

The Effect Of Distributive Justice And Organizational Commitment On Employee Performance With Job Satisfaction As A Mediation Variable In The Public Works And Spatial Planning Department Of East Kutai Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of distributive justice and organizational commitment on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning of East Kutai Regency. A quantitative explanatory approach was applied using a census method involving 141 employees as respondents. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4 software. The results show that distributive justice and organizational commitment each significantly affect employee job satisfaction. However, distributive justice, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction were not proven to directly affect employee performance, and job satisfaction did not significantly mediate the relationships at the 95 percent confidence level. These findings suggest that employee performance in government institutions is also shaped by structural and institutional factors beyond the scope of this model.

Keyword Distributive justice; organizational commitment; job satisfaction; employee performance; PLS-SEM

Introduction

Employee performance is a strategic factor determining an organization's success in achieving its goals. In government agencies, employee performance serves as a benchmark for the quality of public services provided to the community. The Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of East Kutai Regency, as a technical regional government agency, faces real challenges related to suboptimal employee performance, as reflected in program implementation that has not met targets, delays in task completion, and obstacles in inter-sectoral coordination.

These issues can be linked to two main factors: distributive justice and organizational commitment. Distributive justice is employees' perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of workload, incentives, and responsibilities within the organization (Cropanzano et al., 2020).

Organizational commitment reflects employees' psychological attachment to the institution, formed through affective, ongoing, and normative dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 2019). These two variables theoretically influence job satisfaction, which is expected to drive improved employee performance.

Various empirical studies have shown that distributive justice significantly influences job satisfaction (Al-Zu'bi, 2020; Tziner et al., 2019; Lopez-Cabarcos et al., 2018), organizational commitment influences job satisfaction (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2020; Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2018), and job satisfaction is an important antecedent of employee performance (Alsafadi & Altahat, 2021; Sapta et al., 2021). However, research integrating these three aspects within the context of local government agencies in East Kalimantan is still limited.

This study aims to analyze: (1) the influence of distributive justice on employee job satisfaction; (2) the influence of organizational commitment on employee job satisfaction; (3) the influence of distributive justice on employee performance; (4) the influence of organizational commitment on employee performance; (5) the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance; (6) the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the influence of distributive justice on performance; and (7) the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the influence of organizational commitment on employee performance.

Theoretical Framework

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is an employee's perception of the fairness of the distribution of organizational outcomes, such as workload, incentives, and responsibilities, based on their individual contributions (Cropanzano et al., 2020). Adams' equity theory (in Robbins & Judge, 2019) explains that employees compare their input-outcome ratios with others. Three indicators of distributive justice include equity (fairness based on contribution), equality (equality among employees), and need (fulfillment of employee needs).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an employee's psychological attachment to their organization, formed through affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (benefit-cost calculation), and normative commitment (moral obligation) (Meyer & Allen, 2019). Greenberg & Baron (2020) state that highly committed employees tend to be more stable and productive, thus benefiting the organization.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from an employee's assessment

of their work (Luthans, 2020). Schermerhorn (2020) identified five aspects of job satisfaction: the work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility, and organizational advancement. Robbins & Judge (2019) asserted that organizations with more satisfied employees tend to be more effective.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the results achieved by employees in carrying out their duties according to organizational standards (McCormick & Tiffin, 2020). The seven performance indicators include: quantity, quality, work knowledge, cooperation, reliability, initiative, and attitude. Performance reflects employee productivity, discipline, and professionalism.

Research Hypothesis

Based on theoretical studies and previous research, seven hypotheses are proposed: (Ha1) distributive justice influences job satisfaction; (Ha2) organizational commitment influences job satisfaction; (Ha3) distributive justice influences employee performance; (Ha4) organizational commitment influences employee performance; (Ha5) job satisfaction influences employee performance; (Ha6) distributive justice influences performance through job satisfaction; and (Ha7) organizational commitment influences performance through job satisfaction.

Methods

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory design aimed at testing causal relationships between variables. The population and sample were all 141 employees of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of East Kutai Regency, using a census method (saturated sampling). Respondents were spread across six work units: the Secretariat (27 employees, 19.15%), Highways Division (35 employees, 24.82%), Water Resources Division (30 employees, 21.28%), Public Works Division (23 employees, 16.31%), Spatial Planning Division (16 employees, 11.35%), and Functional Position Group (10 employees, 7.09%).

Primary data were obtained through a Likert-based questionnaire measuring distributive justice (4 indicators based on Cropanzano et al., 2020), organizational commitment (4 indicators based on Meyer & Allen, 2019), and job satisfaction (5 indicators based on Schermerhorn, 2020), and employee performance (7 indicators based on McCormick & Tiffin, 2020) assessed by the department head as the direct superior. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. Hypothesis testing used bootstrapping resampling of 5,000 subsamples with acceptance criteria of T-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

No	Category / Classification	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender - Male	98	69,50
	Female	43	30,50
2	Age - < 30 years	14	9,93
	30-39 years	52	36,88
	40-49 years	57	40,43
	>=50 years	18	12,77
3	Education - SMA/SMK	12	8,51
	Diploma	18	12,77
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	96	68,09
	Postgraduate Degree	15	10,64
4	Years of service - < 5 years	11	7,80
	5-10 years	34	24,11
	11-20 years	68	48,23
	> 20 years	28	19,86
5	Group - Group I	1	0,71
	Group II	15	10,64
	Group III	110	78,01
	Group IV	15	10,64
	Number of Respondents	141	100,00

Source: Employee Data of the PUPR Service of East Kutai Regency, processed in 2026

Result

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer model evaluation showed that all 20 research indicators had outer loading values above the required 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE values for Organizational Commitment (0.558) and Job Satisfaction (0.503) met the minimum threshold of 0.50. Distributive Justice (AVE = 0.496) and Employee Performance (AVE = 0.467) were slightly below 0.50 but were acceptable considering their composite reliabilities reached 0.796 and 0.859, respectively, well above the 0.70 threshold (Jogiyanto, 2021). Discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlation with other constructs, thus all constructs were declared to have adequate discriminant validity.

Goodness of Fit Model

Tabel 2. Nilai R-Square (R²)

Endogenous Variables	R ²	R ² Adjusted	Category
Employee Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,411	0,402	Moderate
Employee Performance (Y)	0,166	0,147	Weak

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed 2026

The R² value of job satisfaction of 0.411 (moderate category) indicates that distributive justice and organizational commitment are able to explain 41.1% of the variance in job satisfaction. The R² value of employee performance of 0.166 (weak category) indicates that

83.4% of the performance variance is influenced by factors outside the model, such as leadership, organizational culture, and technical competence. The Q^2 value = 0.509 (> 0) confirms the adequate predictive relevance of the model.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 3. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship Between Variables	Coef. Track	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
Ha1	Distributive Justice -> Job Satisfaction	0,459	6,025	0,000	Accepted
Ha2	Organizational Commitment -> Job Satisfaction	0,244	2,980	0,003	Accepted
Ha3	Distributive Justice -> Employee Performance	0,154	1,117	0,264	Rejected
Ha4	Organizational Commitment -> Employee Performance	0,080	0,490	0,624	Rejected
Ha5	Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0,236	1,747	0,081	Rejected (a=5%)*
Ha6	KD -> Performance through Job Satisfaction	0,108	1,656	0,098	Rejected (a=5%)*
Ha7	KO -> Performance through Job Satisfaction	0,058	1,361	0,174	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed 2026

The Influence of Distributive Justice on Job Satisfaction (Ha1 Accepted)

Distributive justice has been shown to have a significant influence on employee job satisfaction (coefficient = 0.459; T-statistic = 6.025; p = 0.000), placing it as a predictor The strongest indicator of job satisfaction in the model. The average value of this variable of 4.10 (High category) confirms that employees generally perceive fairness in the distribution of workload, incentives, and responsibilities. The indicator of suitability of responsibilities Respondents with job distribution (X1.4) obtained the highest score (4.22), reflecting management's success in distributing duties and responsibilities proportionally. Conversely, incentive distribution (X1.2 = 3.94) remains an aspect that requires attention, with 12.06% of

respondents disagreeing. This finding is consistent with Al-Zu'bi (2020), Tziner et al. (2019), and Lopez-Cabarcos et al. (2018). Gibson et al. (2019) explain that fair distribution of compensation and recognition encourages job satisfaction.

The Influence of Organizational Commitment on Job Satisfaction (Ha2 Accepted)

Organizational commitment has been shown to significantly influence employee job satisfaction (coefficient = 0.244; T-statistic = 2.980; $p = 0.003$). The average organizational commitment score of 4.22 (Very High) reflects a strong psychological attachment. The indicators of willingness to work hard ($X2.2 = 4.42$) and exerting abilities ($X2.3 = 4.35$) obtained the highest scores. However, the dimension of organizational pride ($X2.4 = 3.85$) requires special attention. These results are in line with Eslami & Gharakhani (2020) and Biswas & Bhatnagar (2018). Allen & Meyer (2019) emphasized that employee emotional attachment to the organization has direct implications for increasing job satisfaction.

Direct Influence on Employee Performance (Ha3, Ha4, Ha5 Rejected)

Distributive justice ($T = 1.117$; $p = 0.264$), organizational commitment ($T = 0.490$; $p = 0.624$), and job satisfaction ($T = 1.747$; $p = 0.081$) were not proven to have a direct effect on employee performance at the 5% significance level. It should be noted that Ha5 and Ha6 were accepted at the 10% significance level ($T > 1.645$), indicating a weak effect was detected. This insignificant direct effect can be explained from several perspectives: first, in bureaucratic organizations, performance is regulated through SKP, SOP, and formal monitoring mechanisms so that psychological variations do not necessarily produce statistical differences in performance (Davis & Newstrom, 2020); second, the already very high mean performance score (4.27) limits the explainable variation; third, the mechanism of influence of justice and commitment on performance is generally indirect through job satisfaction (Greenberg, 2019). Thus, this study rejects Ha3, Ha4, Ha5 and accepts H0, respectively. Palaiologos et al. (2019) also found that in the public sector, the direct relationship between distributive justice and performance was weaker than in the private sector.

Mediation Effect of Job Satisfaction (Ha6 and Ha7 Rejected)

Job satisfaction was not proven to mediate the influence of distributive justice ($T = 1.656$; $p = 0.098$) or organizational commitment ($T = 1.361$; $p = 0.174$) on employee performance at a 5% alpha level. This is related to the insignificant path from job satisfaction to performance, which is an integral part of the mediation chain. Baron & Kenny (2019) explained that all mediation paths must be significant for a mediation effect to be proven. However, Ha6 showed $T = 1.656$, which exceeded the 10% alpha T-table, indicating a weak mediation effect at a 90% confidence level. The difference in results with Haryono (2019) and Alsafadi & Altahat (2021) who found significant mediation may be attributed to differences in organizational context and

performance measurement systems.

Conclusions

Based on testing seven hypotheses using PLS-SEM, this study concludes: (1) distributive justice has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction (coefficient 0.459, the strongest predictor); (2) organizational commitment has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction (coefficient 0.244); (3-5) distributive justice, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction do not have a direct effect on employee performance at 5% alpha; and (6-7) job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the effect of distributive justice or organizational commitment on employee performance at a 95% confidence level.

These findings indicate that in the context of bureaucratic government agencies, performance improvement is not solely determined by distributive justice and organizational commitment, but is also influenced by structural and institutional factors such as supervisory systems, work procedures, leadership, and the availability of infrastructure.

Recommendations for the management of the East Kutai PUPR Service: (1) prioritize transparency in incentive distribution as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction; (2) maintain high organizational commitment through recognition and career development programs; (3) improve employee technical competence so that commitment and job satisfaction can be translated into optimal performance; (4) develop a performance feedback system based on real achievements. Further research is recommended to use a longitudinal design, add moderating variables such as transformational leadership, and use mixed methods.

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