

**THE EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND HR PRACTICES ON JOB SATISFACTION: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATOR**

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**ABSTRACT**

Employee job satisfaction has become the center of attention for academics and practitioners. Nevertheless, the determinants of employee job satisfaction are still far from conclusive. This study investigates the impact of employee engagement as a mediation between psychological empowerment, HR practices, and job satisfaction. The research population is all employees at the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, West Sumatra, totaling 115 employees. All of them are used as research respondents where data processing uses Smart-PLS. The study's results found that psychological empowerment had a positive and significant effect on employee engagement, and then employee engagement also had a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. HR practices do not affect employee engagement; psychological empowerment and HR practices do not affect job satisfaction. Employee engagement mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction but does not mediate the relationship between HR practices and job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Psychological empowerment, HR Practices, Employee engagement, Job satisfaction.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Human resources are the most crucial factor in the success of every organization because, in every organizational activity, humans always play an active role in terms of planners, actors, and determinants of the realization of organizational goals. Thus, every element in the organization must pay attention to aspects of job satisfaction among employees.

One organization that realizes the importance of employee job satisfaction is the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, an implementation element of the Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia. This organization plays a vital role in sea transportation activities in waters, port activities, safety and security of water and port transportation, protection of the maritime environment, and administrative implementers in the field of sea transportation within the scope of the work unit of West Sumatra, Indonesia. Based on the initial survey, phenomenon shows higher job dissatisfaction among employees of the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, West Sumatra, Indonesia. For instance, there is lack of fair treatment of the organization for employees in the promotion of positions and the distribution of basic tasks was not carried out yet based on employees' skills.

In the organizational behavior literature, several factors are found that influence job

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satisfaction, such as psychological empowerment (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Khany & Tazik, 2016; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017), human resource practices (Cherif, 2020; Pradhan et al. al., 2019; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018), and employee engagement (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Pradhan et, 2019; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017).

Although psychological empowerment, human resource practices, and employee involvement influence job satisfaction, the three variables are interrelated. In other words, psychological empowerment influences employee engagement (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Jose & Mimpilly, 2012) and human resource practices (Pradhan et al., 2019; Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Therefore, this study argues that the employee involvement mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment, human resource practices, and job satisfaction.

## **2.LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a general attitude toward the work of employees that shows the difference between the number of awards received and the amount that employees believe they should receive (Wibowo, 2016). According to Robbins et al. (2015) there are six benefits of employee job satisfaction for companies, namely: (1) employee performance, an employee who has a high level of satisfaction will have good performance, and this will have an impact on organizational performance, (2) behavior organization, satisfied employees tend to talk positively about their organization to other parties, (3) customer satisfaction, satisfied employees tend to be more friendly, cheerful, and responsive to customers so that it will be able to create customer satisfaction, (4) presence, employees who tend to avoiding absences and not neglecting work, (5) employee turnover (turnover), satisfied employees will not show behavior to leave the organization, and (6) deviant behavior, job dissatisfaction tends to lead to the particular behavior of an employee, such as efforts to form unions, abuse of power, even theft.

Conversely, there are four negative impacts of employee dissatisfaction (Wibowo, 2016), namely (1) Exit, dissatisfied employees will show an attitude of leaving the organization or resigning. (2) Voice, dissatisfied employees show protest against various organizational policies, (3) Loyalty, dissatisfied employees will have low loyalty to the organization where they work, (4) Ignore (Neglect), Dissatisfied employees tend to let organizational conditions get the worse.

### **Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement**

Psychological empowerment is employees' psychological perception or attitude about their duties or jobs and their roles in the organization. In other words, psychological empowerment is an employee's perception of a task and how their role is in carrying out the task in an organization (Gunawan & Viyanita, 2012).

Psychological empowerment has a positive relationship on employee engagement. If psychological empowerment is better implemented in an organization, this condition can increase employee involvement and vice versa. Several previous researchers have found that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Joo et al., 2019; Sharma & Vinod Singh, 2018). Thus, the first hypothesis that can be developed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.

### **Human Resource Practices and Employee Engagement**

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Human resource practice is an organizational activity that helps increase human resources' trust, flexibility, and motivation. It will ultimately make employees more energetic, dedicated, and comfortable with their work, creating a feeling of satisfaction (Pradhan et al., 2019). Human resource practices tend to create working conditions where employees become highly committed to the organization (have a positive attitude) and do their best to achieve organizational goals Cherif (2020). Human resource practices have a role to play in establishing appropriate reciprocal relationships between organizations and their employees regarding shared beliefs and duties.

Empirically, several previous studies have proven that human resource practices have a positive and significant influence on employee engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Kerdpitak & Jermittiparsert, 2020; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018). Thus, the second hypothesis that can be developed in this study is as follows:

H<sub>2</sub>: Human resource practices have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement

### **Psychological Empowerment and Employee Satisfaction**

Psychological empowerment is an employee's perception of a task and their role in doing the task in an organization (Gunawan & Viyanita, 2012). Job satisfaction is a comparison between expectations and reality perceived by employees for their work.

Psychological empowerment has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. If a company implements psychological empowerment better, this condition can increase employee job satisfaction. Empirically, several studies have proven that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Khany & Tazik, 2016; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017; Yani et al., 2016). Based on the description above, the third hypothesis that can be developed in this study is as follows:

H<sub>3</sub>: Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

### **Human Resource Practice and Job Satisfaction**

Human resource practice is an organizational activity that helps to increase human resources' trust, flexibility, and motivation, ultimately making employees more energetic, dedicated, and comfortable with their work, thereby creating a feeling of satisfaction (Pradhan et al., 2019). Job satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or disappointment that employees feel for their work. Implementing better human resource practices in an organization will increase employee job satisfaction and vice versa.

Empirically, several previous studies have proven that human resource practices have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Pradhan et al., 2019; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018). Thus, the fourth hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H<sub>4</sub>: Human resource practices positively and significantly affect job satisfaction.

### **Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction**

Employee involvement is a form of positive thinking related to completing the workload and can be characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker (2004). Employee involvement can be said to be a "resource" that can be invested to spur the development of an organization. Employees who are enthusiastic about work, immersed in work activities, and persistent when dealing with challenges and obstacles are the characteristics of employees who have high work involvement (Bakker, 2017) and will ultimately raise the level of job satisfaction

for these employees.

Several previous studies have proven that employee involvement positively and significantly affects job satisfaction (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2019; Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017). It means the higher the involvement of employees in an organization, the higher job satisfaction in these employees and vice versa. Based on the previous description, the fifth hypothesis in this study can be developed as follows:

H<sub>5</sub>: Employee involvement has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

### **Employee Engagement Mediates Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction**

As previously explained, if an organization implements psychological empowerment correctly, it can increase employee engagement and in turn to increase job satisfaction. Conversely, if an organization cannot implement psychological empowerment properly, it can reduce employee involvement and further reduce employee job satisfaction

Several previous studies have proven that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Joo et al., 2019; Sharma & Vinod Singh, 2018). Furthermore, employee involvement has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2019; Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017). Thus, employee involvement is an intermediary or mediating variable between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis that can be developed in this study is as follows:

H<sub>6</sub>: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

### **Employee Engagement Mediates Human Resource Practices and Job Satisfaction**

An organization that implements human resource practices well, will lead to high employee involvement and in turn to increase job satisfaction. Conversely, an organization that is not able to implement human resource practices well, will lead to decrease employee involvement and in turn create low levels of employee job satisfaction.

Previous studies have proven that human resource practice positively and significantly affects employee engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Kerdpitak & Jermstiparsert, 2020; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018). Furthermore, employee involvement has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2019; Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017). Thus, employee involvement is an intermediary or mediating variable between human resource practices and job satisfaction. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis that can be developed in this study is as follows:

H<sub>7</sub>: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The population of this study was all employees at the Directorate General of Sea Transportation of the West Sumatra Work Unit, Indonesia, totaling 115 people. In order to obtain valid and reliable measures of the variables, previously validated scales were used to measure all variables. All items were measured via 5-point bipolar scales with scale poles ranging from

strongly disagree (1) - strongly agree (5). The questionnaire and cover letter were translated into Indonesian and then back-translated into English (Sefnedi et al., 2022). In order to test the hypothesis development, SEM-PLS was used, which was supported by previous studies (Sefnedi., Akmal., & Nelva, 2020; Supriadi & Sefnedi, 2017).

**4.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study will begin by presenting the profiles of respondents, which can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1. Profile of Respondents**

Demographics	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	89	77.4
	Female	26	22.6
Age	31-40 years	23	20.0
	41-50 years	48	41.7
	> 50 years	44	38.3
Work Experience	<10 years	2	1.7
	10-20 years	50	43.5
	21-30 years	44	38.3
	>30 years	19	16.5
Education	Senior High School	51	44.3
	3-years diploma	8	7.0
	Bachelor	54	47.0
	Master	2	1.7
Level	Level I	0	0
	Level II	27	23.5
	Level III	82	71.3
	Level IV	6	5.2
Technical implementation Unit	KSOP Teluk Bayur	30	26.1
	UPP Sikakap	5	4.3
	UPP Siberut	5	4.3
	UPP Siuban	5	4.3
	Class II Navigation District of Teluk Bayur	70	60.9

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 77.4% of the respondents were male, and 22.6% were female. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were aged between 41-50 years (41.7%), working period between 21-30 years (38.3%), Bachelor's degree (47%), class III (71.3%), and the technical implementation unit of Class Navigation District. II Teluk Bayur (60.9%).

**Measurement Model Assessment**

The Measurement Model Assessment (MMA) specializes in the relationship between latent variables and their statement items. In other words, MMA shows how each statement item relates to its latent variable. MMA analysis uses convergent and discriminant validities (Sefnedi & Utami, 2022). The final results of the convergent validity analysis can be seen as follows:

**Table 2. The Results of Convergent Validity**

Variables	Number of valid items	Outer loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Employee Engagement (EE)	12	0.812-0.893	0.964	0.968	0.751
HR Practices (HRP)	14	0.749-0.886	0.963	0.961	0.636
Job Satisfaction (JS)	19	0.713-0.922	0.970	0.973	0.652
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	12	0.721-0.855	0.952	0.957	0.653

The result of convergent validity found the outer loading of all items or indicators was higher than 0.7, then it can be concluded that all items used were valid. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were higher than 0.7, which means that all latent variables, namely EE, HRP, JS, and PE, had high reliability. In addition, the AVE value was higher than 0.5. Furthermore, the results of discriminant validity analysis can be seen in the following table

**Table 3. The Results of Discriminant Validity with the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Method**

Variables	JS	EE	PE	HRP
JS	0.808	-	-	-
EE	0.320	0.846	-	-
PE	0.112	0.241	0.808	-
HRP	0.017	0.085	0.341	0.798

Table 3 shows that the correlation score of the JS variable is 0.808, where this value is greater than the correlation of JS with EE (0.320), PE (0.112), and HRP (0.017). The same thing also happened to the variables EE, PE, and HRP. Thus, the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis have fulfilled the required rule of thumb (Fornell-Larcker, 1981).

**Table 4. Discriminant Validity with Cross Loadings Method**

	JS	EE	PE	HRP
EE 1	0.306	<b>0.838</b>	0.232	0.101
EE 2	0.371	<b>0.827</b>	0.173	0.100
EE 3	0.192	<b>0.866</b>	0.161	0.014
EE 4	0.266	<b>0.839</b>	0.232	0.051
EE 5	0.262	<b>0.843</b>	0.147	-0.002
EE 6	0.173	<b>0.833</b>	0.153	0.060
EE 7	0.276	<b>0.893</b>	0.248	0.072
EE 8	0.280	<b>0.813</b>	0.182	0.063
EE 9	0.287	<b>0.867</b>	0.208	0.056
EE 10	0.278	<b>0.833</b>	0.231	0.122

EE 11	0.290	<b>0.865</b>	0.231	0.074
EE 12	0.161	<b>0.828</b>	0.214	0.131
HRP 1	0.033	0.018	0.175	<b>0.827</b>
HRP 2	-0.035	0.031	0.276	<b>0.761</b>
HRP 3	-0.057	-0.015	0.293	<b>0.782</b>
HRP 4	0.001	0.055	0.229	<b>0.807</b>
HRP 5	-0.026	-0.001	0.182	<b>0.742</b>
HRP 6	-0.047	0.041	0.168	<b>0.729</b>
HRP 7	0.009	0.049	0.307	<b>0.872</b>
HRP 8	0.024	0.014	0.194	<b>0.757</b>
HRP 9	-0.019	0.053	0.356	<b>0.837</b>
HRP 11	-0.026	0.102	0.234	<b>0.837</b>
HRP 12	0.036	0.075	0.314	<b>0.890</b>
HRP 13	0.058	0.059	0.388	<b>0.822</b>
HRP 14	-0.049	-0.007	0.199	<b>0.739</b>
HRP 15	-0.063	0.000	0.235	<b>0.741</b>
JS 1	<b>0.869</b>	0.333	0.155	0.058
JS 2	<b>0.778</b>	0.206	-0.025	-0.044
JS 3	<b>0.926</b>	0.312	0.153	0.041
JS 4	<b>0.806</b>	0.162	0.033	-0.038
JS 5	<b>0.787</b>	0.292	0.040	-0.032
JS 6	<b>0.793</b>	0.245	0.025	0.067
JS 7	<b>0.812</b>	0.204	0.110	-0.019
JS 8	<b>0.808</b>	0.216	-0.022	0.028
JS 10	<b>0.773</b>	0.263	0.067	0.005
JS 11	<b>0.713</b>	0.185	0.034	-0.067
JS 12	<b>0.774</b>	0.270	0.066	0.033
JS 13	<b>0.778</b>	0.257	0.180	-0.013
JS 14	<b>0.832</b>	0.273	0.105	-0.003
JS 15	<b>0.762</b>	0.194	0.084	0.032
JS 16	<b>0.911</b>	0.355	0.160	0.054
JS 17	<b>0.784</b>	0.206	0.101	-0.073
JS 18	<b>0.827</b>	0.289	0.067	0.083
JS 19	<b>0.796</b>	0.275	0.166	0.072
JS 20	<b>0.789</b>	0.205	0.079	-0.031
PP 1	0.078	0.219	<b>0.848</b>	0.242
PP 2	0.073	0.253	<b>0.841</b>	0.293
PP 3	0.068	0.125	<b>0.789</b>	0.214
PP 4	0.128	0.222	<b>0.855</b>	0.262
PP 5	0.065	0.132	<b>0.815</b>	0.384
PP 6	0.084	0.156	<b>0.839</b>	0.324
PP 7	0.147	0.256	<b>0.777</b>	0.232

PP 8	0.096	0.225	<b>0.759</b>	0.294
PP 9	0.024	0.153	<b>0.811</b>	0.303
PP 10	0.095	0.167	<b>0.836</b>	0.342
PP 11	0.122	0.162	<b>0.791</b>	0.250
PP 12	0.035	0.141	<b>0.722</b>	0.187

Based on the discriminant validity analysis results using the cross-loading method, the correlation score of the item to the latent variable is greater than the correlation item of a variable to other latent variables. Thus, it can be concluded that the variables of JS, EE, PE, and HRP had adequate discrimination (Hair et al., 2014).

### R Square and Q Square

R Square is used to determine the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables expressed as a percentage. At the same time, Q square (Q2) is used to determine the ability of exogenous variables to predict endogenous variables (predictive relevance). The Q-square value must be greater than 0 (zero), so the model is said to have a relevant predictive value. The results of the analysis of R square and Q square can be seen as follows:

Table 5. R Square and Q Square

	R Square	Category	Q Square	Category
<b>Employee Engagement (EE)</b>	0.058	Moderat	0.039	Weak
<b>Job Satisfaction (JS)</b>	0.104	Strong	0.060	Moderat

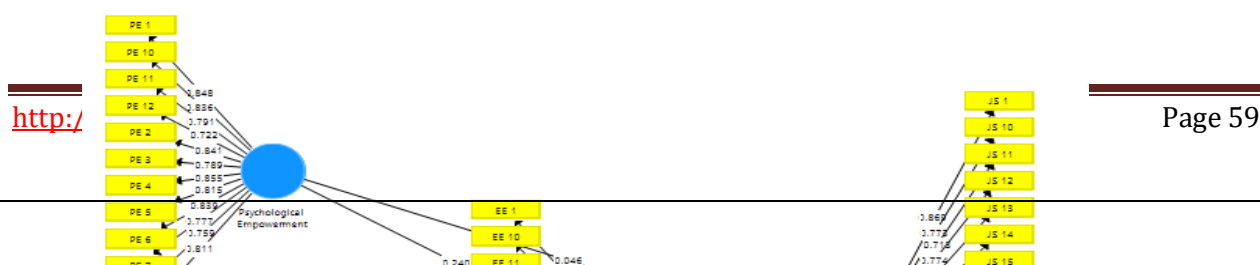
From the table above, it can be seen that the R square value of the JS is 0.104, which means that the magnitude of the influence of PE, HRP, and EE on JS is 10.4% that classified into strong category (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, the R square of EE was obtained at 0.058, meaning the magnitude of the influence of PE and HRP on EE 5.8% that classified into the medium category (Hair et al., 2014).

Besides that, the JS variable has a Q square of 0.060 that classified into the medium category (Hair et al., 2014), which means that the ability of the PE, HRP, and EE to predict JS falls into the medium category. The EE variable has a Q square of 0.039, meaning that the ability of the PE dan HRP in predicting the EE is classified into the weak category.

### Structural Model Assessment

The results of the Structural Model Assessment (SMA) analysis using the bootstrapping method can be seen as follows:

Figure 1. Structural Model Assessment





**Table 5. Direct Effect**

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis
PE -> EE	0.240	2.631	<b>0.009</b>	H1 accepted
HRP -> EE	0.004	0.026	<b>0.980</b>	H2 rejected
PE -> JS	0.046	0.449	<b>0.654</b>	H3 rejected
HRP -> JS	-0.025	0.183	<b>0.855</b>	H4 rejected
EE -> JS	0.311	3.429	<b>0.001</b>	H5 accepted

The effect of PE on EE had t-statistics of 2.631 (>1.96) and p-values of 0.009 (<0.05), thus H1 is accepted. This finding can be interpreted that the better the PE implementation, the higher the EE, and vice versa. Previous studies' findings support this study's results (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Joo et al., 2019; Sharma & Vinod Singh, 2018). The effect of HRP on EE has t-statistics 0.026 (<1.96) and p-values 0.980 (>0.05), thus H2 is rejected. This finding can be interpreted as high or low EE is not determined by HRP. The results of this study are not in line with the results of previous studies (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018). Furthermore, the effect of PE on JS has t-statistics 0.449 (<1.96) and p-values 0.654 (>0.05), thus H3 is rejected. This finding indicates that PE does not determine the high or low JS. The results of this study are inconsistent with the results of previous studies (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Khany & Tazik, 2016; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017; Yani et al., 2016).

The effect of HRP on JS has t-statistics 0.183 (<1.96) and p-values 0.855 (>0.05), thus H4 is rejected. This finding can be interpreted as the high or low JS is not determined by the HRP. The results of this study do not support the results of previous studies (Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Pradhan et al., 2019; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2018). The effect of EE on JS has t-statistics 3.429 (>1.96) and p-values of 0.001 (<0.05), thus H5 is accepted. This finding can be interpreted that the better the EE implementation, the higher the JS, and vice versa. This study's results align with

previous studies' results (Alagarsamy et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2019; Jose & Mampilly, 2012; Al-Ababneh et al., 2017).

**Table 6. Indirect Effect**

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis
PE -> EE -> JS	0.075	2.068	<b>0.039</b>	H6 accepted
HRP -> EE -> JS	0.001	0.024	<b>0.981</b>	H7 rejected

The mediating effect of EE on the relationship between PE and JS has t-statistics of 2.068 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.039 (<0.05), thus H6 is accepted. This finding can be interpreted that the better the PE implementation will lead the better EE, and in turn to increase the JS and vice versa. Furthermore, the effect of EE as a mediation between HRP and JS has a t-statistics of 0.024 (<1.96) and a p-value of 0.981 (>0.05), thus H7 is rejected. This finding indicates that the EE is not so crucial on the relationship between HRP and JS.

**5.CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, some conclusions that can be drawn are (1) PE has a positive and significant effect on EE, and EE also has a positive and significant effect on JS, (2) HRP has no effect on EE, (3) PE and HRP had no effect on JS, and (4) EE only mediated the relationship between PE and JS but did not mediate the relationship between HRP and JS.

**6.LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The limitations of the research are (a) Penelitian ini dilakukan pada Direktorat Jenderal Perhubungan Laut Satuan Kerja Sumatera Barat. Oleh karena itu, hasil penelitian tidak dapat digeneralisir berlkusama dengan organisasi lain. Thus, it is recommended to replicate this research model to test empirically in other organizations, (b) this research is limited to the variables of PE, HRP, and EE as determinats of JS. Therefore, it is advisable to future reseach to consider adding other related variables as determinants of EE and JS.

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