



Motivation, HR Skills, and Commitment: What Drives Employee Performance?

Muhammad Ilyas Alfarizi^{1*}, Suhendra

¹ Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

Corresponding Author e-mail: milyasalfarizi@gmail.com

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Abstract: *This study examines the effects of motivation and human resource (HR) competencies on employee performance, with organizational commitment serving as a mediating variable. The study employed a quantitative explanatory research design involving 59 permanent employees of PT. Indopangan Sentosa. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using path analysis with SPSS. The findings indicate that motivation has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and employee performance, while HR competencies have a positive and significant effect on employee performance but do not significantly influence organizational commitment. Organizational commitment also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and mediates the relationship between motivation and employee performance as well as between HR competencies and employee performance. These findings suggest that employee performance is influenced not only by individual motivation and competencies but also by employees' psychological attachment to the organization. The study highlights the importance of developing integrated human resource management strategies that strengthen employee motivation, competency development, and organizational commitment to improve sustainable employee performance.*

Introduction

Employee performance remains a key driver of organizational success in today's fast-changing business environment. Companies that invest in their human resources often see better productivity, innovation, and adaptability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Among the many factors influencing performance, motivation and competence play especially important roles. Motivation encourages employees to work with energy and purpose, while competence ensures they have the right knowledge and skills to get the job done (Lazaroiu, 2015).

However, high motivation and strong skills are not always enough. Organizational commitment—the emotional and psychological attachment employees feel toward their workplace—also influences how employees behave and perform. Committed employees are more likely to be engaged, stay with the company longer, and contribute more effectively (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Tisu et al., 2021). Recent studies have shown that organizational commitment can act as a bridge, enhancing the effect of motivation and competence on performance outcomes (Azeem & Akhtar, 2021).

In the case of PT. Indopangan Sentosa, a food manufacturing company, maintaining consistent employee performance is a major concern. This study aims to explore how motivation and HR competence affect employee performance, with organizational commitment serving as a mediating variable. By understanding these relationships, the company can strengthen its HR strategies and better support its employees.

Methods

This study adopted a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design, aiming to explore how motivation and human resource (HR) competence influence employee performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. The purpose was to examine relationships between these variables in a structured and statistical way.

The research was conducted at PT. Indopangan Sentosa, involving 59 permanent employees as the population. Since the population was relatively small, the study used a saturated sampling technique, meaning all members of the population were included in the sample. This approach ensured that the findings would reflect the views of the entire employee base.

Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed directly to employees. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5), and was designed to measure four main variables: motivation, HR competence, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Each variable included several indicators. For example, motivation was measured by looking at aspects like enthusiasm, goal orientation, and initiative; HR competence included job skills, communication, and adaptability; organizational commitment focused on emotional attachment, loyalty, and intent to remain; and employee performance was assessed through task completion, punctuality, and quality of work. These indicators were adapted from established sources in human resource and organizational behavior literature (Azeem & Akhtar, 2021; Meyer & Morin, 2016).

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, applying path analysis to examine both direct and indirect effects among the variables. Before conducting the main analysis, the validity of each questionnaire item was tested using Pearson’s product-moment correlation, and the reliability of the variables was checked using Cronbach’s alpha. A significance level of 0.05 (5%) was used throughout the study to determine whether relationships between variables were statistically meaningful.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Description

The respondent profile at PT. Indopangan Sentosa reveals a predominantly young and vocationally skilled workforce. Most employees fall within the 20–30 age group, making up 52.54% (31 respondents), suggesting a team with energy and adaptability. This is followed by the 31–40 age group at 27.12% (16 respondents), likely representing mid-career professionals who blend motivation with growing experience. The 41–50 group comprises 13.56% (8 respondents), while those over 50 years account for just 6.78% (4 respondents), indicating a smaller but valuable presence of seasoned staff with deeper organizational insight.

Gender distribution shows a slight male majority at 54.24% (32 respondents), which may reflect the physically demanding nature of work in the food and beverage production sector. Still, females make up a notable 45.76% (27 respondents), showing that operational intensity hasn't hindered balanced participation across genders.

In terms of educational background, the workforce is heavily dominated by SMK graduates (69.64%, 41 respondents), pointing to a preference for hiring vocationally trained individuals with hands-on skills. University graduates (S1) make up 16.95% (10 respondents), while diploma holders (D3) represent 10.17% (6 respondents). Only 3.39% (2 respondents) hold an SMA qualification, and no respondents reported educational levels below that, reinforcing the company's inclination toward technically capable personnel.

Regarding tenure, the majority of employees—those with less than three years or between three and five years of experience—represent 71.18% (42 respondents), painting a picture of a young and possibly fast-evolving workforce. Meanwhile, 16.95% (10 respondents) have been with the company for six to eight years, and only 11.86% (7 respondents) have served for over eight years. This tenure pattern suggests a company that is likely expanding or evolving quickly, necessitating strategies that focus on onboarding, employee development, and long-term retention.

Altogether, the data paints a clear picture of PT. Indopangan Sentosa as an organization powered by a youthful, skilled workforce with strong technical training, ready to adapt and grow with the demands of the industry.

Analysis of Variables

The core findings of the study evaluated the relationships between motivational factors, HR competencies, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Below is the synthesis of the results.

Impact of Motivation and HR Competencies on Organizational Commitment

Table 1. Results for Sub-Structure 1

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance (p)
Motivation	0.681	6.858	0
HR Competencies	0.046	0.462	0.646

Regression analysis revealed critical insights into the relationships between motivation, HR competencies, and organizational commitment. The findings showed that motivation had a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.681, a t-value of 6.858, and a p-value < 0.05 . This indicates that higher levels of motivation among employees are strongly associated with their commitment to the organization.

Conversely, HR competencies demonstrated no significant influence on organizational commitment. The standardized coefficient (β) for HR competencies was 0.046, with a t-value of 0.462 and a p-value > 0.05 . This suggests that technical skills and knowledge alone may not be sufficient to strengthen employees' emotional or psychological bond with the organization. Together, motivation and HR competencies accounted for 45.7% of the variance in organizational commitment, as evidenced by the adjusted R^2 value.

The findings emphasize the critical role of motivation in fostering organizational commitment, consistent with established theories in organizational behavior. Motivation serves as a driving force that influences employees' willingness to align their goals and actions with those of the organization, ultimately enhancing their sense of loyalty and involvement (Mangkunegara, 2013). The significant impact of motivation corroborates previous studies, such as those by Purnama (2016), which highlight the importance of intrinsic factors like goal achievement, recognition, and workplace relationships in strengthening organizational commitment. Similarly, Suherman et al. (2017) found that motivated employees are more likely to develop a strong emotional connection with their organization, enabling higher levels of engagement and performance.

On the other hand, HR competencies—despite their undeniable value in operational efficiency—did not demonstrate a significant relationship with organizational commitment. This aligns with studies by Yamali (2018), which suggest that technical competencies may lack the emotional and psychological depth necessary to foster commitment. While HR competencies such as skills and knowledge are vital for individual performance, their role in shaping affective and normative organizational commitment remains limited unless complemented by intrinsic motivational factors (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Impact of Motivation, HR Competencies, and Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance

The second substructure of the analysis examined the combined effects of motivation, HR competencies, and organizational commitment on employee performance.

Table 2. Regression Results for Sub-Structure 2

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance (p)
Motivation	0.29	2.344	0.023
HR Competencies	0.239	2.62	0.011
Organizational Commitment	0.439		

Regression analysis revealed that all three variables had a significant positive impact on

performance. Among them, organizational commitment was the most influential predictor ($\beta = 0.439$, $t = 4.018$, $p < 0.05$), followed by motivation ($\beta = 0.290$, $t = 2.344$, $p < 0.05$) and HR competencies ($\beta = 0.239$, $t = 2.620$, $p < 0.05$). Together, these variables explained 55% of the variation in employee performance.

These findings reinforce several key theories and empirical studies in organizational behavior, highlighting how motivation, HR competencies, and organizational commitment work together to shape employee performance. Each factor plays a unique role in enhancing workforce productivity, but their combined effect underscores the importance of a comprehensive, integrated approach to improving performance.

Motivation as a Driver of Performance

The positive influence of motivation on employee performance aligns with previous research that underscores the power of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Purnama, 2016; Coenraad, 2016). Motivated employees tend to show greater enthusiasm, persistence, and efficiency in completing their tasks—traits that are essential for high performance (Mangkunegara, 2013).

Organizations can nurture motivation by aligning employees' personal goals with organizational objectives, ensuring that what's expected of them feels both meaningful and attainable. Recognition also plays a vital role—when employees feel that their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated, their intrinsic motivation grows (McClelland, 2009). Moreover, providing employees with autonomy in decision-making can instill a sense of ownership and drive, leading to more self-directed and sustained effort (Herzberg, 2006).

Based on this study's evidence, motivation isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a performance lever. When organizations embed motivational strategies into their operations—whether through incentives, autonomy, or goal-setting—they're likely to see tangible improvements in employee output.

HR Competencies: The Foundation of Strong Performance

The significant effect of HR competencies on employee performance supports long-held theories that well-equipped workers are more capable of navigating complex tasks and challenges (Yamali, 2018; Renyut et al., 2017). Competencies such as technical expertise, adaptability, and problem-solving are not just desirable—they're essential for sustained performance.

To support the development of these competencies, organizations can foster a culture of continuous learning through targeted training and development programs (Marshall, 2000). Encouraging employees to explore skills beyond their primary roles—such as through cross-functional collaboration—helps build resilience and versatility in the workforce (Fatoki, 2011). Additionally, aligning career advancement with demonstrated competencies, rather than tenure alone, can create a merit-based environment that rewards real contributions.

By focusing on competency-building, organizations empower employees to meet expectations more confidently and contribute to overall growth and productivity.

Organizational Commitment: The Strongest Predictor

Among all the predictors examined, organizational commitment stood out as the most powerful force influencing employee performance. This confirms prior research highlighting commitment as a central factor in determining how engaged, loyal, and productive employees are (Cahyani, 2020; Randall, 1990).

Drawing on Meyer and Allen's (2004) model, organizational commitment includes emotional attachment to the company (affective commitment), awareness of the costs of leaving (continuance commitment), and a sense of moral duty to stay (normative commitment). Employees who feel connected on these levels are more likely to go above and beyond, stay longer, and align their efforts with organizational goals.

Commitment grows in environments where employees feel they belong and are treated fairly. Leadership plays a key role in shaping this experience—supportive, communicative, and empowering managers inspire stronger loyalty (Wiener, 1982). Offering opportunities for career advancement and creating a stable work environment also reinforces the sense of long-term investment (Setiadi, 2005).

The strong correlation between organizational commitment and performance highlights the importance of nurturing genuine engagement through trust-building and shared purpose.

Organizational Commitment as a Mediator

What makes commitment even more vital is its role in mediating the relationship between motivation and HR competencies with performance. Sobel tests revealed that employees who are more committed can better channel their motivation and competencies into productive outcomes ($t = 1.974$ for motivation and $t = 2.142$ for HR competencies).

This means that even highly skilled and motivated employees might not perform optimally unless they feel a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to their organization. Commitment amplifies the effects of both motivation and competencies, turning potential into actual performance.

Organizations, therefore, should view commitment as the glue that binds together the elements of a high-performing workforce. It's not enough to hire skilled people or offer perks; fostering an emotional and psychological connection to the organization is key to unlocking true performance.

Implications for Practice

For companies like PT. Indopangan Sentosa, these insights translate into practical strategies. Investing in holistic HR development ensures that employees grow not just in skills but also in emotional intelligence and interpersonal capabilities. Motivational systems that combine recognition, clear targets, and autonomy can energize employees at all levels. Most importantly, cultivating a workplace culture where employees feel valued, supported, and aligned with the company's mission builds the kind of commitment that drives real results.

Performance management, then, should go beyond numbers and task completion. It should also account for how deeply employees are engaged with their work and their

organization. By taking a well-rounded approach that blends motivation, competencies, and commitment, companies can set the stage for sustainable performance and long-term success.

Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment

The mediating role of organizational commitment emerges clearly through the Sobel test results, which indicate that commitment significantly channels the influence of both motivation and HR competencies on employee performance. When looking at the statistical data, the t-values for both paths exceed the 1.67 threshold, confirming mediation. Specifically, motivation impacts employee performance indirectly through organizational commitment ($t = 1.974$), and HR competencies likewise influence performance through this same channel ($t = 2.142$). This suggests that while motivation and competencies are valuable on their own, their true potential is more fully realized when employees also feel deeply committed to the organization.

This insight underscores just how powerful organizational commitment can be in amplifying the benefits of motivation and skill. Employees who are highly committed tend to direct their capabilities and energy more effectively, resulting in better performance, more consistent effort, and higher levels of satisfaction in their work. When motivation and HR competencies are filtered through a strong sense of commitment, the result is a workplace where people not only *can* perform well—but are genuinely driven to do so.

These findings echo what Susanto and Sukoco (2019) observed, namely that commitment plays a crucial role in boosting engagement, reducing turnover, and encouraging internal cooperation. Committed employees are often the ones who go the extra mile, show resilience under pressure, and maintain a strong focus on contributing to organizational success.

In line with Meyer and Allen's (2004) well-established three-component model of commitment, this dynamic can be understood through three lenses. Affective commitment reflects employees' emotional attachment to their organization, where they feel proud and valued. Continuance commitment deals with the cost-benefit analysis of staying with the company, while normative commitment is driven by a sense of moral obligation or loyalty. When affective and normative components are strong, employees don't just do their jobs—they actively strive to make a meaningful impact.

Motivation, while powerful on its own, may only produce short bursts of productivity if not grounded in organizational commitment. In contrast, when commitment is present, motivation becomes sustained and aligned with broader company goals. The same can be said for HR competencies. Technical skills are essential, but commitment is what transforms those skills into real-world outcomes. Committed employees are more likely to pursue ongoing development, tackle complex challenges, and collaborate constructively with colleagues. This synergy between commitment, motivation, and competence supports a high-performance culture and narrows performance gaps across teams.

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that organizations should put more focus on building a culture of commitment. That starts with recognizing and rewarding employee contributions in meaningful ways that strengthen emotional connections to the

workplace. Leaders also play a big part—those who inspire trust and foster shared values help reinforce that sense of purpose and belonging (Randall, 1990). Clear career growth paths, stability, and an inclusive work environment where employees feel heard and valued further boost this connection.

When employees see that their growth is supported, their efforts appreciated, and their voice respected, their bond with the organization deepens. That's when motivation and skills really start to flourish—because people aren't just working *for* a company; they're working *with* it, and sometimes even *because of* it.

By intentionally cultivating organizational commitment, companies unlock the full benefits of both motivation and competencies, leading to long-term improvements in employee performance and organizational resilience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study underscores the importance of motivation, HR competencies, and organizational commitment in shaping employee performance. Motivation significantly drives workplace engagement, fostering a sense of purpose and encouraging employees to invest their energy into achieving organizational goals. While HR competencies contribute to technical efficiency, their impact on commitment is limited unless paired with intrinsic motivational factors. Organizational commitment serves as a critical mediator, amplifying the effects of motivation and competencies, ensuring that employees remain dedicated, aligned with company objectives, and productive over time.

To enhance workforce effectiveness, organizations should cultivate an environment where employees feel valued, recognized, and empowered. Strengthening motivation through career development, performance incentives, and meaningful work can sustain engagement and drive results. HR competency-building should focus on both technical expertise and interpersonal effectiveness to create well-rounded professionals. Additionally, fostering organizational commitment through inclusive leadership, transparency, and career stability will further reinforce a culture of high performance, leading to sustainable growth and workforce retention.

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