

Job Satisfaction as The Key Connector Between Leadership and Employee Performance

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kelurahan Pacarkembang dan Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia dengan tujuan menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan kepuasan kerja sebagai variabel mediasi. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah pegawai Kelurahan Pacarkembang dan Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia dengan jumlah total 35 pegawai. Teknik pengambilan sampel menggunakan teknik total sampling. Analisis data menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Partial Least Square (PLS). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan berpengaruh terhadap kinerja pegawai dan kepuasan kerja, kepuasan kerja berpengaruh terhadap kinerja pegawai, kepemimpinan berpengaruh terhadap kepuasan kerja pegawai melalui kepemimpinan.

Kata Kunci: kepemimpinan, kepuasan kerja, kinerja pegawai.

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted at the Administratie Village of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia. The aim was to analyze the influence of leadership on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The population in this study was 35 employees of the Administratie Village of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia. The sampling technique used total sampling. Data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results showed that leadership influences employee performance and job satisfaction, job satisfaction influences employee performance, and leadership influences employee performance through employee performance.

Keywords: leadership, job satisfaction, employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human Resources are the most important asset for any organization in achieving its strategic goals. Employees are not only executors of tasks but also the driving force behind innovation, service quality, and organizational competitiveness. Without competent and motivated human resources, it is difficult for

organizations to survive, let alone thrive, in a rapidly changing environment. Therefore, managing human resources effectively becomes a key element in ensuring that the organization can adapt, respond to challenges, and maintain its sustainability.

Employee performance is one of the

desired outcomes of an organization's investment in effective human resource development and management. High performance reflects the success of the organization in aligning individual contributions with overall strategic objectives. When employees demonstrate professionalism, motivation, and commitment, the organization benefits through increased productivity, efficiency, and innovation. Moreover, consistent employee performance helps build a positive organizational culture, strengthens customer trust, and enhances the institution's reputation.

Amidst the dynamics of global change and increasingly complex market demands, it is crucial for organizations to understand the factors that influence their employees' performance. This understanding allows leaders and managers to design appropriate strategies in training, leadership, motivation, and work environment development. Ultimately, strengthening human resources and optimizing employee performance is not only about achieving short-term targets but also about building the long-term resilience and competitiveness of the organization in facing future challenges.

One organizational unit that plays a vital role in public services is the administrative village, as the frontline government unit that interacts directly with the public. The Administrative Village of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru in Surabaya, Indonesia as part of the Surabaya city government's administrative network, is no exception to the challenge of improving employee performance to provide quality services to its citizens.

Employee performance encompasses several aspects, including productivity, innovation, adherence to ethical standards, and contribution to achieving organizational goals. Therefore, research into the factors influencing employee performance is becoming increasingly important to help organizations design effective human resource management strategies.

Hasibuan (2018) explains that performance is the result of an employee's efforts in carrying out their duties using existing skills, efforts, and opportunities. Mangkunegara (2018) explains that performance is the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to them. Rifai (2018) states that performance is the work results obtained by individuals or groups in an organization or company, which are in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities, in order to achieve company goals legally, without violating the law, and in accordance with moral and ethical principles. The opinion on employee performance is also expressed by Robbins (2018) who states that employee performance is formed through the interaction between capabilities and motivation. Setting performance goals is very helpful in detailing the desired goals and plays a role in managing the work process over time and in evaluating performance at the end.

From several previous studies, there are several factors that influence employee performance, including leadership (Rego et al, 2017; Salotohok and Soegoto, 2015; Basit et al, 2017; Delfi, 2017; Baskara and Sukiswo, 2015; Gede and Piartini, 2018; Amrani et al., 2019) and job satisfaction (Azhari et al, 2021; Paparang et al, 2021; Egenius et al, 2020, Adha et al, 2019; Hendrayana et al, 2021).

However, several previous studies related to leadership and job satisfaction on employee performance still have research gaps, namely research by Saputri and Andayani (2018) and Sudarno, et al (2023) which stated that leadership has no effect on employee performance. Fauziek and Yanuar's (2021) research proves that job satisfaction does not affect employee performance.

Given the continuing gap (inconsistency) in research results from several previous researchers involving leadership and job satisfaction variables on employee performance, further, more in-depth research is necessary. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting further research with the aim of analyzing the

influence of leadership and job satisfaction on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

According to Mangkunegara (2020), performance can be understood as the overall accomplishment of an employee in terms of both the quality and quantity of work achieved in fulfilling assigned tasks. This perspective emphasizes that performance is not solely measured by the volume of work completed, but also by the extent to which the outcomes align with predetermined standards. In a similar vein, Rivai (2018) describes employee performance as the tangible and observable behaviors displayed by individuals as a direct consequence of their job activities. These behaviors are expected to correspond with the responsibilities, duties, and roles inherent to their position within the organization. Therefore, employee performance can be viewed as a multidimensional construct that illustrates the degree to which employees are able to effectively carry out their responsibilities in accordance with organizational goals and expectations.

According to Mathis and Jackson (2019), performance, in its most basic sense, can be viewed as the choices employees make in carrying out their tasks or, conversely, the instances where they fail to act in accordance with their responsibilities. In a similar vein, Dessler (2015) elaborates that employee performance—often described as work achievement—represents the degree of accomplishment that organizations expect from their workforce, reflecting not only the completion of tasks but also the quality and timeliness with which these are delivered.

Expanding on this perspective, Gibson et al. (2019) underline that performance serves as an evaluative benchmark, enabling organizations to systematically measure, monitor, and compare the results of task execution and the extent to which employees fulfill formally assigned duties. This evaluative function ensures that organizations can identify areas of excellence, recognize gaps, and provide

constructive feedback for continuous improvement.

Taken together, these viewpoints underscore that performance is not merely a reflection of employee behavior but also a quantifiable indicator that reflects organizational effectiveness. By linking individual accomplishments to organizational objectives, performance becomes a central factor in aligning personal contributions with broader strategic goals, thereby reinforcing the importance of human resources as the driving force behind sustained organizational success.

Kasmir (2016) highlights that employee performance within an organization is shaped by several key factors that play a decisive role in determining the quality and effectiveness of work outcomes. These factors function as essential benchmarks that influence whether employees are capable of delivering optimal results or, on the contrary, encounter challenges that hinder them from meeting their responsibilities effectively. In essence, the attainment of high employee performance is not solely dependent on individual competencies, skills, and efforts, but is also significantly affected by external conditions, workplace dynamics, and the degree of support provided by the organization. This implies that performance is the product of a complex interaction between personal attributes and the organizational environment, underscoring the importance of fostering both individual readiness and institutional backing to achieve sustainable success. Therefore, Kasmir (2016) identifies a number of key aspects that shape and determine employee performance achievement in an organizational context, which are outlined as follows:

1. Ability and Expertise. The ability or skill a person possesses in a job. The more ability and expertise they possess, the more likely they are to complete the job correctly.
2. Knowledge. Knowledge of the job. Someone with good knowledge of the job will produce good work results, and vice versa.
3. Job Design. job design that will facilitate employees in achieving their goals.

4. **Personality.** A person's personality or character. Each person has a different personality or character.
5. **Work Motivation.** The drive for someone to do their job. If they have a strong internal or external drive, employees will be stimulated to do something well.
6. **Leadership.** The behavior of a leader in organizing, managing, and directing subordinates to carry out assigned tasks and responsibilities.
7. **Organizational Culture.** The customs or norms that apply and are shared by an organization or company. These customs govern what is generally accepted and applicable.
8. **Job Satisfaction.** The feeling of joy or happiness, or a feeling of liking, experienced before and after performing a task.
9. **Work Environment.** The atmosphere or condition of the workplace. The work environment can include the room, layout, facilities and infrastructure, and working relationships with coworkers.
10. **Loyalty.** Employees' commitment to remaining employed and supporting the company where they work.
11. **Commitment.** Employee compliance with company policies and regulations.
12. **Work Discipline.** Employees' efforts to carry out their work activities diligently. Work discipline, in this case, can be in the form of punctuality, for example, always arriving at work on time.

Leadership is essentially an interpersonal process of influence that occurs within a particular context and is communicated with the aim of achieving specific goals (Hasibuan, 2016). Stoner (2015) further refines this perspective by describing managerial leadership as not only a matter of directing but also actively influencing the task-related activities carried out by members of a group. Similarly, Robbins (2018) emphasizes leadership as the capacity to guide and inspire a group of people toward the realization of a shared vision or predetermined objectives.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) add to this view by framing leadership as a process whereby one individual exerts influence on others in pursuit of a common purpose. In line with this, Flesherman, as cited in Gibson (2015), highlights leadership as an intentional effort to shape the attitudes and behaviors of others interpersonally, primarily through communication, in order to achieve one or more organizational goals. Taken together, these perspectives underscore that leadership is not merely about holding authority, but rather about the ability to foster cooperation, align individual efforts with collective aspirations, and create the conditions necessary for goal attainment.

Based on the various definitions of leadership mentioned above, it can be concluded that leadership is inherently connected to the broader concept of management. At its core, leadership reflects the ability to guide, influence, and direct others in order to achieve shared objectives. This highlights that leadership is not merely about authority, but rather about fostering collaboration, building trust, and encouraging individuals to work together toward a common purpose. Ultimately, leadership serves as the driving force that enables an organization or group to align its vision with actionable goals and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Several previous researchers have conducted research on the influence of leadership on employee performance, including Rego et al. (2017), Salotohok and Soegoto (2015), Basit et al. (2017), Delfi (2017), Baskara and Sukiswo (2015), Gede and Piartini (2018), and Amrani et al. (2019). The findings of their study indicate that leadership influence employee performance. Effective leadership not only provides clear direction and guidance but also creates an environment that motivates employees, enhances their commitment, and supports them in achieving organizational goals. This suggests that the quality of leadership directly contributes to how well employees perform in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: Leadership influences employee

performance.

Every worker expects satisfaction from their workplace. Job satisfaction is fundamentally individual, as each individual will have varying levels of satisfaction based on their values. The more aspects of a job align with an individual's desires, the higher the perceived level of satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an emotional state characterized by a sense of enjoyment and love for one's work. This attitude is reflected in work morale (Hasibuan, 2018). Job satisfaction itself can be defined as a conclusion based on a comparison of what an employee actually receives from their work compared to what they expect, desire, and perceive as appropriate or entitled to (Gomes, 2018).

Job satisfaction in work is the job satisfaction enjoyed in work by receiving praise for work results, placement, treatment, equipment, and a good work environment. Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which an individual feels positively or negatively various factors or dimensions of the tasks in his work (Hariandja, 2016). Employees who prefer to enjoy job satisfaction in work will prioritize their work over compensation even though compensation is important. Satisfaction outside of work is the job satisfaction employees enjoy outside of work by the amount of compensation they will receive from their work results, so they can buy their needs. Combined job satisfaction inside and outside of work is job satisfaction reflected by a balanced emotional attitude between compensation and the implementation of their work. Employees who enjoy more job satisfaction combined inside and outside of work will feel satisfied if the results of their work and compensation are felt to be fair and appropriate.

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2016), job satisfaction is “an affective or emotional response to various aspects of work.” Davis (2015) describes “job satisfaction as a set of employee feelings about whether their work is enjoyable or not.” According to Robbins

(2018), job satisfaction is “a general attitude toward one’s job that indicates the difference between the amount of rewards workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive.”

Job satisfaction is an affective or emotional response to various aspects of one's job, so job satisfaction is not a single concept. A person can be relatively satisfied with one aspect of a job and dissatisfied with one or more others. Job satisfaction is a (positive) employee attitude toward their job, which arises from an assessment of the work situation. This assessment can be made regarding one's job, or it is carried out as a sense of appreciation for achieving one of the important values in the job. Satisfied employees prefer their work situation to those who dislike it.

Feelings related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction tend to reflect employees' assessments of current and past work experiences rather than expectations for the future. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are two important elements in job satisfaction: job values and basic needs. Job values are the goals to be achieved in carrying out work tasks. What is desired is the work values that are considered important by the individual. It is further stated that job values must be in line with or help fulfill basic needs. Thus, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is a result of the workforce related to work motivation. Overall job satisfaction for an individual is the sum of job satisfaction (from each aspect of the job) multiplied by the degree of importance of that aspect of the job to the individual. Whether an individual feels satisfied or dissatisfied with their job is a personal matter, depending on how they perceive the compatibility or conflict between their desires and the output (they obtain). So it can be concluded that the meaning of job satisfaction is a positive attitude of the workforce including feelings and behavior towards their work through the assessment of one's work as a sense of appreciation in achieving one of the important values of the work.

Several previous researchers have conducted research on the influence of leadership on job satisfaction, including Assiddiki, A.H. (2023), Iman, N. and Lestari, W. (2019), and

Yunita and Budiana (2021). Their research findings demonstrate that leadership influences job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: Leadership influences job satisfaction.

In addition, several previous studies have also conducted research on the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance, including (Azhari et al., 2021; Paparang et al., 2021; Egenius et al., 2020; Adha et al., 2019; Hendrayana et al., 2021), which found that job satisfaction influences employee performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3: Job satisfaction influences employee performance.

As explained above, Several previous researchers have conducted research on the influence of leadership on employee performance, including Rego et al. (2017), Salotok and Soegoto (2015), Basit et al. (2017), Delfi (2017), Baskara and Sukiswo (2015), Gede and Piartini (2018), and Amrani et al. (2019). The findings of their study indicate that leadership influence employee performance. Likewise, Several previous researchers have conducted research on the influence of leadership on job satisfaction, including Assiddiki, A.H. (2023), Iman, N. and Lestari, W. (2019), and Yunita and Budiana (2021). Their research findings demonstrate that leadership influences job satisfaction. In addition, several previous studies have also conducted research on the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance, including (Azhari et al., 2021; Paparang et al., 2021; Egenius et al., 2020; Adha et al., 2019; Hendrayana et al., 2021), which found that job satisfaction influences employee performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: Leadership influences employee performance through job satisfaction.

Based on the above hypothesis, a research framework can be created as follows:

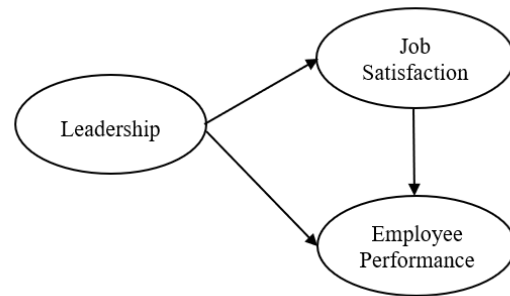


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODS

The approach used in this study is quantitative. This method is a scientific process that applies systematic procedures in collecting, processing, and analyzing data. Quantitative research aims to measure and examine phenomena by breaking them into parts and analyzing their relationships objectively. It focuses on numerical data, provides tools for hypothesis testing, supports generalizations, and produces findings that can be empirically validated. Through this approach, researchers are able to draw more accurate conclusions regarding the relationships among variables studied.

According to Sugiyono (2019), a population can essentially be understood as the entire collection of elements or objects that researchers wish to study or about which they intend to draw conclusions. A population does not only refer to groups of individuals, but may also include objects, documents, or even abstract concepts, depending on the focus of the research being conducted. In this sense, the population serves as the overall source of data from which a researcher can obtain information that is relevant to the problem under investigation. By defining the population clearly, researchers are able to ensure that the scope of their study is well-structured and that the results obtained are representative of the phenomenon being examined. The population in this study was all employee of Administrative Village of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia totaling of 35 employees.

The data in this study were analyzed statistically using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the Partial Least Squares (PLS)

technique as the main tool. SEM-PLS was selected because it is effective for analyzing complex relationships between variables, testing direct and indirect effects, and assessing both measurement and structural models simultaneously. This method is also advantageous in handling small sample sizes and data that may not meet normality assumptions, making it appropriate for hypothesis testing of relationships among latent constructs. Thus, applying SEM-PLS allows the study to produce more accurate, reliable, and comprehensive results regarding the variables examined.

RESULTS

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity testing is evaluated by observing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each indicator. A good requirement is that the AVE value must be less than 0.5 (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 1. Average Variant Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE
Leadership	0.690
Job Satisfaction	0.669
Employee Performance	0.670

The data in Table 1 above confirms that the AVE values for the professionalism, work motivation, and employee performance variables are > 0.5. Therefore, it can be said that each variable has good discriminant validity.

Composite Reliability

Composite Reliability is one of the measures employed to test the consistency and reliability of the indicators that form a variable. This test is used to ensure that the indicators within a construct are able to consistently represent the variable being measured. According to Ghozali (2018), a variable can be considered reliable if it achieves a composite reliability value greater than 0.6. This threshold indicates that the construct has adequate internal consistency, meaning the indicators used are stable and dependable in measuring the same underlying concept. Therefore, Composite Reliability plays an important role in validating the quality of the

measurement model before proceeding to the structural analysis. In this study, the Composite Reliability values of each variable were calculated, and the results are presented in the following table as evidence that the constructs employed meet the required reliability standards:

Table 2. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability
Leadership	0.907
Job Satisfaction	0.910
Employee Performance	0.910

Referring to table 2 above, it can be seen that the Composite Reliability value of all variables in this study is greater than 0.6 so it can be stated that the indicators in all variables are reliable.

Cronbach Alpha

The reliability test that has been assessed through composite reliability can be further reinforced by examining the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient as an additional indicator of internal consistency. Cronbach’s Alpha serves as a widely recognized measure to evaluate the extent to which a set of items reliably reflects the underlying construct. According to Eisingerich and Rubera (2010), a variable can be considered reliable or meet the criteria for internal consistency if it achieves a Cronbach’s Alpha value greater than 0.7. This threshold indicates that the items within the variable are sufficiently correlated and consistently measure the same construct. To provide a clearer understanding, the table below presents the Cronbach’s Alpha values obtained for each variable in this study, thereby supporting the overall reliability of the measurement model.

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha

Variable	Cronbach alpha
Leadership	0.888
Job Satisfaction	0.876
Employee Performance	0.877

Based on the data presentation above in table 3, it can be seen that the Cronbach alpha value of each research variable is > 0.7. Thus, these results indicate that each research variable has met the requirements for the Cronbach alpha value, so it can be concluded that all variables have a high level of reliability.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the data processing that has been done, the results can be used to answer the hypothesis in this study. Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out by looking at the T-Statistics value and the P-Values value. The research hypothesis can be stated as accepted if the P-Values value < 0.05 (Yamin and Kurniawan 2011). The following are the results of hypothesis testing obtained in this study through the inner model:

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Influence	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
H1	Leadership → Employee Performance	3.044	0.002	Accepted
H2	Leadership → Job Satisfaction	4.431	0.000	Accepted
H3	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	3.890	0.000	Accepted
H4	Leadership → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	2.845	0.004	Accepted

Based on the data results in table 4 above, it can be seen that the four hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

1. The influence of leadership on employee performance has a P value of 0.002 or less than 0.05. This means that leadership variable has an influence on employee performance.
2. The influence of leadership on job satisfaction has a P value of 0.000 or less than 0.05. This means that leadership variable has an influence on job satisfaction.
3. The influence of job satisfaction on employee performance has a P value of 0.000, or less than 0.05. This means that job satisfaction variable has an influence on employee performance.
4. The influence of leadership on employee performance through job satisfaction has a P value of 0.000 or less than 0.05. This means that leadership variable influences employee performance through job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

1. Referring to the results of the hypothesis test, which stated that leadership influences employee performance, the relationship between the two variables was positive, meaning they are directly proportional. These results confirm that changes in leadership will

be followed by changes in employee performance in the same direction. Good leadership in an organization will result in high employee performance. Conversely, poor leadership will result in low employee performance.

The research findings that leadership influences employee performance align with leadership theory, which emphasizes fostering cooperation, effective leadership, participation, delegation of tasks and authority, and organization. Leaders possess leadership skills that drive high employee performance.

2. Hypothesis testing indicates that leadership influences employee job satisfaction. The relationship between the two variables is positive. These results confirm that changes in the leadership variable will have a direct impact on changes in the job satisfaction variable. Good leadership will increase employee job satisfaction. However, poor leadership will decrease job satisfaction.

The research findings demonstrate the influence of leadership on job satisfaction, consistent with existing theories. Leadership theory, which emphasizes the leader's role in fostering, directing, and delegating tasks and authority to members, can support employee job satisfaction.

Effective leadership has a significant impact on employee job satisfaction. Effective leadership tends to create job satisfaction. Leadership that fosters, leads effectively, and delegates tasks and authority can increase job satisfaction. Leadership that provides clear direction and fosters strong work attitudes can foster job satisfaction. Good leadership within an organization can increase job satisfaction.

3. Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be stated that job satisfaction influences employee performance. The direction of the two variables is directly proportional, as indicated by the positive sign, indicating that changes in job satisfaction impact employee performance. High job satisfaction will be followed by high employee performance. Conversely, low job satisfaction will result in poor employee performance.

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs, particularly those related to adequate pay, reasonable supervision, and coworker relationships, will have high work quality, high work quantity, adequate job knowledge and skills, and high creativity. Job satisfaction

factors can have a more sustainable impact on employee performance.

4. Referring to the hypothesis test, it can be concluded that leadership influences employee performance through job satisfaction. The relationship between these three variables is positive. These results confirm that, regardless of employee job satisfaction, leadership influences employee performance in a directly proportional manner. This means that if job satisfaction increases, leadership will also increase employee performance.

These research findings align with the theory that employee performance is influenced by the level of leadership within an organization. Leadership, which encompasses the ability to delegate tasks and authority, can positively impact employee performance.

CONSLUSION

Based on the research conducted at the Administrative Village of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru in Surabaya, Indonesia, it can be concluded that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee outcomes. The findings reveal that leadership has a direct and significant influence on employee performance, demonstrating its importance in guiding and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals. In addition, leadership also exerts a positive effect on job satisfaction, indicating that effective leaders are able to create a supportive and motivating work environment that enhances employees' sense of fulfillment in their roles. Furthermore, the study shows that job satisfaction itself significantly contributes to improving employee performance. Employees who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to work more effectively, demonstrating higher commitment and productivity. Importantly, the research also confirms that leadership impacts employee performance indirectly through job satisfaction, highlighting the mediating role of satisfaction in strengthening the relationship between leadership and performance. Overall, the results emphasize that effective leadership, supported by enhanced job satisfaction, is a key driver of employee performance in the public administration context of Pacarkembang and Kapas Madya Baru, Surabaya, Indonesia.

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