



THE EFFECT OF WORK STRESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION OF TRANSJATIM CORRIDOR 1 BUS CREW

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Abstract

Bus crew members of TransJatim Corridor 1 face substantial operational demands, including dense trip frequency, short headways, and intensive passenger interaction, which may affect their job satisfaction. This study aims to examine the influence of work stress and emotional intelligence on the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew. A quantitative survey approach was applied to 92 operational crew members selected through saturated sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0. The results show that work stress has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction, while emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, with both variables jointly explaining a moderate proportion of the variance in job satisfaction. Interpersonal demands arising from uncooperative passenger interactions emerged as the most salient source of pressure, while self-awareness was identified as the most decisive emotional capacity underlying job satisfaction. These findings indicate that strengthening crew emotional-management capacity should be prioritized alongside managing operational workload, so that TransJatim can sustain both crew psychological wellbeing and continuous service quality.

Keywords: Work Stress, Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Crew Bus



INTRODUCTION

Public transportation plays an important role in supporting community mobility while also driving regional economic growth. The East Java Provincial Government introduced the TransJatim Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service as an integrated intercity mass-transportation solution which, since beginning operations in 2022, has continued to expand in terms of the number of corridors, fleet size, and passenger volume. Corridor 1 was the first corridor to be launched and also carries the highest passenger mobility, making it the backbone of TransJatim's service in the Surabaya–Gresik–Mojokerto area. The success of this service cannot be separated from the role of the bus crew, consisting of drivers and stewards/stewardesses, who deal directly with passengers every day and represent the main face of service quality.

The quality of service provided by the crew cannot be separated from how they experience their working conditions. Job satisfaction is understood as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. Satisfied crew tend to be more committed and provide better service, while dissatisfied crew are prone to apathy, which in turn lowers performance quality. A pre-survey of 20 TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew members indicated problems with job satisfaction: only 40 percent of crew felt satisfied with their job duties and responsibilities, 55 percent felt they had career development opportunities, and only 40 percent stated that supervisors provided solutions and that they could rely on coworkers in difficult situations. This indication is reinforced by external data from the 2023–2024 TransJatim Corridor 1 Community Satisfaction Survey (SKM), which fell into the "poor" category, with the elements of service speed and staff behavior actually declining, while complaint handling remained the lowest-scoring element among all those measured.

This job satisfaction problem is thought to stem from the high operational demands faced by the crew. In a single shift, crew complete up to four trips covering a total distance of 284 km, with an average headway of 15 minutes and 16 hours of daily operation, while the number of passengers served has increased by 466.4 percent from 2022 to 2025. These conditions reflect a dynamic state in which individuals are confronted with job-related demands that can affect their psychological and physical condition, known as work stress. Interviews with five crew members further confirmed that relationships with coworkers and the quality of supervision are among the sources of work discomfort.

Beyond operational demands, a pre-survey on the emotional intelligence of 20 crew members showed that on average only 46 percent responded positively



to five emotional intelligence statements, with the lowest proportions found in the dimensions of self-awareness and self-regulation. Emotional intelligence is understood as the ability to recognize one's own feelings and the feelings of others, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions well in relationships with others. The low scores on these dimensions indicate that crew members are not yet fully able to detect or control their emotions when facing work pressure.

A review of previous research reveals a research gap that needs to be addressed. Regarding the effect of work stress on job satisfaction, findings have not been consistent, some studies find a significant negative effect, while others find a positive or non-significant effect. In contrast, research on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction relatively consistently shows a positive relationship, although most of it has been conducted in the education, health, or general workplace sectors, while studies on public-transportation crew remain very limited. Research examining work stress and emotional intelligence simultaneously in relation to job satisfaction is also limited and generally conducted in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, general work environments, or the education sector, so the findings cannot necessarily be generalized to the context of public-transportation bus crew in Indonesia.

Based on the description above, this study was conducted to fill this research gap by simultaneously examining the effect of work stress and emotional intelligence on job satisfaction among TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew. This study aims to determine and analyze the effect of work stress on the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew, as well as to determine and analyze the effect of emotional intelligence on the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew. The results of this study are expected to serve as a consideration for TransJatim management in efforts to sustainably improve crew welfare and service quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Stress

Robbins and Judge (2019) define work stress as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with opportunities, constraints, or demands related to their job that are personally significant, accompanied by uncertainty about their ability to meet them. In line with this, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe stress as a particular relationship between an individual and their environment that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the individual's resources. Person-Environment Fit Theory by French et al. (1982) adds that work stress arises from a mismatch between individual characteristics and the work environment, while Ivancevich (2006) views stress as an adaptive response



moderated by individual differences to the demands arising from a work situation or event.

This study measures work stress through three indicators developed by Robbins and Judge (2019): (1) task demands, pressure stemming from workload, job complexity, and time constraints in completing tasks; (2) role demands, pressure arising from role ambiguity or role conflict within the organization; and (3) interpersonal demands, pressure stemming from relationships with coworkers and supervisors.

Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (2015) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions well both in oneself and in relationships with others. Salovey and Mayer, as cited in Goleman (2015), add that individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to monitor and regulate their own and others' feelings, and then use those feelings to guide thought and action effectively even under pressure.

This study measures emotional intelligence through five indicators developed by Goleman (2015): (1) self-awareness, the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions; (2) self-regulation, the ability to control and manage one's emotions and impulses according to situational demands; (3) motivation, the internal drive to achieve high performance standards and remain optimistic in facing challenges; (4) empathy, the ability to understand others' feelings and perspectives; and (5) social skills, the ability to build and maintain effective communication with others.

Job Satisfaction

Robbins and Judge (2019) define job satisfaction as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. Luthans (2019) describes it as a pleasant or positive emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job or work experience, while Hasibuan (2019) states that job satisfaction is a pleasant emotional attitude of loving one's work, reflected in work morale, discipline, and performance.

This study measures job satisfaction through four of the five indicators developed by Luthans (2019): (1) the work itself, the extent to which the job provides the opportunity to use one's abilities and skills; (2) promotion opportunity, the opportunity for career development and advancement; (3) supervision, the quality of support and guidance from supervisors; and (4) coworkers, the quality of social relationships among fellow crew members. The pay indicator was not used because all crew members are under a uniform salary



structure managed by the East Java Provincial Transportation Agency, so there is insufficient variation for statistical analysis.

Relationships Between Variables and Hypotheses

Robbins and Judge (2019) explain that excessive work stress can lead to decreased job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and an increased intention to leave the organization. This is in line with the demand-control model (Karasek, 1979), which states that high job demands not offset by adequate control produce a state of high strain that negatively affects employee wellbeing and job satisfaction. This is supported by Bayuaji (2021), Hernandez-Rodriguez et al. (2022), Radito and Swasti (2025), and Zhang et al. (2025), who consistently found a significant negative effect of work stress on job satisfaction across various professions with high mobility and service pressure. Based on the above, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Work stress has a negative effect on the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew.

On the other hand, individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage work pressure, build harmonious relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and maintain a positive attitude toward their job despite facing various demands (Goleman, 2015). Amalia et al. (2024), Adha (2021), and Zhang et al. (2025) confirm that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction by strengthening emotional stability, interpersonal relationships, and adaptive capacity in facing work pressure. Based on the above, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population consists of all operational crew members (drivers and stewards/stewardesses) actively serving on the TransJatim Corridor 1 service under the management of the East Java Provincial Transportation Agency, totaling 92 people. Referring to Arikunto (2012), who states that a population of fewer than 100 people should preferably be used entirely as the sample, this study employed a saturated sampling technique so that all 92 crew members were used as respondents.

Primary data were collected through a closed questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), developed based on the indicators of each variable: three work-stress indicators (Robbins & Judge,



2019), five emotional-intelligence indicators (Goleman, 2015), and four job-satisfaction indicators (Luthans, 2019). Secondary data were obtained from reports of the East Java Provincial Transportation Agency and related scientific literature.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) assisted by SmartPLS 4.0, chosen for its ability to estimate models with relatively small sample sizes, its lack of a data-normality assumption, and its capacity to handle models with reflective latent variables (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM analysis was carried out in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). Outer-model evaluation included convergent validity testing (outer loading ≥ 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted/AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity testing through cross loadings, and reliability testing through Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (both required to be ≥ 0.70) (Hair et al., 2022). Inner-model evaluation included the R-Square value to measure the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable, as well as hypothesis testing through a bootstrapping procedure with significance criteria of T-statistic > 1.96 and P-value < 0.05 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents of this study were 92 TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew members, consisting of drivers and stewards/stewardesses. Respondent characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics.

Characteristic	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	52	56.5%
	Male	40	43.5%
Age	17–22 years	26	28.3%
	23–28 years	51	55.4%
	29–34 years	11	12.0%
	> 35 years	4	4.3%
Education	Senior High/Vocational	81	88.0%



	Diploma	2	2.2%
	Bachelor's Degree	9	9.8%
Marital Status	Married	16	17.4%
	Unmarried	76	82.6%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026.

Based on Table 1, respondents were dominated by women (56.5%), who generally serve as stewardesses, with the largest age group falling in the 23–28 year range (55.4%), so that cumulatively 83.7% of respondents were of young productive age (17–28 years). Respondents' education level was dominated by senior high/vocational school graduates (88.0%), consistent with the formal education requirements for driver and steward/stewardess positions, which are generally at the upper-secondary level. The majority of respondents were also unmarried (82.6%), consistent with the relatively young age profile of respondents.

Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation

Outer model evaluation was carried out through convergent validity testing (outer loading and AVE) and construct reliability testing (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha). The outer loading test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Outer Loading Results.

Indicator	Work Stress	Emotional Intelligence	Job Satisfaction
X1.1	0.724	-	-
X1.2	0.893	-	-
X1.3	0.898	-	-
X2.1	-	0.894	-
X2.2	-	0.829	-
X2.3	-	0.755	-
X2.4	-	0.759	-
X2.5	-	0.813	-
Y1.1	-	-	0.953
Y1.2	-	-	0.961
Y1.3	-	-	0.954



Y1.4 - - 0.821

Source: Processed via SmartPLS, 2026.

All indicators in Table 2 have outer loading values above 0.70, meaning each indicator adequately represents its respective construct and thus meets the convergent validity criterion. This result is reinforced by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and construct reliability values in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability.

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Work Stress (X1)	0.710	0.792	0.879
Emotional Intelligence (X2)	0.659	0.869	0.906
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.854	0.942	0.959

Source: Processed via SmartPLS, 2026.

Table 3 shows that all constructs have AVE values above 0.50, so they are declared convergently valid. The Composite Reliability values for all constructs are also above 0.70 (0.879–0.959), as are the Cronbach's Alpha values, all of which exceed 0.70, so the research instrument is declared reliable and consistent in measuring each construct.

Structural Model (Inner Model) Evaluation

Structural model evaluation was carried out through the R-Square value to measure the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. R-Square Value.

Variable	R-Square
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The R-Square value for the Job Satisfaction variable of 0.448 indicates that work stress and emotional intelligence jointly explain 44.8% of the variance in job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew, which falls into the moderate category, while the remaining 55.2% is explained by other variables outside this research model.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure,

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with the path coefficient results presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing Results.

Relationship Between Variables	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Work Stress → Job Satisfaction	-0.249	3.208	0.001	H1 accepted
Emotional Intelligence → Job Satisfaction	0.541	8.469	0.000	H2 accepted

Source: Processed via SmartPLS 4.0, 2026.

Based on Table 5, the first hypothesis test shows a path coefficient of -0.249 with a T-statistic of 3.208 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), so H1 is accepted: work stress has a negative and significant effect on job satisfaction. The second hypothesis test shows a path coefficient of 0.541 with a T-statistic of 8.469 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H2 is accepted: emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

The Effect of Work Stress on Job Satisfaction

The results of the first hypothesis test show that work stress contributes negatively to the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew, so the first hypothesis is supported. This means that the higher the pressure felt by the crew in carrying out their daily operations, the lower their job satisfaction, and vice versa. This finding is in line with Robbins and Judge's (2019) view that work stress is a dynamic condition that arises when individuals are confronted with personally important job demands accompanied by uncertainty about their ability to meet them, thereby shaping their psychological condition and job satisfaction.

This finding is also consistent with Karasek's (1979) demand-control model, which places the crew's condition in a state of high strain, namely high job demands not offset by adequate control over the pace of work. The dense departure frequency, long operating hours, and the dual responsibility of maintaining safety while serving passengers create an accumulation of pressure that erodes the crew's job satisfaction. The dominance of the interpersonal-demands indicator in representing work stress reinforces the picture that interaction with uncooperative passengers is the most-felt source of pressure, consistent with the initial interviews with the crew and with Ovaria's (2020)



findings among intercity bus drivers. This finding is also consistent with previous studies by Bayuaji (2021), Hernandez-Rodriguez et al. (2022), and Radito and Swasti (2025), which emphasize the crucial role of work stress in reducing job satisfaction in professions with high mobility and heavy service demands.

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction

The results of the second hypothesis test show that emotional intelligence contributes positively to the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew, so the second hypothesis is supported. This means that the better the crew's ability to recognize and manage their emotions, the higher their job satisfaction. The magnitude of emotional intelligence's contribution, which exceeds that of work stress, shows that the crew's capacity to manage emotions is the aspect most taken into account in shaping their job satisfaction, surpassing the influence of work pressure itself.

This finding is consistent with Goleman's (2015) view that emotional intelligence, reflected in the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions in relationships with others, fosters positive attitudes and appraisals toward one's job. The dominance of the self-awareness indicator in representing emotional intelligence shows that awareness of one's own emotional state is the main foundation that allows crew members to remain calm and professional when facing service pressure, consistent with the initial survey results showing that the self-awareness and self-regulation dimensions still need strengthening compared to the relatively more developed empathy and social-skills dimensions. This finding further reinforces previous studies by Amalia et al. (2024), Adha (2021), and Zhang et al. (2025), which position emotional intelligence as the foundation of job satisfaction in professions requiring a high degree of interaction with others.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work stress contributes negatively to job satisfaction, while emotional intelligence contributes positively to the job satisfaction of TransJatim Corridor 1 bus crew, with both variables jointly explaining the variance in job satisfaction at a moderate level. Based on these findings, TransJatim is advised to strengthen the crew's ability to manage interpersonal interactions, for example through routine short briefings before duty that address how to handle passenger complaints directly in the field, pairing senior crew members as companions for newer crew, and reviewing rest-time



arrangements between trips so that workload is more balanced and the interpersonal demands faced by the crew can be reduced. In line with this, strengthening the crew's emotional awareness and regulation should be encouraged through simple daily work habits that can be applied directly, such as brief reflection sessions between shifts with coworkers or supervisors to discuss emotionally taxing service situations, and constructive feedback from supervisors after difficult service incidents, so that crew members become accustomed to recognizing and managing their emotions in real work situations without having to wait for formal training programs. In addition, strengthening the crew's job satisfaction can be pursued through a transparent career-development system based on objective performance evaluation, regular appreciation for crew performance, and strengthened teamwork among crew members in daily work activities. This policy implication is expected to help TransJatim maintain the crew's psychological wellbeing while sustaining service quality for the public on an ongoing basis. Future research is recommended to expand the model by adding other variables that may affect job satisfaction, such as workload, job design, compensation, and leadership style, and to broaden the respondent scope to other corridors or public-transport modes so that the findings can be more generalizable.

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