

THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ROLE OVERLOAD ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEE BURNOUT WITH THE MODERATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



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Abstract

Burnout among public sector employees is an important issue due to the high work demands and pressures in the government environment, which impacts individual well-being and organizational performance. This study examines the effect of transformational leadership (TFL) and role overload on burnout among public sector employees, focusing on the moderating role of human resource management (HRM) practices. Data was collected from 415 employees of Statistics Indonesia (BPS) and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that TFL plays a significant role in reducing burnout by providing vision, motivation, and support to employees. On the other hand, role overload was also identified as an important contributor to increasing employee burnout. In addition, the findings of this study highlight the dark side of excessive HRM that can weaken the positive effects of transformational leadership and have the potential to worsen employee burnout, so a balanced HRM approach that is oriented towards employee well-being is needed. Overall, this study provides insight into the interaction between TFL, role overload, and HRM and offers valuable knowledge for stakeholders related to HRM practices in the public sector.

Keywords: Burnout, Transformational Leadership, Role Overload, HRM,

INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a chronic stress syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). It arises primarily from high job demands and insufficient resources, with two key dimensions: emotional exhaustion and disengagement from work (Demerouti et al., 2010). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model identifies that excessive job demands lead to emotional exhaustion, while adequate resources are essential for mitigating stress, fostering personal growth, and enhancing organizational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2010). Burnout negatively impacts individuals and organizations, causing cognitive impairment, increased turnover, and reduced productivity (Golkar, et al., 2014; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

In the context of the public sector in Indonesia, the increase in activities in Statistics Indonesia (BPS) has also raised the workload of employees. BPS financial report data shows that the realization of overtime spending continues to increase and peaks in 2023 at 36 billion rupiahs. It has increased significantly by 49 percent compared to the previous year. This shows an increased workload so employees have difficulty completing work within normal working hours. In addition, an earlier study conducted by the HR Department showed that 26 percent of BPS employees need psychological consultation facilities, which indicates emotional exhaustion that can lead to burnout. The density of BPS activities, especially in the last three years, has also raised complaints from employees. There are Social Population Registration (Regsosek 2022), Agricultural Census (ST 2023), Inter-Census Population Survey Trial (SUPAS 2025), and Economic Census Trial (SE 2026), which the implementation usually requires at least two years.

This condition is exacerbated by the distribution of work that tends to be more concentrated in certain periods so it has the potential to cause burnout in employees. According to research by Hanum & Siswati (2017), as many as 90.24 percent of BPS employees in Semarang experienced burnout in the low category. High burnout can affect individual employee performance and the overall performance of BPS as a government organization. Several studies have revealed the impact of burnout on aspects of work including disengagement, decreased work performance, poor work attitudes, and turnover

intention (Lubbadeh, 2020; Wu et al., 2019). The decline in BPS performance has the potential to produce poor-quality data so that it can continuously have an impact on policy decisions. Addressing burnout in the public sector requires holistic strategies, including leadership development, organizational changes, and supportive policies. This study highlights the roles of transformational leadership, role overload, and HR management in enhancing employee well-being and organizational performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Transformational Leadership and Burnout

Transformational leadership is a process where leaders influence and inspire followers to achieve organizational goals through vision, motivation, and individualized support (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013). The researcher highlights its positive effects on employee engagement, well-being, and organizational success, by providing resources like feedback, support, and opportunities for growth (Breevaart et al., 2014; Hetland et al., 2015; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). Studies have shown that TFL not only enhances employee engagement but also buffers against burnout by providing a positive work climate, where employees experience a sense of purpose and alignment with organizational goals (Breevaart et al., 2014). Transformational leaders address emotional needs, reduce stress, and foster adaptive strategies like recovery and job regulation (Bakker & de Vries, 2021), emphasizing their critical role in achieving organizational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Moreover, organizational interventions such as providing stable resources, realistic goal setting, leadership training, and supporting work-life balance can help prevent burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Role Overload and Burnout

Role overload occurs when employees face excessive demands that exceed their available resources, time, or capabilities, leading to stress and burnout (Beehr et al., 1976; Schaubroeck et al., 1989). Government employees, in particular, experience heightened role overload due to increasing public demands, limited resources, and the expectation to balance multiple roles (Huang et al., 2018; Wang & You, 2016). According to the demand-control model, high job demands combined with low control result in detrimental outcomes such as

emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Karasek, 1998). Furthermore, role overload often mediates the relationship between leadership and burnout, as supportive leadership, particularly transformational leadership, can mitigate its effects (Backman et al., 2018; Karatepe & Turkmen, 2023; Vullings et al., 2020). Addressing role overload is critical for enhancing employee well-being and organizational performance.

Human Resources Management as Moderator

Research by Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022) underscores the role of Human Resource Management as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and burnout levels. HRM is a strategic framework encompassing policies and practices designed to optimize employee contributions while fostering organizational effectiveness and individual well-being (Sharma, 2023). Effective HRM practices—such as fair performance management, professional development, flexible scheduling, and work-life balance policies—promote employee motivation, satisfaction, and resilience, reducing burnout risks (Andreassi et al., 2014; Delery & Doty, 1996; Macky & Boxall, 2007). It stated that effective HRM practices can help create supportive working conditions, provide adequate resources, and encourage a healthy work-life balance, such as offering job crafting programs and recovery training (Oprea et al., 2019). Moreover, supportive HRM practices help employees access resources to meet job demands, fostering personal growth and organizational commitment (Sun & Pan, 2008; Tuan, 2018).

While HRM practices are often designed to enhance engagement and productivity, poorly implemented systems can inadvertently increase stress and burnout (Veth et al., 2019). High-performance work systems (HPWS), for example, may heighten job demands and emotional exhaustion, especially in high-pressure environments (Bartram et al., 2012; Wu & Gu, 2024). Rigid or overly controlling HRM practices, such as strict performance monitoring, can suppress autonomy and innovation, while inconsistent or unfair implementation may erode trust and satisfaction, leading to psychological strain (Castanheira & Chambel, 2010; Gilbert et al., 2015; Xia et al., 2019). To mitigate these risks, HRM systems must balance demands with sufficient resources, promote fairness, and ensure clear communication,

fostering both organizational success and employee well-being (Haines et al., 2017; Tuan, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to collect data from a predetermined group of respondents. Primary data are obtained through a questionnaire filled out by BPS employees who were actively working in the past year. In this study, seven Likert scales were used. Burnout is assessed with the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), focusing on emotional exhaustion and disengagement dimensions (Demerouti et al., 2010) such as “I often feel tired even before arriving at work.”. Transformational leadership is measured through 12 unidimensional items adapted from A Short Measure of Transformational Leadership by Carless et al. (2000) such as “My manager conveys a clear vision for the future.”. Role overload is evaluated using 3 unidimensional items from Schaubroeck et al. (1989) capturing perceptions of excessive workload such as “I often feel like I have too much work to handle well on my own.”. Lastly, HRM is measured through 7 unidimensional items by Andreassi et al. (2014), covering aspects like fairness, work-life balance, and training such as “I am able to maintain work-life balance.”.

The study employs rigorous tests to ensure reliable and valid measurement instruments. Validity and reliability are assessed using tests like Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO), Bartlett's Test, factor loading, and Cronbach's Alpha, using SPSS 27 (Hair et al., 2018; Malhotra, 2020). Descriptive statistics, including measures like mean and standard deviation, provide insights into the variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Malhotra, 2020). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed using PLS-SEM for analyzing complex relationships between latent variables due to its efficiency in handling non-normal data and reflective-formative constructs using SmartPLS 4.3 (Hair et al., 2018; Dash & Paul, 2021). Model assessments include validity, reliability, collinearity, determination coefficient (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping with significant thresholds set for t-values and p-values (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2019).

This study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: TFL negatively affects burnout

H2: HRM moderates the negative relationship between TFL and burnout

- H3: ROL positively affects burnout
H4: TFL negatively affects role overload
H5: ROL mediates the effect of TFL on burnout

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study collected data from 415 valid responses after excluding two for missing values and outliers. The study sample is predominantly female (57.11%), with males accounting for 42.89%. Respondents are primarily Millennials (67.47%), followed by Generation Z (17.11%) and Generation X (15.42%), based on birth years. Most respondents have been employed at BPS for 6–10 years (31.57%) and are primarily from district or city-level offices (59.76%), followed by province level (27.59%) and headquarters (12.29%). The demographic distribution adequately represents the target population, ensuring reliability for further analysis.

Table 1
Respondent Identity

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	178	42,89%
	Female	237	57,11%
Age	Gen Z (12 – 27 tahun)	71	17,11%
	Gen Millenials (28 – 43 tahun)	280	67,47%
	Gen X (44 – 59 tahun)	64	15,42%
Unit	Headquarter	51	12,29%
	Province	116	27,95%
	District/City	248	59,76%
Length of work	1 – 5 years	120	28,92%
	6 – 10 years	131	31,57%
	11 – 15 years	77	18,55%
	16 – 20 years	30	7,23%
	Over 20 years	57	13,73%

Source: Primary data processed in 2024

Variables Descriptive

For burnout, emotional exhaustion has a higher grand mean than disengagement, with BOE2 ("I need more time to relax after work than before") scoring the highest and BOD3 ("I feel increasingly disengaged from my work") the lowest. In transformational leadership,

TFL3 ("My leader treats employees as individuals and supports their development") scored the highest, while TFL9 ("My leader encourages new ways of thinking about problems") scored the lowest. Role overload showed ROL1 ("I often feel I have too much work to handle alone") as the highest-rated indicator, while ROL3 ("I don't have enough time to complete all my work") scored the lowest. For HRM, HRM1 ("Everyone, regardless of differences, has equal opportunities for success") had the highest mean, while HRM4 ("The organization communicates important information in a timely manner") had the lowest. These findings highlight variable-specific strengths and challenges within the surveyed population.

PLS-SEM

The study's measurement model was evaluated for validity and reliability using tests for outer loading ≥ 0.6 , Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7 , composite reliability ≥ 0.7 , AVE ≥ 0.5 , HTMT ≤ 0.9 , and Fornell-Larcker criterion which is greater than the correlation between variables. All first-order (burnout indicators) and second-order constructs met the required thresholds, confirming the indicators were valid and reliable (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2022). The structural model analysis indicated no collinearity issues, with VIF values within acceptable ranges between 0.01 and 10 (Ghozali, 2016). The adjusted R² values showed that transformational leadership and role overload explained 49.7% of the variance in burnout (moderate) and 9.1% in role overload (low). Predictive relevance (Q²) was moderate for burnout (0.404) but low for HRM, role overload, and transformational leadership, suggesting varying levels of model accuracy in predicting the dependent variables. These findings validate the model for further hypothesis testing.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity Measurement

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
	Burnout	HRM	ROL	TFL
HRM	0,714			
ROL	0,652	0,386		
TFL	0,528	0,743	0,322	
HRM x TFL	0,028	0,152	0,076	0,238
Fornell-Larcker Criterion				
	Burnout	HRM	ROL	TFL
<i>Burnout</i>	0,909			
HRM	-0,599	0,722		
ROL	0,559	-0,359	0,917	
TFL	-0,463	0,664	-0,305	0,871

Table 3
Collinearity Test

Indicator	VIF	Indicator	VIF	Indicator	VIF
EE	1,739	TFL4	4,405	HRM1	1,489
DE	1,739	TFL5	3,906	HRM2	1,941
ROL1	3,190	TFL6	4,400	HRM3	2,105
ROL2	4,299	TFL7	5,413	HRM4	1,969
ROL3	2,538	TFL8	6,289	HRM5	1,611
HRM x TFL	1,000	TFL9	3,274	HRM6	1,457
TFL1	4,655	TFL10	4,419	HRM7	1,578
TFL2	4,682	TFL11	3,341		
TFL3	4,366	TFL12	4,226		

Source: Primary data processed in 2024

Table 4
Convergent Validity and Reliability Measurement

Variable	Indicator/ Dimension	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Burnout	EE	0,920	0,789	0,797	0,826
	DE	0,897			
Transformational Leadership	TFL1	0,865	0,971	0,972	0,759
	TFL2	0,864			
	TFL3	0,880			
	TFL4	0,884			
	TFL5	0,864			
	TFL6	0,878			
	TFL7	0,871			
	TFL8	0,892			
	TFL9	0,842			
	TFL10	0,880			
Role Overload	ROL1	0,905	0,905	0,907	0,841
	ROL2	0,945			
	ROL3	0,900			
Human Resource Management	HRM1	0,612	0,847	0,857	0,521
	HRM2	0,749			
	HRM3	0,757			
	HRM4	0,795			
	HRM5	0,723			
	HRM6	0,694			
	HRM7	0,711			

Source: Primary data processed in 2024

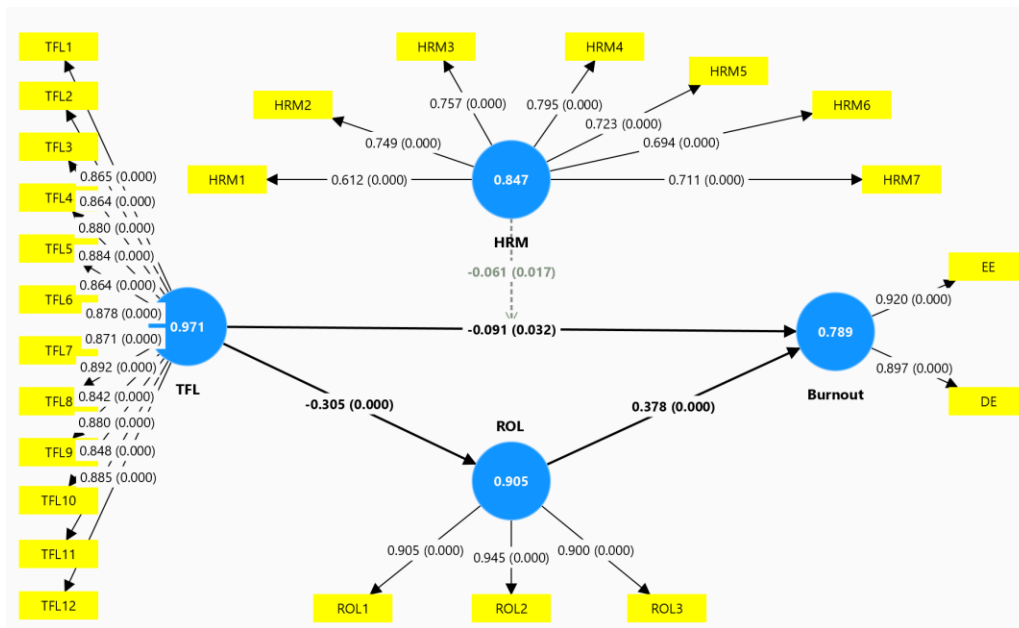


Figure 1
Overall Model Test Results

Tabel 5
Path Coefficient

Hypotesis	Path Coefficient	T-value	P-value	95% CI	
				Upper	Lower
H1 TFL->Burnout	-0,091	1,848	0,032	-0,174	-0,014
H2 HRM x TFL -> Burnout	-0,061	2,117	0,017	-0,109	-0,014
H3 ROL -> Burnout	0,378	9,104	0,000	0,309	0,447
H4 TFL -> ROL	-0,305	6,978	0,000	-0,370	-0,226
H5 TFL -> ROL -> Burnout	-0,115	5,603	0,000	-0,151	-0,084

Source: Primary data processed in 2024

Table 1 shows that at a significance level of 5 percent, all hypotheses successfully reject Ho with a p-value of less than 0.05 and a confidence interval value that does not cut zero. The direction of influence of the five hypotheses is indicated by the path coefficient value. A positive path coefficient value indicates a positive or unidirectional relationship direction. Conversely, a negative path coefficient value indicates a negative or opposite direction of the relationship. This is based on the previous theory and the proposed hypothesis.

Overall Discussion

The analysis confirms that transformational leadership (TFL) significantly reduces burnout in public sector employees, as indicated by a p-value of 0.032 and a confidence interval between -0.174 and -0.014. TFL fosters motivation, collaboration, and emotional support, providing critical job resources to help employees manage high demands and reduce emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Carless et al., 2000; Demerouti et al., 2001; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). This is particularly relevant for organizations like BPS, where high workloads and pressure from national projects exacerbate burnout risks. Indicators such as fostering teamwork (TFL8), providing motivation (TFL4), and inspiring competence (TFL12) were found to be most effective in alleviating burnout by enhancing employee well-being and psychological resilience (O'Connor et al., 2018; Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Role overload (ROL) was found to have a significant positive effect on burnout, with a p-value of 0.000 and a confidence interval between 0.309 and 0.447. The findings align with prior research indicating that excessive workloads increase emotional exhaustion and disengagement, especially in high-demand environments (Beehr et al., 1976; Bolino & Turnley, 2005). In BPS, employees face overwhelming responsibilities due to limited resources and high expectations, leading to increased psychological strain and reduced satisfaction (Bowling et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2022). Addressing ROL requires proactive workload management and supportive policies to reduce stress and prevent burnout, consistent with the demand-control model of Karasek (1998), which emphasizes the importance of balancing job demands with adequate control and resources.

The study also highlights the mediating role of ROL in the relationship between TFL and burnout, as demonstrated by a p-value of 0.000 and a negative confidence interval (-0.151 to -0.084). TFL reduces ROL by fostering a supportive work environment, providing clear guidance, and promoting collaboration, which helps employees better manage their workloads and reduce burnout risks (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Vullings et al., 2020). In the context of BPS, where high workloads and complex tasks are common, TFL offers a practical solution by enhancing employees' ability to cope with job demands while maintaining motivation and psychological well-being. This underscores the importance of implementing

transformational leadership as a strategy to improve employee resilience, reduce burnout, and enhance organizational performance in the high-pressure public sector.

The Dark Side of HRM

The study found that HRM significantly moderates the negative relationship between transformational leadership (TFL) and burnout, with a p-value of 0.017 and a confidence interval between -0.109 and -0.014. However, contrary to expectations, HRM was found to weaken the impact of TFL in reducing burnout. While effective HRM practices like timely communication, recognition, and fostering a sense of accomplishment (e.g., HRM4, HRM3, HRM2) are essential, overemphasis on performance-driven HRM can intensify job demands, leading to burnout (Kroon et al., 2009; Veth et al., 2019). This phenomenon aligns with the “dark side” of HRM, where excessive focus on performance metrics creates pressure and limits work-life balance, which, in contexts like BPS, undermines the supportive environment provided by transformational leaders.

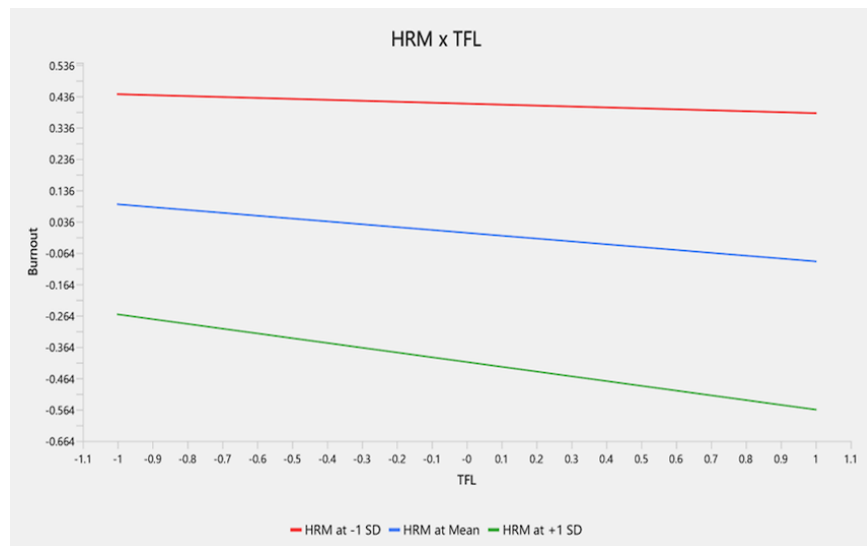


Figure 2
Moderation Effect of HRM

The findings suggest that overly bureaucratic or target-oriented HRM practices may heighten employee workload and stress, counteracting the benefits of TFL (Van de Voorde et al., 2016). Practices that focus solely on organizational goals, rather than employee well-being, can lead to increased emotional strain and burnout, especially in high-demand public sector environments (Wu & Gu, 2023; Xia et al., 2019). To address this, HRM in BPS should

balance performance with well-being by promoting fairness, meaningful recognition, and work-life balance, as suggested by Paauwe (2004). Aligning HRM with TFL can optimize its benefits, fostering a healthier workplace and reducing burnout.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of transformational leadership (TFL) and role overload on burnout among public sector employees at BPS, highlighting the moderating role of human resource management (HRM). Findings reveal that TFL significantly reduces burnout by fostering a supportive environment through vision communication, empowerment, and motivation, particularly crucial for BPS employees managing high-stress national projects (Carless et al., 2000; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). Conversely, role overload significantly increases burnout, as excessive job demands lead to emotional exhaustion and diminished job satisfaction (Beehr et al., 1976; Bowling et al., 2015). The study also finds that HRM moderates the TFL-burnout relationship, but excessive performance-oriented HRM practices can inadvertently heighten stress and undermine TFL's positive effects, consistent with the "dark side" of HRM (Kroon et al., 2009; Veth et al., 2019). These results underscore the need for balanced HRM practices that prioritize both performance and employee well-being.

Managerial implications suggest several strategies to mitigate burnout at BPS. Enhancing TFL through leadership training programs can equip leaders to provide motivation, support, and clear communication, reducing employee stress and improving psychological resilience (Breevaart et al., 2016; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Addressing role overload by aligning job demands with employee capacity, supported by adequate resources and work-life balance policies, can alleviate burnout risks (Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, HRM practices should ensure fairness, transparent communication, and realistic workload expectations while avoiding excessive control measures (Castanheira & Chambel, 2010; Wu & Gu, 2023). Integrating TFL with supportive HRM policies can create a healthier work environment, fostering both organizational productivity and employee well-being (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022; Ogbonnaya & Messermit, 2019).

Building on the study's conclusions, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to capture burnout's dynamic nature and expand to diverse public organizations for broader applicability. Incorporating variables like work engagement, job satisfaction, and individual capital (e.g., knowledge and skills) can provide a deeper understanding of how transformational leadership and HRM policies influence burnout, offering valuable insights for public sector HR management (Han et al., 2018).

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