

The Effect of Employee Relations and Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues and Managers

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ABSTRACT

Workplace diversity requires effective management to build positive Employee Relations, which impacts Job Satisfaction and Mental Health of employees. This study explores the influence of Human Resources on Employee Relations, Job Satisfaction, Interpersonal Trust in Managers, and Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues, with mediation by Perceived Value and Employee Satisfaction. The purposive sampling method was used by distributing online questionnaires to employees of fintech companies in Jakarta. Data analysis was performed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that Employee Relations significantly positively affect Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues and Job Satisfaction. Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues mediates the positive impact of Employee Relations on Job Satisfaction, while Interpersonal Trust in Managers does not show a positive effect on Job Satisfaction. This study contributes to the understanding of employee dynamics in the fintech industry. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of variables such as working conditions, salary, and organizational culture, and to use more anonymous data collection methods to reduce bias. Additionally, disseminating the research beyond Jakarta will provide a broader and more representative perspective from various locations.

Keywords: Employee Relations, Job Satisfaction, Interpersonal Trust in Managers, Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues, Transformational Leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the business world has increased competition among companies to retain top-quality employees. Positive employee relations and job satisfaction are crucial in retaining high-performing talents and fostering innovation within organizations (Akbar, 2018; Al-Dweik, 2019). Conversely, poor relationships among employees or with managers, along with low job satisfaction, can reduce organizational efficiency and hinder development (Neuman, 2003). Companies that fail to promote positive workplace interactions may struggle to build a culture of innovation essential for navigating competitive markets (Ejupi, 2020). Job satisfaction is one of the most critical aspects of workplace success, closely linked to the quality of relationships between employees and the role of managers in supporting employee mental well-being (KESER, 2005). Trust and mutual respect in the workplace have been shown to encourage employees to take risks, share creative ideas, and engage in collaborative processes (Amabile, 2020). Additionally, trust among team members facilitates open communication, effective coordination, and a willingness to help achieve common goals (Nijhof, 2022). Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding how specific variables such as interpersonal trust in managers and colleagues and transformational leadership influence employee relations and job satisfaction. Previous studies often focus on general organizational trust or leadership styles but rarely examine their combined effects within dynamic industries like fintech, characterized by high innovation demands and diverse workforces (Braun, 2018).

This study addresses these gaps by exploring the influence of human resource factors on employee relations, job satisfaction, and interpersonal trust, with perceived value acting as a mediating variable. It further examines the moderating role of transformational leadership in these relationships. The research advances prior work by incorporating a broader scope of variables and focusing on the fintech industry in Jakarta, providing insights into the unique dynamics of employee relations within fast-paced, technology-driven organizations. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of human resource management and offer practical implications for fostering workplace trust, satisfaction, and innovation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study involves four variables: Employee Relations, Job Satisfaction, Interpersonal Trust in Managers, Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues, and Transformational Leadership. The measurement of Employee Relations was adopted from Jehn (1995), consisting of six items. The Job Satisfaction variable was measured using three items, while the Transformational Leadership variable was adapted from Podsakoff (1990a) with five items. The measurement of Interpersonal Trust in Managers was adopted from Mael (1992), consisting of four items, and Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues was adapted from Tierney (1999), also with four items.

The population of this study consisted of employees of fintech companies in Jakarta. Data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The survey began with a pretest conducted on 30 respondents. The sample size was determined based

on Hair et al. (2018), which recommends a minimum sample size of five times the number of items in the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire contained 20 items, the study included a sample of 100 respondents. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. Data analysis and processing were conducted using SPSS and SmartPLS 4.0 software. Validity and reliability were tested using factor analysis in SPSS by examining the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values and the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA). If the KMO and MSA values exceeded 0.5, the factor analysis was deemed suitable. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with values closer to 1 indicating higher reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, an inner model test was performed to examine the indicators using path coefficients and bootstrapping.

Hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. SmartPLS 4.0 was chosen for its ability to deliver straightforward and robust results, particularly suited for complex or large research models without requiring normality testing (Bamgbade, Kamaruddeen, and Mohd Nawi, 2015; Henseler et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 100 respondents, with 35% being male and 65% female. Most respondents were aged 18–26 years (80%) and were unmarried (87%). The majority worked as staff (81%), had 3–5 years of work experience (45%), and held either a high school diploma (46%) or a bachelor's degree (43%) as their highest education level. Instrument testing showed that all indicators met the validity criteria, with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values exceeding 0.70. The reliability of the instruments was also confirmed, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 for all constructs. The results indicate that Employee Relations significantly and positively influence Job Satisfaction. Additionally, Employee Relations positively impact Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues. However, Interpersonal Trust in Managers was not found to significantly influence Job Satisfaction. The study found that "Interpersonal Trust in Managers is not significant to Job Satisfaction." This result can be understood through theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, trust in managers may not directly impact job satisfaction as employees often derive more satisfaction from peer relationships, autonomy, or recognition (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001). In team-based structures, trust in colleagues tends to influence daily operations and teamwork more significantly (Nijhof, 2022). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) also suggests intrinsic motivators, such as achievement and recognition, play a greater role in job satisfaction than extrinsic factors like managerial trust.

Practically, this emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to job satisfaction. Organizations should focus on fostering peer support and collaborative environments, as these have a more immediate impact. In fast-paced industries like fintech, employees value autonomy and innovation opportunities more than managerial trust. Managers should therefore create empowering environments that encourage creativity and independent projects. Studies support this view. Wang (2021) found trust in colleagues had a stronger correlation with job satisfaction than trust in supervisors, particularly in

dynamic settings. Similarly, Huang (2018) stressed aligning managerial actions with employees' growth aspirations. Future research should explore cultural factors and individual differences that mediate the relationship between managerial trust and job satisfaction. Examining variables like organizational culture, leadership styles, and personality traits could provide a deeper understanding and inform strategies for enhancing job satisfaction. Similarly, Transformational Leadership did not moderate the relationship between Employee Relations and Job Satisfaction.

The findings reveal that Employee Relations play a crucial role in enhancing Job Satisfaction. Positive workplace relationships foster effective communication and harmonious teamwork, creating a supportive environment for employees. These results align with prior studies, such as Huang (2018), which demonstrated the significance of Employee Relations in improving mental well-being and productivity. Employee Relations also positively influence Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues. When employees feel valued and supported by their peers, trust among colleagues strengthens, leading to improved workplace dynamics. This supports Tan's (2000) argument that trust among peers is essential for building collaborative and productive work environments.

Conversely, Interpersonal Trust in Managers was not found to significantly influence Job Satisfaction in this study. This outcome may stem from differing expectations between managers and employees, where peer support and teamwork might be more critical factors for job satisfaction. The study further showed that Transformational Leadership did not moderate the relationship between Employee Relations and Job Satisfaction. This suggests that other variables, such as organizational culture, working conditions, or individual differences among employees, may play a more significant role than leadership style in this context. These findings underscore the importance of fostering strong interpersonal relationships and trust among colleagues to enhance job satisfaction. While managerial trust and leadership styles remain relevant, their impact may vary depending on organizational or cultural factors. Future research should explore additional variables and their interplay to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

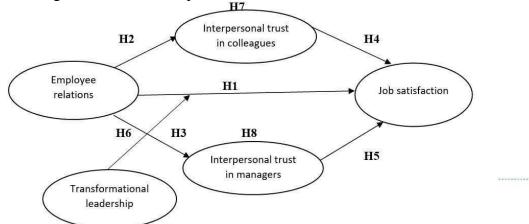


Figure 1. Research Model

Variables	Hipotesis	T - Value	Significance
H1	Employee Relations has a positive and significant influenceon Job Satisfaction	3.694	Significant
H2	<i>Employee Relations</i> has a positive and significant influenceon <i>Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues</i>	12.518	Significant
НЗ	Interpersonal Trust in Manager has a positive and significant influence on Employee Relations	11.700	Significant
H4	Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues has a positive and significant influence on Job Satisfaction	3.648	Significant
Н5	Interpersonal Trust in Manager has a positive influence on Job Satisfaction	1.781	Not Significant
Нб	Transformational Leadership mediates Employee Relations to have a positive influence on Job Satisfaction	0.274	Not Significant
H7	Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues has a positive and significant influence on Job Satisfaction with mediation from Employee Relations	3.719	Significant
H8	Employee Relations has a positive influence on Job Satisfaction through Interpersonal Trust in Managers	1.729	Not Significant

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Result

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, Employee Relations, Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues, Interpersonal Trust in Managers, and Transformational Leadership play significant roles in influencing Job Satisfaction. Strengthening Employee Relations can enhance Interpersonal Trust in Colleagues and Job Satisfaction, while Interpersonal Trust in Managers reinforces trust among colleagues. However, Transformational Leadership does not have a direct impact on Job Satisfaction when mediated by Employee Relations. This study is limited by its focus on specific variables, such as Employee Relations, Interpersonal Trust, and Job Satisfaction, excluding other potential factors like working conditions, salary, and organizational culture.

Additionally, there is a possibility that respondents were hesitant to provide negative feedback about their managers or organizations, which may have influenced data accuracy. For future research, it is recommended to explore additional leadership styles, such as Transactional Leadership, which might also affect Employee Relations and Job Satisfaction. Researchers are encouraged to study more complex interactions between variables, including moderating and mediating effects, to gain deeper insights into these relationships. Expanding the geographic scope to include respondents outside Jakarta and ensuring anonymity in surveys can help improve the validity and generalizability of future studies.

From a managerial perspective, strengthening Employee Relations and fostering trust among colleagues are effective strategies for enhancing Job Satisfaction. Organizations should focus on creating an inclusive and diverse workplace by hiring employees from varied backgrounds and implementing fair reward systems. Providing training in conflict management, teamwork, and collaboration is also essential to develop a more engaged workforce. Additionally, offering employees opportunities to share their ideas openly can improve their motivation and trust in the organization.For fintech companies, promoting diversity and inclusion during recruitment and maintaining a supportive work environment can drive innovation, creativity, and employee loyalty. By managing Employee Relations and workplace trust effectively, organizations can create a healthier, more inclusive, and productive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and long-term success.

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