

Synergy of Ethical Leadership and Emotional Intelligence to Increase Employee Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the synergy of ethical leadership and emotional intelligence in improving employee job satisfaction. The research location was at the Garuda Health Center in Pekanbaru City with a sample of 44 employees selected through accidental sampling techniques. The data was analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the help of SmartPLS software. The results showed that ethical leadership had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (original sample = 0.503; $p = 0.000$), and emotional intelligence also had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (original sample = 0.469; $p = 0.000$). The combination of these two variables forms an effective synergy model with a contribution of 78.2%. These findings indicate that the culture of leaders' discussions in solving problems and listening to subordinate input is able to generate optimal employee job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The government is obliged to prioritize access to health services as a basic need of citizens. This is because excellent physical, mental, and social conditions are an absolute prerequisite for individuals to be able to carry out activities productively. At the regional level, Puskesmas play a crucial role in supporting national health development through community empowerment efforts to improve their standard of living (Nadhifa et al., 2025). This task requires careful planning so that development is directed and measured based on performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to maintain high performance; Conversely, job dissatisfaction can trigger a crisis of confidence, high absenteeism, and decreased performance

Job satisfaction is crucial for every individual. Because everyone has different behaviors and values, their job satisfaction levels vary. In general, job satisfaction is the employee's view or attitude towards their work, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant (Handoko, 2000). Leaders need to create ethical norms, especially when it comes to leadership that involves ethics, both in their personal behavior and in organizational policies and processes. The existence of an ethics committee, an ethics training program, the position of the head of ethics, an introduction to the ethics mechanism, and a code of ethics, can all support employees in providing guidelines on ethical practices, especially when the actions of ethical practices come from leaders. Ethical leadership is a leader who always does ethical deeds. Ethical leaders are the ability and readiness of a person to be able to influence, invite and teach a person or group in achieving a goal by using existing moral or ethical values (Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022). Ethical leadership is a result of an image through actions that are in accordance with the norms between individuals or their subordinates by considering balanced and actual decisions (Engelbrecht et al., 2014). Ethical leadership includes caring for the feelings of others, solving problems humbly, avoiding imposing wills but respecting the opinions of others, prioritizing the dialogical process in solving problems, recognizing mistakes and trying to improve, and prioritizing honesty, discipline and trustworthiness (Kamilah et al., 2023).

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that allow us to navigate a complex world, encompassing the personal, social and defensive aspects of all intelligence, common sense and sensitivity that are essential for effective functioning on a daily basis (Auda, 2016). Emotions refer to a feeling and its characteristic thoughts, a biological and psychological state, and a series of tendencies to act (Goleman, 2024). Emotions are typical feelings and thoughts; a biological and psychological state; a range of tendencies to act. That emotions are feelings or affections that arise when a person is in a situation or an interaction that is considered important by him or her that represents comfort or discomfort to the situation or interaction that is being experienced. Good ability to understand emotions in oneself and read the emotions of others.

Employees are required to be able to complete their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Research (Kianto et al., 2016); (Ren & Chadee, 2017). (Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022) found that ethical leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction, but it differs from research (Engelbrecht et al.,

2014) show a positive effect that is not significant on job satisfaction. Furthermore, emotional intelligence (EQ) is a person's ability to feel each other, distinguish themselves and use the information obtained as a basis for thinking and behaving. (Auda, 2016), and (Sandhu, 2015) concluding that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction. However, different results were found by (Wahyuni & Frendika, 2022) which states that emotional intelligence is not able to increase job satisfaction. (Auda, 2016), and (Sandhu, 2015) concluding that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction. However, different results were found by (Wahyuni & Frendika, 2022) which states that emotional intelligence is not able to increase job satisfaction.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Concept of Employee Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an employee's attitude or view of their work, which is pleasant or unpleasant (Dharmmesta & Handoko, 2014). Job satisfaction is crucial because each individual has different behaviors and values, so the level of satisfaction varies. Satisfied employees tend to maintain high performance, while dissatisfaction can trigger a crisis of confidence, high absenteeism, and decreased performance. Job satisfaction is influenced by various internal factors (such as motivation, personality, abilities) and external factors (salary, working conditions, relationships with superiors and colleagues, organizational culture, organizational policies, and career development opportunities). In addition, satisfaction also depends on the extent to which employees' expectations are met by the work, both intrinsically and extrinsically.

Ethical Leadership and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction

Ethical leadership is defined as the ability of leaders to influence, invite, and teach subordinates to achieve goals by using prevailing moral or ethical values (Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022). Ethical leaders always do ethical actions, including caring for the feelings of others, solving problems humbly, respecting the opinions of others, prioritizing the dialogical process, recognizing mistakes, and prioritizing honesty, discipline, and trustworthiness (Ariani et al., 2023). Research (Kianto et al., 2016), (Ren & Chadee, 2017), and (Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022) found that ethical leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Leaders with high integrity and morality are able to be role models, encouraging a culture of mutual correction, discussion and problem-solving, and listening to input from subordinates, which in turn increases employee job satisfaction.

Emotional Intelligence and Its Effect on Job Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that includes the personal, social, and defensive aspects of the entire intelligence, common sense, and sensitivity to function effectively every day (Auda, 2016). (Emiliana et al., 2021) states that emotions refer to typical feelings and thoughts, biological and psychological states, and the tendency to act. Emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively, both one's own

emotions and those of others, to guide thoughts and behavior. Research (Auda, 2016), and (Sandhu, 2015) shows that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Employees with good emotional intelligence are able to increase self-awareness, self-mastery, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills, thus creating conducive relationships and high job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at the Garuda Health Center, Pekanbaru City, with the subject of the study being employees who work at the health center. The number of samples used was 44 people, which were selected through the accidental sampling technique, which is a sampling technique based on anyone who happened to meet the researcher and was considered to be in accordance with the required characteristics. This technique was chosen due to efficiency and accessibility considerations, given time and resource constraints, but still seeks to represent the overall employee population. (Imam Ghozali, 2018)

The research data was collected using a questionnaire arranged in the form of closed statements with a Likert scale of 5 categories. The scale includes a score of 5 for "strongly agree", 4 for "agree", 3 for "neutral", 2 for "disagree", and 1 for "strongly disagree". The questionnaire is designed to measure three main variables, namely ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, and employee job satisfaction. Each variable is measured through several statement indicators that have been compiled based on theoretical studies from previous studies, so that it is expected to be able to capture the actual conditions in the field.

In analyzing the data, this study uses the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the help of Smart-PLS software. The PLS-SEM approach was chosen because it has a number of advantages that are relevant to the characteristics of this study. First, this method is able to process data with a relatively small sample size, which is only 44 respondents, without requiring the assumption of normal data distribution. Second, PLS-SEM is very suitable for predictive research and aims to develop theoretical models, as was done in this study. Third, this method can test the complex relationships between latent variables simultaneously, both direct and indirect relationships, and be able to evaluate the quality of measurement instruments and structural models simultaneously.

The data analysis process is carried out in two main stages, in accordance with the standard procedures of PLS-SEM. The first stage is the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), which aims to test the validity and reliability of the indicators that form each latent variable. Validity is tested through a loading factor value that must be greater than 0.6, while reliability is tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability with critical values above 0.6 and 0.7, and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value that must exceed 0.5. The second stage is the evaluation of the structural model (inner model), which aims to test the predictive power of the model through the R-square value and test the hypothesis of the relationship between latent variables by looking at the path coefficient values, T-statistics, and P-values.

With this systematic procedure, the research is expected to produce valid and reliable conclusions regarding the synergy of ethical leadership and emotional intelligence in improving employee job satisfaction..

RESULTS

Based on the results of the research from the likert scale assessment, namely strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1, the average value of the statement is obtained as follows:

Table 1 Descriptive Variables

Variabel	Code	Statement	Average	Category
Ethical Leadership (E)	E1	Leaders provide community-building solutions	3,64	Good
	E2	Leaders pay attention to their subordinates to build teamwork	4,23	Good
	E3	Leaders always discuss solving problems	3,66	Good
	E4	Leaders prioritize the dialogical process in solving problems	3,77	Good
	E5	Leaders always discuss building teamwork	4,16	Good
Emotional Intelligence (K)	K1	The level of observing the feelings that arise	4,09	Good
	K2	Level of ability to entertain yourself	3,89	Good
	K3	Ability level to release self-anxiety	3,95	Good
	K4	Degree of maintaining relationships with others	3,95	Good
	K5	The level of self-ability to rely on Social consciousness	4,02	Good
Employee Satisfaction (DG)	KP1	Employees are happy because they communicate with their superiors in all work situations	3.98	Good
	KP2	Providing opportunities for employees to develop their potential to be more advanced	4.05	Good
	KP3	Employees are happy with the promotion in accordance with existing regulations	4.11	Good
	KP4	Colleagues always help in completing tasks and provide solutions at work	4.16	Good
	KP5	Employees are happy because their colleagues provide technical assistance while working	3.84	Good
	KP6	Be satisfied with the results of the work completed	3.93	Good

Source : Processed Data

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, the average respondents' assessment of the ethical leadership variable that has the highest average score is that the leader pays attention to subordinates in building teamwork. Emotional

intelligence is at the level of one's ability to rely on social awareness, and employee satisfaction with colleagues always helps in completing tasks and providing solutions at work.

Furthermore, in testing the model with *Partial Least Square (PLS)* analysis operated with SmartPLS software. The research model tested can be seen in the following scheme:

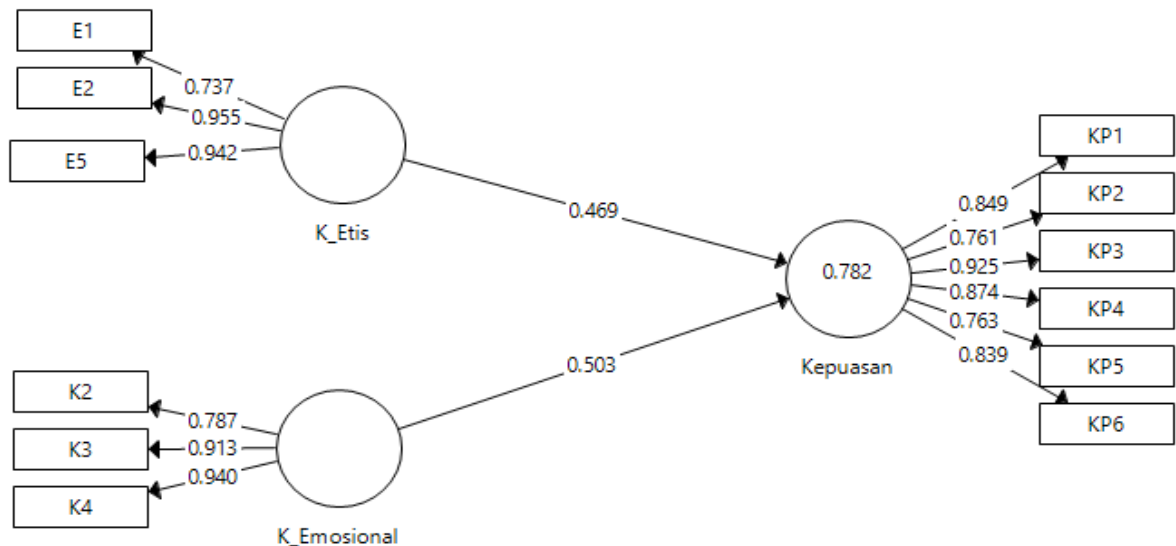


Figure 1. Research model

Table 2. Outer model measurement results

Variabel	Statement	Loading Factor >0.6	Cronbach's Alpha>0.6	Composite Reliability >0.7	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) >0.5
Ethical Leadership (E)	E1	0,737	0,860	0,913	0,779
	E2	0,955			
	E5	0,942			
Emotional Intelligence (K)	K2	0,787	0,853	0,913	0,781
	K3	0,913			
	K4	0,940			
Employee Satisfaction (DG)	KP1	0,849	0,914	0,933	0,701
	KP2	0,761			
	KP3	0,925			
	KP4	0,874			
	KP5	0,763			
	KP6	0,839			

Source : SmartPLS Processed Data 4.

Based on Table 2, the *outer measurement of the model* has met the criteria set in the formation of the research model. This means that all indicators or research instruments used are proven to be reliable and valid in measuring their latent variables.

Table 3. R-Square Value Test

Variabel	R-Square	Category
Job satisfaction (KP)	0,782	Strong

Based on the R-square value of the two variables, the category value in work quality (KP) is 0.782 (strong), this means that the variation or change in job satisfaction in the strong category of 78.20% is influenced by ethical leadership, and the rest emotional intelligence is influenced by other variables. Job satisfaction is influenced by various other variables, such as internal factors (motivation, personality, abilities) and external factors (salary, working conditions, relationships with superiors and colleagues, organizational culture, organizational policies, and career development opportunities). Satisfaction also depends on whether the employee's expectations are met by the work, both intrinsically and extrinsically.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing

Influence of variables	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
Ethical Leadership (E)=> Job satisfaction (K)	0,503	5,041	0,000
Emissal intelligence (K)=> Job satisfaction (K)	0,469	5,197	0,000

Based on Table 4, it is shown that ethical leadership and emotional intelligence have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (sig. 0.000 < 0.050). It is concluded that the combination of these two variables is an effective synergy model to increase employee job satisfaction..

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees of the Garuda Health Center in Pekanbaru City. These findings are in line with previous research conducted by (Kianto et al., 2016), (Ren & Chadee, 2017), and (Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022), which also found that leaders who uphold ethics and morality are able to increase the job satisfaction of their subordinates. Ethical leadership in this context is reflected in the behavior of leaders who always discuss in solving problems, prioritize dialogical processes, pay attention to subordinates, and build solid teamwork. The highest average score on the ethical leadership variable was found in the statement "Leaders pay attention to subordinates in building teamwork" (4,23), which is included in the good category. This confirms that ethical leaders not only act as superiors, but also as role models who are approachable, honest, and trustworthy. When employees feel attention and openness from the leadership, they tend to feel appreciated, so they feel satisfied with their work.

In addition to ethical leadership, emotional intelligence has also been shown to have a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction. These results support the findings of the (Auda, 2016), and (Sandhu, 2015), which states that an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively can increase job satisfaction. In this study, the indicator of emotional intelligence that obtained the highest average score was "Level of self-ability to rely on social awareness" (4.02), which was included in the good category. This shows that Garuda Health Center employees are quite capable of understanding the feelings of others, comforting themselves, releasing anxiety, and maintaining good relationships with colleagues. This ability is very important in a work environment that demands intensive interaction, both with superiors, fellow employees, and with patients or the community. Emotionally intelligent employees tend to be more adaptable, manage stress, and build harmonious interpersonal relationships, which ultimately contributes to high job satisfaction.

Furthermore, an interesting finding from this study is that the synergy between ethical leadership and emotional intelligence was able to explain 78.2% variation in employee job satisfaction, as shown by the R-square value of 0.782 in the strong category. This figure indicates that only the remaining 21.8% is influenced by other variables outside the model, such as internal factors (motivation, personality, ability) and external factors (salary, working conditions, organizational culture, company policies, and career development opportunities). The combination of these two variables proved to be an effective synergy model. This means that job satisfaction is not only determined by one factor, but also by the interaction between an ethical leadership style and the emotional intelligence possessed by employees. Ethical leaders create a fair, transparent, and caring work climate, while emotionally intelligent employees are able to respond to that climate with a positive attitude, empathy, and high self-motivation. When these two conditions are met simultaneously, employee job satisfaction will increase optimally.

The practical implication of this discussion is that the management of the Garuda Health Center needs to continue to maintain and even improve ethical leadership practices and encourage the development of emotional intelligence for all employees. The culture of giving corrections to each other for the better, such as leaders who always discuss in solving problems and listen to input from subordinates, should continue to be cultivated. In addition, employees also need to be encouraged to improve self-awareness, self-mastery, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills through regular training or coaching activities. Even though the emotional intelligence of employees is already relatively good, there is still room for improvement to achieve optimal conditions. Thus, the synergy between ethical leadership and emotional intelligence is not only statistically proven, but also makes a real contribution to the creation of high job satisfaction in the Garuda Health Center of Pekanbaru City.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that emotional leadership, and emotional intelligence have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. This can awaken a

culture of giving corrections to each other in a better direction such as the Leadership always discusses solving problems; and the Leader listens to input from below. Employees should increase and build a good influence with fellow colleagues in one section or with another so that high job satisfaction will be created. A good influence between employees will create a sense of brotherhood among fellow colleagues, this can be improved in a way that conducive relationships are in accordance with expectations. Emotional intelligence further improves self-awareness, self-mastery, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. This shows that the intelligence possessed by employees is quite high or can be said to be good, but it is not optimal, so this emotional intelligence still needs to be improved and maintained. It is hoped that the agency can provide more encouragement for employees to be able to improve emotional intelligence, especially in the fields of self-awareness, self-mastery, and self-motivation.

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