

The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance at the Sei Suka District Office, Batu Bara Regency

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Abstract

Employee performance is an important factor in supporting the success of public services, especially at the sub-district level of government. The Sei Suka Sub-district Office in Batu Bara Regency is required to have employees with optimal performance in order to provide effective, efficient, and quality services to the community. This study aims to analyze the effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The study used a quantitative approach with a census method, in which all 55 permanent employees of the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office were used as research samples. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software. The results show that emotional intelligence does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance, but it has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of the indirect effect test showed that job satisfaction was able to significantly mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. These findings indicate that improving employee performance does not only depend on emotional intelligence alone, but also on the level of job satisfaction felt by employees. Therefore, organizations need to pay attention to managing factors that can increase job satisfaction in order to optimize employee performance in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance

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Introduction

Employee performance is one of the key factors in determining the success of public service delivery, especially in government agencies at the sub-district level. The Sei Suka Sub-district Office in Batu Bara Regency, as the spearhead of public service, is required to be able to provide fast, accurate, and quality services to the community. The high demands of the community for quality public services require government officials to perform optimally so that organizational goals and community satisfaction can be achieved. However, in practice, there are still various problems related to employee performance, such as the inaccuracy of work completion times (), lack of initiative, and service quality that does not fully meet the established standards.

Employee performance is not only influenced by technical and structural factors, but also by individual psychological factors. One psychological factor that is gaining attention in human resource management studies is emotional intelligence. Goleman (2023) states that emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, manage, and control their own emotions and understand the emotions of others, which is reflected through self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Employees with good emotional intelligence tend to be able to manage work pressure, adapt to change, and establish harmonious working relationships, thereby potentially improving performance.

Various previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employee performance. Putri (2025) found that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the performance of public sector employees, especially in improving service quality and the ability to work together. Wonda (2024) also revealed that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to improving employee performance through the ability to manage stress and work emotions. However, the influence of emotional intelligence on performance is not always direct, but can be influenced by other psychological factors, one of which is job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that reflects the extent to which employees feel satisfied with their jobs, both in terms of the work itself, compensation, work relationships, and support from superiors. Robbins and Judge (2020) explain that job satisfaction plays an important role in shaping employee attitudes and work behavior. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to show higher motivation, strong loyalty, and better performance. Conversely, employees with low job satisfaction are likely to show a decline in performance even if they have adequate abilities or emotional intelligence.

In the context of the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency, job satisfaction is an important aspect to consider given the high workload, complex public service demands, and limited resources available. Employees who have good emotional intelligence but are not balanced with adequate job satisfaction are feared to be unable to perform optimally. Therefore, job satisfaction is seen as a variable that can mediate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance.

Based on this description, research on the role of job satisfaction in mediating the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency is important to conduct. This study is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of public sector human resource management studies, particularly regarding the role of psychological factors in improving employee performance. In addition, the results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for sub-district leaders in formulating human resource management policies and strategies oriented towards improving employee job satisfaction and performance in a sustainable manner.

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Definition of Employee Performance

According to Robbins and Coulter (2021), employee performance is the work results achieved by an individual in carrying out their responsibilities, which are measured based on

organizational standards, criteria, and objectives. They emphasize that performance reflects how effectively an individual achieves the expected results in a job.

Employee Performance Indicators

Robbins & Coulter (2021) categorize performance into six main indicators, namely:

- 1) **Work Quality**
The level of accuracy, neatness, precision, and quality of work produced by employees.
- 2) **Work Quantity**
The amount of output produced within a specific period of time.
- 3) **Timeliness**
How quickly work is completed according to the set schedule.
- 4) **Cost Effectiveness**
The ability of employees to work economically, reduce waste, and maximize resources.
- 5) **Work Independence**
The extent to which employees can work without much supervision from their superiors.
- 6) **Interpersonal Relationships**
Employees' ability to cooperate, work in teams, and maintain good relationships with colleagues, superiors, and the community.

Job Satisfaction

Definition of 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 that their work is meaningful, interesting, and in line with their abilities.
- 2) **Satisfaction with Salary/Compensation**
This is the level of employee satisfaction with the fairness, adequacy, and accuracy of the compensation received (salary, incentives, allowances).
- 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 superiors' leadership style, support, communication, and fairness in leadership.
- 5) **Satisfaction with Coworkers**
Measuring the extent to which employees feel comfortable and supported by their coworkers, including aspects such as cooperation, social relationships, harmonious communication, and team solidarity.

Emotional Intelligence

Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman (2023): Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage emotions, maintain emotional balance and express them through self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Indicators of Emotional Intelligence

The five main indicators of emotional intelligence according to Goleman (2023):

- 1) **Self-Awareness**

An individual's ability to understand their own moods, emotions, and impulses, as well as their impact on others.

2) Self-Regulation

The ability to manage or direct negative emotions, remain calm under pressure, and think rationally before acting.

3) Self-Motivation

Internal drive to achieve goals with high commitment, not just because of external rewards.

4) Empathy

The ability to understand and feel what others are feeling, which is important in building social relationships.

5) Social Skills

The ability to build and maintain healthy social relationships, influence others, and work together in a team.

Conceptual Framework

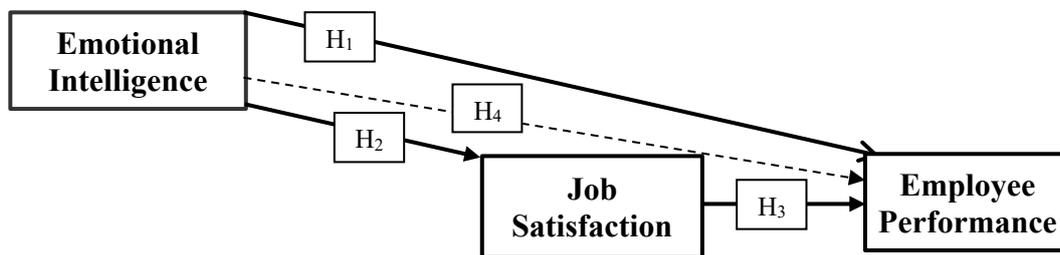


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

H₁ Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.

H₂ : Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.

H₂ : Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.

H₄ : Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2010), 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 competence and emotional intelligence in relation to employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable at the Sei Suka Sub-District Office in Batu Bara Regency.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency, located on Jalan Access Road Inalum, Lalang, Medang Deras Subdistrict, Batu Bara Regency, North Sumatra. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2021) defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. The population and sample in this study were all 55 permanent employees at the Sei Suka Sub-District Office, and the entire population was used as the sample.

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

	Emotional Intelligence	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction
X2.1	0.775		
X2.2	0.855		
X2.3	0.738		
X2.4	0.863		
X2.5	0.753		
Y.1		0.767	
Y.2		0.911	
Y.3		0.759	
Y.4		0.819	
Y.5		0.869	
Y.6		0.866	
Z.1			0.866
Z.2			0.704
Z.3			0.825
Z.4			0.825
Z.5			0.878

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.

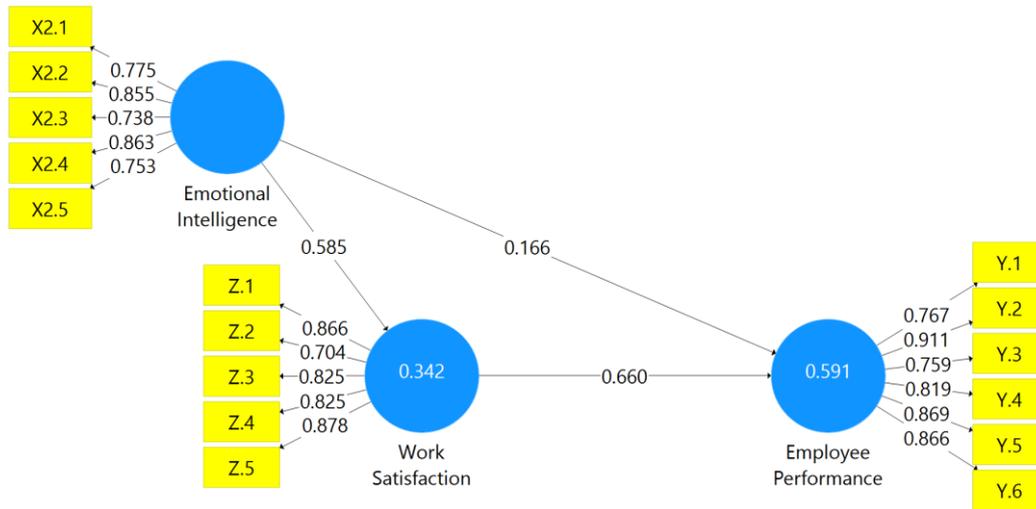


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Emotional Intelligence	0.857	0.865	0.897	0.637
Employee Performance	0.911	0.921	0.932	0.695
Job Satisfaction	0.878	0.889	0.912	0.675

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 (R²)

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

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Work Satisfaction	0.342	0.330
Employee Performance	0.591	0.576

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 0.342, meaning that the influence of emotional intelligence is 0.342 or 34.2%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for employee performance is 0.591, meaning that emotional intelligence and job satisfaction account for 0.591 or 59.1%, 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 coefficient values. 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
Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Performance	0.166	1.534	0.126	Rejected
Emotional Intelligence -> Job Satisfaction	0.585	8.461	0	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.660	7,927	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

1. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 1.534 below 1.96 and a significance of 0.126 above 0.05, meaning that emotional intelligence has no significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is above 0.05. The results of this study are not in line with the results of previous studies, namely that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Rizki, 2024).
2. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 8.461 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that emotional intelligence has a significant 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 emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Tafonao, 2025).
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 7.927 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction has a significant 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 (Ibrahim & Mesra, 2023).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

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

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Emotional Intelligence -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.386	6.823	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 6.823 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between emotional intelligence and employee performance.

Conclusion

1. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.
2. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.

4. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.

Recommendations

1. Employee performance with the lowest score was "I complete my work on time according to the specified schedule." Therefore, the recommendation is to improve the timeliness of work completion by implementing more structured work time management through task prioritization, regular monitoring of work progress, and leadership support in reducing work obstacles. With good time management and consistent supervision, employees can complete their work according to the predetermined schedule more optimally.
2. Job satisfaction with the lowest score being "I am satisfied with my salary or compensation." To increase satisfaction with salary or compensation, organizations need to ensure a fair, transparent compensation system that is in line with employees' workloads and responsibilities. In addition, incentives, performance allowances, or non-financial rewards can also be considered so that employees feel valued and motivated to improve their performance.
3. Emotional intelligence with the lowest score being "I am able to motivate myself to continue working well." To improve employees' ability to motivate themselves, organizations are advised to create a work environment that supports the development of intrinsic motivation, such as giving trust, recognition for work results, and opportunities for self-development through training and coaching. Thus, employees are encouraged to continue to work optimally without always having to rely on external encouragement.

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