

Linking transformational leadership with job satisfaction: the mediating roles of trust and team cohesiveness

The roles of trust and team cohesiveness

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Abstract

Purpose – The study aims to investigate the roles of trust and team cohesiveness as mediating variables to transmit the effect of transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employs a quantitative approach with 405 respondents as the samples. The respondents are teachers and staff of schools in East Java, Indonesia. The data are analyzed using partial least square (PLS).

Findings – Trust and team cohesiveness fully mediate the relationship between idealized influences on job satisfaction. Besides, idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration directly affect job satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications – The relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction in educational institutions has been rarely explored. The study contributes to the literature on the role of trust and team cohesiveness in transmitting the effect of transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction of school employees.

Practical implications – To increase employee job satisfaction at schools, principals need to be highly concerned about trust in the leader–follower relationship. Therefore, principals are responsible for responding to the followers' needs and aspirations and caring for followers.

Originality/value – The significance of the result findings lies in the detailed model that transmits the direct and indirect effect of the transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction.

Keywords Job satisfaction, Team cohesiveness, Transformational leadership, Trust

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim community in the world, even though it is not an Islamic country. It currently faces a crucial problem regarding education (Michalos, 2017; Welch, 2007) in terms of leadership, management, demography and finance (Hariri *et al.*, 2014; Hidayat *et al.*, 2020; Welch, 2007). Education for the Muslim community in Indonesia contributes to social change and modernization (Lukens-Bull, 2001). Islamic education leaders have created an educational system that corresponds to modern society's needs and fortifies students from moral decadence due to globalization and modernization (Lukens-Bull, 2001). They play an important role in educational institution development in Indonesia (Bandur *et al.*, 2022; Welch, 2007). However, leadership in Indonesian schools is not well explored (Hariri *et al.*, 2014). The educational institution for the Muslim community is often called *Madrasah*. The number of *Madrasah* in Indonesia reaches up to 53,183, which comprises 25,790 elementary schools (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*), 18,385 junior high schools (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) and 9,008 senior high schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*) (Kemenag, 2020).

Indonesian phenomena, leadership problems, role and the existence of *Madrasah* base the current research to conduct. One of the leadership theories which suits the school context is transformational leadership (Braun *et al.*, 2013; Ninković and Knežević Florić, 2018; Yulianti *et al.*, 2021). In response to the new policies in Indonesia, the practice of transformational



leadership that emphasizes building and sharing a vision plays a prominent role in making changes at schools (Damanik and Aldridge, 2017; Heyward *et al.*, 2011). Transformational leadership in this context is the principal's behavior that involves and encourages employees to be active and participative in evaluating and improving the school culture through shared vision and mission (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1997), because the employees (teachers and staff) are strategic assets and resources.

Some researches show that employees are the most valuable assets and strategic resources, and to attain customer and external stakeholder satisfaction, the employees' job satisfaction must be concerned (Arasanmi and Krishna, 2019; Bennett *et al.*, 1998; Chen *et al.*, 2006; Katou and Budhwar, 2015; Kim, 2018; Nebeker *et al.*, 2001; Pahos and Galanaki, 2019). Therefore, organizations consistently observe their employees' job satisfaction to win the competition and challenges in the global era. The increase in the employees' job satisfaction can improve performance, service quality, organizational commitment, external stakeholder satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). One of the challenges is the company's ability to boost job satisfaction of the employees (Ashraf, 2019; Yildirim *et al.*, 2016), as job satisfaction can increase employees' performance (Conger *et al.*, 2000; Khan *et al.*, 2019; Supriyanto, 2019), organizational performance (Nebeker *et al.*, 2001; Salminen *et al.*, 2017), organizational commitment (Zain and Setiawati, 2019), external stakeholders satisfaction (Brown and Lam, 2008; Spinelli and Canavos, 2000) and OCB (Reiley and Jacobs, 2019). Nevertheless, research on employee job satisfaction in educational institutions has not been explored (Al Kuwaiti *et al.*, 2020; Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet, 2021; Tayfur Ekmekeci *et al.*, 2018).

Employee job satisfaction is a reflection of one's feelings on a job. Further, Luthans (2011) explains that employees' perceptions of how well their jobs contribute to things considered important to them. One of the fundamental factors influencing job satisfaction is leadership. Leadership can increase the employee's job satisfaction in an educational institution (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016; Halim, 2019; Mwesigwa *et al.*, 2020; Torlak and Kuzey, 2019). Even though there have been pros and cons about transformational leadership on job satisfaction (Long *et al.*, 2014; Thamrin, 2012), many pieces of research show that transformational leadership affects job satisfaction (Bartram and Casimir, 2007; Chang and Lee, 2007; Widarmanti *et al.*, 2021; Hughes and Avey, 2009; Hu *et al.*, 2010; Yaghoubipoor *et al.*, 2013; Eliophotou Menon, 2014; Banks *et al.*, 2016; Sim and Lee, 2018; Alamir *et al.*, 2019; Mickson *et al.*, 2020; Han *et al.*, 2020; Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020).

Transformational leadership has several dimensions such as personal recognition, which has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (Hassi, 2019). Conger *et al.* (2000) show that charismatic leadership impacts both job satisfaction and trust. Likewise, Torlak and Kuzey (2019) supported four dimensions of transformational leadership – idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration – that significantly positively affect job satisfaction among educational institutions in Pakistan. The study investigates the influence of transformational leadership, which is close to educational institutions' characteristics and includes the mediating variables of trust and team cohesiveness in *Madrasah*.

Leaders can achieve the expected outcome once trust in their leadership increases (Burke *et al.*, 2007). Robbin (2004) explains that trust in a leader is a positive expectation that he/she will not act fraudulently and opportunistically. In the context of the current study, a principal can increase employee's job satisfaction when trust in him/her increases. Although there have been many contradictions (Munfaqiroh *et al.*, 2021; Ugwu *et al.*, 2016), trust is a significant variable in reaching the job satisfaction of school teachers (Atik and Celik, 2020; Braun *et al.*, 2013; Da'as, 2021). It also functions as an important predictor of job satisfaction (Lambert *et al.*, 2021; Roberts and David, 2020). In this global era, along with the COVID-19 pandemic,

leaders of educational institutions necessitate the trust of their followers to improve the organizational performance and job satisfaction of their employees.

One factor that increases the stakeholders' trust is transformational leadership (Bartram and Casimir, 2007), which continuously improves the organization through trust variables (Khattak *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Cai *et al.* (2018) suggest that transformational leadership can trust and acceptance of organizational change through trust variables. Leadership can improve team performance (Ozaralli, 2003), while transformational leadership can improve team performance and service quality through trust variables (Mahdikhani and Yazdani, 2020). It also has a significant positive effect on team cohesiveness (Sanders and Schyns, 2006). Team cohesiveness is a level to which members of the organization (school) are attached to the group and encouraged to stay as parts of the team (Schermerhorn *et al.*, 2000). Trust and team cohesiveness can improve job satisfaction (Lu, 2015). Transformational leadership can further increase job satisfaction through trust (Asencio, 2016; Braun *et al.*, 2013). Based on the literature review and research contradictions above, the study analyzes the roles of trust and team cohesiveness as mediating variables to transmit the effect of transformational leadership dimensions on employee satisfaction.

2. Theory and hypothesis development

This section describes a theoretical study of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, trust, team cohesiveness and the relationship among variables to build research hypotheses models that research objectives can be achieved. The study investigates the roles of trust and team cohesiveness as mediating variables to transmit the influence of transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction.

2.1 A closer look into transformational leadership research in education

Transformational leadership in education is a research topic that has received significant attention from academics and researchers due to the current global changes and developments. Leaders in educational institutions have an important role in achieving the organizational goals, stakeholders' satisfaction and the institution's innovation (Chin, 2007; Prestiadi *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership at school has a close relationship with job satisfaction (Chin, 2007). Several studies show that good educational leadership is described as transformational leadership (Chin, 2007; Kendrick, 1988; Sagor, 1992). Leithwood and Jantzi (1997) define transformational leadership at schools as principals' behaviors that are encouraging employees to play an active role and evaluate and improve school culture by sharing their vision and mission.

Research in the context of education is relevant for investigating the relationship of transformational leadership, job satisfaction and trust in a leader (Braun *et al.*, 2013). Besides, Braun *et al.* (2013) divide transformational leaders of an educational institution into four roles: (1) displaying value-based behaviors which influence the followers to stick to their career paths, (2) motivating the followers to pursue careers as educators based on long-term goals, (3) intellectually stimulating them to develop innovative learning ideas and (4) promoting their academic success by training and teaching through advice at the early stages of a career. The four characteristics of transformational leaders are the contextualization of the four dimensions of transformational leadership in educational institutions, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

2.2 Transformational leadership and job satisfaction

Transformational leadership develops into a widely used theoretical approach in the leadership literature today (Alrowwad and Abualoush, 2020; Chan, 2020; Keskes *et al.*, 2018)

and has become one of the most studied leadership styles (Aboramadan and Dahleez, 2020; Pawar, 2003). It provides a significant influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors. In addition, it impacts job satisfaction (Jung and Avolio, 2000). Leadership explains how a person can influence others to achieve a particular goal. Transformational leaders can influence the team to improve the expected performance and increase job satisfaction (Bass and Riggio, 2010). They help the team members grow and develop by responding to their necessities, empowering and adjusting to individual, group and organizational goals.

Job satisfaction results from employees' perceptions of how well one's job performance in serving everything is perceived as important through work outcomes (Luthans, 2011). Job satisfaction reflects one's feelings about a job. It can be observed from the positive attitude toward a job and everything encountered around his/her work environment. Every organization must monitor job satisfaction because it will affect absenteeism, workforce turnover, work morale, complaints and other vital organizational problems. There is strong relationship evidence between transformational leadership and job satisfaction (Alamir *et al.*, 2019; Banks *et al.*, 2016; Bartram and Casimir, 2007; Chang and Lee, 2007; Eliophotou Menon, 2014; Griffith, 2004; Han *et al.*, 2020; Hu *et al.*, 2010; Hughes and Avey, 2009; Mickson *et al.*, 2020; Sim and Lee, 2018; Yaghoobipoor *et al.*, 2013).

The transformational leadership dimension in educational institutions can boost job satisfaction. The dimension of transformational leadership comprising idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration significantly affects employee job satisfaction in Pakistan's educational institutions (Al-edenat, 2018; Torlak and Kuzey, 2019). Transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction in Pakistan and America (Barnett, 2018; Shah *et al.*, 2017). Hilton *et al.* (2021) also denoted that the four dimensions of transformational leadership hold a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Some other scholars also prove a positive relationship between transformational leadership dimensions and job satisfaction (Cahyono *et al.*, 2020; Mickson and Anlesinya, 2019; Puni *et al.*, 2018). Based on the literature review, the research hypotheses are as follows:

- H1. Idealized influence is positively related to job satisfaction.
- H2. Inspirational motivation is positively related to job satisfaction.
- H3. Intellectual stimulation is positively related to job satisfaction.
- H4. Individualized consideration is positively related to job satisfaction.

2.3 Transformational leadership, trust and team cohesiveness

There were pieces of evidence supporting that transformational leadership facilitates subordinates' trust (Cai *et al.*, 2018; Jain *et al.*, 2019; Jung and Avolio, 2000; Khattak *et al.*, 2020; Yasir *et al.*, 2016). Trust is also a mediating variable of transformational leadership on job satisfaction (Bartram and Casimir, 2007; Jung and Avolio, 2000). Also, transformational leadership creates effective teamwork and increases job satisfaction (Braun *et al.*, 2013). Trust is one of the mediating variables of transformational leadership on job satisfaction (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990). Transformational leadership is closely related to team cohesiveness (Pillai and Williams, 2004; Sanders and Schyns, 2006). Concerning team cohesiveness, Schermerhorn *et al.* (2000) describe it as a degree to which members of the organization (school) are attached to the group and are encouraged to remain in the group.

Trust in leadership is a positive expectation that a leader will not act opportunistically (Robbin, 2004). In this regard, positive expectations presuppose recognition and familiarity with followers. Trust refers to a historical-dependency process of followers' experience. The subordinates' trust in the leader is a crucial variable that might play a role as mediating

variable of transformational leadership (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990; Yukl, 1981). Leadership is related to team cohesiveness (Wendt *et al.*, 2009). Transformational leadership impacts team cohesiveness and becomes a mediating variable of the influence of transformational leadership on organizational commitment (Cohen *et al.*, 2012). A few pieces of research also show that team cohesiveness influences job satisfaction (Alfes *et al.*, 2016; Kidwell and Valentine, 2009; Kovner *et al.*, 2006; Riasudeen *et al.*, 2019; Tekleab *et al.*, 2009) and some others show that trust affects job satisfaction (Da'as, 2021; Goris *et al.*, 2003; Lee and Teo, 2005; Rich, 1997; Zheng *et al.*, 2019). Trust in leadership is an essential mediating aspect of the transformational leadership theory (Shamir *et al.*, 1993). Researchers have devoted much attention to the role of trust in leader–follower relationships (Braun *et al.*, 2013; Dirks and Skarlicki, 2009), yet further studies on its relationship with other variables, such as job satisfaction, need to conduct (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Lau and Liden, 2008; Yukl, 1981). Therefore, the hypotheses of the current research are as follows:

- H5a.* Trust is a mediating variable of idealized influence on job satisfaction.
- H5b.* Trust is a mediating variable of inspirational motivation toward job satisfaction.
- H5c.* Trust is a mediating variable of intellectual stimulation toward job satisfaction.
- H5d.* Trust is a mediating variable of individualized consideration toward job satisfaction.
- H6a.* Team cohesiveness is a mediating variable of idealized influence on job satisfaction.
- H6b.* Team cohesiveness is a mediating variable of inspirational motivation toward job satisfaction.
- H6c.* Team cohesiveness is a mediating variable of intellectual stimulation toward job satisfaction.
- H6d.* Team cohesiveness is a mediating variable of individualized consideration toward job satisfaction.

2.4 Overall hypothesized model

The current study investigated if trust and team cohesiveness provide a mediating role within the influence of transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction. It employs PLS to test the hypotheses and the mediating role with two variables, trust and team cohesiveness. Therefore, the analysis belongs to multiple mediating effects. This type of analysis suggests several steps (Nitzl *et al.*, 2016; Sholihin and Ratmono, 2013): first, estimating the hypothesized direct effect model, as in Figure 1, which is the influence of the transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction; second, appraising the indirect effect of the full model hypothesis, as in Figure 2, and finally, determining the type of mediation effect – full mediation, partial mediation or no mediation/direct.

The hypothesized direct model is developed from the relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and job satisfaction, so hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 are formulated. The four dimensions of transformational leadership hold a close relationship with job satisfaction (Boamah *et al.*, 2018; Chandrasekara, 2019; Hilton *et al.*, 2021). Several other studies on the relationship between the four transformational leadership dimensions and job satisfaction are presented in building the hypotheses. The second stage of the multiple mediating effect test aims to assess the hypothesized indirect effect model that the mediating role of trust and team cohesiveness variables are found. This step is intended to test the hypotheses H5a, H5b, H5c, H5d, H6a, H6b, H6c and H6d. The hypothesized full model, or commonly popular as indirect effect, in Figure 2 is built based on the literature review,

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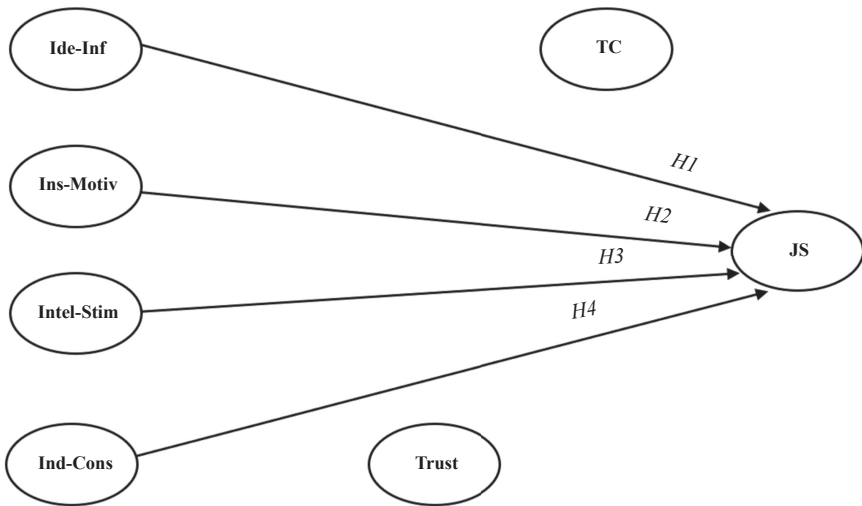


Figure 1.
Hypothesized
direct model

Note(s): Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness; JS is job satisfaction

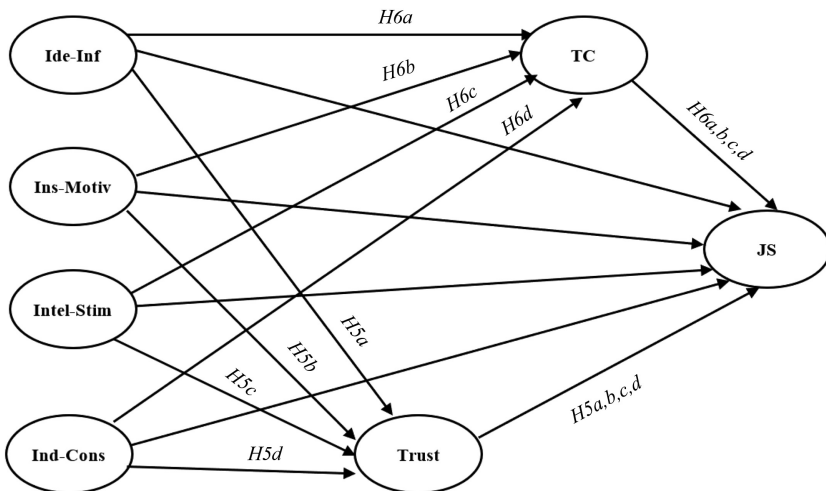


Figure 2.
Hypothesized
full model

Note(s): Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness; JS is job satisfaction

which has also been carried out by [Sholihin et al. \(2011\)](#) and suggested by [Baron and Kenny \(1986\)](#), [Nitzl et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Zhao et al. \(2010\)](#).

The roles of trust and team cohesiveness

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

The data in the study were teachers and staff of schools (*Madrasah*) in East Java, Indonesia. They work in a team because they are united in a school teacher meeting for a particular program. It employed random sampling involving 405 respondents as an individual unit analysis. Data were obtained using questionnaires. To collect the data, we distributed 500 pieces of questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed at schools in East Java Province, Indonesia. In total, 405 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. Based on the respondents' general description, the subjects of the study are provided in the following table. The respondent characteristics include groups of age, gender, level of education, the status of marriage and income level. [Table 1](#) shows most respondents aged 21–30 years and 31–40 years whose numbers are 175 (43.2%) and 170 or 42%, respectively.

Based on the gender group, there were 243 male respondents (60%) and 162 female respondents (40%). The majority of them hold a diploma and bachelor's degree (S1), which are 308 (76%) and 65 (16%), respectively. Based on their marital status, most of them are married, 286 (70.6%). The respondents whose income level is less than 2m rupiah are 254 (62.7%).

3.2 Measures

This study has several construct variables, namely the four dimensions of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness. These variables are validated based on the existing literature and measured from the responses of teachers and school staff in East Java, Indonesia, under a five-point Likert scale. A total of 12 statement items measure the four dimensions of transformational leadership developed from the multi-factor leadership questionnaire by [Avolio et al. \(2003\)](#), which cover idealized influence [three items, composite reliability (CR) = 0.775], inspirational motivation (three items, CR = 0.815), intellectual

| Characteristics | Variable characteristics | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|------|
| <i>Age group</i> | Less than 20 years old | 5 | 1.2 |
| | 21–30 years old | 175 | 43.2 |
| | 31–40 years old | 170 | 42 |
| | More than 41 years old | 55 | 13.6 |
| <i>Gender</i> | Male | 243 | 60 |
| | Female | 162 | 40 |
| <i>Education</i> | Elementary school | 2 | 0.5 |
| | Senior high school | 29 | 7.2 |
| | Diploma | 308 | 76 |
| | Undergraduate degree | 65 | 16 |
| | Master's degree | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Doctoral degree | 2 | 0.5 |
| <i>Marital status</i> | Married | 286 | 70.6 |
| | Single | 109 | 26.9 |
| | Widowed | 10 | 2.5 |
| <i>Income level (monthly)</i> | Below 2 million (IDR) | 254 | 62.7 |
| | 2–4 million (IDR) | 105 | 25.9 |
| | Over 4 million (IDR) | 46 | 12.4 |

Table 1.
Respondent characteristics

stimulation (three items, CR = 0.765) and individualized consideration (three items, CR = 0.814). Job satisfaction is measured with four statement items (CR = 0.82) developed from the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire by Weiss *et al.* (1967). Trust is measured with three statement items (CR = 0.918) modified from the instrument of Rich (1997). While, team cohesiveness is measured with three statement items (0.855) modified from the instrument of Dion (2000). The CR score of every variable construct is higher than 0.70, as shown in Table 2, has met the internal reliability criteria (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

3.3 Data analysis

The study employed a quantitative approach to achieve research objectives. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) through PLS approach. PLS approach can analyze equations having both dependent and multiple independent variables and simultaneous relationships. One important reason for using PLS analysis was that it did not use the normal distribution (Chin, 1998). We used WarpPLS for the study. In addition, PLS is

| Latent variable | Mean | SD | Loading |
|---|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Idealized influence (composite reliability = 0.775; AVE = 0.536)</i> | | | |
| My leader makes me happy when I am around him/her | 3.856 | 0.855 | 0.733 |
| My leader sets a high achievement standard | 4.133 | 0.775 | 0.655 |
| My leader has an idea that stimulates me to rethink the previous ones | 3.980 | 0.741 | 0.802 |
| <i>Inspirational motivation (composite reliability = 0.815; AVE = 0.595)</i> | | | |
| My leader encourages me to see a problem as a learning opportunity | 4.054 | 0.784 | 0.755 |
| My leader acknowledges my achievement | 3.958 | 0.771 | 0.777 |
| My leader is a trusted person | 4.217 | 0.690 | 0.782 |
| <i>Intellectual stimulation (composite reliability = 0.765; AVE = 0.521)</i> | | | |
| My leader appreciates every new idea to solve the problem that an organization faces | 4.150 | 0.740 | 0.667 |
| My leader provides reasons to change my perspectives | 3.854 | 0.799 | 0.753 |
| My leader gives me what I want in return for my support to him | 3.612 | 0.995 | 0.742 |
| <i>Individualized consideration (composite reliability = 0.814; AVE = 0.594)</i> | | | |
| My leader wholeheartedly supports me when he/she feels that my idea is good for the company | 4.098 | 0.693 | 0.747 |
| My leader knows what I want and helps me get it | 3.824 | 0.848 | 0.807 |
| My leader compliments me if I perform well | 4.037 | 0.682 | 0.757 |
| <i>Job satisfaction (composite reliability = 0.829; AVE = 0.548)</i> | | | |
| I feel satisfied with the way my leader leads his/her subordinates | 4.076 | 0.722 | 0.772 |
| My leader is extremely wise in making decisions | 4.091 | 0.786 | 0.797 |
| I see that the task given to me is a mandate that must be completed as well as possible | 4.333 | 0.744 | 0.696 |
| I feel comfortable with the work that I have this time | 4.044 | 0.804 | 0.692 |
| <i>Trust (composite reliability = 0.918; AVE = 0.789)</i> | | | |
| I trust my leader | 4.190 | 0.741 | 0.889 |
| I believe in the leader's kindness | 4.202 | 0.713 | 0.892 |
| My leader is trustworthy | 4.239 | 0.685 | 0.875 |
| <i>Team cohesiveness (composite reliability = 0.855; AVE = 0.664)</i> | | | |
| I am happy to be a part of my work teams | 4.138 | 0.645 | 0.792 |
| My team and I work together to build solidarity | 4.111 | 0.747 | 0.842 |
| My team and I conduct regular meetings to develop the organization | 4.103 | 0.737 | 0.809 |

Table 2.
Reliability and
convergent validity

a useful tool for testing hypotheses, especially the complex path models in an exploratory method (Chin, 2010); also, it is good for examining the role of mediation (Hair et al., 2021; Nitzl et al., 2016). In addition, this study also adopted Sobel's method as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Kock (2014) in testing the indirect effect to confirm the existence of trust and team cohesiveness roles in the hypothesized model.

This study investigates the role of trust and team cohesiveness as mediating variables in the transmission of transformational leadership influence on job satisfaction. Nitzl et al. (2016) stated that the main characteristic of the indirect or mediating effect involves trust and team cohesiveness, which play an intermediary role in the relationship between the independent variable (transformational leadership) and the dependent one (job satisfaction). The framework of mediation analysis by Baron and Kenny (1986) brought mediation effects into full mediation, partial mediation, only direct effects and no mediation/no effect (Nitzl et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2010). Full mediation effect occurs when the direct effect is not significant, and there is an indirect effect through the mediator. The partial mediation effect occurs when both effects (direct and indirect) are significant (Nitzl et al., 2016). Further, only direct effect refers to the situation where the indirect effect is not significant while the direct effect is significant. No mediation or no effect is a condition in which influence is not found, neither indirect nor direct effect is significant.

4. Results

4.1 Measurement model analysis

Tables 2 and 3 describe the relationship among variables, the reliability of each variable, the mean and the factor loading value of each study indicator. The analysis of the relationship among indicators and constructs is conducted using the analysis of measurement models. The analysis of the measurement model will result in both the reliability and validity values of each construct. The measurement analysis in Tables 2 and 3 shows that all measurements are significant. The CR values are above 0.70, referring to the recommendation of Hair et al. (2017).

Tables 2 and 3 also show the results of the outer model test. The results of the test indicate the extent to which each indicator can describe its latent variables. The convergent and discriminant validities and the CR are used to test the reflective model. Table 2 shows the CR value, which is more than 0.70. Therefore, the latent variables' reliability is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). The average value of the construct variable indicator is between 3 and 4. The values of both convergent and discriminant validity show latent variable construct validity. Meanwhile, average variance extracted (AVE) shows the value of convergent validity. The analysis result shows that the AVE value of each latent variable is

| Latent variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 Ide-Inf | (0.732) | | | | | | |
| 2 Ins-Motiv | 0.616** | (0.771) | | | | | |
| 3 Intel-Stim | 0.515** | 0.584** | (0.722) | | | | |
| 4 Ind-Cons | 0.492** | 0.555** | 0.628** | (0.771) | | | |
| 5 JS | 0.490** | 0.530** | 0.457** | 0.563** | (0.741) | | |
| 6 Trust | 0.484** | 0.551** | 0.507** | 0.519** | 0.591** | (0.888) | |
| 7 TC | 0.427** | 0.430** | 0.507** | 0.418** | 0.529** | 0.413** | (0.815) |

Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; square roots of average extracted variances (AVE) are provided in a diagonal; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness and JS is job satisfaction

Table 3. Discriminant validity

more than 0.50. The score of AVE above 0.50 shows all latent variables are valid (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Table 3 also demonstrates the relationship among variables of transformational leadership dimensions including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration with job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness variables. Idealized influence has a significant positive relationship on job satisfaction ($r = 0.492$; $p < 0.01$), trust ($r = 0.484$; $p < 0.01$) and team cohesiveness ($r = 0.427$; $p < 0.01$). It indicates that idealized influence is an important variable in increasing job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness. Furthermore, inspirational motivation has a significant positive relationship on job satisfaction ($r = 0.530$; $p < 0.01$), trust ($r = 0.551$; $p < 0.01$) and team cohesiveness ($r = 0.430$; $p < 0.01$). It indicates that inspirational motivation is an important variable in increasing job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness. Similarly, intellectual stimulation has a significant positive relationship on job satisfaction ($r = 0.457$; $p < 0.01$), trust ($r = 0.507$; $p < 0.01$) and team cohesiveness ($r = 0.507$; $p < 0.01$). It indicates that intellectual stimulation is an important variable in increasing job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness. The dimension of individualized consideration also has a significant positive relationship on job satisfaction ($r = 0.563$; $p < 0.01$), trust ($r = 0.519$; $p < 0.01$) and team cohesiveness ($r = 0.418$; $p < 0.01$). It indicates that intellectual stimulation also becomes an important variable in increasing job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness.

4.2 Structural model analysis

The structural analysis model is used to test research hypotheses, mainly to show whether idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration impact job satisfaction, trust and team cohesiveness. Besides, this analysis also indicates the role of mediating variables of trust and team cohesiveness. Table 4 shows the model fit equation in the study. The fit model indicators include average path coefficient (APC), average R square (ARS) and average variance inflation factor (AVIF). They are useful for determining the model fit in the PLS analysis (Kock, 2020).

The analysis results in Table 4 shows that all three indicators met the criteria of a fit model; APC and ARS values meet the fit model criteria and the probability values of the two fit model indicators are significant (Kock, 2011; Sholihin and Ratmono, 2013). Besides, the value of AVIF also meets the requirement because it is less than 5. The value of R^2 is an inner test model. The result indicates that the model is at a moderate level since the value of R^2 ranges between 0.337–0.492. The analysis concludes that the model meets the specified criteria.

4.3 Hypothesis testing

The research hypothesis is solved with a structural equation model through PLS approach. PLS approach can analyze equations with dependent and multiple independent variables and simultaneous relationships. One important reason for using PLS analysis is that it does not use the normal distribution (Chin, 1998). The path coefficient estimates are perceived to determine the effect of each relation (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

| Panel model | JS | R^2 | | APC | ARS | AVIF |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | TC | Trust | | | |
| Direct effect model | 0.420 | – | – | 0.196** | 0.420** | 1,868 |
| Full model | 0.527 | 0.337 | 0.399 | 0.181** | 0.421** | 1.975 |

Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; AVIF good if < 5 ; ideally ≤ 3.3 ; JS is job satisfaction and TC is team cohesiveness

Table 4.
Result of fit indices

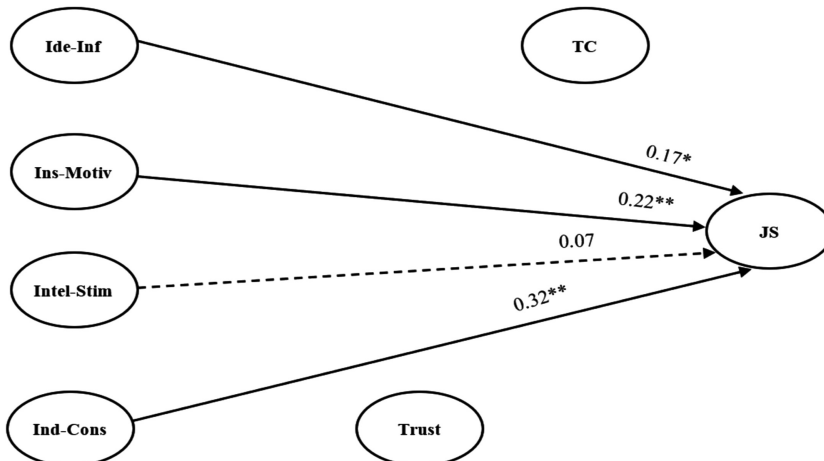
Table 5 at a direct effect (Model I) and Figure 3 show that idealized influence has a positive effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.17; $p < 0.05$), inspirational motivation has a positive effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.22; $p < 0.01$) and individualized consideration has a positive effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.32; $p < 0.01$). Thus, hypotheses H1, H2 and H4 are supported. Then, intellectual stimulation has no effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.07; $p = 0.173$), so hypothesis H3 is rejected.

Table 6 presents the result of hypothesis test on the mediating role of trust and team cohesiveness variables. Trust poses a mediating role within all transmission paths of the transformational leadership effect on job satisfaction, yet its characteristic is typical. Meanwhile, team cohesiveness holds a mediating role only on idealized influence and intellectual stimulation. Table 7 presents the path coefficients of all models (direct effect model and full model), and it illustrates about the role characteristics of the mediating variable. In the full model equation (see Table 7) and Figure 4, the idealized influence has no effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.08; $p = 0.12$). Model II and Figure 4 also show that the idealized influence has a positive effect on trust (coefficient: 0.13; $p = 0.03$), and the variable of trust can boost job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28; $p < 0.01$). The result of the mediating role test in Table 6 shows that trust performs a mediating role in the current transmission path

| | Path | Coefficients | SE | p -value | Remarks |
|----|-----------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| H1 | Ide-Inf → JS | 0.17* | 0.073 | 0.011 | Supported |
| H2 | Ins-Motiv → JS | 0.22** | 0.073 | 0.001 | Supported |
| H3 | Intel-Stim → JS | 0.07 | 0.076 | 0.173 | Rejected |
| H4 | Ind-Cons → JS | 0.32** | 0.061 | <0.001 | Supported |

Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration and JS is job satisfaction

Table 5.
PLS: Direct effect (model I)



Note(s): * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness; JS is job satisfaction

—————> Significant
 - - - - -> Insignificant

Figure 3.
PLS result: direct model

| | Mediation | Path | Sobel's test | <i>p</i> -value | Remarks |
|-----|-----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|
| H5a | Trust | Ide-Inf → JS | 2.49* | 0.013 | Supported |
| H5b | Trust | Ins-Motiv → JS | 3.88** | <0.001 | Supported |
| H5c | Trust | Intel-Stim → JS | 2.92** | 0.003 | Supported |
| H5d | Trust | Ind-Cons → JS | 3.47** | <0.001 | Supported |
| H6a | TC | Ide-Inf → JS | 2.85** | 0.004 | Supported |
| H6b | TC | Ins-Motiv → JS | 1.26 | 0.202 | Rejected |
| H6c | TC | Intel-Stim → JS | 4.77** | <0.001 | Supported |
| H6d | TC | Ind-Cons → JS | 1.43 | 0.154 | Rejected |

Table 6. Mediation role of trust and team cohesiveness

Note(s): ***p* < 0.01; **p* < 0.05; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness and JS is job satisfaction

| Latent variable | Path coefficients and mediations | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | Direct effect (Model I) | Full model (Model II) | Decision of mediations |
| Ide-Inf → JS | 0.17* | 0.08 | – |
| Ins-Motiv → JS | 0.22** | 0.12* | – |
| Intel-Stim → JS | 0.07 | –0.09* | – |
| Ind-Cons → JS | 0.32** | 0.26** | – |
| Ide-Inf → TC | – | 0.16** | – |
| Ins-Motiv → TC | – | 0.06 | – |
| Intel-Stim → TC | – | 0.38** | – |
| Ind-Cons → TC | – | 0.07 | – |
| Ide-Inf → Trust | – | 0.13* | – |
| Ins-Motiv → Trust | – | 0.25** | – |
| Intel-Stim → Trust | – | 0.17* | – |
| Ind-Cons → Trust | – | 0.21** | – |
| Trust → JS | – | 0.28** | – |
| TC → JS | – | 0.28** | – |
| Ide-Inf → Trust → JS | – | – | Full mediation |
| Ins-Motiv → Trust → JS | – | – | Partial mediation |
| Intel-Stim → Trust → JS | – | – | Partial mediation |
| Ind-Cons → Trust → JS | – | – | Partial mediation |
| Ide-Inf → TC → JS | – | – | Full mediation |
| Ins-Motiv → TC → JS | – | – | No mediation/direct |
| Intel-Stim → TC → JS | – | – | Partial mediation |
| Ind-Cons → TC → JS | – | – | No mediation/direct |

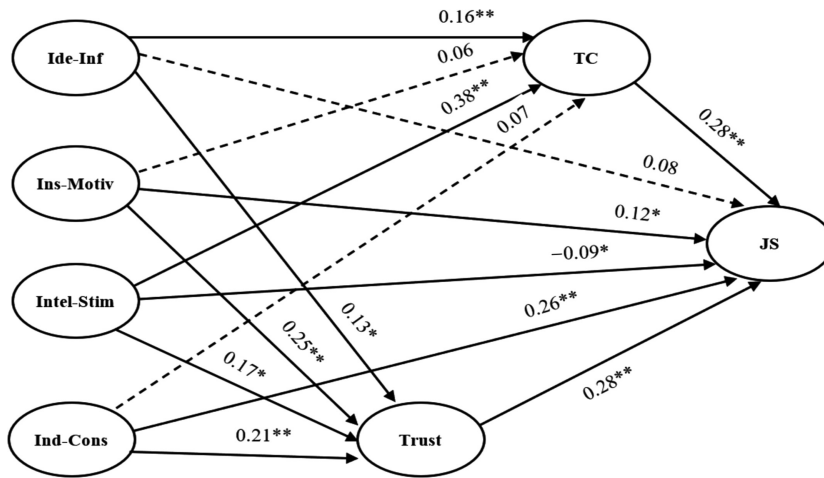
Table 7. PLS result and path coefficients

Note(s): ***p* < 0.01; **p* < 0.05; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness and JS is job satisfaction

(Sobel's test: 2.49; *p* = 0.013). Therefore, trust plays a fully mediating role in the effect of idealized influence on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H5a is supported.

Inspirational motivation positively influences job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.12; *p* = 0.04) in Table 7, the full model (Model II). The full model at Figure 4 also shows that inspirational motivation impacts trust (coefficient: 0.25; *p* < 0.01). Likewise, trust can boost job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28; *p* < 0.01). The result of the analysis concludes that trust is a partial mediation of the influence of the inspirational motivation on job satisfaction because the total values of the effect of inspirational motivation variables on job satisfaction through a trust ($0.28 \times 0.25 = 0.07$) is smaller than the direct effect (0.12). Therefore, hypothesis H5b is supported.

The roles of trust and team cohesiveness



Note (s): ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; Ide-Inf is idealized influence; Ins-Motiv is inspirational motivation; Intel-Stim is intellectual stimulation; Ind-Cons is individualized consideration; TC is team cohesiveness; JS is job satisfaction

—————> Significant
 - - - - -> Insignificant

Figure 4. PLS result: full model

Intellectual stimulation influences job satisfaction (coefficient: -0.09 ; $p = 0.028$) in the full model (Model II). Model II also shows that intellectual stimulation impacts trust (coefficient: 0.17 ; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the trust can also raise job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28 ; $p < 0.001$). The analysis result concludes that trust plays a partial mediating role in the influence of intellectual stimulation on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H5c is supported.

Individualized consideration impacts job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.26 ; $p < 0.01$) in the full model. Similarly, trust can boost job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28 ; $p < 0.01$). The analysis result concludes that trust plays a partial mediating role for the influence of individualized consideration on job satisfaction because the total values of the variable effects of individualized consideration on job satisfaction through a trust ($0.28 \times 0.21 = 0.06$) are smaller than its direct effect (0.26). Thus, hypothesis H5d is supported.

The results in Table 7 show that idealized influence does not affect job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.08 ; $p = 0.12$) on the full model. On the other hand, the idealized influence variable impacts team cohesiveness (coefficient: 0.16 ; $p < 0.001$). Next, team cohesiveness has a positive effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28 ; $p < 0.001$). The analysis result of the mediating role in Table 6 shows that team cohesiveness is a mediating variable in this transmission path (Sobel's test: 2.85 ; $p = 0.004$). The results show that team cohesiveness plays a fully mediating role in influencing the idealized influence on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H6a is supported.

Inspirational motivation influences job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.12 ; $p = 0.009$) in Table 7, Model II. On the other hand, inspirational motivation does not impact team cohesiveness (coefficient: 0.06 ; $p = 0.098$). Sobel's probability test shows that the value is higher than 5% in this path (Sobel's test: 1.26 ; $p = 0.202$). The result shows that team cohesiveness does not play a mediating role in influencing inspirational motivation on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H6b is rejected.

The full model in Table 7 shows that intellectual stimulation impacts job satisfaction (coefficient: -0.09 ; $p = 0.028$). The intellectual stimulation also influences team cohesiveness (coefficient: 0.38 ; $p < 0.001$). Moreover, team cohesiveness has a positive effect on job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.28 ; $p < 0.001$). The analysis concludes that team cohesiveness plays a partial mediating role in the influence of intellectual stimulation on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H6c is supported.

The full model in Table 7 also shows that individualized consideration impacts job satisfaction (coefficient: 0.26 ; $p < 0.001$), but it has no effect on team cohesiveness (coefficient: 0.07 ; $p = 0.072$). In Table 6, the value of Sobel's probability test in this path is over 5% (Sobel's test: 1.43 ; $p = 0.154$). The result shows that team cohesiveness does not play a mediating role in transmitting the effect of individualized consideration on job satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H6d is rejected.

5. Discussion and implications

This section will discuss the study of transformational leadership and job satisfaction, with trust and team cohesiveness as the mediating variables.

Research on the factors that determine job satisfaction in educational institutions is fundamental, as there is an unexplored space in the domain (AlKuwaiti *et al.*, 2020; Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet, 2021; Ghasemy *et al.*, 2020; Tayfur Ekmeçci *et al.*, 2018). The current study investigates such mechanisms, the relationship of transformational leadership with job satisfaction as well as trust and team cohesiveness on the transmission mechanism. Previous studies have focused more on theorizing bivariate tests on the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. However, studies that examine the simultaneous multiple mediation mechanisms on transformational leadership and work attitudes will provide excellent insights into this theory (Amankwaa *et al.*, 2019). We believe that this study develops some previous research.

First, the presented research contributes to the literature review on leadership and job satisfaction by showing empirical evidence of a positive relationship among three dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration with job satisfaction at schools or *Madrasah* in Indonesia (see Figure 3). Meanwhile, the dimension of intellectual stimulation does not affect job satisfaction directly at schools or *Madrasah* in Indonesia. These results are different from the research results by Torlak and Kuzey (2019), which show that the four dimensions of transformational leadership positively affect job satisfaction in private educational institutions in Pakistan. This study develops previous research showing the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction (Banks *et al.*, 2016; Sim and Lee, 2018; Widarmanti *et al.*, 2021). Specifically, it shows three dimensions of transformational leadership affecting job satisfaction at *Madrasah* in Indonesia.

Second, we provided empirical evidence that trust plays a full mediation in the transmission mechanism of idealized influence for employees' job satisfaction. Besides, trust also has a partial mediation role in transmitting the influence of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration on job satisfaction (see Table 7). This result develops the researches by Asencio (2016), Bartram and Casimir (2007), Braun *et al.* (2013), Jung and Avolio (2000) and Podsakoff *et al.* (1990) that show trust as the mediation of transformational leadership effect on job satisfaction. This study characterizes the mediating role of trust in such transmission mechanisms. When trust has a full mediating effect, transformational leadership can only increase job satisfaction through trust.

Third, we also presented that team cohesiveness plays as a full mediation of the transmission mechanism effect of idealized influence on job satisfaction. However, team cohesiveness does not mediate the transmission of inspirational motivation and

individualized consideration on job satisfaction. This finding provides more detailed information than that of the research by [Cohen et al. \(2012\)](#) about the different mediating roles of team cohesiveness on the mechanism for the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction (see [Figure 4](#)).

Fourth, the overall findings contribute to the prior studies of mediation theory ([Alamir et al., 2019](#); [Bartram and Casimir, 2007](#); [Chang and Lee, 2007](#); [Han et al., 2020](#); [Mickson et al., 2020](#); [Yang, 2009](#)). The previous studies represent empowerment ([Bartram and Casimir, 2007](#)), learning organization ([Chang and Lee, 2007](#)), maintenance and achievement behaviors ([Yang, 2009](#)), interactional justice ([Alamir et al., 2019](#)), meaningfulness at work ([Han et al., 2020](#)), climate diversity ([Mickson et al., 2020](#)) as mediating mechanism in the transformational leadership and job satisfaction relationship. This study reveals trust and team cohesiveness as mediating variables between the hypothesized transformational leadership dimensions and job satisfaction.

5.1 Implications for practice

The results of this study recommended trust and team cohesiveness as full mediators of the mechanism dimension of the effect of the idealized influence on job satisfaction. Therefore, it must be through trust and team cohesiveness to increase job satisfaction on such a mechanism. For the other dimensions of transformational leadership, trust and team cohesiveness perform different mediating roles in the transmission path. Trust has a partial mediation role in the mechanism path of the influence of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration on job satisfaction. Meanwhile, team cohesiveness does not mediate inspirational motivation and individual consideration in the transmission path. Based on those findings and recommendations, this study promoted the following practical implications.

First, this study emphasizes the role of trust. The principal needs to be concerned more seriously about this variable to create trust in the leader–follower relationship. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness among *Madrasah* principals regarding the great impact of trust in the leader. In particular, leaders are responsible for responding to the needs, aspirations and abilities of their followers ([Braun et al., 2013](#)), meeting their expectations and avoiding fraudulent action ([Robbin, 2004](#)), providing support and care ([Burke et al., 2007](#)).

Second, team cohesiveness must be included as a mediator in increasing job satisfaction in *Madrasah* on the transmission of idealized influence. Furthermore, the principal must ensure that his/her followers feel attached to the group and are encouraged to remain ([Schermerhorn et al., 2000](#)) by showing value-based behavior and stimulating them to develop innovative learning ideas ([Braun et al., 2013](#)).

Third, the intellectual stimulation dimension cannot increase employee's job satisfaction in *Madrasah* on the direct effect. Therefore, the principal must pay more attention, encourage and improve himself/herself to increase creativity and innovation so that he/she can influence the followers ([Torlak and Kuzey, 2019](#)). Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness among school principals to improve their leadership skills and the quality of the leader–follower relationship to increase job satisfaction ([Mwesigwa et al., 2020](#)).

5.2 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The current study has contributed to the theory and practice, yet the limitation remains. Through questionnaires, it employed self-reported data from the educational institutions' employees in East Java. It distributed 500 questionnaires and 405 of them were analyzed. Some of the analyzed questionnaire results might be biased due to different time durations and limited area coverage. However, the results of the PLS analysis indicated

that data bias is not associated with the problems in our study. Therefore, further research is suggested to consider time lags to measure the variables of job satisfaction, leadership, trust and team cohesiveness. Also, this research does not include the variable of control.

Finally, the rationale behind the absence of a mediating role in the relationship of inspirational motivation and individualized consideration needs further exploration. It is necessary to conduct a confirmatory analysis and field observation with job satisfaction. Future research may use other samples and institutions and include some control variables to test the current models and theories.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of the variables trust and team cohesiveness on the transmission mechanism of the influence of the four dimensions of transformational leadership on job satisfaction. It indicated that trust has a full mediation role in transmitting the influence of idealized influence on job satisfaction at *Madrasah* in Indonesia. This result proved that idealized influence could only increase job satisfaction through trust in the leader. Full mediation occurs when the direct effect is not significant, yet an indirect effect was found through the mediator variables (Nitzl *et al.*, 2016; Zhao *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, in inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration dimensions, trust contributes as a partial mediation in the transmission mechanism. It indicated that inspirational motivation and individualized consideration affect job satisfaction directly and indirectly through the variable of trust even though the direct effect is greater than the indirect one.

Team cohesiveness also plays a full mediation role in the transmission mechanism of idealized influence on job satisfaction at *Madrasah* in Indonesia. It indicated that the principal could influence his/her followers to stick to a career path as an educator with the standards already set up. Besides, he/she could stimulate employees to develop creative learning ideas once he/she improves team cohesiveness. The results of the PLS analysis also indicated that team cohesiveness does not have a mediating role in the transmission mechanism of the influence of inspirational motivation and individualized consideration on job satisfaction at *Madrasah* in Indonesia.

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