
The Effect of Leadership Style and Competence on Village Apparatus Performance with Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

Muhammad Shodikin

mshodiq301@gmail.com

Master of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pekalongan

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan kepala desa dan kompetensi aparatur desa terhadap kinerja aparatur desa di Kecamatan Doro, dengan kepuasan kerja aparatur desa sebagai variabel perantara. Data dikumpulkan dari seluruh 73 anggota aparatur desa di Kecamatan Doro dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gaya kepemimpinan dan kompetensi tidak memiliki pengaruh langsung yang signifikan terhadap kinerja aparatur, sedangkan kompetensi memiliki pengaruh yang kuat, positif, dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja ($\beta = 0,645$; $p < 0,001$). Pengaruh kepuasan kerja terhadap kinerja hanya bersifat marginal ($\beta = 0,341$; $p = 0,050$), dan kepuasan kerja tidak secara signifikan berperan sebagai variabel mediasi terhadap pengaruh baik gaya kepemimpinan maupun kompetensi terhadap kinerja. Gaya kepemimpinan dan kompetensi secara bersama-sama menjelaskan 47,4% varians dalam kepuasan kerja, tetapi hanya 1,9% varians dalam kinerja aparatur desa, yang menunjukkan bahwa kinerja dalam konteks ini kemungkinan besar lebih dipengaruhi oleh faktor struktural dan prosedural daripada oleh kepemimpinan atau kompetensi saja. Temuan ini menyarankan bahwa pengembangan kompetensi, bukan hanya gaya kepemimpinan, harus diprioritaskan untuk meningkatkan kepuasan kerja di kalangan aparatur desa, sementara strategi peningkatan kinerja harus melampaui aspek kepemimpinan dan kompetensi untuk mempertimbangkan faktor struktural dan kontekstual.

Kata kunci: kinerja aparatur desa; kepuasan kerja aparatur desa; gaya kepemimpinan kepala desa; kompetensi aparatur desa

Abstract

This study examines the effect of village head's leadership style and village apparatus competence on village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district, with village apparatus job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Data were collected from all 73 village apparatus members in Doro Sub-district and analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that leadership style and competence do not have a significant direct effect on apparatus performance, whereas competence has a strong, positive, and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.645$; $p < 0.001$). Job satisfaction's effect on performance is only marginal ($\beta = 0.341$; $p = 0.050$), and it does not significantly mediate the effect of either leadership style or competence on performance. Leadership style and competence jointly explain 47.4% of the variance in job satisfaction, but only 1.9% of the variance in apparatus performance, indicating that performance in this context is likely shaped more by structural and procedural factors than by leadership or competence alone. These findings suggest that competence development, rather than leadership style alone, should be prioritized to improve job satisfaction among village apparatus, while performance improvement strategies should look beyond leadership and competence to structural and contextual factors.

Keywords: village apparatus performance; village apparatus job satisfaction; village head's leadership style; village apparatus competence

PRELIMINARY

An organization, in general, is a deliberately coordinated social unit, possessing relatively distinguishable boundaries, operating continuously in pursuit of predetermined objectives. According to Nurhayati & Sunarjo (2019), an organization is a group of individuals who establish an entity with the primary objective of improving the welfare of its members (Nurhayati & Sunarjo, 2019). Various operational challenges may affect the performance of its apparatus. The government must be prepared to position human resource administration as a driving factor in fulfilling its primary responsibilities and operational functions. Workers must be equipped to navigate an increasingly competitive labor market. Human resources or workers with the requisite skills to perform their duties efficiently are essential for meeting these objectives. Apparatus with this level of competence are indispensable for delivering efficient services and producing high-quality work. Village Apparatus Performance is of critical importance to every institution or organization, whether public or private. Government institutions, as nonprofit organizations, continuously strive to enhance their human resources through improvements in village head's leadership style and proficiency, which in turn affect the performance and village apparatus job satisfaction of village apparatus in carrying out their primary duties and operations.

In this study, leadership style specifically refers to the leadership style demonstrated by the Village Head in directing, influencing, motivating, and coordinating village apparatus to achieve village government objectives. Leadership style reflects the behavioral approach employed by a leader in exercising authority and interacting with subordinates, and its effectiveness may influence employees' attitudes and performance (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Within village government, the Village Head's leadership style is expected to provide clear direction, strengthen communication, encourage participation, and create supportive working relationships that can enhance village apparatus job satisfaction and performance. Empirical evidence indicates that leadership style can significantly influence employee performance and that job satisfaction may function as a mediating mechanism in this relationship (Hailu, 2025; Saputra, 2023). Previous findings regarding the direct effect of leadership style on performance remain inconsistent across organizational contexts, suggesting that leadership may affect performance through employees' psychological and attitudinal responses. Job satisfaction is therefore positioned as a relevant mechanism through which the Village Head's leadership style may influence village apparatus performance (Sutia et al., 2022). Effective leadership may foster positive work experiences and greater satisfaction, which subsequently encourage village apparatus to perform their responsibilities more effectively, efficiently, and consistently

(Fatahuddin & Tanuwijaya, 2022). Accordingly, this study conceptualizes the Village Head's leadership style as an antecedent of village apparatus performance, with village apparatus job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable.

Competence is defined as the ability to carry out a task or role, supported by the requisite work ethic for that position and grounded in knowledge and skills (Yasin, 2024). As one of the factors influencing performance, competence is defined as an individual's fundamental quality associated with how effectively one performs in one's field of work, or as a fundamental quality that is causally related to performance standards, effectiveness, or superior performance in the workplace or in specific circumstances. Competence can be understood as a set of underlying individual characteristics, including knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes, that enable village apparatus to perform governmental and public service responsibilities effectively and efficiently (HM, 2018).

The success of village apparatus in executing their duties is highly dependent on their village head's leadership style and competence as leaders of village government within an organization. By demonstrating exemplary conduct and behavior as leaders, village apparatus will inspire their subordinates to perform well. Within village government organizations, village apparatus leadership must not only be capable of fulfilling the duties and obligations of leaders, but must also be able to serve as role models for the community. At its core, village apparatus leadership is about how they are able to integrate community interests into every decision made. With regard to competence and performance outcomes, research by Muhdar HM (2018) concludes that competence exerts a significant influence on performance (HM, 2018). This was further examined by Hizkia et al. (2022), who noted that with the current changes in government regulations, a younger cohort of apparatus has emerged; the majority of whom are capable of utilizing technology; yet the implementation of loyalty among newly appointed village apparatus has not yet been fully realized, thereby potentially affecting village apparatus job satisfaction across various parties (Hizkia et al., 2022).

On a related note, a gap-inducing phenomenon has been observed across village governments within Doro Sub-district concerning organizational leadership, whereby not all villages have undertaken improvements in village head's leadership style with regard to village apparatus job satisfaction. The diversity in educational backgrounds among village heads has produced differences in village head's leadership style. For instance, subordinates fail to comprehend instructions communicated to them, as they are unaware of the regulations being mandated; leaders and subordinates rarely consult one another in resolving organizational problems; leaders rarely engage actively in collaborative work; and leaders seldom delegate

authority due to low levels of trust in subordinates, thereby impeding village apparatus as subordinates from pursuing improvements in village apparatus job satisfaction.

Employee performance constitutes a critical foundation for employee appraisal in support of organizational objectives. The management of human resources determines the success of an organization. According to Maamari & Saheb (2018), employee performance is defined as actions that support organizational objectives and are formally recognized as components of the job (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). Performance encompasses two dimensions: the behavioral aspect, which constitutes the action dimension, and the performance aspect, which constitutes the outcome dimension. Meanwhile, Bili et al. (2018) conclude that performance represents the work results of an individual that provide feedback, encouraging the individual to remain actively engaged in completing their work well, with the expectation of producing quality outputs (Bili et al., 2018). Performance, therefore, is the work accomplished by an employee over a given period in relation to their respective job functions, as established by the organization.

Marbun & Jufrizen (2022) define job satisfaction as the optimistic attitude demonstrated by workers toward their work, enabling them to work joyfully without feeling burdened and to deliver their best contributions to the organization (Marbun & Jufrizen, 2022). According to Sunarta (2019), there exists a correlation between job satisfaction and not only pleasant work but also with happiness and well-being (Sunarta, 2019). Job satisfaction represents an individual's positive or negative evaluation of their job and work experiences. Employees who perceive their work positively are more likely to experience pleasant emotional states and favorable attitudes toward their jobs, whereas unfavorable evaluations of work are associated with dissatisfaction and more negative affective experiences (Madrid et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2022). Job satisfaction is an important factor associated with employees' intention to remain in an organization. In the context of village government, higher job satisfaction among village apparatus may strengthen their willingness to remain committed to their responsibilities and reduce their intention to leave their positions (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Job satisfaction, therefore, is an attitude reflecting positive emotions and enthusiasm toward one's work, determined by evaluating one's job or work experience.

Leadership refers to a process of influencing and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). In the context of village government, this concept specifically refers to the Village Head's ability to direct, motivate, coordinate, and influence village apparatus in carrying out their responsibilities and achieving shared village objectives. Leadership can be understood as a reciprocal process of influence

through which leaders and followers interact to achieve shared objectives. In the context of village government, this process specifically reflects the ability of the Village Head to provide direction, make appropriate decisions, communicate organizational expectations, and motivate village apparatus to perform their responsibilities effectively. Effective leadership is therefore not limited to the exercise of formal authority but also involves the capacity to foster cooperation, encourage employee participation, and align individual efforts with village government objectives (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Empirical evidence in the village government context demonstrates that leadership is significantly associated with village apparatus performance, indicating that effective leadership practices can strengthen the quality and effectiveness of apparatus performance (Mariyani et al., 2021; Pratama & Islamuddin, 2024). The Village Head's leadership style consequently represents an important managerial mechanism for directing and motivating village apparatus toward the achievement of organizational goals.

Competence encompasses the knowledge, skills, abilities, and work-related attributes required for individuals to perform their duties effectively and achieve expected performance outcomes. In the context of village government, adequate competence enables village apparatus to understand regulations and job responsibilities, perform administrative tasks accurately, solve work-related problems, and provide effective public services. Empirical evidence demonstrates that basic competence, managerial abilities, and technical skills significantly contribute to the performance of village apparatus, indicating that higher levels of competence are associated with better-quality work outcomes (Abadi et al., 2020). More recent evidence further demonstrates that competence is associated with village apparatus performance and that job satisfaction can mediate this relationship, suggesting that competent village apparatus are not only better equipped to accomplish their duties but may also experience more favorable attitudes toward their work (Sabil et al., 2024). Competence is therefore considered an important individual factor that can directly contribute to village apparatus performance while potentially influencing performance indirectly through job satisfaction.

Although the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership style, competence, and employee performance has been examined in various organizational settings; including private companies, higher education institutions, and district-level government offices (Aprilliansyah & Cholid, 2020; Hidayat, 2021; Hizkia et al., 2022); these studies predominantly involve younger, more formally structured, and career-oriented workforces. Village apparatus represent a distinct organizational context: they operate within a rule-bound bureaucratic structure with limited managerial discretion, are largely composed of

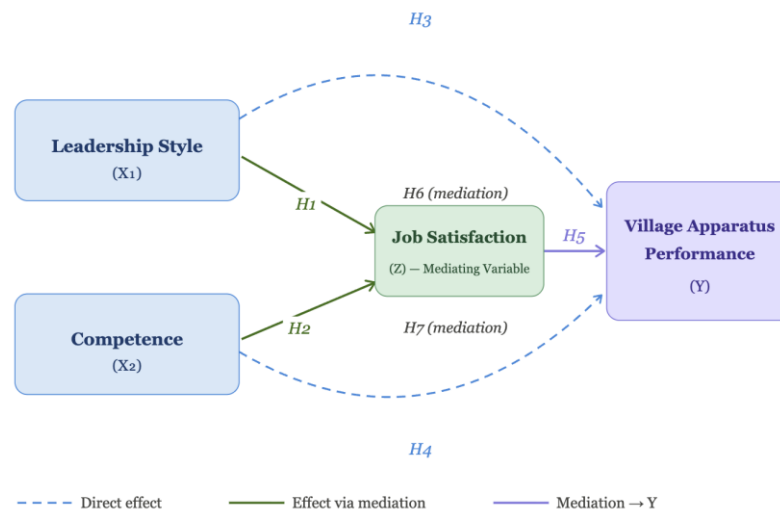
long-tenured personnel with senior-secondary educational backgrounds, and are subject to leadership turnover driven by village head elections rather than institutional career paths. This structural and demographic profile has rarely been the focus of prior leadership–competence–village apparatus job satisfaction –performance research, leaving open the question of whether relationships established in corporate or higher-level government contexts hold in village-level governance. The present study addresses this gap by examining these relationships specifically among village apparatus in Doro Sub-district, thereby contributing context-specific evidence on how village head’s leadership style and competence translate into performance through village apparatus job satisfaction within a rule-driven, low-turnover, and demographically distinct workforce—an empirical setting that remains underrepresented in the existing literature.

The hypotheses formulated in this study are as follows:

- H1: Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H2: Competence has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H3: Leadership style has a positive effect on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H4: Competence has a positive effect on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H5: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H6: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of leadership style on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.
- H7: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of competence on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district.

The conceptual framework for this study is presented below:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Variables in the model:

- Blue (X₁, X₂) = exogenous (independent) variables: Leadership Style and Competence
- Green (Z) = mediating variable: Job Satisfaction
- Purple (Y) = endogenous (dependent) variable: Village Apparatus Performance

Hypothetical paths:

H1: Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction

H2: Competence → Job Satisfaction

H3: Leadership Style → Village Apparatus Performance (direct, dashed line)

H4: Competence → Village Apparatus Performance (direct, dashed line)

H5: Job Satisfaction → Apparatus Performance

H6: Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction → Village Apparatus Performance (mediated)

H7: Competence → Job Satisfaction → Village Apparatus Performance (mediated)

Village Apparatus Performance

In this study, village apparatus performance is conceptualized based on the broader concept of individual work performance within an organizational setting. Accordingly, the term village apparatus performance refers specifically to the work performance of individual village apparatus in carrying out their duties, responsibilities, and functions within village government institutions, rather than to the overall performance of the village government as an organization. This distinction is important because the unit of analysis in this study is the individual village apparatus. In this regard, job performance is generally understood as an individual-level construct that reflects the extent to which employees' work behaviors and outcomes contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. Motowidlo et al. (1997) conceptualize job performance as the aggregated value of behavioral episodes performed by individuals over a particular period, emphasizing that performance is behavioral, evaluative, and multidimensional (Motowidlo et al., 1997).

The multidimensional nature of individual performance is further elaborated by Borman & Motowidlo (1997), who distinguish between task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Task performance concerns behaviors directly related to the core duties and technical requirements of a job, whereas contextual performance encompasses behaviors that support the broader organizational, social, and psychological environment in which work is performed (Campbell et al., 1990). This perspective is particularly relevant to village apparatus, whose responsibilities involve not only completing administrative and governmental tasks but also demonstrating behaviors that support effective public service and the functioning of village government.

Consistent with this perspective, Koopmans et al. (2012) developed the concept of individual work performance as a generic framework for assessing employees' performance across different occupational settings (Koopmans et al., 2012). Their empirical work identifies three major dimensions of individual work performance: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. Task performance reflects employees' ability to perform the essential duties of their jobs, while contextual performance concerns behaviors that contribute to the organizational and social environment beyond formal task requirements. Based on this framework, village apparatus performance in the present study can therefore be understood as the extent to which village apparatus effectively perform their assigned duties and responsibilities, contribute constructively to the functioning of the village government, and demonstrate work behaviors that support the achievement of organizational objectives.

In the context of village governance, the performance of village apparatus is particularly important because village officials serve as the primary human resources responsible for carrying out administrative functions, delivering public services, and supporting village development. Previous empirical research in Indonesia has also examined village apparatus performance in relation to competence and other organizational factors, confirming the relevance of individual performance as an important outcome in village government settings (Abadi et al., 2020; Sabil et al., 2024). Therefore, in this study, village apparatus performance refers to the individual work performance of village apparatus as reflected in their ability to perform assigned tasks effectively, fulfill their responsibilities, and contribute to the achievement of village government objectives.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction in this study refers specifically to the job satisfaction experienced by village apparatus in performing their duties and responsibilities within village government

institutions. Thus, village apparatus job satisfaction represents the extent to which individual village officials develop favorable feelings and positive evaluations toward their jobs and work experiences. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of their job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). This definition indicates that job satisfaction is not merely an assessment of whether employees enjoy their work, but also reflects their emotional response to various aspects of their employment. In the context of village government, such evaluations may arise from the nature of the work, responsibilities, leadership, working conditions, and experiences encountered by village apparatus in carrying out public administrative and service functions.

Job satisfaction is therefore an important employee attitude that reflects the degree to which village apparatus perceive their work as fulfilling and consistent with their expectations. Employees who experience higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work, whereas dissatisfaction may be associated with unfavorable emotional responses and reduced attachment to their jobs. This perspective is particularly relevant to village government because the quality of administrative and public services is partly dependent on the attitudes and work experiences of the officials responsible for delivering those services. Recent empirical research involving village officials in Indonesia demonstrates the relevance of job satisfaction within this context. Sabil et al. (2024), for example, found that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between competence and village apparatus performance, indicating that satisfaction is an important mechanism through which individual capabilities may be translated into better work performance (Sabil et al., 2024).

Village apparatus job satisfaction in this study can be understood as a positive evaluative and emotional attitude toward the work performed by village officials, arising from their assessment of their job and work experiences. This construct is positioned as a mediating variable linking village head's leadership style and competence to village apparatus performance. A favorable leadership environment and adequate competence may contribute to more positive work experiences and evaluations, which in turn may strengthen village apparatus' satisfaction with their jobs and ultimately support better performance. This conceptualization is also consistent with empirical evidence showing a relationship between job satisfaction and the performance of village government officials in Indonesia. Awal and Syamsir (2019), for instance, reported that job satisfaction significantly influenced the performance of village government officials in village financial management (Awal & Syamsir, 2019).

Leadership Style

The term leadership style in this article specifically refers to the leadership style demonstrated by the village head in directing and managing the village apparatus. Leadership is fundamentally a process through which an individual influences others to understand and accomplish collective objectives, while also facilitating individual and organizational effectiveness. Yukl & Gardner (2020) emphasizes that leadership involves influencing people and facilitating collective efforts toward the achievement of shared objectives (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). In the context of village government, the village head occupies a strategic leadership position because the effectiveness of village administration depends not only on formal authority but also on the leader's ability to provide direction, make appropriate decisions, communicate expectations, and encourage village apparatus to perform their responsibilities effectively. Thus, village head's leadership style can be understood as the pattern of behavior adopted by the village head in influencing, directing, motivating, and coordinating village apparatus in the implementation of governmental and public service functions.

The relevance of village head's leadership style becomes particularly important in determining how village apparatus perceive their roles, responsibilities, and working relationships. An effective village head is expected to employ leadership behaviors that encourage participation, provide clear guidance, recognize employees' contributions, and create an environment conducive to achieving organizational objectives. Such leadership practices may influence not only the immediate performance of village apparatus but also their attitudes toward their work. Evidence from public-sector research demonstrates that leadership style is associated with organizational outcomes through employee-related mechanisms, including job satisfaction. For example, Vermeeren et al. (2014), based on data from employees of Dutch municipalities, demonstrate the importance of leadership and human resource practices in shaping organizational outcomes, while more recent evidence from the public sector indicates that leadership style can influence employee performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction (Vermeeren et al., 2014).

Within the framework of this study, village head's leadership style is positioned as an important antecedent of both village apparatus performance and job satisfaction. The way in which the village head exercises authority, communicates with subordinates, involves apparatus in decision-making, provides support, and motivates employees may shape their satisfaction with their work and subsequently affect the quality of their performance (Lempang et al., 2025). This argument is consistent with empirical studies showing that job satisfaction can function as

a mediating mechanism in the relationship between leadership style and employee performance (Asriani et al., 2020; Hailu, 2025; Saputra, 2023).

Village head's leadership style in village government should not merely be viewed as a matter of how the village head exercises authority, but as a managerial mechanism through which employee attitudes and behaviors are directed toward effective village administration. In this sense, examining the effect of the village head's leadership style on village apparatus performance, both directly and through job satisfaction, provides a relevant theoretical basis for understanding variations in apparatus performance within the village government context.

Competence

Competence in this study specifically refers to the competence possessed by village apparatus in carrying out their administrative, governmental, and public service responsibilities. Competence represents the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral attributes that enables individuals to perform their duties effectively. From a human resource management perspective, competence is not limited to technical expertise but also encompasses the capacity to apply knowledge and skills appropriately in specific work situations. Boyatzis (1991) conceptualizes competence as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance (Boyatzis, 1991). In the context of village government, competent village apparatus are expected to possess adequate knowledge of administrative procedures and regulations, technical skills relevant to their respective positions, problem-solving abilities, and appropriate work attitudes. These competencies are essential because village apparatus serve as the operational actors who support the village head in implementing government administration, development programs, and public services.

The competence of village apparatus is therefore closely associated with their ability to accomplish tasks accurately, efficiently, and responsibly. Competent apparatus are more capable of understanding job responsibilities, adapting to administrative requirements, utilizing relevant information and technology, and resolving problems encountered in the provision of public services. Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Abadi et al. (2020) found that basic competence of village apparatus, managerial abilities, and technical skills significantly influence the performance of village apparatus in Sidoarjo Regency, indicating that higher levels of competence are associated with better performance (Abadi et al., 2020). Similarly, research on village officials in Indonesia has demonstrated that competence of village apparatus contributes positively to performance, particularly because adequate knowledge and skills enable village officials to perform administrative and governance-related responsibilities more effectively (B. Setiawan et al., 2022).

Competence may influence performance not only directly but also through employees' attitudes toward their work. When village apparatus possess sufficient knowledge, skills, and confidence to perform their responsibilities, they are more likely to experience a sense of mastery and satisfaction with their work. This argument is consistent with empirical evidence involving village apparatus in Pariaman City, which found that competence had a positive effect on job satisfaction and job performance, while job satisfaction mediated the relationship between competence and job performance (Trimurni & Evanita, 2021). In the present study, competence of village apparatus is positioned as an antecedent that may contribute to both village apparatus performance and job satisfaction, with job satisfaction functioning as a potential mechanism through which competence of village apparatus translates into improved performance. This perspective is particularly relevant to village government because enhancing apparatus competence of village apparatus may not only improve their capacity to perform administrative and public service tasks but may also foster more positive work experiences, ultimately supporting higher levels of performance.

METHOD

This survey research employs an explanatory research approach with a single population to explain causal relationships among variables and to quantitatively test causal hypotheses, consistent with the concept of causal research as proposed by (Sugiyono, 2018). The research object comprises 73 Village Apparatus members in Doro Sub-district, assessed using a performance appraisal questionnaire. Determination of the number of samples using the purposive sampling method, namely based on predetermined criteria. The criteria employed are: Village Apparatus members in Doro Sub-district, Pekalongan Regency; apparatus possessing a Letter of Appointment (SK); and a minimum tenure of five years. The study employs SmartPLS and a questionnaire for primary data collection. The researcher utilized a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to facilitate respondent responses. The analytical techniques employed include data quality testing, classical assumption testing, and path analysis.

Validity Test

The validity test was conducted to determine whether the measurement instruments adequately measured the constructs intended in the study, namely the Village Head's leadership style, village apparatus competence, village apparatus job satisfaction, and village apparatus performance. An instrument is considered to have satisfactory validity when its measurement items accurately represent the underlying construct. The validity of each questionnaire item was assessed by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient with the critical value and by

examining its statistical significance. The results indicate that all questionnaire items for the four variables were valid, as their significance values were below 0.05. These findings suggest that each item adequately represents the construct being measured and can therefore be retained for subsequent statistical analysis.

Reliability Test

The reliability test was performed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items used to measure the Village Head's leadership style, village apparatus competence, village apparatus job satisfaction, and village apparatus performance. Each construct was measured using 10 questionnaire items. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Following Hair et al. (2019), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher indicates good internal consistency, values between 0.60 and 0.70 are considered acceptable for exploratory research, and values below 0.60 indicate inadequate reliability. As presented in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were 0.828 for the Village Head's leadership style, 0.865 for village apparatus competence, and 0.805 for village apparatus job satisfaction—all of which meet the good-reliability threshold. In contrast, the Cronbach's Alpha for village apparatus performance was 0.514, which falls below the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60. This indicates that the performance measurement instrument does not yet demonstrate adequate internal consistency and should be interpreted as a limitation of the present study, discussed further in the Measurement Model Evaluation and Limitations sections.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Variable	Questionnaire Items	Cronbach's alpha	Description
Leadership Style (X1)	10	0.828	Reliable
Competence (X2)	10	0.865	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Z)	10	0.805	Reliable
Performance (Y)	10	0.514	Below Threshold

Source: Primary data, processed (2024)

Overall, the reliability results indicate that three of the four constructs used in this study—Village Head's leadership style, village apparatus competence, and village apparatus job satisfaction—demonstrate good internal consistency according to Hair et al. (2019). The Village Apparatus Performance construct, however, falls below the minimum acceptable threshold (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.514), indicating a reliability shortcoming that constrains the

interpretability of subsequent structural model results involving this construct. All four constructs were nonetheless retained for further analysis, consistent with the study's objective of examining these relationships; however, results involving Apparatus Performance should be interpreted with appropriate caution, as elaborated in the Measurement Model Evaluation and Limitations sections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation

Prior to structural model estimation, the outer model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for each construct. A construct is generally considered reliable when its Cronbach's Alpha exceeds 0.60–0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). As shown in Table 1, three constructs—Leadership Style, Competence, and Job Satisfaction—met this threshold. However, the Apparatus Performance construct yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.514, falling below the commonly accepted minimum. This indicates that the indicators used to measure Apparatus Performance in this study do not yet form an internally consistent and reliable scale.

This low reliability value raises a methodological concern that should have been addressed prior to structural model testing: indicators with insufficient internal consistency undermine the interpretability of any coefficient involving that construct, including the path estimates reported in the subsequent structural model analysis.

As reported in Table 1 and discussed in the Method section, three constructs—Leadership Style, Competence, and Job Satisfaction—met the reliability threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2019), whereas the Apparatus Performance construct (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.514) fell below the acceptable minimum (Hair et al., 2019). This reliability shortcoming, rather than being addressed only at this stage, should have been identified and corrected during instrument pretesting prior to structural model estimation. Ideally, item purification; through the removal of weak-loading indicators or the addition of more discriminating items; should have been conducted at the instrument development stage. Because this was not done prior to data collection, the results involving Apparatus Performance in this study (including its low R^2 of 0.019) must be interpreted with this instrument limitation in mind, rather than solely as a substantive finding about the absence of leadership or competence effects.

Path Coefficient Analysis

Path analysis was conducted to explain the causal relationships between one variable and another. In addition, path analysis can demonstrate both the direct and indirect effects

among research variables. The following presents the results of path analysis for the variables in this study.

Figure 2. Path Analysis

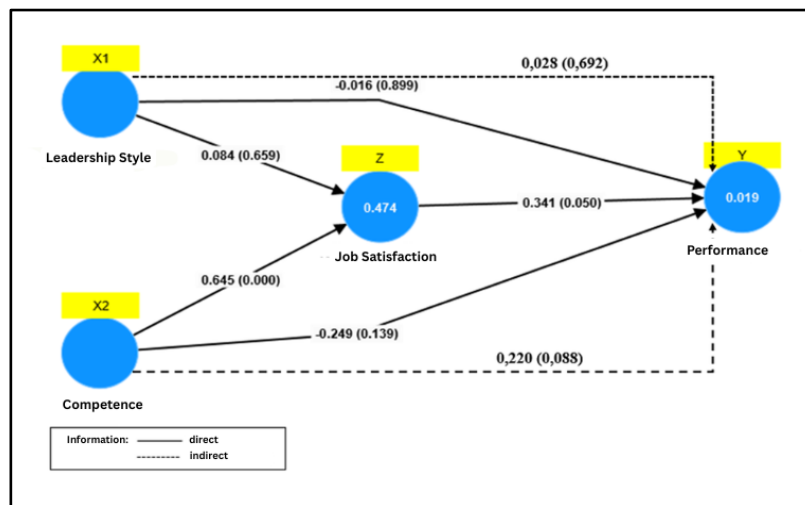


Figure 2 indicates that the R^2 value for the Village Apparatus Performance variable is 0.019, meaning that 1.9% of Village Apparatus Performance is explained by the independent variables examined in this study. This influence is categorized as extremely weak. It is important to state at the outset that an R^2 of 0.019 falls far below conventional thresholds for even weak explanatory power in social science research (Chin, 1998), meaning the structural model tested here should not be interpreted as an adequate explanation of village apparatus performance. The following points offer possible explanations for this outcome, but they do not resolve the fundamental limitation that the model, as specified, has negligible predictive relevance for the dependent variable. This finding warrants careful interpretation across several dimensions.

First, the characteristics of the respondents indicate that most village apparatus in Doro Sub-district are over 50 years of age and have completed senior secondary education (SMA/SMK/MA). This demographic profile may be associated with relatively established work routines, accumulated work experience, and stronger familiarity with existing administrative procedures, which may reduce the extent to which short-term changes in the Village Head's leadership style or efforts to enhance apparatus competence influence their established patterns of work behavior. This condition can be interpreted from the perspective of job embeddedness, which emphasizes the importance of employees' links, fit, and perceived sacrifice in explaining their attachment to the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001). Previous research further indicates that job embeddedness is associated with employee performance and may interact with leader-member exchange in shaping task performance (Sekiguchi et al.,

2008). Thus, the relatively stable performance of experienced village apparatus may partly reflect their strong attachment to established work relationships and organizational routines rather than being determined solely by the Village Head's leadership style or recent competence-development initiatives.

Second, village apparatus performance is likely influenced by factors not measured in this study, such as: (a) the availability of village budget and infrastructure, (b) administrative regulations and demands from the district government, (c) employees' intrinsic motivation, and (d) the local village organizational culture. In the context of village governance, Village Apparatus Performance is more rule-driven in nature; governed by established regulations and fixed procedures; such that leadership and individual competence of village apparatus factors are not always the dominant predictors.

Third, as already noted in the measurement model evaluation, the Apparatus Performance construct exhibited weak internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.514), reinforcing the conclusion that the low R^2 value is partly attributable to instrument-level weakness rather than the complete absence of substantive relationships among the study's variables. This implies that the performance indicators employed have not yet fully captured the relevant performance dimensions in the context of village apparatus. The implication of this finding is that future research should incorporate more contextually relevant predictor variables; such as work motivation, organizational culture, organizational support, and resource availability; and should improve the performance measurement instrument to better align with the core duties of village apparatus.

Meanwhile, the R^2 value for the Job Satisfaction variable is 0.474, meaning that 47.4% of village apparatus job satisfaction is explained by Village head's leadership style and Competence of village apparatus. This influence is categorized as moderately substantial.

Table 2. Path Analysis Results: Leadership Style, Competence, Job Satisfaction, and Village
table 2 Apparatus Performance in Doro Sub-district

Variable	Coefficient	p-value	Description
Leadership Style → Apparatus Performance	-0.016	0.899	Direct
Competence → Apparatus Performance	-0.249	0.139	Direct
Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction	0.084	0.659	Direct

Competence → Job Satisfaction	0.645	0.000	Direct
Job Satisfaction → Apparatus Performance	0.341	0.050	Direct
Leadership Style → Job Satisfaction → Apparatus Performance	0.028	0.692	Indirect
Competence → Job Satisfaction → Apparatus Performance	0.220	0.088	Indirect

Source: Primary data, processed (2024)

Table 2 presents the relationships among variables based on the hypotheses. The direct effect of Village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance yielded a p-value of 0.899, which exceeds 0.05, with a path coefficient of -0.016. This indicates that at a 5% significance level, Village head's leadership style exerts a negative effect on Apparatus Performance, although the effect is not statistically significant. With respect to the effect of competence of village apparatus on Apparatus Performance, the p-value of 0.139 exceeds 0.05, with a path coefficient of -0.249, indicating that at a 5% significance level, Competence of village apparatus exerts a direct negative effect on Apparatus Performance, although the effect is not statistically significant. The direct effect of Village head's leadership style on Job Satisfaction yielded a p-value of 0.659, which exceeds 0.05, with a path coefficient of 0.084. This indicates that at a 5% significance level, Village head's leadership style exerts a direct positive effect on Job Satisfaction, although the effect is not statistically significant. The direct effect of Competence on Job Satisfaction yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, with a path coefficient of 0.645. This indicates that at a 5% significance level, Competence exerts a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction. The direct effect of Job Satisfaction on Village Apparatus Performance yielded a p-value of 0.050, which is equal to the 5% significance level, with a path coefficient of 0.341. This indicates that at a 5% significance level, Job Satisfaction exerts a direct positive yet non-significant effect on Apparatus Performance.

In the results of the indirect path analysis of Village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance in Doro Sub-district through the mediation of Job Satisfaction, a p-value of 0.692 was obtained, which exceeds 0.05, with a path coefficient of 0.028. This indicates that at a 5% significance level, Village head's leadership style exerts a positive effect on Village Apparatus Performance through the mediation of Job Satisfaction, although the effect is not statistically significant. Furthermore, at a 5% significance level, Competence of village apparatus also exerts a positive effect on Village Apparatus Performance through the

mediation of Job Satisfaction, although the effect is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.088 exceeding 0.05 and a path coefficient of 0.220.

Table 2 indicates that the coefficient of the direct relationship between Leadership Style and Village Apparatus Performance is -0.016, whereas the coefficient of the indirect relationship between Leadership Style and Village Apparatus Performance mediated by Village apparatus job satisfaction is 0.028. Although the effects are not statistically significant, the indirect path coefficient (0.028) is greater than the direct path coefficient (-0.016). This indicates that Village apparatus job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Village head's leadership style and Apparatus Performance. Although the direct effect of Village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance is not significant, there is an indication that part of the effect of Village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance can be explained through the improvement of Village apparatus job satisfaction, mediated by other factors not measured in this analysis.

Table 2 presents the coefficient of the direct relationship between Competence and Village Apparatus Performance as -0.249, whereas the coefficient of the indirect relationship between Competence and Village Apparatus Performance mediated by Job Satisfaction is 0.220. Although the effects are not statistically significant, the indirect path coefficient (0.220) is greater than the direct path coefficient (-0.249). This indicates that Village apparatus job satisfaction mediates the relationship between competence of village apparatus and Apparatus Performance. Although the direct relationship between competence of village apparatus and Village Apparatus Performance is not significant, part of the effect of competence of village apparatus on Village Apparatus Performance can be explained through the improvement of Village apparatus job satisfaction, mediated by other factors not measured in this analysis.

Goodness of Fit Test

The goodness of fit of the model can be assessed from the SRMR value. A PLS model is declared to satisfy the goodness of fit criterion if the SRMR value is < 0.10 , and a perfect fit if $\text{SRMR} < 0.08$. The results of the PLS model goodness of fit test in Table 3 below indicate that the SRMR value of the model falls below 0.10, thereby declaring this PLS model as fit (acceptable), and thus suitable for testing the research hypotheses. The Chi-square value of 0.000 for both the saturated and estimated models is a function of the model's degrees of freedom under the specified structure, rather than an indication of literally zero residual discrepancy; this should not be interpreted as evidence of a flawless model fit.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Test Results for the Path Analysis Model

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.000	0.000
d_ULS	0.000	0.000
d_G	0.000	0.000
Chi-square	0.000	0.000
NFI	1.000	1.000

Direct Effect of Village Head's Leadership Style on Apparatus Performance

The results of this study indicate that Village head's leadership style exerts a negative yet non-significant effect on Village Apparatus Performance in Doro Sub-district. The regression coefficient for the effect of village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance is -0.016 with a p-value of 0.899, which is not statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that although some respondents perceive the applied village head's leadership style to be of good quality, its effect on Village Apparatus Performance is not significant. Other factors may be more dominant in influencing village apparatus performance in this area.

The finding that the Village Head's leadership style does not significantly affect village apparatus performance differs from the results reported by Widodo et al. (2018), who identified a positive and significant effect of leadership style on employee performance at PT Telkom Indonesia's Batam Branch (Widodo et al., 2018). However, the present finding is consistent with Mulyadi et al. (2020), who found that leadership style did not significantly influence employee performance, suggesting that the contribution of leadership to performance may vary across organizational settings (Mulyadi et al., 2020). Such differences may be attributable to contextual conditions, including employee characteristics, organizational culture, work environment, and other individual or organizational factors that shape performance outcomes. Previous research has likewise demonstrated that work environment and organizational culture may operate alongside leadership in influencing employee attitudes and performance, indicating that leadership should not necessarily be viewed as an isolated determinant of performance (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Setiawan, 2019). Accordingly, the hypothesis proposing a significant effect of the Village Head's leadership style on village apparatus performance is not supported. The non-significant result may indicate that other factors not incorporated into the present model, such as work environment, organizational culture,

motivation, or individual characteristics of village apparatus, may play a more substantial role in determining performance.

Direct Effect of Competence of village apparatus on Apparatus Performance

The findings reveal that village apparatus competence has a negative but statistically non-significant effect on village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district, as indicated by a path coefficient of -0.249 and a p-value of 0.139 . Thus, the hypothesis that village apparatus competence significantly affects performance is not supported. This result suggests that possessing adequate knowledge, skills, and work-related capabilities does not necessarily translate into higher performance in the village-government context. The finding contrasts with Abadi et al. (2020), who found that management and technical competencies significantly contributed to village apparatus performance in Sidoarjo Regency (Abadi et al., 2020), while Murhaban et al. (2021) similarly reported a significant positive effect of village apparatus competence on performance in Lhokseumawe City (Murhaban et al., 2021). However, the present result is consistent with evidence that competence does not always produce a significant performance outcome.

The present finding is supported by Nugraha et al. (2022), who found that competence did not have a significant direct effect on employee performance among civil servants in the West Java Provincial Office of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Nugraha et al., 2022). More importantly, their analysis also showed that competence did not significantly influence performance through job satisfaction, indicating that possessing adequate competencies does not necessarily translate into improved performance through positive work attitudes. Similarly, Misra et al. (2023), in a study of employees within the Ministry of Religious Affairs across the Kalimantan region, found that competence did not significantly affect employee performance, whereas organizational culture had a significant influence (Misra et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the contribution of competence to performance may be highly contingent upon organizational conditions and the mechanisms through which individual capabilities are translated into work outcomes.

The non-significant relationship in Doro Sub-district may reflect the fact that competence must be supported by an organizational environment that enables village officials to utilize their capabilities effectively. Competent personnel may possess the necessary knowledge and skills but may not achieve superior performance when faced with inadequate organizational support, unclear responsibilities, limited resources, weak work systems, or an organizational culture that does not facilitate the application of their capabilities. This interpretation is consistent with Sabil et al. (2024), who demonstrated that village apparatus

performance is influenced not only by competence but also by organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction. Accordingly, the negative coefficient observed in the present study should not be interpreted as evidence that competence is detrimental to performance; rather, given the non-significant p-value, it indicates that the observed variation in competence does not provide sufficient statistical evidence to explain differences in village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district. Future research should therefore examine competence alongside organizational support, work environment, organizational culture, motivation, and job satisfaction to better explain the conditions under which village apparatus competence can be translated into improved performance.

Direct Effect of Village head's leadership style on Village apparatus job satisfaction

The findings indicate that the village head's leadership style has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on the job satisfaction of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district. The estimated path coefficient of 0.084 with a p-value of 0.659 suggests that, although respondents tend to perceive the prevailing leadership style positively, variations in the village head's leadership style are insufficient to produce a statistically detectable change in job satisfaction. Accordingly, the hypothesis proposing a significant effect of village head leadership style on village apparatus job satisfaction is not supported. This result suggests that job satisfaction among village apparatus may be shaped more strongly by other organizational and individual conditions than by leadership style alone.

This finding differs from the evidence reported by Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), whose study of employees in Indonesian hotels found that leadership style had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Their findings indicate that leadership behavior can be an important organizational antecedent of employees' affective responses to their work. However, the present result is closely aligned with Ahyat et al. (2023), who specifically examined village officials in Lombok and found that transformational leadership by village heads had a positive but non-significant effect on job satisfaction, while work climate significantly affected job satisfaction (Ahyat et al., 2023). The similarity is particularly relevant because both studies examine leadership within village-government settings, where the formal authority of the village head may not automatically translate into higher job satisfaction among apparatus. The broader evidence also suggests that the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction may depend on contextual factors, including organizational climate, communication patterns, working conditions, and employees' perceptions of support and fairness.

The non-significant relationship in Doro Sub-district may therefore reflect the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction in village government organizations. A favorable leadership style may be insufficient to enhance satisfaction when employees' day-to-day experiences are more strongly influenced by the work environment, organizational culture, workload, compensation, interpersonal relationships, career opportunities, or perceived organizational support. This interpretation is consistent with Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), who demonstrated that work environment and organizational culture, in addition to leadership style, significantly contributed to job satisfaction (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Thus, the present finding should not be interpreted as indicating that leadership is irrelevant; rather, it suggests that the effect of village head leadership may be contingent upon the broader organizational context in which village apparatus perform their duties. Future research could therefore incorporate work climate, organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and individual characteristics to provide a more comprehensive explanation of job satisfaction among village apparatus.

Direct Effect of Competence of village apparatus on Village apparatus job satisfaction

The findings demonstrate that village apparatus competence has a positive and statistically significant effect on job satisfaction in Doro Sub-district, with a path coefficient of 0.645 and a p-value below 0.001. This result indicates that higher levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to village administration are associated with greater satisfaction among village officials. Competent officials are likely to experience greater confidence in performing their responsibilities, managing administrative tasks, and delivering public services, thereby fostering more positive evaluations of their work. This finding is consistent with Fitri et al. (2020), who found that competence had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among employees of the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office of Riau Province (Fitri et al., 2020). Similarly, Yulianti et al. (2020) reported a positive and significant relationship between competence and job satisfaction among employees of the Riau Provincial Transportation Agency (Yulianti et al., 2020). The consistency of these findings across public-sector organizations strengthens the argument that competence is not only an important resource for accomplishing work tasks but can also shape employees' positive attitudes toward their jobs.

The significant relationship observed in Doro Sub-district provides empirical support for the hypothesis that village apparatus competence contributes to job satisfaction. From a practical perspective, strengthening competence through targeted training, technical assistance, continuous learning, and appropriate placement may enhance officials' confidence and

perceived ability to fulfill their administrative and public-service responsibilities. Nevertheless, competence should not be viewed as the sole determinant of job satisfaction. Previous research on village apparatus indicates that job satisfaction is embedded within a broader organizational context involving organizational culture and perceived organizational support (Sabil et al., 2024). Therefore, the relatively strong coefficient observed in this study should be interpreted as evidence of the importance of competence while recognizing that supportive leadership, a conducive work environment, organizational culture, recognition, and adequate institutional support may further strengthen the extent to which competence is translated into positive job experiences. In the context of Doro Sub-district, competency-development policies should consequently be accompanied by organizational interventions that enable village officials to apply their capabilities effectively and experience greater satisfaction in performing their roles.

Direct Effect of Village apparatus job satisfaction on Apparatus Performance

The findings indicate that job satisfaction has a positive but statistically inconclusive effect on the performance of village apparatus in Doro Sub-district. The estimated path coefficient of 0.341 indicates that higher job satisfaction tends to be associated with better apparatus performance; however, the p-value of 0.050 lies precisely at the conventional 5% significance threshold. Accordingly, when the decision rule is based strictly on $p < 0.05$, the hypothesis proposing a significant effect of job satisfaction on village apparatus performance is not supported. This result suggests that job satisfaction alone may not be sufficient to explain variations in the performance of village apparatus, as performance in village government may also depend on other organizational and individual factors, including competence, work environment, organizational culture, leadership, and perceived organizational support.

The finding is consistent with Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), who found that job satisfaction did not have a significant positive effect on employee performance in the Indonesian hotel industry, indicating that satisfaction does not necessarily translate directly into higher performance (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Their findings are particularly relevant because they demonstrate that even when employees experience favorable working conditions and satisfaction, performance may be driven more strongly by other organizational mechanisms. However, the present result contrasts with Sabil et al. (2024), who examined 368 village officials across 19 regencies in West Java and found that job satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on village apparatus performance (Sabil et al., 2024). Similarly, Jufrizen et al. (2017) reported a positive effect of job satisfaction on lecturer performance, suggesting that satisfied employees may be more likely to demonstrate higher work effectiveness (Jufrizen et al., 2017). These contrasting findings indicate that the relationship between job satisfaction

and performance is not necessarily universal but may depend on organizational context, job characteristics, and the mechanisms through which satisfaction is translated into work behavior.

In the context of village government, the non-significant finding may indicate that satisfaction needs to be accompanied by adequate competence, organizational support, clear work expectations, and a conducive organizational culture before it can be translated into improved performance. This interpretation is supported by Sabil et al. (2024), who found that organizational culture and perceived organizational support were important factors associated with village apparatus performance, while job satisfaction also played a role in the competence–performance relationship (Sabil et al., 2024). Thus, the present finding does not imply that job satisfaction is unimportant; rather, it suggests that its contribution to village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district may be contingent upon other organizational conditions. Future research should therefore examine interaction or mediation mechanisms involving organizational culture, perceived organizational support, competence, work environment, and reward systems to obtain a more comprehensive explanation of how job satisfaction contributes to village apparatus performance.

Effect of Village head's leadership style on Village Apparatus Performance with Village apparatus job satisfaction as Mediating Variable

The findings demonstrate that the village head's leadership style does not have a statistically significant effect on village apparatus performance when job satisfaction is considered in the model. The estimated coefficient is -0.016 with a p-value of 0.899 , indicating an extremely weak and statistically insignificant relationship. This result suggests that variations in the village head's leadership style are not sufficient to generate meaningful differences in apparatus performance within the Doro Sub-district context, even when employees' job satisfaction is taken into account. Accordingly, the finding does not provide empirical support for the proposition that leadership style contributes directly to improved apparatus performance through the inclusion of job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism. Rather, the result implies that the translation of leadership practices into actual work performance may depend on additional organizational and behavioral conditions that are not fully captured by job satisfaction alone.

The finding contrasts with Siagian and Khair (2018), who reported that leadership style influenced employee performance through job satisfaction, suggesting that satisfaction can constitute an important mechanism through which leadership is translated into employee outcomes (Siagian & Khair, 2018). Similarly, Saputra (2023) found that leadership style had a

positive and significant effect on employee performance and that job satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between leadership style and performance (Saputra, 2023). These contrasting findings suggest that the mediating role of job satisfaction is not necessarily uniform across organizational settings. In particular, the institutional characteristics of village government may produce different dynamics from those found in private-sector organizations. This interpretation is supported by Sabil et al. (2024), who specifically examined village apparatus performance and demonstrated that job satisfaction operates within a broader organizational framework involving competence, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support (Sabil et al., 2024).

In the context of Doro Sub-district, the non-significant effect of leadership style may therefore indicate that improving village apparatus performance requires more than strengthening the leadership behavior of the village head or increasing employee satisfaction. Village apparatus operate within a relatively small administrative structure in which performance may be more strongly influenced by competence, clarity of responsibilities, organizational support, work systems, and available resources. Thus, leadership may create favorable working conditions without necessarily producing an immediate improvement in measurable performance. The present finding should therefore be interpreted as evidence that leadership style alone is insufficient to explain variations in village apparatus performance, rather than as evidence that leadership is irrelevant. Future research should examine whether competence, organizational culture, perceived organizational support, work environment, or other organizational mechanisms strengthen or weaken the pathway from village head leadership to apparatus performance through job satisfaction.

Effect of Competence of village apparatus on Village Apparatus Performance with Village apparatus job satisfaction as Mediating Variable

The findings indicate that job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the effect of village apparatus competence on village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district, as shown by an indirect path coefficient of 0.220 and a p-value of 0.088, which exceeds the 5% significance threshold. Although the indirect coefficient is positive and larger in magnitude than the direct path coefficient reported earlier (-0.249; see Section B), the mediated effect does not reach statistical significance. This suggests that while competence exerts a discernible positive influence on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.645$; $p < 0.001$), this heightened satisfaction does not translate into a statistically detectable improvement in apparatus performance. Competent village officials may perform their administrative and public-service duties effectively, and studies in comparable village-government settings have found direct associations between

competence and performance; for instance, Abadi et al. (2020) in Sidoarjo Regency and Murhaban et al. (2021) in Lhokseumawe City both reported that village apparatus competence significantly influenced performance directly (Abadi et al., 2020; Murhaban et al., 2021). However, the present study's own direct-effect estimate for this relationship was negative and non-significant (Section B), and the indirect pathway through job satisfaction examined here is likewise non-significant. Taken together, these results indicate that in the Doro Sub-district context, neither the direct nor the mediated pathway from competence to performance reaches statistical significance, even though competence remains the strongest and only significant predictor of job satisfaction in this study.

This finding differs from Sabil et al. (2024), who specifically examined village officials and found that job satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between competence and performance. Their study, involving 368 village officials across 19 regencies in West Java, further demonstrated that organizational culture and perceived organizational support shaped the competence–performance relationship (Sabil et al., 2024). The difference may reflect contextual characteristics of village government organizations and the extent to which competence is translated into positive work attitudes. Competence may enable village officials to perform their duties effectively without necessarily increasing their job satisfaction to a degree sufficient to generate additional performance gains. In other words, competence appears to operate more strongly as a direct performance resource in Doro Sub-district than as an antecedent whose effects are transmitted through job satisfaction. This interpretation is also compatible with evidence showing that competence and performance relationships can be influenced by broader organizational conditions rather than by individual capabilities alone.

The finding therefore suggests that strengthening village apparatus competence should remain a priority for improving performance, but competency development should not be assumed to automatically produce higher performance through increased job satisfaction. Training, technical development, regulatory knowledge, and administrative skills may improve the capacity of village officials to perform their duties, whereas job satisfaction may depend on additional factors such as organizational culture, perceived organizational support, work environment, compensation, and recognition. Sabil et al. (2024) similarly emphasized the importance of organizational culture and organizational support alongside job satisfaction in explaining village apparatus performance (Sabil et al., 2024). Consequently, efforts to improve performance in Doro Sub-district should combine competency development with supportive organizational policies and working conditions. The non-significant mediating effect should thus be interpreted not as evidence that job satisfaction is irrelevant, but as an indication that

its role in converting competence into performance may be contingent upon other organizational factors.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of the village head's leadership style and village apparatus competence on village apparatus performance in Doro Sub-district, Pekalongan Regency, with village apparatus job satisfaction as a mediating variable, using a Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach based on data from 73 village apparatus members. The findings reveal a consistent pattern across the seven hypothesized pathways. Neither leadership style nor competence exerts a significant direct effect on apparatus performance (H3 and H4 not supported), and job satisfaction does not significantly mediate either relationship (H6 and H7 not supported). Leadership style likewise shows no significant effect on job satisfaction (H1 not supported). The only robust and statistically significant pathway is the positive effect of competence on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.645$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H2, while the effect of job satisfaction on performance sits exactly at the conventional significance threshold ($p = 0.050$) and is treated here as only marginally supported (H5). Overall, the structural model explains 47.4% of the variance in job satisfaction but only 1.9% of the variance in apparatus performance ($R^2 = 0.019$), indicating very limited predictive power for the study's primary outcome variable.

These findings suggest that in a rule-driven, low-turnover bureaucratic setting such as village government; where the workforce is largely long-tenured and shaped by fixed administrative procedures; apparatus performance appears to be governed more by structural and procedural factors than by leadership style or the mediating mechanism of job satisfaction. This nuances existing leadership–performance literature, much of which is drawn from private-sector or higher-turnover organizational settings, by showing that mediation pathways well-established elsewhere do not necessarily transfer to village-level public administration. The consistently confirmed effect of competence on job satisfaction remains the only substantively interpretable finding of this study, underscoring competence—rather than leadership style—as the more relevant lever for improving village apparatus job satisfaction.

Based on these findings, the Doro Sub-district Government and the Pekalongan District Government are encouraged to prioritize regular capacity-building programs for village apparatus, such as village administrative technical training, technical guidance on village financial management, and competency certification, given that competence is the strongest confirmed predictor of job satisfaction in this study. Village governments should also ensure

alignment between apparatus competence and assigned duties, as appropriate placement is likely to reinforce job satisfaction and may contribute, in turn, to improved performance.

These conclusions should be interpreted in light of several important limitations. Most fundamentally, the structural model's negligible explanatory power for apparatus performance ($R^2 = 0.019$) means that the non-significant direct paths reported for H3 and H4 cannot be reliably attributed to the true absence of an effect; they may instead reflect a misspecified or incomplete model, an inadequate performance measurement instrument, or the omission of more proximate determinants of performance such as work motivation, organizational culture, and resource availability. Relatedly, the Apparatus Performance construct did not meet minimum reliability standards (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.514), a shortcoming that should ideally have been identified and corrected during instrument pretesting rather than discovered post hoc during structural model estimation. Readers should therefore interpret all path estimates involving Apparatus Performance with considerable caution. Additional limitations include the restricted sample (73 village apparatus members in a single sub-district), limiting generalizability; reliance on self-report data, which is susceptible to perception bias; and a performance instrument that requires refinement through indicators more specific to each apparatus member's position and core duties.

Future research is encouraged to conduct a pilot test with item purification prior to full-scale data collection, expand the geographic scope beyond a single sub-district, incorporate work motivation and organizational culture as additional predictor variables, and consider objective performance data based on supervisory appraisals to strengthen measurement validity. Such refinements would help establish whether the weak explanatory power observed here reflects a genuine characteristic of village-level governance or a limitation of the measurement approach used in this study.

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