



The Effect of Competence and Staff Placement on Performance with Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the direct and indirect influence of competency and employee placement on performance through job satisfaction at the East Java Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Office (DP3AK).

Research Methodology: The research approach was quantitative. The research data were collected using a survey method with a Likert scale questionnaire. The sampling technique was carried out purposively using the Slovin formula. The analysis technique uses the Structural Equation Model (SEM) PLS-SEM version 4.1.9.

Results: The results of the study show that there is a direct and significant influence of employee competence and employee placement on employee performance at the DP3AK Office in East Java Province. Job satisfaction significantly mediates the influence of employee competence and placement on employee performance in the DP3AK Office of East Java Province.

Conclusions: This study shows that employee competence and placement directly impact performance at the East Java DP3AK Office, with job satisfaction serving as a significant mediator in this relationship.

Limitations: The study focuses on a single government office in East Java, limiting generalizability. The small sample size of 67 employees may not fully represent the broader population, and other external factors influencing performance were not considered.

Contributions: This research highlights the role of employee competence and placement in performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating factor, offering insights for improving human resource practices in public organizations.

Keywords: *Competence, Employee Placement, Job Satisfaction DP3AK, Performance*

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1. Introduction

The Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Office (DP3AK) is a government agency responsible for advancing women and protecting children from all forms of violence and discrimination. The functions and roles of DP3AK include empowering women economically, socially, and politically. This can be achieved through training programs, education, providing access to economic resources, and support for skill development. DP3AK also conducts various activities, such as awareness campaigns, victim assistance services, policy advocacy, and the establishment of a child protection system. DP3AK also plays an important role in monitoring and ensuring law enforcement against violations of women's

and children's rights. They work closely with the police, other legal institutions, universities, and the private sector to ensure that violations are followed up seriously.

Competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affect a person's duties or responsibilities in the workplace, which are related to performance, can be measured based on accepted standards, and can be improved through training and development (Kuncoro & Harahap, 2021; Setyawati et al., 2020). Competencies include knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA - Knowledge, Skill, Ability) that in the workplace (Ayuningtyas & Iman, 2021; Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014). This competency is being faced by DP3AK East Java Province. DP3AK employees are employees starting from DP3AK East Java and from other departments assigned to DP3AK. This transfer is relatively less based on the competencies employees possess.

In relation to this competency issue, it becomes necessary to research the placement of employees further. According to Hasibuan (2005) and Wahyuningsih et al. (2021), employee placement aims to place the right person in the right position. Appropriate placement involves consideration of the educational background, physical and spiritual health, work experience, age, gender, marital status, interests, and hobbies of the employee, matching individuals with job titles based on knowledge, skills, references, and personality. Job placement should ensure that workers can carry out the responsibilities and risks related to these tasks and jobs (Siswanto, 2005; Syahril & Sudono, 2021).

If employees are placed appropriately in compliance with the requirements of the organization, the organization will produce maximum performance. Employee performance is important because the performance of individual employees in an organization is part of the overall performance of the organization. When employees have competencies that match the demands of the job, they tend to be effective and efficient. When an employee's competencies match the demands of the job, it can increase their confidence, motivation, and job satisfaction. Thus, the relationship between competency and employee performance is very close, and strong competence can be a driver to achieve high performance in the work environment (Agusinta et al., 2021; Heriyanto, 2021; Keke et al., 2021).

The right placement of employees has a significant impact on employee performance in organizations. When an employee is placed in a position or job title that matches their competencies, interests, and potential, they can make maximum contributions and achieve optimal performance. With the right placement, employees can feel more motivated, confident, and passionate about performing their duties.

Several researchers have examined the relationship between competence and placement in employee performance. Berlian Rms and Wahyuningsih (2021) and Zacher et al. (2018) stated that employee competence did not have a significant effect on performance, then Hamdiah et al. (2023) and Saputro and Soleha (2021) stated that employee competence did not have a significant effect but employee placement had a significant effect. Meanwhile, according to research by Kusumawardana et al. (2023), employee competence and placement significantly affect performance. Based on the lack of consistent results, it is suspected that other variables play a role in the relationship between competence and placement and employee performance (Creswell, 2014). These variables can function as mediators. According to Purba (2020), the mediating factor can be related to employees' job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction plays an important role as a mediating variable that affects employee performance in various organizations (Setyawati et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2021). Job satisfaction includes positive feelings and pleasant evaluations of aspects of a job, including salary, work environment, recognition of achievements, and opportunities for growth. When employees feel satisfied with these aspects, they tend to be more motivated, passionate, and dedicated to carrying out their tasks (Parmenas, 2021; Ricardianto et al., 2021).

As a mediating variable, job satisfaction connects internal organizational factors with employee perfor-

mance. Working conditions in the context that will be studied further include employee competencies and placements (Susanto & Parmenas, 2021). Therefore, increasing employee job satisfaction can be an effective strategy for mediating and improving their overall performance at work. Organizations that pay attention to the needs and expectations of employees have a better chance of achieving optimal performance levels and building a positive and productive work environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance is a critical indicator of organizational success, reflecting the extent to which employees achieve work targets and contribute to organizational objectives (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019; Ulabor & Bosede, 2019). High performance is generally associated with efficiency, quality of work, and the ability to meet deadlines. Organizations rely on employee performance as a benchmark for evaluating productivity and competitiveness (Arimie, 2020; Muhammad et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence performance is essential for improving overall organizational outcomes (Makambe & Moeng, 2019; Panchali & Seneviratne, 2019).

2.2 Competence

Competence refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that employees possess to carry out their tasks effectively. It is a fundamental element that determines how well an individual can perform job responsibilities (Kurniawan, 2018; Salman et al., 2020). Employees with high competence tend to demonstrate better decision-making, adaptability, and innovation in their work. Competence can be developed through education, training, and work experience, making it a strategic asset for organizations aiming to enhance employee performance (Sisyuk, 2018).

2.3 Staff Placement

Staff placement is the process of assigning employees to positions that align with their qualifications, skills, and interests. Proper placement ensures that employees can perform their duties efficiently and effectively (Abdullah, 2021; Aprillita & Perkasa, 2021). When employees are placed in roles that match their competencies, they are more likely to feel comfortable and confident in their work. On the other hand, inappropriate placement may lead to job mismatch, reduced motivation, and lower productivity, which can negatively impact performance (Oraison et al., 2019; Susilowati et al., 2018; Zacher et al., 2018).

2.4 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents an employee's emotional and psychological response to their job. It is influenced by various factors such as compensation, work environment, leadership, and opportunities for career advancement. Employees who experience high job satisfaction tend to exhibit greater motivation, commitment, and loyalty to the organization. Job satisfaction also plays a significant role in reducing absenteeism and turnover, thereby supporting organizational stability (Irabor & Okolie, 2019; Lu et al., 2019).

2.5 The Relationship Between Competence and Job Satisfaction

Competence is closely related to job satisfaction, as employees who feel capable and confident in their abilities are more likely to enjoy their work. When employees possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their tasks, they experience less stress and greater job fulfillment. This sense of competence enhances their confidence and contributes positively to their overall job satisfaction (Arian et al., 2018; Pfister et al., 2020; Ratnasari & Adam, 2019).

2.6 The Relationship Between Staff Placement and Job Satisfaction

Proper staff placement contributes significantly to job satisfaction by ensuring that employees are assigned to roles that suit their capabilities and interests. When there is a good fit between the employee and the job, individuals are more likely to feel valued and motivated. Conversely, poor placement can result in dissatisfaction due to mismatched expectations and job demands, leading to decreased morale and engagement (Mahmood et al., 2019).

2.7 The Effect of Competence on Employee Performance

Competence has a direct impact on employee performance, as it determines the ability of individuals to complete tasks effectively and efficiently. Employees with higher competence levels are more productive, make fewer errors, and are better equipped to handle challenges. As a result, competence is considered a key driver in improving both individual and organizational performance (Elrehail et al., 2020; Mira et al., 2019).

2.8 The Effect of Staff Placement on Employee Performance

Staff placement influences employee performance by ensuring that the right person is assigned to the right job. When employees are placed according to their expertise, they can maximize their potential and contribute more effectively to organizational goals. Proper placement not only enhances productivity but also minimizes inefficiencies and work-related errors (Rinny et al., 2020; Setyowati et al., 2020; Suwanto & Subyantoro, 2019).

2.9 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between competence, staff placement, and employee performance (Marhayani & Ibrahim, 2019). Competence and appropriate placement can improve performance directly; however, they also enhance job satisfaction, which in turn leads to higher performance. Satisfied employees are more motivated, engaged, and willing to exert extra effort, thereby strengthening the overall impact of competence and placement on performance (Hendri, 2019; Khan et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach. The research data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire. This research was conducted at the DP3AK office of East Java Province. The independent variables of this study were competence and employee placement. Job satisfaction was the intervening variable, and employee performance was the dependent variable. The competency dimension used was based on research (Salman et al., 2020). Job satisfaction indicators were taken from Pfister et al. (2020). The results of the validity test using Pearson's correlation showed that all the variables measured in this study were valid. The validity of a variable was achieved if the significance value was less than 0.05. Reliability tests were conducted to assess the internal consistency of the items in this research questionnaire. Measurements were made using the alpha-Cronbach coefficient. The test results obtained the Alpha Cronbach value of all variables above 0.70, so that all variables had an adequate level of reliability. The population in this study is all DP3AK employees of East Java Province, which totals 200. The sampling technique was purposively, using the Slovin formula, a large sample size of 67. The data collection method involved distributing questionnaires using both offline printed questionnaires and online G-Forms. The data were then analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) PLS SEM version 4.1.9.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Based on the test results, all the values of the loading factor/outer loading indicator in each variable were > 0.7 , and it was concluded that all indicators in each variable passed the convergent validity test. Furthermore, the validity of the crime can also be measured using the Fornell Larcker value. Where the Fornell Larcker Value (AVE Root) > 0.5 main variable and higher compared to the values of other variables, the latent variable is good.

Table 1. Results of the Fornell Larcker Method Discriminant Validity Test

Variabel	Satisfaction	Performance	Competence	Employee Placement
Satisfaction	0.913			
Performance	0.659	0.908		
Competence	0.421	0.463	0.941	
Employee Placement	0.504	0.575	0.269	0.924

Based on Table 1, it was found that all Fornell-Larcker values (average root) (yellow) of each variable were > 0.5 and higher correlated with other variables. It can be concluded that all variables passed the discriminatory validity test of the Fornell-Larcker method. The results of the construct validity and construct reliability tests are as follows:

Table 2. Results of the Fornell Larcker Method Discriminant Validity Test

Variabel	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Satisfaction	0.834	0.971	0.976
Performance	0.824	0.969	0.974
Competence	0.886	0.957	0.969
Employee Placement	0.854	0.943	0.959

Based on Table 2, all AVE values for each variable were > 0.5 and the reliability test results were > 0.7 ; therefore, it can be concluded that all variables passed the construction validity and reliability tests. After the measurement model test, the next stage was the structural model. The structural stage aims to determine whether there is an influence between variables (Prijono et al., 2021; Saputra & Kusnadi, 2021). The test was performed using a t-test. A variable has an influence if the significance value t is less than 0.05.

The calculation results are shown in the following figure.

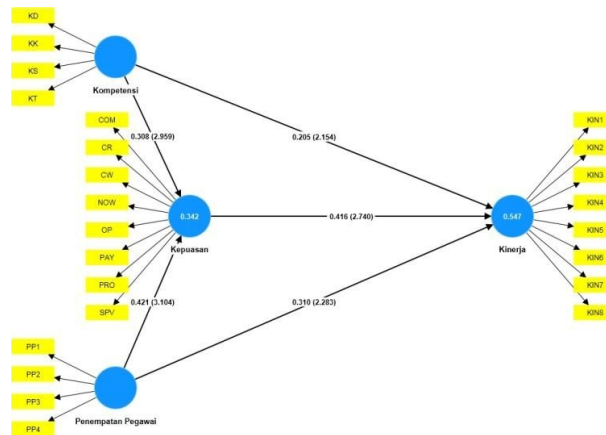


Figure 1. Inner Model Results

Based on Figure 1, competence has a positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.308$; $t = 2.959$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.205$; $t = 2.154$). Employee placement also shows a positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.421$; $t = 3.104$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.310$; $t = 2.283$). Furthermore, job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.416$; $t = 2.740$). The coefficient of determination indicates that competence and employee placement explain 34.2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.342$), while competence, employee placement, and job satisfaction explain 54.7% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.547$).

The following are the estimated values and results of testing the hypothesis of the direct influence of the relationship between the research variables:

Table 3. Results of Inner Model Testing

Relationship between Variables	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Direct Effect			
Competence → Performance	0.205	2.154	0.031
Employee Placement → Performance	0.310	2.283	0.022
Indirect Effect			
Competence → Satisfaction → Performance	0.128	1.971	0.049
Employee Placement → Satisfaction → Performance	0.175	1.974	0.048

Based on Table 3, the results of the inner model testing show that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($O = 0.205$, $t = 2.154$, $p = 0.031$). Employee placement also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($O = 0.310$, $t = 2.283$, $p = 0.022$).

Furthermore, the indirect effect results indicate that competence influences employee performance through job satisfaction ($O = 0.128$, $t = 1.971$, $p = 0.049$), and employee placement influences employee performance through job satisfaction ($O = 0.175$, $t = 1.974$, $p = 0.048$). These results suggest that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between competence, employee placement, and employee performance.

4.1.1 Direct Impact Testing

The relationship between competence and performance showed a significant result with a p-value below 0.05, so it was statistically significant, with a coefficient of 0.205. This shows that improving employee competencies contributes to improving their performance. This shows that competence positively contributes to employee work outcomes.

Employee placement also had a significant effect on performance, showing significant results with a p-value below 0.05, which was statistically significant, with a coefficient of 0.310. This shows that the placement of employees contributes positively to their work results

4.1.2 Indirect Influence Testing

The results of the analysis also show that the indirect influence of competence on performance through satisfaction has a coefficient value of 0.128, a t-value of 1.971, and a p-value of 0.049. This shows that the competencies possessed by employees contribute positively to their satisfaction, which then improves performance. Statistically, the p-value (0.049) is less than 0.05, and is also significant at the 95% confidence level. In other words, employees with adequate competence tend to be more satisfied at work, and this satisfaction will ultimately be reflected in better performance.

Based on the results of the analysis, the indirect influence of employee placement on employment through satisfaction has a coefficient value of 0.175, a t-value of 1.974, and a p-value of 0.048. This shows that good placement can increase employee satisfaction, which in turn improves their performance. Statistically, because the p-value (0.048) is less than 0.05, this is significant at the 95% confidence level. In other words, the placement of employees according to their skills and interests contributes positively to their satisfaction, which has implications for improving performance.

The determination coefficient measures the extent to which the change in the dependent variable caused by the independent variable can be explained. The value of the determination coefficient ranged from 0 to 1. If the value of $R^2 = 0$ or is getting smaller, it indicates a low or limited determination coefficient. If the value of $R^2 = 1$ or is increasing, it indicates a high or well-explained coefficient of determination.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R Square) and Q Square

Relationship Between Variables	R-Square	R-square Adjust	Q ² (= 1- SSE/SSO)
Direct Effect			
Competencies and placement of employees → Satisfaction	0.342	0.321	0.272
Indirect Effect			
Competence employee placement satisfaction → performance	0.547	0.526	0.441

Based on Table 4, the value of the determination coefficient (R^2) for the influence of Competency and Employee Placement on Satisfaction is 0.342. This means that 34.2% of the variation in Employee Satisfaction can be explained by the variation in Employee Competencies and Placements. The R^2 value of 0.342 indicates that these two variables play an important role in improving employee satisfaction in the organization. The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) for the influence of Competence, Employee Placement, and Satisfaction on Performance is 0.547. This means that 54.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by variations in Competence, Employee Placement, and Satisfaction. More than half of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the interaction and mutual influence of Competence, Employee Placement, and Satisfaction.

The Q^2 value for the influence of Competency and Employee Placement on Satisfaction is 0.272. This shows that the model has quite good predictive ability in explaining the variability of employee satisfaction based on Employee Competencies and Placements. A Q^2 value of 0.272 indicates that the model can predict 27.2% of the variability in employee satisfaction, which means that the model is reliable in predicting how Competency and Employee Placement affect employee satisfaction.

The Q^2 value for the influence of competence, employee placement, and satisfaction with performance was 0.441. This shows the model can predict 44.1% of the variability in employee performance, meaning the model is quite reliable in predicting how the combination of these three variables affects employee performance. The results of the fit model calculation show that SRMR or Saturated Root Mean Residual

(SRMR) is worth 0.089. This value is less than 0.1, so the model is declared fit.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Direct Influence of Competence on Employee Performance

Employee competence is often considered a key factor that determines the overall success and performance of an organization (Sumaryadi & Kusnadi, 2021; Suyanto et al., 2021). The results of the tests conducted showed that there was a significant direct influence of competence on the performance of DP3AK employees in East Java Province, Indonesia. Competence consists of a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Nunuh & Wulandari, 2021). When a person has competencies that match the demands of their job, their performance tends to improve. Competencies allow individuals to complete tasks more efficiently and effectively because they have a deep understanding of what to do and how to do so (Anggraini, 2021; Aprillita & Perkasa, 2021). Thus, investing in the development of individual competencies directly impacts the overall performance of the organization. Previous research by (Kusumawardana et al., 2023) show that competence influences employee performance.

4.2.2 Direct Influence of Employee Placement on Employee Performance

Proper employee placement ensures that each individual works according to their competencies and interests and contributes significantly to the overall performance of the organization. This study aims to explore the relationship between employee placement and performance in the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Office (DP3AK) of East Java Province. The results of the tests conducted showed a significant direct influence of employee placement on the performance of DP3AK employees in East Java Province. Previous research by (Kusumawardana et al., 2023) showed that employee placement affects employee performance.

4.2.3 Direct Influence of Competencies on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction

However, the influence of competence on performance is not always direct and simple; other factors can act as mediators of this relationship. This study aims to explore the indirect influence of competence on employee performance at the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Office (DP3AK) of East Java Province, by considering the mediating role of other variables. The results of the tests conducted showed a significant indirect influence of competence on the performance of DP3AK employees in East Java Province. These findings highlight the importance of considering mediation channels to improve employee performance through job satisfaction (Abdullah, 2021).

When a person has a high level of competence, they tend to feel more satisfied with their job because they feel capable and skilled at carrying out the tasks assigned to them. High job satisfaction makes individuals work harder and make maximum contributions in their work. Therefore, job satisfaction mediation is important for mediating the positive effects of competence on employees performance. Research explaining the role of mediation in the influence of competence on employee performance includes Arifuddin (2022) and Kusumawardana et al. (2023). This study emphasizes that job satisfaction functions as an intermediary or mediator of the relationship between competency and employee performance.

4.2.4 Direct Influence of Employee Placement on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction

Individuals who are satisfied with their positions and duties tend to feel more motivated and strongly intend to achieve their job goals. High job satisfaction can also increase self-satisfaction, which ultimately contributes to better performance. Additionally, high job satisfaction influences an individual's work attitudes and behaviors, such as teamwork, initiative, and the desire to overcome challenges (Satria, 2021; Solihin, 2021). Thus, job satisfaction mediation helps explain how the right placement of employees can affect performance through psychological and motivational pathways, which is important for improving employee performance, which has an impact on organizational performance. Research that explains

the role of mediation in the influence of competence on employee performance is (Arifuddin, 2022; Kusumawardana et al., 2023; Permatasari & Machasin, 2023). The study emphasizes that job satisfaction functions as an intermediary or mediator of the competency relationship with employee performance.

5. Conclusions

The conclusion drawn from this study is that there is a direct and significant influence of employee competence and employee placement on employee performance at the DP3AK Office of East Java Province. Job satisfaction significantly mediates the influence of employee competence and placement on employee performance in the DP3AK Office of East Java Province. Organizations must take strategic steps to maximize the potential of human resources by ensuring that employee placement is carried out carefully. Organizations must also provide relevant and ongoing training programs to develop their skills and knowledge. Thus, it can improve job satisfaction and overall performance. Organizations also need to involve employees in work-related decision-making processes to increase their sense of belonging and satisfaction. The organization can then conduct periodic evaluations of employee performance and satisfaction is an important step to determine the effectiveness of employee placement and development programs. Constructive feedback can help employees understand the areas that need improvement.

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Author Contributions

PIW conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript. LRRU supervised the research, reviewed the methodology, and provided critical revisions to the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. This research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the results or interpretation of the findings.

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