

The Effect of Motivation and Leadership on Employee Performance with Organizational Commitment as an Intervening Variable at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City

Al Mahfud Bahtera., Kurnia Asni., Zulkifli

Faculty of Economics and Business, Abulyatama University, Indonesia, Aceh

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effects of motivation and leadership on employee performance and to examine the role of organizational commitment as an intervening variable at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City. The study employed a quantitative approach with a population and sample of 105 employees using a census sampling technique. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS 25 and AMOS. The results showed that all constructs met the validity and reliability criteria. The structural model indicated that motivation had a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=0.378$; $CR=3.349$; $p<0.000$), as did leadership on organizational commitment ($\beta=0.476$; $CR=4.102$; $p<0.000$). Motivation had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.300$; $CR=3.974$; $p<0.000$), leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.450$; $CR=4.778$; $p<0.000$), and organizational commitment had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.343$; $CR=3.443$; $p<0.000$). Organizational commitment also partially mediated the effect of motivation on employee performance (Sobel=2.773; $p<0.000$) and the effect of leadership on employee performance (Sobel=3.086; $p<0.000$). These findings indicate that strengthening motivation and leadership quality, accompanied by stronger organizational commitment, are interrelated aspects that support employee performance.

Keywords: Motivation, Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Employee Performance, Intervening Variable.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is an important measure of organizational success because it reflects the level of work achievement in pursuing organizational goals. Good performance is necessary to enable employees to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. In government organizations, the quality of employee performance is also related to the institution's ability to provide services and perform governmental functions optimally (Widodo & Yandi, 2022).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City is a government organization that performs functions related to public services, development, and guidance. The quality of its services is inseparable from the performance of its employees. The performance achievement data used in this study show a decline in the average Employee Performance Target, from 88.22 in 2019 to 87.02 in 2020 and 86.01 in 2021. This condition indicates a need to understand the factors associated with employee performance.

In addition to performance achievement, the initial survey results reported in the thesis indicate that organizational commitment has not yet been fully optimized. Some employees were found to have limited compliance with regulations, insufficient responsibility, and less-than-maximal effort in carrying out their work. Initial observations also indicated issues with time discipline that could potentially affect work efficiency and productivity. These conditions suggest that employee performance should be understood not only from work outcomes but also from the psychological and managerial factors that shape work behavior.

Motivation is one factor that can encourage employees to devote their abilities, energy, and time to carrying out their duties. Good motivation can increase work enthusiasm, responsibility, and achievement orientation. Sumiatik et al. (2021) found that motivation significantly affects organizational commitment and employee performance. Mauliansyah and Suprihhadi (2023) also found that motivation, the work environment, and leadership can be used as predictors of employee performance.

Another important factor is leadership. Leadership concerns the ability to influence, direct, guide, and mobilize employees to achieve organizational goals. In government organizations, leadership quality can determine how work directions, standards, task allocation, and problem solving are implemented. Siswatiningsih et al. (2018) found an association between leadership, organizational commitment, and performance through organizational and work-behavior mechanisms.

Organizational commitment is positioned as an intervening variable because it describes employees' attachment to the organization, acceptance of organizational values and goals, and desire to maintain membership in the organization. Employees with high commitment tend to exert greater effort to support organizational goals. Thus, motivation and leadership are expected to be related not only directly to performance but also to organizational commitment, which in turn is related to performance.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City is a government organization that performs functions related to public services, development, and religious guidance. The quality of its services is inseparable from employee performance. Performance achievement data used in this study show a decline in the average Employee Performance Target, from 88.22 in 2019 to 87.02 in 2020 and 86.01 in 2021. This descriptive trend provided the contextual basis for examining factors associated with employee performance, rather than constituting evidence of a causal decline. In addition to performance achievement, the initial survey results reported in the thesis indicated that organizational commitment had not yet been fully optimized. Some employees were reported to have limited compliance with regulations, insufficient responsibility, and less-than-maximal effort in carrying out their work. Initial observations also indicated issues with time discipline that could potentially affect work efficiency and productivity. These observations were used to establish the research context and were not treated as statistical evidence of causal relationships.

Based on these phenomena and the previous research summarized in the thesis, this study was conducted to analyze the effects of motivation and leadership on employee performance, with organizational commitment as an intervening variable, at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the work result achieved by employees in carrying out their duties based on certain criteria. Robbins and Judge (2017) proposed performance indicators used in the thesis, including work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, service orientation, integrity, commitment, discipline, teamwork, and leadership. Performance is an important indicator because the achievement of organizational goals depends greatly on employees' ability to perform their duties (Syam, 2020).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization, characterized by acceptance of organizational values and goals and a desire to maintain membership (Porter and Mowday, as cited in the thesis). Luthans (2016) views commitment as a strong desire to remain a member of an organization, willingness to exert effort in accordance with organizational interests, and acceptance of organizational values and goals. In this study, commitment was measured through a sense of belonging, attachment, the personal meaning of the organization, a desire not to leave the organization, pride, and loyalty.

Motivation

Motivation is a force that directs individuals to perform a series of activities in order to achieve certain goals. Hasibuan (2014) defines motivation as a driving force that creates enthusiasm for work so that a person is willing to cooperate and work effectively. The motivation indicators used in the thesis include responsibility, work achievement, opportunities for advancement, recognition of performance, and challenging work.

Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence and direct others to achieve organizational goals. In the thesis, leadership indicators include analytical ability, role modeling, rationality and objectivity, work instructions, ability to listen to suggestions, task allocation, and decisiveness in action (Hasibuan, 2012).

Relationships Among Variables

Conceptually, motivation and leadership are expected to increase organizational commitment and employee performance. Organizational commitment is then expected to improve performance and serve as a mechanism linking motivation and leadership to performance. The research model generated seven hypotheses: H1 motivation → organizational commitment; H2 leadership → organizational commitment; H3 motivation → performance; H4 leadership → performance; H5 organizational commitment → performance; H6 motivation → performance through organizational commitment; and H7 leadership → performance through organizational commitment.

Research Methods

This study is a survey research study using a quantitative approach (Sugiyono, 2017). It focuses on analyzing the effects of Motivation (X_1) and Leadership (X_2) on Employee Performance (Y) with Organizational Commitment as an intervening variable, at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City.

The study population consisted of 105 employees, and all population members were included as respondents; therefore, census/total sampling was used.

Primary data were collected through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat disagree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Secondary data were obtained through documentation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City. The research instrument consisted of 5 motivation items, 10 leadership items, 6 organizational commitment items, and 10 employee performance items.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 and AMOS. The analysis stages included validity testing, reliability testing, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), goodness-of-fit evaluation, and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Ferdinand, 2011). Validity was tested using Pearson correlation with a critical value of 0.191 at $n=105$, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Mediation effects were tested using the Sobel Test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Penelitian melibatkan 105 pegawai. Responden laki-laki berjumlah 57 orang (54,3%) dan perempuan 48 orang (45,7%). Sebagian besar responden berstatus kawin (70,5%), berada pada kelompok usia 30–39 tahun (44,8%), dan berpendidikan Sarjana (56,2%).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		

Male	57	54,3
Female	48	45,7
Total	105	100.0
Marital status		
Married	74	70,5
Unmarried	31	29,5
Total	105	100.0
Age		
18–29 years	27	25,7
30–39 years	47	44,8
40–49 years	28	26,7
>50 years	3	2,9
Total	105	100.0
Education		
Senior High School	5	4,8
Diploma	34	32,4
Bachelor's Degree	59	56,2
Master's Degree	7	6,7
Total	105	100.0

Table 1 shows that the respondent composition was relatively diverse in terms of gender, marital status, age, and education. The proportions of male and female respondents were 54.3% and 45.7%, respectively, while the 30–39 age group was the largest at 44.8%. In terms of education, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (56.2%). This composition indicates that the research data were obtained from employees with diverse backgrounds, so perceptions of motivation, leadership, organizational commitment, and performance were not derived from only one respondent group.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

All questionnaire items were declared valid because the correlation coefficient of each item was greater than the critical value of 0.191. Reliability was also established because Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables were above 0.60.

This study used a quantitative survey design to examine the relationships of Motivation (X1) and Leadership (X2) with Employee Performance (Y), with Organizational Commitment as an intervening variable, among employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City.

Table 2. Instrument Validity and Reliability

Variable	Items	Item-total correlation range	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Motivation	5	0,555–0,820	0,790	Valid and reliable
Leadership	10	0,595–0,819	0,888	Valid and reliable
Organizational commitment	6	0,551–0,833	0,916	Valid and reliable
Employee performance	10	0,521–0,811	0,888	Valid and reliable

The results in Table 2 show that all items across the four research variables had correlation ranges above the critical value of 0.191. Thus, each item used was able to represent the construct measured by the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.790 to 0.916, indicating that all variables met the reliability criteria used. These findings provide a basis for using the research instrument in subsequent analyses because it demonstrated adequate internal consistency.

Description of Respondents' Perceptions

After the instrument was declared valid and reliable, the next stage was to describe respondents' perceptions of each research variable. This description was used to identify respondents' assessment tendencies regarding motivation, leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance before testing the structural model.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 and AMOS. The analysis included item validity and reliability testing, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), assessment of measurement-model fit, evaluation of the structural model, and hypothesis testing using structural equation modeling (SEM) (Ferdinand, 2011). Item validity was assessed using Pearson correlation with a critical value of 0.191 at $n=105$, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Mediation was assessed using the Sobel test. Because the original analysis output available for this manuscript did not contain standardized loading estimates, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant-validity statistics, or bootstrap confidence intervals, these statistics cannot be reported retrospectively without the underlying AMOS output or respondent-level data. A summary of the mean values and categories for each variable is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Description of Respondents' Perceptions

Variable	Mean	Category
Motivation	4.12	Good
Leadership	4.13	Good
Organizational commitment	4.32	Very good
Employee performance	4.17	Good

Based on the category thresholds used in the thesis, all variables received at least a good rating. Organizational commitment had the highest mean (4.32), while motivation had the lowest mean (4.12), although both remained within the good/very good categories according to the intervals used.

Measurement Model Evaluation

In the initial CFA, indicators K4, KO5, M5, and KP9 had loading factors below 0.50 and were therefore eliminated. After elimination, the remaining indicators had loading factors above 0.50. The initial measurement model showed marginal fit, after which the model was respecified using Modification Indices (MI). The

respecification was intended to improve overall model fit only where theoretically defensible; modification indices should not be interpreted as an automatic basis for adding parameters. The final model showed improved fit.

Table 4. Measurement Model Evaluation

Goodness-of-Fit Indicator	Cut-off	Initial model	Final model
Chi-Square	<617,882	624,967	506,203
RMSEA	≤0,08	0,096	0,077
CMIN/DF	≤2,00	1,965	1,617

The final measurement model showed improved fit compared with the initial model: RMSEA decreased from 0.096 to 0.077 and CMIN/DF decreased from 1.965 to 1.617. The final model was therefore considered adequate according to the fit criteria used in this study. Because the retained manuscript does not contain the full AMOS standardized-loading and covariance output, construct-level CR, AVE, and discriminant-validity statistics are not reported here.

R-Square

An R^2 value of 0.568 for organizational commitment indicates that motivation and leadership jointly explain 56.8% of its observed variance in the structural model. An R^2 value of 0.906 for employee performance indicates that motivation, leadership, and organizational commitment jointly explain 90.6% of the observed variance in employee performance. Although this value is high, R^2 alone does not establish that the model is free from overfitting, common-method bias, measurement overlap, or specification problems. Therefore, the value should be interpreted as sample-specific explanatory variance rather than as evidence that 90.6% of employee performance is universally determined by the three predictors.

The relatively high R^2 also warrants diagnostic caution because all principal constructs were measured using the same questionnaire and collected from the same respondents at one time point. The present manuscript does not contain a documented common-method-bias test or respondent-level data from which additional diagnostics could be independently reproduced. Accordingly, the high R^2 should be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalized beyond the study context.

Table 5. R-Square

Item	R-Square
Organizational commitment	0,568
Employee Performance	0,906

An R^2 value of 0.568 for organizational commitment indicates that motivation and leadership jointly explain 56.8% of the variation in organizational commitment. An R^2 value of 0.906 for employee performance indicates that motivation, leadership, and organizational commitment jointly explain 90.6% of the variation in employee performance, while the remaining 9.4% is explained by factors outside the model.

Structural Equation Modeling and Hypothesis Testing

After evaluating the measurement model and the explanatory capability of the model, the next analysis focused on the structural relationships among variables. This testing was used to determine the direction and significance of the effects of motivation and leadership on organizational commitment and employee performance, including

the effect of organizational commitment on performance. A summary of the path coefficients (β), critical ratios (CR), p-values, and hypothesis decisions is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Direct Effect Test Results

Relationship	Estimate (β)	CR	p	Decision
Motivation $\rightarrow$ Organizational commitment	0,378	3,349	<0,000	H1 H1 accepted
Leadership $\rightarrow$ Organizational commitment	0,476	4,102	<0,000	H2 H1 accepted
Motivation $\rightarrow$ Employee performance	0,300	3,974	<0,000	H3 H1 accepted
Leadership $\rightarrow$ Employee performance	0,450	4,778	<0,000	H4 H1 accepted
Organizational commitment $\rightarrow$ Employee performance	0,343	3,443	<0,000	H5 H1 accepted

Based on Table 6, all tested paths showed positive coefficients, with CR values exceeding the testing threshold and $p < 0.001$. Motivation affected organizational commitment with a coefficient of 0.378, while leadership had a coefficient of 0.476. For employee performance, motivation had a coefficient of 0.300, leadership 0.450, and organizational commitment 0.343. These results indicate that all direct hypotheses, H1 through H5, were supported in the research model.

Mediation Testing

The Sobel results indicate significant indirect effects of motivation and leadership on employee performance through organizational commitment. Because the direct effects of both motivation and leadership on performance remained significant, the mediation pattern is classified as partial mediation. The Sobel test is reported because it was the mediation procedure used in the original analysis. A bootstrap-based confidence interval would provide a more robust assessment of indirect effects; however, bootstrap results cannot be reconstructed from the manuscript alone without the respondent-level data or the original AMOS bootstrap output.

Table 7. Mediation Testing

Indirect path	Sobel	p	Conclusion
Motivation $\rightarrow$ Organizational commitment $\rightarrow$ Employee performance	2,773	<0,000	Partial mediation
Leadership $\rightarrow$ Organizational commitment $\rightarrow$ Employee performance	3,086	<0,000	Partial mediation

The Sobel results show that organizational commitment mediates the effects of motivation on employee performance and leadership on employee performance. Because the direct effects of motivation and leadership on performance were also significant, the resulting mediation was partial mediation.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Motivation on Organizational Commitment

The results show that motivation has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.378$; $CR = 3.349$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that employees' drive to achieve, fulfill responsibilities, obtain recognition, develop, and face challenging work is associated with stronger attachment to the organization. Theoretically, motivation is a driving force that encourages individuals to use their abilities and energy to achieve

goals. When employees' needs and work-related drives are accommodated within the organization, employees are more likely to identify with organizational goals and maintain their membership.

These findings can be explained through Hasibuan's (2014) motivation theory, which views motivation as a driving force that creates enthusiasm for work so that a person is willing to work effectively to achieve goals. In this study, indicators such as responsibility, work achievement, opportunities for advancement, recognition of performance, and challenging work provide a theoretical basis for the view that the stronger the work motivation perceived by employees, the greater the likelihood that employees will direct their behavior toward organizational goals. Such alignment may subsequently strengthen employees' sense of attachment to the organization.

These findings are also consistent with Sumiatik et al. (2021) and Majid et al. (2021), who found that motivation significantly affects organizational commitment and employee performance. The consistent direction of these findings indicates that the relationship between motivation and organizational commitment found at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City is not an isolated finding but is related to previous studies using similar constructs.

The researchers assume that this positive relationship may occur because employees who receive encouragement to achieve, obtain recognition, have opportunities for development, and experience challenging work may be more motivated to make organizational goals part of their work goals. However, this assumption is an interpretation of the research findings and is not intended as evidence of a directly measured psychological mechanism.

Effect of Leadership on Organizational Commitment

Leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=0.476$; $CR=4.102$; $p<0.001$). This coefficient indicates that the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment in the model is relatively strong compared with the motivation-to-commitment path. Leadership that provides direction, serves as a role model, acts objectively, listens to suggestions, allocates tasks, and makes firm decisions can build clarity and employees' trust in the organization.

Theoretically, this result is consistent with Hasibuan's (2012) concept of leadership, which places analytical ability, role modeling, rationality and objectivity, work instructions, the ability to listen to suggestions, task allocation, and decisiveness among the important aspects of leadership. These aspects can create clarity regarding work and organizational direction. Within the relationships among the research variables, clear direction and positive work experiences may be associated with employees' acceptance of organizational values and goals, which constitute part of organizational commitment.

Siswatiningsih et al. (2018) and Effendi (2014) found an association between leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance. The present study shows a similar pattern, namely that leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. Thus, the findings reinforce the relevance of leadership as one factor associated with the formation of commitment in an organizational context.

The researchers assume that leadership capable of providing clear direction, demonstrating exemplary behavior, allocating tasks proportionally, accepting suggestions, and acting decisively can help employees feel more certain about how to perform their work. This condition may strengthen employees' trust and attachment to the organization. This assumption should be understood as an interpretation based on the indicators and statistical results, rather than as a qualitatively observed causal relationship.

Effect of Motivation on Employee Performance

Motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.300$; $CR=3.974$; $p<0.001$). This finding means that the better the employees' work motivation, the better the performance they demonstrate. Motivation provides energy to complete work, sustain effort, and direct behavior toward task achievement.

Theoretically, this finding can be associated with Hasibuan's (2014) concept of motivation, namely motivation as a driving force that encourages a person to work effectively to achieve goals. In this study, motivation is represented by responsibility, work achievement, opportunities for advancement, recognition of performance, and challenging work. Conceptually, these motivational drivers can direct employees' energy and effort toward task completion and thus be associated with better performance.

This finding is consistent with Sumiatik et al. (2021), who reported an effect of motivation on employee performance. It is also consistent with Mauliansyah and Suprihhadi (2023) and Ainanur and Tirtayasa (2018), who stated that motivation, the work environment, and leadership can be used as predictors of employee performance. The consistent direction of the findings provides empirical support that motivation is a relevant variable for explaining variation in performance across different research contexts.

The researchers assume that the mean motivation score of 4.12, which falls within the good category, reflects relatively positive work motivation among respondents. This motivation may help employees sustain their efforts to complete tasks and fulfill their responsibilities. Thus, the positive relationship between motivation and performance can be understood as an association between the quality of work motivation perceived by employees and the task achievement reported in the study.

Effect of Leadership on Employee Performance

Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.450$; $CR=4.778$; $p<0.001$). This result indicates that leadership quality is associated with employees' ability to achieve the expected work outcomes. Leaders who provide clear instructions, serve as role models, allocate tasks appropriately, listen to input, and make firm decisions can help employees understand what needs to be done and how the work should be completed.

Theoretically, this relationship can be explained through Hasibuan's (2012) concept of leadership, particularly the leader's ability to provide instructions, allocate tasks, serve as a role model, listen to suggestions, and make firm decisions. These functions help direct employee work behavior and provide clarity regarding the tasks to be performed. Therefore, leadership can conceptually be related directly to work implementation and employee performance.

This finding is consistent with Mauliansyah and Suprihhadi (2023) and Eka Saputri (2021), which, as reported in this manuscript, found a positive and significant effect of leadership on performance. This similarity indicates that the relationship between leadership and performance has also been identified in previous studies cited in the manuscript. Thus, the findings at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City are consistent in direction with those empirical findings.

The researchers assume that the direct effect of leadership on performance is related to the leader's role in organizing daily work. When instructions are clearer, task allocation is more structured, and decisions can be made firmly, employees have clearer guidance for completing their duties. This assumption helps explain the leadership-to-performance coefficient of 0.450, but it is not intended to claim that these aspects were individually tested as direct causes.

Effect of Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance

Organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta=0.343$; $CR=3.443$; $p<0.001$). This finding indicates that employees who have a sense of belonging, pride, loyalty, and a desire to remain members of the organization tend to demonstrate better performance. Theoretically, commitment reflects acceptance of organizational values and goals and a willingness to exert effort for the organization.

Theoretically, this result is consistent with Luthans (2016), who states that organizational commitment includes the desire to remain a member of the organization, willingness to exert effort in accordance with organizational interests, and acceptance of organizational values and goals. Such commitment provides a behavioral orientation that encourages employees not only to complete their work but also to consider organizational interests in their work. Therefore, conceptually, organizational commitment is related to employee performance.

The findings are also related to previous studies summarized in the manuscript, particularly Siswatiningsih et al. (2018), Eka Saputri (2021), and Daulay et al. (2019), which found an association or effect of organizational commitment on performance. This consistency supports the present finding of a positive and significant coefficient of 0.343. It shows that organizational commitment remains relevant as a construct explaining performance even when motivation and leadership are included in the model. The findings can also be linked to Claudia (2018), which showed that organizational commitment is associated with the emergence of positive behavior in organizations. This condition highlights the importance of employee commitment to the organization in supporting organizational goal achievement.

The researchers assume that the mean organizational commitment score of 4.32, categorized as very good, is one condition supporting employee performance. A sense of belonging, pride, loyalty, and a desire to remain in the organization may encourage employees to sustain their efforts in completing their work. This assumption is an interpretation of descriptive data tendencies and structural relationships and should therefore be distinguished from evidence of behavioral mechanisms that were not directly measured.

Mediation of Organizational Commitment in the Effect of Motivation on Employee Performance

Organizational commitment was found to partially mediate the effect of motivation on employee performance, with a Sobel value of 2.773 and $p < 0.001$. Partial mediation means that motivation continues to have a direct effect on performance, but part of this effect occurs through organizational commitment. Substantively, motivation not only encourages employees to complete their work directly but may also strengthen their attachment to the organization; this attachment subsequently supports performance. This pattern indicates that performance improvements through motivation may be strengthened when the organization simultaneously builds a sense of belonging, loyalty, and acceptance of organizational goals.

Theoretically, the mediating role of organizational commitment can be understood from the conceptual relationship among motivation, organizational attachment, and performance. According to Hasibuan (2014), motivation encourages individuals to work effectively toward goals, while commitment according to Luthans (2016) concerns acceptance of organizational values and goals and willingness to exert effort for the organization. Thus, conceptually, motivation may be related to performance through stronger employee attachment to the organization while retaining a direct path to performance.

This finding is particularly relevant to Sumiatik et al. (2021), which, as described in the manuscript, used organizational commitment as an intervening variable in the relationship between motivation and performance. The present study also shows a significant indirect effect based on the Sobel Test, while the direct effect of motivation on performance remains significant. This consistency supports a relationship pattern in which organizational commitment functions as one mechanism linking motivation and performance.

The researchers assume that part of employees' work motivation may develop into organizational attachment when employees experience work goals, recognition, opportunities for development, and clear responsibilities. Such attachment may then help sustain employees' efforts to achieve work outcomes. Because the study used survey data from a single institution, this assumption is used to explain the mediation pattern found, rather than to claim a causal mechanism applicable to all organizations.

Mediation of Organizational Commitment in the Effect of Leadership on Employee Performance

Organizational commitment was also found to partially mediate the effect of leadership on employee performance, with a Sobel value of 3.086 and $p < 0.001$. Because the direct effect of leadership on performance remained significant ($\beta = 0.450$; $p < 0.001$), leadership does not operate entirely through organizational commitment. This finding indicates two pathways operating simultaneously: leadership may affect performance directly through direction, task allocation, role modeling, and decision-making, and indirectly through strengthening employees' attachment to the organization. These results provide a basis for viewing improvements in leadership together with efforts to maintain organizational commitment so that their relationship with performance is more comprehensive.

Theoretically, the mediation of organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership and performance can be understood through the role of leadership in shaping work direction and employees' experiences within the organization. Leadership demonstrated through role modeling, instructions, task allocation, the ability to listen to suggestions, and decisiveness may help create working conditions that support acceptance of organizational goals. Such conditions can conceptually be related to commitment, which in turn is associated with performance as described in Luthans' (2016) concept of organizational commitment.

Siswatiningsih et al. (2018) is a relevant previous study because, as reported in this manuscript, it examined the relationship of leadership with organizational commitment and employee performance. The present findings extend this relationship by showing that organizational commitment also serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between leadership and performance. This finding should nevertheless be understood within the context of the research object and model, namely employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City.

The researchers assume that the mean organizational commitment score of 4.32, categorized as very good, is one contextual condition supporting employee performance. A sense of belonging, pride, loyalty, and a desire to remain in the organization may encourage employees to sustain their efforts in completing their work. This interpretation should be distinguished from a directly observed behavioral mechanism. In addition, because all constructs were measured through the same self-report questionnaire, common-method bias cannot be ruled out from the information retained in the manuscript.

CONCLUSION

The researchers assume that leadership affects performance through two simultaneous pathways. The first originates from leadership functions directly, such as providing direction, allocating tasks, and making decisions. The second concerns the formation of organizational commitment through employees' leadership experiences. This interpretation is consistent with the partial mediation result because the direct effect of leadership on performance remains significant while the indirect effect through organizational commitment is also significant. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional survey design does not establish temporal causality.

This study shows that motivation and leadership have positive and significant effects on organizational commitment and employee performance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City. Organizational commitment also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, organizational commitment was found to partially mediate the relationships of motivation with performance and leadership with performance. The model explains 56.8% of the variation in organizational commitment and 90.6% of the variation in employee performance. These findings indicate that employee performance is associated with a combination of work motivation, leadership practices, and employees' attachment to the organization.

Implications

Based on the findings, the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City can focus on strengthening performance through two complementary pathways. First, motivation can be strengthened by providing recognition for work results, supporting achievement, offering development opportunities, and involving employees in achieving work goals. Second, leadership can be strengthened through role modeling, clear direction, task allocation, the ability to listen to input, and decisiveness in decision-making. Both efforts should be accompanied by the maintenance of organizational commitment through strengthening employees' sense of belonging, pride, loyalty, and attachment to the organization.

This study found positive and statistically significant associations of motivation and leadership with organizational commitment and employee performance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City. Organizational commitment was also positively and significantly associated with employee performance. Furthermore, organizational commitment partially mediated the relationships of motivation and leadership with performance. The structural model explained 56.8% of the observed variance in organizational commitment and 90.6% of the observed variance in employee performance. Given the single-institution, cross-

sectional, self-report design, these findings should be interpreted as context-specific statistical relationships rather than definitive causal effects.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The study used a survey design in a single institution, with all 105 members of the population serving as respondents. Therefore, the findings primarily describe the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Subulussalam City. Future research may consider other variables that could affect employee performance and expand the research setting to obtain a more diverse picture.

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