The Role Of Job Satisfaction In Mediating The Effect Of Leadership And Competence On Employee Performance At The Community And Village Empowerment Office Of Langkat Regency

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Abstract

This study analyzes the effect of leadership and competence on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency. This study is motivated by the importance of human resource management in supporting effective government administration and achieving organizational goals. A quantitative approach was used, with a population that also served as the sample, comprising 60 civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN). The sampling technique was saturated sampling. Primary data were collected through questionnaires using a Likert scale and analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0. The testing covered evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model, direct effects, and indirect effects through bootstrapping. The results show that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.291 and a t-statistic of 3.809. Competence also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.323 and a t-statistic of 3.740. In addition, leadership and competence have positive and significant effects on job satisfaction, with coefficients of 0.453 and 0.535, respectively. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.473. The mediation test shows that job satisfaction positively and significantly mediates the effect of leadership and competence on employee performance. Accordingly, improving the effectiveness of leadership, competence, and job satisfaction is an important aspect in supporting the optimization of employee performance.

***Keywords**:* Leadership, Competence, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Mediation

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Introduction

Human resources are one of the strategic elements that determine an organization's success in achieving its stated goals. In public sector organizations, human resources function not only as executors of administrative activities but also as the main drivers of government administration and public service delivery. High-quality human resources are needed so that every program and policy can be implemented effectively, efficiently, transparently, and accountably. Therefore, employee performance is one of the key indicators for assessing the success of a government organization in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. Employee performance essentially reflects the degree to which individuals succeed in carrying out their work based on the duties, responsibilities, work standards, and targets set by the organization. Optimal performance is determined not only by employees' ability to complete their work but also by the quality of leadership, the competence they possess, and their level of satisfaction with their jobs. These three aspects are interrelated in shaping employees' work behavior, motivation, responsibility, and commitment to achieving organizational goals. Thus, efforts to improve employee performance need to be pursued through a human resource management approach that considers both organizational and individual factors. Theoretically, effective leadership can improve performance through clear goals, work support, motivation, and appropriate supervision. Conversely, when work direction is unclear, communication is not optimal, employees feel insufficiently involved in decision-making, or recognition of work results falls short of expectations, these conditions can affect employees' work experience. However, the relationship between leadership and performance cannot always be explained through direct effects alone. Employees may still be able to meet targets because of their competence and professional responsibility, even if their satisfaction with leadership varies. Conversely, supportive leadership does not necessarily produce optimal performance if employees lack adequate competence or face obstacles in carrying out their work. Therefore, the relationship between leadership and performance needs to be examined by considering other factors that can explain the mechanism of this effect. Competence also has a relationship with job satisfaction that deserves attention. Employees who feel capable of performing their duties, have opportunities to develop their abilities, and receive assignments that match their competence are likely to have a more positive work experience. Conversely, a mismatch between abilities and job demands can lead to difficulties in completing tasks, work pressure, or dissatisfaction.

Literature Review

2.1 Employee Performance

According to Pranogyo et al. (2022) in the book Kinerja Karyawan (Employee Performance), performance can be understood as a person's achievement obtained from carrying out work and compared against predetermined standards or targets. Performance concerns not only the quantity of work but also its quality, efficiency, behavior, and the employee's contribution to organizational goals.

2.2 Employee Performance Indicators

According to Pranogyo et al. (2022), performance measurement should reflect work results that can actually be observed and evaluated. Recent performance literature discusses measurement through indicators, targets, quality, skills, behavior, and work achievement. The employee performance indicators used in this study are:

a. Quality of work
b. Quantity of work
c. Timeliness
d. Work effectiveness
e. Responsibility

f. Cooperation

2.3 Job Satisfaction

According to Robbins and Judge (2022), job satisfaction is essentially a person's positive feeling about their job that arises after the individual evaluates its various characteristics.

2.4 Job Satisfaction Indicators

According to Robbins and Judge (2022), the indicators of job satisfaction are:

a. Satisfaction with the work itself;
b. Satisfaction with the rewards received;
c. Satisfaction with co-worker

2.5 Competence

Following Roy and Ray (2025), competence in this study is defined as the set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and work attitudes possessed by employees.

2.7 Competence Indicators

In this study, competence is measured using the indicators of Roy and Ray (2025):

a. Knowledge
b. Skills
c. Problem-solving ability
d. Adaptability
e. Professional attitude and behavior
f. Ability to apply competence

2.8 Leadership

According to Northouse (2021), leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. This definition shows that leadership has four essential elements: process, influence, group, and common goals.

2.9 Leadership Indicators

Based on Northouse's (2021) concept, the leadership indicators are as follows:

a. Ability to provide direction
b. Ability to influence and motivate
c. Communication
d. Support for employees
e. Role modeling
f. Ability to adapt leadership
g. Orientation toward common goals

Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research is a method grounded in the philosophy of positivism, used to study a particular population or sample, in which sampling is generally carried out randomly, data are collected using research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative/statistical with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses.

3.1 Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2025), a population is the entire set of objects or subjects with certain characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are then drawn. Based on this definition, the population in this study comprises all 60 employees of the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency, all of whom are civil servants (ASN).

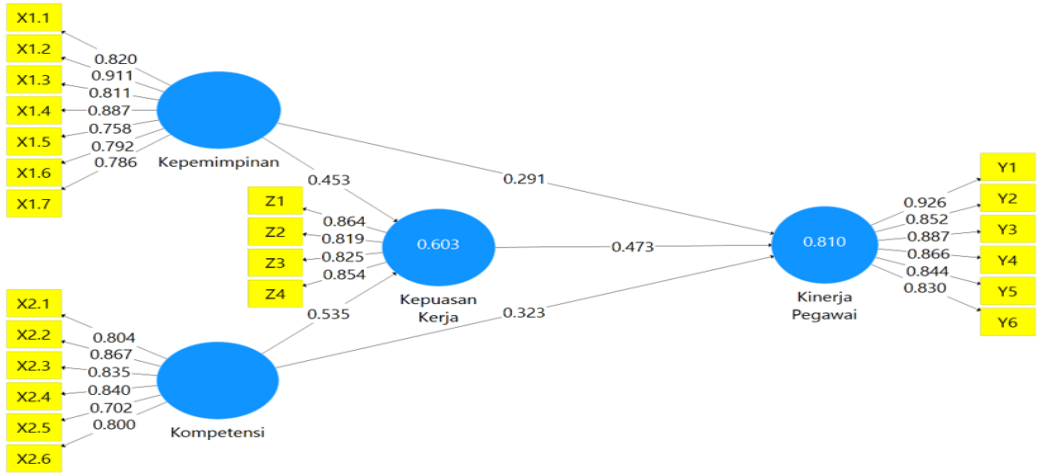
The sample in this study consists of all 60 employees of the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency. The sampling technique used is saturated sampling, that is, a technique in which all members of the population are taken as the research sample.

3.2 Data Analysis Technique

This study uses *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) as its data analysis method. The data were processed using SmartPLS 3.0.

Results

The outer model test using loading factors/outer loadings shows that all indicators of each variable have loading values ≥ 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. It can therefore be concluded that all questionnaire items meet the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.



Source: SmartPLS, 2026

4.1 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Assessment of the model with PLS begins by examining the R-square of each dependent latent variable. The table below presents the R-square estimates obtained using SmartPLS.

Table 1. R-square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Job Satisfaction	0.603	0.589
Employee Performance	0.810	0.800

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 1 presents the R-squared values for the two dependent variables. For job satisfaction, the R-squared value is 0.603, meaning that leadership and competence explain 0.603 or 60.3% of its variance; the remainder is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-squared value for employee performance is 0.810, meaning that leadership, competence, and job satisfaction explain 0.810 or 81% of its variance; the remainder is explained by other variables outside the model.

4.2 Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

a. Hypothesis Testing

The direct effects between variables can be seen from the *path coefficients*. The results of the data processing for the direct effects are presented in the following table.

Table 2. *Path Coefficients* (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Employee Performance	0.291	3.809	0.000	Accepted
Competence -> Employee Performance	0.323	3.740	0.000	Accepted
Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0.453	5.026	0.000	Accepted
Competence -> Job Satisfaction	0.535	8.085	0.000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.473	4.506	0.000	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

The results in Table 2 show the following direct effects:

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a t-statistic of 3.809, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that leadership has a real effect on employee performance, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Boangmanalu & Ferine, 2026; Winanda & Anwar, 2024).
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a t-statistic of 3.740, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that competence has a real effect on employee performance, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Pandito et al., 2025; Anwar, 2025).
3. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 5.026, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that leadership has a real effect on job satisfaction, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Rahayu & Dahlia, 2023).
4. Competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 8.085, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that competence has a real effect on job satisfaction, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Widayanti et al., 2026).
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a t-statistic of 4.506, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that job satisfaction has a real effect on employee performance, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Sidik & Ferine, 2026; Boangmanalu & Ferine, 2026).

a. Indirect Effects

The indirect effects between variables can be seen from the *specific indirect effects*. The results of the data processing for the indirect effects are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 3. *Specific Indirect Effects* (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.214	3.698	0.000	Accepted
Competence -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.253	3.585	0.000	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 3 shows the following indirect effects between variables:

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 3.698, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between leadership and employee performance.
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 3.585, above 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000, below 0.05. This means that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between competence and employee performance.

Conclusion

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
3. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
4. Competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
6. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.
7. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Community and Village Empowerment Office of Langkat Regency.

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