

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Gojek Organizational Culture on Driver Partner Work Flexibility

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's annual digital economic growth of 11% encourages Gojek to create an inclusive work ecosystem for more than 3.1 million driver partners. This study analyzes the influence of transformational leadership on Gojek's organizational culture and its impact on driver partner performance. The method used is a qualitative case study analyzing various written sources, including scientific articles, books, credible opinions, and company policy documents. The results showed that Gojek's transformational leadership succeeded in forming an inclusive and collaborative organizational culture, thus increasing the motivation and performance of driver partners. However, the work flexibility offered still faces challenges in the form of income uncertainty. This study recommends a performance-based incentive system and reward-based training to balance flexibility with optimal performance achievement. The findings are expected to serve as a practical reference for companies in creating a productive and sustainable work environment.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture, Work Flexibility, Driver Partners, Gojek.

I. Introduction

Gojek, a digital platform that started in 2010 under the leadership of Nadiem Makarim, has rapidly transformed from a simple ride-hailing service to a major technology company in Southeast Asia. As of 2023, the company offers diverse services ranging from food delivery to digital payments, creating a complex ecosystem that integrates millions of driver-partners. Gojek's rapid growth and success can be attributed to its innovative approach to leadership and organizational culture, particularly the application of transformational leadership. This leadership style, which emphasizes empowering individuals, fostering motivation, and encouraging engagement, is central to Gojek's operational success. Through this style, Gojek aims to cultivate an organizational culture based on openness, collaboration, and innovation, which benefits the company's internal stakeholders and promotes an inclusive work environment for its driver-partners (Osisiogu, 2017). As the digital economy in Indonesia continues to grow at a rate of 11% annually (Hartarto, 2023), Gojek faces the challenge of managing a diverse workforce of over 3.1 million driver-partners by 2023. The company has attempted to address this challenge by prioritizing work flexibility, allowing driver-partners to set their work schedules and enjoy a sense of autonomy. While this flexibility is one of Gojek's most compelling features, the reality for many driver-partners is income uncertainty and an unbalanced workload. These issues have created a gap between the management's vision and the lived experience of the driver-

partners, which ultimately impacts their motivation, welfare, and service quality. The ability of Gojek to strike a balance between flexibility and performance optimization is thus critical to maintaining a high level of service quality and organizational sustainability (Rachbini, 2023). While Gojek's transformational leadership has been instrumental in creating a culture of innovation and inclusivity, the operational challenges driver-partners face must not be overlooked. According to research by Trand and Nguyen (2020), transformational leadership is crucial for shaping an organizational culture that fosters innovation and loyalty. Moreover, studies by Wahyudi and Surya (2021) highlight the importance of inclusivity in organizational culture to enhance employee motivation, particularly in digital platforms where remote work and flexible schedules are prevalent. However, when not accompanied by clear communication and fair policies, work flexibility can lead to income uncertainty and dissatisfaction among employees (Zahng et al., 2021). These challenges underscore the need for a more nuanced understanding of how transformational leadership interacts with work flexibility to influence driver-partner performance.

Further complicating the issue is the disparity in access to information and technology among some driver-partners, which hinders the effectiveness of leadership strategies. Bushra et al. (2021) noted that limited access to digital tools and platforms can prevent some driver-partners from fully engaging with the company's policies and goals. Effective two-way communication, facilitated by digital platforms, can bridge this gap, ensuring that all driver-partners are aware of and engaged with the company's vision and operational goals. Moreover, providing feedback mechanisms and regular educational initiatives would help reinforce the transformational leadership vision and motivate driver-partners to improve their performance (Bushra et al., 2021). To address these challenges, Gojek needs to adapt its work flexibility policies to meet both the needs of its driver-partners and the operational demands of the company. This may involve offering flexible work shifts, providing fair compensation, and introducing performance-based incentives. Additionally, creating a supportive work environment that includes access to healthcare, psychological support, and skill development programs would improve the driver-partners' overall welfare. Such initiatives are critical to enhancing motivation, loyalty, and performance, ultimately leading to higher quality customer service (Batista-Foguet et al., 2021). In conclusion, while Gojek's transformational leadership has played a significant role in shaping an inclusive and innovative organizational culture, the company must address the challenges its driver-partners face to realize the full potential of this leadership style. When managed with fairness and clarity, work flexibility can lead to higher motivation and performance, but effective communication, supportive policies, and employee well-being initiatives must complement it. By balancing the needs of the company and its driver-partners, Gojek can continue to thrive in the competitive digital economy and maintain a high level of service quality.

II. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, which allows researchers to explore phenomena comprehensively in a specific organizational context, namely Gojek. This approach was chosen because the research objectives focus on an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of organizational culture, transformational leadership, and its impact on Gojek. The choice of case study is based on the arguments of (Cresswell, 2007) and (Ridlo, 2023), which states that this approach is suitable for studying complex phenomena in a real-world context that is not yet fully understood. This case study approach is considered more appropriate than other qualitative approaches, such as ethnography or phenomenology, because the focus of this research is the dynamics of a particular organizational culture, as experienced by Gojek driver-partners Andini et al (2022) Rather than individual experiences in general. In this situation, it is important to analyze how these two elements influence each other and shape the performance and well-being of driver-partners operating in a highly volatile environment.

Data was collected by analyzing non-numerical written sources, such as journal articles, scientific papers, textbooks, organizational reports, and credible opinion articles. The selection of sources was based on the relevance of the topic, year of publication (at least the last 5 years to support the current context),

reputation of the author, and credibility of the publisher (e.g. Sinta or Scopus indexed journals, or official institutions such as Gojek or the Ministry of Manpower). In addition to enriching the data, researchers refer to the results of in-depth interviews from previous studies, such as those conducted by Hilal Akman Dömbekci (2022), which involved Gojek driver partners as informants. The interview involved 10 driver-partners from various operational areas, with an average duration of 45 minutes per interview, using a semi-structured format. The results of the interview data will dig deeper into their experiences in working with the flexibility provided by Gojek, as well as how transformational leadership is applied in the company, which affects Gojek's organizational culture and its impact on driver partners (Ur Rehman, 2019). This approach is described by Cresswell (2007), which suggests the importance of understanding social phenomena through a data-based approach obtained directly from the field.

Data analysis was conducted systematically using thematic analysis, as described by (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This technique was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes that emerged from the data. The analysis process involves the stages of data familiarization, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up results. The data obtained will be analyzed to find patterns and relationships between these factors and their impact on driver-partner work flexibility, as described in the literature on the influence of organizational culture on individual performance. In addition, the researcher will also map the relationship between the findings and the theoretical framework used, namely, transformational leadership theory. Bass and Avoilo (1994) State work flexibility and motivation based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs are needed to answer the research questions more explicitly.

This research aims to apply leadership styles and work flexibility in the context of Gojek's organizational culture. In contrast, the research subjects include various written sources and documentation of previous research. With this approach, it is expected to thoroughly understand how Gojek's leadership and organizational policies shape the achievements and welfare of driver partners in the current era of flexible work. Ethical considerations are important in this research, especially when using secondary data from previous interviews. All information used has gone through a process of disguising identity and maintaining the confidentiality of informants. Researchers also realize the limitations in applying theories such as Maslow, which tend to be universal and may not fully represent the socio-economic dynamics of Gojek driver partners. Therefore, the results are interpreted contextually by considering local realities.

III. Results and Discussion

This study aims to analyze how the vision of transformational leadership applied by Gojek affects organizational culture and its impact on the performance of driver partners. The results of the study are based on secondary data analysis and previous interviews. Hilal Akman Dömbekci (2022) Show that organizational culture through Gojek's transformational leadership significantly influences driver partner motivation and performance. A total of 8 out of 10 driver partners interviewed stated that Gojek's vision and managerial approach encourage work enthusiasm and a sense of belonging. However, the work flexibility poses challenges regarding income uncertainty, despite providing time autonomy.

4.1 Discussion of Gojek's Vision

Gojek's vision focuses on empowering people through technology by providing solutions for mobility and on-demand services. Since its establishment in 2009, Gojek has been committed to connecting ojek drivers with customers through a digital platform by utilizing technology to facilitate this process. This is supported by the findings of Furqon (2023), which states that Gojek's social and technological approach creates an inclusive organizational culture. However, the impact on drivers is not direct causal, but in the form of a positive correlation influenced by other factors such as personal motivation and market conditions.

4.2 The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Gojek Organizational Culture

Transformational leadership in Gojek is reflected through the values of openness, collaboration, and innovation in organizational culture. This is reinforced by (Bushra, 2011) and (Green, 2018), which shows that this leadership style triggers commitment and work motivation because it involves organizational members in the company's vision. However, these positive effects are not automatic. There are indications that the local context, access to technology, and driver-partner perceptions also influence the outcomes. Therefore, the effects seen are contextual and must be understood holistically per the case study approach.

4.3 Impact of Work Flexibility on Driver Partners

Work flexibility is Gojek's main policy, which allows driver partners to set working hours independently. From the interview results, 6 out of 10 driver partners feel that this flexibility provides work-life balance. However, 7 out of 10 respondents expressed concerns over fluctuating income. This finding is in line with (Ur Rehman et al., 2019), who highlighted that flexibility in the gig economy creates both opportunities and challenges. Therefore, work flexibility positively correlates to job satisfaction, but does not fully lead to increased work without systematic support from management.

4.4 Solutions to Improve the Balance between Work Flexibility and Optimal Performance

One solution that emerged from the data was the need for an incentive system based on quality of service, not quantity. Driver-partners suggested rewards for those who maintain high ratings from customers. (Batista-Foguet et al., 2021) Emphasized the importance of incentives that encourage self-development. Reward-based training programs are also considered relevant to improve driver-partner competencies. This solution retains flexibility but provides a reward structure that encourages productivity.

4.5 Explanation of Gojek Organizational Culture

Organizational culture in Gojek is formed through three main pillars: speed, social impact, and innovation. This culture is strongly influenced by the company's vision, which focuses on innovation, inclusiveness, and partner empowerment. As a company engaged in online transportation services, Gojek prioritizes a culture that supports collaboration, openness, and effective teamwork. This vision is applied not only in the company's internal management but also in the relationship with driver partners who are the spearhead of their services. Gojek encourages driver partners to adapt to technology and provide the best service, while their organizational culture ensures that everyone in the company feels valued and engaged. One important aspect of Gojek's culture is flexibility, which allows driver partners to work according to the time they choose, while maintaining high performance standards. According to (Nur Sabrina et al., n.d.) Implementing a structured organizational culture plays an important role in increasing the loyalty and performance of drive partners and helping companies face challenges in a dynamic market. Gojek creates a work environment that enables self-development through digital training, performance-based incentives, and access to welfare support.

4.6 The Importance of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is an important element in determining the success of a company. In the context of Gojek, the organizational culture built by transformational leadership affects how driver partners interact with the company and one another. An open, collaborative, and innovative culture helps create a work environment that supports creativity and productivity. Batista-Foguet (2021) Explains that culture forms a social framework that influences individual interactions and perceptions of the organization. Wahjono et al. (2020) Added that a work culture that supports innovation encourages sustainable productivity and performance.

4.7 Functions of Organizational Culture

The functions of organizational culture are very complex. Culture is an interorganizational differentiator, identity reinforcement, and social control tool. Wahjono et al. (2020) State that culture creates a social structure that helps direct behavior and decision-making. On the one hand, culture helps reduce uncertainty and clarify shared values. On the other hand, a too substantial culture risks stifling innovation and reducing flexibility. This contradiction aligns with criticisms of dominant cultures that are too uniform, which can suppress diverse perspectives and slow responses to market changes.

4.8 Factors Affecting Organizational Culture

Some of the main factors that influence organizational culture in Gojek include:

- a. **Leadership:** Transformational leadership is the primary driver of organizational culture (Green et al., 2018) and (Loang, 2023) This style can increase employee engagement and loyalty to the company's vision. In the context of Gojek, leaders encourage innovation and collaboration through a visionary approach. However, the impact of this leadership has not been fully felt by all driver partners, which indicates a gap in communication of values and vision between management and field implementers.
- b. **Organizational Structure:** A flexible and open structure enables efficient information flow and supports collaboration (Wadhwa, 2018; Howard, 2019). In Gojek, using digital platforms has created a structure that enables rapid response to market needs. However, not all partners feel clarity in information and policies, indicating that digital structures have not entirely replaced the importance of dialogue and personal approaches.
- c. **Values Upholded:** Values such as integrity, innovation, and inclusiveness become the foundation of culture (Bushra et al., 2011). In Gojek, these values are instilled through training and incentive systems. However, in practice, not all partners understand the operational meaning of these values. The mismatch between the proclaimed values and perceptions in the field indicates the need for a more participatory cultural approach so that these values are truly alive in the work practices of driver-partners.
- d. **External Environment:** Market competition, government regulations, and technological developments affect organizational culture. (Nila Munana, 2018) Shows that companies must adapt to external changes to remain competitive. Research by (Howard, 2019) Reveals that this adaptation creates a dynamic and responsive organizational culture. (Hussain, 2025) Additionally, a flexible culture strengthens the company's position in the face of external challenges. With innovative responses, companies can maintain competitiveness.

However, not all of these factors always yield positive results. For example, external environmental pressures can accelerate cultural change and create internal tensions if not managed inclusively.

4.9 Comparison with Previous Research

This finding is in line with (Wahyudi dan Surya, 2021) This highlights the importance of leadership in shaping an inclusive culture. However, there is a deviation from the ideal work flexibility theory as proposed by (Zhang et al., 2022), which emphasizes the need for fair income distribution policies. In the context of Gojek, there is still a gap between the flexibility policy and the reality of partner income. This indicates a mismatch between theoretical expectations and practical implementation, which should be a concern for future policy improvements.

IV. Conclusion

This research shows that transformational leadership in Gojek plays an important role in shaping an inclusive, adaptive, and innovation-oriented organizational culture. Through values like openness, collaboration, and empowerment, Gojek has created a work environment that can motivate driver partners to be actively involved in the company's ecosystem. This finding is reinforced by interview data showing that most driver partners feel psychologically driven by the company's vision and managerial approach. However, the impact of this leadership is not uniform. Contextual factors such as access to technology and perceptions of organizational values influence how all driver-partners internalize the culture. This indicates that the role of leadership cannot be separated from the accompanying communication and organizational support structures.

On the other hand, the work flexibility offered by Gojek has two sides. Although it provides autonomy in managing working time, it is not followed by the certainty of stable income. This creates challenges to maintaining driver partners' optimal motivation and performance, especially in volatile market conditions. A positive correlation between work flexibility and job satisfaction is seen, but this relationship is not causal and is strongly influenced by the managerial support system. Gojek's organizational culture is formed from the interaction between the company's vision, leadership, organizational structure, and external influences. This culture serves as a social framework that shapes the behavior and expectations of driver partners. However, not all elements of this culture are practical. The mismatch between communicated values and understanding at the operational level indicates the need for adjustments in the cultural value internalization strategy.

Comparison with the literature shows that the results of this study partially support previous findings, especially regarding the importance of inclusive culture and participative leadership. However, there is a discrepancy with the theory of ideal work flexibility, which requires a fairer compensation system. This tension between theory and practice underscores the complexity of implementing flexible work policies in the digital economy sector. This study confirms that an organization's success in creating a productive and sustainable work culture depends on the consistency of vision, transformative leadership, and the ability to bridge expectations and operational realities. This research provides a basis for further understanding work culture dynamics in Indonesia's platform economy.

Future research is recommended to use a quantitative approach with statistical analysis to measure the extent of the relationship between transformational leadership, organizational culture, and driver partner performance. Field studies with primary data through interviews and observations are also needed to understand better driver-partners' perceptions and direct experiences in dealing with work flexibility. Thus, the results of this study not only enrich the academic discourse on leadership and organizational culture in the technology sector but also make a practical contribution to Gojek management in formulating a strategy for the sustainable development of driver partners.

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