

BEYOND THE BADGE: THE DETERMINANTS OF INDONESIAN PUBLIC-SERVANT PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT: Indonesia's public servants struggle to match the comparative performance of its top ASEAN peers, potentially due to an underdeveloped workforce. This study, drawing on insights from 214 public servants, delves deeper to identify key performance drivers. Surprisingly, this analysis, using a Structural Equation Model, reveals no significant link between organizational culture and employee commitment, motivation, or performance. Instead, the study pinpoints competency mismatch as the critical factor hindering effectiveness. Actionable insights emerge, highlighting the need for strategic skill development programs tailored to individual roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the research underscores the current emphasis on behavioral factors, calling for a shift towards targeted interventions that modify employee behavior and drive performance improvement.

Keywords: Job Performance; Organizational Culture; Competence; Organizational Commitment; Job Motivation

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INTRODUCTION

Across Southeast Asia, robust economies are fueled by efficient and effective public sectors (Suriyanti, 2020). However, Indonesia's public service performance lags behind its ASEAN counterparts. This deficiency translates into a ripple effect, slowing the economic growth and national development. A critical factor suspected to be contributing to this disparity is the quality of human resources within its public operators. Recent data paints a concerning picture with a 2019 data from LAN ([National Administration Agency](#)) found a significant skill mismatch, as 37% of public servants lacking the specific qualifications for their current roles. Furthermore, the compounding issue emerges from the Indonesia's rapidly ageing population. According to BKN ([National Civil Service Agency](#)), over 34% of public servants are eligible for retirement within the next five years. This potential exodus of experience is coupled with [the World Bank's](#) 2020 report highlighting the urgent needs of comprehensive improvement in education quality. Finally, a 2022 Indonesian Anti-Corruption Commission ([KPK](#)) survey revealed a prevalent decrease in the public agency integrity. This phenomenon paves the way for the continuing conversation for increasing public servant performance.

Scholars have long recognized the importance of a competent and motivated workforce in organizational success. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory posits that hygiene factors like job security and salary are essential to prevent dissatisfaction, but true motivation and high performance arise from intrinsic factors like challenging work and opportunities for growth (Labiris et al., 2008). Organizational culture fosters potential sense of belonging, shared values, and commitment to organizational goals (Lu et al., 2022). Existing research has explored the relationships between organizational culture (Panagiotis et al., 2014), employee commitment (Suzuki & Hur, 2020), and performance in various contexts (Eisenberger et al., 1990). However, studies focusing on the public sector workforce in Indonesia, particularly the interplay of these factors with employee competency, remain limited. This research gap presents a significant opportunity to contribute valuable insights to the field of public administration, targeted to potentially intervene the gap with other leading ASEAN nations.

This study extends the current understanding of public sector employee performance by employing a novel Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. The model incorporates the often-studied factors of organizational culture, employee commitment, and work motivation, but also integrates competency, a less explored variable in this context. By analyzing data from 214 Indonesian public servants, this research aims to not only identify the relative influence of these factors on performance, but also to potentially challenge existing assumptions within the field. The findings hold the potential to contribute significantly to academic discourse by offering a more nuanced understanding of public sector employee performance drivers (Mikkelsen et al., 2022). Furthermore, the actionable recommendations derived from the analysis can inform policy and practice within the Indonesian public sector workforce, leading to improved performance outcomes.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Herzberg's two-factor theory played a significant role in discussions about employee motivation, highlighting the importance of compensation and hygiene factors (Labiris et al., 2008). However, the 1980s saw the rise of New Public Management (NPM) theories (Reiter & Klenk, 2019), which shifted the focus of public service towards efficiency and effectiveness, mirroring practices common in the private sector. This theoretical shift emphasized performance metrics, competition, and marketization of service delivery.

The New Public Service (NPS) theory challenged this business-centric approach, arguing that it does not always translate well in practice (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). NPS prioritizes building equity, responsiveness, and accountability to citizens. Public services, according to NPS, should be designed around citizen needs (Bryer, 2009), not just efficiency, while maintaining ethical standards.

Another key concept emerges from the Public Service Delivery Logic (PSDL) theory. PSDL borrows from the marketing concept of service-dominant logic (SDL) (Ordanini & Parasuraman, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), recognizing public services as intangible offerings co-created with citizens, rather than simply products delivered by the government. Service delivery, under PSDL, is envisioned as a continuous cycle of interaction, feedback, and improvement, with citizen satisfaction as the ultimate goal (Wiewiora et al., 2016). While this concept appears ideal, its implementation faces challenges due to the high level of citizen engagement it necessitates (Bryer, 2009).

The construction of public service performance is built upon delicate structure. Organizational Performance Feedback Theory reveals the factors driving organizations to launch or abandon specific strategic initiatives, along with the implementation process. This approach is closely related to overall firm performance—both financial and non-financial (Kotiloglu et al., (2023), by indicating the managerial culture. The pronounced financial-performance relationship appears to be in the service industry (G. Liu et al., 2021). Other study discovers the same notion (Nazarian et al., 2017), with the need to focus on the work engagement, trust, and job satisfaction of public relations professionals (Meng & Berger, 2019). Innovative and supportive organizational culture shape and mold the behaviors related to their commitment and performance (G. Liu et al., 2021).

A collaborative work environment encourages employee engagement and participation, ultimately leading to organizational performance. This study contributes to the existing knowledge regarding the empirical impact of leadership behaviors on organizational commitment (Eliyana et al., 2019). It builds upon the transformational leadership (Zehir et al., 2012). In addition, manager warmth and competence have an indirect influence on employee turnover intention through job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Indrayani et al., 2023). As a result, leaders must monitor their daily interactions through all level of workers. The job performance has to reconsider the nuanced effect of the motivation as employees deeply ingrained in such force and

leadership support. Our hypotheses provide the guidance to uncover the badge behind the public service performance.

H1: A strong and consistently maintained Organizational Culture will have a significant positive influence on the Organizational Commitment.

H2: Leadership that is carried out by behaving consistently will have a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.

H3: High competence and directed to the right field of work, will have a positive effect on organizational commitment.

H4: A strong and consistently maintained Organizational Culture will have a significant positive effect on Work Motivation.

H5: Leadership carried out by behaving consistently will have a significant positive effect on the Work Motivation.

H6: High competence in the right field of work, will have a significant positive effect on Work Motivation.

H7: A strong and consistently maintained Organizational Culture will have a significant positive effect on the Performance.

H8: Leadership that is carried out well by behaving consistently will have a significant positive effect on the Performance.

H9: Higher work competence, will have a significant positive effect on improving performance.

H10: High Organizational Commitment will have a significant positive effect on the Performance.

H11: High work motivation is critical for increasing employee performance.

METHODOLOGY

This research develops several hypotheses under quantitative approach with the intention of answering public service performance negations as previously formulated. This research confirms the theoretical proposition in the hypotheses by the statistical analysis. This follows the explanatory design, constructed to demonstrate various symptoms in the research object. The essence of quantitative research lies in the operationalization of variables. This crucial step involves constructing abstract concepts into measurable indicators. This research utilizes a quantitative data collection method, that is surveys or questionnaires.

In an effort to capture a wide range of perspectives within the Indonesian public sector, data was distributed to public workers across diverse working units during a three-month period from July to September 2023. This approach ensured a well-rounded sample that met the established guidelines for structural equation modelling (SEM) set by Kline (1998). Surpassing the minimum threshold of 200 data points, the final sample of 254 responses (214 usable data) provides a statistically robust foundation for the study. Furthermore, the diverse composition of the sample, with public workers from various departments, strengthens the generalizability of the findings, allowing them to be more confidently applied to a broader population of Indonesian public sector employees.

This investigation delves into the data by meticulously optimizing each stage within the structural equation modelling (SEM) framework. To achieve robust and insightful results, the analysis leverages IBM's Amos statistical software. The process commences with a comprehensive descriptive presentation of the data, followed by the construction of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This CFA incorporates various goodness-of-fit criteria, including degrees of freedom (df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Based on the evaluation of these criteria, the initial model will be refined, culminating in the final path model that serves as the foundation for hypothesis testing. This meticulous approach ensures the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

RESULTS

This study executes a pilot study to observe the instrument quality with the aim of testing whether it meets the requirements in accordance with standardized research methods. This study carefully observes the questionnaire by their validity and reliability as in table 1. The Cronbach alpha greater than 0.60, meaning that all statement items in the research instruments are reliable.

Table 1 Recapitulation of Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Research Variables	Items	Loading	Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Organizational Culture	X11	0,392	X15	0,556	0,664
	X12	0,371	X16	0,475	
	X13	0,552	X17	0,582	
	X14	0,444	X18	0,618	
Leadership	X21	0,575	X25	0,446	0,697
	X22	0,640	X26	0,468	
	X23	0,657	X27	0,598	
	X24	0,600	X28	0,570	
Competency	X31	0,557	X36	0,694	0,787
	X32	0,610	X37	0,611	
	X33	0,692	X38	0,563	
	X34	0,659	X39	0,455	
Organizational Commitment	X35	0,680			0,755
	Y11	0,659	Y16	0,459	
	Y12	0,583	Y17	0,655	
	Y13	0,656	Y18	0,622	
Work Motivation (Y2)	Y14	0,473	Y19	0,588	0,722
	Y15	0,519			
	Y21	0,494	Y26	0,483	
	Y22	0,562	Y27	0,617	
	Y23	0,577	Y28	0,626	
Employee Performance	Y24	0,571	Y29	0,569	0,772
	Y25	0,600			
	Z11	0,432	Z15	0,614	
	Z12	0,670	Z16	0,599	
	Z13	0,655	Z17	0,734	
	Z14	0,619	Z18	0,651	

Source: Adapted SPSS output

This study advances to test the structural model feasibility to determine the suitability of data with observations that are built and estimated using the standardized regression weights value. The structural model built and estimated consists of direct relationships and indirect relationships that refer to the formulation of problems and research objectives. The structural model is said to fit the observed data if the Chi-square is small and insignificant > 0.05 ; probability value ≥ 0.05 ; CMIN/DF ≤ 2.00 ; GFI, AGFI, TLI, NFI and CFI > 0.90 ; and RMSEA ≤ 0.05 . The computational results in the Figure 1 display the initial model with fit test criteria by comparing the cut-off value of the goodness of fit index.

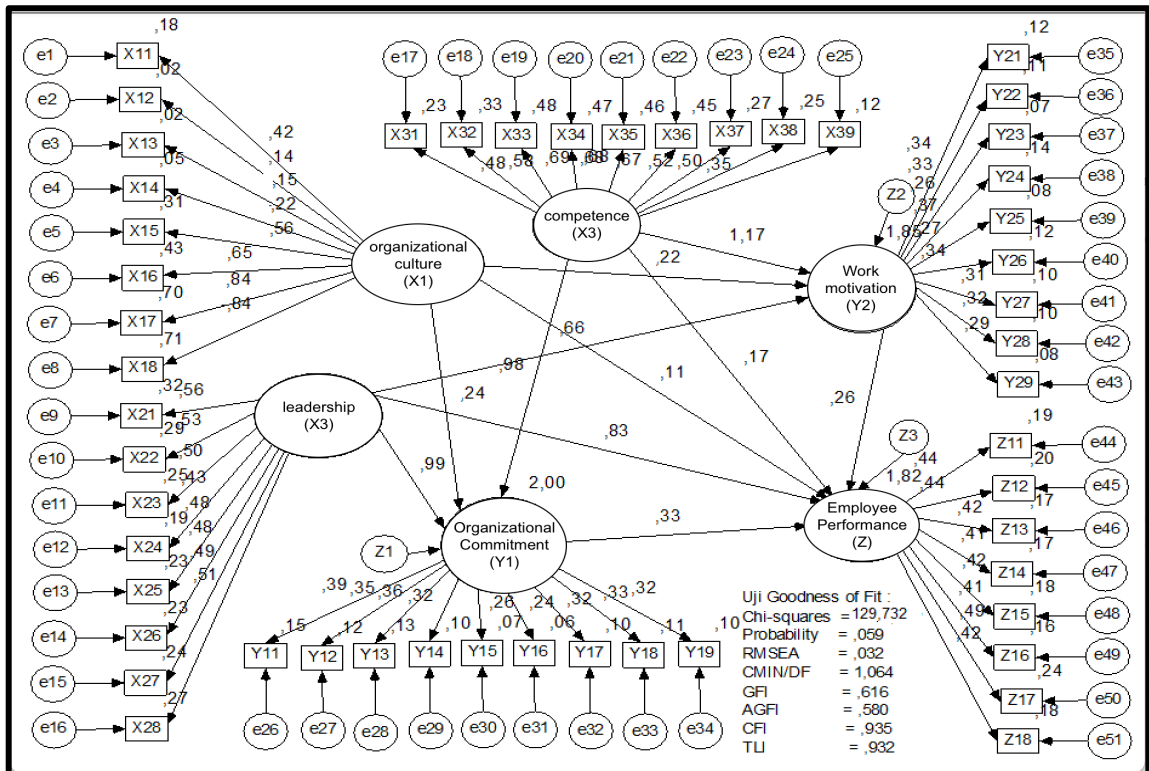


Figure 1. Path Construction

Shows the results of testing the path diagram of the full structural model, which is the basis for comparing the model fit index with the cut-off values presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Model Fit Index with Cut-off Value

Model fit criteria	Initial Finding	Cut-off Value	Description
Chi-square	129,732	Small	Marginal
Probability	0,059	$\geq 0,05$	Good
RMSEA	0,032	$\leq 0,08$	Good
CMIN/DF	1,064	$\leq 2,00$	Good
GFI	0,616	$\geq 0,90$	Marginal
AGFI	0,58	$\geq 0,90$	Marginal
CFI	0,935	$\geq 0,90$	Good
TLI	0,932	$\geq 0,90$	Good

Source: Adapted Amos Output

The combined finding in the fitness test reveals an acceptance in the statistical model so as it is possible to analyze structural relationships and hypothesis testing. The study investigates the latent variables that are Organizational Culture (X1), Leadership (X2), Employee Competence (X3), Organizational Commitment (Y1), and Work Motivation (Y2), as well as Employee Performance (Z). The combined finding is illustrated in Figure 2 with the prospective information of the t value and probability.

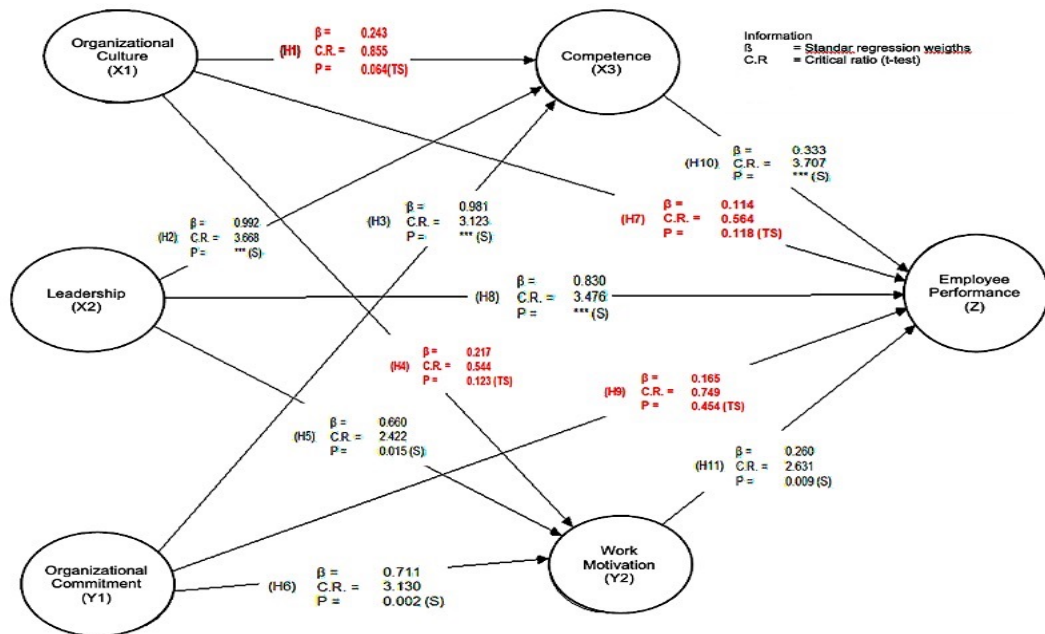


Figure 2. Standardized Estimate

Further to find out more about the causality relationship between variables as shown in the path coefficient (Standardized) in Figure 2 above can be seen in Table 3. With the significance level of parameter estimates in hypothesis testing is at 95% or $p < 0.05$, the summarized finding is in Table 4.

Table 4. The Hypothesis Summary

Paths	Effect	t	p
H1 Organizational culture -> Organizational commitment.	0.168	0.593	0.064
H2 Leadership->Organizational commitment.	0.688	3.668	0.000
H3 Competence -> Organizational commitment.	0.683	3.123	0.002
H4 Organizational Culture-> Work Motivation.	0.150	0.377	0.085
H5 Leadership -> Work Motivation.	0.458	2.422	0.015
H6 Competence -> Work Motivation.	0.493	3.130	0.002
H7 Organizational Culture->Performance.	0.079	0.391	0.081
H8 Leadership ->Performance.	0.576	3.476	0.000
H9 Competence->Performance.	0.114	0.520	0.315
H10 Organizational commitment ->Performance.	0.231	3.797	0.000
H11 Work motivation ->Employee performance.	0.180	2.631	0.009

Source: Adapted Amos Output

Some of the finding highlights the acceptance of most hypothesized relationships. Otherwise, culture is not a predictor of commitment, motivation, and performance. Competence is also not associated with performance. The finding is discussed.

DISCUSSION

Organizational culture can shape the creation of commitment, and uphold the values and norms and beliefs that have been mutually agreed upon for both leaders and members of the organization (Zaal et al., 2019). The results of this study contradict previous research with insignificant relationship, disconfirming hypothesis 1. This finding is not in line with the results past articles that a good organizational culture will form personal or individual commitment in realizing work results (Husin & Kernain, 2020). While organizational culture did not meet the traditional threshold for statistical significance, the suggestive trend towards its influence on commitment and motivation compels further investigation. Indonesia's public service landscape is a complex ecosystem interwoven with intricate threads of government regulations (Erb, 2011), deeply ingrained traditional norms (Rijal, 2020), and regional autonomy. These factors undoubtedly shape what constitutes effective leadership and how competence is perceived.

The results showed that leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment. This result indicates that good leadership prioritizes the interests of the commoners. That is, a good leader understands his subordinates with forward-oriented mindset. Departing from leadership theories, especially the theory of traits (Mostafa et al., 2023), a leader must have a high level of intelligence, especially intellectual intelligence in understanding various internal and external problems of the organization (Alon & Higgins, 2005). The rigid structure of government regulations can create a culture that prioritizes compliance over innovation (Liu, 2021). Traditional norms in Indonesia often emphasize respect for hierarchy and a paternalistic leadership style (Menchik, 2016). This can propel an issue of leader who excels at collaborative decision-making but lacks the authority in a culture that values a strong central figure.

The effect of competence on commitment shows a positive relationship meaning. This result indicates that a person with ability in the form of knowledge, skills, and behavioral attitudes, can contribute to the implementation of his duties and responsibilities as public servants. This knowledge forms a self-awareness and a high level of self-confidence in every assignment and activity. The hypothesis testing does not support the causality of organizational culture and work motivation. This finding contradicts most previous articles, that a good organizational culture always provides a stimulus for employees to be motivated in performing various tasks in order to achieve both individual and organizational performance (Baloch et al., 2022; Sawant & Pise, 2021; Simunaniemi et al., 2022). Leadership shows a positive effect on work motivation indicating a leader must have certain qualities such as honesty, intelligence,

courage, communication, openness, and respect (Resick et al., 2013). This trait will bridge the leadership-performance effects.

The result indicates the competency affects the staffs' work motivation. Indonesia's regional autonomy system adds another layer of complexity. Leadership styles and required competencies might differ vastly between regions with strong cultural identities or those facing unique development challenges (Charoensukmongkol & Lamsam, 2022). Research should explore how these regional variations influence what constitutes effective leadership and competence. The positive influence of competence on both commitment and motivation further strengthens the argument for investing in skill development and training programs for public service employees (Lanjouw & Pradhan, 2002). When employees feel equipped with the necessary knowledge and abilities, they can experience a sense of accomplishment and derive satisfaction from their work, leading to increased commitment and motivation, fostering a growth mindset within the public service. This will form a continuous learning cycle and development (Bolívar-Ramos et al., 2012).

The commitment to discipline is consistent with their attached duties and responsibilities, leading to the increased performance (Pisano, 2019). This is reinforced by the significant relationship between organizational commitment and performance in hypothesis 10th. This finding aligns with the idea that a committed workforce is more likely to exert greater effort, display higher levels of innovation, and perseverance, for performance goals (Ghorbanpour et al., 2014).

The statistical test also confirms the positive influence between work motivation and performance, in accordance with the final hypothesis. This effect potentially manifests in the increased productivity and higher quality work to greater creativity and problem-solving skills (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2012). This finding teases the potential recursive effect, as experiencing success and achieving goals can be highly motivating. Leaders can create a positive feedback loop that further enhances performance, by setting clear goals, opportunities for growth, fostering recognition, and a positively-supportive work environment. The valuable insights for policymakers and administrators are proposed in a strive to secure the effectiveness of the Indonesian public service management.

FURTHER STUDY

This study examined how organizational culture, leadership, and competence influence commitment, motivation, and performance among Indonesian public service workers. The results reveal that leadership and competence are strongly linked to both a strong sense of commitment to the organization and high levels of work motivation. Interestingly, organizational culture, while not statistically definitive, showed a trend that suggests it might still be a relevant factor. In terms of performance, competence emerged as the single most significant predictor. Leadership played a strong positive role in the performance effect, as well as the organizational commitment.

Future research can analyze the specific aspects of leadership and competence that resonate with Indonesian public service workers. This exploration needs to consider the influence of government regulations that shape effective leadership styles and how competence is measured. Additionally, traditional norms around leadership and respect, along with regional variations due to state autonomy and political dynamics, contributes to the potential discussion in the Indonesian public service landscape.

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