

Does Strategic Management Approach Enhance Employee Performance through the Mediating Role of Commitment and Motivation?

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of competence on employee performance by exploring the mediating roles of organizational commitment and work motivation, aiming to identify whether competence affects performance directly or indirectly through these variables. Conducted at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of Kampar Regency using a quantitative approach, the research employed a census method with 93 respondents and analyzed data via Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares technique in SmartPLS 4. The results reveal that competence lacks a direct effect on employee performance but significantly impacts it indirectly by enhancing organizational commitment and work motivation, with work motivation proving the most influential factor, followed by organizational commitment. This study offers original insights into the indirect mechanisms of competence in boosting performance, emphasizing the need to integrate psychological and emotional aspects into human resource management strategies beyond mere technical skill development.

Keywords: business systems; innovation; digital transformation; governance; analytics.

1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the impact of competence on employee performance, with a special focus on the mediating roles of organizational commitment and work motivation. The research specifically targets employees of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office (PUPR) in Kampar Regency, who are crucial in managing regional infrastructure development. The research seeks to address the extent to which competence (Black et al. 2008), along with commitment and motivation, can enhance employee performance to achieve optimal levels (Garcia-Sanchez, Cuadrado-Ballesteros, and Frias-Aceituno 2013).

This research is important because employee performance is the spearhead in achieving organizational goals, especially in the public sector which is directly related to community services (Folan and Browne 2005). Bureaucratic reform requires improving the quality of state civil apparatus, not only from the administrative side, but also in terms of ability, work enthusiasm, and loyalty to the organization. By understanding the factors that influence

performance, policies to improve employee capacity can be formulated more accurately and have a direct impact on improving government work systems (Broadbent and Laughlin 2009).

The phenomenon in the field shows that the performance of some PUPR employees in Kampar Regency is still not optimal. This is reflected in the assessment of Employee Performance Standards (SKP) for the last four years (2020-2023), which shows that some employees are still in the “need to be improved” category. In addition, there are still employees who are less motivated, less disciplined in time, and reluctant to attend training or technical guidance, which is an indicator of weak competence and commitment to the organization.

If this phenomenon is not addressed immediately, agency performance will continue to stagnate or even decline, which ultimately impacts the quality of regional infrastructure development and services to the community. Lack of competence and work motivation will hinder the effectiveness of development programs and can create an unproductive work culture in the long run (Gerrish 2016). As a solution, this study proposes to improve employee performance through strengthening technical competencies, fostering work motivation, and instilling strong organizational commitment (Pulakos and O’Leary 2011). This approach utilizes a Structural Equation Model (SEM) to quantitatively assess both the direct and indirect connections between variables, employing the SmartPLS version 4.00 software for analysis.

Through this method, the study aims to offer a thorough understanding of how competence influences employee performance, while also shedding light on the role that commitment and motivation play in this process. The final target of this research is to provide data-based recommendations to the PUPR Office of Kampar Regency to design a strategy for improving employee performance that is more effective, sustainable, and in accordance with the demands of bureaucratic reform.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Competence

Competence encompasses a blend of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that employees employ to execute tasks in an effective and efficient manner. The competence of employees forms the primary asset for enhancing organizational performance. In the realm of public organizations, competence extends beyond formal education to include work experience, training, and technical skills relevant to their area of expertise. According to Masruroh et al. (2023) in the journal *Sinta 1*, competence directly impacts the enhancement of employee performance, especially when employees possess a strong inner drive for personal development. Furthermore, Indah Krisnayanti et al. (2024) demonstrated that competence boosts performance both directly and indirectly through work motivation. This underscores that competence serves as the fundamental basis for fostering productive and professional work behavior.

2.2. Work Motivation

The drive behind work motivation is a psychological force that inspires an individual to consistently act towards achieving organizational objectives. This motivation may stem from

internal aspects like the need for self-actualization or from external elements such as praise and acknowledgment from leaders. According to Kanfer et al. (2017), high levels of work motivation have a notable impact on employee performance. With strong motivation, employees are propelled to put forth their best effort, meet deadlines, and focus on outcomes. However, findings by Toode et al. (2011) in a Scopus indexed journal suggest that motivation doesn't automatically have a positive effect on performance unless it's paired with sufficient competence. Hence, motivation is often considered an intervening factor that enhances the link between a person's competence and their performance (Deci 2005).

2.3. Work Motivation

Organizational commitment represents the emotional and psychological bond employees have with the values, goals, and vision of the organization they work for. Highly committed employees usually show strong loyalty, enthusiasm, and responsibility in completing tasks. Organizational commitment consists of three main dimensions, namely affective, normative, and continuance commitment (Latuconsina et al. 2024). Reichers (1985) shows that high organizational commitment has a positive effect on employee performance, because individuals who feel they belong to the organization will be encouraged to make their best contribution. However, a study by Cohen (2007) found different results that organizational commitment does not always have a direct impact on performance, especially in a work environment that is less supportive or colored by role conflict. This discovery indicates that the impact of organizational commitment on performance may be influenced by context and requires a thorough analysis.

2.4. Work Motivation

Employee performance represents the outcome an employee delivers while fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. It is typically evaluated against organizational standards like speed, accuracy, productivity, and work quality. Mulyani et al. (2019) mention that performance is shaped by key elements such as competence, motivation, and organizational commitment. In public organizations, like the Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency (PUPR), employee performance significantly impacts the quality of public services and the accomplishment of developmental goals. Hence, enhancing performance goes beyond issuing directives and observing employees; it requires a managerial strategy focused on HR development. This includes boosting competence via training, offering motivational incentives, and embedding organizational values through cultivating a robust work culture (Abdul 2011).

3. Methodology

In this research, the methods used are organized systematically in order to obtain results that are relevant and can be scientifically accounted for. The research process was carried out through several interrelated stages, starting from field observations to reporting research results. Each stage is designed to ensure that the data collected is valid and supports the research objectives. The following figure explains the flow of the research method used:

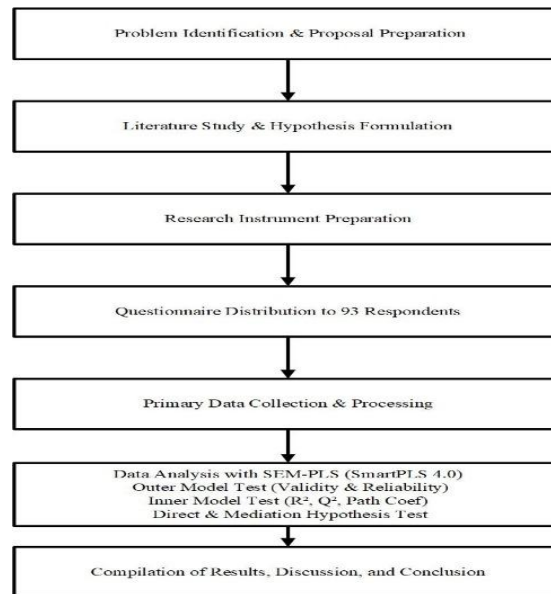


Figure 1 Research Method

This study employs a quantitative approach paired with a case study method, targeting the examination of how competence, work motivation, and organizational commitment are related to employee performance. The research took place at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office (PUPR) in Kampar Regency over six months, spanning from April to September 2024. The investigation involved distributing questionnaires to all PUPR staff members, serving as both the population and sample, as the saturated sampling (census) method was applied, with a total of 93 respondents participating.

The types of data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through observation, unstructured interviews, and closed questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from literature, scientific journals, internal reports, and documentation related to employee performance and training. Data collection techniques were carried out directly at the location of the research object. The questionnaire instrument was prepared based on indicators of the research variables: competence, work motivation, organizational commitment, and employee performance.

Regarding data processing and analysis, this study employs the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach using the SmartPLS tool, version 4.0. The choice to use SEM-PLS stems from its capability to manage complex models despite a relatively small sample size, as well as its ability to support second-order reflective constructs. In this research, variables such as “performance” and “competence” are evaluated using derived indicators (dimensions). The analysis procedure includes testing the outer model for construct validity and reliability, examining the inner model which involves relationships between latent variables, and conducting hypothesis testing based on t-statistics and p-value.

In hypothesis testing models, assessments are performed on seven relationship paths between variables, considering both direct impacts and those that are indirect (mediated impacts). To test validity, convergent validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and

discriminant validity are employed, while reliability is measured using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The R-square and Q-square values are utilized to assess the quality of the structural model. Data processing results are then portrayed as path estimations to determine the influence between variables, along with an analysis of how motivation and commitment mediate effects on employee performance.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis Of Respondents

From the findings of the data collection, insights were gathered about the respondents' identities, covering aspects such as gender, age, highest educational attainment, and employment status. This descriptive analysis is intended to give a detailed picture of the profile of employees from the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office in Kampar Regency who participated in the study. The specifics are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Respondent Analysis

Item	Frekuensi	Presentase
Gender		
Man	55	59,14%
Women	38	40,86%
Age		
< 30 Year	2	2,15%
30 – 39 Year	36	38,71%
40 – 49 Year	41	44,09%
≥ 50 Year	14	15,05%
Education		
SLTA	42	45,16%
Diploma	6	6,45%
Strata 1 (S1)	38	40,86%
Strata 2 (S2)	7	7,53%
Employment Status		
ASN	84	90,32%
Non ASN	9	9,68%

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondent characteristics in this study, which consisted of 93 employees of the Kampar Regency Public Works and Spatial Planning Office. Based on gender, the majority of respondents were male, numbering 55 (59.14%), while females numbered 38 (40.86%). In terms of age, most respondents are in the 30–49 age range, with the highest percentage in the 40 - 49 age category at 44.09%, indicating that the respondents are in their productive working years.

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents had a high school education (45.16%), followed by a bachelor's degree (40.86%), a master's degree (7.53%), and a diploma (6.45%). This indicates that most employees have a secondary to higher education, which is relevant to their technical positions in the agency. Meanwhile, in terms of employment status, the majority of respondents are civil servants (90.32%), with only a small proportion being non-civil servants (9.68%). This dominance of civil servants reflects that most employees

are permanent staff with long-term responsibilities toward achieving the agency's performance goals.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis Of Respondents

To evaluate construct validity, factor loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable indicator are analyzed. An indicator is considered valid if its factor loading is greater than 0.5 and its AVE exceeds 0.5, as outlined by (Islam 2020). The testing outcomes for all indicators related to employee performance, organizational commitment, work motivation, and competence are shown in the table below:

Table 2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

variable	Item	Factor Loading	AVE	CA	CR
Employee Performance	EP1	0,707	0,597	0,903	0,922
	EP2	0,770			
	EP3	0,877			
	EP4	0,790			
	EP5	0,792			
	EP6	0,748			
	EP7	0,783			
Organizational Commitment	OC1	0,832	0,772	0,951	0,959
	OC2	0,890			
	OC3	0,919			
	OC4	0,916			
	OC5	0,872			
	OC6	0,851			
	OC7	0,866			
Work Motivation	WM1	0,810	0,611	0,836	0,886
	WM2	0,846			
	WM3	0,791			
	WM4	0,799			
	WM5	0,648			
Competence	C1	0,735	0,596	0,886	0,911
	C2	0,830			
	C3	0,759			
	C4	0,761			
	C5	0,784			
	C6	0,852			
	C7	0,670			

The results of construct validity testing show that all indicators on each variable in this study are declared valid. This is based on the factor loading values which are all above the minimum value of 0.5, as well as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value which exceeds 0.5 in accordance with the criteria of (Clay, Murphy, and Watrins 1975). In the employee performance variable, the factor loading value ranges from 0.707 to 0.877 with an AVE of 0.597, indicating that the indicators are able to explain the variable well. Similarly, the organizational commitment variable, which has a high factor loading value between 0.832 to 0.919 and an AVE of 0.772, indicates very strong convergent validity (Liou 2008).

Meanwhile, the work motivation variable has a factor loading value between 0.648 to 0.846 with an AVE value of 0.611. Although there is an indicator (MK5) with a factor loading value close to the lower limit, it still meets the valid criteria. In the competency variable, all indicators were also declared valid with factor loading values ranging from 0.670 to 0.852 and an AVE of 0.596. The reliability of the constructs was also tested using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). The results show that all variables are reliable, with CR values above 0.70 employee performance (0.922), organizational commitment (0.959), competency (0.911), and work motivation (0.886). Likewise, CA values for each variable exceed the minimum requirement of 0.70 indicating strong internal consistency where the lowest CA is 0.836 and the highest is 0.951 (Kerns 2019). Overall, all constructs in this study meet the validity and reliability requirements, making them suitable for further structural model analysis.

Table 3 Fornell-Lacker Criteria Results

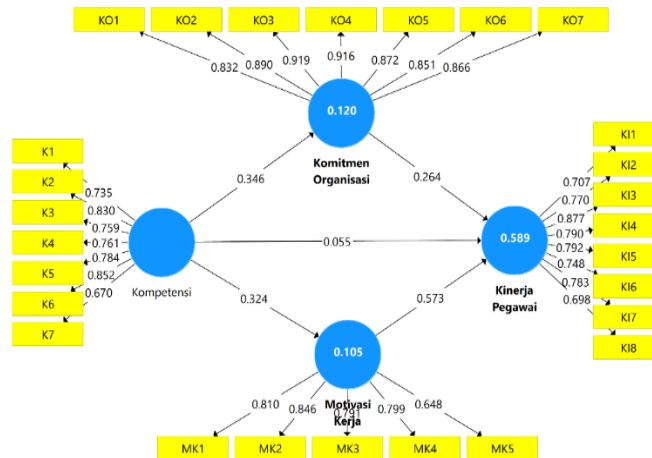
	Employee Performance	Organizational Commitment	Competence	Work Motivation
Employee Performance	0.773			
Organizational Commitment	0.582	0.879		
Competence	0.331	0.346	0.772	
Work Motivation	0.728	0.521	0.324	0.782

The table above reveals the outcomes from discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The values on the diagonal denote the square roots of Average Variance Extracted (\sqrt{AVE}) for each construct: employee performance (0.773), organizational commitment (0.879), competence (0.772), and work motivation (0.782). These \sqrt{AVE} figures surpass any inter-construct correlations within their corresponding rows and columns, demonstrating that each construct is empirically unique and possesses strong discriminant validity. Notably, work motivation displays the strongest link with employee performance (0.728), followed by organizational commitment (0.582). In contrast, competence shows comparatively weaker correlations with employee performance (0.331), organizational commitment (0.346), and work motivation (0.324), implying that its impact might be mediated by other constructs (Randall, Fedor, and Longenecker 1990). These outcomes affirm the structural integrity and discriminant validity of the measurement model employed in this research.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis Of Respondents

The following are the results of path analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). This figure presents the relationship between latent variables: Competence, Organizational Commitment, Work Motivation, and Employee Performance. Each latent variable is measured through several indicators (in yellow boxes), and the magnitude of the indicator's contribution to the latent variable is indicated by the loading

value. In addition, the numerical values between the latent variables indicate the path coefficient, which describes the strength and direction of the relationship between variables in this model. Please take a look at the following figure to get a visual picture of the relationship model between the variables under study:



Pictures 1 SEM-PLS Calculation Results

The diagram displayed illustrates the outcome of employing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to depict the connections among four latent variables: Competence (C), Organizational Commitment (OC), Work Motivation (WM), and Employee Performance (EP). Each of these hidden variables is assessed using a series of indicators: Competence is reflected by C1-C7, Organizational Commitment by OC1-OC7, Work Motivation by WM1-WM5, and Employee Performance by EP1-EP7. The loading values for all indicators exceed the minimum standard of 0.7, demonstrating their validity in measuring each variable's construct, though a few values are slightly less than 0.7 but are still considered acceptable for exploratory studies.

In the structure of the relationship between variables, it can be seen that Competence (C) has the greatest direct effect on Employee Performance (EP) of 0.573, compared to Organizational Commitment (OC) of 0.264 and Work Motivation (WM) of 0.055. In addition, Competence (C) also has a positive effect on OC (0.346) and WM (0.324), which indicates that competence not only affects performance directly but also indirectly through increased organizational commitment and work motivation. The R-square value in EP of 0.589 indicates that the three independent variables collectively explain 58.9% of the variability in employee performance. Thus, this model emphasizes the importance of competency improvement as a key strategy to drive optimal employee performance.

Table 4 Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistics	P-Value
H1	Competence → Organizational Commitment	0.346	3.528

H2	Competence → Work Motivation	0.324	3.766
H3	Competence → Employee Performance	0.055	0.684
H4	Organizational Commitment → Employee Performance	0.264	3.114
H5	Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.573	5.863
H6	Competence → Organizational Commitment → Employee Performance	0.091	2.268
H7	Competence → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.185	2.912

The table above illustrates the outcomes of hypothesis testing within the research model analyzing the impact of Competence, Organizational Commitment, and Work Motivation on Employee Performance, assessed both directly and indirectly. Out of the seven hypotheses evaluated, six demonstrated statistical support (P-Value <0.05), suggesting a meaningful effect among the variables examined.

5. Discussion

Directly, Competence has a significant effect on Organizational Commitment (H1) and Work Motivation (H2), but has no direct effect on Employee Performance (H3). On the other hand, both Organizational Commitment (H4) and Work Motivation (H5) have a significant direct influence on Employee Performance, with Work Motivation being the most dominant factor (path coefficient = 0.573). In addition, there are two significant indirect effects, namely Competence through Organizational Commitment (H6) and Competence through Work Motivation (H7) on Employee Performance (Heery 1996). This shows that although Competence does not directly affect employee performance, it can improve performance through increased commitment and work motivation .

H1 (Competence → Organizational Commitment) The study indicates that competency significantly influences organizational commitment, boasting a path coefficient of 0.346 and a P-Value of 0.000. Essentially, as employees' competence rises, so does their dedication to the organization. Competent individuals often possess higher self-assurance, feel appreciated, and are more engaged both emotionally and professionally within the organization. This aligns with the research conducted by Gottman et al. (1998), which concluded that competence plays a role in boosting organizational commitment, a sentiment echoed by Gunawan & Gunawan (2019), who assert that competence fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty to the institution.

H2 (Competence → Work Motivation) displays a notable connection, with a coefficient of 0.324 and a P-Value of 0.000. This suggests that competence plays a role in enhancing employee motivation at work. Employees who perceive themselves as technically and intellectually adept in their roles tend to be more driven to excel and demonstrate top performance. Kharisma & Rosia (2022) propose that competence is an element of self-efficacy that can boost intrinsic motivation, whereas Sulasmi & Program (2016) discovered that high competence allows employees to feel challenged and innately motivated.

H3 (Competence → Employee Performance) the argument lacks statistical backing because the path coefficient is just 0.055 with a P-Value of 0.494, suggesting no meaningful

direct impact between competence and employee performance. This suggests that competence by itself is insufficient to directly boost performance and necessitates additional elements like motivation and commitment. This aligns with Nuriman's (2021) view that competence needs to be paired with motivation to enhance performance effectively. Kurniawan (2021) also mentioned that without psychological support and a favorable environment, employee competence doesn't automatically lead to great work outcomes.

H4 (Organizational Commitment → Employee Performance) is confirmed with a coefficient of 0.264 and a P-Value of 0.002. This indicates that employees with strong organizational commitment tend to exhibit superior work performance. Commitment embodies a sense of responsibility, loyalty, and eagerness to contribute at their best. This study aligns with Reichers (1985), who highlighted that affective commitment is strongly linked to enhanced individual performance. Additionally, Islam (2020) supports this by asserting that employees' dedication to organizational values and objectives motivates them to work more efficiently.

H5 (Work Motivation → Employee Performance) shows the strongest and most significant relationship in the model, with a coefficient value of 0.573 and a P-Value of 0.000. This means that the higher the work motivation of employees, the higher the performance they produce. Motivation is the main driver for someone in achieving work targets. Kurniawan (2021) explain that motivation is key in encouraging positive work behavior, while Herzberg in his theory also states that intrinsic motivation has an important role in achieving maximum performance. This finding confirms that motivated employees will be more focused, energized, and productive at work.

H6 (Competence → Organizational Commitment → Employee Performance) shows the indirect effect of competence on performance through organizational commitment with an indirect effect value of 0.091 and a P-Value of 0.024. This shows that although competence does not directly affect performance, but through increased commitment, competence can make a positive contribution to employee performance. Research by Gottman et al (1998) supports this, that organizational commitment can be a mediator between personal factors (such as competence) and employee work outcomes.

H7 (Competence → Work Motivation → Employee Performance) was also statistically significant, with an indirect effect value of 0.185 and a P-value of 0.004. This means that competence can improve employee performance through increased work motivation. Employees who feel competent are more motivated to work, and this motivation has a positive impact on work performance. This aligns with Vroom's expectancy theory, which states that perceptions of self-competence influence motivation, and ultimately impact work outcomes.

Based on the research results, it was found that competence has a significant influence on organizational commitment and work motivation, but does not directly affect employee performance. This indicates that competence plays a more indirect role in improving performance through two mediating variables, namely commitment and motivation. This finding indicates that even if an employee possesses good competencies, this alone is insufficient to drive optimal performance unless accompanied by commitment to the organization and high

work motivation. This finding aligns with the mediation effect model, where an independent variable requires a mediating variable to exert a tangible influence on the dependent variable.

Furthermore, work motivation has been proven to be the most dominant factor in improving employee performance, with the highest coefficient value among all pathways. This means that organizations need to pay more attention to aspects that can increase motivation, such as recognition, rewards, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for growth. On the other hand, organizational commitment also significantly contributes to performance improvement, highlighting the importance of fostering loyalty, a sense of ownership, and emotional engagement among employees toward the organization. Overall, the findings of this study support the framework that employee performance improvement does not solely depend on technical skills (hard skills) but also on internal psychological and affective factors.

6. Conclusion

This research seeks to examine how competence, organizational commitment, and work motivation affect employee performance, considering both direct and indirect impacts. The analytical findings indicate that competence does not significantly impact employee performance on its own. However, it does have a noteworthy indirect effect when mediated by organizational commitment and work motivation. This suggests that the impact of employee competence on performance becomes significant when coupled with strong commitment and motivation to work.

Additionally, work motivation was found to be the most dominant factor in improving employee performance, followed by organizational commitment. These findings highlight the importance for organizations to not only enhance employees' technical competencies but also strengthen the psychological and affective aspects that influence work behavior. Therefore, a holistic and balanced approach to human resource management, integrating both capability and internal motivation, is essential to achieving optimal employee performance.

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Author Contributions (CRediT)

Author 1 led conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing of the original draft, supervision, and project administration, while sharing equally in writing review and editing. Author 2 led investigation, data curation, and visualization, also contributing equally to writing review and editing.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, due to privacy restrictions related to employee survey responses from the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of Kampar Regency. No code or additional materials were generated beyond the SmartPLS 4 analysis files, which can be provided under similar conditions. Reuse requires anonymization and ethical approval.

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