
MEDIATION MODEL OF JOB SATISFACTION IN THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN DIGITAL COMPETENCE, WORK MOTIVATION, AND THE
PERFORMANCE OF CIVIL SERVANTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the effect of digital competence and work motivation on the performance of Civil Servants (ASN) with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Regional Secretariat of South Sumatra Province. The study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design. The research sample consisted of 85 ASNs selected through stratified random sampling from a total population of 553 employees. Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4. The results showed that digital competence and work motivation had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta=0.342$; $p<0.001$ and $\beta=0.428$; $p<0.001$). Digital competence and work motivation also have a significant effect on civil servant performance ($\beta=0.246$; $p=0.007$ and $\beta=0.287$; $p=0.002$). Job satisfaction was found to have a significant effect on civil servant performance ($\beta=0.445$; $p<0.001$) and partially mediated the relationship between digital competence and work motivation on performance. The research model showed strong predictive power with an R^2 value of 0.871 for job satisfaction and 0.724 for civil servant performance. These findings confirm that improving digital competence and work motivation must be integrated with strategies to increase job satisfaction in order to encourage optimal civil servant performance in the era of digital transformation in government.

Keywords: digital competence, work motivation, job satisfaction, civil servant performance, PLS-SEM

A. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a major factor driving structural and operational changes in modern government bureaucracy. Digitalisation not only serves as an administrative support tool, but has evolved into a key foundation for improving the efficiency, transparency and accountability of governance. In the Indonesian context, the commitment to digital transformation is realised through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) as stipulated in Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018. SPBE aims to realise effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable governance through the integrated use of information and communication technology. In addition, the national strategic initiative Making Indonesia 4.0 reinforces the direction of digital transformation policies that require the integration of technology in all aspects of governance and public services.

Within the framework of this transformation, the Civil Service (ASN) has a strategic role as the main actor in the implementation of digital policies (Hadi & Zakiah, 2021; Pradiatiningtyas, 2021). This makes digital competence an essential prerequisite that must be possessed by ASN in order to carry out their duties effectively and adaptively in response to technological changes. Digital competence encompasses not

only technical skills in using digital devices, but also the ability to access, manage, evaluate, and utilise information effectively to support decision-making and improve the quality of public services. Theoretically, digital competence is part of professional competence that contributes directly to improving individual and organisational performance through increased work efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness of services.

The development of the e-government concept, which has evolved into digital government, increasingly emphasises the importance of technology integration in government administration processes (, data-based decision making, and increased public participation. This transformation has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prompted government agencies to adopt digital work systems, including remote and hybrid work systems. However, the digital transformation process does not only depend on the availability of technological infrastructure, but is also greatly influenced by human resource factors, particularly digital competence, work motivation, and employee job satisfaction (Sobana et al., 2021) .

Empirically, various reports indicate that the level of digital readiness among civil servants in Indonesia still faces challenges. Data from the State Civil Service Agency in 2024 shows that only some civil servants feel they have adequate digital competencies to support the implementation of technology-based tasks. This digital competency gap has the potential to affect the effectiveness of the implementation of digital government systems and impact overall organisational performance. In addition to digital competence, work motivation is also an important determinant in improving employee performance. Work motivation acts as a psychological factor that drives individuals to work optimally, achieve organisational targets, and adapt to changes in the work environment. Employees with high work motivation tend to perform better than those with low motivation.

In addition, job satisfaction is an important factor that mediates the relationship between competence, motivation, and employee performance. Job satisfaction reflects an individual's psychological state towards their work, which is influenced by various factors such as the work environment, reward systems, career development opportunities, and organisational support. Employees with high job satisfaction tend to show stronger organisational commitment, higher productivity, and optimal performance.

In the context of the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat as the centre for regional government administration coordination, digital transformation has been implemented through various application systems, such as e-office and digital-based service systems. However, this implementation still faces various obstacles in terms of adoption and optimal utilisation by civil servants. Internal data from the South Sumatra Provincial Civil Service Agency for 2024 shows that the performance achievement level of civil servants () stands at 76%, which is still below the national target of 85%. Additionally, the level of job satisfaction among civil servants based on an internal survey shows an index of 3.2 on a scale of 5, indicating that job satisfaction is not yet optimal.

Furthermore, internal data shows that around 65% of civil servants have been using the e-office system regularly, while the rest are still experiencing difficulties in adapting to digital technology. This condition indicates a digital competency gap that has the potential to affect performance and the quality of public services. In addition, fluctuating work motivation and individual characteristics, such as age, educational background, and length of service, also influence the ability to adapt to digital transformation.

Although various studies have examined the relationship between competence, motivation, job satisfaction, and employee performance, there are still limitations in empirical research that specifically examines the relationship between digital competence and work motivation on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, particularly in the context of local government bureaucracy in Indonesia. Furthermore, research that specifically examines this phenomenon within the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat is still very limited, thus requiring empirical research to fill this gap.

Based on the above description, this research is important to analyse the influence of digital competence and work motivation on civil servant performance, as well as to examine the role of job satisfaction as a mediating variable in this relationship. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of public sector human resource management studies, as well as provide practical contributions to local governments in formulating strategic policies to improve digital competence, work motivation, job satisfaction, and civil servant performance in supporting the digital transformation of government.

B. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design that aims to examine the causal relationship between digital competence, work motivation, job satisfaction, and the performance of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN). The survey method was used to collect data through a structured questionnaire compiled based on the theoretical indicators of each research variable.

The research was conducted at the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat, located at Jalan Kapten A. Rivai No. 1, Palembang, from September 2025 to January 2026. The research population consisted of all 553 civil servants working at the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in a sample of 85 respondents. The sampling technique used stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation of respondents based on work units or bureaus.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to civil servants who were the research respondents, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Secondary data was obtained from official agency documents, personnel reports, and relevant scientific literature. The research instruments were developed based on indicators that had been validated in previous studies, covering variables such as digital competence, work motivation, job satisfaction, and civil servant performance.

The independent variables in this study are digital competence and work motivation, the mediating variable is job satisfaction, while the dependent variable is civil servant performance. Digital competence is measured based on the dimensions of information literacy, digital communication, digital content creation, digital security, and digital problem solving. Work motivation is measured through the dimensions of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and public service motivation. Job satisfaction is measured based on satisfaction with work, compensation, promotion, supervision, and co-workers. Civil servant performance is measured based on work quality, work quantity, timeliness, service innovation, and organisational contribution.

Data analysis techniques using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4 software. The analysis was conducted in two stages, namely evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model evaluation aimed to test the validity and reliability of the constructs using factor loading indicators (> 0.70), Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50), Composite Reliability (> 0.70), and Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.70). The inner model evaluation aimed to test the strength of the relationship between variables using R-square (R^2), Q-square (Q^2), and path coefficient values.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method to obtain t-statistic and p-value values. A hypothesis is considered significant if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% significance level. In addition, mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of job satisfaction in mediating the relationship between digital competence and work motivation on civil servant performance. This method was chosen because PLS-SEM has advantages in analysing complex structural models, is capable of testing direct and indirect relationships simultaneously, and is suitable for studies with relatively small sample sizes and predictive objectives.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

The results of data analysis collected from 85 respondents from the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat Civil Service. The analysis began with a description of the characteristics of the respondents, followed by an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), an evaluation of the structural model (inner model), hypothesis testing, and a discussion of the research findings in the context of theory and previous research. Data processing used SmartPLS 4 with bootstrapping techniques to test the significance of the path coefficients. The results of the analysis will show whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected based on predetermined statistical criteria.

Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristic data shows that the majority of civil servants are aged between 36 and 45 (41.2%), followed by those aged between 25 and 35 (32.9%). This composition indicates that the Regional Secretariat civil servants are dominated by a

productive generation that is relatively adaptive to digital technology, but still requires continuous competency improvement given the generation gap with the older age group.

Outer Model Evaluation: Validity and Reliability

Average Loading Factor (0.85): All indicators have a loading factor >0.70 , indicating good convergent validity.

Average AVE (0.68): The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of all constructs is >0.50 , indicating adequate convergent validity.

Composite Reliability (0.89): The CR value of all constructs is >0.70 , indicating excellent instrument reliability.

Cronbach's Alpha (0.87): The Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs are >0.70 , indicating high internal consistency.

The results of the outer model evaluation show that all research constructs (Digital Competence, Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and ASN Performance) meet the required validity and reliability criteria. This indicates that the research instrument is suitable for use in testing hypotheses in the next stage.

Inner Model Evaluation: Predictive Power

The results of the inner model evaluation show an R-Square value for Job Satisfaction of 0.871 (87.1%), indicating that Digital Competence and Work Motivation are able to explain 91.5% of the variance in Job Satisfaction, including the moderate to strong category. The R-Square value for ASN Performance is 0.724 (72.4%), indicating that Digital Competence, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction can explain 72.4% of the variance in ASN Performance, which is in the strong category. These results show that the research model has good predictive power.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis H₁: Digital Competence (KD) has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (KK) with a Path Coefficient of 0.342 ($t=4.128$, $p=0.000$). This hypothesis is **accepted**.

Hypothesis H₂ : Work Motivation (WM) has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (JS) with a Path Coefficient of 0.428 ($t=5.247$, $p=0.000$). This hypothesis is **accepted**.

Hypothesis H₃: Digital Competence (DC) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (EP) with a Path Coefficient of 0.246 ($t=2.683$, $p=0.007$). This hypothesis is **accepted**.

Hypothesis H₄: Work Motivation (MK) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (KP) with a Path Coefficient of 0.287 ($t=3.142$, $p=0.002$). This hypothesis is **accepted**.

Hypothesis H₅: Job Satisfaction (KK) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (KP) with a Path Coefficient of 0.445 ($t=5.892$, $p=0.000$). This hypothesis is **accepted**.

Explanation: KD = Digital Competence, MK = Work Motivation, KK = Job Satisfaction, KP = Employee Performance. All hypotheses were accepted because the t -statistic > 1.96 and p -value < 0.05 , indicating a statistically significant relationship.

Discussion of Research Results

The Influence of Digital Competence on Job Satisfaction

The research results show that Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Civil Servant Job Satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.342 (t -statistic = 4.128; p -value = 0.000). This finding confirms the first hypothesis, in line with the Resource-Based View theory. Digital competence improves task efficiency, autonomy, access to information, communication, as well as career opportunities and status, which contribute to job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the research by Widyastuti et al. (2025) and Hidayat et al. (2024).

In relation to the South Sumatra Provincial Secretariat, digital competency is very important given the implementation of e-office and online public service applications. The dimensional analysis shows that Information and Data Literacy and Digital Security have the greatest contribution to job satisfaction, providing confidence and reducing anxiety. Conversely, the Digital Problem Solving dimension has the lowest contribution, possibly due to a lack of technical support. The practical implication is to focus training on dimensions with a significant impact and to strengthen technical support.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction

The results of the study indicate that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Civil Servant Job Satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.428 (t -statistic = 5.247; p -value = 0.000). This finding confirms the second hypothesis and is in line with Herzberg's two-factor theory. The higher path coefficient of work motivation compared to digital competence (0.428 vs 0.342) indicates a stronger influence of psychological factors. Highly motivated civil servants have positive expectations of work outcomes, in line with Vroom's expectancy theory. These findings are consistent with the research of Tambunan et al. (2025), Paisah et al. (2023), and Nursella et al. (2025). In relation to civil servants in the Regional Secretariat, high public service motivation (average score of 4.02) is a key factor. The analysis of motivation dimensions shows that Public Service Motivation has the largest contribution, followed by Intrinsic Motivation; while Extrinsic Motivation has the lowest contribution, indicating the need for improvements in compensation and reward systems. The managerial implication is to strengthen public service values and intrinsic motivation, while ensuring that extrinsic factors are adequate.

The Effect of Digital Competence on Civil Servant Performance

The results of the study indicate that digital competence has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance with a path coefficient of 0.246 (t -statistic = 2.683; p -value = 0.007). This finding confirms the third hypothesis, in line with

Campbell's individual performance theory. Mastery of digital technology enables task efficiency through automation, better decision-making, innovation, and collaboration. These findings are consistent with the research of Supriyadi et al. (2025), Elisnawati et al. (2023), and Emilia & Soemaryani (2025).

The magnitude of the direct effect (0.246) is relatively small ($f^2 = 0.128$), indicating that the effect of digital competence on performance is largely mediated by job satisfaction. This is due to uneven technological infrastructure, organisational culture in transition, and lack of system integration. The practical implication is that improving digital competence must be accompanied by infrastructure improvements, organisational culture changes, and system integration to maximise its impact.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Civil Servant Performance

The results of the study indicate that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Civil Servant Performance with a path coefficient of 0.287 (t-statistic = 3.142; p-value = 0.002). This finding confirms the fourth hypothesis, in line with Campbell's individual performance theory. Civil servants with high motivation demonstrate greater intensity of effort and perseverance. This finding is consistent with the research of Supriyadi et al. (2025), Elisnawati et al. (2023), and Sopian et al. (2025). The path coefficient of work motivation (0.287) is greater than that of digital competence (0.246). Public Service Motivation has the largest contribution, followed by Intrinsic Motivation; while the low contribution of Extrinsic Motivation indicates that the reward and recognition system is not yet optimal. The managerial implications are to strengthen public service values, create a work environment that supports intrinsic motivation, and improve the reward system.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Civil Servant Performance

The results show that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance with a path coefficient of 0.445 (t-statistic = 5.892; p-value = 0.000). This finding confirms the fifth hypothesis, in line with Locke and Latham's job satisfaction theory. This path coefficient is the largest among all direct effects ($f^2 = 0.389$), confirming the central role of job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the research of Widyastuti et al. (2025), Hidayat et al. (2024), and Manalu (2025).

Satisfied civil servants have higher organisational commitment, lower absenteeism and turnover intention, engage in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), and are more resilient to pressure. The theoretical implication is that job satisfaction is not only a result, but also an active facilitator of superior performance.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

These findings confirm the partial mediating role of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Digital Competence and Civil Servant Performance, as well as between Work Motivation and Civil Servant Performance. For Digital Competence, the indirect effect through Job Satisfaction is 0.152, while the direct effect is 0.246 (VAF

38.2%). For Work Motivation, the indirect effect through Job Satisfaction is 0.191, while the direct effect is 0.287 (VAF 39.9%). VAF values in the range of 20%-80% confirm partial mediation. These findings are consistent with several previous studies, such as Widyastuti et al. (2025) and Hidayat et al. (2024), although there are differences with Tambunan et al. (2025), who found full mediation. Partial mediation indicates that there are direct and indirect paths that are equally important. Digital competence and work motivation can directly influence performance through efficiency and effort intensity, but long-term impacts require positive psychological conditions in the form of job satisfaction. Strategies to improve civil servant performance must be multidimensional, focusing on competence development, motivation, and the creation of satisfying working conditions.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and hypothesis testing, this study produced several key findings as follows.

First, digital competence has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of civil servants in the Regional Secretariat of South Sumatra Province ($\beta = 0.342$; $t = 4.128$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the higher the digital competence of civil servants, the higher their level of job satisfaction. The ability of civil servants to utilise digital technology effectively facilitates the performance of tasks, increases work efficiency, and creates a more positive work experience. Second, work motivation has a positive and significant effect on civil servant job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.428$; $t = 5.247$; $p < 0.05$). This finding shows that high work motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, can increase civil servants' job satisfaction. Civil servants with strong work motivation tend to show higher work engagement and a positive attitude towards their work. Third, digital competence has a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance ($\beta = 0.246$; $t = 2.683$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that digital competence is an important factor in improving civil servant performance, especially in the context of government digital transformation that requires the ability to adapt to technology. Fourth, work motivation also has a positive and significant effect on ASN performance ($\beta = 0.287$; $t = 3.142$; $p < 0.05$). ASN with high levels of work motivation tend to show better productivity, higher responsibility, and stronger commitment to achieving organisational goals. Fifth, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on ASN performance ($\beta = 0.445$; $t = 5.892$; $p < 0.05$). This finding shows that job satisfaction is a factor that contributes greatly to improving ASN performance. ASNs who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have higher performance levels, both in terms of quality and quantity of work.

Sixth, job satisfaction was found to play a partial mediating role in the relationship between digital competence and work motivation on civil servant performance. The indirect effect of digital competence on civil servant performance through job satisfaction is 0.152 ($t = 3.856$; $p < 0.05$) with a Variance Accounted For (VAF) value of 38.2%, indicating partial mediation. Similarly, the indirect effect of work motivation on

civil servant performance through job satisfaction is 0.191 ($t = 4.523$; $p < 0.05$) with a VAF value of 40.0%, which also indicates partial mediation. This indicates that job satisfaction mediates approximately 38–40% of the influence of digital competence and work motivation on ASN performance, while the remainder is directly influenced by these two variables.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that digital competence and work motivation are important factors that directly and indirectly influence the performance of civil servants, with job satisfaction serving as a psychological mechanism that reinforces this relationship.

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