

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Organizational Silence and Its Impact on Employee Performance at PT. PLN (Persero) in The Belawan Power Generation Sector

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of job satisfaction on organizational silence and employee performance, with organizational silence as a mediating variable at PT PLN (Persero) Belawan Power Generation Sector. The research was motivated by the phenomenon of low employee participation in voicing opinions and the suboptimal performance achievements observed. A quantitative survey method was applied to 100 respondents, and the data were analyzed using path analysis. The results show that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on organizational silence ($p = 0.017$) and employee performance ($p = 0.016$). Organizational silence also significantly influences employee performance ($p = 0.005$) and acts as a full mediator in the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. This finding indicates that even with high job satisfaction, employee performance improvement cannot be maximized if a culture of silence persists. The novelty of this study lies in proving the full mediation mechanism within a state-owned energy company in Indonesia, a context less explored in previous research. Practically, the findings highlight the need for management to enhance job satisfaction through fair compensation systems, transparent promotion policies, and a supportive work environment while fostering open communication to reduce silence and sustain performance improvement.

Keywords: *employee performance, job satisfaction, organizational silence, PT PLN*

JEL Codes : **M41, M15**

INTRODUCTION

Human Resources (HR) are strategic assets within an organization that determine the direction and success of achieving corporate goals. Simamora (2015) emphasizes that without the involvement of competent human resources, no matter how sophisticated the technology and management systems employed, organizational goals cannot be optimally achieved. HR serves as the main driver of all operational processes, from the lowest level to the highest managerial ranks.

Organisational success is directly related to employee performance. Mathis and Jackson (2015) define performance as the quality and quantity of work achieved by employees in carrying out their tasks in accordance with the responsibilities given. Performance is influenced by ability, motivation, and working environment conditions, in which job satisfaction plays a crucial role.

Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job. Robbins and Judge (2017) add that job satisfaction is influenced by factors such as the job itself, salary, promotion opportunities, supervision, and relationships among employees. Employees who feel satisfied tend to demonstrate greater loyalty, higher productivity, and stable work enthusiasm. Conversely, dissatisfaction may trigger the phenomenon of organizational silence.

Morrison and Boyd (2016) define organizational silence as a collective phenomenon in which the majority of organizational members choose not to share information, opinions, or concerns regarding important organizational issues with those in authority. This silence is often driven by fear of negative consequences,

low levels of trust in leadership, and an organizational culture that suppresses open expression. Ang and Van Dyne (2015) further emphasize that employee silence represents a form of passive behavior where individuals withhold information that could actually benefit the organization. Although sometimes perceived as reducing conflict, organizational silence can hinder innovation, slow down decision-making, and ultimately decrease organizational performance in the long term.

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational silence is significant. That organizational silence tends to emerge in organizations that do not support freedom of expression, operate within rigid hierarchical structures, and provide limited employee involvement in decision-making. Conversely, satisfied employees are more likely to express ideas, criticisms, and constructive suggestions for the organization.

PT PLN (Persero), as a state-owned enterprise in the electricity sector, faces major challenges in the era of globalization, technological advancement, and increasing customer demands. Organizational performance improvement can only be achieved through an open organizational culture, high levels of job satisfaction, and active employee participation. As part of its commitment to good corporate governance, PLN implements a code of conduct and corporate values emphasizing integrity, trust, care, and continuous learning. However, the success of these values largely depends on employees' psychological conditions, including the extent to which they feel satisfied and empowered to voice their opinions.

Therefore, it is essential to examine how job satisfaction influences organizational silence and to what extent these two variables affect employee performance. Research conducted at PT PLN (Persero) Belawan Power Generation Sector, one of the strategic units within the national power generation system, is expected to provide empirical insights into the dynamics of these variables and their contribution to organizational effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Satisfaction and Its Importance

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job. It is critical for increasing motivation, engagement, and productivity. Herzberg's two-factor theory highlights factors like achievement and recognition as contributors to job satisfaction, while salary and working conditions serve to prevent dissatisfaction. In high-pressure environments, such as PT. PLN's Belawan Power Generation Sector, job satisfaction is essential for boosting morale, enhancing operational efficiency, and improving safety outcomes. Satisfied employees also exhibit higher organizational commitment and lower turnover rates (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Organizational Silence: A Barrier to Effective Communication

Organizational silence occurs when employees withhold feedback, ideas, or concerns, often due to fear of retaliation or a lack of trust. This silence can hinder innovation, decision-making, and organizational effectiveness. In hierarchical organizations like PT. PLN, employees may fear retribution for voicing concerns about inefficiencies or safety risks, which is particularly concerning in the power generation sector, where safety is paramount.

The Interplay between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Silence

Job satisfaction can reduce organizational silence. Satisfied employees are more likely to feel secure in expressing opinions and offering feedback, as they perceive a supportive environment. In contrast, dissatisfaction can lead to disengagement and silence. In high-risk sectors like power generation, where safety and operational efficiency are critical, fostering an open communication environment is essential to mitigate the risks associated with organizational silence.

Employee Performance: The Ultimate Outcome

Employee performance, defined as the outcomes achieved based on quality and quantity standards (Mangkunegara, 2015), is influenced by factors like job satisfaction and organizational climate. In the Belawan Power Generation Sector, performance directly affects operational efficiency, safety, and reliability. High job satisfaction creates an environment conducive to employee engagement and performance, while open communication further enhances employee contributions.

The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Organizational Silence, and Performance

Job satisfaction, organizational silence, and employee performance are interconnected. Satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged and contribute positively, both in performance and communication. Conversely, dissatisfaction may lead to organizational silence, which hampers feedback and problem-solving. Research has shown that higher job satisfaction correlates with better performance outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Organizational silence, however, can obstruct performance improvements by limiting communication and innovation.

Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed for testing at PT. PLN (Persero) in the Belawan Power Generation Sector:

- a. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on reducing organizational silence. This means that higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with lower levels of organizational silence within the organization.
- b. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Organizational silence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (in a negative direction). This means that lower levels of organizational silence are significantly associated with higher levels of employee performance.
- c. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This means that employees with higher job satisfaction tend to demonstrate better performance.
- d. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Organizational silence positively and significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. This suggests that the effect of job satisfaction on employee performance is partially or fully mediated through the level of organizational silence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted at PT PLN (Persero) Belawan Power Generation Sector, focusing on three main variables: job satisfaction as the independent variable, organizational silence as the intervening variable, and employee performance as the dependent variable. The research population consisted of 120 employees. Using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, a total sample of 100 respondents was obtained and proportionally distributed across each department or work unit.

Data collection was carried out through two sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews and questionnaires distributed to respondents, while secondary data were collected through literature studies and relevant organizational documents. The measurement scale applied in this study was the ordinal scale.

Data analysis employed path analysis to examine both direct and indirect effects among variables, with organizational silence serving as the mediating variable. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the F-test and t-test to determine the significance of the independent variable's effect on the dependent variable, both simultaneously and partially. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the strength of the relationships among variables. Instrument validity was tested using the item-total correlation method, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a significance level set at 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). The following are the indicator variables:

Organizational Silence

Indicators (Acaray & Akturan, 2015):

1. Fewer or poor-quality safety reports
2. Recurring incidents or accidents with similar causes
3. Low or no proactive employee engagement regarding safety
4. Deterioration in internal climate between managers and employees
5. Psychological and collective defense mechanisms preventing information flow

Job Satisfaction

Indicators (Afandi, et al., 2018) :

1. Salary and Benefits
2. Work Environment

3. Relationship with Supervisors
4. Career Development
5. Workload and Stress

Employee Performance

Indicators (Anitha, 2015) :

1. Goal achievement and OKR completion rates
2. Quality of work
3. Productivity efficiency
4. Employee engagement and motivation
5. Skills development and adaptability

This study used a Likert scale to measure job satisfaction, organizational silence, and employee performance. The Likert scale was chosen because it is effective in measuring respondents' abstract attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. According to Sugiyono (2019), the Likert scale can transform qualitative data into quantitative data, facilitating statistical analysis. This aligns with Sekaran & Bougie (2016), who asserted that the Likert scale is a popular instrument in social and management research due to its simplicity, ease of understanding, and the variety of responses.

This study used a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), allowing respondents' level of agreement with each statement to be objectively measured and analyzed to answer the research hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research was conducted with 100 employee respondents from PT. PLN (Persero) Belawan Generation Sector. The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that the majority were male (68%), while a significant proportion possessed a bachelor's degree (48%). These demographic characteristics suggest that the respondent group is largely composed of individuals with higher educational qualifications. Consequently, their perspectives on the research variables may be regarded as adequately representative of the organizational context under study.

Job Satisfaction (X)

The analysis of the questionnaire results indicates that the level of employee job satisfaction falls into the good category. This can be seen from the distribution of responses, in which the majority of respondents selected agree (52.6%) with the measured indicators. These indicators include satisfaction with salary, incentives, promotion opportunities, and relationships with colleagues. This finding suggests that employees perceive both compensation aspects and interpersonal relationships in the workplace as being well-managed, thereby contributing positively to job satisfaction.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents' Answers to the Job Satisfaction Variable (X)

Answere Score	Average (%)
Strongly Agree	32,5
Agree	52,6
Disagree	13,6
Don't Agree	1,3
Strongly Disagree	0,0

Data Source Processed (2025)

Organizational Silence (Y1)

In contrast, the organizational silence variable demonstrates a less favorable tendency. A total of 57% of respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that they tend to remain silent during meetings or refrain from providing input. This finding suggests that employees generally show a willingness to express their opinions and contribute ideas, thereby reflecting a positive attitude toward organizational communication and participation.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents' Answers to the Organizational Silence Variable (Y1)

Answer Score	Average (%)
Strongly Agree	28,2
Agree	57,0
Disagree	14,0
Don't Agree	0,8
Strongly Disagree	0,0

Data Source Processed (2025)

Employee Performance (Y2)

The findings indicate that the employee performance variable is categorized as good, as evidenced by the average of 55.6% of respondents who expressed agreement with the measured indicators. This suggests that employees are generally capable of performing their tasks in accordance with established plans, maintaining both the quality and quantity of their work, and completing assignments within the designated timeframe. These results reflect a positive alignment between organizational expectations and employee performance outcomes.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents' Answers to Employee Performance Variable (Y2)

Answer Score	Average (%)
Strongly Agree	33,4
Agree	55,6
Disagree	10,1
Don't Agree	0,9
Strongly Disagree	0,0

Data Source Processed (2025)

Path Analysis

The results of the path analysis show that job satisfaction (X) has a significant effect on organizational silence (Y1), with a significance value of $p = 0.017 < 0.05$. This finding indicates that the level of employee job satisfaction can determine their tendency to remain silent or refrain from expressing opinions within the organization. Furthermore, job satisfaction (X) is also proven to have a significant effect on employee performance (Y2), with a significance value of $p = 0.016 < 0.05$. This suggests that the higher the level of job satisfaction perceived by employees, the better the performance they deliver. In addition, organizational silence (Y1) has a significant effect on employee performance (Y2), with a significance value of $p = 0.005 < 0.05$. This shows that employees' tendency to remain silent within the organization has a direct implication for the quality of performance displayed.

Table 4. Summary of Path Analysis Results

Relationship Between Variables	Sig.	Result
Job Satisfaction → Organizational Silence	0,017	Signifikan
Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0,016	Signifikan
Organizational Silence → Employee Performance	0,005	Signifikan

Data Source Processed (2025)

Overall, these findings confirm that job satisfaction not only plays an important role in reducing the level of organizational silence but also contributes directly to improving employee performance. On the other hand, organizational silence becomes a critical variable that can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that job satisfaction is a fundamental factor in creating high employee performance. However, an interesting result lies in the role of organizational silence as a full mediating variable. This indicates that even when job satisfaction is high, if the organizational culture is still characterized by silence, reluctance to voice opinions, or withholding criticism, employee performance improvement will not reach its maximum potential.

These findings are consistent with Morrison & Milliken (2016), who argued that organizational silence can hinder innovation, participation, and employee performance. However, unlike their study, which was mostly conducted in private companies in developed countries, this research demonstrates the phenomenon within state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the Indonesian energy sector. This

strengthens the argument that organizational silence occurs not only in private companies but also in state-owned enterprises with strong bureaucratic structures.

Furthermore, this study supports Nurhayati (2016), who found that job satisfaction influences employees' tendency to speak up. Satisfied employees are more willing to express their opinions. Yet, in the context of this research, although job satisfaction significantly affects performance, its influence becomes stronger when organizational silence is minimized. In other words, this full mediation highlights that employee performance highly depends on the openness of communication channels within the organization.

In terms of employee performance, the results are in line with Robbins & Judge (2017), who emphasized that employees with high job satisfaction tend to demonstrate higher productivity. However, this research contributes an additional perspective that productivity is not solely determined by job satisfaction but is also critically shaped by the organizational communication climate.

Research Novelty

The main contributions of this study are as follows:

1. **Research context:** This study was conducted in a state-owned energy company (PT. PLN), which is relatively underexplored, particularly concerning organizational silence. Most prior research has focused on private companies or educational institutions.
2. **Full mediation mechanism:** Unlike previous studies that typically found partial mediation, this research proves that organizational silence fully mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. This indicates that in the context of Indonesian SOEs, job satisfaction alone is insufficient to enhance performance without managing the culture of silence.
3. **Practical implications:** The study emphasizes that SOE management must pay serious attention to fostering an open communication culture so that existing job satisfaction can truly be converted into improved performance.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that job satisfaction has a significant influence on organizational silence as well as on employee performance. The statistical results demonstrate that the higher the level of job satisfaction among employees, the lower their tendency to engage in organizational silence. At the same time, higher job satisfaction contributes to improvements in employee performance in terms of quality, quantity, and timeliness of task completion. Furthermore, the study reveals that organizational silence serves as a full mediating variable in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. This implies that the effect of job satisfaction on employee performance does not only occur directly but is also strengthened through the reduction of organizational silence. In other words, higher job satisfaction encourages employees to be more open in expressing ideas, critiques, and suggestions, thereby fostering a healthier flow of communication within the organization.

These findings emphasize the importance of creating a healthy, open, and communicative work environment. Such an environment allows job satisfaction to be optimally internalized by employees, ultimately leading to enhanced individual as well as organizational performance.

Suggestion

First, increasing job satisfaction requires serious attention from leadership. This effort can be realized by creating and maintaining a conducive work environment, particularly in physical aspects such as cleanliness, orderliness, and workplace aesthetics. A comfortable work environment has been proven to positively influence employee satisfaction and motivation in carrying out their responsibilities. Second, the management of organizational silence is an important aspect that should not be overlooked. The company's management is advised to foster more open, participatory, and responsive communication patterns toward employee aspirations. Strengthening managerial concern and attentiveness to employee voices will minimize passive silence culture, thereby encouraging a

healthier organizational climate. In such an environment, employees are more likely to express ideas, criticisms, and constructive feedback that contribute to organizational advancement.

Third, the development of employee performance should be pursued continuously through the provision of proportional appreciation and recognition for high-performing employees, along with consistent adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Appropriate forms of recognition not only reinforce work motivation but also encourage employees to maintain and even improve the quality of their performance.

Fourth, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of research by involving a larger and more diverse sample, for example across different industries or organizational types, in order to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. In addition, further studies may include other mediating or moderating variables—such as organizational culture, leadership style, or employee engagement—that could provide deeper insights into the dynamics between job satisfaction, organizational silence, and employee performance.

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