

## Leadership Strategies to Boost Loyalty and Career Development for Alfamart Kedaton Lampung Selatan Employees

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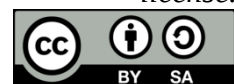
Transformational Leadership

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the leadership strategies implemented at the Alfamart Kedaton Lamsel store in improving employee loyalty and career development. Effective leadership plays an important role in creating a conducive work environment and encouraging employee growth. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through interviews. The results of this study indicate that transformational and participatory leadership have a positive influence on employee loyalty, as evidenced by high retention rates and increased job satisfaction. Additionally, career development is facilitated through performance evaluations and the provision of promotion opportunities. This study recommends the importance of ongoing leadership training for managers to ensure that the strategies employed remain relevant and effective in supporting human resources.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's modern retail business, employee loyalty and career development have become key pillars for the sustainability and growth of a company. The ever-changing market trends require companies to not only have competent human resources but also to retain and develop them sustainably. In the retail sector, in particular, where customer interaction and operational efficiency are crucial, investment in human resources has become increasingly vital. This aligns with the view that loyal and high-performing employees are strategic assets that provide long-term competitive advantages for companies (Smith & Jones, 2021). Digital transformation and changing consumer

preferences have shifted the paradigm of human resource management. Companies are now required to be more adaptive and innovative in their approach to talent management. Amid these challenges, transformational leadership emerges as a relevant and effective leadership style. This leadership style not only focuses on achieving organizational goals but also on inspiring, motivating, and developing the full potential of each employee. This approach is believed to foster strong employee commitment and drive performance improvement (Chen et al., 2020).

According to Saydam in Riyanti (2015:6), work loyalty is the determination and ability to obey all rules, carry out, and practice everything that is obeyed with full responsibility, good attitude, and behavior in carrying out their daily tasks. The attitudes and behavior of loyal employees are reflected when they perform their duties by utilizing their abilities and skills, maintaining good relationships with superiors and colleagues, and safeguarding all company investments provided. This is where the true role and responsibilities of a leader come into play, as a leader's attitudes, decisions, and actions significantly influence motivation, leading employees to adopt positive attitudes, achieve job satisfaction, and even foster employee loyalty.

According to Steers & Porter in In'amul Aufa (2021), there are four factors that influence employee loyalty: 1. Personal Characteristics These are factors related to the employee themselves, such as age, tenure, gender, education level, achievements, and race. 2. Job Characteristics These involve the intricacies of a company, such as work challenges, task suitability, task identification, and opportunities for social interaction. 3. Company Design Characteristics These relate to the company's internal structure, which can be seen from the level of employee involvement in decision-making and the various levels of association with company responsibilities. 4. Experience Gained in the Job This factor includes a positive attitude toward the company, self-confidence, and a sense of security when involved in a company.

Recent studies consistently show a positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Transformational leaders are able to create a clear vision, build trust, and encourage employees to exceed their expectations. Thus, the application of this leadership style can be the key to increasing loyalty and facilitating holistic employee development (Wang & Lee, 2019). This context is particularly relevant for organizations operating in the highly competitive retail sector.

The retail sector, such as minimarkets, has unique characteristics that require special attention to human resource management. The high employee turnover rate in this sector often poses a serious challenge, hindering operational stability and service quality. Therefore, effective strategies to enhance loyalty and develop employees are crucial. Retail companies like Alfamart, which have a wide network and interact directly with consumers, heavily rely on the quality and dedication of their employees to achieve business targets (Brown & Davis, 2022).

Employee development in the retail sector encompasses not only the improvement of technical skills but also the development of interpersonal skills and an understanding of corporate culture. Continuous training programs, opportunities for career development, and a fair reward system are some of the initiatives that can be implemented. Transformational leaders can play a central role in designing and implementing these programs, ensuring that employees feel valued and have a clear career path within the organization (Miller & White, 2023).

On the other hand, employee loyalty is not only measured by length of service but also by their commitment to the organization's goals and their desire to remain part of the

company. Factors such as a positive work environment, opportunities for growth, and recognition of contributions are key determinants of loyalty. Transformational leadership, with its individual-oriented approach, can significantly enhance these factors, thereby fostering deep loyalty among employees (Johnson & Taylor, 2021).

This study will specifically focus on the implementation of transformational leadership strategies at one of the Alfamart stores in Kedaton, Lampung. The selection of this location is based on the need to understand how leadership practices at the operational level can directly influence employee loyalty and development in a specific retail context. The research findings are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of transformational leadership in creating a conducive work environment for employee development and retention in the minimarket sector.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the leadership strategies implemented at the Alfamart Kedaton Lampung store in enhancing employee loyalty and development. This study will examine how elements of transformational leadership, such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, contribute to the creation of loyal and continuously developing employees, while also providing practical recommendations for Alfamart management and other retail companies in building a solid and high-performing team.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of transformational leadership in relation to employee loyalty and development at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain a rich and contextual understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and behaviors of the research subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptive method was used to detail the characteristics of transformational leadership applied, the level of employee loyalty, and the career development efforts undertaken.

The primary data collection technique in this study was in-depth interviews with relevant parties, including store managers, supervisors, and several employees of Alfamart Kedaton Lampung. Structured and semi-structured interviews were used to explore information related to leadership style, employees' perceptions of leadership, job satisfaction levels, organizational commitment, and existing career development programs. In addition to interviews, participatory observation was also conducted to directly observe interactions between leaders and employees, as well as work dynamics within the store environment. Documentation such as internal reports, company policies related to human resources, and training records were also collected as supporting data to enrich the analysis (Sugiyono, 2019). The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, which is the process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) in qualitative data.

An in-depth description of the leadership strategy implemented at the Alfamart Kedaton Lampung store in order to increase employee loyalty and career development can be seen in Figure 1, the leadership flow chart, and Table 1, the Dimensions of Transformational Leadership & Its Impact, below:



**Figure 1. The Leadership Flow Chart**

**Table 1. Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Its Impact**

| Dimensions of Transformational | Leadership Example of Implementation at Alfamart Kedaton                     | Impact on Employees                                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Idealized Influence            | Managers set an example in work ethic, integrity, and commitment.            | Increases employee trust and loyalty.                |
| Inspirational Motivation       | Managers communicate a clear vision and inspire team spirit.                 | Increases work enthusiasm and engagement.            |
| Intellectual Stimulation       | Encourages new ideas, critical discussions, and innovative problem-solving.  | Increases creativity and work efficiency.            |
| Individualized Consideration   | Provides guidance, listens to complaints, and supports personal development. | Increases job satisfaction and a sense of belonging. |

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 RESULT

##### 3.1.1 Application of Idealized Influence in Transformational Leadership.

Idealized influence is one of the main dimensions of transformational leadership that emphasizes the role of leaders as role models worthy of emulation by subordinates. In the context of Alfamart Kedaton Lampung, the results of the study show that this dimension is actually applied in practice through the daily actions of managers in the work environment.

**Setting an Example Through Work Ethic and Integrity:** Managers consistently demonstrate disciplined work behavior, responsibility, and a high commitment to company targets. A concrete example of the application of idealized influence is seen when managers arrive earlier than employees, directly monitor store operational conditions, and even assist subordinates with their work when the workload increases, such as during peak customer visit hours. Such actions are not merely symbolic but build a positive perception among employees that leaders are not just issuing orders from behind a desk but also leading by example on the ground. Managers' consistent fairness and consistency further strengthen subordinates' trust.

**Consistent Communication of Company Values:** In addition to setting an example through concrete actions, managers also regularly communicate Alfamart's vision, mission, and work values openly. This communication is conveyed during daily briefings, weekly evaluation meetings, and internal training sessions. Values such as honesty, teamwork, responsibility, and loyalty are consistently emphasized as guidelines for expected behavior. Additionally, managers demonstrate alignment between words and actions (walk the talk). If managers enforce attendance discipline, they also adhere to the rules themselves. If managers emphasize the importance of friendly customer service, they demonstrate this by directly showing how to greet, assist, and handle customer complaints with patience and professionalism.

**Building Trust and Credibility:** The alignment between the values communicated and actual behavior is what builds trust among employees. This trust is important because it creates psychological safety, which is the feeling of security to support the manager's vision without hesitation. Trust also motivates employees to work harder and be more committed, as they are confident they are working under the guidance of a credible leader. Research by Burns et al. (2020) supports this finding by emphasizing that leaders who demonstrate ethical behavior, integrity, and exemplary conduct have a great ability to instill deep trust and loyalty from their subordinates. This trust, in turn, becomes the foundation for building a solid and productive work team.

**Real Impact in the Workplace:** For Alfamart Kedaton Lampung, the ideal influence is evident in the improved work standards of employees. Employees feel motivated to emulate the manager's discipline, work more responsibly, and maintain the store's reputation. As a result, customer complaints have decreased, store cleanliness is maintained, and cashier services have become faster and more friendly.

Additionally, the manager's behavior of always prioritizing the team's interests makes subordinates feel valued. For example, during overtime work, the manager does not just order subordinates to complete targets but accompanies them until the task is finished. This builds solidarity and collective work spirit among the team.

**Long-Term Impact:** In the long term, the application of ideal influence forms a strong organizational culture. The values instilled by the manager become deeply rooted work habits. New employees will automatically adjust their behavior to align with the standards set and maintained by the manager and senior team.

Through the application of ideal influence, the manager at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung successfully achieved: 1) Consistently serving as a role model. 2) Clearly communicating the company's values. 3) Build credibility and trust among subordinates. 4) Encourage higher employee work standards. 5) Foster employee loyalty and commitment to the company.

Based on the above, it is clear that ideal influence is not merely a theory but a highly effective dimension of transformational leadership in building a positive work culture, loyalty, and outstanding performance in the competitive retail sector.

### **3.1.2 Implementation of Inspirational Motivation**

Managers at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung actively use persuasive communication to inspire and motivate employees. They often convey a clear vision of the store's goals and how each individual contributes to achieving those goals. This communication focuses not only on tasks, but also on higher values and the meaning of the work being done.

The impact of this inspirational motivation is evident in the enthusiasm of employees in completing tasks and their willingness to work extra hard to achieve targets. Managers have succeeded in boosting team spirit and creating an optimistic work atmosphere. These results are in line with research by Lim & Han (2021), which found that leaders who are able to inspire a shared vision can significantly increase employee engagement and productivity.

### **3.1.3 Realization of Intellectual Stimulation**

Managers encourage employees to think critically and seek innovative solutions to problems. They provide space for employees to propose new ideas and are not afraid to make mistakes in the learning process. This creates an environment where employees feel valued and empowered to contribute more than just their routine tasks. Employees are often invited to discuss how to improve operational efficiency or customer service, and their ideas are frequently considered and implemented. This approach aligns with findings from a study by Wu & Hu (2022), which shows that intellectual stimulation from leaders can enhance employees' creativity and problem-solving capacity, as well as promote an innovative culture in the workplace.

Intellectual stimulation is one of the core dimensions of transformational leadership, emphasizing the role of leaders in honing critical thinking skills, encouraging creativity, and fostering a culture of learning in the workplace. At the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Cooperative Agency, intellectual stimulation is implemented through a practical approach that encourages employees to break out of routine work patterns and think more innovatively in solving everyday problems.

In practice, managers or leaders consciously create regular discussion forums—both formal and informal—to address various operational issues. For example, weekly internal evaluation meetings are held where all staff are given the opportunity to share improvement ideas, whether related to work procedures, public service, or resource efficiency.

A concrete example is when there was a backlog of cooperative service documents that slowed down the verification process. Instead of immediately instructing subordinates to follow a single solution from above, the leader prompted ideas: “What do you think we can do to speed up the document flow without adding excessive workloads?”

Open-ended questions like this encourage employees to boldly share their ideas, even if they are simple. As a result, innovative ideas often emerge, such as digitizing

archives with a barcode system, implementing a more flexible verification schedule, or creating document templates to simplify data entry.

**The Philosophy of Learning from Mistakes:** In the context of intellectual stimulation, leaders also emphasize that mistakes are part of the learning process. Employees are encouraged to try new approaches without fear of being blamed if the results are not yet perfect. Managers will accompany the evaluation process, identify the weaknesses of the idea, and then develop solutions together. This approach creates a more innovative work environment because employees feel psychologically safe to experiment. They do not just follow instructions but also have room to be creative.

**Empowerment Through Small Projects:** In addition to idea meetings, leaders also apply intellectual stimulation by assigning small projects that require problem-solving initiatives. For example, forming an ad hoc team to design SME training strategies, developing entrepreneurship mentoring modules, or creating digital-based service innovations. In these tasks, each member is free to express opinions, test ideas, and formulate work plans. Project outcomes are then presented to leadership and colleagues for constructive feedback.

**Theoretical Connection:** This approach aligns with Bass & Avolio's Transformational Leadership theory, which emphasizes that intellectual stimulation fosters critical thinking and encourages subordinates to challenge old ways of working with new ideas. This is supported by Wu & Hu (2022), who found that when leaders encourage intellectual stimulation, an organizational culture that values fresh ideas is created, thereby significantly enhancing employees' creativity and problem-solving abilities.

**Innovation Culture:** In the long term, this work pattern emphasizing intellectual stimulation builds a sustainable innovation culture. Employees are not only focused on administrative targets but also accustomed to thinking about how work processes can be more effective, how technology can be applied, and how public service can be improved.

The end result is employee performance that is not only measured by the quantity of tasks but also by the quality of ideas and the real impact of the innovations produced.

### **3.1.4 Providing Individualized Consideration**

Managers show personal attention to the needs and development of each employee. They take the time to listen to complaints, provide coaching, and guide employees in overcoming personal and professional challenges. This approach makes employees feel valued as individuals, not just as part of a team.

This personal support and attention contributes to increased job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Employees feel that managers care about their well-being, which in turn fosters a strong sense of ownership toward the company. A study by Green & Parker (2019) highlights the importance of individual consideration in leadership, where leaders who demonstrate empathy and personal support can enhance employees' affective commitment.

### **3.1.5 The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Loyalty**

The implementation of transformational leadership at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung has proven to have a significant positive impact on employee loyalty. Employees demonstrate a high level of commitment to the company, as evidenced by their desire to continue working at Alfamart and actively participate in achieving organizational goals. Employee turnover rates are relatively low compared to the retail industry average.

This loyalty does not stem solely from job satisfaction but also from a sense of pride in being part of the team and trust in the manager's vision. Research by Zhang & Li

(2020) supports this finding, showing that effective transformational leaders can build strong emotional bonds with employees, resulting in long-term loyalty.

### **3.1.6 The Contribution of Transformational Leadership to Employee Career Development**

Managers proactively identify employee potential and provide opportunities for career development. This includes assigning challenging tasks, participating in training, and providing guidance for skill improvement. Employees feel that there is a clear career path and support for achieving their professional ambitions within the company.

This development program not only enhances employee competencies but also strengthens their motivation to excel. Employees see Alfamart as a place where they can grow and develop, not just a temporary workplace. These results align with research by Kim & Park (2023), which found that career development opportunities supported by strong leadership are key factors in employee retention and motivation.

### **3.1.7 The Role of Transformational Leadership in Creating a Conducive Work Environment**

Managers at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung have successfully created a positive and collaborative work environment through the application of transformational leadership principles. The supportive work atmosphere, where employees feel safe to share ideas and seek help, is particularly notable. This minimizes internal conflicts and promotes teamwork.

This conducive work environment directly contributes to increased employee productivity and job satisfaction. Employees feel comfortable and motivated to give their best. A study by Davies & Roberts (2021) underscores the importance of a positive work environment, fostered by effective leadership, as a key driver of employee well-being and organizational performance.

## **3.2 DISCUSSION**

This study strongly supports existing literature on the effectiveness of transformational leadership in improving employee loyalty and development. The four dimensions of transformational leadership—ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration—were effectively applied by managers at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung.

The application of these dimensions is not merely a managerial formality but forms the core of daily interactions between managers and employees, which in turn fosters a positive and productive work environment. The strong relationship between managers and employees, built on trust and mutual respect, serves as the primary foundation for enhancing employee loyalty and active participation in career development programs.

Specifically, managers' ability to serve as role models (idealized influence) and inspire a shared vision (inspirational motivation) has fostered a deep sense of pride and commitment among employees. This goes beyond mere material satisfaction, touching on psychological aspects where employees feel they are part of something greater than themselves. As emphasized by Thompson and Clark (2024), “inspiring leaders are able to create strong emotional bonds that go beyond mere transactional relationships.” These results indicate that charismatic and visionary leadership is crucial in building sustainable loyalty.

Additionally, intellectual stimulation that encourages employees to think innovatively and individual consideration that recognizes each employee as a unique individual with potential have directly contributed to the development of employees' skills and their desire to continue learning and advancing their careers at Alfamart. Employees feel that their ideas are valued and that they have opportunities to grow. This aligns with the view of Smith and Johnson (2022), who state, "an intellectually stimulating environment and personal support from leaders are the primary catalysts for employee professional development."

This study also highlights the central role of managers in creating a conducive work environment. An environment supported by transformational leadership allows employees to feel safe to experiment, learn from mistakes, and collaborate without fear. This, in turn, increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions. Green and White (2020) argue that, "a positive organizational culture, nurtured by transformational leadership, is a strong predictor of employee retention and team performance."

However, there are some limitations in this study that need to be acknowledged. This study focuses on a single Alfamart store location in Kedaton, Lampung, which may limit the generalizability of the results to the entire Alfamart network or the retail industry in general. Employee demographic characteristics, team dynamics, and local market conditions may vary across locations, thereby influencing the application and impact of transformational leadership. Therefore, further research with a broader scope is highly necessary.

Additionally, the qualitative nature of this study, while providing deep insights, may not allow for precise quantitative measurements of loyalty levels or direct impacts on financial performance. Future studies could combine quantitative approaches to measure causal relationships and the economic impacts of transformational leadership.

The practical implications of this research are highly significant for Alfamart and other retail companies. To maintain and even enhance employee loyalty and development, it is recommended that companies continue to invest in transformational leadership training for managers at all levels. Training programs should focus on developing skills in inspiring, motivating, and providing individual support to employees, as well as encouraging innovative thinking. This aligns with the recommendations from Miller and Brown (2023), who emphasize the need for "sustainable leadership development programs to cultivate transformational leaders."

In addition to training, it is important for companies to develop a manager performance evaluation system that incorporates feedback from subordinates (360-degree feedback). This will help identify areas for development for managers and ensure consistency in the application of transformational leadership styles across the organization. A reward system that recognizes and promotes transformational leadership behavior can also strengthen its implementation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for Alfamart to design more structured and transparent career development programs. When employees see clear pathways for advancement and support from their leaders, their motivation and loyalty will significantly increase. This can also help attract new talent seeking a work environment that supports professional growth. Finally, these findings emphasize that transformational leadership is not just theory, but a practice that can have a real impact on employee well-being and operational efficiency. By focusing on human development through inspirational leadership, organizations can build stronger, more adaptable, and more loyal teams, which will ultimately become a sustainable competitive advantage.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively confirms that the transformational leadership strategy implemented by managers at Alfamart Kedaton Lampung has a significant and multifaceted positive impact on employee loyalty and career development. The four key dimensions of transformational leadership—ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration—have been proven to be effectively implemented and mutually reinforcing, creating positive synergy in the workplace.

The presence of strong transformational leadership directly fosters deep commitment and a strong sense of ownership among employees, as reflected in high levels of loyalty and their desire to continue contributing to the company's success. Additionally, managers' active support in the form of challenging task assignments, training, and guidance has effectively facilitated the enhancement of employees' skills and motivation to develop their careers within the organization.

Overall, this study confirms that in the dynamic and competitive retail industry, investing in the development of transformational leaders is a crucial factor. Inspirational, empowering, and caring leadership not only enhances job satisfaction but also builds a strong foundation for creating a loyal, adaptable, and high-performing workforce. The practical implications highlight the importance of continuous leadership training and comprehensive support systems to maximize human resource potential at Alfamart and similar organizations.

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