

Research Article

The Effects of Reward Systems and Organizational Culture on Job Satisfaction among Civil Servants: Evidence from a Local Government

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Abstract: Unemployment and increasingly competitive labor market conditions pose significant challenges for public sector organizations in managing and retaining human resources effectively. One critical aspect of human resource management is job satisfaction, which plays a strategic role in influencing employee performance, organizational commitment, and public service quality. This study aims to examine the effects of reward systems and organizational culture on job satisfaction among civil servants in the Bantul Regency Government, Yogyakarta. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 96 civil servants, selected using purposive sampling based on predefined criteria. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, supported by descriptive analysis and classical assumption tests. Hypothesis testing was conducted using partial t-tests, a simultaneous F-test, and the coefficient of determination. The results reveal that reward does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction, indicating that standardized and routine reward systems in the public sector may reduce their motivational impact. In contrast, organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, suggesting that shared values, norms, and supportive work environments play a dominant role in shaping employee satisfaction. Simultaneously, reward and organizational culture significantly influence job satisfaction, with organizational culture emerging as the most influential variable. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening organizational culture as a strategic approach to enhancing job satisfaction among civil servants. The study contributes to the public sector human resource management literature by providing empirical evidence from a local government context and offers practical insights for policymakers seeking to improve employee well-being and organizational performance.

Keywords: Civil Servants; Job Satisfaction; Organizational Culture; Public Sector; Reward.

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1. Introduction

Unemployment remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges in Indonesia. High unemployment rates have the potential to generate various adverse effects, including increased poverty, widening social inequality, and weakened economic stability and growth (Suryahadi, Al Ihsan, & Sumarto, 2019). According to the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), the national Open Unemployment Rate (OUR) stood at 5.32 percent in 2023, showing a downward trend compared to the previous year (BPS, 2023). This condition reflects the increasingly competitive dynamics of the labor market, including within the public sector.

In an increasingly competitive labor market, organizations are required not only to absorb labor but also to retain and manage human resources effectively. One of the most critical aspects of human resource management is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to an individual's positive attitude or emotional response toward their job, resulting from an

evaluation of job characteristics and work experiences (Robbins & Judge, 2013). High levels of job satisfaction contribute to improved employee performance, stronger organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intentions.

Labor market conditions, as reflected by the unemployment rate, are closely associated with job satisfaction. When unemployment levels are relatively high, employees tend to value their jobs more due to limited alternative employment opportunities, which may, on the one hand, increase job satisfaction. On the other hand, heightened work pressure and mismatches between employee competencies and job requirements may reduce job satisfaction (Warr, 2007). Therefore, job satisfaction is influenced not only by individual factors but also by organizational and environmental conditions.

In response to these labor market dynamics, the role of organizations becomes increasingly crucial in maintaining and enhancing employee job satisfaction, particularly within the public sector. Unlike private organizations, public sector institutions are characterized by more bureaucratic structures, limited flexibility in human resource management, and a strong orientation toward public service, which demands stability and performance accountability. Consequently, managing internal organizational factors becomes a primary strategy for mitigating the impact of labor market pressures on employee job satisfaction. Within organizational contexts—especially in the public sector reward systems and organizational culture are widely recognized as two key determinants of job satisfaction. Rewards represent forms of appreciation provided by organizations for employees' contributions and performance, encompassing both financial and non-financial incentives (Armstrong, 2012). Fair and appropriate reward systems have been shown to enhance work motivation, feelings of recognition, and job satisfaction (Steers & Porter, 2011).

Beyond rewards, organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors. Organizational culture reflects shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide members' actions within an organization (Schein, 2010). A positive organizational culture fosters a supportive work environment, strengthens employees' sense of belonging, and reinforces organizational commitment, ultimately leading to higher levels of job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

In government organizations, the job satisfaction of civil servants is a strategic issue due to its direct relationship with public service quality and performance accountability. One of the key indicators of government performance in Indonesia is the evaluation of the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP). Based on the SAKIP evaluation results for Bantul Regency during the 2022–2024 period, a downward trend in performance scores has been observed, although the overall rating remains in category A. This condition signals the need for greater attention to internal organizational factors, including civil servants' job satisfaction. Objective and consistent performance evaluations, supported by transparent reward systems and a supportive organizational culture, can foster perceptions of fairness and appreciation among employees. These factors are essential for sustaining motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn contribute to improved performance in public sector organizations (Armstrong, 2012; Wijaya, 2019).

Based on these phenomena and prior empirical findings, this study aims to examine the effects of reward and organizational culture on the job satisfaction of civil servants in the Bantul Regency Government, Yogyakarta. This research is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of public sector human resource management, particularly in efforts to enhance job satisfaction among government employees.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Job Satisfaction in Public Organizations

Job satisfaction refers to employees' affective responses toward their work, reflecting the degree to which work experiences meet individual expectations and values. Job satisfaction is commonly defined as a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job and work environment (Locke, 1976; Robbins & Judge, 2013; Hasibuan, 2017). In the public sector, job satisfaction plays a strategic role because it directly influences employee discipline, organizational commitment, service quality, and overall institutional performance, particularly within bureaucratic organizations that rely heavily on human capital to deliver public services (Perry, Engbers, & Jun, 2009; Kim, 2012).

Several scholars emphasize that job satisfaction is shaped by a combination of individual, social, and organizational factors. While individual characteristics such as personality and values influence employees' perceptions of work, organizational factors are considered more

controllable and sustainable levers for improving job satisfaction, especially in public institutions (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Warr, 2007). As a result, recent literature increasingly focuses on internal organizational mechanisms—such as leadership practices, reward systems, and organizational culture—to enhance job satisfaction in highly regulated and rule-bound environments like government organizations (Armstrong, 2012; Kim, 2012).

Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction

Organizational culture represents a system of shared values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions that guide behavior within an organization (Schein, 2010). A strong and positive organizational culture provides clarity of expectations, fosters trust, and creates a supportive work environment that encourages cooperation and employee engagement (Robbins & Judge, 2013). In public organizations, organizational culture also functions as an informal control mechanism that complements formal rules and procedures, thereby shaping employees' attitudes and work behavior (Kim, 2012).

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that organizational culture has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction across various sectors, including services, banking, manufacturing, and public institutions (Schein, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Cultures that emphasize collaboration, transparency, employee welfare, and results orientation tend to strengthen employees' sense of belonging and satisfaction, whereas rigid, hierarchical, or toxic cultures increase work stress, dissatisfaction, and turnover intention (Warr, 2007; Kim, 2012). Despite this extensive evidence, empirical research examining the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction in local government contexts particularly within Indonesian regional administrations remains limited.

Reward Systems and Job Satisfaction

Reward systems encompass both financial and non-financial forms of recognition provided by organizations in exchange for employees' contributions and performance (Armstrong, 2012). Drawing on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, rewards—especially intrinsic and non-financial rewards such as recognition, appreciation, and opportunities for personal growth—function as motivators that enhance job satisfaction rather than merely preventing dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Steers & Porter, 2011). In public organizations, reward systems also serve as important signals of fairness and appreciation, which shape employees' perceptions of organizational support (Perry et al., 2009).

Recent empirical studies show that fair, transparent, and well-communicated reward systems significantly increase job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2012; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Contemporary literature further highlights the growing importance of non-financial rewards, particularly in organizations with limited financial flexibility and standardized pay structures, such as government institutions (Perry et al., 2009; Kim, 2012). Non-financial rewards including recognition, career development opportunities, and psychological appreciation are therefore increasingly viewed as strategic tools for enhancing job satisfaction in the public sector.

State of the Art and Research Gap

Although a substantial body of literature confirms the positive effects of organizational culture and reward systems on job satisfaction, several research gaps remain. First, much of the existing empirical evidence is derived from private-sector settings, while studies focusing on public-sector organizations—especially at the local government level—are still relatively scarce (Perry et al., 2009; Kim, 2012). Second, prior research often examines organizational culture and reward systems separately, rather than investigating their simultaneous effects on job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Armstrong, 2012). Third, limited attention has been given to the unique bureaucratic, institutional, and regulatory characteristics of Indonesian regional governments, which may shape the effectiveness of internal human resource management practices (Warr, 2007; Kim, 2012).

To address these gaps, this study examines the simultaneous effects of reward systems and organizational culture on job satisfaction among civil servants in the Bantul Regency Government. By situating the analysis within a local public-sector context characterized by strong institutional constraints, this research extends existing theories of job satisfaction and human resource management into a regional government setting and provides empirical insights that are directly relevant to public-sector management and policy formulation (Armstrong, 2012; Perry et al., 2009).

3. Materials and Method

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a survey method to examine the effects of reward and organizational culture on job satisfaction among civil servants. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables the measurement of relationships between variables using statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (Sugiyono, 2019). Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to respondents to capture their perceptions of the studied variables.

The variables in this study consist of independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include reward and organizational culture, while job satisfaction serves as the dependent variable. Reward is defined as financial and non-financial appreciation provided by the organization in recognition of employees' contributions, encompassing career development, psychological and social rewards, and employee welfare (Wijaya, 2021). Organizational culture refers to shared values, norms, and practices that guide collective behavior within the organization, measured through indicators such as innovation and risk consideration, result orientation, employee concern, and task efficiency (Aliefiani Mulya Putri G et al., 2023). Job satisfaction is defined as employees' positive attitudes and feelings toward their job, reflected through satisfaction with salary, the job itself, coworkers, supervisors, promotion opportunities, and the work environment (Jodie Firjatullah et al., 2023).

The research was conducted at the Bantul Regency Government Office, located in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The population of this study comprises all civil servants employed by the Bantul Regency Government, totaling 7,372 employees. Due to limitations in time and resources, sampling was conducted using a purposive sampling technique. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 96 respondents. Respondents were selected based on the criteria that they are active civil servants assigned to work within the Bantul Regency Government.

Primary data were collected directly from respondents using a questionnaire. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) to measure respondents' perceptions of each variable (Sugiyono, 2017). Prior to analysis, data were processed through editing, coding, and tabulation to ensure accuracy and readiness for statistical testing.

Data analysis consisted of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to describe respondents' characteristics and general tendencies of responses. Inferential analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to examine the effects of reward and organizational culture on job satisfaction. Before regression analysis, the data were tested using classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity tests, to ensure the validity of the regression model (Cahyono & Maskan, 2020).

Instrument validity was tested using factor analysis, with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values greater than 0.5 and factor loadings exceeding 0.5 indicating acceptable validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where values above 0.6 indicate reliable measurement instruments (Cahyono & Maskan, 2020). Hypothesis testing was performed using partial t-tests to assess the individual effect of each independent variable, an F-test to evaluate the overall model fit, and the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) to measure the explanatory power of the regression model.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 100 civil servants working within the Bantul Regency Government, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Respondents were selected based on criteria aligned with the research objectives, and all distributed questionnaires were deemed valid for analysis. Respondent characteristics were examined in terms of gender, age, educational background, and length of service to provide an overview of the respondent profile.

The majority of respondents were male (67%), while female respondents accounted for 33%. In terms of age, most respondents were between 41–45 years old (32%) and 36–40 years old (29%), indicating that the sample largely consisted of employees in their productive and professionally mature stages. Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (44%), followed by diploma-level education (32%), reflecting a relatively high educational attainment. In terms of tenure, 80% of respondents had more than 10 years

of work experience, suggesting that they possessed sufficient organizational experience to provide informed assessments of the variables studied.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted to illustrate respondents' perceptions of Reward, Organizational Culture, and Job Satisfaction. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed through mean values, standard deviations, and response distributions.

The results indicate that the Reward variable achieved a relatively high mean score, suggesting that respondents perceived the reward system implemented by the organization as generally favorable, particularly in aspects related to career development opportunities. Organizational Culture recorded the highest mean among the variables, indicating that values such as discipline, result orientation, rule compliance, and teamwork have been strongly internalized within the organization. Meanwhile, Job Satisfaction also fell into the high category, implying that, overall, civil servants in the Bantul Regency Government were satisfied with their jobs, work environment, and interpersonal relationships at work.

Instrument Quality Testing

Validity testing was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation with a critical r -value of 0.197 ($n = 100$; $\alpha = 0.05$). The results show that all items measuring Reward, Organizational Culture, and Job Satisfaction had correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value, indicating that all items were valid. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha revealed that all variables had alpha values above 0.60, demonstrating that the research instruments were reliable and internally consistent.

Classical Assumption Tests

The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov method yielded an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.200 (> 0.05), indicating that the residuals were normally distributed. Multicollinearity testing showed tolerance values greater than 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10 for all independent variables, confirming the absence of multicollinearity. The heteroskedasticity test using scatterplot analysis showed randomly distributed residuals without a clear pattern, indicating that the regression model was free from heteroskedasticity. Linearity testing also indicated a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

Partial hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the individual effects of Reward and Organizational Culture on Employee Performance. The analysis employed the t-test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. A hypothesis is accepted if the significance value (Sig.) is less than 0.05 or if the t-value exceeds the critical t-table value of 1.984.

Table 1. Hasil Uji T Parsial.

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	9.462	3.557			2.660	.011
	Reward (X1)	.367	.211	.272		1.740	.090
2	Budaya Organisasi (X2)	.794	.132	.700		6.037	.001

Effect of Reward on Employee Performance

The results of the t-test indicate that reward does not have a significant effect on employee performance. This is evidenced by a t-value of 1.740, which is lower than the critical t-table value of 1.984, and a significance value (Sig.) of 0.090, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold. The regression coefficient for reward is $\beta = 0.367$, with a standardized beta value of 0.272, indicating a positive but statistically insignificant relationship between reward and employee performance.

Accordingly, the hypothesis stating that reward has a significant effect on employee performance is rejected. These findings suggest that although rewards may be perceived positively, they are not a determining factor in improving employee performance. In the context of public sector organizations, this result may reflect the standardized nature of reward systems, which limits their motivational impact on individual performance outcomes.

Effect of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

In contrast, the results demonstrate that organizational culture has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. This is supported by a t-value of 6.037, which substantially exceeds the t-table value of 1.984, and a significance value (Sig.) of 0.001, which is well below the 0.05 significance level. The regression coefficient for organizational culture is $\beta = 0.794$, with a standardized beta value of 0.700, indicating a strong contribution to employee performance.

Thus, the hypothesis proposing that organizational culture significantly influences employee performance is accepted. This finding indicates that shared values, adherence to organizational rules, teamwork, and performance orientation embedded within the organizational culture play a critical role in enhancing employee performance. Organizational culture emerges as the most dominant variable in explaining variations in employee performance among the variables tested in this model.

Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-test)

The F-test was conducted to examine whether the independent variables, namely reward and organizational culture, simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance.

Table 2. Uji F.

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	88.362	3	29.454	11.912	.000 ^b
Residual	89.013	36	2.473		
Total	177.375	39			

a. Dependent Variable: Kepuasan Kerja (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Kompensasi (X3), Motivasi Kerja (X2), Budaya Organisasi (X1)

This test aims to assess the overall feasibility and explanatory power of the regression model. Based on the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results, the regression model yields an F-value of 11.912 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is lower than the predetermined significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and fit for explaining variations in employee performance. The regression sum of squares is 88.362, while the residual sum of squares is 89.013, with a total sum of squares of 177.375. These results suggest that the independent variables included in the model are able to explain a substantial proportion of the variance in employee performance, while the remaining variance is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Accordingly, the hypothesis stating that reward and organizational culture simultaneously influence employee performance is accepted. This finding confirms that, when considered together, organizational reward mechanisms and cultural factors play a meaningful role in shaping employee performance within public sector organizations. The significance of the F-test further reinforces the importance of internal organizational factors in improving performance outcomes among civil servants.

Analysis and Discussion

Effect of Reward on Job Satisfaction

The findings of this study indicate that reward does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction, as reflected by a significance value greater than 0.05. This result suggests that the rewards received by employees have not become a determining factor in enhancing their job satisfaction. One plausible explanation is that rewards provided within the organization tend to be routine and normative, leading employees to perceive them as organizational obligations rather than as motivational incentives. Consequently, rewards may lose their psychological impact in fostering job satisfaction.

This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Utami, Suliyanto, and Gunistiyo (2020), which reported that reward did not significantly influence job satisfaction and performance among educational staff. Their study emphasized that standardized reward systems often fail to stimulate positive emotional responses because employees no longer associate them with recognition or appreciation. However, this result contrasts with several previous studies, such as Saudagar and Candra (2021) and Ruwiasri and Yudiatmaja (2022), which found that reward had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction when perceived as fair, performance-based, and aligned with employee contributions.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which classifies financial rewards as hygiene factors. While hygiene factors can prevent dissatisfaction, they do not necessarily increase job satisfaction unless complemented by motivators such as recognition, personal growth, and a supportive work environment (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Therefore, the insignificant effect of reward in this study indicates that job satisfaction in the observed organization is influenced more strongly by non-material and contextual factors than by reward mechanisms alone.

Effect of Organizational Culture on Job Satisfaction

The results of the regression and t-test analyses demonstrate that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. This is evidenced by a positive regression coefficient of 0.794 and a significance value of 0.001, indicating that improvements in organizational culture are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. This finding aligns with organizational behavior theory, which posits that shared values, norms, and beliefs shape employees' attitudes and behaviors toward their work (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

A supportive organizational culture characterized by cooperation, mutual respect, and clear work values creates a conducive working environment that enhances employees' sense of belonging and satisfaction. The results of this study are consistent with previous empirical findings, such as Miharty (2025), who reported a significant positive relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction among academic and administrative staff. Similarly, Arifina, Setiawati, and Palupi (2025) found that organizational culture plays a crucial role in improving job satisfaction and indirectly enhances performance through increased employee engagement.

Nevertheless, contrasting findings have been reported by Shokib, Budiyati, and Widiastuti (2025), who found no significant effect of organizational culture on job satisfaction. These differences suggest that the impact of organizational culture is highly context-dependent and influenced by the extent to which cultural values are effectively implemented and internalized by employees. In this study, the significant effect of organizational culture indicates that the cultural values within the organization are well-established and perceived positively by employees, thereby directly contributing to their job satisfaction.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effects of reward systems and organizational culture on job satisfaction among civil servants in the Bantul Regency Government. Based on the results of quantitative analysis and hypothesis testing, several important conclusions can be drawn.

First, the findings indicate that reward does not have a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction. Although rewards are perceived positively by employees, their influence is not sufficient to enhance job satisfaction significantly. This suggests that reward mechanisms implemented within the organization tend to be routine and standardized, causing employees to perceive them as organizational obligations rather than as meaningful recognition. As a result, rewards lose their motivational and psychological impact in fostering job satisfaction,

particularly within a public sector context characterized by rigid regulations and limited flexibility.

Second, the study demonstrates that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. A strong organizational culture characterized by shared values, discipline, teamwork, and performance orientation contributes substantially to higher levels of employee satisfaction. This finding confirms that organizational culture plays a dominant role in shaping employees' attitudes toward their work and their organization, especially in public institutions where formal structures and procedures strongly influence daily work practices.

Overall, the results suggest that job satisfaction among civil servants is influenced more strongly by contextual and cultural factors than by reward mechanisms alone. In the context of public sector organizations, strengthening organizational culture appears to be a more effective strategy for enhancing job satisfaction than relying solely on reward systems. Therefore, public organizations are encouraged to prioritize the development of supportive, transparent, and value-driven organizational cultures while complementing them with fair and meaningful reward practices.

This study contributes empirically to the literature on public sector human resource management by highlighting the relative importance of organizational culture over reward systems in explaining job satisfaction. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, work motivation, or organizational commitment, as well as to expand the scope of analysis to other regional governments to improve the generalizability of the findings..

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