

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK STRESS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH JOB SATISFACTION (Evidence From a Port Authority in Tanjung Pakis)**

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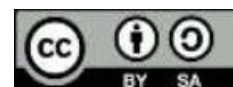
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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effects of emotional intelligence and work stress on employee performance through job satisfaction at the Class III Port Authority of Tanjung Pakis, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach and PLS-SEM analysis, the findings showed that emotional intelligence, work stress, and job satisfaction positively influenced employee performance. However, emotional intelligence and work stress did not significantly affect job satisfaction, indicating that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationships between these variables and employee performance. The findings contribute to the Job Demands-Resources and Conservation of Resources theories, particularly in the context of Indonesia's public maritime sector. The study recommends human resource strategies that focus on enhancing emotional competencies, optimizing productive levels of work stress, and implementing separate job satisfaction improvement initiatives to strengthen employee performance.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Work-related stress has been recognized by WHO as a global occupational health phenomenon, while emotional intelligence has emerged as a critical resource for managing workplace demands (Chigeda et al., 2022; NGUYEN et al., 2020). In the public sector, particularly port authorities responsible for maritime safety and vessel traffic control, employees face unique operational pressures requiring both technical competence and psychological resilience (Syafrin & Rahman, 2023). Empirical observations at the Tanjung Pakis Class III Port Authority indicate declining performance indicators, suboptimal attendance, and employees leaving workstations during hours, suggesting emotional and psychological challenges beyond administrative solutions (Azhar et al., 2023). Existing literature presents inconsistent findings regarding work stress, job satisfaction, and employee performance relationships, with studies demonstrating negative, positive, or non-significant associations (Peristera, 2021; Radito et al., 2022). Consequently, understanding how emotional intelligence and work stress influence

performance through job satisfaction remains theoretically and practically imperative in this context.

Prior studies established that emotional intelligence positively affects job satisfaction and performance, yet strength and direction vary across occupational settings (Ekaristiyani & Yanti, 2024; O'Boyle et al., 2011). Work stress predominantly exerts negative effects, although high-demand public service contexts document positive stress-performance linkages consistent with eustress frameworks (Hamisi, 2021; NGUYEN et al., 2020). Job satisfaction's mediating role between emotional intelligence, work stress, and performance remains inconsistent some research confirms significant indirect effects (Nugroho & Manafe, 2025; Tito Tilawah et al., 2024; Tuahuns et al., 2023), while others report non-significant mediation in healthcare and educational settings (Andriansyah & Irwansyah, 2022). Notably, most studies were conducted in healthcare, education, or general private enterprises, leaving an empirical gap regarding port authority employees confronting operational hazards and regulatory compliance demands. This study addresses this gap by examining job satisfaction's mediating mechanism within a specialized maritime public sector organization in Indonesia.

Drawing upon Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories, this study posits that emotional intelligence functions as a personal resource enabling emotion regulation, interpersonal management, and job demand coping, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hobfoll, 1989). Conversely, excessive work stress depletes psychological resources, potentially reducing satisfaction and impairing performance, although moderate stress may activate functional coping responses (Radito et al., 2022). Job satisfaction is theorized as a critical affective mechanism transmitting personal resources and job demands to performance outcomes, consistent with Affective Events Theory emphasizing emotional experiences as proximal determinants of work attitudes and behaviors (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). However, the mediating mechanism may be attenuated when direct effects predominate or contextual factors exert stronger influences on satisfaction formation (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Zhao et al., 2010). Accordingly, this study tests hypotheses that emotional intelligence positively affects performance, work stress negatively affects performance, and job satisfaction mediates these relationships, while remaining open to direct effects superseding indirect pathways.

The primary objective is examining direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence and work stress on employee performance through job satisfaction at Tanjung Pakis Class III Port Authority, contributing to theoretical refinement of mediation models in public sector human resource management. Theoretically, this research advances understanding of how emotional and psychological factors shape performance in specialized maritime administrative contexts, extending JD-R and COR theories beyond conventional settings. Practically, findings inform evidence-based human resource policies for enhancing emotional competencies, managing workplace stress productively, and cultivating job satisfaction as a strategic performance lever. Methodologically, a quantitative explanatory design employed structured questionnaires administered to all 65 civil servant employees through census sampling, with data analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test measurement validity, structural relationships, and mediation effects.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design examining causal relationships among emotional intelligence, work stress, job satisfaction, and employee performance at Tanjung Pakis Class III Port Authority. Data collection used a cross-sectional survey with structured questionnaires administered to all 65 civil servant employees through census sampling, measuring four constructs with six items each on a 5-point Likert scale. Validity was confirmed through convergent and discriminant validity, while reliability exceeded 0.90 for all constructs via Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis used SmartPLS version 4 with PLS-SEM, a variance-based approach suitable for small-to-medium samples, employing a two-stage procedure for measurement and structural model evaluation. Model fit was verified through SRMR = 0.072,  $d\_ULS = 1.563$ ,  $d\_G = 1.115$ , and NFI = 0.761, with mediation effects tested via bootstrapping following contemporary PLS-SEM recommendations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Measurement Model Evaluation

#### Convergent Validity and Reliability Analysis

All 24 indicators demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity with outer loadings from 0.767 to 0.912, exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Hair et al., 2019). Cronbach's alpha values were 0.942 (emotional intelligence), 0.930 (job satisfaction), 0.919 (employee performance), and 0.904 (work stress), indicating excellent reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 1 presents the complete results.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Indicator	Emotional Intelligence	Work Stress	Job Satisfaction	Employee Performance
X1.1	0.876	-	-	-
X1.2	0.846	-	-	-
X1.3	0.899	-	-	-
X1.4	0.911	-	-	-
X1.5	0.836	-	-	-
X1.6	0.912	-	-	-
X2.1	-	0.860	-	-
X2.2	-	0.871	-	-
X2.3	-	0.767	-	-
X2.4	-	0.787	-	-
X2.5	-	0.828	-	-
X2.6	-	0.810	-	-
Y.1	-	-	0.822	-
Y.2	-	-	0.885	-
Y.3	-	-	0.874	-
Y.4	-	-	0.803	-
Y.5	-	-	0.894	-

Y.6	-	-	0.874	-
Z.1	-	-	-	0.848
Z.2	-	-	-	0.844
Z.3	-	-	-	0.856
Z.4	-	-	-	0.828
Z.5	-	-	-	0.845
Z.6	-	-	-	0.840
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>0.942</b>	<b>0.904</b>	<b>0.930</b>	<b>0.919</b>

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. All loadings > 0.70; all  $\alpha > 0.90$ . EI = Emotional Intelligence; WS = Work Stress; JS = Job Satisfaction; EP = Employee Performance.

### Discriminant Validity Analysis

The discriminant validity examination through cross-loading analysis demonstrated that each indicator loaded more strongly on its theoretically assigned construct than on alternative constructs. As detailed in Table 2, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was satisfied, with the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeding its correlations with other constructs. For instance, emotional intelligence exhibited an AVE square root of 0.882, surpassing its correlations with work stress (0.350), job satisfaction (0.339), and employee performance (0.427). This pattern held consistently across all constructs, confirming that emotional intelligence, work stress, job satisfaction, and employee performance represent empirically distinct phenomena rather than overlapping conceptual domains. The absence of cross-loading contamination indicates that respondents could differentiate among the emotional, psychological, attitudinal, and performance-related aspects of their work experience, which is essential for establishing the structural integrity of the proposed mediation model.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>Work Stress</b>	<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	<b>Employee Performance</b>	
Emotional Intelligence	<b>0.882</b>			
Work Stress	0.350	<b>0.823</b>		
Job Satisfaction	0.339	0.292	<b>0.854</b>	
Employee Performance	0.427	0.412	0.386	<b>0.844</b>

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. Diagonal elements (bold) are the square root of AVE. Off-diagonal elements are correlations between constructs.

a. Model Fit Assessment

The overall model fit evaluation produced satisfactory results across multiple fit indices. The SRMR reached 0.072, the d\_ ULS was 1.563, and the d\_ G was 1.115, all indicating acceptable model fit. The chi-square statistic of 344.311 exceeded the critical value of 35.172 at 24 degrees of freedom, further confirming adequate fit. The NFI reached 0.761, suggesting reasonable though not optimal comparative fit relative to the independence model. Collectively, these indices confirm that the proposed structural model adequately reproduced the observed covariance structure, providing a valid foundation for interpreting the hypothesized relationships.

Table 3. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Status
SRMR	0.072	< 0.10	Fit
d_ ULS	1.563	> 0.05	Fit
d_ G	1.115	> 0.05	Fit
Chi-Square	344.311	≥ 35.172 (df = 24)	Fit
NFI	0.761	~ 1.0	Marginal

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; d\_ ULS = Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy; d\_ G = Geodesic Discrepancy; NFI = Normed Fit Index.

Structural Model Evaluation

a. Coefficient of Determination and Effect Size

The structural model explained 31.2% of variance in employee performance and 11.0% in job satisfaction, leaving substantial unexplained variance to omitted variables such as organizational commitment and leadership style. Effect sizes were small yet meaningful, ranging from  $f^2 = 0.022$  to  $0.085$ , with job satisfaction exhibiting the largest effect on performance and work stress the weakest on satisfaction. These values indicate that no single predictor dominates outcome formation, consistent with multicausal work behavior explanations. The modest explanatory power suggests that extrinsic factors exert stronger influences on job satisfaction than the studied predictors. Overall, the results support configurational approaches that reject single-factor determinism in favor of multiple parallel performance pathways.

Table 4. R-Square and Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

Endogenous Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Predictor	f <sup>2</sup>	Effect Size
Job Satisfaction	0.110	0.082	Emotional Intelligence	0.054	Small
			Work Stress	0.022	Small

Employee Performance	0.312	0.278	Emotional Intelligence	0.075	Small
			Work Stress	0.070	Small
			Job Satisfaction	0.085	Small

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. Effect size categories based on Cohen (1988): small  $\geq 0.02$ , medium  $\geq 0.15$ , large  $\geq 0.35$ .

### Direct Effects Analysis

The direct effects analysis revealed mixed support for the hypothesized relationships, with three of five direct paths achieving statistical significance while two failed to reach the conventional threshold. As summarized in Table 5, the pattern of findings challenges conventional theoretical expectations particularly regarding the work stress-job satisfaction and work stress-performance linkages.

Table 5. Direct Effects (Path Coefficients)

Hypothesis	Path	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	EI $\rightarrow$ JS	0.239	1.940	0.052	Not Supported
H2	WS $\rightarrow$ JS	0.153	1.103	0.270	Not Supported
H3	EI $\rightarrow$ EP	0.255	2.148	0.032	Supported
H4	WS $\rightarrow$ EP	0.244	2.281	0.023	Supported*
H5	JS $\rightarrow$ EP	0.256	2.303	0.021	Supported

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. EI = Emotional Intelligence; WS = Work Stress; JS = Job Satisfaction; EP = Employee Performance. H4 hypothesized negative effect; positive effect found.

#### a. Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence exerted a positive yet statistically non-significant effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $p = 0.052$ ), suggesting weak influence overpowered by stronger organizational factors such as compensation and leadership. This finding diverges from (Maharvi, 2022; Nceong et al., 2025), who documented significant positive relationships in other contexts. The predominance of extrinsic over intrinsic satisfaction determinants reflects the hierarchical, procedure-bound nature of port authority operations. Employees perceive satisfaction as more contingent upon organizational treatment than personal emotional capabilities. This extends emotional intelligence theory by demonstrating that its attitudinal effects are context-dependent rather than universal in high-structure, high-accountability environments.

**b. Work Stress and Job Satisfaction**

This result contradicts (Hamisi, 2021; NGUYEN et al., 2020; Peristera, 2021), who documented significant negative stress-satisfaction effects in Southeast Asian public sectors and Indonesian civil service contexts. The positive directional tendency, albeit non-significant, suggests that port authority employees experience functional eustress rather than distress, wherein moderate operational pressures from maritime safety oversight activate adaptive coping responses (Radito et al., 2022; Selye, 1984). This resonates with (Tuahuns et al., 2023), who observed complex stress-satisfaction dynamics in high-demand healthcare settings, suggesting that stress valence depends on occupational characteristics and perceived meaningfulness of work demands. The implication is that job satisfaction in this context remains relatively insulated from stress effects because employees perceive their pressures as inherent to meaningful public service responsibilities rather than arbitrary or excessive demands.

**c. Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance**

Emotional intelligence demonstrated a positive and statistically significant direct effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.255$ ,  $t = 2.148$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ), confirming that higher emotional competencies yield superior work outcomes. This finding corroborates (Maharvi, 2022; Nceong et al., 2025), who identified emotional intelligence as a robust performance predictor across diverse organizational contexts. Port authority employees with higher emotional intelligence likely demonstrate superior self-regulation during safety inspections, enhanced empathy in stakeholder interactions, and constructive conflict resolution in team coordination. These capabilities translate directly into operational effectiveness without requiring job satisfaction as intermediary. This extends Conservation of Resources theory by demonstrating that personal resources can bypass intermediate affective states to influence behavioral outcomes in high-stakes operational contexts.

**d. Work Stress and Employee Performance**

Work stress exhibited a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.244$ ,  $t = 2.281$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ), directly contradicting the hypothesized negative relationship. This directional reversal contrasts with the predominantly negative associations documented by (NGUYEN et al., 2020; Radito et al., 2022). The positive linkage can be interpreted through the eustress framework, which posits that moderate stress levels activate heightened alertness and goal-directed effort in high-stakes environments (Selye, 1984). Within the port authority context, operational pressures may function as functional stressors that sharpen vigilance and motivate meticulous task execution. The practical implication is that stress management should pursue optimization preserving functional stress levels that sustain alertness while preventing progression into chronic strain.

**e. Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance**

Job satisfaction manifested a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.256$ ,  $t = 2.303$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ), emerging as the strongest predictor among the direct pathways. This finding aligns with (Syafrin & Rahman, 2023; Tuahuns et al., 2023), who demonstrated that satisfied employees exhibit heightened enthusiasm and task commitment.

The result is consistent with (Pratantia & Nasution, 2023), who emphasized that job satisfaction influences performance through commitment and motivation mechanisms. Port authority employees translate positive affective evaluations into tangible performance improvements through increased discretionary effort and sustained work engagement. The persistence of this direct effect despite mediation failure suggests that satisfaction operates through parallel rather than serial pathways, coexisting with direct predictor effects.

**Indirect Effects Analysis (Mediation)**

The indirect effects analysis examined whether job satisfaction transmitted the influences of emotional intelligence and work stress to employee performance. As presented in Table 6, both hypothesized mediating pathways failed to achieve statistical significance, representing a fundamental structural departure from the proposed mediation model.

**Table 6. Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Path</b>	<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Mediation Type</b>
H6	EI → JS → EP	0.061	1.382	0.167	Not Supported	Direct-only non-mediation
H7	WS → JS → EP	0.039	0.900	0.368	Not Supported	Direct-only non-mediation

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. EI = Emotional Intelligence; WS = Work Stress; JS = Job Satisfaction; EP = Employee Performance. Mediation type based on Zhao et al. (2010) taxonomy.

**a. Emotional Intelligence → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance**

The indirect effect of work stress on employee performance through job satisfaction produced a coefficient of 0.039 ( $t = 0.900, p = 0.368$ ), failing to achieve statistical significance and rejecting the hypothesized mediating pathway. This result diverges from (Tuahuns et al., 2023), who reported significant mediation in healthcare contexts. The non-significant mediation, combined with the significant positive direct effect, suggests that stress operates as an immediate situational activator rather than a distal influence requiring attitudinal translation. In the port authority context, stress may directly mobilize cognitive resources and behavioral vigilance without altering underlying job attitudes. The practical implication is that stress management interventions should focus on sustaining productive stress levels rather than satisfaction preservation.

**b. Work Stress → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance**

The indirect effect of work stress on employee performance through job satisfaction was non-significant (coefficient = 0.039,  $t = 0.900, p = 0.368$ ), rejecting the hypothesized mediating pathway. This diverges from (Azhar et al., 2023; Tuahuns et al., 2023), who documented

significant mediation in other contexts. Combined with the significant positive direct effect, this suggests stress operates as an immediate activator rather than a distal influence requiring attitudinal translation. In the port authority context, stress directly mobilizes cognitive resources and vigilance without altering job attitudes, bypassing satisfaction-based mediation. Consistent with (Nursifa et al., 2023), this implies stress management should focus on sustaining productive stress levels rather than satisfaction preservation.

**Integrated Discussion and Theoretical Implications**

The collective findings reveal a structurally distinctive pattern wherein both emotional intelligence and work stress influence employee performance through significant direct pathways, while neither predictor achieves significant indirect effects through job satisfaction mediation. This configuration challenges the prevailing mediation-centric paradigm in organizational behavior research, which frequently assumes that personal resources and job demands necessarily transmit their effects through attitudinal mechanisms. As synthesized in Table 7, only three of seven hypotheses received empirical support, with the most theoretically significant departures involving the positive work stress-performance relationship and the complete absence of mediation effects.

Table 7. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Emotional intelligence positively affects job satisfaction	Rejected
H2	Work stress negatively affects job satisfaction	Rejected (positive, non-significant)
H3	Emotional intelligence positively affects employee performance	Accepted
H4	Work stress negatively affects employee performance	Rejected (positive, significant)
H5	Job satisfaction positively affects employee performance	Accepted
H6	Job satisfaction mediates EI → EP	Rejected
H7	Job satisfaction mediates WS → EP	Rejected

Source: processed data, 2026

Note. EI = Emotional Intelligence; WS = Work Stress; JS = Job Satisfaction; EP = Employee Performance.

Three of seven hypotheses were supported, with the positive stress-performance relationship and complete mediation failure as the study's primary contributions (Maharvi, 2022; Nceong et al., 2025). Emotional intelligence and work stress influence performance through significant direct pathways, while neither achieves significant indirect effects through job satisfaction mediation (Syafrin & Rahman, 2023; Tuahuns et al., 2023). This predominance of direct effects suggests that in high-demand public service contexts, performance is shaped more immediately by emotional competencies and stress activation than by attitudinal evaluations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Pratantia & Nasution, 2023). The positive stress-performance relationship

empirically validates the eustress conceptualization, demonstrating that moderate operational pressures can function as performance-enhancing stimulants (Radito et al., 2022; Selye, 1984). The failure of job satisfaction to mediate either predictor reveals it as an independent performance predictor rather than a universal transmission mechanism, suggesting that job satisfaction should be conceptualized as one of multiple parallel performance determinants (Farida & P, 2023).

### Practical Implications

The direct effect of emotional intelligence on performance suggests prioritizing emotional competency training as a direct performance enhancement strategy (Maharvi, 2022; Nceong et al., 2025). The positive stress-performance relationship implies stress management should pursue optimization rather than minimization, sustaining vigilance without crossing into distress territory (Radito et al., 2022; Selye, 1984). The non-significant stress-satisfaction pathway indicates interventions should focus on maintaining productive stress levels rather than satisfaction preservation (Nursifa et al., 2023). The significant direct effect of job satisfaction confirms that satisfaction-enhancement initiatives retain strategic value as parallel performance levers requiring investment in compensation and career development (Syafrin & Rahman, 2023; Tuahuns et al., 2023). This dual-track approach developing emotional competencies and optimizing stress as direct inputs while independently cultivating satisfaction offers a comprehensive strategy consistent with prior research on Indonesian public sector performance improvement (Hamisi, 2021; Pratantia & Nasution, 2023).

### CONCLUSIONS

This study successfully examined the direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence and work stress on employee performance through job satisfaction at Tanjung Pakis Class III Port Authority. The investigation revealed that all three predictors exert significant direct effects on performance, while job satisfaction failed to mediate either predictor-outcome relationship a configuration that extends JD-R and COR theories by identifying mediation boundary conditions in high-stakes public sector contexts. The empirically validated eustress effect demonstrates that moderate work stress enhances performance, suggesting stress optimization should replace elimination as the guiding intervention philosophy. These findings contribute to theoretical refinement by showing that personal resources and situational demands can bypass intermediate attitudinal states to influence behavioral outcomes directly in operationally critical environments. Future research should expand to multiple port authorities, employ longitudinal designs, and explore additional mediators such as organizational commitment or work engagement to better explain performance mechanisms in public sector maritime administration.

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