

**THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON  
INNOVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PLN UID  
ACEH**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research seeks to examine the influence of gender and transformational leadership on employee performance, with innovation serving as a mediator within PLN, an electricity company. The population for the study comprised all heads of departments in the PLN main distribution office in Aceh (PLN UID Aceh), totaling 858 employees. A sample of 272 employees was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using SEM-AMOS and Sobel calculator. The results revealed that significantly, gender and transformational leadership influence innovation; gender transformational leadership, and innovation influence employee performance, and; innovation mediates the gender and transformational leadership effect on employee performance. Furthermore, innovation is also revealed to function as a partial mediator in the model. The research findings illustrate that a model of high employee performance is significantly influenced by several key factors: the alignment of gender roles, the presence of strong transformational leadership, and the fostering of increased innovation within the workplace.

**Keywords:** Employee Performance, Innovation, Gender, Transformational Leadership.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Employee performance is influenced by a variety of interconnected factors, one of which is innovation. Employees who operate in an environment that fosters innovation tend to exhibit higher motivation and productivity levels. Leadership that cultivates a culture of innovation can significantly enhance both individual and team performance. As a prominent organization in the energy sector, PLN, as an electricity company, requires employees who possess not only the skills for their daily tasks but also the ability to adapt to change and drive innovation. Therefore, it is essential to understand how transformational leadership and gender influence overall employee performance. Based on the data obtained, the PLN main distribution office in Aceh (PLN UID Aceh) shows that overall the performance of male employees fluctuated from 2020 to 2022, where the previous SPO talent in semester 1 was 15.5 percent, dropping to 14.1 percent in semester 2 of 2023. Meanwhile, the performance of female employees also fluctuated but tended to increase, where in semester 1 of 2020 it was 7.1 percent, rising to 12.1 percent in semester 2 of 2023. This shows that the performance of female employees is better than the performance of male employees. One important aspect that needs to be considered in human resource management is gender. Gender often influences perspectives, communication patterns, and interaction patterns in the workplace. Previous studies have shown that gender differences in the work environment can affect group dynamics, decision-making, and the level of innovation produced. However, it is

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important to remember that innovation should not be influenced by gender, but rather by the competence and collaboration between team members.

As a company committed to the principles of equality and justice, PLN recognizes the importance of creating an inclusive work environment and providing equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender (SCI No. 0014/PERDIR/2022). In this context, PLN is still not optimal in recruiting female employees in the organization where in percentage terms only 16 percent of the 858 employees of PLN UID Aceh. Even the number of female employees in management positions is still far from the expected representation. Several efforts have been made which include several important aspects, such as fair recruitment and selection where PLN strives to implement an open, transparent, and non-discriminatory recruitment and selection process based on gender. This aims to provide equal opportunities for prospective female and male employees (SCI No. 0014/PERDIR/2022).

From the data obtained, there is still a gap between the total number of male employees, both structural and non-structural, compared to the total employees, as well as the number of female employees, only 25% of the 16% of total female employees occupying structural positions at PLN UID Aceh currently. However, this is an important problem because in terms of the total number of structural positions, which is 386 formations, only 36 people, or around 9% of the number positioned by female employees. This percentage is still much smaller than the value sought by government policies, ministries, and PLN of 30% and 15% occupying leadership positions. The issue of gender perspective or views on gender balance or gender inclusivity refers more to the concept of equality and inclusion between men and women in the context of organizational leadership where this issue is seen as still a problem in the context of unbalanced employee dominance and the existence of high workload demands even though the PUG strategy at PLN has been integrated into organizational planning. The relationship between gender and employee performance at PLN UID Aceh can be seen from how gender equality affects the work environment and individual contributions to achieving organizational goals. In organizations that support gender equality, both men and women have equal opportunities to develop, innovate, and participate in decision-making. This equality creates an inclusive work environment, which ultimately increases employee motivation, collaboration, and overall productivity. Gender is not only a biological aspect but also reflects differences in perspective, work approach, and abilities that, if managed well, can be an organizational strength in improving employee performance. At PLN UID Aceh, gender diversity can contribute to the creation of innovative solutions due to the combination of different perspectives from men and women. However, the success of this relationship is highly dependent on how the organization creates a fair and supportive work culture, where there is no discrimination or gender stereotypes. For example, women who are empowered with equal access to training and career opportunities will be more confident in giving their best contribution, which in turn improves individual and team performance. Therefore, strategic management of gender issues at PLN UID Aceh has the potential to result in significant improvements in employee performance. From our pre-survey with 30 respondents, the average value of the gender variable was 3.75. It is > 3.41, which indicates that the gender assigned is appropriate. However, there are still indicators that have a low average value where male leaders have a stronger mentality than women. This shows that female leaders also have a strong mentality that can be compared to male leaders.

The next factor that influences performance is transformational leadership.

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Transformational leadership as one of the leadership approaches widely used in various organizations, has a key role in driving innovation (McLaurin & Amri, 2008). Leaders who apply transformational leadership style not only focus on achieving targets and results, but also on developing individual potential, raising team spirit, and inspiring their subordinates. Transformational leaders tend to create a work environment that supports employees to think creatively, dare to take risks, and feel appreciated for their contribution to innovation. In the PLN UID Aceh, transformational leadership is expected to encourage innovation when facing challenges in the energy distribution sector. This leadership approach emphasizes inspiration, motivation, and individual development. Transformational leaders are able to provide a clear vision and inspire employees to contribute more than their initial expectations. Transformational leaders can also help create a work environment that supports innovation and collaboration, so that employees feel more appreciated and motivated to achieve the best results. When employees feel inspired by their leaders, they tend to show better performance, both individually and as a team. In addition, transformational leadership also plays an important role in supporting organizational change and adaptation amidst the challenges of the ever-evolving electricity industry. By providing individual attention to employees, transformational leaders are able to recognize the needs and potential of each team member, and provide the necessary support for their development. Thus, transformational leadership at PLN UID Aceh directly contributes to improving employee performance, both in terms of productivity and job satisfaction. From our pre-survey with 30 respondents, the transformational leadership average value of  $3.73 > 3.41$ , indicates that the performance is good. However, there are still indicators that have a low average value where the leader lacks the appeal to make others support the vision and also promote it enthusiastically.

The next factor that influences employee performance is innovation. In many organizations, innovation often comes from the collaboration of individuals with different perspectives. In this case, the role of leadership is very important to create an open culture of innovation and support the diversity of ideas. Transformational leadership that supports creativity and diversity of opinions can create an environment conducive to innovation. On the other hand, the role of gender in innovation must also be considered, especially in creating equal opportunities for each individual to contribute (Natalia, 2024). Innovation has a close relationship with employee performance at PLN UID Aceh because innovation encourages the creation of more effective, efficient, and creative ways of working. When innovation is applied in the work process, employees have the opportunity to use new ideas and technologies that make their tasks easier. This not only increases productivity but also makes employees more motivated and involved in their work. With innovation, employees can find solutions to the work challenges they face, so that the work results are more optimal and of higher quality. In addition, innovation creates a dynamic work environment, where employees are encouraged to continue learning and developing. At PLN UID Aceh, the implementation of innovation can improve employee competency, both through training in new technologies and the development of more modern work methods. When innovation becomes part of the organizational culture, employees will feel more appreciated for their contributions, which ultimately improves individual and team performance. Therefore, innovation serves as a catalyst for improving employee performance by strengthening work enthusiasm and operational effectiveness in the company. Based on our pre-survey with 30 respondents on the innovation variable, the average value was 3.59 with a good category ( $3.59 > 3.41$ ). However, there are still indicators that have a low average value where according to

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respondents, new innovations are not yet compatible to replace old innovations. This shows that there are still aspects that need to be improved by new innovations.

One of the biggest challenges faced by PLN UID Aceh is how to improve efficiency and performance in energy distribution, considering that this sector is very vital for people's lives. One way to achieve this is by encouraging innovation in the distribution process, energy management, and the technology used. However, to create sustainable innovation, companies need leaders who not only focus on short-term results, but also prioritize the development of employees' long-term potential. Transformational leadership plays an important role in creating a work climate that prioritizes innovation. On the other hand, gender is becoming an increasingly relevant factor in creating an inclusive work environment and encouraging diversity. PLN, as one of the largest companies in Indonesia, must ensure that opportunities to contribute to innovation are not limited by gender. By creating an inclusive environment, companies can ensure that every employee has an equal opportunity to provide ideas and solutions that can improve the company's efficiency and performance.

This study aims to see how gender affects collaboration and innovation within a team, and whether there are significant differences in performance based on gender. It is important to provide a clearer picture of the interaction between gender, transformational leadership, and innovation in influencing employee performance. In the context of PLN UID Aceh, which consists of various individuals with different backgrounds, knowing the factors that influence performance is very crucial. The results of this study are expected to provide insight for management to improve leadership approaches, facilitate employee development, and improve the culture of innovation in the organization. Furthermore, this study also aims to identify whether there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and gender in driving innovation, and how it impacts employee performance at PLN UID Aceh. In this case, an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence performance will provide a basis for management in designing policies that support productivity and creativity. This study is also expected to be a reference for other companies in the energy sector and other industries that want to understand the role of leadership and gender in driving innovation. With this background, this study not only contributes to the development of theory in the field of management, but also provides practical impacts on human resource management in large companies such as PLN UID Aceh. Through a better understanding of the relationship between gender, leadership, and innovation, companies can design more inclusive policies, improve employee performance, and ensure the sustainability of innovation in the future. The results of this study are expected to provide significant contributions to human resource management and overall organizational development.

## **2. LITERATURE**

### **Employee Performance**

(Mangkunegara, 2016) stated that employee performance is the level of achievement of work results produced by an employee in carrying out his duties and responsibilities in accordance with the standards set by the organization. This performance reflects the quality, quantity, efficiency, and effectiveness of employees in completing the work given, which contributes directly to the achievement of organizational goals. Factors that influence employee performance include skills, motivation, leadership, work environment, and support from management. Good employee performance not only supports the success of the organization, but also reflects the professionalism

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and commitment of the individual to the work he/she holds. Meanwhile, (Susanto, 2019) stated that employee performance reflects the level of achievement of an individual in an organization that can contribute to increased productivity. This performance is usually measured based on the quality and quantity of work produced in a certain period, and the extent to which the results meet the standards or targets that have been set. In the world of work, employee performance is an important factor in achieving organizational goals, because employees who have good performance can make a significant contribution to the productivity and progress of the company. In addition, employee performance is also influenced by various factors, including motivation, skills, knowledge, and support from superiors and coworkers.

Improving employee performance requires continuous efforts from management to create a conducive environment, such as providing training, career development, and awards for achievements. An organization that wants to achieve maximum results must be able to manage employee performance well, including conducting regular performance assessments. This assessment aims to identify strengths and areas that need improvement, so that employees can be given constructive feedback to improve their performance. In addition, the influence of leadership style, effective communication, and adequate awards or incentives can also motivate employees to work better and achieve the targets that have been set. (Sulistiyani et al., 2017) indicators that influence employee performance, namely: work quantity, work quality, reliability, and Initiative.

### **Innovation**

(Riyanti, 2019) stated that creativity refers to the emergence of new ideas, while the application of these ideas is called innovation. (Sutirna, 2018) explains that innovation is an idea, method, way, or product that is considered new by individuals or groups of people (society). Innovation in organizations refers to the application of new ideas that can improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness of the organization. The innovation process involves the creation or development of products, services, methods, or systems that are better than those that already exist. In organizations, innovation can occur in various aspects, ranging from the products or services offered, and internal business processes, to the way the organization interacts with customers or other stakeholders. Organizations that are able to innovate continuously tend to be more adaptive to market changes, customer needs, and technological developments. To create successful innovation, organizations need to create an environment that supports creativity and experimentation. This can be achieved through an organizational culture that is open to change, giving employees the freedom to innovate, and supporting the development of their skills and knowledge. Transformational leadership also plays a vital role in driving innovation, by providing a clear vision, inspiring, and motivating employees to think creatively and take risks. Thus, innovation is not just about creating something new, but also about how to manage change and implement it to have a positive impact on the organization. (Suwarno, 2008) explains that innovation in its implementation has indicators, namely: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, triability, and observability.

### **Gender**

Gender is the basis used to understand the influence of culture and collective life in differentiating men and women (Wilson, 1989). In another concept, gender is defined as the characteristics or traits inherent in men and women, which are formed through social and cultural processes. For

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example, women are often associated with gentle, beautiful, emotional, and maternal traits, while men are perceived as strong, rational, masculine, and tough (Fakih, 2016). Gender is a concept that refers to the roles, responsibilities, and characteristics that are socially and culturally attached to individuals based on their sex, whether male or female. Gender is not only related to biological differences, but also to social constructions that shape how a person should behave, act, and carry out their role in society. For example, women are often associated with maternal, gentle, and emotional traits, while men are identified with strength, rationality, and courage. This perspective reflects how society regulates and expects differences in roles based on gender. Understanding gender is essential because there are often inequalities in the distribution of roles and responsibilities based on gender stereotypes. This can affect an individual's access to opportunities, resources, and recognition in areas such as education, employment, and decision-making. Therefore, gender analysis aims to identify and address inequities arising from differences in treatment based on sex, and to promote gender equality in all aspects of community life. According to (Wiladatika, 2018), gender indicators are: behavior, role, emotional characteristics, and mentality.

### **Transformational Leadership**

(Kartono, 2019) stated that transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on change and renewal in an organization with the aim of motivating and inspiring employees to achieve their best potential. Leaders with this style are able to create strong relationships with employees, provide stimulating challenges, and support creativity and innovation. Through transformational leadership, leaders can improve employee morale and commitment, which will ultimately contribute to achieving organizational goals more effectively. The characteristics of transformational leadership include the ability to be a role model, inspire, and pay attention to the individual needs of employees. Transformational leaders also tend to give employees the freedom to innovate and make greater contributions to decision-making. This type of leader encourages employees to not only meet expectations, but also exceed expectations in creative and innovative ways. In addition, transformational leadership also pays attention to aspects of employee professional development, with the aim of creating an environment that supports continuous learning, collaboration, and individual growth. There are several indicators of transformational leadership style according to (Robbins et al., 2019): charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention.

### **3. METHOD**

In this study, the population is all the heads of employees of PLN UID Aceh totaling 858 employees. The respondents were determined as many as 272. Furthermore, they were taken using non-probability sampling techniques with the purposive sampling technique. Data were processed using AMOS with a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique to test direct effects, and a Sobel calculator to test mediation effects. Hypotheses that were tested :

H1 : significantly gender influences innovation,

H2 : significantly transformational leadership influences innovation,

H3 : significantly gender influences employee performance,

H4 : significantly transformational leadership influences employee performance,

H5 : significantly innovation influences employee performance,

H6 : significantly innovation mediates the gender effect on employee performance, and  
 H7: significantly innovation mediates the transformational leadership effect on employee performance.

**4. RESULT**

The testing of the research hypothesis produces the facts that we can see in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Standardized Regression**

	Influence	Estimate	SE	CR	P	R-Square
Innovation	<--- Gender	0.681	0.089	9,720	***	0.654
Innovation	<--- Transformational Leadership	0.188	0.040	3,472	***	
Employee performance	<--- Gender	0.235	0.081	3,227	,001	0.696
Employee performance	<--- Transformational Leadership	0.186	0.042	3,771	***	
Employee performance	<--- Innovation	0.504	0.087	6,543	***	

**H1: Gender towards Innovation**

The Influence test for Gender on Innovation provides CR 9.720 with significance 0.000, revealing that Gender influences significantly the Innovation. Furthermore, the size effect is 0.681. This indicates that the 1 unit of gender match occurs will provide 0.681 units of increased Innovation. This gender influence on innovation at PLN UID Aceh can be seen through the roles played by employees with various gender backgrounds in creating new ideas and contributing to business process improvements. Although innovation should not be influenced by gender factors, in reality, gender perceptions and roles within an organization can affect the way team members think and interact. At PLN UID Aceh, gender diversity in the team can provide broader perspectives and more creative solutions in facing existing challenges. Employees with different gender backgrounds may have different experiences and approaches to problems, which can contribute to innovative ideas. On the other hand, imbalanced gender dynamics or gender stereotypes within an organization can hinder the innovation process. If one gender is dominant in decision-making or new ideas, this can reduce the diversity of perspectives needed to create effective innovation. For example, if women are less likely to be in positions that lead innovation teams, their contributions to new ideas can be overlooked. Therefore, it is important for organizations such as PLN UID Aceh to ensure that gender does not become a barrier to the active participation of all employees in the innovation process. However, research that focuses on the influence of gender on innovation at PLN UID Aceh can provide deeper insight into how gender diversity can be utilized to increase productivity and creativity. An organization that supports gender diversity and ensures that all individuals are given equal opportunities to innovate will be more likely to produce fresher ideas and more adaptive solutions to change. Therefore, it is important for PLN UID Aceh to create policies that support gender equality in teams involved in innovation development, so that it can maximize the potential of employees from various backgrounds.

### **H2: Transformational Leadership towards Innovation**

The Influence test for Transformational Leadership on Innovation provides CR 3.472 with significance 0.000, explaining that Transformational Leadership influences significantly the Innovation. The effect size is 0.188, explaining that the 1 unit stronger Transformational Leadership will increase 0.188 units of Innovation. This transformational leadership influence on innovation at PLN UID Aceh is very important, because transformational leaders can create an environment that supports creativity and innovation. Transformational leadership focuses on empowering employees by providing inspiration, a clear vision, and supporting individual development. Leaders who apply this leadership style encourage employees to think outside the box, take risks, and innovate. By creating an atmosphere that supports collaboration and experimentation, transformational leaders can facilitate the emergence of new ideas that can improve operational efficiency and service quality at PLN UID Aceh. In addition, transformational leaders also play an important role in creating a culture that is open to change and innovation. This type of leader tends to focus more on developing employee potential and providing opportunities for them to come up with new ideas. In the context of PLN UID Aceh, leaders who inspire and motivate employees to innovate will help the company adapt to technological changes and meet the demands of better service to customers. Innovations generated in organizations led by transformational leaders not only include product and service improvements, but also include new ways to improve the efficiency of the energy distribution process. Transformational leadership also plays a role in building trust between leaders and employees, which in turn increases employee engagement in the innovation process. When leaders are able to provide a clear vision and support employee initiatives, employees feel valued and encouraged to contribute more. In this case, PLN UID Aceh can see the positive impact of transformational leadership, where employees not only focus on their routine tasks, but also actively seek new ways to improve work processes and improve performance. Therefore, transformational leadership is very influential in creating a culture of sustainable innovation in the organization.

### **H3: Gender towards Employee Performance**

The Influence test for gender on employee provides CR 3.227 with significance 0.001, explaining that gender influences significantly Innovation. The size effect is 0.235, This indicates that 1 unit of gender match occurs will increase 0.235 units of Innovation. This gender influence on employee performance at PLN UID Aceh can be seen through the dynamics created in a work environment involving employees with various gender backgrounds. Although performance should not depend on gender, gender factors can influence how individuals within an organization interact and contribute to achieving goals. Female and male employees often bring different approaches to completing tasks, communicating, and working together, which can have a positive impact on overall team performance. In this context, gender diversity can encourage the creation of more creative and innovative solutions and increase productivity at PLN UID Aceh. However, gender factors can also influence the perception and treatment of employees, which in turn can affect their performance. Gender stereotypes that still exist in some organizations can lead to inequalities in career development opportunities, recognition for achievements, or even selection for strategic positions. At PLN UID Aceh, if women or men are faced with barriers or discrimination based on gender, this can reduce their motivation to achieve their full potential and impact performance.

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Therefore, it is important for companies to create policies that ensure gender equality, so that all employees have the same opportunity to develop and contribute to the success of the organization. Gender diversity supported by inclusive policies can improve employee performance at PLN UID Aceh. Organizations that value and utilize employee potential regardless of gender can create a more harmonious, collaborative, and productive work environment. When every individual feels valued, be it women or men, they will be more motivated to give their best in their work. Thus, a balanced gender and fair approach to career development can improve overall performance, which in turn contributes to the achievement of PLN UID Aceh's organizational goals.

#### **H4: Transformational Leadership towards Employee Performance**

The Influence test for Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance provides CR 3.771 and significance 0.000, explaining that Transformational Leadership influences significantly employee performance. The size effect is 0.186. This indicates that 1 unit of stronger Transformational Leadership will increase 0.186 units of employee performance. Transformational leaders are able to provide a clear vision, stimulate creative thinking, and encourage employees to be more actively involved in achieving organizational goals. By providing appropriate support and guidance, transformational leaders can increase employee self-confidence, which will ultimately improve their performance. Leaders who prioritize this approach tend to build positive relationships with employees, facilitate more open communication, and reward individual and team achievements. In addition, transformational leaders at PLN UID Aceh play a role in creating a work environment that supports the development of employee skills and knowledge. These leaders do not only focus on short-term results, but also on the long-term development of employees by providing constructive challenges, opportunities to learn, and opportunities to grow. In such conditions, employees feel more appreciated and motivated to give their best in their work. This contributes to increased productivity and efficiency, because employees feel they have an important role in achieving organizational goals and are eager to achieve better results. Furthermore, transformational leadership can also strengthen employee commitment to the vision and mission of PLN UID Aceh. Transformational leaders prioritize concern for employee welfare, so that employees feel more connected to the organization and more committed to achieving common goals. By providing inspiration and encouragement to innovate, these leaders are able to increase employee satisfaction and motivation, which directly affects their performance. When employees feel led by someone who cares about their welfare and has a clear vision, they are more likely to work with full dedication and optimize their performance for the success of the organization.

#### **H5: Innovation towards Employee Performance**

The Influence test for Innovation on Employee Performance provides CR 6.543 with significance 0.000, explaining that innovation influences significantly employee performance. The size effect is 0.504. This indicates that 1 unit of increased innovation will increase 0.504 units of employee performance. When employees are involved in the innovation process, they not only follow existing procedures, but are also given the opportunity to develop creative ideas that can improve the quality and productivity of their work. Innovation implemented within the organization can create better solutions for overcoming challenges, which ultimately improves employee performance. With innovation, employees feel more motivated and involved in achieving

organizational goals. Innovation in PLN UID Aceh also has an impact on improving the quality of services provided to customers. When organizations encourage employees to innovate, employees will strive to create more efficient processes, both in terms of energy distribution and customer service. Innovation can be in the form of using the latest technology, improving work systems, or developing new methods to improve customer satisfaction. When these innovations are implemented, employee performance will increase because they feel more involved in efforts to improve the quality of service and the results achieved by the organization. In addition, innovation can create a positive work culture in PLN UID Aceh, which in turn will improve employee performance. By encouraging employees to innovate, the organization shows that they value the contribution of each individual and provide room for employees to grow. This culture of innovation not only improves employee skills and knowledge, but also motivates them to work more productively and efficiently. When employees feel appreciated and given the opportunity to contribute with new ideas, they will be more enthusiastic about achieving organizational goals, which ultimately has a positive effect on their performance.

**H6: Gender towards Employee Performance through Innovation**

From the results of the Sobel test calculations, it was found that innovation acts significantly as a mediating variable between gender and employee performance ( $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The calculation table is as follows.

**Table 2. Innovation Mediation Effect on Gender Affecting Employee Performance**

	Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.681	Sobel test: 4.61869111	0.07431196	0.00000386
b	0.504	Aroian test: 4.59382138	0.07471427	0.00000435
$s_a$	0.089	Goodman test: 4.64396919	0.07390747	0.00000342
$s_b$	0.087	Reset all	Calculate	

This gender influence at PLN UID Aceh can be seen in how gender diversity affects team dynamics in developing innovative ideas. Employees with different gender backgrounds tend to bring unique perspectives, which can contribute to the creative process and problem-solving. This diversity allows for a broader exchange of ideas and encourages more effective innovation. In this context, gender not only affects individual roles, but also how they collaborate in teams to produce new solutions that improve organizational performance. However, to maximize the positive influence of gender on innovation, it is important for PLN UID Aceh to create an inclusive and equitable environment. Gender stereotypes or inequality in opportunities to innovate can hinder employee performance. When female or male employees feel that they have equal opportunities to participate in the innovation process, they will be more motivated to make maximum contributions. Therefore, policies that support gender equality in innovation teams can improve creativity and, ultimately, employee performance. Innovation influenced by gender diversity can also increase employee productivity, because it gives them a sense of ownership of the results achieved. When employees feel appreciated, both women and men, they are more likely to innovate and actively participate in projects aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of service at PLN UID Aceh. With innovation resulting from diverse gender perspectives, employee performance will increase because they are motivated to create more effective and efficient

solutions in carrying out tasks and achieving organizational goals.

**H7: Transformational Leadership towards Employee Performance through Innovation**

From the results of the Sobel test calculations, it was found that Innovation acts as a mediating variable between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance ( $p\ 0.0002 < 0.05$ ). The calculation table is as follows.

**Table 3. Innovation Mediation Effect on Transformational Leadership Affecting Employee Performance**

	Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.188	Sobel test:	3.64986139	0.02596044	0.00026238
b	0.504	Aroian test:	3.61750385	0.02619265	0.00029746
$s_a$	0.040	Goodman test:	3.68310305	0.02572613	0.00023041
$s_b$	0.087	Reset all	Calculate		

This result reveals transformational leaders can inspire and motivate employees to think creatively and innovate when facing challenges. Leaders who apply a transformational leadership style not only focus on achieving short-term results, but also on developing employee potential to generate new ideas that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. By creating a clear vision and supporting employees in implementing innovation, these leaders play a role in creating an environment that encourages high productivity and performance. In addition, transformational leaders at PLN UID Aceh play an important role in creating an organizational culture that is open to innovation. These leaders give employees the freedom to explore new ideas, encourage them to take risks, and reward innovative initiatives. In this case, employees who feel empowered and supported by their leaders will be more motivated to create innovative solutions and improve the quality of their work. When innovation is considered part of the organizational culture, employees will be more involved and enthusiastic in achieving common goals. Transformational leadership also strengthens employee commitment to the organization's vision, which affects their performance through increased participation in innovation. Leaders who inspire and care about employee development will increase their sense of responsibility for the success of the organization. By creating an environment that supports collaboration, open communication, and recognition of innovation results, transformational leaders can increase employee morale and productivity. Therefore, transformational leadership that encourages innovation will have a direct impact on improving employee performance at PLN UID Aceh, resulting in more effective and efficient results in the company's services and operations.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The results revealed that significantly, gender influences innovation, transformational leadership influences innovation, gender influences employee performance, transformational leadership influences employee performance, innovation influences employee performance, innovation mediates the gender effect on employee performance, and innovation mediates the transformational leadership effect on employee performance. Furthermore, innovation is also revealed to function as a partial mediator in the model. The findings indicate that a high employee performance model can be achieved through the effective integration of appropriate gender

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dynamics, robust transformational leadership, and enhanced innovation. This framework scientifically elucidates the formation of employee performance. From an academic perspective, these results could serve as a valuable reference for future research, particularly concerning the variables studied. However, it is important to note that the limitations of these findings pertain to the specific variables and subjects involved in the study. Practically, several recommendations produced specifically for the subject under study are:

1. For the transformational leadership variable, leaders are still less enthusiastic about communicating the future of the organization to employees. This can be a concern for companies to encourage leaders to communicate more often everything with employees, be it work, goal achievement strategies, and overall company achievements.
- 2) For the innovation variable, it is known that less compatible innovations replace old innovations. This can be a concern for companies to improve or repair existing innovations to be more compatible in replacing old innovations.
- 3) Companies need to adopt policies that encourage gender equality in the workplace. This can be done by providing equal opportunities for men and women in strategic decision-making, job promotions, and competency development training. Good gender equality not only increases employee confidence but also opens up space for diverse perspectives that can drive innovation in the workplace.
- 4) Transformational leadership needs to be strengthened through special training for company leaders. Leaders who are able to inspire, motivate, and provide individual attention to employees will create a more collaborative and innovative work culture. PLN UID Aceh can consider developing a transformational leadership training program that emphasizes the development of a shared vision, change management, and appreciation for employee contributions to innovation.
- 5) Innovation needs to be an integral part of organizational culture. This can be achieved by creating a work environment that supports the exploration of new ideas, providing adequate resources, and rewarding employees who contribute to innovation. In this way, companies not only increase productivity but are also able to face increasingly complex industry challenges. In addition, companies are also advised to strengthen internal communication mechanisms so that innovative ideas from all levels of the organization can be properly accommodated.
- 6) Companies need to monitor and evaluate employee performance periodically to ensure that the implemented strategy delivers optimal results. Fair and data-based performance appraisals, which consider innovation as a key indicator, will help companies identify the strengths and weaknesses of human resources. Thus, PLN UID Aceh can continue to improve management strategies and achieve better results in supporting the performance of its employees.

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