

Agile Leadership, Digital Transformation And Employee Performance: The Roles Of Work Motivation And Job Satisfaction In Public Higher Education

Kepemimpinan Agile, Transformasi Digital, Dan Kinerja Karyawan: Peran Motivasi Kerja Dan Kepuasan Kerja Di Perguruan Tinggi Negeri

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships among agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance among administrative and technical staff at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected from 248 respondents selected through stratified random sampling across different organizational units. The proposed model was tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling with SmartPLS 4. The findings show that agile leadership has positive and significant effects on digital transformation and work motivation. Digital transformation positively influences work motivation and job satisfaction, while work motivation positively affects job satisfaction and employee performance. Job satisfaction also has a positive effect on employee performance. However, agile leadership does not significantly affect job satisfaction or employee performance, and digital transformation does not significantly affect employee performance. These results indicate that leadership, technological change and employee-related factors have distinct roles in shaping organizational outcomes. In particular, work motivation and job satisfaction emerge as important determinants of employee performance, while agile leadership is more strongly associated with digital transformation and motivation. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a legally autonomous public university undergoing institutional and digital transformation. The findings also offer practical implications for university leaders seeking to strengthen adaptive leadership, improve digital systems and enhance employee motivation, satisfaction and performance.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Digital Transformation, Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Performance

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara kepemimpinan tangkas (*agile leadership*), transformasi digital, motivasi kerja, kepuasan kerja, dan kinerja karyawan di kalangan staf administrasi dan teknis Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif *cross-sectional*, dengan data yang dikumpulkan dari 248 responden yang dipilih melalui teknik *stratified random sampling* dari berbagai unit organisasi. Model yang diusulkan diuji menggunakan metode *partial least squares structural equation modelling* (PLS-SEM) dengan perangkat lunak SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan tangkas memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap transformasi digital dan motivasi kerja. Transformasi digital berpengaruh positif terhadap motivasi kerja dan kepuasan kerja, sedangkan motivasi kerja berpengaruh positif terhadap kepuasan kerja dan kinerja karyawan. Kepuasan kerja juga memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap kinerja karyawan. Namun, kepemimpinan tangkas tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja maupun kinerja karyawan, dan transformasi digital tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan. Hasil-hasil ini mengindikasikan bahwa kepemimpinan, perubahan teknologi, dan faktor-faktor terkait karyawan memiliki peran yang berbeda dalam membentuk hasil organisasi. Secara khusus, motivasi kerja dan kepuasan kerja muncul sebagai penentu penting bagi kinerja karyawan, sementara kepemimpinan tangkas lebih erat kaitannya dengan transformasi digital dan motivasi. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan menyajikan bukti empiris dari sebuah perguruan tinggi negeri yang memiliki otonomi

hukum dan sedang menjalani transformasi kelembagaan serta digital. Temuan ini juga memberikan implikasi praktis bagi para pemimpin universitas yang ingin memperkuat kepemimpinan adaptif, memperbaiki sistem digital, serta meningkatkan motivasi, kepuasan, dan kinerja karyawan.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Tangkas, Transformasi Digital, Motivasi Kerja, Kepuasan Kerja, dan Kinerja Karyawan

1. Introduction

The transformation of Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) into a state university with legal-entity status (Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Hukum [PTNBH]) under Government Regulation No. 37 of 2022 has increased institutional demands for autonomy, accountability, service quality, and performance-oriented governance. This transition requires UNESA to strengthen organizational adaptability, accelerate digital transformation, and manage its human resources more strategically. Administrative and technical staff are central to this process because they directly support academic administration, institutional services, and daily operations. Although UNESA has implemented integrated digital platforms, technology adoption may not automatically generate consistent improvements in employee performance. Internal human resource data indicate that staff are distributed across units with diverse functions, workloads, and educational backgrounds (My SDM UNESA, 2025), which may shape differences in digital readiness and responses to institutional change.

Digital transformation is not limited to the adoption of new technologies but involves changes in organizational structures, routines, work systems, and value-creation processes (Vial, 2019). Its success therefore depends on both technological capacity and leadership practices that enable employees to adapt to change. Agile leadership is particularly relevant because it emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, empowerment, continuous learning, and rapid decision-making (Denning, 2018). Agile leaders may facilitate digital transformation by communicating a clear direction, strengthening coordination, encouraging employee involvement, and reducing resistance to change (David & Lahindah, 2025). However, empirical evidence remains inconclusive. Rialti and Filieri (2024) found that agile leadership supported digital transformation, whereas Esamah et al. (2023) showed that organizational inertia could constrain this relationship. These contrasting findings suggest that the effectiveness of agile leadership may vary across organizational settings, particularly in public institutions characterized by bureaucratic procedures and complex stakeholder interests.

Agile leadership and digital transformation may also influence work motivation. Agile leaders can enhance motivation by providing autonomy, recognition, participation, feedback, and opportunities for development. Similarly, digital systems may strengthen motivation when they simplify work procedures, improve information accessibility, and reduce repetitive administrative tasks. Herzberg's two-factor theory identifies achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth as important motivational factors that generate positive work attitudes (Herzberg, 1966). Supportive leadership and effective work systems may consequently encourage employees to invest greater effort in achieving organizational objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Nevertheless, previous findings remain mixed. Hartono and Saputra (2025) and Xinyue and Marcelo (2024) reported significant effects of adaptive leadership and digitalization on work motivation, whereas Dwipayana and Ferine (2023) and Astuti et al. (2025) found insignificant relationships. These differences indicate that leadership and technology may not enhance motivation when employee readiness, job autonomy, competence, or organizational support is insufficient.

Work motivation is subsequently expected to strengthen job satisfaction because motivated employees are more likely to experience achievement, recognition, responsibility, and meaningfulness in their work (Herzberg, 1966). Mohammed (2024) confirmed a positive relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction. Agile leadership and digital

transformation may also directly influence job satisfaction by improving participation, communication, flexibility, work efficiency, and access to information. Conversely, poorly managed digitalization may create technological stress, role ambiguity, and additional workloads. Previous studies have therefore reported varying results concerning the effects of leadership and digital transformation on job satisfaction (Pratama, 2024; Saptaprasetya et al., 2025; Trivilanita et al., 2024; Yelviana et al., 2024).

Employee performance is a central indicator of successful institutional transformation because it reflects employees' ability to complete their responsibilities accurately, efficiently, and consistently with organizational objectives. Performance is theoretically influenced by leadership, motivation, job satisfaction, and effective work systems (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Agile leadership may improve performance through empowerment, coordination, and faster problem-solving, whereas digital transformation may streamline administrative processes and strengthen information integration. However, empirical findings remain inconsistent. Isnawati and Waskito (2024), Fajriani et al. (2025), and Surapto (2025) found positive effects of leadership, digital transformation, motivation, or job satisfaction on employee performance. In contrast, Pragiwani et al. (2020), Anggiani and Fatonah (2025), Nurhasanah and Sarah (2025), and Azzam et al. (2025) reported insignificant relationships.

These inconsistencies suggest that agile leadership and digital transformation may not translate directly into higher employee performance. Their effects may depend on whether leadership practices and digital changes enhance employees' motivation and satisfaction. However, previous studies have largely examined these relationships separately, providing limited explanation of the psychological mechanisms through which leadership- and technology-related changes influence performance. Evidence from public higher education is also limited, although universities undergoing governance transformation face simultaneous pressures for digitalization, institutional accountability, service quality, and employee adaptability.

To address these gaps, this study examines the effects of agile leadership and digital transformation on the performance of administrative and technical staff at UNESA, with work motivation and job satisfaction as mediating mechanisms. This study contributes to the literature by integrating leadership-related and technology-related organizational changes within a single explanatory model of employee performance. It further clarifies how work motivation and job satisfaction transmit the effects of agile leadership and digital transformation during institutional change. Empirically, the study extends existing evidence to a legally autonomous public university, where organizational flexibility and digital innovation must be balanced with bureaucratic requirements, accountability, and diverse employee capabilities. Practically, the findings may assist university leaders in developing adaptive leadership practices, employee-centred digital initiatives, and human resource policies that strengthen motivation, satisfaction, and performance.

2. Literature Review (Tinjauan Pustaka)

Agile leadership and digital transformation

Agile leadership reflects a leader's capacity to respond rapidly to environmental changes while maintaining strategic clarity, flexibility and organizational direction. Agile leaders encourage collaboration, employee empowerment, continuous learning and timely decision-making under uncertain conditions (Brown, 2023; Denning, 2018). Joiner and Josephs (2007) argue that leadership agility develops from expertise-based leadership toward more participatory and systemic forms of leadership. These characteristics are relevant to digital transformation because the integration of digital technologies requires rapid coordination, experimentation, knowledge sharing and adjustment of organizational routines. Agile leaders

can therefore facilitate transformation by articulating a digital vision, mobilizing resources and reducing resistance to new technologies.

Empirical evidence regarding this relationship remains inconclusive. Rialti and Filieri (2024) found that agile leadership positively contributed to successful digital transformation, whereas Esamah et al. (2023) reported that its effect was constrained by organizational inertia. These contrasting results indicate that leadership agility may be particularly important in organizational settings where established procedures and resistance inhibit technological change. Nevertheless, leaders who are adaptive, decisive and learning-oriented are theoretically more capable of directing digital transformation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Agile leadership positively affects digital transformation.

Agile leadership and work motivation

Work motivation refers to the forces that determine the intensity, direction and persistence of employees' efforts toward organizational goals (Hanafi and Yohana, 2017; Lusri and Siagian, 2017). Agile leadership may strengthen motivation by providing employees with autonomy, meaningful participation, constructive feedback, recognition and opportunities for development. Herzberg's two-factor theory identifies achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth as motivational factors that generate positive work attitudes (Herzberg, 1966). By empowering employees and involving them in decision-making, agile leaders can satisfy these intrinsic needs and encourage employees to contribute more actively.

Hartono and Saputra (2025) found that agile leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee motivation through empowerment. Conversely, Dwipayana and Ferine (2023) reported a positive but insignificant effect in a public-sector organization. These differences suggest that the motivational benefits of agile leadership may depend on whether employees genuinely receive autonomy, recognition and support. Despite such contextual variation, agile leadership should increase employees' willingness to direct their effort toward organizational objectives. Accordingly:

H2. Agile leadership positively affects work motivation.

Digital transformation and work motivation

Digital transformation changes the way employees perform, coordinate and evaluate their work by integrating digital technologies into organizational processes. When digital systems automate repetitive activities, improve information accessibility and simplify administrative procedures, employees may perceive their work as more efficient and meaningful. The Technology Acceptance Model suggests that employees are more likely to accept and use technology when they perceive it as useful and easy to operate. These positive perceptions may subsequently increase motivation because employees can perform their responsibilities with greater confidence and effectiveness.

Xinyue and Marcelo (2024) found that digital transformation significantly increased employee motivation and organizational efficiency. In contrast, Astuti et al. (2025) reported that digital transformation did not significantly affect motivation among public-sector employees. This inconsistency may arise because poorly implemented digitalization can produce complexity, additional workloads and technostress rather than facilitate work (Tarafdar et al., 2007). However, when digital technologies are supported by adequate training and organizational assistance, they are expected to improve employees' perceived competence and willingness to work. Therefore:

H3. Digital transformation positively affects work motivation.

Agile leadership and job satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional and cognitive evaluations of their jobs, including their perceptions of the work itself, supervision, rewards, promotion opportunities and relationships with colleagues (George and Zakkariya, 2018; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Agile leadership may enhance satisfaction by creating an environment characterized by trust, communication, participation and psychological support. From the perspective of Leader–Member Exchange theory, high-quality relationships between leaders and employees increase feelings of respect, recognition and organizational support. Agile leaders are likely to foster such relationships because they emphasize collaboration, responsiveness and employee involvement.

Pratama (2024) found that agile leadership positively and significantly affected job satisfaction. Conversely, Trivilanita et al. (2024) reported a positive but insignificant relationship, indicating that leadership practices may not always translate into favourable work attitudes. The effect may depend on whether agile leadership is consistently reflected in employees' daily experiences rather than remaining a formal managerial approach. Nevertheless, employees who receive greater autonomy, support and recognition from their leaders are expected to evaluate their jobs more positively. Thus:

H4. Agile leadership positively affects job satisfaction.

Digital transformation and job satisfaction

Digital transformation may improve job satisfaction by increasing work flexibility, information accessibility, process efficiency and the quality of performance feedback. Job Characteristics Theory explains that autonomy, skill variety and feedback contribute to positive work experiences. Digital technologies can strengthen these characteristics by allowing employees to complete tasks more independently, access real-time information and use a broader range of competencies. Consequently, employees may experience greater convenience, control and accomplishment in performing their work.

However, the effects of digitalization depend on how technological change is implemented. Yelviana et al. (2024) found that digital transformation did not significantly affect job satisfaction, whereas Saptaprasetya et al. (2025) reported a positive and significant effect. Digital systems may reduce satisfaction when employees face inadequate training, technical disruptions, excessive monitoring or increased work demands. Conversely, well-integrated and user-friendly systems should improve employees' work experiences and satisfaction. Accordingly:

H5. Digital transformation positively affects job satisfaction.

Work motivation and job satisfaction

Work motivation and job satisfaction are distinct but interrelated psychological constructs. Motivation concerns the forces that stimulate employees to exert effort, while job satisfaction represents employees' evaluations of their work experiences. Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that intrinsic factors, including achievement, recognition, responsibility and opportunities for development, directly contribute to satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). Employees who are motivated by these factors are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful and rewarding.

Mohammed (2024) found that work motivation positively and significantly affected job satisfaction across different organizational settings. In contrast, Fitria et al. (2024) reported an insignificant relationship, suggesting that motivation may not produce satisfaction when extrinsic conditions such as compensation, organizational policies and working environments are inadequate. Nevertheless, motivated employees who experience achievement and recognition should develop more favourable evaluations of their jobs. Therefore:

H6. Work motivation positively affects job satisfaction.

Agile leadership and employee performance

Employee performance reflects the quality, quantity, timeliness and effectiveness of employees' work in fulfilling organizational responsibilities (Azzam et al., 2025; Nursam, 2017). Agile leadership may improve performance by clarifying objectives, facilitating rapid problem-solving and empowering employees to respond effectively to changing work demands. It also resembles transformational leadership in its emphasis on vision, innovation, employee development and organizational adaptability. These leadership practices can strengthen employees' ability to act independently while remaining aligned with institutional objectives.

Surapto (2025) found that agile leadership positively and significantly influenced employee performance in higher education. In contrast, Prasetiawan et al. (2025) reported no significant direct effect, although agile leadership improved workforce agility, which subsequently enhanced performance. These findings imply that agile leadership may affect performance directly or through employees' adaptive capabilities. However, leaders who provide strategic direction, autonomy and responsive support should generally enable employees to perform their responsibilities more effectively. Thus:

H7. Agile leadership positively affects employee performance.

Digital transformation and employee performance

Digital transformation may increase employee performance by automating routine tasks, integrating information and accelerating organizational processes. From the Technology Acceptance Model perspective, technologies perceived as useful and easy to use are more likely to be adopted effectively by employees. Productive technology use can improve work accuracy, speed, coordination and service responsiveness. Digital transformation may therefore allow employees to allocate more time and attention to value-adding activities rather than repetitive administrative procedures.

Isnawati and Waskito (2024) found that digital transformation positively affected employee performance, both directly and through employee engagement. Conversely, Panggayuh and Krisprimandoyo (2024) found no significant direct effect on organizational performance. These contrasting results suggest that digital technologies improve performance only when they are aligned with work requirements, employee capabilities and organizational support. Nevertheless, effectively implemented digital transformation should enable employees to perform their duties more efficiently and accurately. Therefore:

H8. Digital transformation positively affects employee performance.

Work motivation and employee performance

Work motivation determines the amount of effort, persistence and attention employees devote to completing their responsibilities. Expectancy Theory explains that employees become motivated when they believe their effort will generate strong performance and lead to valuable outcomes. Employees with high motivation are therefore more willing to overcome difficulties, maintain task persistence and direct their behaviour toward organizational objectives. Motivation is particularly important when employees face changing procedures and increasing performance expectations.

Pragiwani et al. (2020) found that motivation did not significantly affect employee performance, whereas Fajriani et al. (2025) identified a positive and significant effect. These different findings indicate that the motivation–performance relationship may be influenced by reward systems, employee competence, job characteristics and organizational support. Despite these contingencies, stronger motivation should encourage employees to exert greater effort and maintain their focus on achieving work targets. Accordingly:

H9. Work motivation positively affects employee performance.

Job satisfaction and employee performance

Job satisfaction represents a positive emotional state arising from employees' evaluations of their jobs and work experiences. Satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate organizational commitment, cooperation and willingness to contribute beyond minimum requirements. Herzberg's theory suggests that satisfaction derived from achievement, recognition and responsibility may encourage employees to invest more effort in their work. In service-oriented institutions, positive work attitudes may also improve responsiveness and the quality of services delivered to organizational stakeholders.

Empirical evidence remains mixed. Binter (2025) found that job satisfaction did not significantly affect employee performance, whereas Surapto (2025) reported a positive and significant relationship among employees in higher education. The effect of satisfaction may depend on whether employees possess adequate capabilities, resources and performance incentives. Nevertheless, employees who feel valued and satisfied with their work are expected to show greater commitment and perform their responsibilities more effectively. Therefore:

H10. Job satisfaction positively affects employee performance.

3. Research Methods

Design and Participants

This research is quantitative in nature. The study uses a probability sampling technique with a stratified random sampling approach. Primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were obtained from an online questionnaire distributed to administrative and technical staff at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), while secondary data were obtained from scientific articles, books and other sources discussing agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance. Stratified random sampling was considered appropriate because the study population was distributed across different organizational units, allowing respondents to be selected proportionally from each stratum and ensuring adequate representation of the population (Malhotra et al., 2012). The overall population in this study consisted of 674 administrative and technical staff at UNESA, distributed across faculties, directorates and supporting units. From this population, 250 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling based on their respective organizational units. A total of 250 completed online questionnaires were collected. Following data screening and verification, two responses did not meet the research criteria and were excluded from further analysis. Consequently, 248 valid questionnaires were retained and used as the basis for subsequent statistical analysis.

The measurement of agile leadership in this study was adapted from Khan et al. (2025) using six items that assess leaders' ability to motivate employees, empower staff, influence others and respond proactively to environmental and technological changes, with sample statements such as "My supervisor motivates employees" and "My supervisor proactively prepares for environmental and technological changes." Digital transformation was measured using five items adapted from Almazrouei and Alnahhal (2025), based on Nasiri et al. (2020), covering process digitalization, data utilization, digital integration and information exchange, with items such as "Administrative and technical staff at UNESA seek to digitalize work processes" and "Digital technology is used to improve the efficiency of academic and administrative services." Work motivation was measured using five items adapted from Aman-Ullah (2026), including enthusiasm, willingness to perform well, skills development, productivity and sense of purpose, for example, "I feel highly motivated to give my best at work every day." Job satisfaction was measured using eight items adapted from Mishra (2025), covering recognition, job enjoyment, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, job

security, organizational support, compensation and overall satisfaction, with a sample item such as “I am satisfied with my job.” Employee performance was measured using seven items adapted from Almazrouei and Alnahhal (2025) and Kalogiannidis (2020), assessing work quality, feedback, organizational contribution, continuous improvement and work-related innovation, with a sample item such as “I always seek to improve my knowledge and skills so that I can perform better.” All items were measured using a Likert-type scale, and the proposed conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

Measures and Data Analysis

The research questionnaire was developed in Indonesian and then translated into English. All items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree and 5: strongly agree), with respondents indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement (Sekaran and Bougie 2016, p. 215). To determine the relationships in the model in this study, PLS-SEM was used. PLS is a composite-based approach to SEM that relaxes the strong assumption that common factors explain all covariances between indicator blocks (Schlagel and Sarstedt, 2016). Our analysis used SmartPLS 4.0 software to reflect model parameters (Schlagel and Sarstedt, 2016).

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis generally consists of two main components, namely the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) (Ghozali and Latan, 2015). The measurement model explains the relationship between observed indicators (manifest variables) and latent constructs, and is used to test the validity and reliability of the constructs. In models with reflective indicators, convergent validity is evaluated through external loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values, while discriminant validity is tested through differences between constructs, and reliability is measured using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA). On the other hand, structural models are used to analyze causal relationships between latent constructs, which are evaluated through R-Square values on endogenous constructs, Q² values as a measure of predictive relevance, and significance tests through bootstrapping techniques (Ghozali and Latan, 2015).

4. Results and Discussions

Respondent Description

According to Hair et al. (2014), the sample size for multivariate analysis should generally be at least five times the number of indicators included in the research model. In this study, 250 online questionnaires were collected from administrative and technical staff at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). Following data screening, two responses were excluded because they did not meet the eligibility and data-quality criteria. Consequently, 248 valid questionnaires were retained for PLS-SEM analysis and hypothesis testing. Respondent characteristics were examined using frequency analysis based on gender, age, educational attainment, length of service, organizational unit, occupational position and employment status. The sample consisted of 56.0% male and 44.0% female respondents. Most respondents were aged 41–50 years (44.8%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (24.6%), 51–60 years (23.8%) and 30 years or younger (6.9%). Regarding education, the majority held a bachelor's degree (59.4%), followed by senior high school qualifications (19.4%), master's degrees (16.5%), diploma qualifications (4.0%) and junior high school education (0.4%).

The respondents also demonstrated substantial organizational experience, with 33.9% having worked for more than 20 years and 28.6% having 16–20 years of service. Respondents were drawn from diverse organizational units, with the largest proportions working in directorates, secretariats and rectorate units (19.0%), followed by institutions, agencies, centers and technical service units (15.3%). In terms of occupational position, administrative

staff represented the largest group (21.0%), followed by data, information and academic management staff (20.2%), section heads (17.7%), and laboratory assistants, technicians and laboratory operators (13.3%). Most respondents were civil servants (61.7%), while the remaining participants held fixed-term contract, permanent non-civil-servant, temporary or other employment statuses. Overall, the respondent profile reflects a diverse yet experienced workforce, providing an appropriate empirical basis for examining the relationships among agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance at UNESA.

Measurement Model

Inferential statistical analysis in this study was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis method, supported by SmartPLS 4 software. This study involved five research variables, namely agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance. Therefore, convergent validity and discriminant validity were evaluated to assess the measurement model. To evaluate convergent validity, the outer loading value of each measurement item was examined in the initial stage. According to Ghazali (2014), an indicator is considered valid when its outer loading value is greater than 0.70. However, loading values ranging from 0.50 to 0.60 may still be considered acceptable, particularly in exploratory research. Figure 2 shows that the outer loading values of all statement items used to measure agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance were greater than 0.50. These results indicate that all statement items met the required convergent validity criteria and were considered valid for measuring their respective constructs.

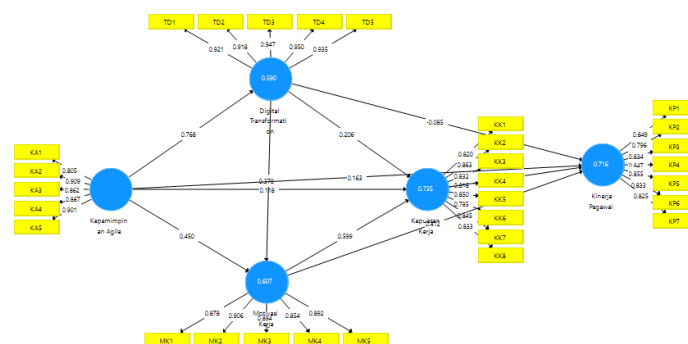


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Source: Authors' work

This shows that the validity of the statement items of each variable in this study can be seen in Table 1. The table shows that, for all variable indicators in this study, the loading through the outer loading of each statement item is more than 0.50.

Table 1. The latent validity and reliability of the measurement model

Construct	Loading	CR	CA	AVE
<i>Agile Leadership</i>		0.939	0.919	0.757
KA1	0.805			
KA2	0.909			
KA3	0.863			
KA4	0.866			
KA5	0.902			
<i>Transformasi Digital</i>		0.972	0.964	0.873
TD1	0.921			

Construct	Loading	CR	CA	AVE
TD2	0.917			
TD3	0.947			
TD4	0.950			
TD5	0.935			
<i>Work Motivation</i>		0.948	0.931	0.783
MK1	0.879			
MK2	0.907			
MK3	0.894			
MK4	0.854			
MK5	0.890			
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>		0.947	0.936	0.690
KK1	0.820			
KK2	0.863			
KK3	0.832			
KK4	0.816			
KK5	0.850			
KK6	0.785			
KK7	0.845			
KK8	0.833			
<i>Employee Performance</i>		0.941	0.927	0.696
KP1	0.850			
KP2	0.798			
KP3	0.837			
KP4	0.849			
KP5	0.852			
KP6	0.829			
KP7	0.824			

Source: Authors' work

Composite reliability (CR) was assessed to examine the internal consistency of the constructs in this study. Hair et al. (2016) recommended a minimum CR value of 0.70. As shown in Table 3, the CR values for all constructs ranged from 0.939 to 0.972, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Cronbach's alpha (CA) was also examined to strengthen the reliability assessment and evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement items. The CA values ranged from 0.919 to 0.964, indicating that all constructs exceeded the recommended value of 0.70. Finally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was examined to establish convergent validity. According to Hair et al. (2016), an AVE value of at least 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. In this study, the AVE values ranged from 0.690 to 0.873, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50. Therefore, all constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. The detailed measurement model results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Spesific Measurement Model

Variabel	CA	CR	Mean
Transformasi Digital	0.964	0.972	4.34
Agile Leadership	0.919	0.939	4.32
Job Satisfaction	0.936	0.947	4.20
Employee Performance	0.927	0.941	4.20
Work Motivation	0.931	0.948	4.31

Source(s) : Table based on primary data collected by the authors

The results of respondents' answers using the three-box method from Ferdinand (2005, p. 292). Based on the criteria for selecting Likert scale answers, the range of five must be divided by three to produce a range of 1.33 (1.00–2.33 = low; 2.34–3.67 = moderate; 3.68–5.00 = high), which is then used as the criteria for selecting Likert scale answers. Based on respondents' assessments of the research variables (digital transformation = 4.34; agile leadership = 4.32; job satisfaction = 4.20; employee performance = 4.20; work motivation = 4.31), all latent variables are included in the high category.

Structural Model Assesment

Table 3. Hypotheses testing

Relationship	Original sampel	T-Statistic	P-Value	Results
Direct Effect				
Agile leadership → of digital transformation	0,768	15,264	0,000	H1. Accepted
Agile leadership → motivation work	0,450	5,770	0,000	H2. Accepted
Digital transformation → of job satisfaction	0,206	2,320	0,021	H3. Accepted
Work motivation → job satisfaction	0,599	7,408	0,000	H4. Accepted
Agile leadership → job satisfaction	0,118	1,409	0,159	H5. Rejected
Digital transformation → employee performance	-0,085	0,965	0,335	H6. Rejected
Work motivation → Employee Performance	0,412	4,869	0,000	H7. Accepted
Digital transformation → Work Motivation	0,378	4,463	0,000	H8. Accepted
Job satisfaction → Employee Performance	0,404	4,620	0,000	H9. Accepted
Agile leadership → Employee Performance	0,163	1,622	0,105	H10. Rejected

Level Significance (5%); t-statistics $\geq 1,96$; P-value $\leq 0,05$

Source(s) : Table based on primary data collected by the authors

This study presents path coefficients, P-values, and t-statistics in the structural model to evaluate the significance of the hypotheses (Rahman et al., 2020). The structural model was assessed by examining significance values to determine the influence between variables through a bootstrapping procedure. Table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing for the direct relationships. The results of the study indicate that H1 shows that agile leadership has a positive effect on digital transformation. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.768 with a t-statistic of 15.264 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H2, agile leadership has a positive effect on work motivation. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.450 with a t-statistic of 5.770 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H3, digital transformation has a positive effect on job satisfaction. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.206 with a t-statistic of 2.320 ($P = 0.021$), so it is accepted. In H4, work motivation has a positive effect on job satisfaction. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.599 with a t-statistic of 7.408 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H5, agile leadership has no significant effect on job satisfaction. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.118 with a t-statistic of 1.409 ($P = 0.159$), so it is rejected.

In H6, digital transformation has no significant effect on employee performance. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is -0.085 with a t-statistic of 0.965 ($P =$

0.335), so it is rejected. In H7, work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.412 with a t-statistic of 4.869 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H8, digital transformation has a positive effect on work motivation. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.378 with a t-statistic of 4.463 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H9, job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.404 with a t-statistic of 4.620 ($P = 0.000$), so it is accepted. In H10, agile leadership has no significant effect on employee performance. The calculation results show that the path coefficient is 0.163 with a t-statistic of 1.622 ($P = 0.105$), so it is rejected.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that agile leadership is a central enabler of digital transformation in public higher education. Leaders who communicate a clear direction, respond rapidly to emerging problems, encourage collaboration and support continuous learning appear better able to mobilize employees around digital change. This finding supports the view that leadership agility enables organizations to respond to complex and rapidly changing environments (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Denning, 2018). It also reinforces the argument that digital transformation is not simply the adoption of technological tools but an organization-wide reconfiguration of structures, processes and value-creation practices (Berghaus & Back, 2016; Vial, 2019). The result is consistent with Rialti and Filieri (2024), while extending Esamah et al. (2023) by indicating that agile leadership may help public organizations overcome inertia by providing direction, employee involvement and learning support.

Agile leadership also enhances work motivation. Its motivational value appears to arise from empowerment, recognition, participation and opportunities for employee development. This interpretation is consistent with Herzberg's (1966) proposition that achievement, recognition, responsibility and growth generate intrinsic motivation. It also supports Joiner and Josephs (2007) and Solingen (2020), who associate leadership agility with trust, open communication and continuous learning. The result corroborates Hartono and Saputra (2025) but differs from Dwipayana and Ferine (2023). This divergence suggests that agile leadership is more likely to motivate employees when leadership behaviours are translated into meaningful autonomy and tangible organizational support. In UNESA's transition to a legally autonomous public university, such leadership may be especially valuable because employees must simultaneously respond to new governance requirements, digital systems and service expectations.

Digital transformation improves both work motivation and job satisfaction. When technologies simplify routine activities, improve access to information and create clearer work processes, employees are more likely to perceive digitalization as useful and supportive. This interpretation is consistent with the technology acceptance perspective, which emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use as drivers of favourable employee responses (Venkatesh et al., 2019). Digitalization may also improve job characteristics by increasing autonomy, skill variety and feedback, thereby enhancing employees' work experiences (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The results support Xinyue and Marcelo (2024) and Saptaprasetya et al. (2025), but differ from Astuti et al. (2025) and Yelviana et al. (2024). These contrasting findings indicate that the employee benefits of digital transformation are conditional on system quality, integration, training and user support. When these conditions are absent, digital technologies may generate complexity and technostress rather than motivation or satisfaction (Tarafdar et al., 2007).

Work motivation emerges as the most immediate psychological mechanism linking organizational change to positive employee outcomes. Motivated employees are more likely to

perceive their responsibilities as meaningful, invest sustained effort and derive satisfaction from achievement. This finding supports Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory and the conceptualization of motivation as the direction, intensity and persistence of work-related effort (Hanafi & Yohana, 2017; Lusri & Siagian, 2017). It is also consistent with Mohammed (2024), but differs from Fitria et al. (2024). The difference may reflect the importance of organizational context: during institutional transformation, motivated employees may interpret new systems and responsibilities as opportunities to contribute and develop rather than solely as additional demands.

Motivation also improves employee performance. Employees with stronger motivation are more likely to persist under pressure, adapt to new procedures and maintain service quality. This interpretation is consistent with Firdaus et al. (2020), who describe motivation as the energy that stimulates action, and with Hanafi and Yohana's (2017) emphasis on employees' willingness to exert effort toward organizational goals. The finding supports Fajriani et al. (2025), but differs from Pragiwani et al. (2020). This inconsistency suggests that motivation produces performance benefits when employees possess adequate competence, resources and organizational support. In the present context, motivation appears particularly important because administrative and technical staff must maintain service delivery while adapting to changing governance and digital work arrangements.

Job satisfaction similarly enhances employee performance. Employees who evaluate their jobs positively are more likely to display commitment, responsibility and service-oriented behaviour. This finding is consistent with George and Zakkariya's (2018) view that satisfaction reflects employees' cumulative attitudes and experiences at work. It also supports Surapto (2025), but differs from Binter (2025). These contrasting findings imply that satisfaction does not invariably translate into performance; its effect depends on whether employees have the resources, capabilities and opportunities required to act on positive work attitudes. At UNESA, satisfaction may reinforce performance because administrative work depends heavily on sustained cooperation, responsiveness and commitment to institutional services.

In contrast, agile leadership does not directly improve job satisfaction or employee performance. This result suggests that the effects of leadership are transmitted through more proximal organizational and psychological mechanisms. Although agile leaders may create a supportive and adaptable environment, satisfaction also depends on workload, compensation, job security, career opportunities and institutional procedures. The non-significant relationship with satisfaction supports Trivilanita et al. (2024) but differs from Pratama (2024). Similarly, the absence of a direct performance effect is consistent with Prasetiawan et al. (2025), who found that agile leadership operated through workforce agility, but differs from Surapto (2025). In a regulated public university, leaders may influence performance primarily by facilitating digital transformation and strengthening employee motivation rather than by directly changing individual output.

Digital transformation also does not directly enhance employee performance. This finding should not be interpreted as evidence that digitalization is ineffective. Rather, it indicates that technology adoption alone is insufficient to improve performance. Employees need time to develop competence, adapt work routines and integrate new systems into existing processes. The result supports Panggayuh and Krisprimandoyo (2024) but differs from Isnawati and Waskito (2024). The discrepancy reinforces the contextual nature of digital transformation: performance benefits depend on system usability, organizational integration, employee readiness and technical support. Where systems remain fragmented or create duplicated work, their potential benefits may be offset by adjustment costs and technostress (Tarafdar et al., 2007).

Taken together, the results reveal a process-based explanation of employee performance. Agile leadership initiates change by strengthening digital transformation and

motivation, while digital transformation improves employees' motivational and attitudinal responses. Motivation subsequently enhances job satisfaction and performance, and satisfaction further strengthens performance. Thus, leadership and technology-related changes do not automatically generate higher performance; their value depends on whether employees experience greater competence, meaningfulness, efficiency and satisfaction. This finding advances the literature by positioning work motivation and job satisfaction as proximal mechanisms through which organizational transformation is converted into employee outcomes in public higher education.

The practical implication is that UNESA should integrate leadership development, digital transformation and human resource management rather than treating them as separate initiatives. Leaders should communicate a clear digital vision, involve employees in change and provide continuous feedback and learning opportunities. Digital systems should be user-oriented, interoperable and supported by training and responsive technical assistance. These efforts should be complemented by recognition, career development, manageable workloads and fair performance evaluation. Such an integrated approach is more likely to strengthen motivation and satisfaction and, ultimately, improve employee performance during institutional transformation. This discussion is grounded in the complete thesis material supplied by the author.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among agile leadership, digital transformation, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee performance among administrative and technical staff at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. The findings show that agile leadership has a positive and significant effect on digital transformation and work motivation. Digital transformation has a positive and significant effect on work motivation and job satisfaction, while work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance. Job satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

However, agile leadership does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction or employee performance, and digital transformation does not have a significant effect on employee performance. These findings indicate that not all organizational and technological factors examined in this study directly determine employee outcomes. Overall, work motivation and job satisfaction emerge as important factors associated with employee performance, while agile leadership and digital transformation are more strongly related to organizational adaptation and employees' work attitudes. The results provide practical insight for UNESA to strengthen adaptive leadership, improve the quality of digital systems, and enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction in supporting institutional performance.

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