

The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effect of Leadership on Employee Performance at the Medan Tuntungan District Office

Nesron Yanta, Sri Rahayu, Husni Muharram Ritonga

Abstract

Employee performance is an important factor in determining the success of public services in government agencies, including the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office. Differences in the quality of work, timeliness of task completion, and level of employee initiative indicate that employee performance is not yet optimal. This study aims to analyze the effect of leadership on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population in this study was all 67 civil servants at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office, with a sampling technique using the census method. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software. The results show that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction is proven to play a significant mediating role in the relationship between leadership and employee performance. These findings indicate that improved employee performance can be achieved through effective leadership and the creation of optimal job satisfaction to support continuous improvement in the quality of public services.

Keywords: Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance

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Introduction

Employee performance is a key factor in determining the success of public service delivery, especially in government agencies at the sub-district level. Employees with good performance are able to carry out administrative tasks effectively, on time, and in accordance with established standards, thereby supporting the achievement of organizational goals and increasing public satisfaction. In recent years, experts have emphasized that employee performance is the result of work that can be measured based on target achievement, quality of work, and work behavior demonstrated by employees in carrying out their duties (Ruhayat et al., 2022; Kurnia & Sitorus, 2022; Sumitra et al., 2023). Therefore, improving employee performance has become an important requirement for the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office as the frontline of public service at the sub-district level.

However, based on initial observations at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office, employee performance still faces a number of problems, such as inaccuracy in completing work on time, variations in the quality of work results, and the lack of optimal initiative among employees in carrying out their duties. This condition shows that employee performance is not yet fully optimal and the factors that influence it need to be further examined. One internal factor that is believed to have a significant influence on employee performance is leadership.

Leadership plays a strategic role in directing, motivating, and influencing employee behavior to achieve organizational goals. Leaders who are able to provide clear direction, adequate support, and good role models will create a conducive work environment and encourage improved employee performance. Various studies show that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, especially through its role in shaping employee attitudes and work behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2020; Azhari, 2025).

In addition to having a direct influence, leadership also indirectly affects employee performance through job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an emotional state that reflects the extent to which employees feel happy, comfortable, and fulfilled in their work. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have higher work motivation, stronger loyalty, and better performance. Previous studies have proven that job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of leadership on employee performance (Sumitra et al., 2023; Pelasula, 2024).

In the context of the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office, employee job satisfaction is a very important aspect given the increasingly complex and dynamic demands of public service. Without adequate job satisfaction, even good leadership will not be able to optimally encourage employee performance. Therefore, job satisfaction is seen as an important bridge connecting leadership with employee performance.

Based on this description, research on the role of job satisfaction in mediating the influence of leadership on employee performance at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office is important. This research is expected to contribute empirically to the development of public sector human resource management science and to provide consideration for sub-district leaders in formulating leadership policies and strategies to increase job satisfaction in order to improve employee performance and the quality of public services in a sustainable manner.

Literature Review Employee Performance Definition of Employee Performance

According to Robbins & Judge (2020), employee performance is the level of work output of an individual in carrying out the tasks under their responsibility, which is assessed based on standards or criteria set by the organization.

Factors Affecting Employee Performance

Factors Affecting Employee Performance according to Robbins & Judge (2020):

1) Job satisfaction

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs will perform better. Job satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of performance.

- 2) Organizational commitment
High organizational commitment is positively related to performance. The higher the organizational commitment, the higher the quality and productivity of work.
- 3) Leadership
Leaders play a major role in improving or decreasing employee performance. The performance of subordinates is greatly influenced by how leaders treat, motivate, and provide direction.
- 4) Affective commitment
Employees feel proud, emotionally attached, and want to continue being part of the organization. The stronger the employees' commitment to the organization, the higher their performance.

Employee Performance Indicators

Employee Performance Indicators According to Robbins & Judge (2020):

- 1) Primary task performance
Employees are evaluated based on how well they perform their primary responsibilities.
- 2) Organizational Citizenship Behavior
High-performing employees not only complete their core tasks, but also contribute to leadership.
- 3) Destructive Work Behavior
The lower the destructive work behavior, the higher the employee's performance.
- 4) Adaptability
Adaptability is important because modern jobs change very quickly.
- 5) Effort and Initiative
High-performing employees are typically proactive, not just waiting for instructions.

Job Satisfaction Understanding Job Satisfaction

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

Indicators of Job Satisfaction

According to Atmaja (2022), job satisfaction can be measured through several indicators that describe employees' emotional responses to their work. These indicators include:

- 1) Satisfaction with the Job Itself
Describes the extent to which employees feel their work is meaningful, interesting, and in line with their abilities.
- 2) Satisfaction with Salary/Compensation
Refers to the level of employee satisfaction with the fairness, adequacy, and accuracy of the compensation received (salary, incentives, benefits).
- 3) Satisfaction with Promotion Opportunities
Assessing whether employees feel they have opportunities for growth, to obtain higher positions, with a transparent and fair promotion process.
- 4) Satisfaction with Supervision/Superiors
Describes employees' feelings about their boss's leadership style, support, communication, and fairness in leading.
- 5) Satisfaction with Coworkers
Measures the extent to which employees feel comfortable and supported by their coworkers, including aspects such as cooperation, social relationships, harmonious communication, and team solidarity.

Leadership Definition of Leadership

Robbins & Judge (2020) define leadership as the ability to influence a group to achieve goals. In essence: focus on influence and the achievement of organizational goals.

Leadership Indicators

Leadership indicators according to Robbins & Judge (2020):

- 1) Ability to Provide Direction
Effective leaders are able to explain tasks, provide work structure, and clearly define goals.
- 2) Ability to Provide Support
Demonstrated through attention, empathy, and good interpersonal relationships with subordinates.
- 3) Ability to Motivate Subordinates
Leaders influence subordinates through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
- 4) Decision-Making Skills
Leaders must be able to make fair, logical, and quick decisions.
- 5) Communication Skills
Robbins & Judge emphasize the importance of two-way communication in effective leadership.
- 6) Influencing Skills
Effective leaders use power positively to encourage the work behavior of subordinates.

Conceptual Framework

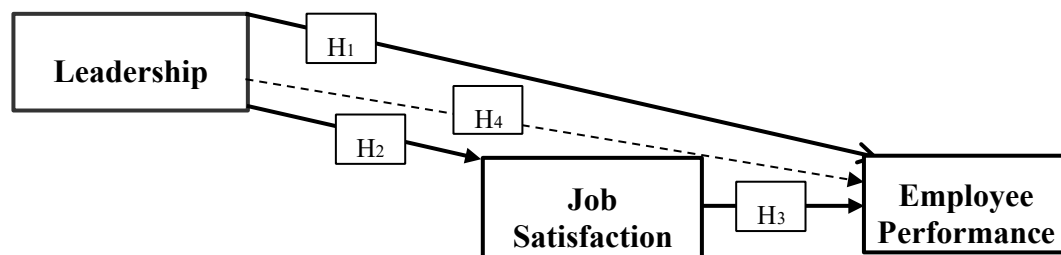


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁ : Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.
- H₂ : Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.
- H₃ Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.
- H₄ : Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.

Research Methodology Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research can be defined as a method based on positivism philosophy, used to study a specific population or sample, with sampling techniques generally conducted randomly, data collection using research instruments, and quantitative/statistical data analysis with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This type of quantitative research was conducted to create a study aimed at adjusting a study and analyzing leadership and organizational commitment to employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office, located at Jalan Bunga Melati No.1, Kemenangan Tani, Medan Tuntungan Sub-District, Medan City. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2022) defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn. The population and sample in this study were all civil servants (PNS) at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office, totaling 67 people.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis using the PLS Algorithm produced the following results: **Validity Test**

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Employee Performance	Leadership	Job Satisfaction
X1.1		0.816	
X1.2		0.742	
X1.3		0.885	
X1.4		0.809	
X1.5		0.824	
X1.6		0.795	
Y.1	0.726		
Y.2	0.825		
Y.3	0.811		
Y.4	0.901		
Y.5	0.755		
Z.1			0.728
Z.2			0.794
Z.3			0.899
Z.4			0.823
Z.5			0.867

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

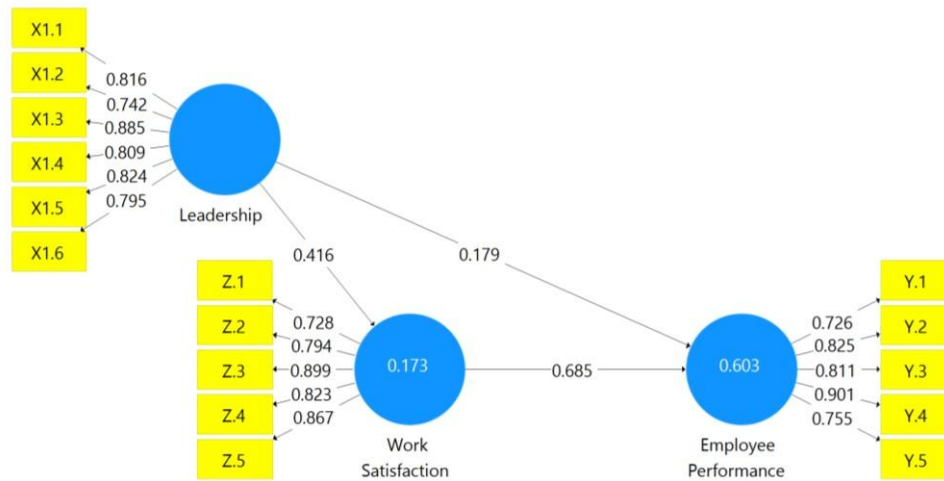


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance	0.863	0.872	0.902	0.649
Leadership	0.898	0.909	0.921	0.661
Job Satisfaction	0.881	0.895	0.914	0.680
Employee Performance	0.863	0.872	0.902	0.649

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

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

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Work Satisfaction	0.173	0.161
Employee Performance	0.603	0.591

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square values for both dependent variables. For the job satisfaction variable, the R square value is 0.173, meaning that the influence of leadership is 0.173 or 17.3%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for employee performance is 0.603, meaning that leadership affects job satisfaction by 0.603 or 60.3%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model.

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

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

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Employee Performance	0.179	1.966	0.050	Accepted
Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0.416	5.029	0	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.685	9,651	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 1.966 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.050 below 0.05, meaning that leadership has a real effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05 . The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Rahman et al., 2023; Fadillah & Mesra, 2024; Arifin et al., 2025).
2. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 5.029 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that leadership has a real effect on job satisfaction because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Pranoto & Mesra, 2024).
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a tstatistic value of 9.651 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction has a real effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Pohan & Rizky, 2024; Yanti et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2023; Budiarto et al, 2023).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

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

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Work Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.285	4.383	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 4.383 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between leadership and employee performance.

Conclusion

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.
2. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.

3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Tuntungan Sub-District Office.
4. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Medan Tuntungan Subdistrict Office.

Recommendations

1. Employee performance with the lowest score was "I carry out my main duties in accordance with my job responsibilities." Therefore, the recommendation is to maintain and strengthen the division of tasks and clarity of job descriptions through consistent socialization and supervision, so that each employee better understands their responsibilities and is able to carry out their main duties optimally in accordance with their respective roles.
2. Job satisfaction with the lowest score being "I am satisfied with my current job." The office is advised to improve employee job satisfaction through fair rewards, career development opportunities, and the creation of a supportive work environment, so that employees feel valued and satisfied with their work.
3. Leadership with the lowest score of "Leaders provide support to employees in completing tasks." Leaders need to continue to improve their support for employees through clear guidance, availability of assistance when facing work obstacles, and open communication, so that employees feel supported and motivated to complete tasks effectively and on time.

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