

THE ROLE OF FOLLOWER CHARACTERISTICS AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE INFLUENCE OF INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HAPPINESS AT WORK

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ABSTRACT

Inspirational leadership is a leader who can invest time and develop intelligence in his work to inspire his followers. Inspirational leaders can encourage employee participation in achieving company goals. According to the 2019 Employee Happiness Index survey by Benify, it is stated that the banking industry is ranked 4th out of 5 industries in the category of employee engagement at work, and employee happiness in the banking industry is influenced by leaders who have good leadership and management characteristics. This study aims to analyze the role of follower characteristics as a mediator between the influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work. The sample in this study amounted to 98 employees at PT. Bank Tabungan Negara (Persero), Tbk. Branch Office of Batam. The data collection method uses a questionnaire and the analysis method of this study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis through the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. The results of this study support the proposed hypothesis that there is a significant influence between inspirational leadership on happiness at work through follower characteristics mediation with path coefficient (0.423) and P-value (0.000 < 0.05). The figure of a leader in inspirational leadership has a fundamental role that directly affects happiness at work.

Keywords: Inspirational Leadership, Follower Characteristics, Happiness at Work.

INTRODUCTION

One dimension of transformational leadership that is able to encourage positive attitudes of employees at work is inspirational leadership. Salas-Vallina et al, (2018) mention that inspirational leadership gives meaning to needs and actions, where inspirational leaders are able to see what followers need and what challenges followers. The existence of dialogue, transparency, and positive energy are part of inspirational leadership. In line with that, Isa et al, (2019), stated that leaders who have the ability to listen and think about employee career paths have an effect on happiness at work. Research on happiness at work has been carried out by several experts, some of which mention the importance of the quality of life of individuals in an organization (Fisher, 2010) as job satisfaction can reduce absenteeism, and increase work effectiveness, cooperation, creativity, and performance.

Seligman et al. (2005), stated that leadership can be a very important factor in influencing the development of character or positive individual well-being. Thus, studies on positive leadership forms such as follower characteristics are transformational and positively used by individuals to improve follower work attitudes and performance. A study conducted by (Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009), showed that follower characteristics have an important role in moderating leadership style on follower or employee work engagement.

The condition of the banking industry today shows a lack of professional competence (Callejas-Albinana, et al, 2017), thus requiring innovation in the banking sector. There needs to be a change in leadership style and positive behavior, and commitment and job satisfaction are the main challenges in realizing these innovations. According to the 2019 Employee Happiness Index survey conducted by Benify, it was stated that in terms of employee engagement in the workplace, the banking industry was ranked 4th out of 5 industries (public sector, retail, industry, bank & insurance, and IT & telecommunications). Furthermore, according to the survey, the banking industry in terms of job satisfaction is influenced by leaders who have good leadership and management characteristics.

PT. Bank Tabungan Negara (Persero) Tbk. is a State-Owned Enterprise (BUMN) engaged in the leading and trusted banking sector in facilitating the housing sector and family financial services, and has a vision as The Best Mortgage Bank in Southeast Asia in 2025. Bank BTN reports an Employee Engagement survey System (EES) through the company's annual report every year. Data from the EES survey at PT. State Savings Bank (Persero) Tbk. 2015-2020 shows an upward trend, respectively, namely 70%, 77%, 78%, 80%, and 88%. It aims to determine the level of satisfaction and measure employee engagement, as well as a benchmark for a conducive work atmosphere. The higher the level of employee satisfaction and engagement, the better the alignment between employee goals and company goals.

Bank BTN has branch offices spread throughout Indonesia, one of which is Bank BTN KC Batam. The achievement of company performance certainly cannot be separated from the direction of a leader. The existence of an inspiring leader is expected to encourage employees to perform well so that they can contribute to the company's performance. Employees who have a need for higher performance growth will outperform those who

have a lower need for performance growth, this happens when employees work with leaders who provide direction and more active participation (Al-Gattan, 1985). His results show that followers' need for growth moderates the relationship between participatory leadership and follower performance. The focus of this research is to see how the role of follower characteristics as a mediator between the influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work, especially at PT. State Savings Bank (Persero) Tbk Batam Branch Office.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Inspirational Leadership

Inspirational leadership is a leader who can invest time and develop intelligence in his work to inspire his followers. Inspirational leaders have higher vision and goals and encourage employee participation. Inspirational leaders can see what followers need and what followers find challenging (Mistry & Hule, 2015).

The discussion on inspirational leadership is taken from Bass's (1990) theory which states two dimensions of leadership style, namely transformational and transactional. Focusing transformational leadership which tends to prioritize commitment and motivation among followers, this leadership has leadership dimensions consisting of charismatic, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, so inspirational leadership is considered part of transformational leadership.

This study uses the measurement dimensions of items or indicators that are appropriate to inspirational communication to measure inspirational leadership based on a scale adapted by Rafferty and Griffin (2004) by quoting from the Podsakoff scale. Indicators include leaders saying things that employees are proud of, saying positive things about the work unit, and encouraging people to see a changing environment as a situation full of opportunity.

Follower Characteristics

Merriam-Webster (2021) defines followers as the capacity or willingness to follow a leader. It can be interpreted that followers are people who follow directions, and opinions and imitate others. Positive follower characteristics are follower characteristics such as being creative, innovative, proactive, initiative and having a learning orientation. Kelley (1988; 1992) identified five basic styles of following, namely: Passive follower, conformist, alienated, pragmatic, and exemplary. Followers characteristics who are more proactive in the work environment or with more positive characteristics are more likely to express themselves or monitor themselves in their social interactions (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Shamir & Howell, 2000). The follower characteristics indicator used in this study uses a four-item scale adapted from previous research by Zhu et al (2009), which involves four aspects of followers: independent thinking, proactive, active learning, and innovative.

Happiness at Work

Fernandez et al. (2018) identify happiness with a sense of job satisfaction, where people feel validated and their self-esteem grows. The conceptualization of happiness at work consists of effective engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Salas-Valina & Alegre, 2018). Fisher's (2010) conceptualization regarding happiness at work includes attachment, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. Engagement is related to the presence of positive work-related effectiveness, such as passion, enthusiasm, or energy (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Meanwhile, job satisfaction refers to the adequacy, acceptability, and assessment of work as a result of job characteristics (excitement). The construction of effective organizational commitment consider feelings of effectiveness at work, and continuance and normative commitment at work.

HYPOTHESIS

The Effect of Inspirational Leadership and Happiness at Work

Leaders' concern for the welfare of others tends to create a climate of cooperation and trust that makes it easier to feel happy at work. Researchers see that the dimensions of happiness at work such as job satisfaction, attachment, and affective organizational commitment can emerge as a consequence of inspirational leadership. Following the JD-R model, inspirational leadership as a source of work can lead to positive attitudes, such as happiness at work. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001)

Attachment implies a feeling of enthusiasm and passion for work. Inspirational leaders can foster self-confidence (Malhotra et al., 2007), enthusiasm, and optimism (Bass, 1985) and offer emotional contagion (Haver et al., 2013). Inspirational leadership promotes a collective identity orientation that focuses on collective messages, energizes teams, and increases self-identification between individuals and organizations, which results in greater commitment (Joshi et al., 2009). Based on the arguments above, the first hypothesis in this study is:

H₁: Inspirational leadership affects happiness at work

The Effect of Follower Characteristics as Mediator Between Inspirational Leadership and Happiness at Work

Research on happiness at work shows that self-esteem, locus of control, and optimism are personal contributors to happiness at work (Lucas, 2008). These contributors are closely related to the follower characteristics of independent and proactive thinking.

The Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist, 1984) suggests that a positive attitude occurs when working conditions meet employee requirements. When embedded in work situations that match the needs and preferences of followers, such as those created by an inspiring leader, individuals are expected to be happier (Fisher, 2010). Willems (2011) also examines the mediating role of follower characteristics in the

relationship between leadership and performance. Based on the arguments above, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H₂: Follower characteristics mediate the influence of inspirational leadership and happiness at work

RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

In this study, the data collection method was designed using a Likert scale questionnaire. The data that has been collected is then processed in the form of numbers and analyzed quantitatively, then hypothesis testing with the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis model through the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using the SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. The research population was less than 100 respondents, so the total sample taken (Arikunto, 2006) was 98 organic employees who worked at Bank BTN KC. Batam.

This study consists of three variables including inspirational leadership (independent variable), follower characteristics (mediation variable), and happiness at work as the dependent variable. In the inspirational leadership variable, there are 3 indicators, follower characteristics 4 indicators, and happiness at work 9 indicators, so the total is 16 indicators. The measurements in this study refer to the statements used in previous research by Salas-Valina & Alegre (2018), namely Rafferty & Griffin (2004), Zhu et al. (2009), Mistry & Hule (2015).

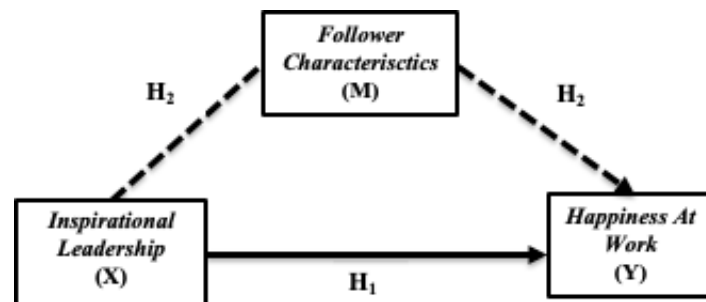


Figure 1. Theoretical Thinking Framework
Source: Salas-Vallina & Alegre (2018)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The description of the respondent's data shows that the sex of the respondents is dominated by men 59 people (60.20%) with the age of 26-30 years as many as 36 people (36.73%), the majority of the respondents' latest education is Strata 1 with a total of 72 people (73, 47%) and the tenure of service is dominated by 41 people (41.48%) who are classified as new employees with 1-5 years of service from the total respondents.

Respondents' responses to inspirational leadership (x), follower characteristics (m), and happiness at work (y) can be explained, respectively, that the overall average score is 3.89; 3.87, and 3.82, while the lowest indicator average score for each variable is IL.3 (3.70); "My immediate supervisor encourages employees to see a changing environment as a situation full of opportunities", FC.2 (3.55); "I am willing to take risks" and HAW.3 (3.57); "I get carried away when I work."

Normality test

Quantitative data included in the measurement of interval scale data is required to be normally distributed. The normality test aims to prove that the data obtained are from a normally distributed population. The normality test in this study refers to the values of skewness and excess kurtosis which are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Indikator	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Excess Kurtosis</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	Keterangan
IL.1	0,833	-0,033	-0,607	Terdistribusi Normal
IL.2	0,903	-0,503	-0,550	Terdistribusi Normal
IL.3	0,939	-0,786	-0,272	Terdistribusi Normal
FC.1	0,778	-0,117	-0,541	Terdistribusi Normal
FC.2	0,916	-0,398	-0,193	Terdistribusi Normal
FC.3	0,832	-0,703	-0,217	Terdistribusi Normal
FC.4	0,774	-0,689	-0,179	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.1	1,014	0,517	-0,939	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.2	0,850	-0,741	-0,307	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.3	1,020	-0,590	-0,226	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.4	0,881	0,080	-0,494	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.5	0,827	-0,352	-0,325	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.6	0,700	-0,944	-0,028	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.7	0,773	-0,613	-0,010	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.8	0,872	-0,657	-0,319	Terdistribusi Normal
HAW.9	0,892	-0,883	-0,173	Terdistribusi Normal

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Based on the results of the calculations in Table 1 above, it shows that the range of values for skewness and excess kurtosis is in the range of 1, which is -0.944 to 0.080 so that the value meets the criteria that the data in this study comes from a normally distributed population. This is supported by Briz et al., (2016); Chavoshi & Hamidi (2018) who state that the value of skewness and excess kurtosis is used to perform a normality test, where the data can be said to be normally distributed if the value is between the value range 1 and if the value of skewness < 3 and the value of excess kurtosis < 10, then the value can be received.

Partial Least Square (PLS) Model Schematic

This multivariate statistical analysis aims to estimate the influence between variables simultaneously with prediction studies, exploration, or development of structural models (Hair et al., 2019). Model evaluation in PLS includes the evaluation of measurement models, evaluation of structural models, and evaluation of the goodness and fit of the model. In this study, the measurement model scheme (outer model) and structural model (inner model) are used as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

In this study, the reflective measurement model is used because the measurement is developed from the elaboration of a concept or theory into the indicators that make up the variables. Evaluation of the reflective measurement model consists of validity tests (convergent validity and discriminant validity) and reliability tests.

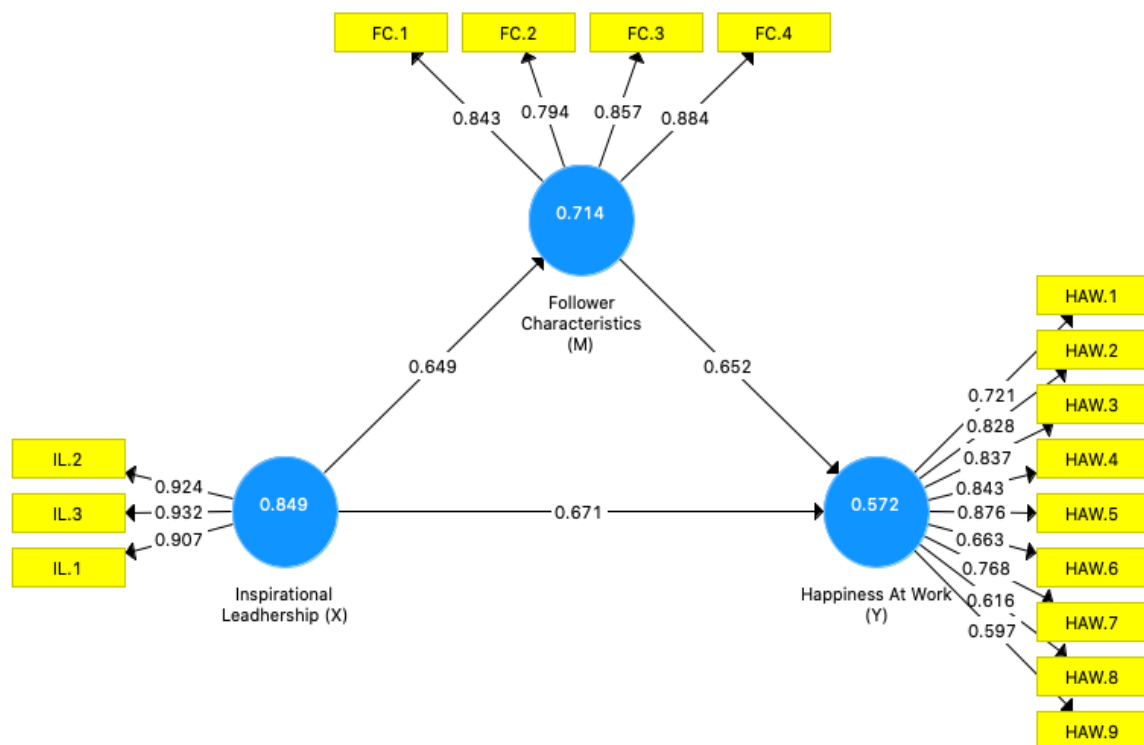


Figure 2. Measurement Model (Outer Model)
Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Validity test

Convergent validity is tested using the outer loading value, where an indicator is declared to meet the requirements of convergent validity in the good category if the outer loading value is > 0.7 . The indicator size is said to be high if the correlation is greater than 0.7 with the measured variable, but Ghazali (2006) mentions for research the initial stage of developing a measurement scale for the outer loading value of 0.5 to 0.6 is still considered adequate. The following is Table 2 which contains the results of the convergent validity test through the outer loading value obtained in the study.

Table 2 above does not show any indicators with an outer loading value of <0.5 then all indicators are declared valid or feasible to be used in research and further analysis can be carried out, it can also be stated that the statements in each latent variable can be understood by respondents such as intended by the researcher.

Convergent validity was also measured based on the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) parameter. According to Abdillah et al. (2015), the required AVE value must be greater than 0.5. Table 3 below presents the AVE value for each variable.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variabel	Indikator	<i>Outer Loading</i>	Keterangan
IL	IL.1	0,907	<i>Valid</i>
	IL.2	0,924	<i>Valid</i>
	IL.3	0,932	<i>Valid</i>
FC	FC.1	0,843	<i>Valid</i>
	FC.2	0,794	<i>Valid</i>
	FC.3	0,857	<i>Valid</i>
	FC.4	0,884	<i>Valid</i>
HAW	HAW.1	0,721	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.2	0,828	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.3	0,837	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.4	0,843	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.5	0,876	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.6	0,663	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.7	0,768	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.8	0,616	<i>Valid</i>
	HAW.9	0,597	<i>Valid</i>

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Average Variant Extracted	Information
	(AVE) > 0.5	
Inspirational Leadership (X)	0.849	Valid
Follower Characteristics (M)	0.714	Valid
Happiness At Work (Y)	0.572	Valid

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Based on Table 3 above, the AVE value of all variables is more than 0.5, where the AVE value is inspirational leadership (0.849), follower characteristic (0.714), and happiness at work (0.572). Thus it can be stated that each variable has good convergent validity.

The discriminant validity test using the cross loading value aims to test the discriminant validity at the indicator level. According to Ghazali (2014) an indicator is declared to meet the requirements of discriminant validity if the value of the cross loading indicator on the variable is the largest compared to other variables. The cross loading value of each indicator can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Indicator	Variable			Information
	IL	FC	HOW	
IL.1	0.907	0.580	0.634	Valid
IL.2	0.924	0.595	0.611	Valid
IL.3	0.932	0.619	0.609	Valid
FC.1	0.628	0.843	0.650	Valid
FC.2	0.466	0.794	0.563	Valid
FC.3	0.539	0.857	0.690	Valid
FC.4	0.553	0.884	0.817	Valid
HAW.1	0.498	0.582	0.721	Valid
HAW.2	0.586	0.814	0.828	Valid
HAW.3	0.466	0.641	0.837	Valid
HAW.4	0.503	0.665	0.843	Valid
HAW.5	0.590	0.717	0.876	Valid
HAW.6	0.436	0.510	0.663	Valid
HAW.7	0.601	0.585	0.768	Valid
HAW.8	0.473	0.459	0.616	Valid
HAW.9	0.376	0.448	0.597	Valid

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

The cross loading value of each indicator on the variable is the largest when compared to other variables, so it can be stated that the indicators used in this study have good discriminant validity in compiling their respective variables. This means that the statements in each latent variable are not confused by the respondent who answers the questionnaire based on the statements in the other latent variables.

Reliability Test

The last step in evaluating the measurement model is to test whether the variables in the study are reliable or not. The reliability test in PLS uses two calculation methods, namely Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability with the required value > 0.7 . The following is the value of Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability of each variable in the study listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Reliabilitas		Keterangan
	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i> > 0,7	<i>Composite Reliability</i> > 0,7	
<i>Inspirational Leadership (X)</i>	0,911	0,944	<i>Reliabel</i>
<i>Follower Characteristics (M)</i>	0,904	0,922	<i>Reliabel</i>
<i>Happiness At Work (Y)</i>	0,867	0,909	<i>Reliabel</i>

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Based on Table 5 above, each latent variable has a Cronbach alpha's value and Composite reliability above 0.7. so that it can be interpreted that the variables of inspirational leadership, follower characteristics, and happiness at work in this study have a high level of reliability.

Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

To predict the causal relationship between latent variables, it is necessary to evaluate the structural model. In this study, the structural models measured were Coefficient of Determination (R²), Predictive Relevance (Q²) and Goodness Fit Index (GoF) (Abdillah, 2015).

This is useful to ensure the relationship between the constructs or variables is strong or robust (rigour and robust). The following schematic of the structural model is presented in Figure 3.

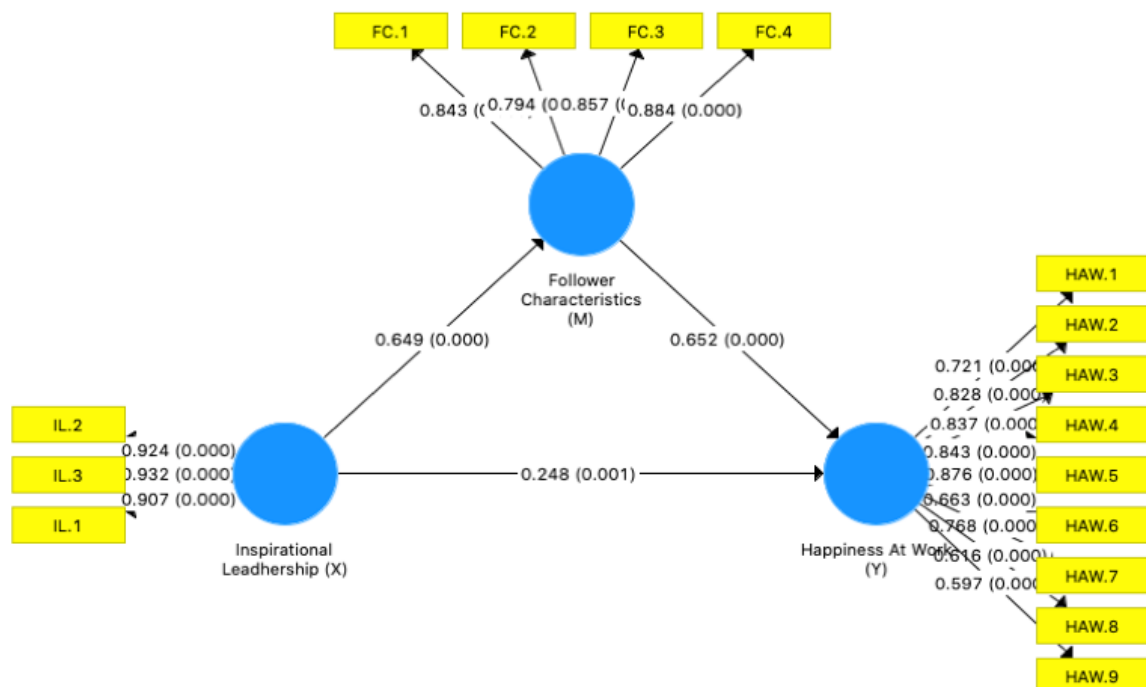


Figure 3. Structural Model Schematic (Inner Model)

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

The results showed that the follower characteristics included in the moderate category (Rsquare = 0.422) and happiness at work was classified as strong (Rsquare = 0.696) which means that the

prediction model of the proposed research model is good or adequate. In addition, the Q square value (0.824) > 0 means that the model has predictive relevance, meaning that the closer to 1 the research model is, the better the research model is with a range of $0 < Q^2 < 1$. The GoF value of 0.630 explains that the overall level of model suitability is calculated from the residuals. The square of the predicted model compared to the actual data is included in the large category GoF, because it has a GoF value of more than 0.38 but not close to 1. Thus, the relationship between the latent variables in this study is strong or called rigor and robust.

HYPOTHESIS TEST

Based on the data processing that has been done using the SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. with the Bootstrapping technique to be able to analyze the direct and indirect effects on the independent, dependent, and mediating variables. In PLS-SEM analysis, the direct and indirect influence values are also referred to as path coefficients whose values range from -1 to +1. The closer the value to +1, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. A relationship that is closer to -1 indicates that the relationship is negative and vice versa (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Measurement of path coefficients is used to see the significance and strength of the relationship between variables and test hypotheses. Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out with a significance level of 0.05 where the proposed hypothesis would be accepted if t-statistics > 1.645 and p-Values < 0.05 or 5%. The following is Table 4.11 which shows the results of hypothesis testing with the SEM-PLS approach.

Table 4. 11
Hypothesis Test Results

Hipotesis	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P-value	Tingkat Kepercayaan 95% Path Coefficient		f-square
				Batas Bawah	Batas Atas	
(H1). IL → HAW	0,248	3,196	0,001	0,087	0,391	0,117
(H2). IL → FC → HAW	0,423	7,630	0,000	0,323	0,537	-

Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Wong (2013) mentions, in addition to assessing the level of significance between variables, it is necessary to assess the magnitude of the influence between variables through the f-square value. The f-square value of 0.02 indicates that there is an influence between variables with a small category; 0.15 medium category, and a value of 0.35 large category. An f-square value less than 0.02 can be ignored or considered to have no effect (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Inspirational Leadership on Happiness at Work

This study supports the first hypothesis (H1), which is that there is a significant influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work with a path coefficient (0.248) and P-value ($0.001 < 0.05$). This means that every change in inspirational leadership will increase happiness at work. With a 95% confidence level, the influence of inspirational leadership in increasing happiness at work lies between 0.087 to 0.391. However, the existence of inspirational leadership in increasing happiness at work has a small to

moderate effect at the structural level ($f\text{-square} = 0.117$). The need for inspirational leadership is very important when leaders encourage employees to see environmental changes as situations full of opportunities, the increase in happiness at work will increase to 0.391. The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Salas-Vallina et al, (2018) explaining the positive and significant relationship in the direct influence model and confirming that the suitability of the structural model is good.

The Role of Follower Characteristics as Mediator Between Inspirational Leadership and Happiness At Work

This study also supports the second hypothesis (H2), namely that there is a significant influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work through follower characteristics mediation with path coefficient (0.423) and P-value ($0.000 < 0.05$). Every change in inspirational leadership will increase happiness at work through the mediation of follower characteristics. With a 95% confidence level, the influence of inspirational leadership in increasing happiness at work through follower characteristics mediation lies between 0.318 to 0.543. The existence of follower characteristics mediation has a very important role when follower characteristics are very innovative, the increase in happiness at work will increase to 0.543. The following is the Path Coefficient and P-value of each indicator on each variable which can be seen in Figure 4.

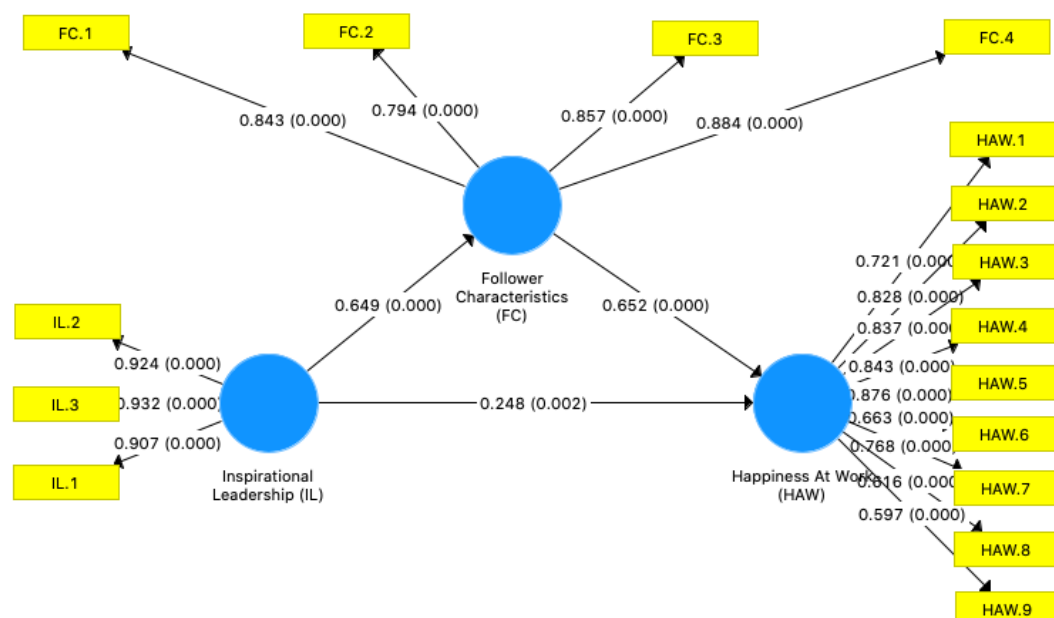


Figure 4.4. Path Coefficient and P- value diagrams
Source: SmartPLS Output Results, 2022

Figure 4. above shows that inspirational leadership has a direct and indirect effect on happiness at work, namely:

Direct effect (IL HAW)

There is a significant influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work with a path coefficient (0.248) and P-value ($0.003 < 0.05$)

Indirect effect (IL FC HAW)

There is a significant influence of inspirational leadership on happiness at work through follower characteristics mediation with path coefficient (0.423) and P-value (0.000 < 0.05). The mediation coefficient (d) can be obtained from the product of the path coefficient (a): KI KP and path coefficient (b): KP → CEC, with the following calculation: $d = a \times b = 0.649 \times 0.652 = 0.423$.

This shows that the characteristics of followers mediate the influence of inspirational leadership on happiness in the workplace partially or referred to as partial mediation, because the direct and indirect effects of inspirational leadership on happiness in the workplace, both have a significant effect ($P < 0.05$). The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Salas-Vallina et al, (2018) which showed that the follower characteristics variable played a partial mediating role in the relationship between inspirational leadership and happiness at work. This means that follower characteristics increase the explanation of happiness at work, which means the mediation model explains the dependent variable better.

CONCLUSION

Inspirational leadership has a positive effect on happiness at work with a path coefficient (0.248) and P-value ($0.003 < 0.05$). These results indicate that more inspiring leadership in a company will affect happiness at work. Inspirational leadership has an indirect effect on the happiness at work variable through the role of follower characteristics with path coefficient (0.423) and P-value ($0.000 < 0.05$). This result means that the higher the mediating role of follower characteristics in a company, the more happiness at work will increase. The mediating role of follower characteristics in this study is referred to as partial mediation, because of the direct and indirect effect of inspirational leadership on happiness in the workplace, both of which had a significant effect ($P < 0.05$).

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