

The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in a Local Government Protocol Office

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Abstract

Employee performance plays a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness of public sector organizations, particularly government protocol offices that demand high levels of professionalism, responsiveness, and time accuracy. This study aims to examine the effect of work motivation on employee performance, the effect of work motivation on job satisfaction, the effect of job satisfaction on employee performance, and the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between motivation and performance. This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a census survey of 50 employees at the Protocol Office of West Lampung Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 3.0. The results indicate that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also significantly influences employee performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between motivation and employee performance. These findings support Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, emphasizing the importance of motivational factors in shaping job satisfaction and performance in public sector organizations. Practically, this study suggests that government institutions should integrate motivational strategies and job satisfaction management to enhance sustainable employee performance.

Keywords: Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Public Sector, SEM-PLS.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a fundamental determinant of organizational effectiveness in public sector institutions. In local government organizations, performance is not only assessed based on task completion but also on timeliness, discipline, service quality, and

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adaptability to dynamic work demands. This is particularly evident in government protocol offices, where employees are responsible for coordinating official events, managing protocol arrangements for public officials, and ensuring the smooth execution of formal governmental activities (Mahmud et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, public sector performance management has been institutionalized through regulations such as Law No. 5 of 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus and Government Regulation No. 30 of 2019 concerning Civil Servant Performance Assessment. These regulations emphasize objectivity, accountability, and performance-based evaluation. However, empirical evidence suggests that regulatory frameworks alone are insufficient to guarantee optimal employee performance without adequate psychological and organizational support mechanisms (Nurlinda, 2024; Riyanto et al., 2021).

Preliminary observations at the Protocol Office of West Lampung Regency reveal recurring issues related to employee discipline, attendance, and task completion timeliness. Records from 2025 show frequent delays, unauthorized absences, and late completion of protocol duties, which potentially disrupt official governmental agendas and damage institutional credibility. These phenomena indicate underlying behavioral and motivational issues that require systematic investigation (Riyanto, Endri & Herlisha, 2021).

Work motivation has long been recognized as a critical psychological driver influencing employee behavior, commitment, and productivity. Motivated employees tend to exhibit higher levels of enthusiasm, persistence, and responsibility in performing their tasks. However, empirical studies in public sector settings report inconsistent findings regarding the direct effect of motivation on performance, suggesting the presence of intervening variables such as job satisfaction (Sari & Fahmi, 2020; Nugroho et al., 2022).

Job satisfaction reflects an employee's emotional response to their work experience, encompassing satisfaction with tasks, compensation, supervision, promotion opportunities, and work relationships. Previous studies indicate that job satisfaction not only directly affects performance but also serves as a mediating mechanism through which motivation influences performance outcomes. Nevertheless, research focusing on protocol units within local government institutions remains scarce (Putra & Rahmawati, 2021).

This study addresses this research gap by examining the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work motivation and employee performance in a government protocol office. The novelty of this study lies in its specific institutional context and its integration of motivational and attitudinal variables within a public sector protocol environment characterized by high operational pressure and strict performance standards (Utami & Yuliana, 2021).



LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivator factors (achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth) and hygiene factors (working conditions, supervision, salary, and organizational policies). Motivator factors are associated with job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, while hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction but do not directly enhance motivation. In public sector organizations, motivational factors play a crucial role in fostering job satisfaction and improving employee performance (Herzberg, 1959).

Work Motivation

Work motivation refers to internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain work-related behavior (Octaviana et al., 2012). Motivation can be intrinsic, driven by personal growth and achievement, or extrinsic, driven by rewards and organizational policies (Nurdiansyah, 2020). In public organizations, motivation has been found to influence both job satisfaction and performance, although the strength of these relationships varies across institutional contexts (Sari & Pramudiani, 2021).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job experiences (Hasibuan, 2020). It is influenced by multiple factors, including job characteristics, compensation, supervision, promotion opportunities, and interpersonal relationships (As'ad, 2019). High levels of job satisfaction are associated with positive work attitudes, reduced absenteeism, and improved performance (Erlina et al., 2022; Utami & Rahman, 2023).

Employee Performance

Employee performance reflects the extent to which employees accomplish their job responsibilities effectively and efficiently (Mangkunegara, 2020). In the public sector, performance encompasses service quality, task completion accuracy, timeliness, responsibility, and adaptability to organizational demands (Ilham & Lasmana, 2021).

Hypothesis Development

Work motivation is considered a fundamental driver of employee behavior and performance. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility encourage employees to exert greater effort and commitment in performing their tasks. Highly motivated employees tend to demonstrate stronger work engagement, persistence, and a willingness to achieve organizational goals, which ultimately leads to improved quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of performance (Putra



& Widodo, 2023). Therefore, higher levels of work motivation are expected to positively influence employee performance.

H1: Work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance.

Work motivation plays an important role in shaping employees' emotional responses to their jobs. Herzberg's theory suggests that motivational factors generate intrinsic satisfaction by fulfilling employees' psychological needs for achievement, recognition, and personal growth. When employees perceive their work as meaningful and rewarding, they are more likely to experience positive feelings toward their job and work environment (Nurdiansyah, 2020). Consequently, higher work motivation is expected to lead to increased job satisfaction.

H2: Work motivation has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction reflects employees' overall evaluation of their work experiences and significantly influences their work attitudes and behaviors. Satisfied employees are more likely to display positive attitudes, higher levels of engagement, and a stronger sense of responsibility toward their tasks. These positive work attitudes contribute to greater consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness in job performance (Ilham & Lasmana, 2021). Accordingly, job satisfaction is expected to have a positive effect on employee performance.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance.

The relationship between work motivation and employee performance is not always direct and may operate through employees' job-related attitudes. Motivated employees tend to experience higher job satisfaction as their intrinsic needs and expectations are fulfilled. This increased level of satisfaction subsequently enhances their willingness to perform tasks effectively and contribute to organizational objectives (Erlina et al., 2022). Thus, job satisfaction is expected to act as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of work motivation on employee performance.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work motivation and employee performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design. The population consisted of all 50 employees working at the Protocol Office of West Lampung Regency, Indonesia. A census sampling technique was applied, ensuring full population coverage.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale. The instruments measured work motivation, job satisfaction, and employee performance



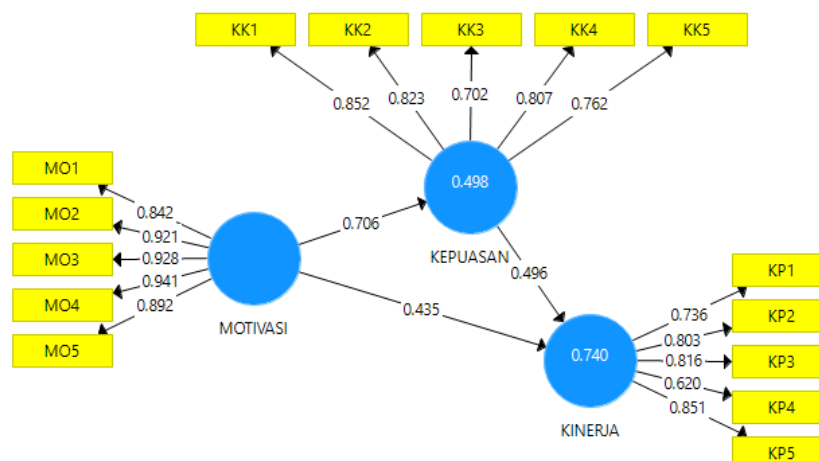
based on established theoretical and empirical indicators. A pilot test was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability.

Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 3.0. The analysis included evaluation of the measurement model (validity and reliability), structural model (path coefficients and R^2), and mediation effects using bootstrapping procedures.

DISCUSSION

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, as all constructs met the established criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, indicating that the indicators consistently and accurately represented their respective latent variables (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2015). The structural model analysis revealed that work motivation has a significant and positive effect on employee performance and job satisfaction, supporting prior empirical findings that motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher effort, commitment, and work effectiveness (Riyanto et al., 2021; Sari & Pramudiani, 2021). In addition, job satisfaction was found to have a significant positive effect on employee performance, confirming that employees who experience positive emotional evaluations of their jobs are more likely to exhibit higher productivity and service quality (Mangkunegara, 2020; Wahyudi, 2022).

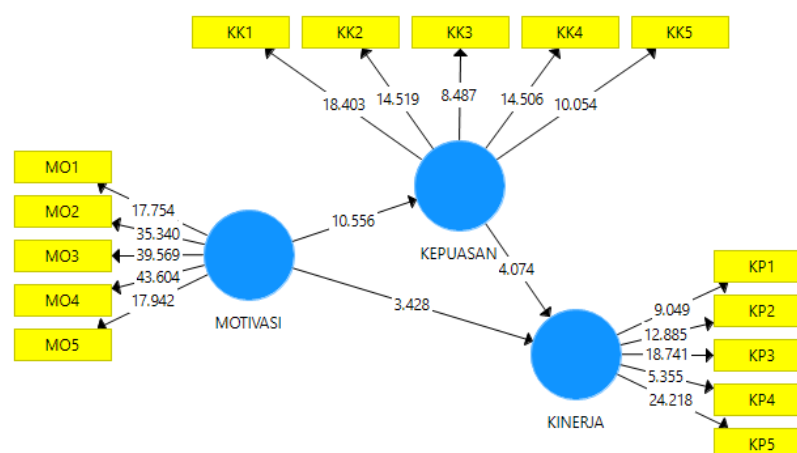
Figure 1. Convergent Validity



Furthermore, the mediation analysis confirmed that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work motivation and employee performance. This result indicates that motivation enhances performance not only through a direct mechanism but also indirectly by increasing employees' job satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens their engagement and responsibility at work (Erlina et al., 2022; Harahap, 2024). These findings provide

empirical support for Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which emphasizes that motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility play a crucial role in fostering job satisfaction and improving performance outcomes (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 2017). In the context of a government protocol office, where work demands are high and operational pressure is substantial, motivated employees who experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to perform effectively, maintain discipline, and respond adaptively to organizational demands, thereby contributing to sustainable public sector performance (Utami & Rahman, 2023).

Figure 2. Inner Model



The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results of this study indicate that work motivation has a significant and positive effect on employee performance, supporting H1. This finding suggests that employees who possess higher levels of motivation tend to demonstrate better work outcomes, including task completion quality, timeliness, and responsibility. From the perspective of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility stimulate intrinsic motivation, which encourages employees to exert greater effort and persistence in performing their duties (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 2017). This result is consistent with previous empirical studies showing that motivation significantly enhances employee performance in both public and private sector organizations (Riyanto et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). In the context of a government protocol office, where performance standards are closely linked to punctuality and service precision, motivated employees are more likely to maintain high performance levels under demanding work conditions.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction

The findings also confirm H2, indicating that work motivation has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. This result implies that motivated employees experience more

positive emotional responses toward their jobs. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory explains that motivational factors fulfill employees' psychological needs for achievement and self-development, which in turn generate job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Empirical evidence supports this relationship, showing that employees who perceive their work as meaningful and rewarding tend to report higher levels of satisfaction (Sari & Pramudiani, 2021; Al-dalahmeh et al., 2023). In public sector institutions, where financial rewards may be relatively standardized, intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction by enhancing employees' sense of purpose and recognition at work.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

The results further support H3, demonstrating that job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee performance. This finding suggests that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to display positive work attitudes, stronger engagement, and a higher sense of responsibility. Job satisfaction has been widely recognized as a key attitudinal variable that influences behavioral outcomes, including performance effectiveness and service quality (Judge et al., 2017; Mangkunegara, 2020). Satisfied employees tend to invest more cognitive and emotional resources into their work, which ultimately enhances performance outcomes (Wahyudi, 2022). In a government protocol setting, job satisfaction contributes to consistent performance, discipline, and adaptability, which are essential for handling formal governmental activities and public service demands.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

The mediation analysis confirms H4, indicating that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between work motivation and employee performance. This result suggests that motivation influences performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. Motivated employees are more likely to experience satisfaction as their intrinsic needs and expectations are fulfilled, and this satisfaction subsequently strengthens their commitment and performance (Erlina et al., 2022; Harahap, 2024). This finding aligns with previous studies that highlight job satisfaction as a key psychological mechanism linking motivation and performance (Yousaf et al., 2021; Utami & Rahman, 2023). The partial mediation effect implies that while motivation directly drives performance, its impact is amplified when employees also feel satisfied with their jobs. Therefore, managing motivation without addressing job satisfaction may limit the potential performance gains in public sector organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work motivation is a critical determinant of employee performance in public sector protocol offices, both directly and through job satisfaction. Job



satisfaction plays a partial mediating role, highlighting its importance as a psychological mechanism linking motivation and performance.

This study contributes to public sector human resource management literature by empirically validating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in a protocol service context and demonstrating the mediating role of job satisfaction. Public sector managers should prioritize motivational strategies that enhance intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, such as recognition, career development, and meaningful task assignment, to improve employee performance sustainably. This study is limited to a single local government institution. Future research should expand the sample scope, incorporate comparative institutional settings, and explore additional mediating or moderating variables.

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