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The Impact of Employee Performance on Career Success and Job Satisfaction Moderated by the Glass Ceiling

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ABSTRACT

In a competitive business environment, employee performance plays a crucial role not only in enhancing organizational productivity but also as a key factor in fostering career success and job satisfaction. However, career achievement is not solely determined by individual performance, as structural barriers such as the "glass ceiling" can limit access to strategic positions, particularly for women. This study aims to analyze the impact of employee performance on career success and job satisfaction, while also examining the role of career success as a mediator in the relationship between performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study investigates the role of the glass ceiling as a moderating variable in the relationship between performance and career success. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected via questionnaires from 53 employees at PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) Makassar. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results indicate that: (1) employee performance has a positive and significant impact on career success; (2) performance also has a significant effect on job satisfaction; (3) career success significantly influences job satisfaction; (4) career success acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between performance and job satisfaction; and (5) the glass ceiling does not play a significant role in moderating the relationship between performance and career success. These findings suggest that strong performance can still drive career success and job satisfaction, regardless of the presence of structural barriers. The implications of this study underscore the importance of strengthening performance management systems and empowering employees as a primary strategy for fostering a work environment that is fairer, more productive, and more inclusive.

Keywords: *Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Career Success, Glass Ceiling*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive and dynamic global era, companies are pushed to improve their operational effectiveness and efficiency to stay competitive. One crucial factor in achieving this advantage is employee performance, which plays a strategic role in driving productivity, innovation, and organizational sustainability. Research by Huselid (1995) and the World Economic Forum report (2020) show that organizations

that manage their human resources optimally tend to excel in profitability and business resilience. Employee performance also contributes to individual career success. According to Hamali (2016), individual performance is a key factor in career achievement. High-performing employees generally have a greater chance of promotion and recognition within the organization. However, excellent performance doesn't always directly lead to career advancement, as it's influenced by various other factors like company policies, organizational structure, and available opportunities. Moreover, someone's performance at work is linked to how happy they are with their job. If employees feel their work is appreciated, they tend to be more motivated and engaged. A report from Gallup (2023) states that companies with highly engaged employees see a 23% boost in productivity. Feeling happy at work means having a good feeling about your job. A supportive work environment is crucial for keeping employees and making them more loyal (Handoko et al., 2021).

However, in Indonesia, challenges related to job satisfaction are still significant. A JobStreet Indonesia survey (2022) revealed that around 73% of employees are unhappy with their jobs. Factors like mismatches between work background and education, lack of work-life balance, and unsupportive leadership styles are the main causes. This dissatisfaction can negatively affect someone's motivation, productivity, and career success.

The glass ceiling phenomenon is a crucial issue that affects performance, employee satisfaction, and career achievement. This concept describes the invisible barriers that limit women from reaching the top positions in organizational hierarchies, even though they have the same competence and performance as their male colleagues. Marilyn Loden first highlighted this phenomenon in 1978. It is related to cultural biases and systemic gender injustice (Loden, 2017). A World Bank report (2023) shows that only 24.8% of managerial positions in Indonesia are held by women. Even though women have made substantial contributions in various fields, this gap still exists. Women face significant obstacles to career advancement due to structural issues like a patriarchal society, lack of mentors, and limited access to leadership training.

Research conducted by Jauhar and Lau (2018) confirms that the glass ceiling hinders women's career advancement, even among high-achieving individuals. Imadoğlu et al. (2020) also found that the glass ceiling dampens work motivation and worsens women's professional experiences, especially in sectors dominated by masculine stereotypes. This phenomenon happens not only in the public and academic sectors but also in the private sector, like at PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) Makassar. Even though the company has shown commitment to human resource development through training and profiling, women's representation in managerial departments is still low. Internal empirical findings show that out of a total of 246 employees, only 30% are women, and out of 26 managers, only 7 are women. These numbers highlight the presence of structural barriers that limit women's upward mobility, which can affect their job satisfaction and motivation. Therefore, this study aims to explore how employee performance influences career success and job satisfaction, while also taking into account the moderating role of the glass ceiling.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach to examine the relationship. By looking at data collected from a predetermined questionnaire, 74 female employees of PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) became the group being studied. With PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) as the study group, the researchers selected participants based on specific criteria using purposive sampling. The questionnaire, consisting of a list of questions created by the researchers themselves, serves as the main research instrument. This questionnaire is designed to measure several aspects of the social concepts being considered. Furthermore, we used Partial Least Squares (PLS) to analyze the data we collected. To do this, we used the SmartPLS 4.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

a. Outer Loading

We checked the measurement framework, which is also often called the outer model, to see if the intended constructs are reliable and measure what they are supposed to measure. Ghozali & Latan (2015) stated that a construct measures what it is supposed to measure when the factor loading of each indicator on its latent variable is greater than 0.70.

1. Convergent Validity

The factor loading value between hidden variables and what they measure uses convergent validity to determine if the test is accurate. It's considered acceptable if the factor loading value is higher than 0.7.

Table 1 Results of Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	External Load	Description
Employee Performance (X)	X1.1	0.899	Valid
	X1.2	0,940	Valid
	X1.3	0,927	Valid
	X1.4	0,940	Valid
	X1.5	0,952	Valid
Career Success (Z)	Z1.1	0,941	Valid
	Z1.2	0,885	Valid
	Z1.3	0,910	Valid
	Z1.4	0,905	Valid
	Z1.5	0,847	Valid
	Year 1.1	0,956	Valid

Job Satisfaction (Y)	Year 1.2	0,961	Valid
	Year 1.3	0,818	Valid
	Year 1.4	0,968	Valid
	Year 1.5	0,961	Valid
Glass Ceiling *(M)*	M1.1	0,890	Valid
	M1.2	0,942	Valid
	M1.3	0,927	Valid
	M1.5	0,823	Valid

As shown in the table above, all the benchmarks for the Employee Performance (X), Career Success (Z), Job Satisfaction (Y), and Glass Ceiling (M) variables can be considered valid. This is proven by the fact that the convergent validity values of all indicators are greater than 0.7.

2. Composite Realibility

Reliability testing with Composite Reliability is used to measure stability with the internal consistency of indicators. If the composite reliability is above 0.7, the data is considered very reliable. However, some literature states that this composite value can be tolerated with Cronbach's alpha, with the recommended minimum number being 0.6.

Table 2 Composite Reliability Results

Variable	***Cronbach's Alpha***	***(rho_a)***	**Composite Reliability**	**Average Variance Extraction *(AVE)***	**Description**
Employee Performance (X)	0,962	0,963	0,970	0,868	Reliable
Career Success (Z)	0,940	0,942	0,954	0,807	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0,963	0,978	0,972	0,873	Reliable
Glass Ceiling (M)	0,941	0,943	0,955	0,811	Reliable

Each variable got a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.6 with a Composite Reliability score of 0.7, showing how stable, consistent, and reliable the measuring tool is.

b. Inner Loading

The internal model assessment aims to predict how hidden variables are related to each other and to check whether the structural model is solid. A key measure in this assessment is the R-squared (R^2) value. This value shows how well the relationship between independent variables can predict outcomes. Ghozali & Latan (2015) stated that an R^2 value below 0.33 indicates weak prediction, a value between 0.33 and 0.67 indicates moderate prediction, and a value above 0.67 indicates strong prediction.

Table 3 R-Square Testing

	R-Squared	Adjusted R-Squared
Job Satisfaction **(Y)**	0,188	0,155
Career Success **(Z)**	0,964	0,962

Referring to the data in table 4.3, the Career Success variable shows a high R^2 value of 0.964, which indicates that the independent variables can strongly predict this construct. Meanwhile, the R^2 for Job Satisfaction is 0.188, showing a moderate level of predictability.

c. Hypothesis Test

1. Results of Direct Relationship Path Analysis

Here are the results of the path analysis testing of moderation relationships, or what is commonly called Moderation Regression Analysis (MRA), between moderating variables, both independent and dependent.

Table 4 Results of Testing the Direct Effect Hypothesis

Hypothesis Test	Original sample *(O)*	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Statistics T (|o/STDEV|)	Value P	Description
Employee Performance (X) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0,853	0,872	0,318	2.680	0,007	(+)Significant
Employee Performance (X) -> Career Success (Z)	0.612	0,608	0,071	8.605	0.000	(+)Significant
Career Success (Z) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	1.393	1.425	0.454	3.070	0,002	(+)Significant

The structural equation modeling from SmartPLS shows that all three direct hypotheses are true because each has a statistically significant relationship.

Employee Performance → Job Satisfaction:

The analysis shows a positive and significant effect, with a coefficient value of 0.853, a T-statistic of 2.680, and a p-value of 0.007. This means that if employees do their jobs well, they are generally happier with their work.

Employee Performance → Career Success:

This relationship is also statistically significant. The path coefficient obtained is 0.612, the T-statistic is 8.605, and the p-value is 0.000. These results show that employees who perform well at work are more likely to have a successful career.

Career Success → Job Satisfaction:

0.002. If employees are more successful in their career, they also tend to feel more satisfied with their job.

2. Moderation Relationship Path Analysis Results

Here are the results of the path analysis for moderation relationships, commonly known as Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA), between moderation variables, both independent and dependent.

Table 5 Analysis of Moderation Relationship Paths

Moderation Relationship Path Analysis	Original sample *(O)*	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Statistics T (|o/STDEV|)	Value P	Description
Glass Ceiling (M) X Employee Performance *(X)* -> Career Success *(Z)*	0,006	0,008	0,021	0.311	0,755	not important

The fourth idea is that the Glass Ceiling affects the relationship between Performance and Career Success, but the data doesn't back this up. The interaction term coefficient is very low (0.006), with a T-statistic of 0.311 and a p-value of 0.755, which is way higher than the required 0.05 level. This result means that gender-based barriers don't really change the relationship between employee performance and career success in this company.

3. Mediation Path Analysis Results

Table 6 Path Analysis of Intervention Relationships

Mediation Relationship Path Analysis	Original sample *(O)*	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Statistics T (|o/STDEV|)	Value P	Description
Employee Performance (X) -> Career Success (Z) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0,853	0.812	0,378	2.680	0,007	(+) Significant

The fifth idea looks at how Employee Performance affects Job Satisfaction through Career Success. Path analysis shows that Career Success is the main connecting factor, with an indirect coefficient of 0.853, a T-statistic of 2.680, and a p-value of 0.007. This means career success is really important: employees who do their job well tend to grow more in their careers, and this makes them happier with their work.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will discuss the research findings that have been presented earlier, connecting them with the theoretical framework and previous findings.

a. The Impact of Employee Performance on Job Satisfaction

It has been proven to have a significant impact on job satisfaction. This is shown by a positive coefficient of 0.853, a t-statistic of 2.680, and a p-value of 0.007. Therefore, it can be said that the research theory in this study is accepted. The study results show that employees at PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) Makassar who perform well usually have higher levels of job satisfaction. This aligns with Robbins and Judge (2017), who stated that job performance provides a sense of satisfaction through recognition, rewards, and meaningful work. This research is supported by Nikolić &

Labus (2024), Saragih & Kustini (2021), and Khan et al. (2012), who found that performance positively affects job satisfaction in various organizational contexts. However, these results differ from the findings of Anindita & Muafi (2020), who highlighted the dominant role of non-performance factors like work-life balance and leadership style. This difference may be due to variations in management systems, work culture, and reward structures across organizations. Overall, the research results confirm that achieving performance is a crucial factor in shaping job satisfaction, especially in organizations that implement structured and fair reward and career development systems.

b. The Impact of Employee Performance on Career Success

The testing conducted showed that there is a significant influence between performance and career success, marked by a p-value of 0.000. This study found a t-statistic of 8.605 and a positive coefficient of 0.842. These numbers mean that employees at PT Hadji Kalla (Holding) Makassar who do their jobs well are more likely to get opportunities to advance in their careers. Good performance is a key element in promotion stages, career development, and gaining professional recognition. These results align with Koekemoer et al. (2020), who stated that job performance is a major determinant of career success. Indripriarko & Aima (2022) also emphasize that work competence reflected in performance results provides a basis for organizations to assess employees' career potential. Putri & Meria (2022) support this finding by showing that high performance positively correlates with promotions and organizational recognition. In short, performance can be concluded as a crucial foundation for achieving career success in the organizational environment.

c. The Relationship Between Career Success and Job Satisfaction

Career performance has been proven to have a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction, with a coefficient of 1.393, a T-statistic of 3.070, and a p-value of 0.002. This shows that those who feel successful in their work tend to have higher satisfaction levels. This finding aligns with previous research by Hussin et al. (2021) and Shabbir et al. (2017), which stated that professional success leads to a positive work attitude and emotional attachment to the organization. Saragih & Kustini (2021) also found the importance of career development in influencing job satisfaction. The perspective of Greenhaus and Callanan supports this finding as they claim that objective and subjective career indicators help explain career satisfaction.

d. The Impact of Glass Ceiling Moderation on the Relationship Between Career Success and Employee Performance

This study's findings show that, unlike what was previously assumed, the glass ceiling does not clearly change the relationship between career growth and employee performance. The results are not statistically significant, considering the interaction coefficient is low (0.006), the T-statistic is 0.311, and the p-value is 0.755. This suggests that at PT Hadji Kalla (Holding), high-performing employees are able to achieve career success regardless of gender structural barriers. These findings contrast with previous studies by Susanto et al. (2023) and Khalid & Sekiguchi (2019), which highlighted the impact of the glass ceiling in hindering women's advancement, even when they show strong performance. This difference might be due to the implementation of meritocratic principles and a more inclusive organizational culture, where gender does not seem to be a major obstacle to progress. Koekemoer et al. (2020) also emphasized

that the impact of the glass ceiling is largely shaped by the organizational context, particularly whether transparency and equality are embedded in HR practices.

e. Career Success Mediates the Relationship Between Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction

The test results show that career success is an important mediator in how performance relates to job satisfaction. The p-value is 0.007, the t-statistic is 2.680, and the coefficient is positively 0.504, so we accept the tested idea. These results clearly show that how well employees perform their jobs not only affects how happy they are at work but also indirectly influences them through their career success. These findings are in line with research by Anindita & Muafi (2020), which highlights the importance of career development as a mediating variable in shaping job satisfaction levels, especially among the millennial generation. Jauhar & Lau (2018) also note that career success plays a strategic role in connecting job performance with employee psychological well-being. Thus, career achievement can be understood as an important pathway linking performance contributions to job happiness and is an important consideration in performance-based human resource development policies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the conclusions are as follows:

1. There is a positive and significant effect of employee performance on job satisfaction, meaning that the better the employee's performance, the higher their job satisfaction.
2. Employee performance significantly influences career success, showing that strong performance plays an important role in driving individual career advancement.
3. Career success has a positive impact on job satisfaction, meaning that professional achievements contribute to a better perception of one's job and work environment.
4. The 'glass ceiling' limitation does not significantly moderate the relationship between employee performance and career success. This indicates that companies have implemented career development practices based on merit and gender equality.
5. Career achievement acts as a mediator for the variables involved in the relationship between employee performance and aspects of job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of career success in boosting employee satisfaction.

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