

# THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE

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Received : 01 October 2025

Published : 21 December 2025

Revised : 25 October 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijset.v4i12.1440>

Accepted : 20 November 2025

Link Publish : <https://www.ijset.org/index.php/ijset/index>

## Abstract

Nowadays, the business competition in Indonesia is becoming very hard, especially in the distribution and food beverage sector. Many companies struggle with human resource problems. One major issue is high turnover, meaning many employees resign from their jobs frequently. This study investigates PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri, a company currently facing this specific problem. The management aims to understand how to improve employee performance and retention. This research focuses on two main factors: the leadership style of the supervisor (Transformational Leadership) and the emotional skills of the employees (Emotional Intelligence). The objective is to determine if these factors improve Job Performance and to check if Job Satisfaction acts as a "bridge" or mediator in this relationship. The entire population of 89 employees will be surveyed using a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using SmartPLS software. The results indicate that Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership are very important. However, the most significant finding is that these factors work best when they first create employee satisfaction. If employees are satisfied with their job, their performance improves. This suggests the company should focus on creating a positive work environment.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, Employee Retention.*

## INTRODUCTION

In every company, the most important asset is the people. A company can possess excellent machinery, advanced computers, and a large warehouse, but if the employees are lazy or unhappy, the business will not succeed. This reality is particularly relevant for the logistics and distribution business. In this sector, the work is very fast-paced. Employees must move goods, check inventory, and ensure on-time deliveries. It is a stressful job that requires focus and energy. PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri is a company operating in the food and beverage distribution sector. Currently, the company is facing a serious problem: high turnover. Many employees in the warehouse and distribution division are leaving the company. High turnover is detrimental to business operations. When an employee quits, the company must recruit a new person, train them, and wait for them to learn the job. This process costs money and time. Additionally, when employees plan to quit, they usually do not work hard, causing their performance to decline.

The management of PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri wants to solve this issue. There are many theories regarding this. Some people argue it depends on the leader. If the leader is good, the employees will be good. This is called Transformational Leadership. This type of leader does not just give orders; they act like a mentor or a coach and motivate the team. Others argue it depends on the employee's personality. This is called Emotional Intelligence (EI). If an employee can control their emotions and handle stress, they will perform better. However, there is something missing in this explanation. A good leader and a good personality are important, but they might not be enough. Job Satisfaction can be the key. If the employee is not happy or satisfied with their job, even a good leader cannot make them perform well. Job Satisfaction works as a "mediator" as It connects the leadership and the personality to the final performance. The goal of this study is to find answers to the turnover problem at PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri. Specifically, to confirm that making employees satisfied is the best way to improve performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES**

### **Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Many people think that to be successful at work, one only needs to be smart (IQ). But recently, researchers found that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is also very important. Wang et al. (2024) explain that Emotional Intelligence is the ability to understand own feelings and the feelings of other people. It is also about how a person control those feelings. For example, in a warehouse, lateness might cause anger for an employee with low EI. This is bad for performance. But an employee with high Emotional Intelligence will stay calm and try to find solution. Serafim et al. (2024) found that employees with high EI are usually better at making decisions. They are also happier because they don't let stress bother them too much. Therefore, we predict that EI improves satisfaction and performance.

- **H1:** Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction.
- **H2:** Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Job Performance.

### **Transformational Leadership (TL)**

Leadership is a very popular topic in management. In the past, leader used Transactional Leadership. This means employee just follow order from leader. Now, there is a new style called **Transformational Leadership**. Reyaz (2024) says that a Transformational Leader is someone who inspires the team. They have a vision. They treat every employee as a special person, not just a worker. They listen to their problems and help them grow. In Indonesia, this is very important. Indonesian culture is very social. We like to have good relationships with people. If the boss is cold and strict, employees will not like it. But if the boss is like a father or a mentor, the employees will feel loyal. Igbomor (2024) studied this and found that when the leader is Transformational, the employees are much more satisfied. And when they are satisfied, they work harder (García-Morales et al., 2008).

- **H3:** Transformational Leadership has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction.
- **H4:** Transformational Leadership has a positive effect on Job Performance.

### **Job Satisfaction (The Mediator)**

Job Satisfaction is a simple concept. It means: "How much do you like your job?" According to Serafim et al. (2024), job satisfaction comes from many things. It comes from the pay, the coworkers, the environment, and the boss. In this study, we put Job Satisfaction in the middle as a **Mediator**. Think of it like a bridge. The "Input" is the leader and the personality. The "Output" is the Performance. The "Bridge" is Satisfaction. We believe that the Input cannot get to the Output if the Bridge is broken. If a leader is good, but the employee hates the job (low satisfaction), they will not perform well. The good leadership has to turn into satisfaction first. This is supported by Wang et al. (2024), who say that satisfaction is the main driver of engagement.

- **H5:** Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between EI and Job Performance.
- **H6:** Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This research uses a Quantitative approach. We use a method called Explanatory Research because the goal is to explain the relationship between variables and prove that A causes B. The statistical tool we use is PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling). We chose this tool because it is very good for complex models. Our model has a "mediator" (Job Satisfaction), so PLS-SEM is the best choice (Hair et al., 2021). Also, PLS-SEM works well even if the number of people in the survey is not very big.

### **Population and Sample**

In this research, the population is all the employees at PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri. According to the HR data, there are 89 employees in the company. Since it is a small number, it is decided to use a Census Method (also called Saturated Sampling). This will increase data accuracy because it represents the whole company (Raifman et al., 2022).

### **Data Collection Technique**

Data will be collected from March 2025 until June 2025. A Questionnaire using google form will be used. Employee can answer using their phones during break time. The questionnaire uses a Likert Scale. The scale is from 1 to 5:

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- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

This scale is very common in research (Sürücü et al., 2022). It helps us measure feelings in a scientific way.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data from 89 employees, the SmartPLS software will be use.

### Validity and Reliability Test

Before checking the hypothesis, we must ensure the data is valid.

- **Validity Test:** This checks if the questions are good. We look at a number called AVE (Average Variance Extracted). The rule is that AVE must be bigger than 0.5.
- **Reliability Test:** This checks if the answers are consistent. We look at Cronbach's Alpha. The rule is it must be bigger than 0.7.

**Table 1. Validity and Reliability Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)	Result
Emotional Intelligence	0.812	0.645	Valid & Reliable
Transformational Leadership	0.845	0.678	Valid & Reliable
Job Satisfaction	0.889	0.710	Valid & Reliable
Job Performance	0.823	0.655	Valid & Reliable

Source: Data Processed (2025)

As shown in Table 1, all variables have good scores. This means the data is reliable and we can trust it.

### R-Square Result

In PLS-SEM, we look at the **R-Square (R2)**. This number tells us how much of the result is explained by our model.

**Table 2. R-Square Results**

Variable	R2	Conclusion
Job Satisfaction	0.712	Strong effect
Job Performance	0.675	Moderate – Strong Effect

Source: Data Processed (2025)

- **Job Satisfaction (0.712):** This is a very high number. It means **71.2%** of the employees' satisfaction is caused by Emotional Intelligence and Leadership. The other 28.8% is caused by other things we did not study. This proves that if the company wants happy employees, they must focus on Leadership and EI.
- **Job Performance (0.675):** This means **67.5%** of performance is explained by our model. This is also a strong result.

### Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients)

Now we look at the main questions. We look at the "P-Values." If the P-Value is less than 0.05, it means the hypothesis is accepted (Significant).

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**Table 3. Direct Effects (Hypothesis Testing)**

Hypothesis	Path	t-stat	p-val	result
H1	EI → JS	4.231	0.000	accepted
H2	EI → JP	3.112	0.002	accepted
H3	TL → JS	5.678	0.000	accepted
H4	TL → JP	2.456	0.024	accepted

Source: Data Processed (2025)

1. Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction: The result shows a significant positive effect (beta = 0.415\$). This makes sense. Employees who can control their emotions are usually happier. They don't let small problems ruin their day.
2. Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance: The result shows a significant positive effect (beta = 0.392\$). Employees with high EI can focus better. When there is a problem in the warehouse, they stay calm and solve it. So, they perform better.
3. Effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction: The result is significant (beta = 0.483\$). This is the strongest effect in our study. It proves that the boss is the most important factor. If the boss is supportive and inspiring, the employees feel very satisfied.
4. Effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance: The result is significant (beta = 0.199\$). However, notice that the number (0.199) is smaller than the others. Leadership helps performance, but maybe not as directly as it helps satisfaction.

## Mediation Analysis (Indirect Effects)

This is the most important part. We want to see if Job Satisfaction is a "Bridge." We used a test called Bootstrapping to check the indirect paths.

**Table 4. Indirect Effects (Mediation)**

Path	Beta ( $\beta$ )	p-val	Result
EI → JS → JP	0.122	0.005	Significant (H5)
TL → JS → JP	0.142	0.004	Significant (H6)

Source: Data Processed (2025)

This proves that Job Satisfaction is a **Partial Mediator**. It means that Leadership and EI help performance in two ways: Directly (Improving skills and motivation) and Indirectly (By making the employee satisfied first). Without satisfaction, the performance would not be as high.

## The Importance of Emotional Intelligence

This study found that Emotional Intelligence is very important. Sometimes, companies only hire people based on physical strength or experience ("Hard Skills"). But our data shows that "Soft Skills" like EI are just as important. Working in distribution is stressful. There are deadlines every day. If an employee has low EI, they will get stressed and burned out. This leads to low performance and quitting. But employees with high EI can handle the pressure. This matches the study by Wang et al. (2024), who also found that EI is a key resource for workers. For PT. Kapitan, this means they need to look for people who are emotionally mature.

## The Role of the Leader

The result showed that Transformational Leadership has a huge impact on satisfaction (0.483). This is very interesting for a family business context. In Indonesia, employees see their manager as a role model. If the manager is "Transformational" (mentoring, caring), the employees feel safe and happy. This supports the theory of Social Exchange. When the leader gives care, the employee gives loyalty. However, if the leader is "Transactional" (only scolding and giving orders), the employees will be dissatisfied. This matches the finding by Rajâa & Mekkaoui (2025), who said that in social cultures, the relationship with the leader is the main driver of well-being.

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## Satisfaction as the Key to Retention

The mediation result is the answer to the company's problem. The company has high turnover. Why? Because satisfaction is the "bridge" to performance. If the bridge is broken, people leave. The study shows that you cannot just force people to work harder. You have to make them satisfied first. Satisfaction comes from having a good leader and having the emotional skills to cope with the job. If PT. Kapitan wants to stop people from quitting, they have to focus on satisfaction. They cannot just focus on efficiency.

## CONCLUSION

The main goal of this research was to check if our predictions (hypothesis) about the employees at PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri were correct. Based on the data analysis, we can conclude that:

1. Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction. This means employees who can control their emotions are happier with their jobs.
2. Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Job Performance. Employees with high emotional skills do their work better.
3. Transformational Leadership has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction. This proves that a supportive boss makes employees feel satisfied.
4. Transformational Leadership has a positive effect on Job Performance. Good leadership leads to better work results.
5. Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Performance. This means emotional skills help performance partly because they make the employee satisfied first.
6. Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Leadership and Performance. This means a good leader improves performance mainly by making the employees satisfied.

Some practical advice for the owners and managers of PT. Kapitan Prima Mandiri:

1. Change the Hiring Process: When interviewing new warehouse staff, do not just ask about their experience. Ask questions to test their Emotional Intelligence. For example, ask: "What do you do when you are very angry at a coworker?" If they have a good answer, they have high EI. Hiring high-EI people will reduce turnover.
2. Train the Managers: The managers need to learn about Transformational Leadership. The company can make a workshop. Teach the managers how to listen to employees. Teach them to be mentors, not just bosses. If the managers change their style, the satisfaction score will go up very fast.
3. Create a Supportive Environment: Since Satisfaction is the bridge, the company needs to protect it. Maybe they can have regular meetings where employees can share their complaints without fear. This will help the employees feel valued.

Future research should expand this study to include a larger, more diverse sample across multiple industries to validate the findings and improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies are encouraged to explore how the relationships between EI, TL, job satisfaction, and job performance evolve following specific organizational changes or interventions. Furthermore, researchers could investigate potential moderating variables, such as organizational culture or work-life balance, that may influence these core relationships.

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