

# The Influence of Competence and Leadership on Employee Performance with Commitment as an Intervening Variable

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## Abstract

### Keywords:

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Employee Performance

Employee performance is a key factor in determining an organization's success. In several studies, the factors influencing employee performance are competence and leadership. Meanwhile, an equally important factor in strengthening the above variables is employee commitment. This study aims to investigate whether competence and leadership have a significant positive impact on employee performance, with commitment serving as an intervening variable. This research is quantitative. The sample in this study consisted of 52 respondents, who were selected using the snowball sampling technique. The data source was a questionnaire distributed randomly using Google Forms. The data analysis technique utilized the Smart-PLS 4.0 application, which comprises inferential statistical tests, model measurement, model design, hypothesis testing, and model evaluation. The results of the study show (1) directly, competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance with a p-value of  $0.013 < 0.05$ , but does not affect commitment because the p-value is  $0.336 > 0.05$ , (2) leadership has a direct significant positive effect on employee commitment and performance with a p-value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ , (3) commitment has a direct significant positive effect on employee performance  $0.001 < 0.05$ . Indirectly, commitment is unable to strengthen the competence variable in relation to employee performance, as indicated by a p-value of 0.361, which is greater than 0.05. At the same time, leadership can strengthen the leadership variable on employee performance with a p-value of  $0.04 < 0.05$ . This study contributes to the development of management science, particularly in understanding the factors that influence employee performance. While the limitation of this study is that the sample is too small, future researchers can conduct further research by increasing the sample size. Research approaches can also be used with a variety of more varied approaches.

### Kata Kunci:

Kompetensi, Kepemimpinan,  
Komitmen dan Kinerja  
Pegawai

### Abstrak.

Kinerja pegawai merupakan salah satu faktor utama yang menentukan keberhasilan suatu organisasi. Dalam beberapa penelitian, faktor yang mempengaruhi kinerja pegawai adalah kompetensi dan kepemimpinan. Sedangkan faktor yang tidak kalah penting dalam memperkuat variabel-variabel di atas adalah komitmen dari pegawai itu sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah kompetensi dan kepemimpinan berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan komitmen sebagai variabel intervening. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif. Sampel dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 52 responden dengan teknik snowball sampling. Sumber data berupa kuesioner yang disebarakan secara acak dengan google form. Teknik analisis data menggunakan aplikasi Smart-PLS 4.0 yang terdiri dari uji statistik inferensial, pengukuran model, perancangan model, pengujian hipotesis dan evaluasi model. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan (1) secara langsung, kompetensi berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan nilai p-value  $0,013 < 0,05$ , tetapi tidak berpengaruh terhadap komitmen karena nilai p-value  $0,336 > 0,05$ , (2) kepemimpinan secara langsung berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap komitmen dan kinerja pegawai dengan nilai p-value  $0,001 < 0,05$ , (3) komitmen secara langsung berpengaruh positif

*signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai  $0,001 < 0,05$ . Secara tidak langsung, komitmen tidak mampu memperkuat variabel kompetensi terhadap kinerja pegawai dimana nilai  $p$ -value  $0,361 > 0,05$ . Sedangkan kepemimpinan mampu memperkuat variabel kepemimpinan terhadap kinerja pegawai dengan nilai  $p$ -value  $0,04 < 0,05$ . Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam pengembangan ilmu manajemen khususnya pada factor yang mempengaruhi kinerja pegawai. Sedangkan keterbatasan penelitian ini adalah sampel yang terlampau kecil sehingga peneliti selanjutnya dapat melakukan riset kembali dengan menambah jumlah sampel yang jauh lebih besar. Pendekatan penelitian juga bisa digunakan dengan berbagai pendekatan yang lebih bervariasi.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of employee performance in Indonesia is a constantly evolving one. This is evident in several national surveys, which indicate that employee performance is suboptimal, reflected in a poor work culture, declining discipline, and persistent disparities between ministries and regions (Yuditio et al., 2024). This also applies to employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in general, where employee performance is often less than satisfactory, driven by low motivation and poor work discipline, which negatively impacts employee performance. (Sudirman, 2025). In its development, the proper human resource management (HRM) practices will be oriented towards improving employee performance. This is in accordance with the opinion of (Shen & Edwards, 2004) The primary assumption of HRM is that implementing the proper HRM practices will lead to improved performance.

In much literature and research results, employee performance is greatly influenced by the employee's own competence. (Marudut Sirait et al., 2022). Competence is the personal ability possessed by employees to complete their work. Competence is divided into two categories: formal competence, acquired through educational levels, and non-formal competence, acquired through training, counseling, technical guidance activities, and other similar experiences. (Marudut Sirait et al., 2022). However, a gap exists in the research conducted by Nurlindah, which suggests that competence does not have a significant effect on employee performance. (Nurlindah & Abdul Rahman Rahim, 2018). Meanwhile, Yanti found that leadership does not affect improving employee performance. This gap has sparked interest among researchers in re-examining the relationship between competence and leadership, as well as their impact on employee performance (Rosmika et al., 2022; Yanti et al., 2022).

A transformational leadership style is expected to improve employee motivation and performance, but the results are often inconsistent (Kartiko et al., 2024; Lor & Hasan, 2017). Since 2003, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Murung Raya Regency has been making various efforts to improve employee performance 2003. Performance is not an individual characteristic, such as talent or ability, but is a manifestation of the talent or ability itself (Prihono et al., 2016). Performance is the result of work and work behavior that has been achieved in completing tasks and responsibilities given in a specific period. Performance is a function of motivation and ability (Araffat et al., 2020). To complete a task or job, a person must have a certain degree of willingness and a suitable level of ability. Individual performance is the foundation of organizational performance, which is significantly influenced by individual characteristics, motivation, expectations, and assessments made by management regarding the achievement of individual work results (Sabil et al., 2021).

According to Robbins, performance indicators can be measured through five key metrics: Quality, Quantity, Timeliness, Effectiveness, and Efficiency (Donkor et al., 2021a). The performance of government employees is a key element in the efficiency and effectiveness of public services (Kuldosheva et al., 2021). Although various efforts have been made to enhance

employee competence and implement effective leadership strategies, the results often fall short of expectations. Most previous studies have emphasized the direct influence of competence and leadership on performance, but have rarely explored the role of employee commitment variables as moderators in this relationship (Ichsan et al., 2021). Employee performance is the result of synergy between competence, leadership, and commitment. In the context of the Ministry of Religion, good performance will be evident in improving public services, enhancing program effectiveness, and achieving organizational goals (Muhamad et al., 2019). High performance not only benefits the ministry but also has a positive impact on society (Mukaromah, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to establish a system that fosters competency development, promotes effective leadership, and enhances employee commitment, thereby enabling continued improvement in employee performance (Rantesalu et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study is to examine the direct influence of competence on employee performance, leadership on employee performance, and commitment on employee performance. The second objective is to investigate the indirect effect of competence and leadership on employee performance, mediated by employee commitment as a moderating variable. This study was conducted because human resource issues remain highly relevant and significant in the modern era. Government employees within the Ministry of Religious Affairs are a key focus of this study. Competence, leadership, commitment, and employee performance in the Ministry of Religious Affairs are interrelated and form an ecosystem that supports the organization's success. By strengthening these four elements, the Ministry of Religious Affairs can be more effective in carrying out its function as a professional and quality religious service provider. The application of strong work culture values will be the foundation for employees to contribute optimally in achieving the ministry's vision and mission, especially in the digital era.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach, incorporating multivariate analysis, to examine the relationships between the constructs in the research model. (Brier & lia dwi jayanti, 2020). The exogenous variables used in this study were competency and leadership, while the endogenous variables were employee commitment and performance. This approach aimed to predict relationships or develop a theory, especially given the relatively small sample size. The contingency table is as follows:

**Table 1: Definition of Variables**

Variables	Definition	Indicators
<b>Competence</b>	Competence is a person's characteristic related to effective and/or superior performance in a particular work situation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge</li> <li>2. Skills</li> <li>3. Attitude</li> <li>4. Achievement</li> </ol>
<b>Leadership</b>	Leadership is defined as a person's ability to influence others through communication, either directly or indirectly, with the intention of motivating those people to follow the leader's will with complete understanding, awareness, and pleasure.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Direction</li> <li>2. Communication</li> <li>3. Decision-making</li> <li>4. Motivation</li> </ol>
<b>Commitment</b>	Commitment is a strong desire to be a member of a group, a high willingness to make an effort for the organization, and a specific belief in and acceptance of the organization's values and goals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Length of Service</li> <li>2. Involvement</li> <li>3. Attendance</li> <li>4. Satisfaction</li> </ol>

		5. Proactive
		6. Loyalty
<b>Employee performance</b>	The employee's own competence greatly influences employee performance	1. Quality 2. Quantity 3. Timeliness 4. Effectiveness

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2025

The population in this study consisted of all employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Murung Raya Regency, including functional teachers, educational staff, and administrative staff. (Vizano et al., 2020). A sample of 52 was selected using probability sampling. Data were obtained by distributing questionnaires directly to employees using the Google Forms application. Data were processed using the SEM-PLS technique supported by the Smart-PLS 4.0 application. Data analysis began with instrument testing, which included convergent validity and discriminant validity, with construct values above 0.7 and AVE above 0.5. Reliability was assessed by a composite reliability value of >7. Hypothesis testing used t-tests for direct effects and z-tests for indirect effects (Aguste Ferdinand, 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study utilized 52 research samples comprising employees of the Ministry of Religion with civil servant (PNS) status, government employees with work agreements (PPPK), and non-permanent employees in the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan. The presentation of the research data is as follows:

### Data Presentation

#### *Inferential Statistics (unidimensional data test)*

The Unidimensionality test of each construct is carried out by looking at the convergent validity of each construct indicator. According to Chin in Ghozali, an indicator is said to have good reliability if the outer loading or loading factor value is greater than 0.70; however, a loading factor of 0.50 to 0.60 can still be maintained at the initial stage. Based on the above criteria, if an outer loading is found below 0.50, it will be removed from the model. Testing is carried out by conducting several tests: Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability as follows:

#### *Convergent Validity*

**Table 2: Convergent Validity**

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading	Information
<b>Competence</b>	X1.1	0.898	Valid
	X1.2	0.919	Valid
	X1.3	0.837	Valid
	X1.4	0.920	Valid
	X1.5	0.922	Valid
	X1.6	0.897	Valid
	X1.7	0.780	Valid
<b>Leadership</b>	X2.1	0.854	Valid
	X2.2	0.753	Valid
	X2.3	0.861	Valid
	X2.4	0.726	Valid
<b>Employee Commitment</b>	Y1.1	0.960	Valid
	Y1.2	0.960	Valid
	Y1.3	0.976	Valid

	Y1.4	0.947	Valid	
	Y1.5	0.939	Valid	
	Y1.6	0.928	Valid	
<b>Employee Performance</b>	Y2.1	0.827	Valid	
	Y2.2	0.867	Valid	
	Y2.3	0.801	Valid	
	Y2.4	0.873	Valid	
	Y2.5	0.612	Valid	
	Y2.6	0.753	Valid	

Smart-PLS Source: Output

Based on Table 2, outer loading test results, the test results show that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.6. Thus, the indicators have met the criteria for proper convergent validity and can be called valid data. Based on the assumptions above, all indicators are met and are suitable to be continued to the next stage for analysis.

*Discriminant Validity*

**Table 3 Discriminant Validity**

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Leadership</b>	0.727
<b>Performance</b>	0.757
<b>Commitment</b>	0.773
<b>Competence</b>	0.545

Source: Smart-PLS Output

In Table 3, the results of the discriminant validity test indicate that all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50. Thus, it can be concluded that this measurement has met the Convergent Validity requirements based on the value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

*Composite Reliability*

**Table 4 Composite Validity**

Variables	Composite Reliability	Information
<b>Leadership</b>	0.842	Reliable
<b>Performance</b>	0.910	Reliable
<b>Commitment</b>	0.845	Reliable
<b>Competence</b>	0.961	Reliable

Source: Smart-PLS Output

Results, where all latent variables have been reliable because all variable values have a composite reliability value  $\geq 0.70$ . In other words, the questionnaire used as an instrument in this study is reliable and consistent. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators are indeed measures of their respective constructs.

*PLS Modeling*

Goodness-of-fit testing of the structural model on the inner model uses the predictive relevance value ( $Q^2$ ). The  $R^2$  value of each endogenous variable in this study can be seen as visualized in Table 4.4 as follows:

Endogenous Variables	R-square
Commitment	0.310
Performance	0.624

The predictive-relevance value is obtained using the following formula:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2) (1 - R_p^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.310) (1 - 0.624) = 0.69$$

$$Q^2 = 0.740$$

The calculation results above show a predictive-relevance value of 0.740, which is greater than 0. This means that the variation in the Employee Performance variable (endogenous variable) is explained by the variables used, accounting for 74%, and other factors outside the model explain the remaining 26%. Thus, the model is said to have a very high predictive value.

### Hypothesis Testing

The results of hypothesis testing using Partial Least Squares indicate that there are four direct influences on the hypothesis, all of which are significantly positive. While the results of testing one indirect influence suggest that the hypothesis is not supported, it is stated as having no significant effect. There is also an indirect influence, where leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance through commitment, serving as a moderator. Testing the hypothesis of direct influence is conducted using the t-test on each path of influence between endogenous variables and exogenous variables. Testing the indirect influence is performed by calculating the Z-test and its corresponding P-value. Furthermore, the results of hypothesis testing can be seen as visualized in Table 5 as follows:

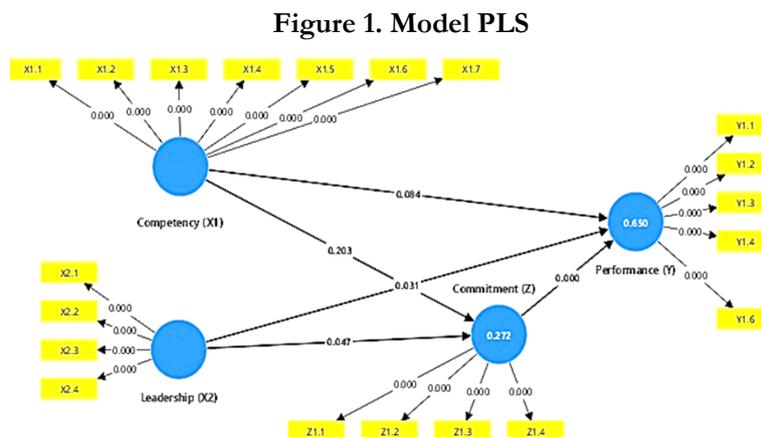
**Table 5: Direct and Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing**

Direct Influence	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T-Statistic	p-value	Information
H1: Competence -> Performance	0.326	0.132	2,478	0.013	Significant
H2: Competence -> Commitment	0.160	0.116	0.962	0.336	Not Significant
H3: Leadership-> Performance	0.452	0.136	3,322	0.001	Significant
H4: Leadership -> Commitment	0.426	0.158	2,689	0.007	Significant
H5: Commitment -> Performance	0.362	0.110	3,286	0.001	Significant
Indirect Influence	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T-Statistic	p-value	Information
H6: Competence -> Commitment -> Performance	0.058	0.063	0.914	0.361	Not Significant
H7: Leadership -> Commitment -> Performance	0.158	0.078	1,986	0.048	Significant

Source: Smart-PLS Output

Table 5 above, the results of the analysis show that 4 (four) hypotheses have a direct influence (H1, H3, H4, and H5), which are positive and significant (proven), while H2 is not significant. While the indirect influence hypothesis shows that the hypothesis is significant

(proven) for H7, and not proven significant for H6. To provide a clear picture of the relationship model between latent variables of each path in this study, it can be seen as in the visualization of Figure 1 as follows:



Source: Output Smar-PLS 4.0

### Hypothesis Result

*Hypothesis 1:* Competence has a significant effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach yields a direct influence path coefficient of competence on Employee Performance, indicating a significant positive effect with a path coefficient of 0.326 and a t-statistic of 2.478, which is significant at an error level of  $\alpha = 5\%$  (t-count value > t-table value = 1.677). Because tcount < t-table, there is sufficient empirical evidence to accept H1, which states that competence clearly has a significant effect on Employee Performance. The path coefficient is positive and significant, indicating a unidirectional and relatively strong relationship between the two variables. This means that the higher an employee's competence, the higher their performance. Conversely, the lower the employee's competence, the lower their performance among employees of the Ministry of Religion in Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 2:* Competence does not have a significant effect on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach yields a direct influence path coefficient of Competence on organizational commitment, which has a significant positive effect with a path coefficient of 0.160 and a t-statistic of 2.962, indicating significance at the  $\alpha 5\%$  error level (t-count value > t-table value = 1.677). Because t-count > t-table, there is empirical evidence to reject the hypothesis H2, which states that competence has a significant positive effect on employee commitment, and H2 is rejected. The coefficient is positive but not statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between the two is not unidirectional and relatively weak. This means that the increasing employee competence will not be able to influence the increase in employee commitment to employees of the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 3:* Leadership has a significant influence on Employee Performance

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach produces a direct influence path coefficient of leadership on employee performance with a path coefficient of 0.452 and a t-statistic of 3.322, significant at an error level of  $\alpha 5\%$  (t-count value < t-table value = 1.677). Because tcount > t-table, there is sufficient empirical evidence to accept H3, which states that leadership has a significant positive effect on Performance. These results indicate that the higher the leadership in the organization, the greater its influence on employee performance at the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 4:* Leadership has a significant influence on employee commitment.

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach yields a direct influence path coefficient of leadership on employee commitment, which has a significant positive effect with a path coefficient of 0.426 and a t-statistic of 2.689, significant at an error level of  $\alpha = 5\%$  (t-count value > t-table value = 1.677). Because t-count > t-table, there is empirical evidence to accept the hypothesis H4, which states that leadership has a significant effect on employee organizational commitment, so H4 is accepted. The coefficient is significantly positive, indicating a strong relationship between the two variables, in both directions. This means that the increasing leadership of employees can influence the increase in employee commitment itself to employees of the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 5:* Employee commitment has a significant effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach yields a direct influence path coefficient of commitment on employee performance, indicating a significant positive effect with a path coefficient of 0.362 and a t-statistic of 3.286, which is significant at an error level of  $\alpha = 5\%$  (t-count value > t-table value = 1.677). Because tcount > t-table, there is sufficient empirical evidence to accept H5, which states that organizational commitment has a significant effect on employee performance. The path coefficient is significantly positive, indicating a strong, unidirectional relationship between the two variables. This means that the higher the employee commitment, the higher the employee performance. Conversely, the lower the employee commitment, the lower the employee performance of the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 6:* Competence has a significant effect on performance with Organizational Commitment as a Mediating variable.

Hypothesis testing using the PLS approach yields a path coefficient indicating the indirect influence of competence on employee performance through organizational commitment as a mediating variable, with a statistically positive influence. Significant with a path coefficient of 0.058 and a t-statistic of 0.914 is not significant at the  $\alpha$  error level of 5% (t-count value > t-table value = 1.677). Because t-count < t-table, there is no empirical evidence to accept the hypothesis H6, which states that competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance with commitment as a mediating variable, and H6 is rejected.

The coefficient is positive but not statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between the two variables is not unidirectional and not strong, with an indirect influence mediated by the commitment variable. This means that the increasing employee competence will not affect the increase in employee performance, even with organizational commitment as a mediator. The mediating variable is not sufficiently representative in mediating the relationship between the competence variable and employee performance among employees of the Ministry of Religion in Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

*Hypothesis 7:* Leadership has a significant influence on employee performance with organizational commitment as a mediating variable.

Hypothesis testing with the PLS approach produces a path coefficient of indirect influence of leadership on employee performance through commitment as a mediating variable, where statistically the positive influence is significant with a path coefficient of 0.158 and a t-statistic of 1.986 with significance at an error level of  $\alpha 5\%$  (t-count value < t-table value = 1.677). Because t-count > t-table, there is empirical evidence to accept hypothesis H7, which states that leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance with organizational commitment as a mediating variable, and finally accepts H7. The coefficient is significantly positive, so it can be concluded that the relationship between the two is unidirectional and very strong, with an indirect influence mediated by the commitment variable. This means that the increasing leadership will immediately affect the increase in employee performance, with organizational commitment as a

mediator. The commitment variable is quite representative in mediating the relationship between leadership and performance variables among employees of the Ministry of Religion in Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Competence in Employee Performance**

Having adequate skills and knowledge tends to result in high-quality work. For example, an employee with good technical skills will be more efficient in completing his/her tasks and reduce the chances of errors. Good competence is often directly proportional to increased productivity. (Sulantara et al., 2020). Employees who understand their jobs well can complete tasks more efficiently and with fewer resources, which in turn has a positive impact on overall productivity. Employees with good problem-solving skills can make informed and strategic decisions, which are essential to achieving organizational goals. This also contributes to project success and achieving the target. Competent employees tend to be more engaged in their work. They feel confident in their abilities and are more motivated to give their best, which ultimately leads to improved performance. (Papa, 1989).

The influence of competence on employee performance is very significant. By enhancing employee competence through training and development, organizations can foster improved employee performance. (Fischer & Mansell, 2009). Therefore, investing in employee competence development not only improves individual results but also provides long-term benefits to the organization as a whole. A deep understanding of this relationship is essential for managers and leaders to develop effective HR strategies. (Azhari & Alwany, 2023). One reason for the inconsistency between competence and commitment may lie in the organizational context in which the research was conducted. Different organizations have different cultures, values, and reward systems. In some organizations, employees may feel competent in their roles but lack emotional investment in the organization. This can occur in companies that prioritize results over individual development. (Swales, 2002).

Competence is not always linearly related to commitment. In some cases, employees with high competence may feel dissatisfied with their roles, especially if they believe their abilities are not being fully utilized or if they experience a lack of challenge. Conversely, employees with lower competence may have higher commitment if they feel valued and supported sufficiently. (J. E. Wallace, 1993). Several studies have shown that employee competency does not always have a direct positive effect on employee commitment, as its influence can be mediated or influenced by other factors, such as inappropriate job placement, the work environment, motivation, and management style. (Martha Hagos Demeke, 2018).

If employee competency is not balanced with appropriate placement, it can become a barrier; alternatively, external factors such as working conditions can be more dominant in influencing employee commitment, resulting in varying research results. (Lombogia Larasati Angelica et al., 2022). The finding that competence has no significant effect on employee commitment suggests that the relationship between these two variables is much more complex than previously thought. A variety of other factors, including organizational context, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction, play significant roles in shaping employee commitment. (Fisher, 2014). Therefore, organizations should adopt a holistic approach to employee development, where competence, motivation, and job satisfaction are all considered to effectively enhance employee commitment.

Leadership is a key factor in achieving optimal employee performance. Research indicates that leadership has a substantial impact on employee performance, lending support to the notion that effective leadership styles can enhance productivity and work quality. (Klein et al., 2012). A leader's ability to foster cooperation and good relationships is essential in creating a collaborative work environment. Effective leaders can cultivate a positive work environment and foster open communication. Good relationships between leaders and employees increase employee motivation and engagement. When employees feel valued and heard, they are more likely to commit to giving their best in their work. (Donkor et al., 2021)

### **Leadership on Employee Performance**

The influence of leadership on employee performance is very significant and supported by various indicators. The ability to foster cooperation, complete tasks with dedication, make decisions through deliberation, delegate tasks, and provide guidance are key elements that can improve overall employee performance. (Buil et al., 2019). By developing effective leadership, organizations can not only increase productivity but also create a positive and sustainable work environment.

Investing in leadership development will yield long-term benefits for the organization and its employees. (Abasilim et al., 2019). Effective leadership is one of the main factors that influence employee commitment in an organization. Research indicates a significant relationship between leadership style and employee commitment levels, supporting the hypothesis that effective leaders can enhance employee dedication to the organization. In this discussion, we will identify indicators of employee commitment and explain how leadership contributes to each of them. (Eliyana et al., 2019).

Highly committed employees tend to work harder and take pride in being part of the organization. This sense of pride is often fueled by leadership that sets an example, inspires, and supports employees in achieving goals. Leaders who demonstrate a clear vision and provide positive feedback can motivate employees to work harder. (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024b). When employees feel appreciated, they are more likely to work with greater dedication. For instance, performance awards can reward employees who demonstrate exceptional performance, increasing pride. Additionally, communicating organizational accomplishments and employee contributions can foster a sense of collective pride.

Highly committed employees feel that leaving the organization would have negative consequences for both themselves and the organization. This reflects a strong emotional bond. Leaders who build strong relationships and demonstrate genuine concern for their employees can strengthen this bond (Ichsan et al., 2021). When employees feel they have a significant impact, they are more likely to stay committed, such as by developing programs that emphasize benefits and rewards for loyal employees and conveying the importance of employee contributions to the organization's success.

Effective leadership provides direction for enhancing employee performance. This leadership applies to anyone assigned a professional task. Leadership is not solely born in the leader; all employees can demonstrate leadership qualities. (Rofifah et al., 2021). The Ministry of Religious Affairs, as one of the ministries that values leadership, must be a concrete example in fostering a spirit of leadership. The texts and scriptures used as guidelines for life within the Ministry of Religious Affairs must truly reflect the journey of life, thus producing leaders capable of adapting to any situation. (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024a).

## **Leadership On Employee Commitment**

The influence of leadership on employee commitment is significant and can be observed through various indicators that have been discussed. By creating a positive work environment, providing support, and involving employees in decision-making, leaders can effectively increase employee commitment. (E. Wallace et al., 2013). Investing in good leadership will not only strengthen employee commitment but also improve the overall performance of the organization, thereby creating a productive and sustainable work culture. Employee commitment plays a crucial role in enhancing individual and team performance within an organization. (Yuan et al., 2021).

Factors such as leadership, organizational culture, and development opportunities contribute to the level of employee commitment. Mechanisms linking commitment to performance include motivation, dedication, quality of work, and proactivity. (Eliyana et al., 2019). Therefore, organizations need to develop strategies that support employee commitment to achieve optimal performance. Investing in leadership development, fostering a positive culture, and providing development opportunities will yield long-term benefits for the organization's success, as evidenced by the results of this study. Employee commitment can have a significantly positive impact on employee performance. (Suryadinata, 2023).

The influence of competence on employee performance is apparent, but the role of commitment as an intervening variable is not as strong as expected. This finding challenges the assumption that commitment will strengthen the relationship between competence and performance. (Herold et al., 2008). Organizations need to recognize that enhancing employee competence is not enough; building commitment is also essential. Other factors, such as the work environment and individual motivation, also play an important role in achieving optimal performance. Therefore, a more holistic approach is needed to maximize employee potential and achieve desired performance. (Abasilim et al., 2019).

These findings suggest that while competence is critical to performance, employee commitment does not always serve as a strong link. This implies that organizations need to consider other factors that can support employee performance, such as building a supportive work environment. Creating a supportive work environment can help maximize employee potential and career development. Offering appropriate training and development programs can improve both competence and performance, independently of commitment. (Puni et al., 2020).

While leadership has a significant influence on employee performance, employee commitment acts as an intervening variable that strengthens the relationship between leadership and employee performance. (Klein et al., 2012). These findings suggest that effective leadership, when combined with high employee commitment, can create an environment that supports optimal performance. Therefore, organizations need to focus on leadership development and creating a culture that promotes commitment to achieve better results. (Crichton & Shrivastava, 2017). The competence of employees in the Ministry of Religious Affairs is very crucial, considering that this institution is responsible for managing diverse and sensitive religious affairs.

The implementation of the ministry's work culture values, such as integrity, professionalism, and diversity, is an important foundation in creating an effective work environment (Puni et al., 2020). High competence allows employees to provide optimal service to the community. With a deep understanding of work culture values, employees can be more responsive to community needs, ensure transparency, and increase public trust in the institution. (Mahfouz et al., 2022). Therefore, competency development through training, workshops, and coaching programs is a priority to create employees who can effectively carry out their duties.

Employee competency in the Ministry of Religious Affairs is the primary foundation for achieving organizational goals. In this context, competency encompasses not only knowledge and skills, but also the implementation of the ministry's work culture values, which are based on integrity, professionalism, and excellent public service. With good competency, employees can carry out their duties effectively and efficiently, and adapt to existing dynamics. The application of this competency has a direct impact on the quality of services provided to the community, which is one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

## **CONCLUSION**

First, competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Competence, comprising knowledge, skills, motivation, and ability, can drive employee performance. However, competence does not have a significant positive effect on employee commitment. The competence possessed by employees, in the form of knowledge, skills, motivation, and ability, cannot directly drive employee commitment. Leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Leadership, in the form of leadership style, skills, and decision-making, can encourage improvements in employee performance. Additionally, leadership has a significant positive impact on employee commitment.

Good leadership will encourage employees to increase their commitment. Employee commitment has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Commitment, comprising willingness, loyalty, and dedication, can enhance employee performance. Employee commitment has not been able to mediate between employee competence and performance. Commitment, which encompasses willingness, loyalty, and dedication, does not necessarily correlate with employee performance. Meanwhile, employee commitment can serve as a mediator between leadership and employee performance. Commitment, comprising willingness, loyalty, and dedication, can enhance both aspects of leadership and employee performance within the Ministry of Religion of Murung Raya Regency, Central Kalimantan.

The results of this study still have limitations, including a small sample size and a limited focus on that district. Future researchers should continue this line of inquiry by exploring other variables, such as employee promotions and compensation, or by employing a combined quantitative and qualitative approach. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide stakeholders with input to continuously improve performance by enhancing employee competency and leadership.

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