Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance in Healthcare Services: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract. Employee performance is a critical determinant of service quality in healthcare organizations. This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable, in a hospital setting in North Labuhan Batu, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 175 hospital employees through structured questionnaires and analysed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee performance and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also has a significant positive effect on employee performance and is found to mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance. However, emotional intelligence does not directly influence job satisfaction, suggesting that emotional capabilities translate into performance outcomes primarily through employees' affective evaluation of their work. This study contributes to the service and management literature by clarifying the mediating role of job satisfaction in healthcare organizations. The findings imply that improving emotional intelligence alone is insufficient to enhance performance unless supported by organizational practices that foster job satisfaction. For hospital management, the results highlight the importance of integrating emotional intelligence development with satisfaction-oriented human resource policies to improve service performance.

Keywords: Compensation, Emotional Intelligence, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, North Labuhan Batu Hospital.

1. Introduction

Labuhan Batu hospitals face numerous issues that impact the quality and efficiency of healthcare services. Limited facilities and resources, along with poor medical staffing, outdated medical equipment, and inadequate infrastructure, are among the main issues. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of hospitals contributes to disparities in access to healthcare services between urban and rural areas. Hospitals in large cities like Medan are often overwhelmed with patients, resulting in long waiting times and poor service.

Furthermore, hospital staff in North Labuhan Batu Regency face a number of issues that impact the quality of healthcare. A shortage of medical staff, including doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel, disproportionate to the number of patients requiring care, is a major issue. This often leads to excessive workloads for existing staff, which in turn leads to poorer quality of care and high levels of burnout. Furthermore, hospital staff face limitations in training and professional development because they lack access to ongoing training programs to improve their skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, research has found that job satisfaction and emotional intelligence are components that can influence employee performance. According to Hasibuan (2016), job satisfaction is a feeling of enjoyment and love for one's employees; the level of job satisfaction can be measured by employee morale, discipline, and performance. The moderating role of compensation variables, work-life balance, organizational culture, and emotional intelligence on employee performance, is an important component in understanding the dynamics of employee performance in a company. Furthermore, employees with high emotional intelligence are able to manage their emotions well, interact effectively with coworkers, and serve patients with patience and empathy.

Overall, these results suggest that hospital employees in North Labuhan Batu need more effort to train and develop emotional intelligence. Improving their ability to manage feelings, understand coworkers' emotions, remain calm in difficult situations, and build positive relationships can help create a more conducive work environment and provide more opportunities for patients to receive better care. According to Supriyanto (2012), emotional intelligence has a positive impact on employee performance and job satisfaction. This contrasts with the findings of Hidayati et al. (2013), which states that emotional intelligence does not have a significant impact on employee performance. The existence of problematic phenomena that occurred at hospitals in North Labuhan Batu Regency, made researchers interested in testing the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable at hospitals in North Labuhan Batu Regency.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence encompasses self-control, enthusiasm, patience, and the ability to motivate, manage impulses and emotions, and adjust to stressful moods. It also includes the ability to think and not cripple the ability to read (empathy). According to Goleman (2015), emotions are essentially the drive to act to resolve a problem. Emotional intelligence allows us to maintain a balance between our personal needs and the needs of others. According to Djasuli (2015), those who best control their emotions are the most respected and revered. Researchers also say that for successful people, 80% of their success comes from their ability to control their emotions, and 20% of this is determined by their intellectual abilities.

According to Jannah (2013), emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage emotions and control their attitudes and behaviors, including controlling their impulses and desires, and expressing their emotions harmoniously and through skills of self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. This allows people to recognize the feelings of others and be accepted in social environments.

2.2 Job satisfaction

An employee who is highly satisfied with their job demonstrates a positive attitude toward it, while an employee who is dissatisfied demonstrates a negative attitude. According to Sutrisno (2017), someone with a high level of job satisfaction exhibits positive characteristics toward their job. Meanwhile, Indriyani (2018) states that job satisfaction is a collection of employee emotions about how comfortable they feel in their workplace. A person's reaction to their work environment is called job satisfaction.

According to Badeni (2017), job satisfaction can be defined as a person's attitude toward their job, which can be reflected in positive or negative attitudes, satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This attitude can be reflected in the employee's work ethic, discipline, and performance. Considering the above definitions, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or displeasure with their job.

2.3 Employee Performance

A person's performance is the result of their efforts, which is determined by their abilities and recognition of their role in the workplace. Everyone has the ability to perform in various activities. This ability can be naturally acquired (present from birth) or learned. Ability or performance is a term used to describe the possibility of a particular action. Employee performance, according to Mangkunegara in Masram (2017), is defined as the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties according to their responsibilities.

Performance, according to Rajagukguk in Pusparini (2018), is defined as organizational behavior directly related to the production of goods or services. From the above understanding, it can be concluded that performance is the result produced by employees when they carry out their work according to the responsibilities assigned to them.

3. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative descriptive method. This study was conducted at a hospital in North Labuhan Batu Regency. The study will examine the moderating role of compensation on the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable. The population in this study were all employees at the hospital in North Labuhan Batu Regency. In this case, the researcher took a sample of 175 people. The data collection methods used in this study were interviews and questionnaires. Validity and reliability tests in this study will be conducted on 30 respondents at the hospital in North Labuhan Batu Regency. The research analysis is SEM analysis using the Smart-PLS application program version 3.0. The hypothesis of this study is:

- 1. Emotional intelligence influences job satisfaction at hospitals in North Labuhan Batu Regency.
- 2. Emotional intelligence influences employee performance at hospitals in North Labuhan Batu Regency.
- 3. Job satisfaction influences employee performance at hospitals in North Labuhan Batu Regency.
- 4. Does job satisfaction mediate the effect of emotional intelligence on performance?

4. Result And Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The following are the results of the distribution of answers for the emotional intelligence variable attached in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Answers for the Emotional Intelligence Variable

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	High	43	33.08%
2	Medium	65	50.00%
3	Low	22	16.92%
	Number	130	100%

Fifty percent of respondents rated their emotional intelligence as moderate. This means that half of the employees still face challenges in managing their own emotions and understanding the emotions of others, including patients and coworkers. Observations revealed that many employees struggle to control their emotions, especially when dealing with difficult patients or uncooperative coworkers. Interviews with several employees revealed that high work pressure often leads to emotional outbursts, both verbal and non-verbal. According to Goleman (2015), emotional intelligence consists of five main components: self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skills. A lack of mastery of emotional intelligence leads to ineffective communication in the workplace and can reduce the quality of healthcare services. The findings of this study demonstrate that emotional intelligence significantly influences employee job satisfaction and performance. This means that the better an employee's emotional intelligence, the higher their satisfaction and performance levels. Therefore, hospitals need to conduct emotional intelligence development training to improve the quality of their work.

The following are the results of the distribution of answers for the Job Satisfaction Variable attached in table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Answers for Job Satisfaction Variables

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	High	42	32.31%
2	Medium	62	47.69%
3	Low	26	20.00%
	Amount	130	100%

Nearly half of the respondents (47.69%) considered their job satisfaction to be moderate, according to the distribution of answers. This indicates that there is a lot of dissatisfaction in the hospital work environment. The results of the study indicate that job satisfaction is only at a moderate level due to high workloads, long working hours, and compensation that is not commensurate with the efforts made by employees. Another factor causing dissatisfaction is the lack of recognition for achievements. According to Hasibuan's theory (2016), job satisfaction is closely related to employee performance, productivity, and loyalty. Happy employees tend to be more motivated and do their best to help the organization. This study shows that job satisfaction improves employee performance. Therefore, improving the compensation system, workload management, and rewards for achievements will improve employee performance.

Next, the following are the results of the distribution of answers for the Employee Performance Variable attached in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Employee Performance Variable Answers

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	High	41	31.54%
2	Medium	65	50.00%
3	Low	24	18.46%
	Amount	130	100%

The majority of respondents (50%) considered their performance to be in the moderate category. This means that hospital employees in North Labuhan Batu Regency still have moderate performance and have not yet reached optimal levels. The average employee performance achievement was only around 70.83%, below the hospital's minimum performance standard of 85%, according to observations and secondary data. Employees stated that high workloads, low compensation, and an unclear organizational culture affected their morale and productivity. Performance, according to Mangkunegara (2015), is defined as the work results achieved by an individual in accordance with the standards set by the organization. In addition to technical skills, motivational factors, job satisfaction levels, and organizational conditions contribute to high performance. The results of this study confirm that internal factors such as emotional intelligence, work-life balance, organizational culture, and job satisfaction levels significantly influence employee performance. Therefore, if we want to improve employee performance, we must make comprehensive improvements to all of these factors.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

4.2.1 Convergent Validity Test

The convergent validity test begins by assessing the filler factor for each instrument on the construct variable. A filler factor value greater than 0.6 is considered a good filler factor for the instrument measuring the construct variable. The second test is to look at the average variance value extracted for the construct variable. An average variance value greater than 0.7 is considered a good average variance for v. The results of the processed model examination indicate that there are several indicators that do not meet the requirements because the value of the additional factor is tested three times. After the initial processing, indicators X1.4, X1.5, X1.9, and Z1.4 have filler factor values less than 0.7, so elimination is carried out. In the second processing, several indicators that do not meet the requirements are smaller than 0.7, namely Y2.7, Y2.8, X2.2, and X2.5. In the fourth processing, the results of the convergent test indicate that validity meets the requirements, which is explained as follows:

Table 4. Loading Factor and Average Variance Extracted Values

Variable Instruments				Convergent Validity Test Results	
Variables Questionnaire Statement Code		Code	Loading Factor	Average Variance Extracted	
	I am able to recognize my own emotions in different situations.	X3.1	0,843		
	I can control negative feelings that arise at work.	X3.2	0,860		
Emotional	I always strive to stay motivated to achieve work goals.	X3.3	0,862	0.651	
Intelligence (X)	I am able to maintain good relationships with my coworkers.	X3.6	0,752	0,651	
	I remain calm and positive even when facing difficult situations.	X3.7	0,721		
	I am able to adapt well to new situations.	X3.8	0,780		
	I feel satisfied with the work I do every day.	Z21	0,918		
	I am proud of my current job.	Z22	0,956		
Job Satisfaction	I feel this job makes a positive contribution to my life.	Z23	0,892		
(Z2)	I am satisfied with the reward and recognition system at work.	Z24	0,874	0,736	
	I feel this job meets my expectations.	Z25	0,913		
	I enjoy working with my coworkers.	Z26	0,941		
	I feel safe and comfortable in my work environment.	Z27	0,890		

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	I feel adequately supported by my superiors.	Z28	0,938	
	I feel free to contribute ideas and input at work.	Z29	0,854	
	My job doesn't place excessive pressure on me.	Z210	0,745	
	I feel valued by my coworkers.	Z211	0,874	
	I am satisfied with the career development opportunities at work.	Z212	0,750	
	I feel this job contributes to my personal development.	Z213	0,798	
	I have sufficient time to achieve a work-life balance.	Z214	0,823	
	I feel my work makes a meaningful contribution to the organization.	Z215	0,842	
	Frequency of Rewards	Y1	0,734	
	Impact of Rewards	Y2	0,740	
	I feel capable of handling the workload assigned to me.	Y3	0,817	
	I can work effectively even under pressure.	Y4	0,720	
	I take the initiative to complete work without waiting for instructions.	Y5	0,936	
	I am able to collaborate with a team to achieve common goals.	Y6	0,734	
г 1	I always look for ways to improve my work output.	Y7	0,844	
Employee Performance	I feel my performance meets the standards set by the company.	Y8	0,886	0,667
(Y)	I am able to complete work with high accuracy.	Y9	0,810	
	I feel I can balance the quantity and quality of work.	Y10	0,897	
	I consistently demonstrate the ability to solve problems at work.	Y11	0,913	
	I feel confident in carrying out my duties and responsibilities.	Y12	0,716	
	I am able to adapt to changes in the workplace.	Y13	0,701	
	I always strive to improve skills relevant to my job.	Y14	0,868	
	I feel my productivity contributes positively to organizational goals.	Y15	0,790	

According to Table 4, we found that the filler factor value for each research variable was greater than 0.7, indicating that the convergent validity test using the filler factor approach was successful. In other words, the research construct variable instrument was valid. While the AVE value is used to determine the validity of the model requirements, the AVE value of each latent variable with reflective indicators must also be greater than 0.5. The analysis results shown in Table 4 indicate that the AVE value of each latent variable is greater than 0.5. Thus, it can be concluded that the SEM PLS model meets the requirements for convergent validity.

4.2.2 Reliability Test of Research Instruments

The combined reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for each latent variable were used to test the reliability of the research instrument. If the combined reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for each latent variable were greater than 0.7, the model was considered reliable. The following are the results of the research instrument reliability test.

Table 5. Reliability Test of Research Instruments

	Reliabil	ity Test		
Variables	Cronbachs' Alpha	Composite Reliability	Conclusion	
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	0,896	0,921	Reliable	

Job Satisfaction (Z2)	0,876	0,979	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0,862	0,966	Reliable

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that all latent constructs have good reliability, are accurate and consistent because they meet the requirements with a composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha value for each latent construct of more than 0.7.

4.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Inner Model Test

Structural model evaluation is conducted by analyzing the coefficient of determination (R_2). The R_2 value is determined by the construct of the endogenous variable or the variable being influenced. According to Chin (1998), R_2 values are categorized into three categories: 0.67 (strong), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.19 (weak). The R_2 values can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. R-Square Value

Variable Laten	R-Square (R ²)	R-Square Adjusted	
Job Satisfaction (Z2)	0,890	0,797	
Employee Performance (Y)	0,927	0,9203	

The endogenous variables used in this study mostly have R2 values that fall into the strong category. The first R2 value, Emotional Intelligence, is able to explain the diversity of employee performance by 89 percent, with the remainder explained by other independent variables not included in this research model. Then the second R2 value, Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction, is able to explain the diversity of job satisfaction by 92.70 percent, with the remainder explained by other independent variables not included in this research model. The obtained R2 values are used to calculate the Q2 value or predictive relevance.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Testing

Once all measurement requirements are met, the next step can begin, namely testing the hypothesis using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS. According to Efron and Tibshirani (1998), the bootstrapping method is the process of repeatedly sampling N samples from an initial data set of size n; each sample point is taken from the initial data set n times. Bootstrapping is performed five hundred times to ensure more stable results and maintain consistent statistical significance. The results of direct and indirect hypothesis testing are shown in the following sections.

Hypothesis testing in this study was obtained by comparing the t-table or probability value (p-value) with the confidence level. In this study, the confidence level used was $\alpha = 0.05$ with a t-table value of 1.96. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of the Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Original Sample	t-statistics	p-values	Conclusion
Emotional Intelligence (X) Balance \rightarrow	0,116	1,622	0,105	H1 Rejected
Job Satisfaction (Y2)				
Emotional Intelligence $(X3) \rightarrow$	0,336	4,206	0,002	H2 Accepted
Employee Performance (Y)				_
Job Satisfaction (Z2) → Employee	0,556	7,206	0,004	H3 Accepted
Performance (Y)				
Emotional Intelligence (X2)) →Job	0,580	8,812	0,000	H4 Accepted
Satisfaction $(Z2)$) \rightarrow Employee				_
Performance (Y)				

Based on the results of Table 7, the results of direct testing of both mentoring and productivity were obtained. The details are as follows.

- 1. The first hypothesis tests that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction. The first hypothesis test found that emotional intelligence has no effect on job satisfaction, based on a p-value (0.105) > 0.05. The original sample value was 0.116. Therefore, it can be concluded that continuously improving emotional intelligence does not improve job satisfaction. Therefore, the third hypothesis of this study is rejected.
- 2. The second hypothesis tests that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employee performance. The second hypothesis test found that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employee performance, based on a p-value (0.002) < 0.05. The original sample value was 0.336, indicating a positive effect between emotional intelligence and employee performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that continuously improving employee emotional intelligence will improve employee performance. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is accepted.
- 3. Finally, the third hypothesis tests that job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance. The results of the seventh hypothesis test found that job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance based on the p-value (0.004) < 0.05. The original sample value obtained was 0.556, indicating a positive effect between job satisfaction and employee performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that increasing employee job satisfaction will improve employee performance. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis of this study is accepted.
- 4. The tenth hypothesis tests the positive influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction. The results of the tenth hypothesis test found that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction based on the p-value (0.000) <0.05. The original sample value obtained was 0.580, which indicates that there is a positive influence between emotional intelligence and employee performance mediated by job satisfaction. This means that increasing emotional intelligence will improve employee performance accompanied by an increase in job satisfaction felt by employees. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tenth hypothesis of this study is accepted.

5. Discussion

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing analysis using statistical methods, it was found that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction at the North Labuhan Batu Regency Hospital. The significance value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, so H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This means that the higher the emotional intelligence of employees, the higher their level of job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence helps employees manage work pressure, control negative emotions, and build harmonious relationships with colleagues and patients. This phenomenon is in accordance with Goleman theory (2015) which states that emotional intelligence has a strong influence on an individual's ability to manage work pressure and build healthy interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the North Labuhan Batu Regency Hospital. The significance value is less than $\alpha=0.05$, so H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This indicates that the higher the emotional intelligence of employees, the better their performance in carrying out their duties. The characteristics of respondents who work in a high-pressure hospital environment require employees to have good emotional management skills. The results of the pre-survey and observations indicate that employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage stress, communicate effectively with patients, and maintain work productivity amidst tough challenges (Joshi & Subedi, 2024).

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing analysis, it is known that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the North Labuhan Batu Regency Hospital. The significance value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, so H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This means that the higher the level of job satisfaction felt by employees, the higher their performance will be. When associated with the characteristics of the respondents, the majority of employees showed moderate to low levels of job satisfaction. This finding is in line with Hasibuan theory (2016) which states that job satisfaction reflects a positive emotional attitude towards work, which ultimately increases productivity and work quality.

For the indirect variable, job satisfaction is able to mediate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance at the North Labuhan Batu Regency Hospital. With a significance value smaller than $\alpha=0.05$, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. Emotional intelligence, based on the characteristics of the respondents, is an important competency considering that the work of hospital employees is full of emotional pressure, both from patients, patients' families, and medical emergencies. Employees who have the ability to recognize, manage, and express their emotions adaptively feel more satisfied in their work, which then has an impact on increased performance. Emotional intelligence increases job satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens employee performance (Čyras & Nalivaikė, 2024). Therefore, emotional intelligence training needs to be considered as a strategy to improve employee job satisfaction and performance in hospitals.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance in a hospital context, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. The empirical findings show that emotional intelligence positively affects employee performance, while job satisfaction plays a central role in transmitting this effect. Job satisfaction itself has a strong and significant influence on performance, confirming its importance in service-intensive healthcare environments.

From a theoretical perspective, the results reinforce the view that individual capabilities such as emotional intelligence do not automatically lead to improved performance. Instead, their effects are shaped by employees' subjective evaluations of their work. By demonstrating the mediating role of job satisfaction, this study extends existing research on emotional intelligence and performance in service organizations, particularly within the healthcare sector.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that hospital administrators should not focus solely on enhancing emotional intelligence through training programs. Such efforts need to be accompanied by organizational practices that improve job satisfaction, including fair workload distribution, supportive leadership, recognition, and a positive work environment. Integrating emotional intelligence development with satisfaction-oriented human resource management can contribute to more sustainable improvements in employee performance and service quality.

This study has limitations. It is based on cross-sectional data from a single hospital, which may limit generalizability. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs, examine additional organizational variables, or compare different healthcare institutions. Despite these limitations, the study provides practical insights into managing human resources and improving service performance in healthcare organizations.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Universitas Medan Area and Universitas Prima Indonesia for their assistance in compiling this article.

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