

Analysis of Competency and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance with Satisfaction As an Intervening Variable at the SEI Suka District Office Batu Bara Regency

Analisis Pengaruh Kompetensi dan Kecerdasan Emosional terhadap Kinerja Karyawan dengan Kepuasan sebagai Variabel Perantara di Kantor Cabang SEI Suka, Kabupaten Batu Bara

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ABSTRAK

Kinerja pegawai merupakan faktor penting dalam menentukan keberhasilan penyampaian pelayanan publik, terutama di tingkat pemerintahan kecamatan. Kantor Kecamatan Sei Suka di Kabupaten Batu Bara, sebagai unit pelayanan publik, masih menghadapi berbagai masalah kinerja, seperti keterlambatan dalam menyelesaikan pekerjaan dan kualitas pelayanan yang kurang optimal. Kondisi tersebut diduga dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor seperti kompetensi, kecerdasan emosional, dan kepuasan kerja pegawai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kompetensi dan kecerdasan emosional terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan kepuasan kerja sebagai variabel perantara di Kantor Kecamatan Sei Suka, Kabupaten Batu Bara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari seluruh 55 pegawai tetap Kantor Kecamatan Sei Suka, Kabupaten Batu Bara, yang juga digunakan sebagai sampel penelitian (total sampling). Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis menggunakan metode Partial Least Squares (PLS) dengan bantuan perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi dan kecerdasan emosional memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan. Selain itu, kompetensi dan kecerdasan emosional juga memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja. Kepuasan kerja terbukti memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan serta berperan sebagai variabel perantara dalam hubungan antara kompetensi dan kinerja karyawan, serta antara kecerdasan emosional dan kinerja karyawan. Berdasarkan temuan ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa peningkatan kinerja pegawai di Kantor Kecamatan Sei Suka, Kabupaten Batu Bara dapat dicapai melalui pengembangan kompetensi dan kecerdasan emosional pegawai, yang didukung oleh upaya peningkatan kepuasan kerja. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi pertimbangan para pemimpin dalam merumuskan kebijakan manajemen sumber daya manusia guna meningkatkan kualitas pelayanan publik secara berkelanjutan.

ABSTRACT

Employee performance is an important factor in determining the success of public service delivery, especially at the sub-district level of government. The Sei Suka Sub-district Office in Batu Bara Regency, as a public service unit, still faces various performance issues, such as delays in completing work and suboptimal service quality. These conditions are thought to be influenced by factors such as competence, emotional intelligence, and employee job satisfaction. This study aims to analyze the influence of competence and emotional intelligence on employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The research population consisted of all 55 permanent employees of the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency, who were also used as the research sample (total sampling). Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software. The results show that competence and emotional intelligence have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, competence and emotional intelligence also have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance and acts as an intervening variable in the relationship between competence and employee performance, as well as between emotional intelligence and employee performance. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that improving employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency can be achieved through the development of employee competence and emotional intelligence, supported by efforts to increase job satisfaction. The results of this study are expected to be taken into consideration by leaders in formulating human resource management policies to improve the quality of public services in a sustainable manner.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is one of the main pillars in determining the quality of public sector organizations, including the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office () in Batu Bara Regency. Employees with high performance are able to provide fast, precise, and accurate administrative services, thereby supporting effective governance and increasing public trust in local government. Various reports and observations in the field generally still show obstacles such as delays in completing work, unresponsive services, and discrepancies between service standards and practices in the field. This indicates that employee performance still needs to be improved by strengthening individual and organizational factors.

One important factor that affects performance is employee competence. Competence includes not only technical knowledge and skills, but also attitudes, values, and personal characteristics related to work success. Classically, Spencer & Spencer define competence as basic characteristics related to effective performance. Recent studies also reinforce this view. Wijayanti (2023) shows that improving competency through mapping and training in line with job requirements can significantly increase employee productivity and performance. Anggiani (2024) found that the competence of government officials has a positive effect on organizational performance in government agencies, so public organizations need to pay serious attention to the development of human resource competence. On the other hand, Wijayanto (2021) proved that competence and job satisfaction together improve employee performance, confirming that competence is an important foundation for achieving optimal performance.

In addition to competency, emotional intelligence is also a psychological factor that greatly influences performance, especially in organizations that require a lot of social interaction and service to the community. Goleman (2020) explains that emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions, which includes self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Recent studies reinforce the relevance of emotional intelligence in the context of public sector employee performance. Putri (2025) found that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance in public organizations in Indonesia. Wonda (2024) shows that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to improving the performance of public sector employees, especially in dealing with the pressure and complexity of public service demands. Rasyid (2025) even proved that emotional intelligence can improve performance through increased work ability as a mediating variable. These findings indicate that employees who are able to manage their emotions well, empathize, and establish harmonious working relationships tend to perform better.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is seen as a psychological variable that acts as an intervening variable that bridges the influence of competence and emotional intelligence on performance. Robbins and Judge (2020) define job satisfaction as a positive emotional state that is the result of an evaluation of work experience, which is reflected in the extent to which the job meets individual expectations. Various recent studies show that job satisfaction not only has a direct effect on performance but also mediates the relationship between other variables and performance. Dini (2024) found that job satisfaction mediates the influence of competence, leadership style, and motivation on the performance of Generation Z employees, so that increasing competence without being accompanied by job satisfaction will not result in maximum performance. Tambunan (2025) in his research on DPRD secretariat employees found that job satisfaction mediates the influence of motivation on employee performance, indicating that motivated and satisfied employees will contribute to better performance. Widyastuti (2025) also proved that digital competence and leadership influence employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediator that strengthens this relationship in the context of public bureaucracy. When related to the conditions at the Sei Suka Sub-District Office in Batu Bara Regency, it can be assumed that variations in employee performance are very likely related to differences in the level of competence and emotional intelligence among employees, as well as the level of job satisfaction they feel. Employees who are highly competent but dissatisfied with their work have the potential to not perform at their best. Similarly, employees who have good emotional intelligence but are not supported by an adequate work environment and job satisfaction may experience a decline in motivation and performance. Therefore, it is important to empirically test how competence and emotional intelligence affect employee performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

According to Robbins and Coulter (2021), employee performance is the result of work achieved by an individual in carrying out their responsibilities, which is measured based on organizational standards, criteria, and objectives. They emphasize that performance reflects how effectively an individual achieves the expected results in a job.

Job Satisfaction

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

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.

Competence

Sutrisno (2020) defines competency as the abilities and characteristics of individuals that are used to perform work or tasks in a particular field.

Conceptual Framework

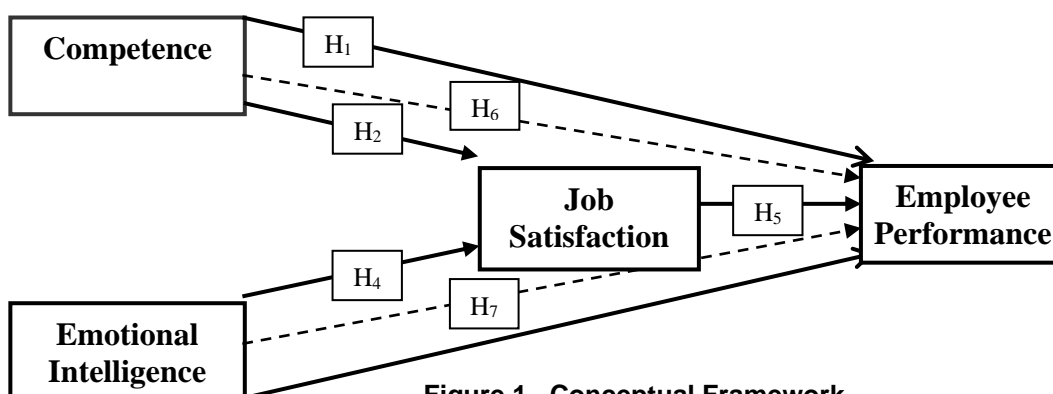


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁: Competency has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.
- H₂: Competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.
- H₃: Emotional intelligence 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 job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.
- H₅: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.
- H₆: Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office, Batu Bara Regency.
- H₇: 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 METHOD

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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Competence	Emotional Intelligence	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction
X1.1	0.804			
X1.2	0.817			
X1.3	0.891			
X1.4	0.826			
X1.5	0.823			
X2.1		0.775		
X2.2		0.855		
X2.3		0.738		
X2.4		0.863		
X2.5		0.753		
Y.1			0.765	
Y.2			0.909	
Y.3			0.762	
Y.4			0.815	
Y.5			0.868	
Y.6			0.870	
Z.1				0.865
Z.2				0.702
Z.3				0.823
Z.4				0.828
Z.5				0.879

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 ≥ 0.60 . 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.

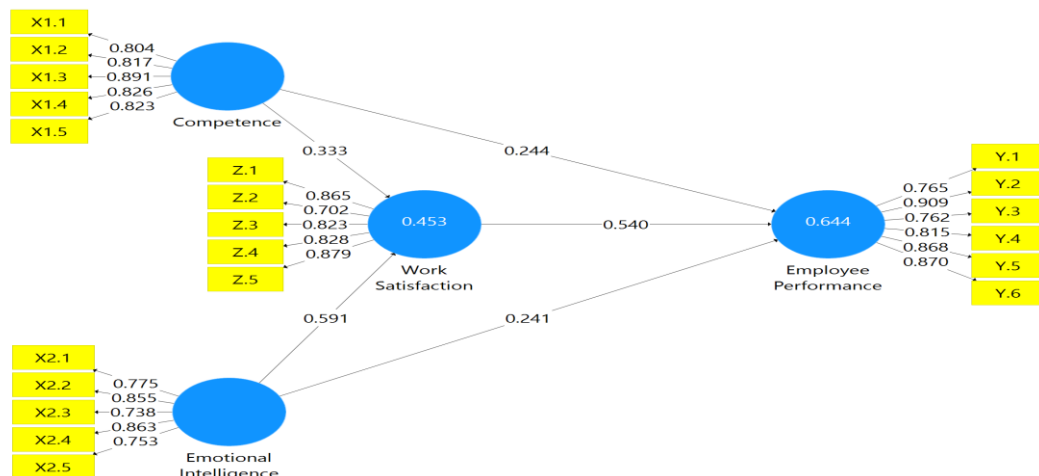


Figure 1. Outer Loading

In this study, there is an equation, and that equation consists of two substructures for substructure

1:

$$Z = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e_1$$

$$Z = 0.333X_1 + 0.591X_2 + e_1$$

For substructure 2:

$$Y = \beta_2 X_1 + \beta_3 X_2 + \beta_3 Z + e_2$$

$$Y = 0.244 X_1 + 0.241 X_2 + 0.540 Z + e_2$$

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competence	0.889	0.891	0.919	0.694
Emotional Intelligence	0.857	0.865	0.898	0.638
Employee Performance	0.911	0.923	0.931	0.695
Job Satisfaction	0.878	0.891	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-squared for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the R-squared estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Work Satisfaction	0.453	0.432
Employee Performance	0.644	0.623

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R-squared values for both dependent variables. For the job satisfaction variable, the R-squared value is 0.453, meaning that the influence of competence and emotional intelligence is 0.453 or 45.3%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for employee performance is 0.644, meaning that competency, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction account for 0.644 or 64.4%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model.

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
Competence -> Employee Performance	0.244	2.717	0.007	Accepted
Competence -> Job Satisfaction	0.333	4.848	0.000	Accepted
Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Performance	0.241	2,171	0.030	Accepted
Emotional Intelligence -> Job Satisfaction	0.591	9.298	0.000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.540	5,448	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 2.717 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.007 below 0.05, meaning that competence 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 competency has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Mesra & Ferine, 2025).
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 4.848 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence 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 competency has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Dahris & Indrawan, 2023).
3. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 2.171 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.030 below 0.05, meaning that emotional intelligence 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 research findings, namely that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Rizki, 2024).
4. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 9.298 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).
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 5.448 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 Effects 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
Competence -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.180	3.443	0.001	Accepted
Emotional Intelligence -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0.319	5.622	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effects between variables, namely:

1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 3.443 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.001 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between competence and employee performance.
2. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 5.622 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.
- 3.

CONCLUSION And RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

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

3. Emotional intelligence 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 job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.
6. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Sei Suka Subdistrict Office in Batu Bara Regency.
7. 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 the salary or compensation I receive." 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.
4. Competence with the lowest score being "I have the skills to support the performance of my work tasks." To improve employees' skills in supporting the performance of their work tasks, organizations are advised to conduct regular training and competency development in line with job requirements. In addition, providing opportunities for independent learning and mentoring by more experienced supervisors or colleagues can help employees hone their skills so that they are able to perform their tasks more effectively and professionally.

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