

## Enhancing Employee Performance During the Covid-19 Pandemic: the Role of Readiness for Change Mentality

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### Abstract

This study aimed to measure the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance of the employee of a shoe industry in Tangerang which are mediated by readiness for change. Data collection was done by simple random sampling technique and the returned and valid questionnaire results were 117 samples. Data processing was used SEM method with SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results of this study concluded that transformational leadership have not significant effect on the employee performance, but transformational leadership have a positive and significant effect on readiness for change. This study conclude also that readiness for change have a positive and significant effect on relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Readiness for change as fully mediator. This new research proposed a model for building employee performance among the employee of a shoe industry in Tangerang through enhancing transformational leadership practice with readiness for change as a mediator. This research could pave the way to improve employee readiness in facing the era of industrial revolution 4.0.

## Meningkatkan Kinerja Karyawan selama Pandemi Covid-19: Peran Mentalitas Kesiapan untuk Berubah

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengukur pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional terhadap kinerja karyawan pada industri sepatu di Tangerang yang dimediasi oleh kesiapan untuk berubah. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik simple random sampling dan hasil kuesioner yang kembali dan valid adalah 117 sampel. Pemrosesan data menggunakan metode SEM dengan perangkat lunak SmartPLS 3.0. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan, tetapi kepemimpinan transformasional berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kesiapan untuk berubah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan juga bahwa kesiapan untuk berubah memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap hubungan antara kepemimpinan transformasional dan kinerja karyawan. Kesiapan untuk berubah sebagai mediator sepenuhnya. Penelitian baru ini mengusulkan model untuk membangun kinerja karyawan di antara karyawan industri sepatu di Tangerang melalui peningkatan praktik kepemimpinan transformasional dengan meningkatkan mentalitas kesiapan untuk berubah sebagai mediator. Penelitian ini dapat membuka jalan untuk meningkatkan kesiapan karyawan dalam menghadapi era revolusi industri 4.0.

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## INTRODUCTION

In most companies, industrial revolution era 4.0 is an absolute phenomenon and is unavoidable. A company should own a strategy that is able to do transformation and innovation to deal with this issue. This strategy could help the company and other businesses that has been built to not get affected by the era and inhibits its development (Asbari, 2015; Agistiawati, 2020; Jumiran et al., 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020; Nuryanti et al., 2020; Sudiyono et al., 2020; Yuwono et al., 2020). A company should also own a map that is integrated, so the direction of business development is able to be seen clearly. In between the strategy that is urged to be noticed is the readiness for change in every organization, especially to the global business organization. The global competition in this era requires readiness for change without any breaks from every industrial people. Covid-19 pandemic condition that is still surging in the world, including Indonesia, also requires changes of the situation and condition of the current businesses (Purwanto et al., 2020a; Purwanto et al., 2020; Setyowati Putri et al., 2020). Therefore, management must do practical and strategic steps to bring organization out from puddle of crisis that has almost drown some part of companies that is not prepared well.

Bass and Avolio (2000) improved the transformational leadership theory, based on Burn (1978) previous theory of transformational leadership. Every transformational leadership supporters believe that transformative leaders create trust, loyalty, admiration, and respect towards the adherent, and in between the adherents and leaders, so that they are voluntarily ready to achieve target, purpose and organization vision. Robbins (2001) confirmed that transformational leadership is whoever inspires their followers to change their life and able to aspire bigger target and vision. Luthans (2005) define transformative leader is able to change their followers' awareness, improve their spirit, and motivate

them to do their best to achieve organization's target, and their willingness to change should come from themselves. According Bass and Avolio, (2000) there are three characteristics of transformative leaders, which are to improve the awareness of the followers about the significance of process and effort. Secondly, to motivate the adherent to prioritise group's interests more than the individuals'. Lastly, to divert the needs of the adherent outside material things to higher level, such as pride and actualization. In other words, Burn (1978) states that transformative leaders is the people who push their follower to act for certain purposes who represent values and motivation-needs and desire, aspiration and hope-from every leaders and adherents. They are able to change the adherent's awareness and build normative values, ambition, to accomplish higher morality, such as equality, freedom, justice, humanitarianism, and peace.

Holt et al. (2007) shows that readiness for change is a multi-dimension that is affected by worker's confidence that able to change efficacy, correspond to the organization appropriateness, management support, and personal benefit. According to Holt et al., (2007) the indicator that could be used to measure the readiness for change of the employees are worker's confidence towards changes that are proposed is proper for the organization, worker's confidence towards organization would receive advantage from application of the changes, Employees believe in the presence of logical reasons for changes and the presence of needs for the changes that are proposed, employees focus on the benefits of changes in the company, worker's confidence towards their capability to apply changes that are desired, worker's feeling towards leaders and management in the organization having commitments and supporting the implementation of changes that are desired, Worker's feeling towards themselves that they would receive benefits from the implementation of changes that are desired.

To prepare employees to be confident enough to change in the organization, under-

standing the ways that could be used to grow readiness for change is necessary. There are two things that could be done by organization, which are establish readiness of the employees to change and solving problems of avoiding changes (Banjongprasert, 2017). organizational commitment could affect the readiness for change (Pramadani, 2012; Hadiyani, 2014). Organizational commitment is the desired to stay as a member of organization, trust and receiving values and organization's purpose as well as the willingness to work hard for the sake of organization's interest. Other than that, employee engagement (work involvement) has a role on the success of the implementation of organization's changes, especially in the larger scale, which involve every elements of the organization. Employees that are involved in the organizational activities will tend to support the journey of the changes of organization and ready to change.

Performance is the behavior on how a target is achieved (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Performance is the oriented process of the purpose that is directed to ensure that every organizational process is in the place to maximize the productivity of employees, team, and the organization itself. In other opinion, performance is the things that are done or not done by the employees (Luthans, 2005). In order to find out the worker's performance in an organization, some certain aspects are needed. Performance is affected by variable that is related to work covering role-stress and work/non-work conflicts (Babin & Boles, 1998). There are some criteria in measuring performance, which are quality, quantity, punctuality, cost effectiveness and interpersonal relationship (Bernardin & Rusel, 1993). Worker's performance has some elements, namely quantity, quality, accuracy, attendance, cooperation, and loyalty (Mathis & Jackson, 2002).

Obviously, Indonesian society has a strong spirit of patronage. Therefore, paying attention to the leadership practices in every unit of society, especially in business organi-

zation is very important and crucial (Asbari et al., 2019; Asbari et al., 2020; Fikri et al., 2020; Sopa et al., 2020a, 2020b). However, in the research field was found that transformational leadership practice does not give significant influence to the performance of employees (Asbari, 2019; Fayzhall et al., 2020; Jumiran et al., 2020; Maesaroh et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2020; Waruwu et al., 2020; Yanthy et al., 2020).

While research gap is still happening in the relationship between transformational leadership, readiness for change and worker's performance, thus this research needs to be done as soon as possible. Besides that, during this pandemic, the condition of the company was certainly no longer normal. Therefore, the authors propose variable readiness for change as an intervening variable or factor between transformational leadership and performance. Not many researchers have done similar research, but the writer considers necessary because readiness to change is considered an important factor that can't be eliminated in abnormal conditions. For instance, research of Mahessa and Hadiyati (2016) states that leadership positively and significantly affects the readiness for change, while according to research of Susyanto (2019) oppositely states that transformational leadership does not significantly affect the readiness for change on employees. The research novelty is addition of readiness fo change is use as an intervening variable, this research gap push researchers to elaborate deeper about the relationship between the two constructs.

## **Hypothesis Development**

### **The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Worker's Performance**

Previous studies shows that transformational leadership has positive relationship with organizational performance, by mediation or without any mediation (Asbari et al., 2019; Purwanto et al., 2019). Other research also found the similar finding (Purwanto et al., 2019; Bernarto et al., 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020b,

2020c). Based on the result and the conclusion of the researches above, thus researchers has made the hypothesis below:

H1 : Transformational leadership has the effect to the worker's performance.

### **The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Readiness for Change**

Previous research conclude that transformational leadership does not have any significant effect on the readiness for change (Susyanto, 2019). In contrast with Mahessa & Hadiyati (2016) who shows evidence that leadership gives positive and significant effect towards readiness for change for the employment of social security administration for health (BPJS). Based on the result and the conclusion of the researches above, thus researchers has made the hypothesis below:

H2 : Transformational Leadership has the effect towards readiness for change of the employees

### **The Effect of Readiness for Change on Worker's Performance**

Holt et al. (2007) defined readiness as worker's trust that they are able to implement changes that are proposed, these changes are appropriate for the organization, leaders commit in these changes, also these changes will give advantage to the members of the organization. An employee is declared as ready to change is when they show behaviour of acceptance, embracement, and adopt plans of changing that will be done (Holt, et al., 2007). Before an employee is in a ready position, they should reflect content, context, process and individual attributes to perceive and believe the changes that will be done by the organization. Readiness for change has been an important factor in creating the success of changes (Armenakis et al., 1993). This is shown by the two behaviour when changes is done, which could be positive and negative. Positive behaviour is shown by the presence of readiness for change and the negative behaviour is shown by avoiding changes. Cre-

ating positive behaviour in employees could be done by building readiness for change in employees, so that the changes could achieve success that is desired.

H3 : Readiness for change has an effect towards worker's performance.

### **The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Worker's Performance through Readiness for Change as a Mediator**

Some researchers conclude that variable of transformational leadership has a significant relationship towards worker's performance variable through the readiness for change (Katsaros et al., 2020). Partially, some other researchers mentioned the significant effect of transformational leadership towards readiness for change (Astuti & Khoirunnisa, 2018; Sari, 2018), and there is a significant effect of readiness for change towards worker's performance (Fitriana & Sugiyono, 2019). there is not much researcher that gives model of relationship between mediation variable of readiness for change towards the relationship of transformational leadership variable and worker's performance variable. Therefore, the author has made hypothesis mentioned below:

H4 : Transformational leadership has an effect towards worker's performance through readiness for change as a mediator.

## **METHOD**

### **Definition of Operational Variable and Indicator**

Method that was used in this research is quantitative method. Data collection is done by spreading questionnaire to every employee working in shoe in Tangerang, Indonesia. Instrument that was used to measure the transformational leadership is adapted by (Bogler, 2001) using five items (TL1-TL5) (i.e. the leader projects himself or herself as a role model). Readiness for change is adapted by Holt et al. (2007) using seven items (RFC1-

RFC7). Worker’s performance is adapted by Bernardin and Russel (1993) using six items (WP1-WP6) (i.e. quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, interpersonal impact and need for supervision). Research model can be seen in Figure 1. Questionnaire is closely designed except for questions/statements regarding respondent’s identity, which is in a form of semi-opened questionnaire. Every items of closed questions/statements were given five answer options, which are strongly agree (SA) 5 points, Agree (A) 4 points, neutral (N) 3 points, disagree (DA) 2 points, strongly disagree (SDA) 1 point. Method used in data preparation was by using PLS as well as software SmartPLS version 3.0 as the tool.

**Population and Sample**

Population in this research is the employee from one of the shoe industry in Tangerang, Indonesia, which has around 215 people. The sample description is shown in Table 1. Questionnaire was spread by simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire results that were returned validly was 117 samples. So, the total sample was 71.11% from the whole population.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

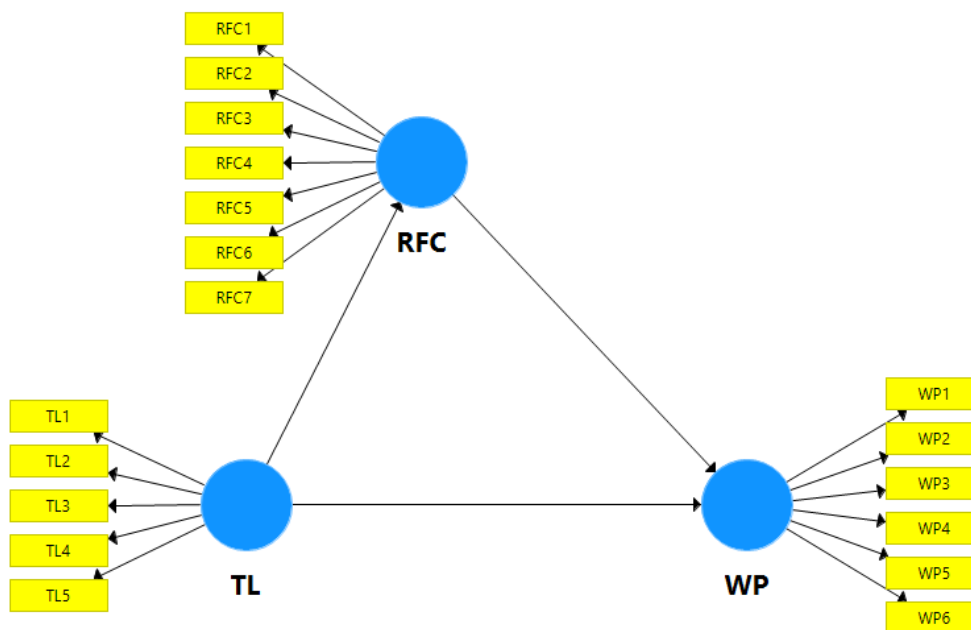
**Sample Description**

**Table 1.** Sample Descriptive Information

Criteria		Total	%
Age (per December 2019)	< 30 years	39	33.3%
	30 - 40 years	66	56.4%
	> 40 years	12	10.3%
Working period	< 5 years	43	36.8%
	5-10 years	58	49.6%
	> 10 years	17	13.7%
Last Education	≥ Bachelor Deg.	19	16.2%
	Senior High	84	71.8%
	Junior High	14	12.0%

**Validity and Reliability Test Result**

Stages on testing model of measuring involve convergent validity test and discriminant validity. While value of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability are needed in testing for construction reliability. PLS analysis result could be used to test for research hypothesis if



**Figure 1.** Research Model

all indicators in PLS model has meet the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability test.

### Convergent Validity Testing

Convergent validity test is done by seeing the value of loading factor of each indicators towards the construct. In most reference, with factor weighing from at least 0.5 is considered having validity that is strong enough to explain the latent construct (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2010; Ghozali, 2014). In this research, minimum limit of loading factor that is accepted is 0.5, with the condition of AVE score for every construct, which is  $> 0.5$  (Ghozali, 2014). After passing the process of Smart PLS 3.0, there are some indicators or items that needs to be taken out from the model. Furthermore, all indicators should have loading factor score above 0.5 or has meet the condition of AVE score above 0.5. Model that is fit and valid from the research could be seen

on Figure 2. Therefore, convergent validity from this research model has meet all of the requirements. Loading score, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE in every construct can be seen in Table 2.

### Construct Reliability Test

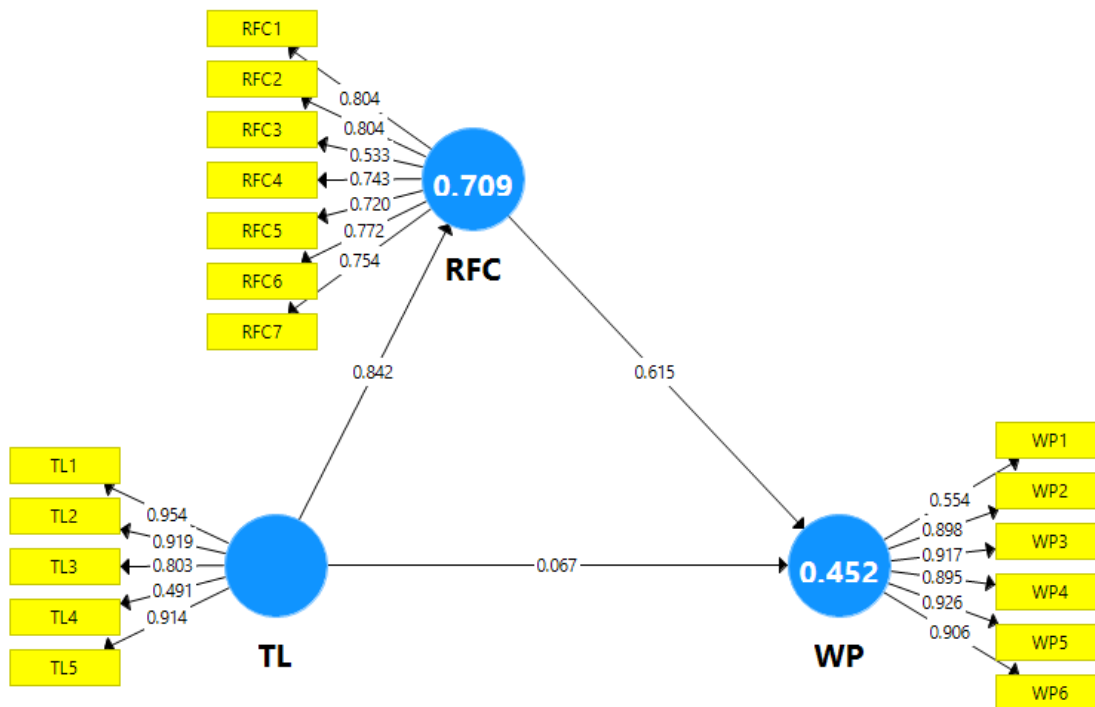
Construct reliability can be assessed from the value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability from each construct. Value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is suggested to be more than 0.7 (Ghozali, 2014). Reliability test result in the Table 2 above shows that all construct has composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha value higher than 0.7 ( $> 0.7$ ). In conclusion, all construct has meet the reliability that is required.

### Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity is done to ensure that every concept of each latent variables are

**Table 2.** Items Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Transformational Leadership (TL)	TL1	.954	.880	.916	.695
	TL2	.919			
	TL3	.803			
	TL4	.491			
	TL5	.914			
Readiness for Change (RFC)	RFC1	.804	.861	.892	.545
	RFC2	.804			
	RFC3	.533			
	RFC4	.743			
	RFC5	.720			
	RFC6	.772			
	RFC7	.754			
Worker's Performance (WP)	WP1	.554	.923	.943	.739
	WP2	.898			
	WP3	.917			
	WP4	.895			
	WP5	.926			
	WP6	.906			



**Figure 2.** Valid Research Model

in contrast with the other latent variables. A model has a good discriminant validity if the quadratic value of AVE in each exogenous construct on value on the diagonalexceeds the correlation between the construct with the other construct on value below diagonal (Ghozali, 2014). Result of discriminant validity research is done by the quadratic value of AVE, which means by seeing the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value that is obtained the same way as shown in Table 3.

Discriminant validity test result shown in Table 3 indicates the whole construct having square root value of AVE above correlation value with the other latent construct through Fornell-Larcker Criterion including cross-loading value of the whole item from any indicator that is larger than the other indicator items as mentioned in Table 4, therefore it can be concluded that a model has meet a discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Final valid research model can be seen in Figure 2.

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity

Variables	RFC	TL	WP
Readiness for Change (RFC)	<b>.738</b>		
Transformational Leadership (TL)	.842	<b>.834</b>	
Worker's Performance (WP)	.671	.585	<b>.860</b>

**Table 4.** Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Variables	Readiness for change (RFC)	Worker's Performance (WP)
Readiness for change (RFC)		3.441
Transformational Leadership (TL)	1.000	3.441

Moreover, collinearity evaluation is done to discover whether there is a collinearity in the model. To find out about collinearity, VIF estimation from every construct is required. If the VIF score is higher than 5, then the model will show a collinearity (Hair et al., 2014). A primer partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). It is shown the same way as in Table 4, all VIF score that is less than 5 means that the model has no collinearity.

### Hypothesis Examination

Hypothesis test in PLS is also denoted as inner model test. This test covers significance test that has a direct and indirect impact as well as how large is the measurement of the exogenous variable impact towards the endogenous variable. To discover the effect of transformational leadership towards worker's performance is through readiness for change as a mediation variable that needs a direct and indirect impact test. Impact test is done by using T-Statistic test in an analysis model called Partial Least Squared (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. With the bootstrapping technique, R square value and significance test value can be obtained as shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Based on the Table 5, R Square value of Readiness for change (RFC) is 0.709, which mean the variable of Readiness for change is able to be explained by the Transformational Leader-

ship (TL) variable in the percentage of 70.9%, while the other has the percentage of 29.1% clarified by other variables that are not discussed in this research. R Square value of Worker's Performance (WP) is 0.452, which means this variable is able to be justified by the Transformational Leadership (TL) and Readiness for change (RFC) variables in the percentage of 45.2%, while the rest has the percentage of 54.8% explained by the other variables that are not discussed in this research. Meanwhile, Table 6 shows T-Statistics and P-Values which indicate the effect of the variables mentioned above.

## DISCUSSION

### Effect of Transformational Leadership towards Worker's Performance

According to the statistical calculation summarized in Table 6, can be concluded that transformational leadership insignificantly affect worker's performance in an industry. Proven in the T-Statistics value of 0.511, which is less than 1.96 and the P-values of 0.610, which is larger than 0.05. This means that the first hypothesis (H1) is not supported or rejected because this case is contradicting with previous research (Nugroho et al., 2020; Waruwu et al., 2020) which stated transformation process in an industry as a main indicator for transformational leadership variable only last in a very short period of time. Transformation is started

**Table 5.** R Square Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Readiness for Change (RFC)	.709	.707
Worker's Performance (WP)	.452	.442

**Table 6.** Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	SE	T Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	TL -> WP	.067	.131	.511	.610	Not Supported
H2	TL -> RFC	.842	.018	45.909	.000	Supported
H3	RFC -> WP	.615	.126	4.867	.000	Supported
H4	TL -> RFC -> WP	.518	.108	4.783	.000	Supported



by the changes of organizational structure, election of a new leader, and then changes of work and culture system. Respondent of this research does not agree that worker's performance is affected by the changes above because the process takes a very short period of time. Nevertheless, this research is parallel with the previous research (Fayzhall et al., 2020a; Fayzhall et al., 2020b) who found evidence that leadership does not significantly affect performance. The conclusions from this study provide evidence to us that transformational leadership can have no effect on employee performance when standard of operating procedures (SOPs) are so good and detailed. In addition, in this pandemic condition, employees feel the need to have a higher attitude of independence and not be too dependent on the direction of the leadership.

#### **Effect of Transformational Leadership towards Readiness for Change**

Based on the statistical calculation summarized in Table 6, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has positive and significant effect towards readiness for change of the workers in an industry. This is proven by the T-Statistics value of 45.909, which is larger than 1.96 and P-Values of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that the second hypothesis (H2) is supported or accepted. The conclusion of this research supports the evidence found in the previous research, that readiness for change is significantly and positively affect performance (Banjongprasert, 2017; Katsaros et al., 2020).

#### **Effect of Readiness for Change towards Worker's Performance**

Based on the statistical calculation summarized in Table 6, it can be concluded that readiness for change has positive and significant effect towards worker's performance of the workers in a shoe industry in Tangerang. This is proven by the T-Statistics value of 4.867, which is larger than 1.96 and P-Values of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that the third hypothesis (H3) is supported or accepted. The conclusion of this research supports the evidence found in

the previous research, that readiness for change is significantly and positively affect performance (Banjongprasert, 2017; Katsaros et al., 2020).

#### **Effect of Transformational Leadership towards Worker's Performance through Readiness for Change as a Mediator**

Based on the statistical calculation summarized in Table 6, it can be concluded that readiness for change has positive and significant effect towards worker's performance through readiness for change of the workers in an industry. This is proven by the T-Statistics value of 4.783, which is larger than 1.96 and P-Values of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that the fourth hypothesis (H4) is supported or accepted. The conclusion of this research supports the evidence found in the previous research of (Katsaros et al., 2020) who claimed that readiness for change could mediate the effect of leadership towards worker's performance.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on this research, it can be concluded that transformational leadership does not give any significant effect towards level of worker's performance in the shoe industry. However, the belief and spirit of readiness for change in workers could maintain a good performance. The most interesting aspect of this research is that in this Covid-19 pandemic era, transformational leadership practices do not significantly affect the worker's performance, but positively and significantly affect readiness of change. The reason is majority of workers are the economically active people, who are above the age of 40 years old (66.7%) and the years of their service are mostly more than 5 years (63.3%), which means the presence of transformational leadership practices do not give as much effect towards worker's performance because they are relatively independent.

On the other hand, transformational leadership could give positive and significant effects towards changes in workers during this Covid-19 pandemic. Leadership practice, the-

re is an exemplary dimension that could dominantly affect. Briefing and meeting session that is held by the leaders could bring up strong awareness and belief to the workers that Covid-19 pandemic could be over and situation could be back to normal. Besides that, motivation given from the transformational leaders could provide belief that during post-pandemic, companies could have improved performance because they could see new probabilities in the future. Apart from that, this research has found evidence that readiness for change could fully mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and worker's performance. Based on the result of this research, it is suggested to the industrial management of shoe to pay more attention on the better transformational leadership practice, so that they could give positive impact towards worker's performance, or if it is impossible to maintain, the management needs to consider new leadership practices that is more suitable with the worker's condition in shoe industry.

This research has a number of limitations. Firstly, this research analyses about the effect of transformational leadership towards worker's performance, both directly and indirectly through the readiness for change variable. This is may be because there are some other variables (such as motivation, competency, management knowledge, organizational culture, etc) which affect the worker's performance. The author recommends to discover, explore, and analyse more to the next researches. Moreover, this research is done in the manufactural industry and may not be generalized to other industries. Therefore, it is suggested to do a further research regarding this topic in other industries, which could be added to other regions, countries, or comparison between small and medium-sized enterprise and larger organizations.

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