

The Role of Transformational Leadership in enhancing Engagement and Motivation of Millennial Employees

Peran Kepemimpinan Transformatif dalam Meningkatkan Keterlibatan dan Motivasi Karyawan Milenial

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in increasing the effectiveness of transformational leadership (TL) in motivating and engaging millennial employees, especially in stressful work environments that demand high performance. Through a systematic literature review (SLR) approach, researchers analyzed existing literature regarding the relationship between TL, EI, motivation and engagement of millennial employees. The findings of this study indicate that EI plays an important role as a mediator in the relationship between TL and millennial employee engagement. Leaders who have high EI are able to manage emotions effectively, create a positive work environment, and increase employee motivation and engagement. The implications of these findings emphasize the need for developing EI in leadership training to improve employee well-being and organizational productivity. This research contributes to transformative leadership theory by adding dimensions of EI and offering practical recommendations for organizations in facing the challenges of stressful work environments.

Keywords: Transformative Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Employee Motivation, Employee Engagement, Millennial Employees

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran kecerdasan emosional (EI) dalam meningkatkan efektivitas kepemimpinan transformatif (TL) dalam memotivasi dan melibatkan karyawan milenial, khususnya di lingkungan kerja yang penuh tekanan dan menuntut kinerja tinggi. Melalui pendekatan tinjauan literatur sistematis (Systematic Literature Review/SLR), peneliti menganalisis literatur yang ada mengenai hubungan antara TL, EI, motivasi, dan keterlibatan karyawan milenial. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa EI memainkan peran penting sebagai mediator dalam hubungan antara TL dan keterlibatan karyawan milenial. Pemimpin yang memiliki EI tinggi mampu mengelola emosi secara efektif, menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang positif, dan meningkatkan motivasi serta keterlibatan karyawan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menekankan perlunya pengembangan EI dalam pelatihan kepemimpinan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan karyawan dan produktivitas organisasi. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap teori kepemimpinan transformatif dengan menambahkan dimensi EI dan menawarkan rekomendasi praktis untuk organisasi dalam menghadapi tantangan lingkungan kerja yang penuh tekanan.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Transformatif, Kecerdasan Emosional, Motivasi Karyawan, Keterlibatan Karyawan, Karyawan Millennial

1. Introduction

Transformational leadership (TL) has emerged as an important approach in contemporary management, especially in reaching the millennial workforce. This leadership style is characterized by a focus on establishing strong relationships between leaders and followers, emphasizing personal growth and aligning individual aspirations with organizational goals. Research shows that TL significantly increases employee motivation and engagement, which is critical in improving organizational performance. For example, Valldeneu et al.

highlighted that TL has a strong correlation with positive employee outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and reduced labor turnover rates, especially among millennials who value meaningful work and recognition (Valldeneu et al., 2021). Additionally, a systematic literature review confirmed that TL is favored by millennials because it matches their desires for challenging work and individual achievement ("Leadership Style for Millennial Generation, Five Leadership Theories, Systematic Literature Review", 2021).

Today's dynamic work environment, characterized by rapid change and competitive pressures, further reinforces the importance of TL in building resilience and adaptability among employees. Valldeneu et al. asserts that TL not only motivates employees but also equips them to face the complexities of the modern workplace (Valldeneu et al., 2021). This is especially relevant for millennials, who are now the dominant demographic in many organizations and exhibit distinctive workplace preferences, including a strong desire for personal development and feedback from leaders ("Leadership Style for Millennial Generation, Five Leadership Theories, Systematic Literature Review ", 2021). An emphasis on TL aligns well with this preference, as it fosters an environment where employees can actively participate and receive personalized coaching (Valldeneu et al., 2021; "Leadership Style for Millennial Generation, Five Leadership Theories, Systematic Literature Review", 2021) .

Additionally, the integration of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with TL has been shown to improve interpersonal relationships and create a supportive work atmosphere, which is critical for increasing employee productivity and job satisfaction. Leaders with high EI can effectively manage the emotional landscape of their teams, thereby fostering a culture of support that increases motivation and engagement (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Stephen, 2023). Pečiuliauskienė discusses how dimensions of TL, such as intellectual stimulation and idealized influence, are closely related to emotional intelligence, showing that leaders who demonstrate high EI are more likely to inspire and motivate their followers (Pečiuliauskienė, 2021). This synergy between TL and EI is especially important in high-pressure environments, such as technology and finance, where leaders must balance organizational goals with the emotional well-being of their teams (Afzal et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the combination of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence presents a powerful framework for improving employee engagement and performance in today's rapidly evolving work environment. This approach not only aligns with the values and expectations of the millennial workforce, but also equips leaders to effectively manage the emotional and psychological challenges inherent in high-performance settings. As millennials dominate the workforce, the relevance of EI-powered TL will only increase, making it essential for organizations looking to thrive in the competitive landscape.

Although Transformational Leadership (TL) has become a widespread subject in leadership studies, various studies have demonstrated its impact on engagement (*engagement*) and employee motivation, there is a significant gap in the available literature, especially regarding how Emotional Intelligence (EI) of leaders can strengthen the influence of TL on the millennial generation. In modern work environments that are often characterized by high levels of stress and performance pressure, such as in the technology and financial services sectors, millennial employee engagement and motivation are becoming increasingly complex and dynamic.

Existing studies generally focus on TL as a motivational factor, but few have deeply explored the relationship between leader EI and its impact on millennial employees in more specific and challenging contexts. In fact, EI can play an important role in helping leaders understand, respond to, and manage the emotional dynamics that occur in stressful work environments. This is especially relevant for the millennial generation, who tend to be more sensitive to work environments that emphasize emotional balance and the need for recognition and flexibility.

So far, not much research has comprehensively explored how EI plays a role in strengthening the influence of TL on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, especially in sectors with high performance demands. Therefore, this research seeks to answer this gap, by exploring how EI in transformative leadership can have a more significant impact on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in stressful work situations. This research aims to fill existing gaps in the literature and provide new contributions to a deeper understanding of the interactions between TL, EI, and millennial employees in the modern era.

This research aims to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the relationship between *transformational leadership* (TL), *emotional intelligence* (EI), motivation, and engagement of millennial employees through a comprehensive literature review. In the context of a modern work environment that is increasingly dynamic and full of pressure, it is important to identify factors that can strengthen employee engagement and motivation, especially among the millennial generation who have unique characteristics regarding needs and expectations at work.

Specifically, this research aims to:

1. Reviewing existing literature on how TL and EI influence millennial employee motivation and engagement. This study will include an analysis of research that has been conducted regarding TL and EI, as well as its implications for increasing motivation and engagement among the millennial generation.
2. Analyzing the role of EI in transformative leadership in the context of high-stress work environments. The focus of the analysis is on how EI in transformative leaders is able to increase the effectiveness of TL in motivating and increasing engagement of millennial employees in stressful industries, such as technology and financial services. This research will highlight the contribution of EI in managing emotional stress and improving employee performance and job satisfaction in demanding working conditions.

By combining elements of TL and EI, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics that can help organizations increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, which in turn can support the achievement of organizational goals in a work environment that continues to develop and is full of challenges.

Transformational leadership (TL) has been widely recognized as an effective leadership style in increasing employee motivation and engagement. Transformative leaders not only provide clear direction and vision, but also strive to develop employee potential, encourage innovation, and create a work environment that supports personal and professional development. In the context of the millennial generation that now dominates the workforce, transformative leadership is becoming increasingly important, given millennial expectations for flexibility, recognition and meaning in their work. However, in stressful work environments that demand high performance, such as those found in the technology industry, financial services and other competitive sectors, the challenges of maintaining millennial employee motivation and engagement become more complex. This is where emotional *intelligence* (EI) in transformative leaders becomes critical. Leaders who have high EI are able to manage emotions, both themselves and their teams, effectively. EI allows leaders to better understand employees' emotional dynamics, provide appropriate support, and create a positive work atmosphere even under high pressure conditions.

Although much research has addressed the impact of TL on motivation and engagement, few have specifically explored how EI in transformative leaders can enhance that impact, especially among millennial employees working in stressful work environments. Given the importance of the combination of TL and EI in demanding work situations, this research seeks to answer the following fundamental questions:

“How does emotional intelligence in transformative leaders increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in a work environment that is full of pressure and demands high performance?”

It is hoped that this question can fill gaps in the existing literature and provide new insights for organizations that want to increase the engagement and motivation of their employees amidst increasingly high performance demands.

This research contributes significantly to the leadership and human resource management literature by offering new insights into the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in strengthening the effectiveness of transformational leadership, especially in increasing the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in stressful work environments. Although transformational leadership (TL) has been widely researched and recognized as an effective leadership approach in encouraging employee performance, the contribution of EI in mediating and strengthening the relationship between TL and employee engagement is still not widely explored, especially in the context of the millennial generation which has unique characteristics related to it. motivation and work expectations.

This research seeks to fill the gap in the literature by exploring how EI in transformative leaders can act as a catalyst that strengthens the positive impact of TL on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in sectors with high levels of work pressure, such as the technology and financial services industries. By highlighting the importance of managing emotions, this research is expected to deepen understanding of the psychological dynamics that occur in interactions between leaders and employees in workplaces that demand high performance. In addition to theoretical contributions, this research also has significant practical implications for organizations. With the millennial generation becoming increasingly dominant in the workforce, organizations need to adapt their leadership strategies to maintain and increase employee engagement, especially in stressful work environments. This research provides practical guidance for leaders and managers about the importance of developing EI as part of transformative leadership competencies. With better EI, leaders are not only able to manage personal and collective emotions within their teams, but can also create a work environment that supports employees' emotional well-being, thereby increasing motivation, productivity, and long-term engagement. Overall, this research seeks to make a significant contribution to the development of leadership theory and more effective management practices amidst changing workforce dynamics which are increasingly influenced by the presence of the millennial generation and the demands of an increasingly competitive and challenging work environment.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This research uses an approach *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) as the main method for identifying, analyzing and synthesizing related relevant literature *transformational leadership* (TL), *emotional intelligence* (EI), motivation, and engagement of millennial employees. The SLR approach was chosen because it is able to provide a systematic and comprehensive review of various previous studies, making it possible to find gaps in the literature and draw conclusions based on strong evidence.

The SLR in this study was designed to answer research questions by collecting secondary data from journal articles published in various well-known academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The selected articles are empirical and theoretical research that discusses the relationship between TL, EI, and their impact on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in various industrial contexts, especially those operating in work environments with high pressure and performance demands.

The SLR process begins with determining appropriate keywords and clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. This research only included studies published within the last ten years to

maintain contextual relevance, focusing on industry sectors facing high work pressure, such as technology and financial services. The results of the search process were then filtered based on relevance to the topic, methodology used, and quality of research, to ensure that only relevant, high-quality studies were included in further analysis.

With this approach, this research not only identifies key trends and findings from previous research, but also constructs a critical synthesis of how EI in TL influences millennial employee motivation and engagement in stressful work environments. It is hoped that the results of the SLR will provide a strong basis for further research and assist organizations in developing more effective leadership strategies in the future.

2.2 Protocol SLR

The systematic review process in this study followed the guidelines PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*), which is known as the gold standard in reporting systematic literature reviews. The PRISMA guidelines provide a transparent and structured framework to ensure that the article identification, screening and selection process is carried out systematically, accurately and free from bias.

The SLR process consists of several important stages, namely:

1. Identification

This stage begins with an article search through leading academic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using a combination of keywords that are relevant to the research topic. Keywords used include "transformational leadership," "emotional intelligence," "millennial employees," "motivation," "engagement," as well as other variables relevant to the research objectives. To ensure the relevance and recency of the results, the search focused on articles published within the last 10 years.

2. Screening

Once all potentially relevant articles have been identified, the next step is screening based on title and abstract. At this stage, articles that did not meet the initial criteria (e.g., were not relevant to the main topic, were published before the specified period, or used inappropriate methodology) were eliminated. Articles that pass title and abstract screening then enter the full screening stage, namely review of the full text.

3. Eligibility

At the eligibility stage, each article filtered based on the full text is further evaluated using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include: (1) articles that explicitly discuss *transformational leadership* (TL) and *emotional intelligence* (EI) in the context of employee motivation and engagement, (2) articles that research millennial employees or similar generations, and (3) articles that use empirical or theoretical approaches with strong methodology. Articles that do not meet these criteria will be excluded from review.

4. Inclusion

Articles that meet all eligibility criteria will be included in the final analysis. At this stage, data from selected articles will be collected and analyzed in depth to identify trends, research gaps, and relationships between the variables studied, namely *transformational leadership*, *emotional intelligence*, motivation, and engagement of millennial employees.

This rigorous and multi-layered process ensures that only the most relevant and high-quality literature is included in the research. By following the PRISMA protocol, this study ensures the validity and reliability of the review results and provides a valuable contribution to the leadership and human resource management literature.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The literature selection process in this study was carried out based on carefully defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the included articles were relevant and of high quality.

2.3.1. Inclusion Criteria:

1. Peer-Reviewed Articles: Only articles that have gone through the process *peer-review* published in international journals will be included. This is to ensure the quality and validity of the research methodology used.
2. Publication Period (2010-2023): Articles published in the period 2010 to 2023 were selected so that the relevance of the data is maintained in the current context, especially regarding the millennial generation which is starting to dominate the workforce in this decade.
3. Relevant Topics: Articles should explicitly discuss the relationship between *transformational leadership* (TL), *emotional intelligence* (EI), motivation, and engagement of millennial employees. The main focus of the research is how TL and EI impact motivation and engagement, especially in the context of high-pressure work environments, such as technology, finance, and other industries that have high performance demands.
4. High Pressure Work Environment Context: Articles that examine stressful work environment contexts, such as competitive industries that demand high performance, are also an important inclusion criterion for understanding the effects of TL and EI in this work situation.

2.3.2. Exclusion Criteria:

1. Non-Peer-Reviewed Articles: Articles that have not gone through the process *peer-review*, such as reports, opinion pieces, and popular articles, will be excluded from review. This kind of literature does not provide strong empirical evidence and its credibility can be questioned.
2. Gray Literature: Gray literature such as government reports, unpublished theses, and conference articles not published in reputable journals will not be included because their quality and validity are not guaranteed.
3. Irrelevant Studies: Articles that discuss TL, EI, motivation, or employee engagement without direct relevance to millennial employees or high-pressure work environments will be excluded. For example, studies that focus on other generations or work environments with lower levels of stress will not be included.

With these criteria, this study ensures that only the most relevant and high-quality articles will be analyzed, allowing for a more comprehensive and meaningful synthesis of the literature.

2.4 Search Strategy

The search strategy in this research was designed to identify literature relevant to the topic *transformational leadership* (TL), *emotional intelligence* (EI), motivation, and engagement of millennial employees, especially in the context of high-pressure work environments. Searches were conducted across several major academic databases to ensure broad and comprehensive coverage. Following are the details of the search strategy implemented:

1. Academic Database:
 - Scopus: As one of the largest and most trusted academic databases, Scopus offers access to leading international journals and peer-reviewed articles. *peer-review*. A search on Scopus will be carried out to find relevant articles with the specified inclusion criteria.

- Web of Science: This database also provides access to various international journals and high-quality scientific literature. Searching Web of Science will broaden the scope of relevant articles, given that its database covers a wide range of scientific disciplines.
 - Google Scholar: Although not as fully curated as Scopus and Web of Science, Google Scholar can provide access to a wide range of publications, including articles that may not be listed in other databases. A search on Google Scholar will ensure that no important literature has been missed.
2. Search Keywords:
- "Transformational Leadership": To find articles that discuss transformational leadership, focus on how transformational leaders influence employee motivation and engagement.
 - "Emotional Intelligence": To identify studies that link emotional intelligence to leadership and its impact on employees.
 - "Millennial Employees": To filter studies that specifically discuss the characteristics, motivation and engagement of millennial employees.
 - "High-Stress Work Environments": To find articles that discuss high-pressure work contexts and how they affect employees.
 - "Employee Motivation and Engagement": To collect literature that explores how employee motivation and engagement are influenced by various factors, including leadership and emotional intelligence.
3. Search Process:
- Initial Search: Conduct an initial search with predetermined keywords in each database to identify potentially relevant articles.
 - Filtering: Uses inclusion and exclusion criteria to screen articles based on title and abstract, followed by full text evaluation to ensure relevance.
 - Monitoring: Periodically check the database for recent articles that may be published during the research process, conducting additional searches if necessary.

With this search strategy, this research aims to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the existing literature, as well as ensuring that the review results cover a variety of perspectives and findings related to TL, EI, motivation, and engagement of millennial employees in a demanding work environment.

2.5 Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method in this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between *transformational leadership* (TL), *emotional intelligence* (EI), motivation, and engagement of millennial employees, especially in high-pressure work environments. To achieve this goal, data analysis was carried out through a thematic approach and a systematic coding process.

1. Thematic Analysis:

Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes and patterns in the reviewed literature. This process involves several steps:

- Data Collection: Collect and organize information from articles that have been selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data collected includes key findings, methodology, and conclusions from each study.
- Identify Theme: Examine the information gathered to find recurring or relevant key themes. These themes include how TL and EI influence millennial employee motivation and engagement, as well as specific impacts in stressful work environments.

- Theme Grouping: Group similar themes to develop patterns and relationships between themes. This helps in understanding how different aspects of TL and EI contribute to employee motivation and engagement in the studied context.
- Synthesis and Interpretation: Organize thematic results to provide a comprehensive picture of how TL and EI are interrelated and influence the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in high-pressure work environments.

2. Proses Coding:

The coding process is applied to extract important information from literature data and to organize the data more systematically:

- Code Development: Create initial codes based on identified themes and important variables such as TL, EI, motivation, and engagement. This code serves to mark relevant information in the text.
- Code Implementation: Apply these codes to the text of the articles that have been analyzed. This process involves highlighting passages of text that reflect themes and relationships between research variables.
- Code Collection: Collect and organize applied code to see patterns and consistencies in data. These codes help in identifying specific relationships between TL, EI, and other related variables.
- Code Analysis: Analyze the collected codes to draw conclusions about the relationship between TL, EI, motivation, and engagement. This process also involves examining convergence and divergence in the findings of various studies.

By applying the thematic analysis method and coding process, this research can provide an in-depth and systematic understanding of the influence of TL and EI on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees. This approach enables the identification of significant patterns and the development of insights that can be applied in leadership practices and human resource management in demanding work environments.

3. Results

3.1. Key Findings about Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Transformative leadership (TL) has been proven to significantly influence the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, especially through the empowerment and support approach it applies. TL creates an environment where leaders inspire followers to reach their full potential, this particularly resonates with millennial employees who seek meaning and purpose in their work. Research shows that transformative leaders build trust and facilitate personal growth, which in turn increases employee motivation and engagement (Valldeneu et al., 2021; Ghafoor et al., 2011; Patricia et al., 2020). This leadership style is characterized by its ability to create a satisfying work environment, which leads to increased intrinsic motivation among employees. When led by transformative leaders, millennial workers demonstrate higher levels of engagement, which is reflected in increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Valldeneu et al., 2021; Ghafoor et al., 2011; Mirda & Prasetyo, 2022).

The impact of TL on employee engagement is further supported by empirical evidence highlighting positive correlations between transformative leadership behaviors and various employee outcomes. For example, research shows that TL not only increases employee engagement but also contributes to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which in turn increases the overall effectiveness of the division (Marinda et al., 2018; Ghafoor et al., 2011). Transformative leaders are skilled at fostering a sense of ownership and psychological ownership among their employees, which increases their commitment and performance (Ghafoor et al., 2011; Mirda & Prasetyo, 2022). Additionally, TL has been associated with

creating a resourceful work environment, which encourages employees to be more engaged with their tasks, thereby improving overall job performance (Tims et al., 2010; Gameda & Lee, 2020).

In the context of the millennial workforce, the relevance of TL is further strengthened by the unique characteristics of this generation. Millennials are very responsive to leadership styles that emphasize personal development and recognition (Valldeneu et al., 2021; Mariah, 2023). Research shows that transformative leadership effectively meets these needs, as it encourages active participation and provides opportunities for growth and development (Patricia et al., 2020; Mirda & Prasetyo, 2022). This match between TL and millennial expectations not only increases employee engagement but also fosters a culture of innovation and creativity in the organization (Mirda & Prasetyo, 2022; Ariyani & Hidayati, 2018). In conclusion, transformative leadership plays an important role in motivating and engaging millennial employees by creating an empowering and supportive work environment. The positive outcomes associated with TL, including increased job satisfaction, productivity, and commitment, underscore the importance of this leadership style in contemporary organizational settings, especially when adapting to the preferences and expectations of the millennial workforce.

3.2. The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Strengthening Relationships between TL and Millennial Employees

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as an important factor in strengthening the relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and millennial employees, especially in terms of motivation and engagement. Leaders who demonstrate high levels of EI have a better ability to forge strong relationships with their employees. This ability stems from their ability to understand and respond to team members' emotional needs, which is critical to creating a supportive work environment. Research shows that leaders with high EI can effectively reduce stress and improve psychological well-being among employees, especially in high-pressure contexts where empathetic leadership is critical for reducing anxiety and promoting a positive work atmosphere (Ramadhan, 2023; Fida et al., 2019; Cai et al., 2016).

Furthermore, employees' psychological well-being is greatly influenced by the emotional intelligence of their leaders. Leaders who can manage their emotions well and understand employees' emotional states create a more stable and less stressful work environment. This stability is especially beneficial for millennial employees, who often seek a workplace that values their emotional health and provides a sense of security and appreciation. Research shows that employees who see their leaders as emotional people tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement, which is critical for maintaining motivation in their roles (Fida et al., 2019; Sugiono & Nurhasanah, 2022; Cai et al., 2016).

In a stressful work environment, a leader's ability to manage stress and provide emotional support is critical. Research has shown that leaders with strong EI can help employees overcome challenges constructively, thereby increasing motivation and engagement. For example, leaders who have good emotional intelligence are more skilled at conflict resolution and can create a collaborative atmosphere that encourages employees to express their concerns and seek support when needed. This capacity not only reduces stress levels but also promotes a culture of open communication and mutual respect, which is important for maintaining high levels of employee engagement (Cai et al., 2017; Chaudhary et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the role of emotional intelligence in strengthening the relationship between transformative leadership and millennial employees is multifaceted. High EI in leaders facilitates stronger interpersonal relationships, improves psychological well-being, and equips leaders to effectively manage stress in their teams. Therefore, organizations aiming to increase

employee motivation and engagement must prioritize the development of emotional intelligence among their leaders, recognizing its critical impact in creating a healthy and productive work environment.

3.3. Implications for Leadership Practice:

The practical implications for leadership in increasing the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, especially in stressful work environments, are significant. Research shows that organizations must prioritize developing emotional intelligence (EI) skills among their leaders. This focus on EI is very important because it allows leaders to apply the principles of transformational leadership (TL) more effectively, thereby supporting employee well-being and engagement. For example, Hayati et al. emphasized that transformative leadership is positively correlated with employee engagement, indicating that leaders who demonstrate transformational behavior can significantly increase the level of work engagement of their followers (Hayati et al., 2014). Similarly, Tims et al. found that transformational leaders can increase their followers' daily work engagement by fostering optimism and personal resourcefulness, which is especially important in stressful work environments (Tims et al., 2011).

Furthermore, integration between TL and EI is very important to create a motivating work environment for millennial employees. Research by Lai et al. supports this idea by showing that transformative leaders not only improve employee performance but also encourage helping behavior through increased work engagement (Lai et al., 2020). These findings are in line with research from Gameda and Lee, which highlights that transformative leadership styles are positively related to work engagement and subsequent work outcomes, reinforcing the idea that effective leadership practices can lead to improved employee performance (Gameda & Lee, 2020).

Additionally, the role of transformative leadership in promoting employee engagement is emphasized by various studies demonstrating its effectiveness in various contexts. For example, Patricia et al. illustrate that transformative leadership is significantly related to work engagement among public service employees, which in turn influences performance outcomes (Patricia et al., 2020). Likewise, Mariah's research shows that developing transformational leaders is a strategic approach for organizations to gain competitive advantage by increasing employee engagement (Mariah, 2023).

In conclusion, organizations aiming to increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in challenging work environments should invest in training programs that enhance the emotional intelligence and transformational leadership skills of their leaders. By understanding and integrating these two factors, organizations can better meet employee needs and improve overall performance, especially in demanding work environments.

3.4 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Motivation, and Engagement in a Challenging Work Environment

1. Effectiveness of Leaders with High Emotional Intelligence in Managing Conflict and Providing Support

The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and engagement in challenging work environments is a crucial area of study, especially in understanding how leaders can effectively manage their teams under pressure. Leaders high in emotional intelligence demonstrate better abilities in conflict management, emotional support, and handling work stress, which collectively promote better employee engagement. Leaders who demonstrate high emotional intelligence are highly skilled at managing and resolving conflict within their teams. Research shows that such leaders have the ability to understand and relate to their employees' emotions, which allows them to communicate effectively and relieve interpersonal tension. These skills not only create a harmonious work environment, but also

significantly increase employee engagement (Selvi & Aiswarya, 2022; Karmacharya, 2023). For example, a study highlights that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with work engagement, indicating that leaders who can manage emotions effectively contribute to a more engaged workforce (Edwar & Sulastri, 2023; Magnaye, 2023).

Additionally, providing emotional support by leaders is critical in high-pressure environments. Leaders with high EI are characterized by the ability to listen empathetically and provide constructive feedback, which helps employees feel valued and supported (Sudibjo & Sutarji, 2020; "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Driving Employee Engagement and Resilience", 2024). This emotional support is essential to motivate employees, especially during difficult times, because it increases their commitment to work and overall job satisfaction (Brunetto et al., 2012; Sulyantie, 2023). The literature consistently emphasizes that when employees feel that their leaders are supportive, their levels of motivation and engagement increase, leading to better organizational outcomes (Pisnar, 2024; Sivanthinathan, 2023).

In a stressful work environment, leaders with strong emotional intelligence can effectively face challenges, thereby creating emotional stability within their teams. This stability is important for maintaining productivity and job satisfaction, because it allows employees to deal with stress better (Aulia, 2016; Torrence & Connelly, 2019). Studies show that leaders who can manage their own stress and help their employees do the same contribute to a positive organizational climate, which in turn drives higher levels of employee engagement (Zhu et al., 2015; Akter, 2021). For example, research has shown that emotional intelligence not only influences individual engagement but also plays a mediating role in increasing organizational commitment among employees (Nagalingam et al., 2019; Magnaye, 2023).

In conclusion, the interplay between emotional intelligence, motivation, and engagement is particularly salient in challenging work environments. Leaders who leverage their emotional intelligence can effectively manage conflict, provide essential emotional support, and navigate work stress, thereby fostering a motivated and engaged workforce. This relationship emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence as a basic attribute for effective leadership in today's dynamic work settings.

2. Implications of Emotional Intelligence Development in Leadership Training

The development of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership training has profound implications for organizations, especially in challenging work environments. One of the most significant results of EI training is increased employee retention rates. Research shows that leaders who demonstrate high emotional intelligence foster supportive relationships with their subordinates, which in turn increases job satisfaction and reduces the likelihood of workforce turnover. For example, Alzyoud et al. highlighted that emotionally intelligent leaders create a better work environment, encouraging employees to stay with the organization (Alzyoud et al., 2019). Similarly, Giao et al. stated that leaders with high EI can effectively reduce employee turnover intentions, thereby retaining valuable talent (Giao et al., 2020). This retention not only reduces recruitment and training costs but also ensures continuity in the workforce, which is important for organizational stability and performance.

Additionally, the motivational aspect of EI training cannot be ignored. Leaders who are equipped with emotional intelligence skills are better at creating a positive and supportive work atmosphere. Studies by Sulyantie emphasize that employees with high EI are more likely to engage positively with their coworkers and superiors, leading to increased motivation and productivity (Sulyantie, 2023). These findings are supported by Chong et al.'s research, which notes that organizations are increasingly adopting their human resources policies to foster emotionally intelligent workplaces, which significantly improve employee performance (Chong et al., 2019). The resulting increase in motivation translates into higher levels of productivity and overall organizational effectiveness.

In addition to retention and motivation, employee well-being is greatly influenced by the development of EI in leadership. Leaders who are effective at managing stress and conflict, while providing emotional support, contribute to a safer and more satisfying work environment for their employees. Prentice et al. discussed how emotional intelligence is a critical factor in predicting individual and organizational success, suggesting that emotionally intelligent leaders can improve employee well-being by fostering resilience and engagement (Prentice et al., 2019). Additionally, research by Febrina shows that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance, which is a critical component of overall employee well-being (Febrina, 2023). Thus, the integration of EI training in leadership development not only improves individual performance but also promotes a healthier workplace culture.

In conclusion, the implications of developing emotional intelligence in leadership training are multifaceted, including higher retention rates, increased employee motivation, and better overall well-being. Organizations that prioritize EI in their leadership training programs tend to experience significant benefits, including reduced workforce turnover, increased productivity, and a more engaged workforce.

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

Findings from this literature review reveal that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a critical role in amplifying impact *transformational leadership* (TL) on the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, especially in work environments that are full of pressure and demand high performance. In-depth explanation these results can provide significant insights related to the main research question: "*How does emotional intelligence in transformative leaders increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in a stressful, high-performance work environment?*"

1. Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator in TL Relationships and Employee Engagement

The relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and employee engagement, especially among millennial employees, is highly mediated by emotional intelligence (EI). Transformational leaders who have high levels of EI are skilled at recognizing and managing their own emotions as well as those of their employees, creating a supportive and motivating work environment that increases employee engagement. This claim is supported by numerous studies highlighting the important role of EI in leadership effectiveness and employee engagement.

First, leaders with high EI can effectively manage their emotions during stressful situations, which is essential for maintaining a positive work atmosphere. This emotional management not only helps leaders deal with work stress, but also creates a calm and productive atmosphere for their teams. Research shows that leaders who are able to manage stress well create a calmer and more productive environment, which is especially important for millennial employees who often seek emotional support from their leaders (Khan et al., 2021; Milhem et al., 2019). Additionally, the ability to remain emotionally stable in challenging situations is associated with increased employee engagement, as employees feel safer and supported (Quang et al., 2015).

Empathy, which is a core component of EI, allows leaders to provide the emotional support employees need, especially in times of stress. Leaders who can empathize with their employees' emotional states help reduce stress and improve psychological well-being, which in turn increases commitment to their work. Studies show that when leaders show empathy and respond to the emotional needs of their employees, this significantly increases employee engagement levels (Selvi & Aiswarya, 2022; Cheema et al., 2021). This emotional support is

especially important for millennials, who value leaders who understand and address their emotional and psychological needs (Hurtienne et al., 2021).

Additionally, EI facilitates the development of positive relationships between leaders and employees. Transformational leaders who have high EI are better at building trust and respect within their teams, creating an inclusive and supportive work environment. Research shows that when employees feel valued and understood by their leaders, their level of engagement increases (Widowati & Satrya, 2023; Aulia, 2016). This is especially relevant in the context of millennial employees, who prioritize meaningful relationships at work (Vania et al., 2023). In conclusion, emotional intelligence serves as an important mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Leaders who have high EI are not only able to manage their own emotions effectively but also provide necessary emotional support and build positive relationships with their employees. This dynamic is critical to increasing employee engagement, especially among millennials, who thrive in an environment where they feel understood and supported.

2. Implications in a Stressful Work Environment

In a stressful work environment, emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in strengthening the impact of transformational leadership (TL) on employee performance outcomes. Leaders equipped with high EI are able to create a supportive atmosphere, which reduces stress and promotes psychological well-being among employees. This is very significant, as research shows that employees who feel emotional support from their leaders are more motivated and engaged in their work, which ultimately improves performance. For example, Brackett et al. emphasizes that emotional intelligence is critical in creating an environment that supports personal and professional success, which is directly related to employee motivation and engagement in stressful work environments (Brackett et al., 2011). In addition, Bashir emphasized that leaders with strong EI skills can manage stress in the workplace effectively, thereby increasing leadership effectiveness and employee performance (Bashir, 2016).

The relationship between EI and employee engagement becomes especially pronounced in high-pressure situations. Studies show that leaders who demonstrate high levels of emotional awareness and emotion management abilities can significantly reduce tension in the workplace, allowing employees to remain focused and engaged despite external pressures. For example, Liu et al. explains how work stress can have a negative impact on work performance and dedication, but effective leadership can reduce this impact by creating a supportive work environment (Liu et al., 2013). Additionally, Chanana and Sangeeta's findings indicate that higher levels of employee engagement are associated with lower levels of job stress and better overall well-being, reinforcing the idea that EI in leadership is critical to maintaining engagement in challenging times (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020).

The implications of these findings extend to the broader organizational context, where EI not only improves individual employee performance, but also contributes to a more resilient workforce. Research shows that employees with high EI are better able to deal with stress and adapt to challenging working conditions, which is essential for maintaining productivity in a demanding environment (Shinta, 2023). Additionally, Noermijati and Primasari's work supports the idea that lower work stress is associated with higher employee performance, emphasizing the importance of leadership in managing stress through emotional intelligence (Noermijati & Primasari, 2015). Therefore, the integration of EI into leadership practices is critical to cultivating a motivated, engaged, and resilient workforce in stressful work environments.

In conclusion, the link between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership is very important in stressful work environments. Leaders who utilize EI can create a supportive atmosphere, which increases psychological well-being, motivation, and engagement among employees, ultimately leading to better performance outcomes.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this research emphasize the importance of integrating EI training in leadership development to increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees. Organizations should consider including elements of EI in their leadership training programs, especially in the context of demanding work environments. By improving leaders' EI capabilities, organizations can create a more supportive work environment, which contributes to increased employee motivation and engagement.

Overall, EI not only strengthens the impact of TL on millennial employee engagement and motivation, but also plays a central role in creating an optimal work environment for high performance. Further research is needed to explore more deeply how specific elements of EI contribute to these outcomes and how organizations can leverage these findings for more effective leadership strategies.

4.2 Theoretical Implications

This research provides an important contribution to the development of transformational leadership theory by adding the dimension of emotional intelligence (EI) as a mediating factor in the relationship between transformative leadership (TL) and millennial employee engagement, especially in the context of a stressful work environment. This finding has several significant theoretical implications:

1. Expansion of Transformative Leadership Theory

This research expands the understanding of transformative leadership by integrating EI as a key element in the theory. Previously, transformative leadership theory mainly focused on leader characteristics, such as vision, inspiration, and empowerment. However, this research shows that EI also plays an important role in strengthening the impact of TL on employee motivation and engagement.

- **Emotional Dimensions in Leadership:** By including EI in TL theory, this research recognizes that effective leadership involves not only the ability to motivate and empower employees, but also the ability to manage and understand emotions in oneself and others. EI allows leaders to create better relationships and a more positive work environment, which increases employee engagement.
- **The Relationship Between TL and EI:** These findings suggest that EI functions as a mediator in the relationship between TL and employee engagement. This means that although TL can increase employee motivation and engagement, leaders' ability to understand and manage their own and their employees' emotions through EI amplifies that impact. This adds a new dimension to TL theory that underscores the importance of emotional factors in effective leadership.

2. Work Context with High Pressure

This research also highlights the importance of EI in the context of stressful work environments, which has previously received less attention in the literature on TL. High-stress work environments, such as the technology and financial services industries, require leaders to have high EI skills to manage the stress and conflict that frequently arise.

- **Pressure and Stress Management:** By identifying EI as a factor that increases TL effectiveness in stressful work environments, this research provides new insights into how leaders can manage the unique challenges of these environments. EI allows leaders to provide necessary emotional support, reduce the negative impact of stress, and maintain employee motivation and engagement in challenging situations.
- **Importance of EI in the Contemporary Work Environment:** These findings confirm that in an increasingly dynamic and demanding world of work, EI is a crucial element in effective leadership. Understanding and applying EI in the context of TL helps address

specific challenges faced by employees in stressful environments, and thus, adds an important dimension to transformative leadership theory.

3. Recommendations for Future Research

This research opens up pathways for further research in several areas:

- **Exploration of EI Specific Elements:** Future research could explore specific elements of EI, such as empathy, self-awareness, and relationship management, and how each element influences employee engagement in the context of TL. A deeper understanding of these elements can provide additional insight into how EI functions as a mediator in various situations.
- **Comparison across Industries and Contexts:** Future research could compare the impact of EI in the context of TL across different industries and work environments to identify whether these findings are consistent beyond stressful work environments. This can help expand understanding of how EI influences employee engagement in various work contexts.
- **Theoretical Model Development:** Based on these findings, the development of a theoretical model that integrates EI within the TL framework can be carried out. This model can be used as a basis for further research and as a practical guide for organizations in designing effective leadership training programs.

Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to transformative leadership theory by adding the dimension of emotional intelligence, making it more relevant in the context of stressful work environments that demand high performance.

4.3 Practical Implications

1. Development of a Leadership Training Program

Based on research findings, it is important for organizations to design and implement leadership training programs that emphasize the development of emotional intelligence (EI) for leaders, especially in stressful work environments. Here are some practical recommendations for integrating EI in leadership training:

- **EI Integration in Training Curriculum:** Organizations need to ensure that leadership training curricula include key elements of EI, such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional communication skills. Training programs should be designed to develop leaders' abilities to manage their own emotions and understand the emotions of their employees, which can strengthen relationships and increase motivation and engagement.
- **Simulations and Practical Exercises:** Training involving simulated high-stress situations and practical exercises can help leaders hone their EI skills in real contexts. The use of case studies, role-playing, and group exercises that emphasize conflict management and emotional support can improve EI skills and a leader's readiness to face challenges in a stressful work environment.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Program implementation EI training should be followed by ongoing evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the training and its impact on leadership skills. Organizations need to provide constructive feedback and support leaders in applying the learned EI skills into daily practice.

2. EI Assessment and Development in the Recruitment Process

In addition to training, organizations are also advised to prioritize EI assessment and development in the recruitment and leader development process. The following steps can be taken to ensure that EI becomes an important element in leadership development:

- **EI Assessment in Recruitment:** During the recruiting process, organizations should consider using EI assessment tools to evaluate potential leaders. Tests and interviews that assess emotional skills, such as the ability to manage stress and empathy, can help in selecting candidates who have the potential to be effective leaders in a demanding work environment.
- **Continuous Development:** After hiring, EI development should be part of the leader's ongoing career development program. Organizations must provide opportunities for leaders to continually hone their EI skills through advanced training, mentoring, and coaching.
- **Organizational Culture that Supports EI:** Creating an organizational culture that supports the development of EI is also important. Organizations can encourage EI-based practices by promoting open communication, emotional support, and positive feedback at all levels of the organization.

By integrating EI into leadership training and recruiting processes, organizations not only increase the effectiveness of transformational leaders, but also create a more positive and productive work environment. Implementing these recommendations is expected to help organizations manage stress and increase the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the organization.

4.4 Research Limitations

This research, while providing valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in transformative leadership (TL) and its impact on millennial employee motivation and engagement in high-pressure work environments, has several limitations worth noting:

1. Reliance on Existing Literature

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method inherently relies on literature that has been published and is available at the time the search is carried out. These limitations include several aspects:

- **Limitations in Literature Update:** Because SLR only identifies and analyzes published articles, it is possible that unpublished studies or more recent data were not covered in this review. This may lead to gaps in understanding of recent developments in research related to TL, EI, and millennial employee engagement.
- **Unreachable Literature:** Some relevant research may not have been published in international journals or is available in the form of gray literature that was not included in the main database search. As a result, it is possible that the findings of this study do not fully cover the entire spectrum of relevant research.

2. Focus on High Pressure Work Environments

This research specifically focuses on high-stress work environments, such as the technology and financial services industries. While this focus provides in-depth insight into a specific context, there are several limitations in terms of generalizability of the findings:

- **Industry Context Limitations:** The findings from this study may not fully apply to different industries or sectors with lower levels of stress or different job characteristics. These limitations mean that the recommendations and practical implications may not be fully applicable to other sectors where job dynamics and demands are different.
- **Variations in Work Environment:** High-pressure work environments often have unique characteristics that may not apply to other work environments, such as the public sector or the creative sector. Therefore, the results of this research need to be considered carefully just be careful when applied to contexts outside of the industry that has been researched.

3. Limitations in Methodology

- Subjectivity in Literature Selection: The process of selecting and assessing articles during SLR can involve subjectivity, especially in terms of study inclusion and exclusion. Although efforts have been made to follow PRISMA guidelines, decisions about the relevance and quality of studies may be influenced by the researcher's judgment.
- Effect of Publication Bias: Publication bias can affect the availability and quality of existing literature. Studies with negative or insignificant results may be less likely to be published, thus peninfluence the representation of results in this systematic review.

In order to strengthen the findings and overcome these limitations, further research can be conducted to examine the influence of EI in TL in various industrial contexts and other work environments, as well as integrating recent studies that may not be available in current publications. This effort will help generate a more comprehensive understanding of the role of EI in transformative leadership and its impact on employee motivation and engagement across a variety of contexts.

4.5 Future Research Directions

Based on the findings and limitations of this research, there are several future research directions that can expand understanding of the relationship between transformative leadership (TL), emotional intelligence (EI), and millennial employee engagement, especially in the context of a stressful work environment. Future research directions include:

1. Exploration of Causal Relationships

Further empirical studies are needed to explore the causal relationships between TL, EI, and millennial employee engagement in various industry sectors. This research may include:

- Longitudinal Research Design: Longitudinal research can provide insight into how changes in leaders' EI skills over time influence millennial employee motivation and engagement. By monitoring impacts over time, researchers can better understand the causal relationships and dynamics involved.
- Controlled Experiment: Experimental research with controlled designs can help identify the direct effects of EI development on leadership performance and employee engagement. These experiments could involve EI training-based interventions and evaluation of their impact on motivation and engagement.
- Sector Variation Analysis: Research comparing different industry sectors will help identify whether the relationship between TL, EI, and employee engagement varies by industry context. This will provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of TL and EI in different work environments.

2. Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Further quantitative and qualitative research could be conducted to measure the impact of developing EI in leadership training programs. This approach may include:

- Quantitative Study: Quantitative research can use survey methods to measure changes in leaders' EI skills and their impact on employee motivation and engagement. Valid and reliable measurement tools are needed to evaluate EI skills and engagement comprehensively.
- Qualitative Study: Qualitative research, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, can be used to explore leaders' and employees' subjective experiences regarding EI training. It will provide insight into how EI is applied in practice and the challenges faced in developing this skill.

- Training Program Evaluation: Research evaluating the effectiveness of training programs focused on developing EI would be valuable. This research could involve case studies of organizations that have implemented EI training programs and assess their impact on leadership and employee engagement.

3. Investigation of moderating and mediating factors

Future research could examine moderating and mediating factors that may influence the relationship between TL, EI, and employee engagement. Examples of such factors include:

- Organizational culture: Examining how organizational culture moderates the relationship between leader EI and employee engagement. This can help identify contexts in which EI may be more or less effective in increasing engagement.
- Other Leadership Styles: Explore how other leadership styles interact with EI in influencing motivation and engagement of millennial employees.

By focusing on these research directions, future studies can make significant contributions to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of TL, EI, and millennial employee engagement, as well as offer more comprehensive recommendations for leadership practices in various industrial contexts.

5. Conclusion

This research provides an in-depth understanding of the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of transformative leadership (TL) and how EI influences the motivation and engagement of millennial employees, especially in work environments that are full of pressure and demand high performance.

1. Main Findings

The results of this systematic literature review confirm that EI is a key factor in strengthening the effectiveness of TL. Leaders who have a high level of EI are able to:

- Managing Emotions: Handle and navigate their own emotions as well as the emotions of others more effectively, which in turn helps create a more positive and supportive work environment.
- Increases Motivation and Engagement: Men Encourage the motivation and engagement of millennial employees in a more responsive and adaptive manner, especially in the context of a stressful work environment.

2. Implications of Findings

These findings have important implications in both theory and practice:

- Theoretical Contribution: This research expands our understanding of transformative leadership theory by adding the EI dimension as a significant mediating factor in increasing employee motivation and engagement. This highlights the need to further integrate EI in leadership theory to explain the complexity of relationships between leaders and employees in challenging environments.
- Practical Implications: For organizations, especially those in high-stress industries, the results of this research suggest that EI development should be an integral part of employee training programs. Investments in EI training can contribute to improving employee psychological well-being, retention, and overall organizational productivity.

3. Recommendations

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations can be put forward:

- **Training Program Development:** Organizations need to design and implement training programs that focus on developing EI for their leaders, with the aim of strengthening their ability to manage stress and increase positive interactions with employees.
- **Strategy Evaluation and Adjustment:** Furthermore, organizations should conduct regular evaluations of the effectiveness of EI training and adjust strategies based on employee feedback and performance results.

By integrating emotional intelligence in leadership training and adopting this evidence-based approach, organizations can improve their leaders' ability to face challenges and motivate millennial employees more effectively in complex and stressful work environments. Further research is needed to examine more deeply the impact of EI training in various industrial contexts as well as to identify other factors that may influence the relationship between TL, EI, and employee engagement.

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