

The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance at the UPTD Animal Clinic Department of Plantation and Livestock Government of North Sumatra Province

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of job satisfaction in mediating the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) of the North Sumatra Province Plantation and Livestock Service. This study uses a quantitative approach with a population of 75 employees, all of whom were included in the sample. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The results showed that transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance (t-statistic = 3.126; p = 0.002) and job satisfaction (t-statistic = 4.797; p = 0.000). In addition, job satisfaction also had a positive and significant effect on employee performance (t-statistic = 10.471; p = 0.000) and acted as a mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance (t-statistic = 4.323; p = 0.000). The R-square value indicates that transformational leadership and job satisfaction together explain 58.4% of the variation in employee performance. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Animal Clinic UPTD improve employee performance by adjusting work targets according to workload and competence, increasing job satisfaction by assigning tasks that align with employee interests, and strengthening transformational leadership through encouragement of innovation and continuous learning. This study provides empirical contributions to the development of human resource management and the improvement of public service quality in the animal health sector.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance

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Introduction

Employee performance is one of the crucial factors that determine the success of government organizations in providing quality public services. The North Sumatra Provincial Plantation and Livestock Service's Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) plays a strategic role in animal health services, disease control, laboratory testing, and providing medical services and consultations to the community. Improving employee performance in this agency is very important given the increasing complexity of tasks, the demand for accuracy in diagnosis, and the speed and precision in handling animal health cases.

One factor that has been proven to influence employee performance is transformational leadership. This leadership is characterized by the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, provide clear direction, foster innovation, and pay attention to the individual needs of employees (Bass & Riggio, 2021). Leaders who apply a transformational style are able to increase employee dedication, commitment, and work enthusiasm, thereby having a positive impact on organizational performance. In the context of animal health services, transformational leadership is important for creating a responsive, innovative, and professional work culture.

In addition to leadership, job satisfaction is also an important factor that affects employee performance. Job satisfaction reflects the positive emotional state of employees when they feel that their expectations and reality in the work environment are in line (Atmaja, 2022). Satisfied employees tend to be more motivated, committed, and able to work with high productivity. Various studies show that job satisfaction is not only influenced by leadership but can also act as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership and employee performance (Nurrohmat & Lestari, 2021; Simanjuntak & Indrawan, 2024).

In the field, the UPTD Animal Clinic faces a number of challenges, such as variations in technical competence among employees, high workloads, and uneven levels of job satisfaction. This raises the need to understand in depth how transformational leadership can affect employee performance, both directly and through job satisfaction as a mediator. This research is important to provide an empirical description of strategies for improving employee performance and the effectiveness of public services in the animal health sector in North Sumatra Province.

Based on the above description, this study focuses on analyzing the role of job satisfaction in mediating the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the North Sumatra Province Plantation and Livestock Service, so as to provide appropriate recommendations for improving the quality of human resource management and public services at this agency.

Literature Review Employee Performance Definition of Employee Performance

According to Rahman & Lataruva (2023), employee performance is defined as the extent to which an employee is able to achieve the expected results or meet the standards set in the context of their work. Measurements include productivity, work quality, compliance with policies, creativity, initiative, attendance, and contribution to the achievement of organizational goals.

Factors Affecting Employee Performance

Factors Affecting Performance According to Rahman & Lataruva (2023):

1) Leadership Style

The leadership style of superiors, especially those that are participatory, transformational, or supportive, greatly influences the enthusiasm, direction, and performance achievements of subordinates.

2) Work Motivation

The level of internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) drive that motivates an individual to achieve work goals. High motivation can drive optimal performance.

3) Competence (Abilities & Skills)

The knowledge, expertise, and work experience possessed by employees greatly determine the quality and productivity of their work.

4) Work Environment

Physical and non-physical: workplace comfort, employee relations, organizational culture, and overall work climate.

5) Work Discipline

The level of employee compliance with rules, procedures, and work ethics. High discipline contributes directly to good performance.

6) Reward and Incentive System

Forms of compensation, both financial and non-financial (recognition, promotion, bonuses), that encourage employees to work to their full potential.

7) Job Satisfaction

The level of satisfaction with work, superiors, facilities, and opportunities for selfdevelopment also affects the consistency and quality of performance.

Employee Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators according to Rahman & Lataruva (2023):

1) Work Quantity

The amount of output or work completed within a certain period of time in accordance with the set target.

2) Work Quality

The level of precision, accuracy, and correctness of work results compared to applicable standards.

3) Timeliness

The ability to complete work within the specified time limit and work time efficiency.

4) Attendance and Discipline

Level of attendance and discipline in following the work schedule, including compliance with organizational rules.

5) Cooperation with Colleagues

Ability to work in a team, good communication, and active participation in completing joint tasks.

6) Initiative and Responsibility

The tendency to take action or find solutions without waiting for instructions, as well as awareness of job responsibilities.

7) Understanding of Duties and Implementation of Procedures

The extent to which employees understand their duties and perform their work in accordance with applicable procedures and instructions.

Job Satisfaction Definition of Job Satisfaction

According to Atmaja (2022), job satisfaction is a pleasant emotional attitude and love for one's work.

Indicators of Job Satisfaction

According to Atmaja (2022), job satisfaction can be measured through several indicators, including:

1) Satisfaction with the Job Itself

Describes the extent to which employees feel that their work is meaningful, interesting, and in line with their abilities.

2) Satisfaction with Salary/Compensation

This is the level of employee satisfaction with the fairness, adequacy, and accuracy of the compensation received (salary, incentives, allowances).

3) Satisfaction with Promotion Opportunities

Assessing whether employees feel they have opportunities for growth, to obtain higher positions, with a transparent and fair promotion process.

- 4) Satisfaction with Supervision/Superiors
Describes employees' feelings about their superiors' leadership style, support, communication, and fairness in leadership.
- 5) Satisfaction with Coworkers
Measuring the extent to which employees feel comfortable and supported by their coworkers, including aspects such as cooperation, social relationships, harmonious communication, and team solidarity.

Transformational Leadership Definition of Transformational Leadership

Yukl (2020) defines transformational leadership as a process in which leaders change or transform the values, attitudes, and goals of organizational members by providing ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention.

Factors that influence Transformational Leadership

Factors influencing transformational leadership according to Yukl (2020):

- 1) Leader Characteristics
Refers to the personal traits and competencies of leaders that support their ability to inspire and influence.
- 2) Follower Characteristics
The psychological conditions and background of followers also determine the effectiveness of transformational leadership.
- 3) Organizational Context
Organizational structure and work culture will determine the extent to which transformational practices can develop.
- 4) External Environmental Conditions
The environment outside the organization, such as market dynamics or technological changes, drives the need for a transformational leadership style.

Indicators of Transformational Leadership

Indicators of transformational leadership according to Yukl (2020):

- 1) Developing and Communicating a Vision
Transformational leaders create and communicate a clear vision of the organization's future and inspire their followers.
- 2) Encouraging Innovation and Learning
Leaders encourage followers to think creatively, question old habits, and continue learning for continuous improvement.
- 3) Providing Individual Support
Leaders pay attention to the needs, potential, and individual differences of each team member on a personal level.
- 4) Setting an Example in Values and Ethics
Leaders serve as role models in integrity, responsibility, and professional conduct.
- 5) Inspiring Enthusiasm and Motivation
Leaders inspire, give hope, and build confidence in the team to work beyond the usual standards.

Conceptual Framework

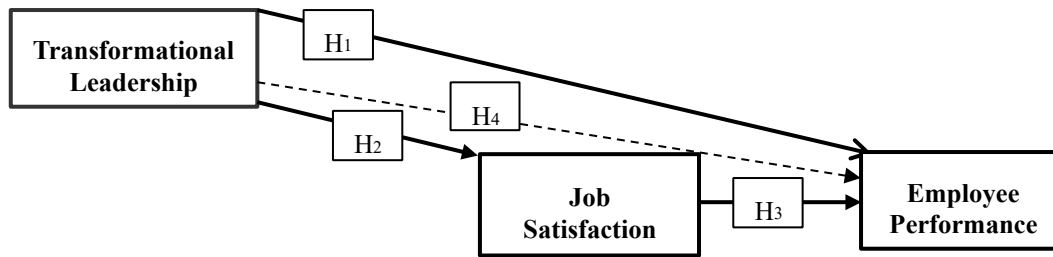


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁ Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
- H₂: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
- H₃: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
- H₄ : Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.

Research Methodology Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. This type of quantitative research is conducted to create a study that aims to adjust a study and to analyze transformational leadership and competence on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government, located at Jalan Jenderal Besar A.H. Nasution No. 24, Medan. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2022), the population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. In this study, the population consists of all employees at the UPTD Animal Clinic of the North Sumatra Provincial Government's Plantation and Livestock Service, totaling 75 people. Because the population size is not too large, the entire population was used as the sample.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results Outer Model Analysis

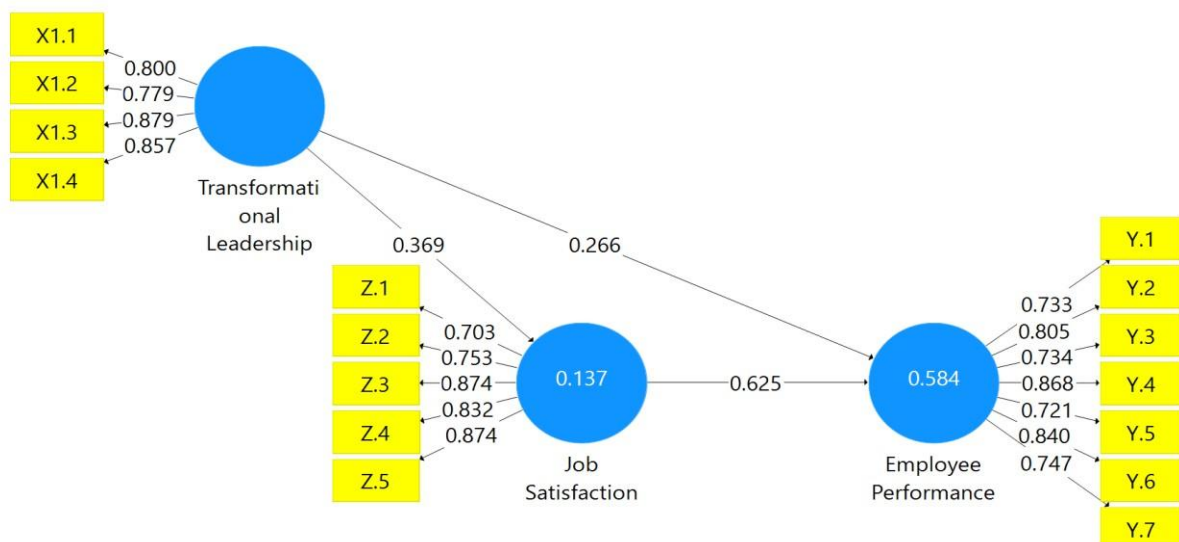
Outer Model Analysis using the PLS Algorithm produced the following results:

Validity Test**Table 1.** Outer Loadings Values

	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Transformational Leadership
X1.1			0.800
X1.2			0.779
X1.3			0.879
X1.4			0.857
Y.1	0.733		
Y.2	0.805		
Y.3	0.734		
Y.4	0.868		
Y.5	0.721		
Y.6	0.840		
Y.7	0.747		
Z.1		0.703	
Z.2		0.753	
Z.3		0.874	
Z.4		0.832	
Z.5		0.874	

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, which show the results of outer model testing through loading factor/outer loadings values, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70 . This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

**Figure 2.** Outer Loading**Reliability Test****Table 2.** Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance	0.892	0.900	0.916	0.609

Job Satisfaction	0.867	0.879	0.904	0.656
	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Transformational Leadership	0.848	0.848	0.898	0.688

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is declared reliable and suitable for use in structural model testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In assessing the model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the Rsquare estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Job Satisfaction	0.137	0.128
Employee Performance	0.584	0.575

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square value for both dependent variables for the job satisfaction variable of 0.137, meaning that transformational leadership accounts for 0.137 or 13.7%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for Employee Performance is 0.584, meaning that the influence of transformational leadership and job satisfaction () is 0.584 or 58.4%, with the remaining 41.6% attributable to other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model) Hypothesis Testing Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct effect between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data analysis results show the direct effect values in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership -> Employee Performance	0.266	3.126	0.002	Accepted
Transformational Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0.369	4.797	0.000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.625	10,471	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

The results in Table 4 show the following direct effect values:

1. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 3.126 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.002 below 0.05, meaning that transformational leadership has a real effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies,

namely that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Fadillah & Mesra, 2023).

2. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 4.797 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that transformational leadership has a real effect on job satisfaction because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Iskandar et al., 2024; Maulana, 2025).
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 10.471 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction has a significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Nurrohmat, & Lestari, 2021; Simanjuntak & Indrawan, 2024).

Indirect Effects Between Variables

The indirect effect between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects value. The data analysis results show the indirect effect value in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.231	4.323	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect influence between variables, namely: transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 4.323 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between transformational leadership and employee performance.

Conclusion

1. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
2. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.
4. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government.

Recommendations

1. Employee performance with the lowest score was "I am able to complete the amount of work in accordance with the set targets." Therefore, the recommendation is that the North Sumatra Provincial Government's Plantation and Livestock Service Animal Clinic UPTD should evaluate and adjust employee work targets based on service load and competency

levels, as well as strengthen leadership guidance and work facility support, so that employees are able to complete their work in accordance with the set targets.

2. Job satisfaction with the lowest score was "I am satisfied with the type of work I am currently doing." The Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government is advised to improve employee job satisfaction by adjusting assignments in line with employee competencies and interests, as well as providing opportunities for self-development so that employees feel more comfortable and satisfied with the type of work they are doing.
3. Transformational leadership with the lowest score being "Leaders encourage employees to innovate and continue learning in their work." The Animal Clinic Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) of the Plantation and Livestock Service of the North Sumatra Provincial Government is advised to strengthen its transformational leadership role by encouraging a culture of innovation and continuous learning through providing support, setting an example, and creating space for employees to develop ideas and improve their work capacity.

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