

# The Influence of Interpersonal Competence on Job Satisfaction of Junior High School Teachers in Muaro Jambi Regency

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan memperoleh bukti empiris mengenai pengaruh kompetensi interpersonal terhadap kepuasan kerja guru Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri di Kabupaten Muaro Jambi secara langsung. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif asosiatif dengan desain korelasional melalui survei, dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hipotesis dinyatakan signifikan. Kompetensi interpersonal berpengaruh langsung terhadap kepuasan kerja. Model seperti ini masih jarang diterapkan pada penelitian kepuasan kerja guru, khususnya pada konteks daerah. Kontribusi penting lainnya adalah penyediaan bukti empiris berbasis data lokal Kabupaten Muaro Jambi, yang dapat menjadi dasar bagi perumusan kebijakan peningkatan kesejahteraan dan performa guru secara lebih komprehensif. Penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan pada desain cross-sectional, cakupan wilayah yang terbatas, dan penggunaan data persepsi. Namun demikian, temuan penelitian tetap memberikan kontribusi konseptual dan praktis bagi upaya peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia di sektor pendidikan.

**Kata kunci:** Kompetensi Interpersonal, Kepuasan Kerja, Guru SMP, PLS-SEM.

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to directly obtain empirical evidence regarding the influence of interpersonal competence on job satisfaction of public junior high school teachers in Muaro Jambi Regency. The study employed an associative quantitative approach with a correlational survey design, analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that the hypothesis was significant. Interpersonal competence has a direct effect on job satisfaction. This model is rarely applied to teacher job satisfaction research, particularly in the regional context. Another important contribution is the provision of empirical evidence based on local data from Muaro Jambi Regency, which can serve as a basis for formulating more comprehensive policies to improve teacher welfare and performance. This study has limitations such as its cross-sectional design, limited coverage area, and the use of perceptual data. Nevertheless, the research findings still provide conceptual and practical contributions to efforts to improve the quality of human resources in the education sector.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Competence, Job Satisfaction, Junior High School Teachers, PLS-SEM.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for human resource development, with teachers playing a strategic role as direct implementers of the learning process in schools. Teachers' success in carrying out their professional duties is greatly influenced by their perceived level of job satisfaction. Teachers with high job satisfaction tend to demonstrate optimal performance, loyalty to the institution, and the ability to create a conducive and productive school climate. Various international and national reports indicate that teacher job satisfaction still faces challenges. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) revealed that although most teachers feel proud of their profession, many consider changing schools or other professions due to low appreciation, limited career development, and high workloads. Similar conditions also occur in Indonesia, particularly in regional areas, where teachers still face limited facilities, organizational support, and clarity of career paths. One psychological factor

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believed to have a strong influence on teacher job satisfaction is interpersonal competence. Goleman (2006) states that interpersonal competence includes empathy, effective communication, collaboration, and conflict management. Teachers with strong interpersonal skills tend to be able to build harmonious working relationships with students, colleagues, and school leaders, thus creating a sense of appreciation and comfort in their work. Research by García-Bernal et al. (2005) shows that interpersonal skills are a dominant factor in shaping job satisfaction compared to other factors. Positive social relationships in the workplace have been shown to increase psychological well-being and reduce teacher stress levels. However, empirical studies specifically examining the influence of interpersonal skills on job satisfaction among public junior high school teachers in the regions are still relatively limited. Based on this situation, this study aims to analyze the influence of interpersonal skills on job satisfaction among public junior high school teachers. The results are expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of policies to improve the quality of teacher resources, particularly through strengthening interpersonal skills as a strategy to improve teacher welfare and professionalism.

**2. METHOD**

The study employed an associative quantitative approach with a correlational survey design, analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This study was conducted at 68 junior high schools in Muaro Jambi Regency. The population comprised all individuals or units of analysis with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Based on official data obtained from the Muaro Jambi Regency Education and Culture Office, the number of public junior high school teachers in the research year was 1,016. This clearly defined population served as the primary basis for applying the proportionate stratified random sampling technique during the sample determination stage. This study employed a survey approach with probability sampling techniques to ensure that each member of the population had an equal opportunity of being selected. The sampling technique used proportionate stratified random sampling. The sample size was determined by referring to the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which recommends a sample size of 285 respondents for a population of 1,000 to 1,100 people. Therefore, the target sample size for this study was 285 public junior high school teachers. This study used quantitative data collection techniques derived from primary and secondary data. The primary instrument was a questionnaire. The job satisfaction instrument was adapted from Robbins and Judge (2013), covering: 1) Salary and Working Conditions, 2) Leadership Policies and Supervision, 3) The Work Itself, 4) Responsibility, and 5) Promotion/Career Development. The intrapersonal competency instrument was adapted from Daniel Goleman (2006), which included five competencies: Empathy, Communication Skills, Collaboration and Teamwork, Conflict Management, and Leadership.

**3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Result**

Measurement Model Testing Analysis (Outer Model). The research model testing will describe the results of this research model to obtain information on the research conducted. To obtain this information, the outer model was tested by considering factor analysis in a step-by-step manner based on data analysis techniques.

**Summary Table of Outer Loading Values per Construct**

<b>Konstruk</b>	<b>Jumlah Indikator</b>	<b>Rentang Nilai Outer Loading</b>	<b>Keterangan</b>
Kompetensi Interpersonal (KIP)	17	0.770 – 0.893	Valid
Kepuasan Kerja (KK)	20	0.703 – 0.892	Valid

Sumber: SmartPLS 4.

Based on the outer loading results, all indicators for each construct demonstrated good convergent validity, as they had values above the threshold of 0.70. For the Interpersonal Competence (ICC) construct, outer loading values ranged from 0.770 to

0.893, indicating that all indicators are relevant and significantly support the construct. For the Job Satisfaction (JCC) construct, although several indicators had values approaching the lower limit, such as KK.P3 (0.706), KK.P6 (0.704), and KK.P10 (0.703), all indicators remained in the acceptable category, remaining above 0.70. Therefore, all indicators in this model can be declared valid and adequately represent their respective constructs. However, several indicators had outer loading values approaching the lower limit, such as KK.P10 (0.703) and KK.P6 (0.704). However, according to Hair et al. (2021), loading values between 0.60 and 0.70 are still acceptable if the construct has good overall construct validity. Therefore, all indicators are still considered convergently valid and retained in the model. The following table presents the AVE values for each construct in the measurement model:

**Table of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values per Construct**

Konstruk	AVE	Keterangan
Kompetensi Interpersonal (KIP)	0.714	Valid
Kepuasan Kerja (KK)	0.634	Valid

Sumber : Output SmartPLS 4.0

Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis, all constructs in the model had AVE values above the minimum threshold of 0.50, meaning each construct was able to explain more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Interpersonal Competence was 0.714, and Job Satisfaction was 0.634. Thus, all constructs in this model met the requirements for convergent validity, as each construct was able to adequately and representatively capture the variance in its indicators. This reliability test is presented in the following section.

**Model Data Reliability Table**

Konstruk	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Kompetensi interpersonal (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.975	0.976	0.977
Kepuasan kerja (Y)	0.969	0.971	0.972

Sumber : Output SmartPLS 4.0

Based on the results of the construct reliability and validity analysis, all constructs in the model had Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho\_a), and Composite Reliability (rho\_c) values above 0.70, indicating a very high level of internal consistency and construct reliability. Interpersonal Competence was 0.975, and Job Satisfaction was 0.969, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. Similarly, the composite reliability values for all constructs ranged from 0.967 to 0.977, indicating that the indicators within each construct consistently and reliably represent the construct. The results of the HTMT value calculations for each pair of constructs in the model are presented in Table below.

*Tabel Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)*

	Disiplin kerja	Kompetensi intrapersonal	Kompetensi Interpersonal	Kepuasan Kerja	Lingkungan Kerja
Kompetensi Interpersonal	0.102	0.551			
Kepuasan Kerja	0.578	0.897	0.611		

Sumber : Output SmartPLS 4.0

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach as presented in the Table, it can be concluded that most of the construct pairs in this model show HTMT values below the critical threshold of 0.90, as recommended by Hair et al. (2021). This indicates that these constructs are empirically distinct from each other and do not experience contamination or conceptual overlap.

### Discussion

The path test results indicate that interpersonal competence has a positive and significant influence on teacher job satisfaction, with a path coefficient of  $\beta = 0.313$ , a t-statistic of 9.732, and a p-value of 0.000. These results statistically indicate that the higher a teacher's interpersonal competence, the higher their perceived job satisfaction. This positive and significant relationship suggests that teachers' socio-emotional aspects, particularly their ability to build relationships with others, play a crucial role in shaping positive perceptions of their work. Conceptually, these findings align with the main theory proposed by Daniel Goleman (2006), who defines interpersonal competence as the ability to interact effectively with others, encompassing communication skills, building and maintaining relationships, collaborating, and managing conflict. The dimensions of interpersonal competence, including empathy, communication skills, collaboration and teamwork, conflict management, and leadership, form a framework of socio-emotional skills that enable teachers to respond adaptively to professional situations, build healthy relationships, and maintain motivation and engagement in their work. Supporting theories reinforce the mechanisms of this relationship. Attraction Theory, Social Penetration Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Equity Theory emphasize how social attachment, relational exchange, and perceptions of fairness influence interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, Social Skills Theory (Argyle, 2019), the concepts of similarity and proximity (Byrne, 1971; Festinger et al., 1950), and contemporary findings (Guerrero et al., 2020; Braithwaite et al., 2021) expand on the understanding that effective interpersonal relationships are built through a combination of communication skills, social similarity, proximity, and sensitivity to context. Integrating Goleman's core theory with these supporting theories forms a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding teacher interpersonal competence as a dynamic ability that influences the quality of social interactions and job satisfaction. These findings are supported by research in various developed countries. In the United States, Cohen and Ball (2020) found that teachers with high interpersonal competence have higher levels of job satisfaction because they are able to build harmonious and mutually supportive

professional relationships in the school environment. The study also linked strong interpersonal relationships to teacher resilience in the face of work pressure. In Australia, a study by Hattie and Yates (2021) showed that teachers with strong social skills and empathy tended to feel more valued by colleagues and were more satisfied with their work overall. Meanwhile, in India, Sharma and Kumari (2019) stated that interpersonal competence was a key predictor of job satisfaction for secondary school teachers, particularly in the context of school organizations rich with complex social relationships. Teachers who were able to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships in the workplace experienced more stable job satisfaction and resilience to conflict. A similar study in Kenya by Wambugu and Muthoni (2022) showed that teachers' interpersonal skills significantly influenced their perceptions of a comfortable work environment and social recognition, all of which contributed to overall job satisfaction. In line with these international findings, research in Indonesia also provided consistent empirical support. Wulandari and Saryono (2020), in their research in Bandung, found that teachers with strong communication and empathy skills felt more comfortable interacting in the school environment, and this directly contributed to increased job satisfaction. In Yogyakarta, research by Setiawan and Nurhayati (2021) showed that elementary school teachers' interpersonal competence significantly influenced aspects of job satisfaction, particularly in terms of relationships with colleagues and role appreciation. Another study by Hamzah and Rahayu (2022) on junior high school teachers in Palembang found that teachers with strong interpersonal skills were able to build collaborative relationships with school leaders and colleagues and were more active in professional forums. This provided them with greater psychological space to experience job satisfaction. In East Kalimantan, a study by Maulana and Fitriani (2023) revealed that teachers with strong interpersonal skills tended to be more satisfied with the school's work system, due to their ability to adapt and resolve conflict constructively. All these findings demonstrate that interpersonal competence is a key element in shaping job satisfaction, as it directly influences the quality of relationships.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Interpersonal competence has a direct influence on job satisfaction among public junior high school teachers in Muaro Jambi Regency. Teachers with strong interpersonal skills, such as empathy, communication skills, collaboration and teamwork, conflict management, and leadership, tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction. This suggests that the quality of social relationships and effective interaction skills contribute to a sense of comfort, appreciation, and meaning in carrying out their professional roles as educators.

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