



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijemss.v7i2>
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Employee Performance Model Through Job Satisfaction: Analysis of Work Environment and Competence (Study at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of work environment and competence on employee performance both directly and indirectly through work satisfaction at the Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Department of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. The population in this study were 72 employees. This study used a census method where all employees were used as research samples. This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method and used Partial Least Square (PLS) data analysis. The results of the study indicate that work environment and competence have an influence on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through employee job satisfaction. This explains that if the PUPR Department of East Tanjung Jabung Regency has a conducive work environment, and is also supported by a good level of employee competence, this will cause employees to be more satisfied in their work, working optimally in the organization.

Keywords: Work Environment, Competence, Job Satisfaction, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a vital element in achieving organizational effectiveness, especially for government agencies that are required to provide public services in a professional, accountable, and efficient manner. According to Mangkunegara (2017), employee performance can be understood as the work results, both in quality and quantity, achieved by employees in accordance with their responsibilities. High performance will be an indicator of the organization's success in carrying out its functions and roles, conversely, low performance has the potential to hinder the achievement of organizational goals. In the current era of globalization and decentralization, state civil servants must be able to demonstrate professionalism, competence, and a high work ethic in order to respond to increasingly dynamic social, economic, and technological changes (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

One important factor influencing performance is the work environment (Wicaksono et al, 2022; Yandi, 2022). The work environment encompasses both the physical and non-physical conditions surrounding employees as they carry out their work. Nitisemito (2001) explains that

a comfortable work environment will increase productivity, while an inadequate work environment will hinder performance. Empirical findings support this, for example, research by Sihaloho and Siregar (2019) and Kusumastuti et al. (2019) proves that a conducive work environment positively influences employee satisfaction and performance. However, in practice, many government agencies still face obstacles such as limited work facilities, unorganized workspaces, and other suboptimal supporting facilities, making it difficult for employees to achieve maximum performance.

In addition to the work environment, employee competency is a crucial factor (Susanto et al 2024; Natalia & Ali, 2024; Giovanni & Ali, 2024; Susanto et al., 2023; Afuan et al., 2024). Competence is defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform a job well (Hutapea & Thoha, 2008). Troter in Soetrisno and Gilang (2018) emphasized that competent employees are able to complete their work quickly, accurately, and with minimal errors. Empirically, Wiarah (2014) found that competencies that are appropriate to the field of work increase employee satisfaction and performance. However, a classic problem remains in the public sector, namely employee placement that does not match educational backgrounds or expertise. This condition was also found in the Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Department of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, where several technical positions were filled by employees with non-technical education. This has the potential to cause a competency mismatch that impacts the quality of work results.

Another equally important factor is job satisfaction (Afuan et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2024). Job satisfaction reflects a positive emotional attitude toward one's work. Luthans (2006) states that job satisfaction is influenced by five dimensions: the work itself, supervision, coworkers, promotion, and compensation. Job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable that can strengthen the influence of the work environment and competence on employee performance (Handoko, 2011; Harini et al., 2020). Empirical research shows that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more disciplined, motivated, and committed to the organization (Deswarta, 2017). Conversely, low job satisfaction has the potential to reduce productivity, increase absenteeism, and increase employee turnover. In the context of the Public Works and Housing Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, employee job satisfaction is still hampered by limited physical facilities, minimal career development opportunities, and workloads that do not match expertise.

A research gap emerged when theoretically, many studies confirmed the influence of the work environment and competency on performance. However, research that places job satisfaction as a mediating variable in the public sector, particularly in local government agencies, is still limited. Most previous studies focused more on the private sector or large companies (Aima et al., 2017; Riyanto et al., 2017). Therefore, this study presents an important contribution in testing the model of employee performance through job satisfaction in a different context, namely local government agencies with unique bureaucratic dynamics and resources.

The urgency of this research is further strengthened given the demands for regional autonomy under Law No. 32 of 2003, which emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of regional apparatus as a driving force for development (Field Observation, 2025). The Public Works and Housing Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency plays a strategic role in infrastructure development, so the quality of its employees' performance has direct implications for the success of regional development. Therefore, this study is relevant both practically and academically. Practically, the research results are expected to provide input for personnel management to improve the work environment, enhance employee competency, and create a system capable of encouraging job satisfaction. Academically, this research enriches the literature on human resource management in the public sector by emphasizing the role of job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

Based on the background and identification of the problem, this study formulates the following questions: (1) Does the work environment influence employee job satisfaction? (2) Does competence influence employee job satisfaction? (3) Does the work environment influence employee performance? (4) Does competence influence employee performance? (5) Does job satisfaction influence employee performance? (6) Does the work environment through job satisfaction influence employee performance? and (7) Does competence through job satisfaction influence employee performance?

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive and verification methods. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study attempts to examine the relationship between measurable variables through a questionnaire, allowing the results to be statistically analyzed (Sugiyono, 2015). The descriptive approach provides an overview of the work environment, competency, job satisfaction, and employee performance, while the verification approach tests hypotheses regarding the direct and indirect influences between variables (Ferdinand, 2016).

The research location was conducted at the Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Department of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, with the analysis unit being all 72 employees. Due to the relatively small population (<100), the sampling technique used was the census method, namely all members of the population were used as research samples (Umar, 2012). Thus, the results of this study are expected to describe the actual conditions of all employees in the agency.

Data collection was conducted using two main techniques: questionnaire distribution and documentation study. The questionnaire was structured in a closed format so that respondents could answer based on the available options, facilitating quantitative analysis. Documentation study was conducted to obtain additional data from records, performance reports, and organizational documents relevant to the research variables (Sugiyono, 2015).

To analyze the data, this study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. PLS was chosen because it is capable of analyzing complex models with a relatively small sample size and does not require many data distribution assumptions (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The PLS-SEM analysis consists of two stages: an outer model used to assess construct validity and reliability, and an inner model used to test causal relationships between latent variables. Construct validity was tested through convergent validity and discriminant validity, while reliability was tested through composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2017).

The structural model was then evaluated by examining the R-square (R^2) value as a measure of predictive power, and the f-square (f^2) value to determine the magnitude of each exogenous variable's effect on the endogenous variable. Furthermore, hypothesis testing was performed by examining the t-statistic and p-value generated from the bootstrapping process. Thus, this analysis method not only describes the direct relationship between variables but also examines the mediating role of job satisfaction in the research model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The following will explain the characteristics of the respondents based on Gender, Age, Education Level and Length of Service, which have been distributed to 72 respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to three Public Works and Spatial Planning Departments of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. Based on the results of data collection through the distribution of questionnaires to employees who served as respondents, the characteristics of each respondent can be identified with the hope that this information can be used as input which will be described as follows.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

No	Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Man	45	62,5
	Woman	27	37,5
2	Age Group (Years)		
	< 25	8	11,1
	25 – 35	34	47,2
	36 – 45	28	38,9
	> 45	2	2,8
3	Education		
	Senior High School	12	16,7
	Diploma	18	25
	Bachelor	38	52,8
	Master	4	5,6
4	Length of Service (Years)		
	< 3	8	11,1
	3 – 6	24	33,3
	7 – 10	34	47,2
	11 – 14	5	6,9
	> 14	1	1,4

Source: Questionnaire data processing results, 2025.

Descriptive Research Variables

Before answering the proposed hypothesis, the author will first describe the variables to be studied. In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the research variables, namely the work environment, competence, job satisfaction, and employee performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency using a Likert scale. This scale is designed to determine the extent to which subjects agree or disagree with the statements proposed. Descriptive analysis is used by compiling a frequency distribution table to determine whether the level of value (score) obtained for the research variables falls into the following categories: very good, good, fairly good, not good, or very bad.

Table 2. Descriptive Research Variables

No	Hipotesis	Score	Range	Results
1.	X1_ Work Environment	270,1	244,8 – 302,2	Good
2.	X2_ Competence	269,4	244,8 – 302,2	Good
3.	M_ Job satisfaction	270,9	244,8 – 302,2	Tall
4.	Z_ Performance	271,1	244,8 – 302,2	Good

Source: Questionnaire data processing results (2025).

Reflective Construct Measurement Model Test Results (Outer Model)

The purpose of a measurement model is to represent the relationship between constructs and their corresponding indicator variables (commonly referred to as the outer model in PLS-SEM). The measurement model explains how the construct is measured and is reliable, valid, and reliable by examining convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

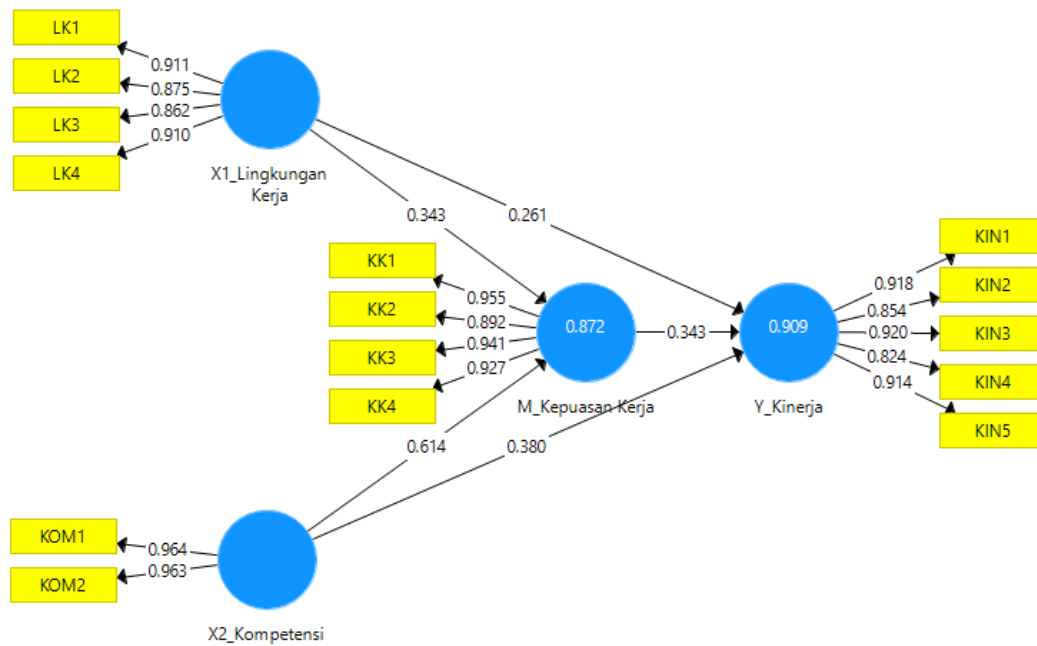


Figure 1. Outer Model

a. Test The Validity Of Reflective Constructs Research Variables

Validity test with reflective constructs is the extent to which the size of a construct should be highly correlated. Test the validity of reflective constructs with reflective constructs can be seen through the value of the loading factor for each indicator construct. The rule of thumb used is that the standard loading factor value must be 0.7 or higher and the average variance extracted (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5. A high Loading factor indicates that the indicators contained in the construct have many similarities so that they have the same meaning in a construct (Hair et al., 2017). Here are the results of loading factor and AVE value for each indicator-construct:

Table 3. Initial Test of Reflective Construct Validity

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	Decision
X1_Work Environment	LK1	0,911	0,792	Valid
	LK2	0,875		Valid
	LK3	0,862		Valid
	LK4	0,910		Valid
X2_Competence	KOM1	0,964	0,928	Valid
	KOM2	0,963		Valid
M_Job Satisfaction	KK1	0,955	0,863	Valid
	KK2	0,892		Valid
	KK3	0,941		Valid
	KK4	0,927		Valid
Y_Performance	KIN1	0,918	0,786	Valid
	KIN2	0,854		Valid
	KIN3	0,920		Valid
	KIN4	0,824		Valid
	KIN5	0,914		Valid

Source: Output SmartPLS 3, 2025.

In general, indicators with an outer loading between 0.40 – 0.70 should be removed from the scale when removing the indicator leads to an increase in the value of composite reliability and the value of average variance extracted (AVE). While indicators with very low outer

loading values (below 0.40) should be eliminated from the contract (Hair et al, 2017). Because the outer loading is very far from 0.4, and above the Ave value, therefore it can be concluded that all indicators have met the rule of thumb. So there is no need to eliminate indicators, and re-estimate.

In addition to conducting a validity test through outer loading, the author also conducted a reliability test to prove the accuracy, precision, and consistency of the instrument in measuring the construct. Here are the results of the composite reliability values in the table below as follows:

Table 4. Composite Reliability Values

Variable	Composite Reliability	Decision
X1 Work Environment	0,938	Reliable
X2 Competence	0,963	Reliable
M Job Satisfaction	0,962	Reliabel
Y Performance	0,948	Reliable

Source: Output SmartPLS 3, 2025.

Based on the results in the table above, the composite reliability values for all constructs are greater than 0.7, with the minimum value being 0.938, indicated by the work environment variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs in this study are reliable and meet the reliability test.

b. Structural Model Test Results (Inner Model)

Once the measurement model (outer model) has demonstrated satisfactory results, the next step in evaluating PLS-SEM results is to assess the structural model (inner model). Structural model analysis is carried out to find evidence supporting the theoretical model (the theoretical relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs) (Avkiran & Ringle, 2018).

1) R-Square value (Coefficient of determination)

The results of the calculation of the coefficient of determination for this research model are presented in the following table:

Table 5. R Square Value

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
M Job Satisfaction	0,872	0,868
Y Performance	0,909	0,905

Source: Output SmartPLS 3, 2025.

Based on the results of data processing in the table above, obtained R-square value of job satisfaction of 0.872. This value explains that the variable job satisfaction can be explained by the construct of work environment and competence of 87.2 percent, while the remaining 12.8 percent is influenced by other factors that are not included in the research model. Then for the performance variables obtained R-square value of 0.909 which means that the amount of influence of the work environment, competence and job satisfaction on performance is 90.9 percent, while the remaining 9.1 percent is influenced by other factors that are not included in this research model. When viewed from the value of R Square obtained, it can be concluded that the test results of the structural model (inner model) of job satisfaction variables and employee performance variables including the category of "strong " model".

2) F-Square Values (f^2 Effect Size)

Table 6. F-Square Values

	M Job Satisfaction	Y Performance
X1 Work Environment	0,696	0,825
X2 Competence	0,117	0,273
M Performance		0,160

Sumber: Output SmartPLS 3, 2025.

Based on the results of data processing in the table above, it can be seen that there is 1 variable that has the largest contribution to the R-square value in the research model, namely the f-square value of the work environment and competency variables on job satisfaction, respectively, namely 0.696 or 69.6% (large), and 0.117 or 11.7% (small). Then for the work environment, competency and job satisfaction variables on performance, respectively, namely 0.825 or 82.5% (Large), 0.273 or 27.3% (medium), 0.160 or 16% (medium).

c. Hypothesis Testing Results

The next step is to examine the significance of the hypothesized relationship between constructs or the influence of variables on path coefficients using a bootstrapping procedure. The next step is to analyze the bootstrapping output to determine the magnitude of the T-statistic.

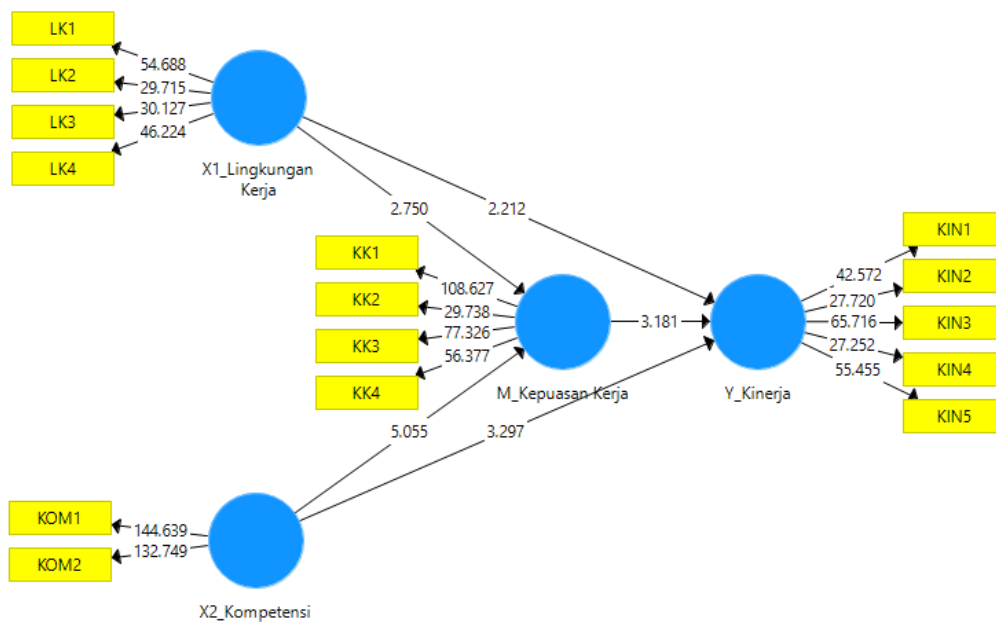


Figure 2. Research Construct Relationship Model Using Bootstrapping Method

Based on the results of the inter-construct relationship modeling obtained, the next step is to conduct a statistical evaluation using the bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS 3.0. This analysis will comprehensively describe both the direct and indirect influences between the research variables, with the following explanation:

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P Value	Decision
H1 : X1 -> M	0,343	2,750	0,006	Accepted

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P Value	Decision
H2 : X2 -> M	0,614	5,055	0,000	Accepted
H3 : X1 -> Y	0,261	2,212	0,027	Accepted
H4 : X2 -> Y	0,380	3,297	0,001	Accepted
H5 : M -> Y	0,343	3,181	0,002	Accepted
H6 : X1 -> M -> Y	0,118	2,652	0,008	Accepted
H7 : X2 -> M -> Y	0,211	2,329	0,020	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS 3 output, 2025.

The results of direct and indirect hypothesis testing obtained a T-statistic value > rule of thumb (1.96) and P value < 0.05 (5%), with these results it can be concluded that all direct and indirect influence hypotheses are accepted.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the work environment has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction and performance. This is in line with the theory that states that a comfortable, safe, and supportive work environment will encourage employees to feel more at home at work and display their best performance (Nitisemito, 2001). Robbins and Judge (2013) also explained that external environmental factors, such as physical facilities, relationships between employees, and organizational systems, have a significant influence on job satisfaction. Empirically, research by Kusumastuti, Hendriani, and Wibowo (2019) and Sihaloho and Siregar (2019) proves that a conducive work environment can increase job satisfaction, which in turn improves performance. Thus, these findings emphasize that improving physical facilities and a harmonious work climate will have an impact on increasing employee satisfaction and productivity at the Public Works and Housing Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency.

Furthermore, employee competency has been shown to significantly influence job satisfaction and performance. Competence, encompassing both technical and non-technical skills, is the primary foundation for employees to effectively perform their duties (Hutapea & Thoha, 2008). Employees with expertise relevant to their field of work will be more confident, productive, and satisfied because they are able to optimally utilize their abilities. Empirically, research by Wiarah (2014) and Aima, Adam, and Ali (2017) confirms that competency is closely related to job satisfaction and performance. However, observations at the Public Works and Housing Agency (PUPR) indicate a persistent mismatch between employee educational backgrounds and positions. This mismatch has the potential to reduce work effectiveness and lead to dissatisfaction because employees are unable to effectively utilize their competencies.

Furthermore, this study confirms that job satisfaction plays a significant role as a mediating variable in the relationship between the work environment and competency on employee performance. Luthans' (2006) theory states that job satisfaction reflects employees' positive feelings toward their work, which are influenced by factors such as the work itself, supervision, coworkers, promotions, and compensation. Satisfied employees are more disciplined, loyal, and motivated, thus improving their performance (Handoko, 2011). Empirically, Harini et al. (2020) found that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of employee performance in the public sector. Thus, this study adds to the evidence that job satisfaction is not only an independent factor but also an important mechanism that mediates the influence of organizational factors on performance.

Another finding shows that although the average employee performance was quite high, there was a downward trend in the final year of the study. This indicates that high performance is not yet fully sustainable. According to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, environmental

factors (hygiene factors) such as facilities and working conditions, if not met, can reduce job satisfaction and ultimately suppress employee performance (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Therefore, improving facilities, matching employee placement with competencies, and enhancing the reward system are urgently needed to achieve optimal and sustainable performance.

Overall, this study supports previous literature emphasizing the importance of the work environment and competencies in shaping employee performance. It also contributes by demonstrating the mediating role of job satisfaction in the context of local government agencies. This is relevant to the need for bureaucratic reform and improving the quality of civil servants, particularly in the era of regional autonomy. Thus, the research findings not only strengthen existing empirical evidence but also provide practical implications for human resource management in government agencies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the work environment and competency significantly influence both job satisfaction and employee performance at the Public Works and Housing Agency (PUPR) of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. A conducive work environment can increase job satisfaction, while competency appropriate to the task area strengthens employee performance. Furthermore, this study also proves that job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of the work environment and competency on performance. This means that the better the work environment and the higher the employee competency, the higher the job satisfaction, which ultimately impacts the achievement of optimal performance.

Although this study provides significant findings, it has several limitations. First, the study was conducted at only one agency, the Public Works and Housing Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other government agencies with different characteristics. Second, the sample size was relatively small due to the limited employee population, so the use of the SEM-PLS method, although appropriate, still has limitations in measuring model complexity. Third, the study variables were limited to the work environment, competency, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Other factors such as leadership, motivation, organizational culture, and reward systems were not examined, even though these factors also have the potential to influence employee performance.

Based on the research findings and existing limitations, several recommendations can be put forward. First, in practical terms, the management of the Public Works and Housing Agency needs to improve the quality of the work environment by providing adequate physical facilities, arranging comfortable workspaces, and creating a harmonious work climate. Second, in terms of competency, it is necessary to place employees according to their expertise, education, and skills, and provide ongoing training and development programs so that employees have skills relevant to job demands. Third, to increase job satisfaction, the organization needs to pay attention to reward systems, promotion opportunities, and more effective internal communication, so that employees feel appreciated and motivated.

From an academic perspective, further research is recommended to broaden its scope by involving several government agencies and the private sector to make the results more generalizable. Furthermore, future researchers can add other variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, and work motivation to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing employee performance. Thus, future research is expected to enrich the human resource management literature, particularly in the context of public bureaucracy in Indonesia.

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