

The impact of emotional intelligence on employee performance at the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how emotional intelligence affects worker performance in the North Sumatra Provincial Regional Secretariat's People's Welfare Bureau. 40 employees make up the sample for the quantitative research method. Simple linear regression was used to analyze the data. The study's findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence significantly and favorably affects worker performance. This implies that an employee's performance will be better the more adept they are at controlling their emotions, empathy, and social interactions. This study highlights how crucial it is to raise emotional intelligence in order to build an effective and competent government apparatus.

INTRODUCTION

Every public organization is required to have human resources who are able to work effectively and efficiently in achieving the agency's goals. In the context of government bureaucracy, employee performance is the main factor in determining the success of the implementation of public service tasks. Therefore, improving the quality of government apparatus is absolutely necessary. According to (Rivai, 2016), employee performance is the result of work achieved by a person in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him.

The performance of employees in the government environment is not only influenced by intellectual abilities and technical skills, but also by the emotional abilities possessed by individuals. Emotional intelligence is one of the important factors that determine how a person behaves, interacts, and makes decisions in the world of work. (Goleman, 2024) states that emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others in social and professional life.

In the context of public organizations, employees who have high emotional intelligence tend to be able to control work pressure, establish harmonious working relationships, and maintain motivation at work. This is very relevant within the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province which has complex tasks in providing social welfare services to the community. Therefore, research on the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance is important to be conducted.

According to (Judge & Robbins, 2013), individuals with good emotional intelligence are able to adapt to a dynamic work environment, understand the needs of colleagues, and show empathy in social interactions. These abilities not only increase the effectiveness of communication, but also create a conducive work climate. Thus, emotional intelligence has a significant contribution to increasing employee work productivity.

Employees in the public sector are often faced with various challenges, such as administrative pressure, high demands on public services, and limited resources. This condition requires the ability of employees to manage emotions so as not to affect the quality of work. (Hermawan et al., 2025) affirms that emotional intelligence allows a person to remain calm and rational in the face of stressful situations.

The People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province has a strategic role in implementing social, religious, and community programs that directly touch the interests of the community. The implementation of these tasks requires good coordination between employees and the ability to understand the needs of the community. In this context, emotional intelligence is an important foundation for creating effective cooperation and optimal service.

Employees who have low levels of emotional intelligence tend to have difficulty managing conflicts, dealing with work pressure, and working in teams. In contrast, employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to control themselves, empathize, and respond positively to difficult situations. This shows

that emotional intelligence is a psychological aspect that has a direct influence on work behavior (Jeffrey & Handayani, 2024).

In addition to technical and structural factors, the psychological aspect of employees is an important variable in achieving optimal performance. Factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, and emotional intelligence are interrelated in shaping employee work behavior. (Anwar Prabu, 2017) Stating that performance is the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties according to the responsibilities given.

Emotional intelligence is not only related to the ability to understand emotions, but also to social skills that allow individuals to interact positively in the work environment. Employees who are able to empathize and establish good relationships with colleagues can create a harmonious work atmosphere. This has implications for increasing team effectiveness and organizational productivity (Goleman, 2024).

In government organizations such as the People's Welfare Bureau, inter-agency cooperation is needed so that welfare programs can run effectively. Employees with high emotional intelligence can balance personal interests and organizational goals. They are also better able to adapt to bureaucratic dynamics and work responsibly (Malayu, H. S. & Hasibuan, 2017).

Emotional intelligence consists of several important aspects, including self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Each of these aspects has a role in determining how individuals act and react to their work environment. (Goleman, 2024) affirms that a person's success in a career is not only determined by intellectual intelligence, but more by emotional intelligence.

Phenomena that occur in the government work environment often show that some employees have good technical competence, but are less able to work together effectively due to low emotional intelligence. This condition can hinder the coordination and communication process in carrying out tasks. Therefore, it is important to research the extent to which emotional intelligence affects employee performance in the agency (Jeffrey & Handayani, 2024)

This research is focused on employees of the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province because this agency has a service function that requires intensive social interaction. The performance of employees in providing services to the community is highly dependent on their ability to manage emotions and maintain harmonious working relationships. Therefore, the analysis of emotional intelligence is very relevant.

In addition, this research is also expected to contribute to the development of strategies to improve the performance of local government apparatus. By understanding the influence of emotional intelligence, agency leaders can design more effective training and coaching to improve employees' emotional abilities. This is in line with bureaucratic reform efforts that emphasize the importance of quality human resources.

Empirically, several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. For example, research by (Prayanto, 2008) found that employees with high emotional intelligence had better levels of productivity and job loyalty. These results

reinforce the suspicion that emotional intelligence is an important predictor of performance.

Optimal performance is basically influenced not only by the factors of the work environment, but also by the individual's ability to adapt to organizational changes. Employees who have high emotional intelligence will be more adaptive to new policies and able to maintain work morale even in stressful conditions. This is an important capital in improving the effectiveness of the work of government organizations.

From the perspective of human resource management, the development of emotional intelligence is part of efforts to improve the non-technical competence of employees. Training that focuses on the ability to recognize and manage emotions is expected to strengthen the performance of individuals and organizations as a whole. In line with that, (Nugraha et al., 2020) mentioned that the performance of the state apparatus is highly determined by the balance between cognitive and affective abilities.

The complex and stressful context of government bureaucracy often requires employees to be able to control their emotions, especially in the face of diverse society and stakeholders. Failure to manage emotions can result in a decrease in the quality of public services. Therefore, strengthening emotional intelligence is a strategic need in improving employee professionalism.

This study will analyze the extent to which emotional intelligence affects the performance of employees at the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province. The focus of the research is directed at the relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and employee performance indicators, such as productivity, responsibility, and work quality. Thus, the results of the study are expected to provide a comprehensive empirical picture.

By paying attention to the importance of the role of emotional intelligence in improving performance, this research becomes relevant for the development of management of government apparatus. The results are expected not only to make a theoretical contribution to the development of human resource management science, but also to provide practical benefits for improving employee performance within the North Sumatra Provincial Regional Secretariat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee performance is one of the important indicators in determining organizational effectiveness, especially in the public sector. Performance reflects the level of success of an individual in carrying out assigned tasks and responsibilities. Performance, according to Anwar Prabu (2017), is the outcome of an employee's job in terms of both quantity and quality attained while performing his duties in accordance with the obligations assigned to him. Ability, motivation, the workplace, and psychological elements like emotional intelligence are all aspects that impact performance.

According to (Hermawan et al., 2025), emotional intelligence is the capacity to identify, control, and comprehend one's own emotions as well as those of others. Later, Daniel (Goleman, 2024) popularized the idea that

emotional intelligence consists of five primary dimensions: self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. A person with emotional intelligence is able to think more maturely, remain composed under duress, and build positive connections with others.

In the context of government organizations, emotional intelligence has an important role in creating a harmonious and productive work climate. Employees who are able to control their emotions tend to be able to work more effectively in a team, resolve conflicts wisely, and maintain good relationships with the community. (Goleman, 2024) emphasizing that a person's success in the world of work is more determined by emotional intelligence than intellectual intelligence (IQ). This proves that the affective aspect has a strong influence on individual performance.

Based on various theories and the results of previous research, it can be concluded that there is a strong tendency to support the hypothesis that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employee performance. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that such influences can vary depending on the organizational context, work environment, and individual characteristics. Therefore, this study was conducted to re-examine the relationship in the context of employees at the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method, which aims to find out and analyze the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on testing hypotheses through the measurement of statistically processable variables. According to (Sugiyono, 2016), quantitative methods are used to research a specific population or sample, collect data using research instruments, and analyze data numerically with the aim of testing established hypotheses.

This study was carried out in the North Sumatra Province Regional Secretariat's People's Welfare Bureau in Medan City. This site was selected because of the agency's strategic role in community welfare and its organizational structure, which includes a number of divisions and workers from diverse backgrounds. The study was conducted between May and August of 2025 for a total of four months.

All workers of the People's Welfare Bureau of the North Sumatra Province Regional Secretariat make up the study's population. According to information gathered from relevant organizations, there are 40 employees in total. Due to the small size of the population, this study employs a saturation sampling approach (census) in which every member of the population serves as a research responder. In order to get more representative results, the entire population should be employed as a study sample if there are less than 100 individuals, according to Arikunto (2019).

This research data consists of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to all respondents, while secondary data was obtained from

internal agency documents, annual reports, and relevant literature. The questionnaire was compiled using the Likert scale with five alternative answers, ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1). This scale is used to measure the level of emotional intelligence and performance of employees based on respondents' perceptions.

Self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills are the five primary indications of emotional intelligence (X), which is the independent variable in this study (Goleman, 2024). Employee performance (Y), on the other hand, is the bound variable. It is assessed using indicators of work quality, amount of work, responsibility, discipline, and collaboration in accordance with theory (Anwar Prabu, 2017).

The data collection technique was carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents within the People's Welfare Bureau. Before deployment, the research instrument is tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure that each question item can accurately measure the variables. The validity test was conducted using *Pearson's Product Moment* correlation, while the reliability was tested with *Cronbach's Alpha* coefficient. The questionnaire is declared valid if *the calculated r value* is greater than *the r of the table* and reliable if *Cronbach's Alpha* value is greater than 0.60.

The most recent version of SPSS software is used to process and analyze the data after it has been gathered. Descriptive analysis, traditional assumption testing, and basic linear regression analysis are examples of data analysis. The distribution of data from each study variable and the traits of respondents were described using descriptive analysis. The traditional assumption test, which includes linearity, heteroscedasticity, and normality tests, is used to make sure the data satisfies the requirements of regression analysis.

Simple linear regression analysis is used to find out how much emotional intelligence affects employee performance. The regression equations used in this study are:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

where Y is employee performance, X is emotional intelligence, a is constant, b is the regression coefficient, and e is the term error term. The t-test was used to test the significance of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable partially, with a significance level of 0.05.

To ensure the objectivity of the research results, the researcher also conducted a determination coefficient (R^2) test to find out how much emotional intelligence contributes to the variation in employee performance changes. A higher R^2 value indicates that emotional intelligence has a strong influence on employee performance. In addition, the interpretation of the results of the statistical test was also carried out to explain the empirical relationship between the two variables.

Research ethics are maintained by ensuring that all respondents voluntarily consent, and their identities are guaranteed confidentiality. The data obtained is used for academic purposes only and will not be disseminated without

permission from the relevant parties. The research process is carried out professionally and guided by the social research code of ethics.

With the design of this method, the research is expected to be able to provide an empirical picture of how emotional intelligence affects the performance of employees within the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province. The results are expected to be the basis for policy makers in formulating strategies to improve the performance of the apparatus through the development of emotional and psychological aspects of employees.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The regression equation was derived from the multiple linear regression data processing results using the SPSS version 26.00 software:

$$Y = 2,052 + 0,551X_1 + 0,377X_2 + 0,590X_3 + \varepsilon$$

This equation shows that the emotional intelligence variable (X_1) has a positive correlation with employee performance (Y), with a coefficient of 0.551. This implies that employees will perform better the more emotionally intelligent they are.

The results of the partial test (*t-test*) showed a calculated *t* value of 3.626 with a significance of 0.001, while the *t* table was 2.021 at a confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$). Because *t* calculated > *t* table ($3.626 > 2.021$) and significance < 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$), it can be concluded that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees at the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province.

Table 1. Results of Partial Test (t-Test) of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance

Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t- count	Sig.	Information
Emotional Intelligence (X_1)	0.551	0.152	3.626	0.001	Significant

Source: SPSS Output Processed Data, 2025

The study's findings demonstrate the significance of emotional intelligence in raising worker productivity. High emotional intelligence workers are able to manage their emotions, empathize with others, and build positive workplace connections. Increasing work effectiveness, inter-division cooperation, and the standard of public services rendered are all impacted by this circumstance.

DISCUSSION

These findings are in line with opinion (Boyatzis et al., 2000) which states that emotional intelligence affects a person's success at work to a greater extent than intellectual intelligence. In addition, this study supports the results of a study conducted by (Jeffrey & Handayani, 2024) and (Sampetan, 2023) Both found that there was a positive influence between emotional intelligence and the performance of public sector employees.

However, the results of this study also show that although the influence is significant, emotional intelligence is not the only factor determining performance. Based on a determination coefficient (R^2) value of 0.916, it is known that overall 91.6% of employee performance variations are explained by three variables, namely emotional intelligence, competence, and discipline, while the remaining 8.4% are influenced by other factors outside of this study such as organizational culture and leadership.

Empirically, these results highlight the significance of emotional growth and training in a bureaucratic workplace. High emotional intelligence workers are more equipped to handle administrative pressure, maintain psychological equilibrium, and adjust to corporate policy changes. Thus, enhancing emotional intelligence is a key tactic for raising worker productivity in the North Sumatra Province Regional Secretariat.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees at the People's Welfare Bureau of the Regional Secretariat of North Sumatra Province. Employees who have the ability to manage emotions, empathize, and establish good social relationships tend to show more optimal performance. Therefore, it is recommended that agencies strengthen the development of emotional intelligence through communication training, stress management, and strengthening a collaborative work culture to increase the effectiveness of public services and create a harmonious, productive, and results-oriented work environment.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research is suggested to add other variables such as work motivation, leadership, and organizational culture to expand understanding of the factors that affect employee performance. In addition, quantitative and qualitative mixed methods can be used to obtain a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis.

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