



# The Moderating Impact Of Transformational Leadership On The Influence Of Talent Management And Motivation On Employee Retention

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the extent to which transformational leadership can strengthen the relationship between talent management and motivation on employee retention. The research approach used is quantitative with a survey method through the distribution of questionnaires to 120 employees. The data obtained were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) technique. The results of the study indicate that talent management and motivation have a positive and significant effect on employee retention. In addition, transformational leadership is able to strengthen the influence of talent management on employee retention, but is unable to strengthen the influence of motivation on employee retention. This finding emphasizes the importance of motivation and transformational leadership in improving employee retention. Talent management programs will not be optimal without the support of transformational leadership that can encourage engagement and a sense of belonging in employees. Organizations need to create a work environment that is able to retain high-performing talent through the development of internal motivation and empowering leadership. HR development strategies should be designed in an integrated manner with transformational leadership styles to make retention efforts more effective and sustainable. Other factors such as task clarity, compensation, work culture, work-life balance, and job security may be more relevant in strengthening motivation towards retention decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

The travel and tourism industry is a key sector in the tourism ecosystem, offering a variety of services, such as ticket bookings, tour packages, transportation, and accommodation, for both leisure and business purposes. This sector not only facilitates mobility but also drives local economic growth. In Kediri City, this industry is growing rapidly, as evidenced by the growing public interest in tourism and the growing number of travel agencies and tour agents. Travel service companies in Kediri now offer domestic and international tour packages, as well as specialized services such as Umrah and Hajj pilgrimages, making the city a competitive travel hub in East Java.

The rapid growth of the travel and tourism industry in Kediri has intensified competition among companies. This requires every organization to manage its human resources effectively to maintain competitiveness and business continuity. Human resources are a crucial factor in the service industry, as service quality depends on the competence, loyalty, and commitment of employees. In this context, employee retention is a crucial strategic issue. Employee retention refers to an organization's ability to retain a qualified and high-potential workforce. High turnover rates can harm productivity, increase recruitment and training costs, and disrupt the stability of a company's operations.

Rapid change, technological advancements, and increasing global competition present significant challenges for organizations in retaining qualified human resources. Employees are no longer viewed merely as labor, but as strategic assets that determine a company's sustainability and competitive advantage. The phenomenon of high employee turnover rates across various sectors demonstrates that employee retention is now a crucial issue in human resource management (Alsakarneh, Al-gharaibeh, Ababneh, & Eneizan, 2023). Employee retention not only reflects a company's success in retaining a competent workforce but is also a strong indicator of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the effectiveness of its overall HR management strategy.

Employee retention also demonstrates an organization's success in managing its human resources effectively. Successful employee retention reflects job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the effectiveness of overall human resource management policies and practices. One proven effective strategy for improving employee retention is the implementation of talent management. Talent management focuses on a company's efforts to identify, develop, and retain high-potential individuals who can contribute significantly to the organization. Good talent management practices include selective recruitment, targeted career development programs, fair compensation, and a work environment that supports professional growth. With the implementation of effective talent management, employees will feel valued, recognized, and have clear career prospects, so that their desire to remain in the organization increases (Menezes, Gumashivili, & Kanokon, 2025).

In addition to talent management, work motivation is also a crucial factor influencing employee retention. Work motivation drives individuals to deliver their best performance in achieving organizational goals. Highly motivated employees typically demonstrate greater dedication, productivity, and loyalty to the company. Conversely, a lack of motivation can lead to decreased performance, increased absenteeism, and ultimately, the decision to leave the organization (Jiatong et al., 2022). Therefore, tour and travel companies in Kediri need to understand the factors that influence employee motivation, both intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction and meaning in work, and extrinsic factors such as compensation and recognition.

In the relationship between talent management and motivation and employee retention, transformational leadership plays a crucial role as a moderating factor. A transformational leadership style can inspire, motivate, and empower employees to transcend personal interests for organizational goals. Transformational leaders not only provide direction but also instill vision, values, and meaning in every organizational action. They build trust, create emotional

connections, and foster a sense of belonging in employees (Rafiq & Mazlan, 2023). In the context of tour and travel agencies in Kediri, the presence of transformational leaders can strengthen the positive influence of talent management and motivation on employee retention, as this style encourages higher employee engagement, loyalty, and commitment (Ismail, Ka, Fern, & Imran, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the moderating impact of transformational leadership on the influence of talent management and motivation on employee retention in tour and travel agencies in Kediri. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management science, as well as practical benefits for travel service companies in retaining a competent workforce amidst increasingly fierce industry competition.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Basis**

According to McClelland (1961), individual work motivation is determined by three fundamental needs: the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation (Et.all., 2022). The need for achievement reflects an internal drive to achieve high levels of performance and receive recognition for results. The need for power, on the other hand, relates to an individual's desire to influence, direct, and control the behavior of others. Meanwhile, the need for affiliation reflects the drive to establish positive social relationships and be accepted in the work environment. These three needs simultaneously shape the behavior and motivation levels of individuals within the organization, ultimately impacting employee commitment and retention, especially when the organization is able to meet each individual's dominant needs. In an organizational context, the fulfillment of these needs is not solely determined by the effectiveness of the talent management system but is also influenced by the leadership style implemented. Transformational leadership plays a significant role as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between talent management and work motivation and employee retention, as transformational leaders are able to inspire, provide individual attention, and foster high work enthusiasm and commitment. Therefore, implementing a transformational leadership style can strengthen the positive impact of talent management and motivation on employee retention, as leaders focus not only on managing systems and competencies but also on meeting employees' psychological and emotional needs, as explained in McClelland's theory of needs.

### **Talent Management**

Talent management is a strategic process to ensure key positions in an organization are filled by competent individuals through the regular management and development of human resources. This process begins with the formation of a talent pool, a group of high-potential employees whose skills align with the organization's needs (Masrurroh, Apriani, & Sopiyan, 2023). Talent management focuses not only on recruitment but also on developing, empowering, and retaining talent so they contribute optimally. This strategy effectively increases employee retention by maintaining stability, reducing employee turnover, and increasing productivity, as research shows (Yetti Kuniawaty, Teguh Iman Santoso, Titin Supini, & Munawaroh Munawaroh, 2025), as it creates a work environment that supports career development and a sense of belonging.

The positive impact of talent management emerges through clear career development opportunities, fair rewards, and recognition of contributions, which enhance intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty (Mere, 2025). In modern organizations, this process encompasses recruitment, selection, training, and retention to ensure strategic positions are filled by competent individuals, thus contributing to competitive advantage. Successful implementation increases employee commitment and engagement, while failure can lead to

talent loss and high costs, making it fundamental to organizational sustainability in the era of globalization.

### **Work Motivation**

According to Robbins (2009:214) (Yolinza & Marlius, 2023), motivation is a process that influences the intensity, direction, and duration of an individual's efforts toward achieving goals. Work motivation is a psychological pressure within an employee that can determine the direction of their behavior within the company, both in terms of their level of effort and their resilience in facing problems and obstacles. Motivated employees are more likely to be engaged in their work, demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, and demonstrate greater commitment to the organization. High motivation contributes to increased commitment and reduces employees' desire to seek employment elsewhere. Furthermore, Vroom's theory of expectancy also supports these findings. Vroom argues that employees will be motivated to work harder if they expect their efforts to be rewarded with desired outcomes, such as rewards or promotions. Employees who perceive that the organization fairly rewards their efforts tend to have higher retention rates because they feel their efforts are appreciated and they have the hope of achieving more in their careers. Motivation and job satisfaction have a positive and significant impact on employee performance (Nur Hayati, Supartini, & Novelia Asita Mranani, 2022). In research by (Frisdayanti & Choirunnisa, 2025), work motivation was found to have a significant influence on employee performance, which in turn can affect employee retention.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is a method used by a leader to influence the behavior of subordinates. This leadership style aims to guide and motivate employees, hopefully resulting in high productivity (Achmad Danang Nugroho Eko Saputro & Noor Arifin, 2025). A leader's transformational leadership style will significantly impact employee or subordinate performance. Leaders must be able to choose a transformational leadership style appropriate to the situation. If the transformational leadership style is applied correctly and appropriately, it will direct the achievement of organizational and individual goals. Research by (Frisdayanti & Choirunnisa, 2025) shows that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in increasing employee productivity and retention, particularly in the manufacturing sector, which faces challenges of job instability and low employee engagement.

### **Employee Retention**

Employee retention is an organization's ability to retain a qualified workforce so they remain and contribute to the company's sustainability. A high retention rate reflects the organization's success in building harmonious, fair, and satisfying working relationships (Siswanto, 2024). In a competitive business world, keeping employees from leaving is a major challenge that requires a systematic strategy. Employee retention also reflects the level of job satisfaction and fairness within the organization. Employees who feel secure, valued, and have a clear future at the company will demonstrate long-term loyalty. This can make new employees feel valued and engaged from day one. Another important approach is to emphasize rewards and opportunities for growth.

Therefore, an effective retention strategy must be oriented toward the well-being and development of employees, not just financial aspects. Good retention also impacts organizational efficiency by reducing recruitment and training costs while maintaining team stability. In the context of this research, employee retention is the dependent variable influenced by talent management and work motivation, with transformational leadership acting as a reinforcing or moderating factor that determines the extent to which these two variables can increase employee loyalty.

## Hypothesis Development

Talent management, work motivation, and transformational leadership are three key factors that play a significant role in employee retention, particularly in service-oriented organizations such as travel agencies and tour operators in Kediri, where the quality of human resources is a key determinant of operational success. Previous research shows that effective talent management and high work motivation can increase employee loyalty and reduce the likelihood of employees wanting to leave their jobs (turnover intention). Furthermore, transformational leadership not only directly influences employee retention but also acts as a moderating variable, strengthening the relationship between talent management, work motivation, and retention (Rafiq & Mazlan, 2023). Therefore, this study develops several hypotheses to test the direct and indirect influences between these variables. The research hypothesis to be proven is:

H1: Motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

According to Robbins and Judge (2019), motivation is defined as a process that describes the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual in pursuing work goals. Work motivation is a crucial psychological element influencing employee commitment and loyalty to the company (Permana, Buniarto, & Saptaria, 2024). Highly motivated employees tend to be more actively engaged in their tasks, experience deeper job satisfaction, and have a greater desire to remain with the organization. Research by (Bhaumik, 2022) shows that companies that successfully build employee motivation through a positive work environment and a fair reward system typically have better retention rates. The research hypothesis to be proven is:

H2: Talent Management has a positive and significant effect on Employee Retention.

Talent management has a positive and significant effect on employee retention. Empirical studies show that implementing effective talent management practices enables organizations to retain high-performing employees and improve overall organizational performance. Research by (Ramadhan & Ekhsan, 2024) outlines that implementing an effective talent management program can support key employee retention and improve overall organizational performance. Employees who feel valued and provided with development opportunities tend to demonstrate higher loyalty and motivation to remain with the company. The findings of this study indicate that talent management has a positive and significant impact on employee retention. The research hypothesis to be proven is:

H3: Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant impact on Employee Retention.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that inspires, motivates, and energizes employees to transcend personal interests for organizational goals. Transformational leaders play a crucial role in creating a conducive work environment, fostering trust, and providing personal support for employees. Transformational leaders successfully foster a sense of ownership, pride, and loyalty to the organization. This impact is directly reflected in increased employee retention, where individuals feel valued, receive assistance in career development, and develop a deep emotional bond with the organization. Various empirical studies have shown that transformational leadership contributes significantly to employee retention. For example, research by (Tian, Iqbal, Akhtar, Qalati, & Anwar, 2020) revealed that transformational leaders can reduce turnover intentions by increasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The research hypothesis to be tested is:

H4: Transformational Leadership moderates the effect of Talent Management on Employee Retention.

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in strengthening the link between talent management practices and employee retention. Talent management practices that include competency development, recognition of individual potential, and the creation of clearly defined career paths will have a more significant positive impact on retention when supported by inspirational and empowering transformational leadership. Recent research shows that transformational leadership significantly moderates the effect of talent management on

employee retention (Yetti Kuniawaty et al., 2025). In this study, talent management practices that include selection, training, and career development have been shown to increase retention. However, this influence becomes even stronger and more effective when integrated with transformational leadership that inspires, motivates, and empowers individual employees. Transformational leadership creates a work environment that supports employee innovation and growth, thereby enhancing their loyalty and engagement with the organization (Amin et al., 2024). Prasetyo (2025) strengthens this argument by stating that talent management strategies, which involve competency development and employee recognition, will be optimally effective when combined with transformational leadership that is effective in increasing motivation and retention.

Research (Amin et al., 2024) shows that transformational leadership has a positive and meaningful impact on employee retention by motivating and providing effective support. The study explains that transformational leadership can reduce turnover rates and strengthen employee loyalty through motivation, building relationships between leaders and subordinates, and providing inspiration. Another study by (Endratno, 2023) shows that transformational leadership significantly influences employee turnover intentions through its moderating effect on work motivation. In this case, inspirational and supportive leadership can increase employee loyalty and commitment, thus encouraging them to remain with the company. The research hypothesis to be tested is:

H5: Transformational Leadership moderates the effect of Motivation on Employee Retention.

## METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey method to examine the relationship between talent management, work motivation, transformational leadership, and employee retention, as well as the mediating role of transformational leadership. A sample of 115 respondents was selected through purposive sampling, with the criteria being permanent employees who had worked for at least one year at a travel agency in Kediri City. Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, which had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. Model evaluation included testing the outer model (convergent and discriminant validity, as well as construct reliability) and the inner model (path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value). The mediation test was conducted to determine the role of transformational leadership in strengthening the influence of talent management and motivation on employee retention.

**Table 1. Variables and Indicators**

No	Variable	Indicator	Measurement Scale Variable
1	Talent Management (X1)	Talent acquisition Likert scale	<i>Likert scale</i>
		Talent development	
		Talent placement	
		Talent retention	
		Succession planning	
2	Motivation (X2)	Responsibility Likert scale	<i>Likert scale</i>
		Job performance	
		Business advancement opportunities	
		Performance recognition	
		Challenging work	
3	Transformational	Idealized influence	<i>Likert scale</i>

	Leadership (Z)		
		Inspiration motivation	
		Intellectual Stimulation	
		Individualized consideration	
4	Employee retention (Y)	Intention to stay	<i>Likert scale</i>
		Commitment	
		Job satisfaction	
		Willingness to contribute	
		Willingness to recommend	

Source: Data processed by researchers (2025)

Talent management variables in general according to Gallardo-Garllardo and Thunnissen (2016) Talent management has five indicators, namely: 1) Recruitment; 2) Training; 3) Retention; 4) Identification; 5) Performance management of talent. Motivation variables according to McClelland translated by Suwanto (2020: 161) are a set of good strengths originating from within a person that encourages them to start behaving at work in accordance with the format and direction. The indicators are: 1) Responsibility; 2) work achievement; 3) business opportunities to advance; 4) recognition of performance; 5) challenging work. Transformational Leadership Variables according to Bass, The level at which a transformational leader is measured is primarily related to the leader's influence on his followers. The indicators are 1) Idealized influence, 2) Inspiration motivation, 3) Intellectual Stimulation, 4) individualized consideration. Employee retention variables according to Ahlrich (2000) that employee retention power refers to the company's policy to prevent employees from leaving the company. The indicators are: 1) intention to stay, 2) commitment, 3) job satisfaction, 4) willingness to contribute, 5) desire to recommend.

## RESULTS

**Table 2. Respondent Characteristics**

	Category	Frequency	Presentation %
Gender	1. Female	70	58,33%
	2. Male	50	41,67%
Age	<25 years	20	16,67%
	25-34 years	45	37,50%
	35-44 years	30	25,00%
	45-54 years	15	12,50%
	>55 years	10	8,33%
High School	Vocational High School Education	25	20,83%
	Diploma	20	16,67%
	Bachelor's Degree	55	45,83%
	Postgraduate	20	16,67%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025)

The study respondents numbered 120 people, consisting of 58.33% men and 41.67% women. Based on age, the majority were between 25–34 years old (37.50%), followed by 35–44 years old (25.00%), while the fewest were aged 55 years and above (8.33%). In terms of

education, the majority (45.83%) had a bachelor's degree (S1), while the rest were high school/vocational school graduates (20.83%), diplomas (16.67%), and postgraduates (16.67%).

**RESULTS**

In this study, inferential analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software version 4.0. Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) includes three main types of testing: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability, which involves Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The outer loading value is an important aspect in determining the model's suitability for further analysis. Based on the following figure, all indicators show outer loading values above 0.7, which means they have met the requirements for convergent validity. Thus, this model is considered valid and reliable, making it suitable for use in further analysis.

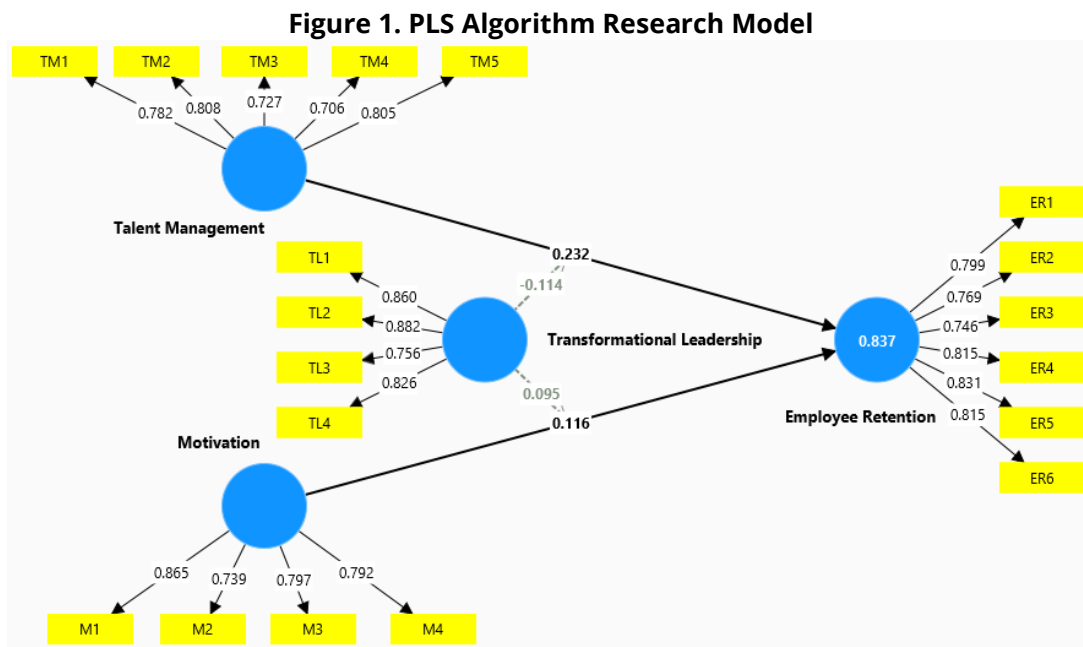


Figure 1 shows the Partial Least Squares (PLS)-based structural model used in this study to examine the relationships between variables: Talent Management, Motivation, Transformational Leadership, and Employee Retention. This model also incorporates the mediating role of Transformational Leadership in strengthening the influence of Talent Management and Motivation on Employee Retention.

Overall, this model encompasses several relationship pathways: a direct effect from Talent Management and Motivation on Employee Retention, as well as an indirect effect mediated by Transformational Leadership. Furthermore, this model also illustrates the relationship between Talent Management and Motivation on Transformational Leadership, as well as two interaction or moderation pathways: Transformational Leadership × Talent Management and Transformational Leadership × Motivation.

The PLS algorithm was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing models with a high level of complexity and a relatively small sample size. PLS also allows for the simultaneous assessment of relationships between constructs and provides estimates of the strength of influence through path coefficients, which are used to test the hypotheses within the model.

### Measurement Model Test Results (Outer Model)

Before testing the relationships between constructs in the structural model (inner model), the initial step is to evaluate the measurement model (outer model). This evaluation aims to assess the extent to which the indicators used in the questionnaire represent the constructs being measured validly and reliably. In the context of this research, outer model testing includes measuring convergent validity and construct reliability through indicators such as outer loading, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

**Table 3. Outer Loading, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE Convergent Validity**

Measurement Variables and Indicators	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reability (rho_a)	AVE
<b>Employee Retention</b>		0,773	0,779	0,596
ER2	0,742			
ER4	0,825			
ER5	0,752			
ER6	0,766			
<b>Motivation</b>		0,891	0,897	0,648
M1	0,752			
M2	0,775			
M3	0,863			
M4	0,838			
M5	0,836			
M6	0,762			
<b>Talent Management</b>		0,898	0,901	0,620
TM1	0,762			
TM2	0,797			
TM3	0,796			
TM4	0,817			
TM5	0,758			
TM6	0,789			
TM7	0,793			
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>		0,832	0,835	0,599
TL2	0,800			
TL3	0,773			
TL4	0,832			
TL5	0,736			
TL6	0,721			

Table 3 shows that one of the main indicators in testing convergent validity is the outer loading value. An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value of at least 0.7, indicating that it adequately represents the construct. Based on the analysis, all indicators in the Employee Retention, Motivation, Talent Management, and Transformational Leadership variables showed outer loading values above 0.7. This indicates that all questionnaire items have good convergent validity and are suitable for use in measuring the construct. In addition to convergent validity, construct reliability was also tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure internal consistency between indicators

within a construct, with a value  $\geq 0.7$  considered to indicate adequate reliability. The test results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct were in the excellent category, namely Employee Retention at 0.773, Motivation at 0.891, Talent Management at 0.898, and Transformational Leadership at 0.832. Furthermore, the construct reliability was strengthened by Composite Reliability results, which all exceeded 0.8, indicating that each construct had high internal consistency.

Convergent validity was also assessed based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which indicates how much of the indicator's variance the construct in question can explain. The minimum required AVE value is 0.5. Based on the test results, all constructs in this study met this criterion, with AVE values of 0.596 for Employee Retention, 0.648 for Motivation, 0.620 for Talent Management, and 0.599 for Transformational Leadership, respectively.

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is conducted to assess the extent to which the constructs in the research model are truly distinct from each other empirically. This test is important to ensure that each latent variable measures a distinct concept and that there is no overlap in meaning between constructs.

**Table 4. Discriminant Validity**

	Employee Retention	Motivation	Talent Management	Transformational Leadership	Transformational Leadership x Talent Management	Transformational Leadership x Motivation
Employee Retention						
Motivation	0,884					
Talent Management	0,975	0,981				
Transformational Leadership	1,193	0,890	0,963			
Transformational Leadership x Talent Management	0,538	0,392	0,438	0,502		
Transformational Leadership x Motivation	0,484	0,433	0,417	0,461	0,930	

Table 4 shows that several correlation values between constructs exceed the ideal threshold for discriminant validity, which is 0.90. For example, the correlation between Talent Management and Employee Retention is 0.975, and between Talent Management and Motivation is 0.981. These values indicate overlap or similarity between constructs, necessitating a review of the measurement indicators to further clarify both conceptually and empirically. A similar finding is seen in the correlation between Transformational Leadership and Talent Management, at 0.963, indicating a very strong relationship between the two constructs and a concern that this could interfere with the clarity of each variable. Furthermore, the correlation between Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention is recorded at 1.193, which is theoretically invalid because correlations between variables cannot exceed 1. These findings indicate possible calculation errors or unmet model assumptions, as well as the potential for high multicollinearity in the model. Meanwhile, the interaction constructs used as moderating variables demonstrated better discriminant validity. The correlation between Transformational Leadership  $\times$  Talent Management and the other constructs ranged from 0.392 to 0.538, and the

correlation between Transformational Leadership × Motivation and the other constructs ranged from 0.417 to 0.484. These values are within the acceptable range, indicating that the moderating constructs are sufficiently independent from the primary construct and have good discriminant validity. However, the correlation between the two moderating constructs reached 0.930, indicating potential overlap between the interaction constructs that requires further consideration. Overall, the results of the discriminant validity test indicate that several key constructs in this study do not fully meet the criteria for discriminant validity. Therefore, it is recommended to re-evaluate the indicators of constructs with high correlations and ensure that the constructs used truly represent distinct concepts to enhance the validity and reliability of the research results.

### Validity of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test aims to evaluate the extent to which a variable represents the original data obtained from its indicators. If the AVE value is greater than 0.5, this indicates good convergent validity for the variable. In this test, the AVE value of each research variable is analyzed to ensure the homogeneity of indicator variance within each variable. Based on the results presented in Table 1, all variables met the validity criteria with AVE values above 0.5. The Employee Retention variable had an AVE value of 0.596, Motivation 0.648, Talent Management 0.620, and Transformational Leadership 0.599. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no convergent validity issues in the tested model, as each construct has a sufficient AVE value to accurately represent the latent variables.

### Reliability

The final stage in evaluating the outer model is testing the model's unidimensionality. This test was conducted using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, with a cutoff value set at greater than 0.7. Table 1 shows that both Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha for each construct were above 0.7. The Employee Retention variable had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.773 and a Composite Reliability of 0.779; Motivation of 0.891 and 0.897; Talent Management of 0.898 and 0.901; and Transformational Leadership of 0.832 and 0.835. This indicates that all variables met the reliability criteria in this study, and there were no issues of reliability or unidimensionality in the developed model. Thus, all constructs can be declared to have good internal consistency and are suitable for use in further analysis.

### Structural Model Testing Results (Inner Model)

After the measurement model (outer model) is declared valid and reliable, the next step in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis is to evaluate the structural model, or inner model. Testing the inner model aims to determine the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable and to measure the strength and significance of the relationships between constructs. Two important indicators in this evaluation are the R-squared ( $R^2$ ) value, which measures the model's predictive power, and the f-squared ( $f^2$ ), which indicates the effect size of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

**Table 5. R Square**

	R-square	R-square adjusted
<b>Employee Retention</b>	0.932	0.931

Based on Table 5, the R-square value for the Employee Retention construct is 0.932, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.931. This value indicates that 93.2% of the variability in Employee Retention can be explained by the variables Motivation, Talent Management, Transformational Leadership, and their two interaction variables. This indicates that the model has very strong predictive power for this construct.

**Table 6. f Square Value**

	Employee Retention	Motivation	Talent Management	Transformational Leadership	Transformational Leadership x Talent Management	Transformational Leadership x Motivation
Employee Retention						
Motivation	0.006					
Talent Management	0.012					
Transformational Leadership	3.389					
Transformational Leadership x Talent Management	0.013					
Transformational Leadership x Motivation	0.006					

Based on Table 6 regarding the f-square values, the Transformational Leadership variable has the largest effect on Employee Retention, at 3.389, which is categorized as a large effect. Meanwhile, the Talent Management variable shows an f-square value of 0.012, followed by Transformational Leadership × Talent Management at 0.013, and Motivation and Transformational Leadership × Motivation at 0.006 each. These values fall into the small effect category according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, which states that an  $f^2$  of  $\geq 0.02$  is categorized as small,  $\geq 0.15$  as medium, and  $\geq 0.35$  as large. Thus, it can be concluded that Transformational Leadership is the most dominant variable in explaining variance in Employee Retention, while the contributions of the other variables are additional but still relevant. These results strengthen the position of transformational leadership as a key factor in increasing employee retention.

**Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results**

Hypothesis	Description Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Description
1	Motivation → Employee Retention	0,116	0,116	0,053	2,202	0,028	Accepted
2	Talent Management → Employee Retention	0,232	0,232	0,045	5,195	0,000	Accepted
3	Transformational Leadership → Employee Retention	0,618	0,619	0,045	13,623	0,010	Accepted
4	Transformational Leadership x Talent Management	0,111	0,047	0,067	2,410	0,016	Accepted

	→ Employee Retention						
5	Transformational Leadership × Motivation → Employee Retention	0,095	0,091	0,050	1,895	0,058	Rejected

**DISCUSSION**

**Hypothesis Testing**

Based on hypothesis testing, the correlation between constructs was measured by observing the path coefficients and their significance levels. Next, these significance levels were compared with the established hypotheses, using a 5% significance threshold in this study. After the data was processed using SmartPLS and initial calculations were performed using the PLS algorithm, the next step was bootstrapping the created model. The confidence level used was 95%, or an  $\alpha$  of 0.05. The t-value at the 5% significance level was 1.96, and the P-value must be less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is considered accepted and significant if the calculated t-value is greater than the t-value and the P-value is less than 0.05. Based on the data processing results in Table 7, the hypothesis testing can be explained as follows:

**The Effect of Motivation on Employee Retention**

The results of this study indicate that motivation has a significant positive effect on employee retention. This is evident from the coefficient value of 0.116 with a t-statistic of 2.202 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.028 (<0.05). In other words, the higher an employee's motivation level, the greater their tendency to remain with the organization. This finding demonstrates the importance of motivation as a key factor influencing employee loyalty and engagement with the company. Motivation theory emphasizes the importance of motivation derived from an individual's internal drives, such as a sense of meaning in work, personal satisfaction, or the desire to achieve specific goals. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), when employees' basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and social connectedness, are met, their intrinsic motivation will increase. This intrinsic motivation not only makes employees more committed to their work but also strengthens their loyalty to the organization. Employees who feel that their work is meaningful and that they have a real contribution to organizational goals tend to show higher retention rates. Psychological and affective factors are important elements in building employee engagement (Lina Saptaria & Sopiah, 2022). Organizations need to ensure that job design, the work environment, and the compensation systems they implement foster both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These efforts can include recognizing performance, setting meaningful work goals, and providing opportunities for employees to contribute and demonstrate their competencies.

According to (Andini & Siregar, 2024), work motivation has been proven to increase employee loyalty. Internally motivated employees have a higher emotional commitment to the company. This emotional commitment is an important component of employee retention, because employees who have an emotional bond with the company are less likely to seek job opportunities outside the organization. Internal motivation encourages employees to achieve targets voluntarily and with initiative, while external motivation, such as financial incentives and formal rewards, provide additional encouragement for employees to remain committed. In other words, the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can create a working environment conducive to retention. According to (Alisman Alisman, Samriana Samriana, Mawardi Mawardi, Muhammad Andi, & Dedi Sufriadi, 2025), motivation built through fair compensation policies,

consistent discipline, and recognition of employee contributions can increase retention. In practice, this means that organizations need to design reward systems that are not only financial but also symbolic, such as public appreciation, certificates of achievement, or opportunities for career development. This holistic motivation received by employees fosters a sense of appreciation and recognition, which in turn encourages them to stay longer with the organization.

Furthermore, a literature review conducted by Zaky (2020) shows that motivation plays a crucial role in increasing job satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens employee retention. High job satisfaction can be defined as a positive psychological experience for employees in carrying out their duties, including recognition, job challenges, and relationships with coworkers. Intrinsic motivation plays a role in fostering job satisfaction through a sense of accomplishment, development opportunities, and involvement in decision-making. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation, such as compensation and promotions, increases employees' sense of security and certainty, which is crucial for minimizing intentions to leave the company. Intrinsic motivation can manifest in several forms.

Companies that neglect motivation risk experiencing high turnover rates, losing potential employees, and experiencing disruptions to operational continuity. Conversely, companies that prioritize effective motivation strategies will be able to retain their best talent, increase productivity, and build a healthy work culture. In an era of global competition and high labor mobility, motivation strategies are a crucial instrument for reducing turnover and ensuring organizational sustainability. Thus, the results of this study confirm that companies that prioritize motivational strategies, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are better able to retain their potential employees. Motivation serves as a bond that facilitates harmonious relationships between individuals and organizations, creates long-term commitment, and enhances the stability and sustainability of the company.

### **The Influence of Talent Management on Employee Retention.**

The results of the study indicate that talent management significantly influences employee retention, with a coefficient value of 0.232 and a t-statistic of 5.195. This means that the better an organization's talent management strategy, the higher the retention rate achieved. This supports the view (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019) that talent management encompasses not only recruitment but also the development, empowerment, and retention of talented individuals as a strategy for achieving competitive advantage. (Ramadhan & Ekhsan, 2024) found that talent management implemented through career development programs, training, and employee engagement significantly impacted retention in manufacturing companies.

In practice, talent management can be implemented through succession planning programs, job rotation, providing clear career paths, and ongoing training. Organizational success is crucially determined by the quality of talent management, as sound career management maintains employee motivation and morale. Organizations need to manage talent in a more strategic, planned, and sustainable manner. Talent management practices such as training and development, career planning, succession programs, and fair reward systems have been shown to increase employee loyalty and desire to stay with the organization. In other words, employees who feel they have opportunities to develop and their potential is valued are more likely to demonstrate long-term commitment. Thus, these findings confirm that talent management is a core strategy in addressing turnover issues. Organizations, particularly in the competitive service and tourism sectors, must ensure the continuity of talent development programs to maintain long-term employee loyalty and retention.

### **The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Retention.**

Research findings show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee retention, with a coefficient of 0.618 and a t-statistic of 13.623. This figure

indicates that transformational leadership is the most powerful factor in maintaining employee loyalty. (Purwanto, 2022) showed that transformational leadership can strengthen the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance. This demonstrates that a transformational leadership style not only increases productivity but also builds long-term commitment. Nurma Wati (2022) found a strong relationship between the transformational leadership of ward heads and nurse retention, with an OR of 8.85, indicating a potentially significant impact. Furthermore, research by Saputra et al. (2025) found that transformational leadership has a significant influence on retention. This means that employees are more likely to stay when they feel led by a figure who provides a clear vision, inspiration, and cares about their personal needs. Thus, transformational leadership has been shown to be a significant retention driver. Organizations should instill transformational leadership principles in their managerial culture to build trust, increase emotional engagement, and reduce employee turnover intentions.

### **Transformational Leadership moderates the effect of Talent Management on Employee Retention.**

The study's findings indicate that transformational leadership can strengthen the influence of talent management on employee retention. When talent management practices within an organization are well-implemented, such as competency development, performance-based reward systems, and succession planning, employee retention will increase significantly when supported by a transformational leadership style. This study aligns with research (Setyawan, Anderson, & Nelson, 2024), which confirms that talent management, combined with transformational leadership, contributes to maintaining employee loyalty while improving organizational performance. These findings are reinforced by research (Srimulyani, 2020), which asserts that talent management not only directly impacts retention but also through increased employee engagement. (Levina, 2023) confirms that talent management variables partially significantly influence employee retention in the service sector. Transformational leaders are characterized by the ability to provide a clear vision, encourage creativity, provide individual consideration, and inspire subordinates through communication and role modeling. With leaders possessing these qualities, employees will feel more valued, supported, and involved in their career development. This situation reinforces positive perceptions of the organization's talent management practices.

Consequently, employees who have access to self-development opportunities through talent management not only feel they have clear career prospects but also feel emotionally connected to the organization through the role of a transformational leader. This combination makes them more motivated to stay, increases loyalty, and reduces the tendency to seek employment opportunities outside the organization. Overall, the research findings confirm that implementing talent management alone is not necessarily optimal in increasing employee retention if it is not accompanied by the support of a leadership style that motivates, empowers, and provides meaning to employees' work. In other words, transformational leadership acts as a catalyst that strengthens the positive impact of talent management on employees' decisions to remain with the organization.

### **Transformational Leadership Moderates the Effect of Motivation on Employee Retention.**

The results showed that the interaction between transformational leadership and motivation was not significant on employee retention, with a p-value of 0.058 ( $>0.05$ ), although the direction of the effect was positive. This indicates that while both variables individually play a significant role in employee retention, the combined effect of transformational leadership and motivation is not strong enough to significantly increase retention. Theoretically, transformational leadership should strengthen employee motivation through inspiration, empowerment, and fostering positive interpersonal relationships, thus fostering long-term

commitment. However, this finding aligns with the view (Wei, Wongvanichtawee, & Tang, 2024), which asserts that employee internal motivation is more influenced by personal factors, reward systems, and work environment conditions than simply leadership style. In other words, transformational leaders can inspire and provide direction, but employee motivation still depends on their basic needs, incentives received, and satisfaction with their daily work. Research by Rachmawati & Haryanto (2021) further indicates that transformational leadership is only effective as a moderator when employee motivation is at a low to moderate level. If employees' intrinsic motivation is already high, additional encouragement from the leader no longer has a significant impact on retention. This suggests a "ceiling effect" where additional interventions from transformational leadership no longer strengthen loyalty because employees already possess sufficient internal motivation.

This finding aligns with findings (Junianty, Anindita, & Nugroho, 2021), which indicate that the interaction between leadership and motivation requires an appropriate organizational context to have a significant impact. Factors such as organizational culture, team structure, workload, and work flexibility can influence the effectiveness of this interaction. For example, in organizations with an appreciative culture and a mature reward system, employee motivation tends to be naturally high, so the addition of transformational leadership does not significantly impact retention. From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that motivation and transformational leadership are more appropriately positioned as independent factors that directly influence retention, rather than as interacting variables. Employee development strategies should focus on increasing motivation through incentives, rewards, and career development. Providing fair compensation, performance-based bonuses, formal and informal rewards, and clear career paths will enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic employee motivation. Furthermore, an organizational culture that is supportive, inclusive, and values individual contributions can strengthen a sense of belonging, thereby increasing employee loyalty and retention. Meanwhile, transformational leadership needs to focus on creating a positive and inspiring work climate. Transformational leaders can emphasize the organization's vision, encourage innovation, build supportive relationships, and provide clear direction.

This approach provides a psychological and motivational foundation that supports productivity, although its interactive effect on retention is not significant. Organizations also need to manage employee expectations realistically so that motivational programs and leadership direction do not create excessive pressure, which can actually reduce work satisfaction.

Furthermore, ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of motivation and transformational leadership are necessary to adapt strategies to actual employee conditions, including stress levels, job satisfaction, and perceptions of the work environment. Overall, the results of this study indicate that while motivation and transformational leadership are both important for employee retention, their interaction does not always provide a significant additional contribution to retention. Therefore, organizations should treat both independently, focusing on optimizing each. Employee motivation can be enhanced through incentives, development opportunities, and a culture of appreciation, while transformational leadership focuses on creating a supportive, inspiring work environment that facilitates employee growth. This approach is expected to be more effective in maintaining employee loyalty, reducing turnover, and improving long-term organizational sustainability.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that work motivation, talent management, and transformational leadership have a positive and significant effect on employee retention. This finding indicates that the higher the level of work motivation and the effectiveness of talent management, the greater the tendency of employees to stay in the

organization. In addition, the results of the study also show that transformational leadership can strengthen the influence of talent management on employee retention, which means that leaders who are able to inspire, provide individual support, and foster work enthusiasm can increase employee loyalty and commitment at Angen Travel Kediri. However, the moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between motivation and retention proved to be insignificant, indicating that employee motivation at Angen Travel Kediri is more influenced by intrinsic factors such as the need for achievement and personal satisfaction, rather than leadership style.

Overall, this study confirms that efforts to improve employee retention at Angen Travel Kediri need to focus on strengthening the talent management system supported by the implementation of an inspirational and development-oriented transformational leadership style.

## LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the study was conducted in only one industry sector, namely a travel agency in Kediri, East Java. Therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other sectors or regions. Second, the data collection method, which used a self-report questionnaire, may introduce subjective bias, as respondents may provide answers deemed socially desirable or in line with the researcher's expectations.

Third, this study used a cross-sectional design, thus unable to fully explain the causal relationships between the variables of talent management, motivation, transformational leadership, and long-term employee retention. Fourth, although the SEM-PLS analysis yielded robust statistical results, there was still a high potential for multicollinearity between variables, particularly in discriminant validity. Therefore, the model needs to be refined in subsequent research.

Future research is recommended to expand the sample size to include various service and manufacturing sectors, employ a longitudinal approach, and consider other variables such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee engagement to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing employee retention.

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