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EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION ACTS AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN TOXIC LEADERSHIP AND THE WORK ENVIRONMENT'S EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in enhancing employee performance. This study examines the impact of toxic leadership and work environments on employee satisfaction and explores whether employee satisfaction serves as an effective mediator in this relationship. The research was conducted through a survey of 42 employees at PT. PLN (Persero), utilizing a saturation sampling technique. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data. The findings indicate that both toxic leadership and work environments have a positive impact on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that employee satisfaction mediates the relationship between toxic leadership, unfavorable work environments, and employee performance. The study is constrained by its small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, as the research was conducted within a single organization, PT. PLN (Persero), the results may not be directly applicable to other sectors or organizations with different workplace cultures. Nevertheless, this study provides valuable insights into the role of toxic leadership and work environments in shaping employee satisfaction and performance within a public sector context. By focusing on PT. PLN (Persero), the research offers a model that could be extended to other public organizations to enhance the understanding of employee behavior and inform the development of more effective leadership and work environment strategies.

KEYWORDS: - Toxic leadership, work situations, employee satisfaction, employee performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the key components of organisational dynamics that affects performance, culture, and direction is leadership (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2019). But sometimes, the idea that ought to give team members direction, inspiration, and drive can take a negative turn (Tepper et al., 2019).

The difficulties that contemporary businesses encounter make it more crucial than ever for leaders to play a part in creating a diverse, effective, and goal-oriented workplace culture (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). But some leaders may become mired in undesirable habits along the way, such as controlling, intimidating, or taking advantage of their team members (Schyns & Schilling, 2018).

Knowing that in the context of contemporary organisational dynamics, leadership is essential to establishing workplace culture, inspiring workers, and accomplishing shared objectives (Putra & Setiawan, 2018). It is important to remember, nevertheless, that toxic leadership can also result from unhealthy and harmful leadership (Wahyudi, 2018). Because of its negative effects on both human well-being and overall organisational performance, this phenomenon is drawing more and more attention from academics and management practitioners (Fitriana & Fauziah, 2019).

The term "toxic leadership," which is becoming more and more popular, describes a leadership approach that is harmful, poisonous, and negatively affects both the effectiveness of the organization as a whole and the people surrounding it (Sutanto & Rachmawati, 2020). A thorough grasp of the elements that contribute to the creation of toxic leadership and the consequences it produces is crucial given the dynamic changes and increasingly complicated demands on the workplace (Utami & Aisyah, 2021). Performance is the outcome attained by an individual in completing the tasks given to him in accordance with his abilities, background, time, and sincerity (Hasibuan, 2020). Performance is the genuine conduct that people exhibit as a result of the work that workers do in accordance with their roles within the organization. Company performance is determined by individual factors such as ability and effort as well as factors beyond the direct control of employees such as other people's decisions, available resources and workplace systems.

On the other hand, the level of employee performance is very important because employees in all organizations are the most important factor in determining the success or failure of the organization's goals. Employee performance is related to employee morale, dedication, love and work discipline. Employees who do not get employee performance will have an impact on negative behavior, such as being undisciplined and lazy in completing their work. On the other hand, an employee who feels employee performance at work will try as hard as possible with their abilities to complete their work, so that their performance will increase. Prasetyo & Marlina (2019), stated that work discipline and employee performance affect employee performance. Fajri et al. (2022), showed that employee performance and work discipline affect employee performance.

Since work discipline is a mechanism by which organizations sustain their existence, employee discipline is another factor that must be taken into account. Employees that possess strong discipline will abide by all laws and rules in place, enabling the work to be completed in line with the planned schedule. Tegor et al.'s (2023) research demonstrated how work discipline affects employees' output.

One of the state-owned businesses in the energy services sector is PT. PLN (Persero), which seeks to establish a harmonious relationship with the community in order to support the business's efforts to supply electricity to both the community and PT. PLN in the province of East Java. Actively promoting the availability of electricity to raise living standards by utilizing it for domestic tasks throughout the day and creating communities that are energy self-sufficient. Although the company has attempted to improve employee performance through various programs, such as improving incentives and creating good and comfortable working conditions or situations, employee performance still falls short of expectations. The issue that still exists in the company is the level of employee performance, which is not yet optimal because the leadership does not side with employees. The purpose of this study was to close this gap and develop a model in which worker performance functions as a mediating variable.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Human Resources are vital assets in an organization in a company; therefore their role and function cannot be replaced by other resources. Even though the technology used, how much money is spent, without professional human resources, everything will be meaningless. HR is required to have high adaptability so that they are not crushed by the rate of change itself. With the support of these HR, it must be balanced with a great orientation towards the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the organization wherever it is. Human resources have a strategic role in determining the success and achievement of the company's goals. In an effort to realize these goals, the role of HR will continue to be optimized to be able to improve its performance for the sustainability of the company. Performance is a series of activities as a process carried out by employees in their efforts to achieve results as determined. Performance is a work result achieved by a person in carrying out their duties based on skills, efforts and opportunities (Hasibuan, 2020). Edison, Anwar, & Komariyah, (2017) stated that performance is the result of a process that refers to and is measured over a certain period of time based on previously determined provisions or agreements. Adyaribowo, M., Andjarwati, T., & Susanti, N. (2023), stated that there are many factors that affect employee performance, some of which include leadership style, organizational commitment, work stress & employee performance. Performance indicators are: effective, efficient, quality, punctuality, and productivity (Moehariono, 2012).

2.1 Toxic Leadership

Toxic leadership is a series of actions by leaders, whether intentional or not, that damage and discourage followers or employees who truly want to carry out the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. Toxic leadership as a leader who is not suitable for the work environment, often causes anxiety, and often wants to do bad things to subordinates (TezcanUysal, 2019). Toxic leadership is a combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that can create negative effects on task performance, both to the organization and to direct subordinates. Meanwhile, according to Naeem & Khurram (2020), leadership is an individual who behaves destructively and displays non-functional characteristics and can create a toxic triangle as a result of the interaction between leaders, subordinates and organizations that can result in the creation of toxic leadership.

Toxic leadership prioritizes personal goals as an individual that can create very serious, permanent, or even toxic effects on individuals, organizations, and their families. Toxic leadership weakens subordinates by shouting, criticizing, mocking, intimidating which can reduce employee self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-development (Bhandarker& Rai, 2019). This leader does not motivate employees and more often creates disturbances that can cause an employee to give up. Yulianti (2022), proves the negative influence of toxic leadership on employee performance. Wolor et al. (2022) showed that toxic leadership affects employee work performance and does not affect employee performance, while employee work performance affects employee performance. Erdal& Budak (2021), Toxic leadership has a negative effect on employee work performance. Indicators of toxic leadership are: authoritarian leadership, narcissism, uncertainty (Paltu& Brouwers, 2020).

2.2 Work Situations

The work situation is the result of employee perceptions of various aspects of their work environment, which will affect their behavior, as well as in the work situation. Often described as organizational culture, psychological climate and company personality (Gilmer, 1971). Literally, the situation or climate does not only mean something that is limited to physical things, such as temperature or pressure, but also has a psychological meaning in the form of a group of people in an organization that describes the internal environment of the organization, created from individual personalities and job requirements that interact with each other to produce a situation that affects both individuals and the organization. Steers and Porter (2011) state that there are at least four factors that can affect the work situation of an organization, namely: organizational structure, technology, external environment, and managerial policies and actions. Laniwidiyanti, (2010) proved the influence of the work situation on employee performance and employee performance. Shooshtarian et al. (2013), stated that employee emotional intelligence allows employees to adapt to work situations that are positively correlated with employee work performance. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between workers' emotional intelligence and work performance in the mediation of work situations. Nabawi (2019), proved that the work environment (work situation) does not affect employee performance. Work situation indicators are: conformity, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity, team spirit (Litwin & Meyer, 1971). (0.14").

2.3 Employee Satisfaction

Employee performance is the employee's moral motivation, discipline, and work performance in supporting the realization of the goals that a company wants to achieve (Hasibuan, 2020). Employee performance is a pleasant or unpleasant situational condition and how employees view their work. Employee performance reflects a person's attitude towards their work (Rosita &Yuniati, 2016). Employee performance is influenced by two factors (Mangkunegara, 2019), namely factors that exist in the employee and job factors. Employee factors include intelligence (IQ), special skills, age, gender, physical condition, education, work experience, length of service, personality, emotions, way of thinking, perception and work attitude. Job factors include type of work, organizational structure, rank (group), position, quality of supervision, financial security, job promotion opportunities, social interaction, and work relationships. Afianto&Utami (2017) prove that there is an influence of work discipline on employee performance, and the influence of employee performance on employee performance. Indicators of employee work performance are: mentally challenging work, supportive working conditions, appropriate salary or wages, personality

compatibility with work supportive coworkers (Robbins, 2015). This study aims to determine the effect of toxic leadership and work situations on employee satisfaction. Also to determine whether employee satisfaction is a good mediator. Based on the available literature, the following hypotheses are developed:

- H1: Toxic leadership system has a significant effect on employee satisfaction
- H2: Work situation has a significant effect on employee satisfaction
- H3: Employee satisfaction has a significant effect on employee performance
- H4: Employee satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and employee performance
- H5: Employee satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between work situation and employee performance

Based on the issues and literature review depicted in Figure 1, a research framework that explains the link between research variables can be constructed.

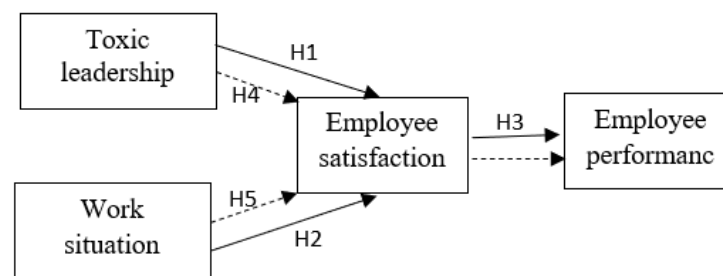


Figure 1: Framework for Research

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a causal-comparative study that aims to draw conclusions about the causal relationship between the variables studied (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The study population was all employees at BLK Pasuruan, East Java, which was 42 employees. Using a saturated sampling method, this is included in non-probability sampling. However, the small sample size of 42 employees may limit the generalizability of the findings. The results might reflect the specific conditions of the participants and may not be representative of a larger or more diverse population. The analysis technique uses SEM with the help of Warp PLS software. The data source for this study is primary data, obtained from respondents' responses using a questionnaire instrument with a 5-level Likert scale with a score interval of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and each indicator uses two statement items. Then descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing were carried out (Kyriazos&Stalikas, 2018). After testing the instrument, the measurement model test was carried out, namely the outer model and inner model tests. The Goodness of fit overall model test was carried out to see the structural model and measurement model in an integrated manner. Finally, a hypothesis test was carried out.

4. RESULTS

Description of respondents including gender, age, education level, and marital status is shown in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Characteristic of respondents (N=42)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	27	64.3
	Female	15	35.7
Age	< 30years	12	28,5
	31-40years	23	54,7
	> 40years	7	16,8
Education Level	Highschool level	8	19,0
	College level	34	81,0
Status	Mate	23	54.7
	Single	19	54,3

Descriptive data analysis of 42 respondents shows that: the gender of respondents is dominated by men (64.3%). Respondent characteristics based on age, dominated by the age range of 31-40 years, which is 54.7%, at the age of >40 years, as much as 16.8%, and at the age of <30 years, as much as 28.5% of respondents. The education level of the majority of respondents is before high school which reaches 41.4%, while the rest are educated at College level 81.0%.

The goodness of fit model is analyzed from the magnitude of the Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R Squared (ARS), Average adjusted R-squared (AARS) and the Average Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF) value. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis. Where AVIF and APC indicate the multicollinearity of the independent variables and their relationships. The evaluation data informs that the model is acceptable.

Table 2. Goodness of fit model

Result	P-Value	Criteria	Description
Averagepathcoefficient	0.390	< 0,001	Supported
Average R-squared	0.367	< 0,001	Supported
Averageadjusted R-squared	0.360	< 0,001	Supported
Averageblock VIF	1.207	< 5.000	Supported

Validity Test of Research Variables

Based on Table 3, the loading factor value of each indicator is greater than 0.5, and the AVE (average variances extracted) value is greater than 0.5. Thus, all indicators and measures of convergent validity of the research variables meet the requirements.

Table 3. Loading Factor values, and AVE

Researchvariables	Indicator	Outer LoadingFactor Value	AVE
Toxicleadership	Toxic.1	0.642	0.683

(Toxic)	Toxic.2 Toxic.3	0.679 0.645	
Work situations (Situasi)	Situasi.1 Situasi.2 Situasi.3 Situasi.4 Situasi.5 Situasi.6	0.647 0.688 0.677 0.629 0.523 0.555	0.761
Employee satisfaction (Puas)	Puas.1 Puas.2 Puas.3 Puas.4 Puas.5	0.701 0.713 0.776 0.632 0.713	0.724
Employee performance (Kinerja)	Kinerja.1 Kinerja.2 Kinerja.3 Kinerja.4 Kinerja.5	0.791 0.715 0.854 0.755 0.753	0.630

Source: Researcher

Discriminant validity is indicated by the AVE,s (square roots of average variance extracted) value, where the AVE,s value is in the diagonal position in the correlations among latent variables out put of Warp PLS, and the expected value is greater than the correlation value in the same block. Based on Table 4, the value in the diagonal block is greater than the value in the same block. Thus, all variables meet the discriminant validity criteria.

Table 4. Correlations among latent variables

Variable	Toxic	Situasi	Puas	Kinerja
Toxic	0.695	0.471	0.201	0.221
Situasi	0.471	0.601	0.258	0.208
Puas	0.201	0.258	0.751	0.690
Kinerja	0.221	0.208	0.590	0.775

Reliability Test of Research Variables

Uji reliabilitas variable penelitian diukur dengan dua kriteria yaitu compositereliability dan cronbach's alpha.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Cut Off Value		Toxic	Situasi	Puas	Kinerja	Notes
Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.6	0.727	0.632	0.669	0.689	All items meet the requirements
Composite Reliability	> 0.7	0.716	0.762	0.736	0.633	

Table 5 shows that the cronbach alpha value of each variable is greater than 0.6. Also, the compositere liability value is greater than 0.7. Therefore, all constructs have met the requirements.

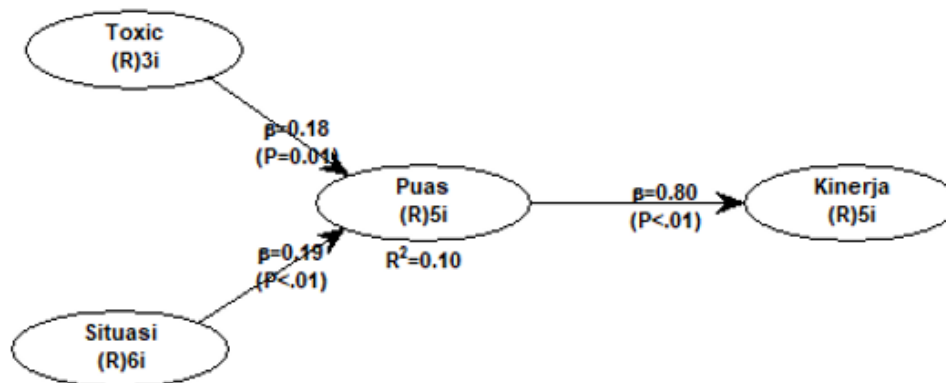


Figure 2. Coefficient of research model path
 (B= coefficient; p=probability; R2=determination)

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing is carried out based on the estimated significance values of the research model parameters as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	StandardizedCoefficient	P Value	Decision
H1.	Toxic → Puas	0.184	0.010**	accepted
H2.	Situasi → Puas	0.189	0.008**	accepted
H3.	Puas → Kinerja	0.798	0.000**	accepted
H4.	Toxic → Puas → Kinerja	0.147	0.005**	accepted
H5.	Situasi → Puas → Kinerja	0.151	0.004**	accepted

Note: →: influence; ** P value < 0.05

Toxic= Toxic leadership; Situasi= Work situations; Puas= Employee satisfaction; Employee performance

There is an influence of toxic leadership on employee satisfaction of 0.184, with a p value = 0.010. This indicates that H1 is accepted. There is an influence of work situations on employee satisfaction of 0.189, with a p value = 0.008. This indicates that H2 is accepted. There is an influence of employee satisfaction on employee performance of 0.798, with a p value = 0.000. This indicates that H3 is accepted. There is an influence of toxic leadership on employee performance, through employee satisfaction of 0.147. This indicates that H4 is accepted. There is an influence of work situations on employee performance, through employee satisfaction of 0.151. This indicates that H5 is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

This study found that employee performance of employees at PT. PLN (Persero) can be explained significantly by the variables of toxic leadership, work situations and employee satisfaction.

It is important to note that the context of this study is limited to PT. PLN (Persero), a state-owned enterprise in Indonesia. Therefore, the findings may not be directly applicable to organizations in other sectors or with different workplace cultures. This study also proves that employee satisfaction is a positive intervening variable in the relationship between toxic leadership, work situations and employee performance. For clarity, the discussion and discussion of the research results are carried out one by one as follows:

The influence of toxic leadership on trust and employee performance through employee satisfaction

The findings of this study inform that toxic leadership has a significant effect on employee satisfaction. Thus, toxic leadership provides reinforcement for employee satisfaction. This evidence shows that toxic leadership at PT. PLN (Persero) according to respondents is good. This is reflected in the respondents' answers which state that leadership with a narcissistic model is not good for the development of the company, as well as authoritarian leadership, which will make employees stay away from the leader. Toxic leadership will create uncertainty in the company environment. Thus, toxic leadership will not lead the company in a good direction, but will lead it in a less good direction. This study is in accordance with the findings of Yulianti (2022) which proves the negative influence of toxic leadership on employee performance.

Responsibility indicators contribute dominantly to forming toxic leadership, while authoritarian leadership indicators contribute the least to forming the toxic leadership variable. Therefore, authoritarian leadership does need to be eliminated. This can be done by providing input to upper management, to evaluate leaders better, and to do it continuously, so that the company can run according to expectations.

This study also found an indirect influence between toxic leadership and employee performance through employee satisfaction (H4). This informs that employee satisfaction is a good intervening variable in the relationship between toxic leadership and employee performance. Thus, to increase the value of employee performance, it can also be done through evaluating toxic leadership and employee satisfaction.

The influence of work situations on trust and on employee performance through employee satisfaction

The findings of this study inform that work situations have a significant effect on employee satisfaction. Thus, work situations provide reinforcement for employee satisfaction. This evidence shows that work situations at PT. PLN (Persero) have been running well. This is reflected in the respondents' answers stating that the work situation at PT. PLN (Persero) has been running well. Each employee has carried out their duties well. Likewise, management cares about employees and gives awards to each employee who excels. This study is in accordance with the findings of Laniwidiyanti, (2010) which proves the influence of work situations on employee performance and employee performance.

The indicator of the importance of self-expression contributes dominantly to forming work situations, while the standard indicator contributes the smallest to forming the work situations

variable. Therefore, standards still need to be considered. This can be done by providing work standards for each thing that will be done, so that employees can know whether what has been done has met the specified standards or not, as evaluation material for the results of their work.

In this study, it was also found that there was a significant indirect influence between work situations on employee performance through employee satisfaction (H5). This informs us that employee satisfaction is a good intervening variable in the relationship between work situations and employee performance.

The influence of employee satisfaction on employee performance

The findings of this study inform that employee satisfaction influences employee performance at PT. PLN (Persero). Thus, it can be interpreted that employee satisfaction provides reinforcement to employee performance. This evidence shows that employee satisfaction at PT. PLN (Persero) is good, and has an impact on employee performance. This is reflected in the respondents' answers who stated that the salary received is appropriate and in accordance with government regulations. Likewise, working conditions support high-achieving employees, because management opens opportunities for each employee to do their best and will be rewarded. Coworkers also strongly support employees when needed. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Afianto&Utami (2017) which prove the influence of employee performance.

The indicator of appropriate salary or wages contributes dominantly to the formation of employee satisfaction, while the indicator of personality suitability with work contributes the smallest to the formation of employee satisfaction variables. The results of this study indicate that employee satisfaction has a positive relationship to employee performance. This informs that by increasing employee satisfaction, it will encourage an increase in the value of employee performance.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that toxic leadership and work situations have a significant effect on employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is a good intervening variable in connecting the variables of toxic leadership and work situations with employee performance. This emphasizes that to improve employee performance; employees can try to increase the value of work situations and employee satisfaction. Of the two hypothesized variables, the work situations variable has a dominant influence on employee satisfaction. This study primarily focused on toxic leadership and work situations, without exploring other potentially significant factors such as financial incentives, family support, or mental health, which may also influence employee performance. Future research should consider these factors for a more comprehensive understanding of employee performance drivers.

This informs that in the work environment and while working, the work situation is good and supportive to be able to work well. For further research, it is necessary to add to the scope of the study, it is also recommended to research further the influence of other factors that affect employee performance, such as family allowances, health benefits and other variables, which are not yet part of the topic of this study, where there are still many other variables that can affect employee performance.

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