., 2023). Situational leadership approaches, for instance, have proven capable of improving change

* *Corresponding author, email address:* ***jeje.abdulrojak@gmail.com***

management processes alongside team performance, findings that reinforce the perspective that leadership styles help determine collective work outcomes (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). Among various leadership approaches, transformational leadership emerges as the style most frequently associated with enhanced employee motivation and commitment. Transformational leaders are known for their ability to inspire subordinates through clear visions, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration encouraging personal growth. The capacity of this leadership type to awaken collective awareness regarding higher purposes aligns with values underlying CSR programs. Employees working under transformational leaders tend to develop robust identifications with organizations and experience deeper meanings in their work. This condition is supported by findings that sound knowledge management and the quality of work life shape employee commitment toward their employing organizations (Eddine et al., 2023). The relationship between transformational leadership and employee behavior has been investigated within diverse organizational contexts, yet focus on CSR as a specific behavioral domain remains relatively limited. Prior research has predominantly highlighted leadership influence on task performance or general organizational citizenship behaviors. This gap opens avenues for exploration regarding how specific leadership styles influence employee participation in socially oriented activities. Comprehending these mechanisms can assist organizations in formulating leadership strategies supporting CSR programs.

CSR programs are no longer viewed as peripheral activities separate from a company's core operations, but rather as part of organizational identity influencing long-term competitiveness. Enterprises successfully integrating CSR within business strategies demonstrate superior performance regarding reputation and stakeholder loyalty (Soria, 2024). Such achievements are generally underpinned by a number of interrelated internal organizational factors that collectively enhance corporate work effectiveness (Darmawan, 2024). Employee engagement serves as a crucial element because employees act as agents embodying corporate social commitments through daily actions. Sound cross-functional collaboration among employees likewise facilitates the realization of such actions in daily field practices (Fared & Darmawan, 2021). When employees engage in CSR programs, they experience meaningful encounters that reinforce emotional bonds with organizations. These experiences contribute to enhanced job satisfaction and employee retention, ultimately benefiting companies financially. Good human resource quality is indeed known to correlate closely with employee performance levels and loyalty toward companies (Darmawan et al., 2020). Nevertheless, employee participation does not occur automatically; encouragement from management systems emphasizing prosocial values is required. This impetus can stem from diverse sources, including organizational policies, workgroup norms, and applied leadership styles. Positive psychological factors within employees similarly play vital roles in fostering their engagement and commitment toward organizational tasks (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Transformational leadership possesses the potential to serve as a catalyst strengthening the relationship between CSR values and employee behavior. Leaders capable of articulating the importance of social contributions will awaken employee awareness regarding their roles in actualizing corporate social missions. This awareness subsequently drives more active engagement across various CSR activities.

Employee perceptions of leadership play a central role in determining the extent to which they are willing to contribute to CSR programs (Hu et al., 2019). These perceptions are shaped through daily interactions with superiors and observations of leader behavior when making decisions. Employees evaluate the consistency between what leaders say and the actual actions taken, particularly regarding commitments to social values. Ethics-based leadership has proven instrumental in establishing positive and sustainable organizational cultures, making the consistency between leader words and deeds a focal point of employee attention (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Transformational leaders who demonstrate exemplary modeling in supporting social initiatives reinforce employee convictions that their participation is valued and meaningful. Such role modeling is likewise apparent in authentic leadership practices capable of cultivating positive work climates while encouraging the emergence of organizational citizenship behaviors (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Conversely, misalignments between leader rhetoric and actions can undermine employee motivation to engage. This perceptual process is subjective and influenced by individual experiences, personal values, and expectations regarding the role of

organizations in society. Personality characteristics inherent in each individual further color how employees assess and respond to the work situations they encounter (Darmawan, 2017). Employees possessing high prosocial value orientations may prove more sensitive to leadership signals associated with CSR. These individual variations add complexity to understanding the relationship between leadership and CSR engagement. Research exploring aspects of employee perception can provide richer insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying this phenomenon. Qualitative approaches through literature studies enable the excavation of various published findings to construct a comprehensive understanding.

The subjective experiences of employees within CSR programs offer a unique perspective frequently overlooked in conventional management research. These experiences encompass motivations, barriers, and the meanings they derive from engagement in social activities. Through such experiences, employees construct their social realities and ascribe meaning to the organizational lives they experience. Qualitative approaches enable researchers to capture the nuances of subjective experiences that remain difficult to measure via quantitative instruments. The importance of examining work experiences in depth is similarly apparent in literature reviews concerning remote work, which demonstrate how changing work patterns can affect employee psychological well-being and social relations (Darmawan, 2023). Within the context of transformational leadership, employee experiences can reveal how such leadership styles shape their interpretations of CSR programs. Employees may describe how their leaders inspire participation through communications that elevate spirit and appreciate social contributions. These experiences can equally highlight aspects of leadership that most profoundly influence their decisions to participate or abstain from CSR activities. Utilizing subjective experiences as a unit of analysis aligns with the qualitative research tradition emphasizing an understanding of human experience. Literature studies synthesizing experiences documented in prior research can yield valuable accumulations of knowledge. This synthesis is vital for identifying general patterns and variations in employee experiences across diverse organizations.

The primary problem underlying this research is the lack of systematic mapping regarding the relationship between employee perceptions of transformational leadership and their engagement in CSR programs. Various studies have examined both variables separately, yet efforts to connect them through employee experiences remain limited. This limitation creates difficulties for organizations wishing to design effective leadership interventions to enhance CSR participation. Without a clear understanding of the mechanisms of employee perception, companies might invest resources into leadership programs that fail to produce expected impacts. Employee experiences buried within diverse research reports have not been comprehensively synthesized to answer questions concerning how transformational leadership is perceived in relation to CSR. This accumulated fragmented knowledge impedes the development of coherent theories regarding the role of leadership in driving employee engagement on social issues. Companies require evidence-based guidance regarding the most effective leadership practices to foster employee participation in CSR. The gap between practical needs and the availability of theoretical knowledge acts as a barrier to optimizing CSR programs across various organizations.

Another issue relates to the dominance of quantitative approaches within research on transformational leadership and CSR, which overlooks the richness of information contained within the subjective experiences of employees. Quantitative approaches tend to reduce complex phenomena into measurable variables devoid of nuanced meaning. Consequently, understandings of the psychological processes connecting leadership perceptions with CSR engagement behaviors remain shallow. Quantitative research frequently relies on Likert scales measuring perceptions and engagement without capturing the narratives behind those numbers. Yet, employee experiences can reveal contradictions, ambivalence, and relational dynamics unreachable by quantitative instruments. The richness of qualitative data can similarly explain why certain employees respond positively to transformational leadership while others exhibit no behavioral changes. These differential responses may stem from factors emerging only through the recounting of direct experiences. Literature studies focusing on employee experiences can bridge the gap between quantitative findings and the realities of organizational experiences. This approach enables the identification of cross-study themes enriching theoretical understandings of the investigated phenomenon.

Companies face pressure to demonstrate real impacts from CSR programs, rather than mere regulatory compliance or symbolic activities

(Blowfield & Murray, 2019). Meaningful employee engagement serves as a key indicator of CSR program success because it reflects the internalization of social values within organizational culture. Without adequate comprehension of the factors driving such engagement, companies risk running ineffective programs and wasting resources. Employee experiences with transformational leadership can provide pointers regarding best practices that need to be adopted. Synthesizing knowledge from various literature studies enables the identification of consistent patterns and reliable recommendations. This research becomes crucial amidst the current of globalization that strengthens awareness of cross-border social responsibilities. Innovation cultures capable of balancing technological speed with human value considerations constitute one tangible manifestation of such social commitment, ensuring that CSR programs do not stop at mere symbols (Darmawan, 2023). Organizations ignoring this aspect risk losing public legitimacy and facing serious reputational hazards. Therefore, developing knowledge concerning the mechanisms of employee engagement in CSR represents an urgent necessity for the contemporary business world.

The problem formulation in this research is how employee experiences depict perceptions toward transformational leadership as a driver of engagement within corporate social responsibility programs. This question focuses on exploring the meanings constructed by employees through their experiences interacting with transformational leaders within the context of CSR activities. This problem formulation directs research toward excavating themes emerging from various published studies. The results of this synthesis are expected to provide theoretical contributions for the development of knowledge concerning psychological mechanisms connecting leadership and prosocial behavior within organizations. Its practical contribution is to supply a reference framework for managers and organizational leaders to design effective leadership approaches in enhancing employee engagement within CSR programs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a literature study design examining the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement in CSR. The literature study was selected because it enables researchers to access various documented knowledge sources without having to collect primary data through interviews or observations. This approach aligns with qualitative research characteristics that emphasize understanding meanings constructed by research subjects, as explained by Savin-Baden and Major (2023), who note that qualitative research focuses on how individuals comprehend their experiences within specific social settings. Within a literature study, qualitative data is derived from scientific publications reporting findings regarding employee perceptions of leadership and CSR. The researcher acts as the primary instrument performing interpretations across various available texts. This approach permits the exploration of cross-study themes that might remain invisible when relying solely on a single data source. Oranga and Matere (2023) affirm that qualitative research possesses advantages in capturing the complexity of human experience unreduceable to statistical numbers. Literature studies within the qualitative tradition likewise allow researchers to conduct source triangulation to strengthen the validity of findings.

The procedures of this research follow systematic steps commonly utilized in qualitative literature studies, beginning with the identification of research questions, determination of source inclusion and exclusion criteria, literature searches, data extraction, up to the synthesis of findings. Literature sources utilized encompass journal articles, books, and research reports addressing transformational leadership and CSR. Searches are conducted through trusted academic databases utilizing keywords relevant to the research topic. Mohajan (2018) underlines the importance of a systematic approach in qualitative research to ensure that generated findings possess credibility and accountability. During the analysis process, the researcher performs repeated readings of texts to identify recurring patterns of meaning. Thematic analysis techniques are employed to categorize various statements into more abstract themes. The validity of findings is reinforced through cross-checking among sources and discussions with peers to reduce interpretation bias. This research does not intend to generalize findings to a broader population, but rather presents a rich understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Transformational leaders are depicted as figures capable of communicating visions concerning corporate roles within society in ways that elevate enthusiasm and commitment (Zhang et al., 2024).

Employees describe how their leaders utilize powerful language and compelling visions of the future to demonstrate that social contributions form a vital part of organizational identity. Communication strategies designed soundly during organizational change processes likewise determine the effectiveness of conveying such visions to employees (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). This inspiration is not abstract, but translated into concrete goals comprehended and internalized by every individual. Studies indicate that employees feel called to participate because they perceive deeper meanings within their work. Transformational leaders successfully connect daily activities with broader social impacts, preventing employees from feeling as though they are performing supplementary tasks, while transforming them into parts of noble missions. Engagement in CSR subsequently becomes an expression of values personally adhered to by employees. This process establishes alignment between individual and organizational goals, which reinforces employee intrinsic motivation. Such alignment functions as a primary driver of sustainable participation in CSR programs.

The dimension of intellectual stimulation within transformational leadership emerges across research as a factor encouraging employees to think critically regarding social issues. Transformational leaders prompt subordinates to question existing assumptions and seek innovative solutions for social problems confronted by communities (Pawar, 2003). Organizational cultures promoting innovation have indeed proven capable of enhancing creative employee engagement alongside overall quality of work life (Irfan & Rojak, 2022). Employees describe how their leaders invite them not merely to execute pre-existing CSR programs, but to design novel approaches that prove more effective and sustainable. This intellectual stimulation generates environments wherein employees feel secure voicing creative ideas without fear of criticism. Research depicts collaborative processes wherein leaders and subordinates jointly explore novel possibilities in responding to social needs. Employees perceive that their intellectual contributions are valued and integrated into CSR program designs. This experience elevates a sense of ownership over programs and commitment to executing them to the utmost of abilities. Intellectual stimulation likewise broadens employee horizons concerning the complexity of social problems, which in turn elevates their awareness regarding the importance of CSR. This heightened awareness drives more active and meaningful engagement across various corporate social activities.

Individual consideration demonstrated by transformational leaders emerges as a central theme in research regarding CSR engagement. Employees describe experiences wherein their leaders display attention toward the needs, interests, and capacities of each individual within the context of social programs (Demir & Budur, 2019). Transformational leaders do not apply a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather tailor support based on the unique characteristics of every employee. Such managerial attention toward employee well-being is recognized for boosting overall organizational productivity (Darmawan et al., 2022). Research indicates that employees feel treated as complete persons rather than mere task executors when their leaders take the time to understand their motivations and barriers to participation. This individual attention manifests in diverse forms, such as assignments aligned with interests, recognition of specific contributions, and support for capacity development relevant to CSR. Employees describe how their leaders assist them in discovering ways to contribute that harmonize with their respective values and expertise. This experience fosters a sense of being valued and trusted, which serves as an essential foundation for voluntary engagement in CSR activities. Individual consideration equally reduces employee anxiety and doubt regarding their capabilities to contribute meaningfully. This heightened self-confidence encourages bolder and more innovative participation in corporate social programs.

Idealized influence or role modeling within transformational leadership is reflected in research concerning how leaders consistently demonstrate personal commitments toward CSR values (Taamneh et al., 2024). Employees observe and describe how their leaders not only speak about the importance of social responsibility, but also engage directly in CSR activities and sacrifice personal time and resources for such purposes. This exemplary behavior establishes robust credibility in the eyes of employees, allowing messages regarding CSR to be received with greater sincerity. Research depicts leaders who are present in social activities, interact with beneficiary communities, and display genuine empathy toward problems confronted by society. Employees perceive that their leaders truly believe in the values they articulate, rather than merely executing formal corporate obligations. This consistency between words and deeds reinforces

employee trust in organizational integrity and commitment to CSR. Organizational citizenship behaviors sprouting from such trust, coupled with a good quality of work life, prove impactful in enhancing employee performance (Eddine & Darmawan, 2022). When employees witness their leaders taking risks or confronting difficulties to support social programs, they feel inspired to do the exact same. Role modeling functions as a driving force transforming CSR from a mere policy into a collective movement internalized by all members of the organization.

The role of transformational leadership in creating a psychological climate supporting CSR engagement proves significant. Employees describe experiences wherein their leaders successfully build environments where social contributions are valued and celebrated, rather than regarded as supplementary activities disrupting productivity (Goswami et al., 2018). This climate is formed through public recognition of employee participation, the integration of CSR values within performance evaluations, and the normalization of discussions concerning social issues during routine meetings. Research indicates that employees feel braver in initiating CSR activities when they know their leaders will support and appreciate such efforts. Transformational leaders establish psychological safety enabling employees to take initiatives without fear of negative consequences should failure occur. This security is vital because CSR activities frequently involve experimentation and untested novel approaches. Employees feeling psychologically safe tend to be more open to engaging in challenging programs requiring new learnings. The balance between work and personal life, coupled with organizational support perceived by employees, similarly contributes to psychological well-being forming the foundation of such climates (Darmawan, 2022). Supportive climates also encourage the sharing of knowledge and experiences among employees regarding effective CSR practices. This collectivity reinforces overall organizational capacities to respond to social demands in innovative and sustainable ways.

The relationship between transformational leadership and CSR engagement is mediated in research by robust organizational identification. Employees describe how transformational leaders assist them in developing a sense of pride regarding membership within organizations caring for society (AlFarah, 2022). This identification emerges when employees witness their personal values aligning with those upheld by organizations through CSR programs. Environmentally oriented human resource practices further reinforce corporate images as sustainable entities, facilitating employee development of such identifications (Hariani et al., 2022). Transformational leaders play roles in articulating such values in ways resonating with employee experiences and aspirations. Research demonstrates that employees identifying themselves with organizations tend to be more motivated to contribute to CSR programs as extensions of their identities. They no longer view CSR as an external activity, but rather as part of what they do as organizational members. This identification also drives behaviors surpassing basic role expectations, including voluntary initiatives unrequested by superiors. Employees possessing high organizational identification feel that the success of CSR programs constitutes their own success, and program failures represent shared failures. This collective sense of ownership reinforces commitments ensuring that CSR programs operate effectively and achieve expected objectives.

The role of transformational leadership in overcoming psychological barriers that hinder CSR engagement proves significant. One primary barrier identified is the feeling of lacking time or energy to participate in social activities outside routine job responsibilities (Gabelaia, 2024). Transformational leaders overcome this barrier by integrating CSR into job descriptions and providing dedicated time for employees to participate. The implementation of lean management principles reducing operational time waste and resource drain similarly opens space for employees to engage in such activities (Radjawane et al., 2022). Research depicts leaders who actively remove administrative and bureaucratic hurdles frequently obstructing employee participation. Another psychological barrier involves feelings of incompetence or a lack of relevant expertise to contribute to CSR programs. Transformational leaders address this barrier by providing training, guidance, and learning opportunities enabling employees to develop necessary capacities. Gamification-based training approaches are known to enhance employee learning engagement and effectiveness, making them relevant for overcoming such competency limitations (Eddine & Darmawan, 2022). Research demonstrates that employees feel more confident to engage after receiving support and direction from their leaders. Transformational leaders also assist employees in overcoming anxieties regarding how their participation will be evaluated by colleagues or other superiors. By establishing clear expectations and delivering constructive

feedback, transformational leaders create conditions wherein employees feel secure participating fully. This reduction in psychological barriers drives significant increases in participation across various CSR programs.

The influence of transformational leadership on CSR engagement within research is likewise visible through perceived empowerment. Employees describe experiences wherein their leaders grant autonomy and authority to make decisions concerning how they will contribute to social programs (Mittal, 2019). This empowerment encompasses freedom to select types of activities to follow, determine implementation methods, and even lead CSR initiatives independently. Data analysis capabilities possessed by employees further determine the quality of decisions made when granted such latitude (Khairi & Darmawan, 2022). Research indicates that employees feel greater responsibility for program success when they hold control over execution processes. Transformational leaders do not impose rigid working methods, but instead provide general guidance and trust for employees to discover their own paths. The integration of business process reengineering and quality management principles into program execution likewise helps ensure that conferred freedoms maintain sound work standards (Rahman et al., 2022). This empowerment elevates employee self-efficacy, representing the conviction that they are capable of delivering meaningful contributions to society. Employees feeling empowered tend to exhibit greater initiatives and seek novel opportunities to engage in CSR. They are similarly more persistent when confronting challenges and more creative in discovering solutions. Empowerment bestowed by transformational leadership establishes a positive cycle wherein successful engagement strengthens self-confidence, which subsequently drives even greater engagement in the future.

The role of transformational leadership in building team cohesion that strengthens collective engagement in CSR proves essential. Transformational leaders are depicted as capable of creating a sense of togetherness and shared purpose among team members within the context of social activities (Demir & Budur, 2019). Findings regarding the influence of transformational leadership styles on team performance confirm that collaboration and shared motivation serve as keys to enhancing collective work effectiveness (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). Employees describe experiences of working alongside colleagues from diverse departments to design and execute impactful CSR programs. This team cohesion is formed because transformational leaders encourage cross-functional collaboration and facilitate open communication among team members. Sound management of organizational diversity likewise creates inclusive work environments contributing to enhanced corporate competitiveness (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2022). Research indicates that employees feel more motivated to engage when witnessing peers participating with enthusiasm. This positive social pressure encourages individuals to participate and contribute in accordance with their capacities. Transformational leaders also play roles in resolving conflicts potentially arising within teams and ensuring all voices are heard. Strong team cohesion establishes social resources supporting individual engagement, such as emotional support, practical assistance, and knowledge sharing. Employees feel they are not alone in executing CSR programs, but rather form parts of larger collective movements. This sensation reduces psychological burdens and elevates enjoyment in participating.

The communication aspect within transformational leadership emerges as a crucial factor influencing employee perceptions concerning CSR (Allen et al., 2017). Transformational leaders act as master communicators capable of conveying information regarding CSR programs in clear, compelling, and easily understandable ways. Employees describe how their leaders utilize diverse communication channels to disseminate messages concerning the importance of CSR and opportunities to engage. The effective utilization of social media constitutes one method for building work environments encouraging employee engagement in spreading such messages (Hariani et al., 2023). Effective communication is not merely one-way, but involves two-way dialogues wherein employees can pose questions, express concerns, and provide feedback. Employees feel better informed and more prepared to engage when receiving regular and transparent communications concerning CSR programs (Dong et al., 2023). The implementation of good corporate governance similarly safeguards such informational transparency, preserving employee trust toward conveyed messages (Rojak & Al Hakim, 2023). Transformational leaders likewise employ stories and metaphors to render messages about CSR more memorable and meaningful. Effective communication helps employees comprehend program objectives, their roles, and expected impacts from participation. This clear understanding reduces ambiguities and confusions

frequently hindering engagement. Employees feeling they possess sufficient information tend to exhibit greater self-confidence and higher motivation to take part in CSR programs.

Employees describe experiences wherein their leaders consistently acknowledge their contributions toward social programs, whether through formal or informal recognition (Brun & Cooper, 2009). This recognition manifests in diverse forms, such as verbal praise, certificates, incentives, or career development opportunities. Employee rewards essentially function as representations of values upheld by organizations, meaning their forms and methods of delivery require careful design (Gani, 2025). Research indicates that sincere and specific recognition is more effective in motivating engagement than general or routine rewards. Transformational leaders are capable of delivering personal and meaningful recognition because they understand the unique contributions of every employee. This recognition validates employee efforts and demonstrates that their participation is valued by the organization. Employees feeling appreciated tend to develop stronger affective commitments toward CSR programs and remain willing to engage continuously over the long term. Recognition likewise serves as a signal that organizations are serious regarding CSR execution and that employee participation represents a management priority. Fair and transparent reward systems prevent the emergence of perceptions of unfairness that can damage motivation. Consistent recognition from transformational leaders creates a sustainable cycle of motivation.

The influence of transformational leadership on CSR engagement within research is likewise visible through capacity and competency development. Employees describe how their leaders encourage and facilitate the development of skills relevant to CSR program execution (Gabelaia, 2024). This development encompasses training concerning social issues, project management skills, communication abilities, and leadership capacity. Structured thinking capabilities in connecting individual ideas into collective decisions likewise constitute crucial parts of capacities needing development so that employees are capable of designing mature CSR programs (Darmawan, 2024). Research demonstrates that employees feel better prepared and more competent to engage in CSR after receiving development opportunities provided by their leaders. Transformational leaders identify individual development needs and supply necessary resources to fulfill them. Attention toward employee well-being, including healthcare service aspects complying with applicable regulations, similarly forms part of organizational investments toward its human resources (Waluyo et al., 2024). Investments in capacity development indicate that organizations are serious in running CSR and do not merely utilize employees as tools to achieve short-term objectives. Employees developing new competencies through CSR engagement experience personal and professional growth enriching their work experiences. This growth elevates job satisfaction and retention, ultimately benefiting the organization as a whole. Capacity development also enables employees to assume larger and more complex roles in CSR programs over time. This process creates a leadership pipeline for future social initiatives.

Transformational leadership influences CSR engagement through the creation of higher meaning and purpose. Employees describe how their leaders assist them in connecting daily work with contributions toward broader community welfare (Gabelaia, 2024). Transformational leaders articulate how every task, no matter how small, carries significant social impact when executed as part of coordinated CSR programs. Compliance with moral values and legal rules in managerial decision-making constitutes one tangible manifestation of such higher meaning and responsibility (Halizah et al., 2024). Research indicates that employees experience profound inner satisfaction when witnessing the tangible outcomes of their contributions to society. This satisfaction cannot be replaced solely by material incentives, as it stems from fulfilling psychological needs for meaning and purpose. Ethical principles in corporate resource management, including investment and risk decision-making, reflect the same moral dimensions that transformational leaders strive to instill in their employees (Putra & Arifin, 2023). Transformational leaders successfully demonstrate that their work possesses moral dimensions transcending narrow economic interests. Employees perceiving meaning in their work exhibit higher levels of engagement and greater resilience against exhaustion or boredom. The creation of this meaning likewise helps employees overcome challenges and difficulties potentially arising during CSR program implementation. They view difficulties as parts of meaningful journeys rather than insurmountable obstacles. Sustainability policies formulated by taking local cultural values into consideration further strengthen employee attachments to the meaning of the work they experience (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023). Meaning and purpose created by

transformational leadership serve as robust and sustainable sources of intrinsic motivation.

The time dimension within research demonstrates that the influence of transformational leadership on CSR engagement is cumulative and develops over time. Employees describe how repeated exposure to transformational behaviors reinforces their convictions regarding the importance of CSR and their commitments to engage. This influence does not occur instantly, but through gradual internalization processes wherein CSR values become parts of employee identities (Cao & Lee, 2023). The capacity of leaders to adapt decision-making styles to encountered situations helps determine how consistently messages concerning CSR can be maintained across time (Darmawan, 2024). Research indicates that employees working longer with transformational leaders exhibit higher engagement levels compared to new employees. The accumulation of positive experiences with transformational leaders creates memory traces reinforcing motivation to participate in CSR programs. Flexibility in applying situational leadership styles has similarly proven to strengthen employee engagement and accelerate team development over time (Rojak & Darmawan, 2023). Transformational leaders consistent in their behaviors over time build reputations that cause employees to trust their commitments toward CSR. This trust is vital because employees need assurance that leader support for CSR is neither temporary nor opportunistic. This cumulative influence likewise signifies that organizations need to sustain transformational leadership over the long term to observe full impacts on employee engagement in CSR. Frequent leadership changes can disrupt the internalization processes of CSR values and diminish program effectiveness.

Transformational leadership creates a positive upward spiral in CSR engagement wherein individual participation reinforces collective participation. Employees describe how the enthusiasm and dedication of a few team members inspire others to engage, creating a mutually reinforcing group dynamic (Demir & Budur, 2019). Transformational leaders act as catalysts who initiate and sustain this positive spiral through consistent recognition, empowerment, and support. Tensions arising within working relationships must be addressed with clear mechanisms to prevent them from disrupting the trajectory of this positive spiral (Khayru, 2024). Research depicts how CSR programs initially followed by a handful of employees expand into movements involving nearly all organizational members. This positive spiral is driven by diverse mechanisms, including social norms supporting participation, sharing positive experiences, and enhancing collective capacities. Legal certainty concerning corporate responsibility similarly provides a sense of security for employees to engage more deeply in such collective initiatives (Sujito et al., 2023). Employees witnessing peers enjoying and benefiting from CSR engagement tend to desire experiencing it themselves. Transformational leaders facilitate the dissemination of success stories and cross-team learnings to reinforce this positive spiral. Appropriate communication strategies in managing differences within teams of diverse backgrounds likewise safeguard this positive spiral from being disrupted by internal conflicts (Marsal & Darmawan, 2022). The spiral effect also signifies that the impact of transformational leadership on CSR engagement transcends direct effects on individuals, encompassing the transformation of overall organizational culture. Cultures supporting CSR become valuable assets persisting even after specific transformational leaders leave the organization.

CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership acts as a driver of employee engagement in CSR programs through a series of interrelated psychological and social mechanisms. These mechanisms encompass inspiring motivation that elevates spirit, intellectual stimulation that encourages innovation, individualized consideration that makes employees feel valued, exemplary role modeling that builds credibility, and the creation of a psychological climate supporting participation. This research also uncovers the roles of organizational identification, empowerment, effective communication, recognition, capacity development, and meaning-making as pathways through which transformational leadership influences CSR engagement. These findings confirm that the influence of transformational leadership is cumulative and creates a positive spiral wherein individual participation strengthens collective participation. This literature study successfully synthesizes various previously fragmented findings into a coherent understanding of how employees perceive and respond to transformational leadership within the context of CSR. This understanding provides a foundation for developing a more comprehensive theory concerning the role of leadership in driving prosocial behavior within organizations.

The theoretical implication of this research is the

enrichment of leadership and CSR literature through the presentation of mechanisms connecting both variables based on the employee's perspective. This study demonstrates that qualitative approaches can uncover dimensions of subjective experience unreached by conventional quantitative methods. The practical implication consists of recommendations for organizations to develop leadership development programs emphasizing transformational aspects proven effective in driving CSR engagement. Subsequent research is also recommended to compare employee experiences across various organizational types and examine the roles of moderating factors such as personal values and demographic characteristics.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, M. H. A. B., Gardi, B., & Darmawan, D. (2021). Innovation in Human Resource Management to enhance Organizational Competitiveness in the Era of Globalization. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 1(1), 51–58.

AlFarah, M. E. (2022). The Effects of Leadership in Corporate Social Advocacy on Positive Employee Outcomes. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* 34(6), 296–316.

Allen, G. W., Attoh, P. A., & Gong, T. (2017). Transformational Leadership and Affective Organizational Commitment: Mediating Roles of Perceived Social Responsibility and Organizational Identification. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 13(3), 585–600.

Barzani, L. A., Darmawan, D., & Zulkarnain, M. A. B. (2022). The Application of Sustainable Supply Chain Management Principles in the Manufacturing Industry to Improve Operational Performance and Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 1(1), 38–45.

Blowfield, M., & Murray, A. (2019). The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Bordbar, M., Nia, N. M., & Asgari, H. (2023). Investigating the Impact of Transformational Leadership and Social Responsibility on Employees' Work Conscience. *International Journal of Progressive Business and Public Management*, 1(4), 0–35.

Brun, J.-P., & Cooper, C. L. (2009). Recognize Your Employees: A Simple Act. In *Missing Pieces: 7 Ways to Improve Employee Well-Being and Organizational Effectiveness*, 19-38.

Cao, Y., & Lee, K. (2023). Employee Engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility: Disentangling the Effects of Values vs Prestige. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 38(6), 449–463.

Darmawan, D. (2017). The Effects of The Big Five Personality on Job Performance. *Management & Accounting Research Journal*, 2(1), 36–42.

Darmawan, D. (2022). The Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Perceived Organizational Support to Employees Psychological Well-Being of Employees in Modern Work Environments. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 73-80.

Darmawan, D. (2023). Innovation Culture That Balances Technological Speed with the Depth of Humanistic Thought. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 4(1), 47–54.

Darmawan, D. (2023). The Concept Of Remote Work: A Literature Review on its Impact on Work Dynamics, Psychological Well-Being, and Social Relationships Among Employees. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 3(3), 49–55.

Darmawan, D. (2024). Application of Situational Leadership in Decision Making in Dynamic Organizations. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(1), 499-504.

Darmawan, D. (2024). Distribution of Six Major Factors Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 22(4), 47-58.

Darmawan, D. (2024). From Individual Minds to Collective Decisions: The Function and Contribution of Cognitive Mapping. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(2), 467-476.

Darmawan, D., & Mardikaningsih, R. (2022). The Role of Positive Psychological Factors in Enhancing Employee Engagement and Commitment to Work Tasks. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 1(2), 37–45.

Darmawan, D., Jahroni, Irfan, M., & Al Hakim, Y. R. (2022). Leadership and Employee Welfare in Improving Organizational Productivity. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 173-176.

Darmawan, D., Mardikaningsih, R., Sinambela, E. A., Arifin, S., Putra, A. R., Hariani, M., Irfan, M., Al Hakim, Y. R., & Issalillah, F. (2020). The Quality of Human Resources, Job Performance and Employee Loyalty. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(3), 2580-2592.

Demir, A., & Budur, T. (2019). Roles of Leadership Styles in Corporate Social Responsibility to Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

International Journal of Social Sciences, 5(4), 174–183.

Dong, C., Zhang, Y., & Ao, S. (2023). How to Engage Employees in Corporate Social Responsibility? Exploring Corporate Social Responsibility Communication Effects Through the Reasoned Action Approach. *Management Communication Quarterly,* 38(1), 27-59.

Eddine, B. A. S., & Darmawan, D. (2022). The Effects of Quality of Work Life and Organizational Citizenship Behavior on Job Performance of Government Employees in Surabaya City. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 69-76.

Eddine, B. A. S., & Darmawan, D. (2022). The Gamification Approach to Employee Training to Increase Engagement and Learning Effectiveness in Organizations. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 201-206.

Eddine, B. A. S., Darmawan, D., Mardikaningsih, R., & Sinambela, E. A. (2023). The Effect of Knowledge Management and Quality of Work Life on Employee Commitment. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 10(1), 87-100.

Fared, M. A., & Darmawan, D. (2021). Design and Implementation of Cross-Functional Training to Improve Team Collaboration. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 1(1), 215–220.

Gabelaia, I. (2024). The Role of Transformational Leaders in Enhancing Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Entrepreneurship. *Advances in Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, and e-Services Book Series*, 279–312.

Gani, A. (2025). Representation of Organizational Values through Employee Awards. Journal of Social Science Studies, 5(1), 27-36. https://jos3journals.id/index.php/jos3/article/view/398

Gardi, B., & Darmawan, D. (2024). Supply Chain Management Optimization with IoT and Blockchain Technology to Increase Efficiency and Transparency. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(2), 31-36.

Goswami, A., O'Brien, K. E., Dawson, K. M., & Hardiman, M. E. (2018). Mechanisms of Corporate Social Responsibility: The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership. *Ethics & Behavior*, 28(8), 644–661.

Halizah, S. N., Mardikaningsih, R., & da Cruz, C. (2024). Strengthening Moral Values and Legal Compliance in Corporate Managerial Decision-Making Practices. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(2), 65-72.

Hariani, M., Aisyah, N., & da Cruz, C. (2023). Building a Work Environment that Supports Employee Engagement Through Effective Use of Social Media. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(1), 65-68.

Hariani, M., Mardikaningsih, R., & Essa, N. E. (2022). HR and Environmental Policy Management Strategies to Create a Sustainable Organization that Improves Company Performance. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 249-254.

Hu, B., Liu, J., & Qu, H. (2019). The Employee-Focused Outcomes of CSR Participation: The Mediating Role of Psychological Needs Satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 41, 129–137.

Irfan, M., & Rojak, J. A. (2022). Fostering Innovation-Driven Cultures to Enhance Creative Engagement and Quality of Work Life in Organizations. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 265-270.

Ismail, M., Kanwal, S., Rafi, N., Gul, F., Bilal, M., & Akbar, U. (2023). Employee Perceptions of CSR: A Multifaceted Analysis. *Bulletin of Business and Economics*, 12(4), 96-107.

Khairi, M., & Darmawan, D. (2022). Developing HR Capabilities in Data Analysis for More Effective Decision Making in Organizations. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 223-228.

Khayru, R. K. (2024). Legal Mechanisms in Handling Work Relationship Tensions in Modern Organizational Environments. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(2), 137-144.

Mardikaningsih, R., & Darmawan, D. (2022). Design and Implementation of Communication Strategy in Change Management. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 237-242.

Mardikaningsih, R., & Darmawan, D. (2022). Situational Leadership Strategies to Improve Change Management and Team Performance. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 247–252.

Mardikaningsih, R., & Darmawan, D. (2023). Building Sustainability Policies Relevant to Local Cultural Values. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(1), 127-132.

Mardikaningsih, R., & Hariani, M. (2022). Integrating Diversity and Sustainability in Organizations: How to Impact Performance, Corporate Competitiveness, and the Creation of Inclusive Work Environments. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 77-84.

Mardikaningsih, R., Halizah, S. N., Darmawan, D.,

Masithoh, N., & Nuraini, R. (2022). Examining the Role of Authentic Leadership in Shaping Positive Work Climate and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 2(1), 52–59.

Mardikaningsih, R., Halizah, S. N., Nuraini, R., & Darmawan, D. (2022). The Role of Ethical Leadership in Shaping a Positive and Sustainable Organizational Culture. *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology*, 2(2), 48–55.

Marsal, A. P., & Darmawan, D. (2022). Communication Strategies in Managing Conflict in Multicultural Teams. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 285-290.

Mittal, V. (2019). Employee Engagement and Empowerment. Building a Better Working World, 33.

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23-48.

Oranga, J., & Matere, A. (2023). Qualitative Research: Essence, Types and Advantages. *Open Access Library Journal*, 10(12), 1-9.

Pawar, B. S. (2003). Central Conceptual Issues in Transformational Leadership Research. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 24(7), 397–406.

Pawłowska, E., & Márta, M. (2022). Corporate Social Responsibility as a Modern Concept of Organization Development. *Organizacja i Zarządzanie*, 57(1), 91-112.

Putra, A. R., & Arifin, S. (2023). Ethical Principles in Corporate Financial Management: A Literature Study on Investment and Risk. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(2), 221-226.

Radjawane, L. E., Darmawan, D., & Varela, J. R. (2022). Application of Lean Management Principles to Reduce Waste and Improve Operational Efficiency in the Service Sector. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 261-266.

Rahman, A., Putra, A. R., & Al Hakim, Y. R. (2022). Integration of Business Process Engineering and Quality Management to Improve Efficiency and Product or Service Quality Standards. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 207-212.

Rojak, J. A., & Al Hakim, Y. R. (2023). Implementation of Corporate Governance in Improving Transparency and Sustainability of Companies in Global Market. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(2), 101-106.

Rojak, J. A., & Darmawan, D. (2023). Improving Employee Engagement and Team Development through the Implementation of Flexible and Adaptive Situational Leadership. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(1), 369-374.

Rojak, J. A., & Khayru, R. K. (2022). The Effect of Transformational Leadership Style on Team Performance: Implications for Collaboration, Motivation, and Effectiveness Enhancement Strategies. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 13-20.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2023). *Qualitative Research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice*. Routledge, London.

Soria, E. E. A. (2024). Corporate Social Responsibility as a Strategy for Improving Corporate Performance. *Revista Cientifica Zambos*, 3(2), 31–47.

Sujito, S., Hardyansah, R., Putra, A. R., Khayru, R. K., & Arifin, S. (2023). Legal Implications of the Job Creation Law on the Concept and Liability of Individual Companies in Indonesia. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(1), 259-270.

Taamneh, M., Al-Okaily, M., Abudoleh, J. D., Albdareen, R., & Taamneh, A. (2024). Nexus between Green Human Resource Management Practices and Corporate Social Responsibility: Does Transformational Leadership Make Difference?. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 33(1), 1-24.

Temirova, F. (2024). Social Responsibility of Companies and its Impact on the Brand. *European International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Management Studies,* 4(4), 223-229.

Waluyo, A., Vitrianingsih, Y., Mardikaningsih, R., Issalillah, F., & Negara, D. S. (2024). Legal Regulation of Multinational Corporate Health Services and Local Legal Obligations. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 4(1), 359-370.

Zhang, X., Duraipandi, O., Lubei, F., Beifan, Y., & Jiahao, G. (2024). Transformational Leadership Practices Enables a Business to Achieve Long-Term Success. *International Journal of Computational and Experimental Science and Engineering*, 10(4), 2182-2188.

***Rojak, J. A. (2025). Transformational Leadership as a Driver of Employee Engagement in CSR Programs, *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 5(1), 37 – 48.**