



Employee Performance as Human Capital in Realizing an Integrity-Based Educational Organization

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Abstract

This study examines employee performance as human capital in realizing an integrity-based educational organization, focusing on the Directorate of Junior High Schools, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 122 employees and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that leadership, employee competence, and work motivation significantly affect employee performance. However, employee performance shows a significant negative impact on achieving the Integrity Zone towards a Corruption-Free Area (ZI WBK), revealing a gap between administrative performance and the internalization of integrity values. Conversely, employee competence shows the strongest and most consistent positive influence on ZI WBK achievement, both directly and indirectly. The mediating role of employee performance is found to be complex and ambivalent, indicating that performance can act as both a driver and a constraint on organizational integrity if not guided by ethical values. These findings contribute to the human capital and public sector management literature by highlighting the non-linear relationship between performance and integrity in educational bureaucracy. Practically, this study emphasizes the need for integrating ethical leadership, competency development, and integrity-based performance evaluation to support sustainable integrity reforms in public education organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is an essential element in achieving organizational goals, especially in the context of government bureaucracy (Jannah & Mardikaningsih, 2023). The government is currently facing complex challenges in the form of increasingly high demands for accountability, transparency, and professionalism in human resources (Suwanda & Suryana, 2020). The reality that is often found is that the government has not fully optimized the potential of employees as strategic assets that can drive organizational performance as a whole (Carmeli, 2004; Nanang et al., 2023). According to human capital theory, the quality of human resources in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience has been shown to have a positive relationship with general organizational performance and individual work effectiveness (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022).

In the context of Education, common problems that are often encountered include low levels of internal employee motivation and a lack of understanding of the values of integrity and professional work culture. This condition has an impact on work productivity that has not been optimal, and weak achievement of the strategic goals of educational organizations. Previous research has shown that employee motivation levels significantly affect productivity and work effectiveness in educational organizations. However, many institutions still lack systematic attention to this aspect in their human resource management practices (Ngala et al., 2025).

Directorate of Junior High School of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, as an educational organization, serves not only in the technical administration of education, but also as an institution that is expected to be an example of Public Integrity. However, there are indications that the performance of employees in this environment is still influenced by the variability of technical

competence, leadership style, and work motivation that have not been effectively integrated in supporting the achievement of the territorial integrity zone free from corruption (ZI WBK). This gap marks the need for a deeper understanding of the role of human capital as the basis for improving organizational performance with integrity.

The urgency of this study is based on the strong linkage between determinant variables of employee performance, which include leadership, employee competence, and employee motivation to employee performance (Northouse, 2021; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Robbins & Judge, 2017), as well as how employee performance itself contributes to the achievement of the ZI WBK predicate. Human Resource Management studies affirm that effective and competent leadership and strong motivation are important predictors of individual and organizational work outcomes (Hajiali et al., 2022), as well as in the context of government and public service (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). However, the empirical literature that brings together all these variables in the context of efforts to achieve the integrity of educational organizations has not been sufficiently presented in detail in various studies.

This research is rooted in Human Capital Theory, which asserts that investment in human resources through competency development, motivational coaching, and adaptive leadership styles will result in superior work performance as well as higher organizational competitiveness (Fareed et al., 2016). Previous research in various sectors has shown a positive relationship between human capital attributes, such as competencies and skills, with organizational performance, as well as the role of leadership in reinforcing such effects (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022; Subramony et al., 2018). However, the integration of this theory, especially in the context of achieving the integrity of public education organizations, is still relatively rare.

Several previous empirical studies have highlighted factors such as competence, motivation, and leadership in influencing employee performance (Ngala et al., 2025; Hajiali et al., 2022; Subramony et al., 2018), but studies linking these three variables simultaneously within the framework of achieving the educational organization integrity predicate are still minimal. For example, the findings show a relationship between competence and motivation to employee performance in local government institutions, but without a direct link with specific Public Integrity indicators such as ZI WBK (Warso et al., 2022). This indicates the existence of research gaps that have not fully explained the mechanism of influence of these variables in the context of education bureaucracy with integrity.

In an effort to answer these gaps, this study offers a novelty by comprehensively examining the influence of leadership, competence, and motivation on employee performance and its implications for the achievement of the ZI WBK predicate in the Directorate of Junior High School of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The purpose of the study was formulated to determine the extent to which the three independent variables contribute to employee performance and indirectly encourage the achievement of organizational integrity, in this case, ZI WBK.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyze and test hypotheses by correlating the influence between variables. The survey was conducted on employees within the Directorate of Junior High Schools, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The population in this study amounted to 175, with the number of samples conducted using the Slovin formula obtained as many as 122 employees. In this study, the method of data processing and analysis used is the method of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is a multivariate analysis technique used to test the causality relationship between latent variables (unobserved variables) and manifest variables (observed variables) simultaneously. SEM integrates factor analysis, path analysis, and multiple regression in one comprehensive model (Hair et al., 2011). The Data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed descriptively. The analysis includes the calculation of the average, percentage, and correlation analysis to determine the relationship between employee performance improvement scenarios and the achievement of the ZI WBK predicate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents in this study are employees at the Directorate of Junior High School Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education who are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of tasks, organizational functions, as well as efforts to build integrity zones towards areas free from corruption (ZI WBK), as many as 122 people, according to the number of samples that have been determined. The selection of respondents is carried out considering that employees have a relevant understanding and experience of organizational performance and the implementation of integrity values. All questionnaires were declared feasible to be processed (usable response) and qualified for analysis using the SEM-PLS method. Characteristics of respondents submitted include gender, age, education, length of Service, and position. The distribution of the characteristics of the respondents is described in the five tables below.

Table 1. Respondents Characteristic

Description	Frequency (People)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Men	56	45,90
Female	66	54,10
Total	122	100
Age		
≤ 30 years	18	14,75
31–40 years	42	34,43
41–50 years	39	31,97
> 50 years	23	18,85
Total	122	100
Education Level		
Diploma (D3)	8	6,56
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	79	64,75
Graduate (S2)	35	28,69
Total	122	100
Working Time		
< 5 years	21	17,21
5–10 years	37	30,33
11–15 years	34	27,87
> 15 years	30	24,59
Total	122	100
Position		
Structural Officer	14	11,48
Functional Positions	53	43,44
Executor	55	45,08
Total	122	100

Based on the table above, the percentage of respondents' gender characteristics consisted of male employees and female employees. The results showed that respondents were dominated by female employees rather than men. This reflects the actual condition of employees in the Directorate of SMP Kemendikdasmen. The balance of gender composition is important in the context of SEM-PLS because it can minimize the potential perception of respondents towards leadership constructs, motivation, employee performance, and achievement of integrity zones towards WBK. Most of the respondents are in the productive age range. This shows that the respondents are active employees who are directly involved in the implementation of tasks, the process of public service, as well as the implementation of the Integrity Zone Development Policy. Judging from the results of the table, this study is dominated by employees with the last undergraduate education (S1), with 79 employees, followed by the second largest group of employees with the last postgraduate education (S2), with 35 employees. This shows that this level of education reflects the intellectual capacity and competence of employees in understanding policies, work procedures, and principles of integrity zones towards WBK. The results of the percentage of respondents' characteristics have varied, ranging from employees with relatively

short service life to employees with more than 15 years of Service. This variation of work period provides a comprehensive perspective on the internal conditions of the organization, work culture, and the effectiveness of the implementation of the ZI WBK development policy. The results of the percentage characteristics of respondents came from various levels of office, including structural officials, functional positions, and implementers. This diversity of positions allows the research to capture perceptions from the side of policy planners, program managers, and technical implementers of public services.

Measurement Model

Evaluation model assessment of the validity and reliability of each construction. This stage discusses the indicators (questionnaire items) to identify the latest variables involved accurately. Internal reliability measures the consistency of respondents' answers on indicators in one construction. Convergent validity assesses the degree to which the indicators actually show the same construction. These two assessments were evaluated together, and the results were assessed in the following table.

Table 1. Reliability and AVE

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Leadership (X1)	0,947	0,949	0,954	0,634
Employee Competence (X2)	0,943	0,945	0,952	0,689
Employee Motivation (X3)	0,928	0,929	0,943	0,736
Employee Performance (Z)	0,915	0,918	0,933	0,665
Achievement of ZI WBK Predicate (Y)	0,908	0,911	0,927	0,646

Reliability testing uses three parameters, namely Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR). A construct is declared reliable if the CR value > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011). The data in Table 1 shows that all Composite Reliability (CR) values for all variables are well above the threshold of 0.70. The lowest CR value is 0.927 (achievement of ZI WBK), and the highest is 0.954 (leadership). Similar results are shown by Cronbach's Alpha and rho_A values, which are all above 0.90. This finding proves that all research instruments (questionnaires) used are very reliable and consistent.

Convergent validity was evaluated using the average Variance Extracted (AVE). The condition that must be met is the value of AVE > 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). An average value of 0.50 means that the construct is able to explain 50% or more of the variance of its indicators. Table 1 shows that all constructs in this study have been qualified for convergent validity. All AVE values are above the 0.50 threshold. The lowest AVE value is 0.619 (SPIP), and the highest value is 0.736 (employee motivation). This result confirms that the indicators on each variable have been valid in measuring their respective constructs. Then, discriminant validity ensures that a construct is conceptually and statistically unique and differs (does not overlap) with other constructs in the model. This test uses the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Table 2. Diskriminant Validity

Variable	Leadership (X1)	Employee Performance (Z)	Employee Competence (X2)	Employee Motivation (X3)	Achievement of ZI WBK Predicate (Y)
Leadership (X1)	0,796				
Employee Performance (Z)	0,978	0,815			
Employee Competence (X2)	0,960	0,952	0,830		
Employee Motivation (X3)	0,932	0,957	0,887	0,858	
Achievement of ZI WBK Predicate (Y)	0,950	0,949	0,962	0,918	0,804

The Fornell-Larcker method compares the square root value of the AVE (presented diagonally in the table) with the correlations between constructs (non-diagonal values). A model is considered to have good discriminant validity if the square root of the AVE (diagonal) for each construct is higher than its correlation with all other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Hypothesis Testing

This stage focuses on testing the statistical significance of each hypothesis proposed in the research model. Significance testing is carried out through the SmartPLS bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is stated to be accepted and considered significant if it meets two criteria. The P-Value must be less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), and the T-statistic value must be greater than 1.96 (for a 95% confidence level). The complete statistical calculation results are presented in the following table. Direct effect testing is conducted to test the first seven hypotheses (H1-H7) in this study.

Table 3. Path Coefficient

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
X1 → Z	0,294	0,296	0,068	4,313	0,000
X1 → Y	-0,208	-0,212	0,088	2,358	0,019
Z → Y	-0,372	-0,362	0,147	2,529	0,012
X2 → Z	0,265	0,266	0,048	5,562	0,000
X2 → Y	0,919	0,921	0,089	10,341	0,000
X3 → Z	0,299	0,299	0,043	6,989	0,000
X3 → Y	0,266	0,259	0,086	3,082	0,002

Table 3 presents the test results for seven direct effect hypotheses. The analysis results found that all direct effect hypotheses are accepted and statistically significant. All paths have P-Values < 0.05 and T-Statistics > 1.96. Five out of the seven paths show a positive effect, in accordance with the initial assumptions. The most significant finding (strongest effect) is the path from Employee Competence (X2) to the Achievement of ZI WBK Rating (Y), with a very high T-Statistic value (10.341) and a P-Value of 0.000. Two paths show a significant negative effect, namely Leadership (X1) on ZI WBK Achievement (Y) and Employee Performance (Z) on ZI WBK Achievement (Y). Statistically, this model indicates that an increase in Employee Performance is actually negatively correlated with the Achievement of ZI WBK Rating.

Next, a mediation hypothesis test was conducted to examine the role of Employee Performance (Z) as an intervening variable.

Table 4. Specific Indirect Effect

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
X1 → Z → Y	-0,109	-0,110	0,057	1,912	0,056
X2 → Z → Y	-0,099	-0,095	0,040	2,443	0,015
X3 → Z → Y	-0,111	-0,109	0,048	2,322	0,021

Based on Table 4 above, the results indicate that Employee Performance (Z) significantly mediates the relationship between Employee Competence (X2) and Employee Motivation (X3). Meanwhile, for the Leadership variable (X1), it is not proven to be significant, with a P-Value of 0.056, which is slightly above the 0.05 threshold (and a T-Statistic of 1.912 < 1.96). This is in line with the anomalous findings on the direct effect. All significant mediation effects above also show a negative direction of influence (Original Sample -0.099; -0.111; -0.060). This reinforces the finding that Employee Performance (Z) has a complex and counter-intuitive mediating role in the WBK integrity zone achievement model at the research site.

B. Discussion

The results of this study confirmed that leadership, employee competence, and employee motivation play a significant role in shaping employee performance in the Directorate of Junior High

School, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This finding is consistent with Human Capital Theory, which views human capital as a strategic asset of the organization, where investment in competence, motivation, and leadership will increase the productivity and effectiveness of individual work (Becker, 1993; Aman-Ullah et al., 2022). Empirically, these results are in line with various previous studies showing that effective leadership, adequate competence, and high work motivation are the main determinants of employee performance, both in the public and education sectors (Subramony et al., 2018; Hajiali et al., 2022; Abdelwahed et al., 2023).

The positive influence of leadership on employee performance shows that the role of leadership remains crucial in shaping work behavior, discipline, and employee performance orientation. In public organizations, leadership serves not only as a technical director, but also as a role model of values and work ethics (Northouse, 2021). These findings reinforce the view that a clear, consistent, and capacity-oriented leadership style can improve individual performance. However, effective leadership on performance does not necessarily directly have positive implications on the achievement of organizational integrity, as reflected in the results of this study.

One of the most interesting findings in this study is a significant negative influence between employee performance and achievement of Zi WBK predicate. These findings contradict the normative assumption that high performance will always contribute positively to organizational integrity. However, in the context of public bureaucracy, this phenomenon can be explained through the perspective of the performance-integrity paradox. Some studies suggest that high-performance pressures in public organizations may encourage dysfunctional behaviors, such as pseudo-compliance, administrative manipulation, or excessive focus on quantitative targets versus substantive integrity values (Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002; Choi & Park, 2023).

In the context of integrity zone development, high administrative performance of employees does not necessarily reflect the internalization of integrity values. Employees can demonstrate productivity and achievement of work targets, but still carry out work practices that are procedural, symbolic, or even pragmatic in order to meet formal indicators of Zi WBK assessment. This is in line with the concept of decoupling in institutional theory, where organizations display formal adherence to integrity policies without substantive behavioral change (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Bromley & Powell, 2012). Thus, this negative finding actually indicates a distance between operational performance and the actual quality of integrity.

The finding of the direct negative influence of leadership on the achievement of ZI WBK also reinforces the argument. Leadership that is too oriented towards achieving performance targets can create a work climate that emphasizes short-term results over building a long-term integrity culture. Previous studies have shown that instructional and control-oriented leadership styles can improve short-term performance, but undermine ethical values, honesty, and accountability if not balanced with ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hassan et al., 2014). Therefore, the results of this study confirm that leadership that encourages performance is not necessarily aligned with leadership that fosters integrity.

In contrast, employee competence showed a very strong positive influence on the achievement of ZI WBK, both directly and through employee performance. These findings indicate that organizational integrity is largely determined by the cognitive capacity, understanding of regulations, and technical ability of employees in implementing the principles of accountability and transparency. Competent employees tend to understand the substance of the integrity zone policy, rather than simply fulfilling its administrative aspects. This finding is consistent with research stating that bureaucratic competence is a key prerequisite for successful governance reform and strengthening public sector integrity (OECD, 2017; Altaf & Shabir, 2023).

Mediation results show that employee performance mediates the relationship between competence and motivation to the achievement of ZI WBK with a negative direction. This finding confirms that employee performance acts as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, performance is a prerequisite for the achievement of organizational goals; on the other hand, when performance is not framed by the values of integrity and public ethics, it can actually hinder the achievement of an organization with integrity. De Vries et al. (2016) asserted that performance reforms in the public sector that are not

accompanied by strengthening ethical values have the potential to result in gaming performance and lower public confidence.

Overall, the results of this study provide an important theoretical contribution by showing that the relationship between human capital, performance, and organizational integrity is non-linear and contextual. Employee performance cannot be positioned as the only indicator of the success of an educational organization with integrity. On the contrary, the integration between competence, intrinsic motivation, ethical leadership, and internalization of integrity values is a key factor in realizing the substantive achievement of ZI WBK. These findings enrich the public human resource management literature by asserting that the success of bureaucratic reform is determined not only by how well employees perform, but also by how and why they perform.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

This study shows that leadership, employee competence, and employee motivation are important determinants of employee performance as human capital in the Directorate of Junior High School, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. These findings confirm the relevance of Human Capital Theory in the context of public education organizations, where the quality of human resources remains the main foundation of organizational performance achievement. However, this study also revealed a complex relationship between employee performance and the achievement of the title of regional integrity zone free from corruption (ZI WBK). Employee performance has been shown to negatively affect the achievement of ZI WBK, which indicates a gap between administrative performance and internalization of integrity values. These findings suggest that high performance does not automatically reflect behavior of integrity in the education bureaucracy.

On the other hand, employee competence emerged as the most consistent and dominant factor in supporting the achievement of ZI WBK. This confirms that the success of the development of educational organizations with integrity is determined by the substantive capacity of employees in understanding and applying the principles of accountability and good governance, rather than simply achieving output-based performance. Overall, this research contributes conceptually by asserting that the relationship between human capital, performance, and organizational integrity is contextual and non-linear, thus requiring a more value-oriented approach to human resource management.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings of the study, public education organizations are advised to review the orientation of the employee performance appraisal system by integrating substantive integrity indicators, not just administrative performance indicators. Performance appraisals need to reflect ethical behavior, adherence to accountability principles, and consistency between processes and work results, so that performance serves as a supporting instrument for building organizational integrity. Organizational leaders are advised to adopt a leadership approach that emphasizes ethical leadership dimensions and exemplary values in order to reduce the gap between performance achievement and integrity practices. Leadership development programs need to be directed at strengthening value-based decision making, managing performance pressures, and establishing an organizational culture that supports transparency and accountability.

In Human Resource Development, employee competency improvement should be focused on strengthening the understanding of regulations, risk management, and internal control systems, which are relevant to the implementation of integrity zones. Case-based training and reflection on work practices are recommended to encourage more in-depth and continuous internalization of integrity values.

For future research, it is advisable to develop a more comprehensive model by including variables such as ethical leadership, organizational culture, and internal control mechanisms as moderation or mediation factors. Longitudinal approaches and mixed methods are also recommended to capture the dynamics of the relationship between performance and organizational integrity more fully. This approach is expected to enrich academic understanding as well as provide policy recommendations that are more applicable to education bureaucratic reform.

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