Analysis of the Effect of Competence and Organizational Culture on Employee Performance at Pesantren Education Institutions through Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of competence and organizational culture on employee performance in pesantren educational institutions, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. The approach used is quantitative with a survey method, and data analysis techniques are carried out through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research sample consisted of 86 permanent employees within the Islamic Education Foundation of Bustanul Makmur Pesantren Kebunrejo, which was selected by census. The results of the analysis show that competence and organizational culture have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment, as well as on employee performance both directly and indirectly. Organizational commitment also proved to play a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between competence and organizational culture on employee performance. These findings indicate that efforts to improve employee performance in the pesantren environment do not only depend on improving individual abilities and organizational cultural values, but also require strengthening employees' emotional ties, loyalty, and involvement with the organization. The practical implication of the results of this study is the importance of developing HR competencies and strengthening a supportive work culture, in line with efforts to build organizational commitment as a foundation for improving employee performance in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Competence, Organizational Culture, Organizational Commitment, Employee Performance, Pesantren.

1. Introduction

In today's era of rapid and competitive change, pesantren-based educational institutions are required not only to maintain religious and traditional values, but also to manage human resources professionally in order to achieve optimal performance. Employee performance as the main pillar in supporting the success of the institution becomes an important focus in pesantren institutional management. Good employee performance reflects the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization in carrying out educational service tasks, fostering students, and developing institutions in a sustainable manner (Mangkunegara, 2017). In addition, in the context of pesantren institutions characterized by religiosity and high discipline, competence and organizational culture are essential factors that influence the performance of educational apparatus (Rivai & Mulyadi, 2012; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Competence describes an individual's ability to carry out tasks and responsibilities based on knowledge, skills and work attitudes. Employees with high competence tend to have better work productivity, high initiative, and adaptability to changes and work challenges (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). In the pesantren environment, competence not only involves technical and administrative aspects, but also involves spiritual values and sincerity in work.

In addition, organizational culture plays an important role in shaping employee work behavior. Organizational culture reflects the system of values, norms, and practices shared within an institution. A strong and positive culture will create a conducive work climate, strengthen employee loyalty, and encourage collective work enthusiasm (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In the context of pesantren, organizational culture is not only sourced from the vision and mission of the institution, but also integrated with Islamic values, exemplary leadership, and scholarly traditions (Sedarmayanti, 2017).

However, the influence of competence and organizational culture on employee performance does not always run directly. Another factor that plays a role is organizational commitment, which is the extent to which employees feel emotionally attached, have a sense of belonging, and are loyal to the institution where they work. Organizational commitment is an important bridge that mediates the influence of personal and structural variables on work output. Employees who have high commitment will show more dedication, willing to sacrifice for the organization, and able to maintain performance in various situations (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Based on this background, this study was conducted to test and analyze the effect of competence and organizational culture on employee performance by considering the mediating role of organizational commitment. This research is focused on the Islamic Education Foundation of Bustanul Makmur Pesantren Kebunrejo as a representation of Islamic educational institutions that continue to grow and demand professionalism of human resources. It is hoped that the results of this study can make an empirical contribution to the development of human resource management in the pesantren environment, as well as a reference for data-based policy making in improving the quality of employee performance.

2. Methods

Population and sample

According to Sugiyono (2017), population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics set by researchers to study and then draw conclusions. The population in this study were all employees who worked within the Islamic Education Institute of Bustanul Makmur Pesantren, consisting of educators and education personnel. Thus, the population in this context includes all individuals who have direct involvement in educational and administrative activities in the pesantren environment. The total population is 110 people and not all members of the population are considered to have direct relevance to the variables studied, so researchers use purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the sample is purposively selected by the researcher based on certain criteria that are considered to provide the most relevant information to the research focus (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In this case, researchers set inclusion criteria such as status as an active employee and a minimum work period of one year, assuming that individuals who meet these criteria have sufficient experience and understanding to provide valid and in-depth data. The sample in the study is part of the population that has certain characteristics and is used as the object of research in order to obtain data. In this case, researchers set inclusion criteria such as status as an active employee and a minimum work period of one year, assuming that individuals who meet these criteria have sufficient experience and understanding to provide valid and in-depth data. Samples in research are part of the population that has certain characteristics and is used as an object of research to represent the entire population (Nazir, 2011). Based on these considerations, 87 respondents were determined as the research sample, which was considered representative and in accordance with the needs of the analysis. The selection of this number refers to the principle of effectiveness and adequacy of information for quantitative analysis purposes (Arikunto, 2010).

Hipotesis

Hypotheses are temporary propositions or statements formulated based on theoretical studies and previous research findings, in order to provide direction and focus in the empirical testing process. According to Narimawati (2007), a hypothesis is an assumption or initial conjecture about the relationship between variables that can be tested through a scientific research process. In a quantitative approach, the hypothesis not only functions as a prediction, but also as a basis for logical argumentation in the process of data analysis and conclusion drawing. The hypotheses proposed in this study are H1: There is a positive and significant influence between competence on organizational commitment; H2: There is a positive and significant influence between organizational culture on organizational commitment; H3: There is a positive and significant influence between competence on employee performance; H4: There is a positive and significant influence between organizational culture on employee performance; H5: There is a positive and significant influence between organizational commitment on employee performance; H6: Organizational commitment significantly mediates the effect of competence on employee performance; H7: Organizational commitment significantly mediates the effect of organizational culture on employee performance, the whole hypothesis can be seen in Figure 1. These hypotheses will be tested empirically through a quantitative

approach with path analysis techniques, in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of employee performance in the context of Islamic education organizations.
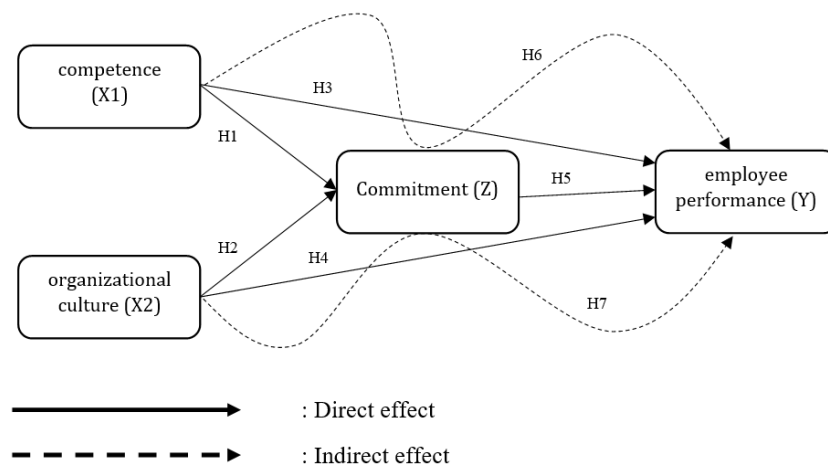

Figure 1. the conceptual framework

Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type, which is an approach that aims to test and explain the causal relationship between variables that have been formulated theoretically through hypothesis testing (Sugiyono, 2021). This approach was chosen because it was considered the most appropriate for the research objectives, namely not only to test the direct relationship between variables, but also to identify and analyze indirect relationships through mediating variables, namely organizational commitment.

This research was conducted at the Pesantren Bustanul Makmur Kebunrejo Islamic Education Institution, a pesantren-based educational institution that has a complex organizational structure, consisting of educators and education personnel who work in a system characterized by religious, collegial, and Islamic values-based. The selection of this location considers organizational characteristics that are relevant to the research variables, such as organizational culture, motivation, and employee performance.

The implementation of data collection was carried out during May to June 2025. The main technique used in data collection is a closed questionnaire or questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale that reflects the respondent's level of agreement with a number of statements. This scale allows researchers to measure respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies towards each research variable (Sugiyono, 2021). The use of this instrument was chosen because it is efficient, systematic, and makes it possible to obtain large amounts of quantitative data that can be analyzed statistically.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this study was carried out with a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), using SmartPLS software version 4.0. This method was chosen because it is able to test the causal relationship between latent variables simultaneously, both direct and indirect, and is suitable for exploratory research with high model complexity and a relatively moderate sample size. SEM-PLS is also less demanding on multivariate normality and has the flexibility to manage models with reflective and formative indicators. The stages of data analysis are carried out in stages, including:

1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

This stage aims to test the validity and reliability of constructs through several measurement indicators, namely:

    a. Outer loading is used to assess the validity of indicators against their constructs, with an ideal value above 0.7.

    b. Composite reliability (CR) is used to measure the internal reliability of constructs, with an expected value greater than 0.70.

    c. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to measure convergent validity, with the minimum recommended value being 0.50. In addition, a discriminant validity test is also conducted to ensure that each construct in the model is unique and does not overlap with each other.

2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

At this stage, the relationship between latent variables and indicators is analyzed as follows:

a. Coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the extent to which the independent variable is able to explain the dependent variable.

b. Test the significance of the path (path coefficient) through the t-statistic value and p-value obtained from the bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 resampling, to test the significance of direct and indirect effects.

c. Effect size (f^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2) can also be used as additional indicators to assess the predictive power of the model.

3. mediation test

For test the mediating role of organizational commitment, a bootstrapping procedure is used which is also carried out at the structural model evaluation stage. This test aims to determine whether the indirect effect between variables through mediators is statistically significant. Interpretation is done by comparing the direct and indirect effects, as well as looking at the total effect of the mediation pathway.

Operational Variables

The instrument used in this research is a structured questionnaire prepared based on a quantitative approach. The measurement scale used is a five-point Likert scale, with a value range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The Likert scale was chosen because it was able to capture the degree of attitude or perception of respondents more flexibly and quantitatively. The questionnaire is prepared based on indicators that have been formulated from relevant theories and scientifically recognized literature sources. Each of the main variables in the study, namely HR Competence, Organizational Culture, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Performance, is operationalized into nine indicators that represent the conceptual dimensions of the variables comprehensively. These indicators were developed from the opinions of experts such as Spencer & Spencer (1993) for competence, Robbins & Judge (2017) for organizational culture, Meyer & Allen (1997) for organizational commitment, and Mangkunegara (2017) for employee performance. The details of the operationalization of each variable can be seen in the following table:

Variables	Operational Definition	Dimensions / Indicators	Source	Scale
HR Competency (X_1)	The ability of individuals to carry out tasks based on their knowledge, skills and work attitudes.	1. Understand duties and responsibilities; 2. Have technical job skills; 3. Complete tasks according to quality standards; 4. Solve work problems independently; 5. Actively participate in training. 6. Work independently; 7. Quickly adapting to changes; 8. Effective communication; 9. Understanding the foundation's policies.	Spencer & Spencer (1993)	Likert Scale 1–5
Organizational Culture (X_2)	Values, norms, and work practices shared by all members of the organization.	1. Understanding organizational values and norms; 2. Feeling comfortable in the work environment; 3. Respecting differences; 4. Culture encourages teamwork; 5. Fair enforcement of rules6. Exemplary leadership; 7. Culture encourages innovation; 8. Feeling part of the organization; 9. Culture increases morale.	Robbins & Judge (2017)	Likert Scale 1–5
Organizational Commitment (Z)	The level of emotional attachment, awareness, and	1. Proud to be part of the institution; 2. Responsible for the progress of the institution; 3. Want to keep working at the institution; 4. Willing	Meyer & Allen (1997)	Likert Scale 1–5

Variables	Operational Definition	Dimensions / Indicators	Source	Scale
	responsibility of employees to the organization they work for.	to sacrifice for the institution; 5. Loyal to the institution; 6. Support the vision and mission; 7. Emotionally attached; 8. Feel part of the institution's family; 9. The institution is the best place for me		
Employee Performance (Y)	Employee work results that can be assessed based on quality, quantity, timeliness, and teamwork contribution.	1. Complete work on target; 2. Produce quality work; 3. Work efficiently and effectively; 4. Achieve work goals; 5. Handle tasks under pressure; 6. Cooperate in teams; 7. Be consistent in performance; 8. Receive work appreciation; 9. Demonstrate work initiative.	Mangkunegara (2017)	Likert Scale 1–5

Table 1.

3. Results and Discussion

Measurement analysis and structural modeling

In this study, data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) using SmartPLS 4.0 software. This approach was chosen because it has the advantage of estimating models with high complexity, even though the number of samples is relatively limited, and is able to analyze the simultaneous relationship between latent constructs and their indicators (outer model), as well as the relationship between latent constructs (inner model). Figure 2. shows the measurement model and structural model to be analyzed in this study.
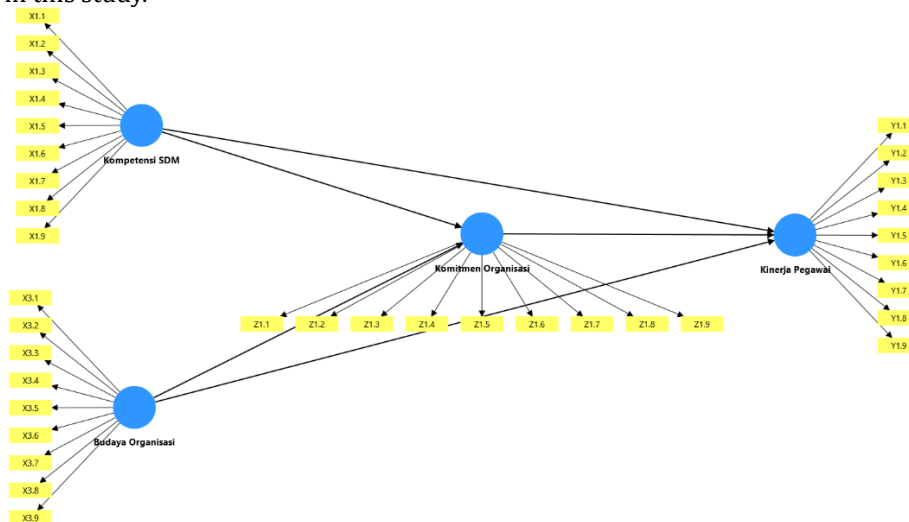

Figure 1. model pengukuran dan model struktural
Source : Data Processing 2025

The measurement model in the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach plays an important role in assessing the extent to which the indicators used are able to represent latent constructs accurately and reliably. Evaluation of the measurement model aims to test the quality of the measuring instrument used in the study, both in terms of validity and reliability. Indicator validity is tested through the outer loading value, which is the correlation between each indicator and the latent construct it represents. Indicators are declared to meet convergent validity if the outer loading value is above the recommended minimum threshold, which is ≥ 0.70. However, in exploratory conditions or to maintain certain theoretical meanings, indicators with values between 0.60-0.70 can still be considered as long as they meet other validity criteria.

Furthermore, to measure the internal reliability of latent constructs, two main indicators are used, namely composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha. A CR value that exceeds 0.70 indicates that the indicators in one construct have good internal consistency, while Cronbach's alpha is used as an additional measurement that describes the stability of the research instrument in measuring the same construct repeatedly. In addition, overall convergent validity is also tested using the average variance extracted (AVE) value, which reflects the proportion of indicator variance that can be explained by the latent construct. An AVE value ≥ 0.50 indicates that more than half of the indicator variance is explained by the construct, so the construct can be considered to have sufficient convergent validity. Details of item loadings along with AVE values and composite reliability are given in Table 2.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading Range	Composite Reliability	AVE	*Cronbach's alpha*
Organizational Culture	9	0.877 – 0.940	0.977	0.824	0.973
Employee Performance	9	0.931 – 0.972	0.988	0.904	0.987
Organizational Commitment	9	0.891 – 0.938	0.981	0.849	0.978
HR Competencies	9	0.849 – 0.883	0.964	0.747	0.958

Table 2. Reliability and validity of the instrument.
Source: Data Processing 2025

The four constructs (Organizational Culture, Employee Performance, Organizational Commitment, and HR Competence) meet all the criteria of the reflective measurement model, namely indicator validity (factor loading > 0.70), internal reliability (CR and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70), and convergent validity (AVE > 0.50). Therefore, all constructs can be said to be reliable and valid for use in further structural model analysis.

Discriminant validity is an important part of the measurement model evaluation to ensure that each construct in the model is truly unique and able to distinguish itself from other constructs. One commonly used approach to testing discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of a construct with the correlation between other constructs in the model. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is fulfilled if the AVE square root value of a construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. In other words, the construct explains more of the variance of its own indicators than the variance explained by other constructs. Detailed results are given in Table 3, which fully comply with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) discriminant validity criteria.

Konstruk	Organizational Culture	Employee Performance	Organizational Commitment	HR Competencies
Organizational Culture	**0.908**			
Employee Performance	−0.233	**0.951**		
Organizational Commitment	−0.192	0.636	**0.921**	
HR Competencies	0.030	0.334	0.272	**0.865**

Table 3. Constructs' discriminant validity.
Source: Data Processing 2025

All AVE square root values (thick diagonal values) are higher than the correlation values between the constructs concerned, so it can be concluded that the model has met discriminant validity based on the Fornell-Larcker criteria.

Evaluation of the structural model is carried out to determine the feasibility of the overall model. Based on the test results, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.050 is below the 0.08 threshold, which indicates that the model has a good fit (Hair et al., 2021). Although the d_ULS (1.642) and d_G (2.017) values are above the bootstrapped HI95 value, the model is still acceptable because it is supported by a Chi-square value of 808.843 which is greater than 49.802 and

a Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.837, which indicates a level of model feasibility that is close to a good category.

In addition, the Goodness of Fit (GoF) value of 0.47 exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.36 (Wetzels et al., 2009), indicating that the model has high global quality. Meanwhile, the predictive relevance Q^2 value of 0.120 for the Employee Performance variable and 0.069 for Organizational Commitment indicates that the model has relevant predictive ability, although in the weak category. This indicates that the model is not only structurally suitable, but also has reliable predictive value in the context of this study. Details of the measurement and structural models are given in Table 4.

GoF Measures	SRMR	d-ULS	d-G	Chi-Square	NFI	GoF	Q^2 PR
Recommended value	< 0.10	> 0.05	> 0.05	$\geq \chi^2$ tabel	~1	≥ 0.36	≥ 0.35
Structural Model	0.05	1.642	2.017	808.843	0.837	0.47	0.069 dan 0.120

Table 4. Model fit measures.
Source: Data Processing 2025

After ensuring that the structural model meets the eligibility criteria through Goodness of Fit (GoF) testing, the next step is to analyze the influence between variables in the model. This analysis includes direct effect and indirect effect through mediating variables. The direct effect shows how much an independent variable contributes to the dependent variable without going through an intermediary. Meanwhile, the indirect effect explains the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable through the mediator, which in this study is important to understand the mechanism of the relationship between variables. The test was conducted using a path analysis approach in the SEM-PLS framework, by paying attention to the path coefficient value, T-statistic value, and significance (p-value) to determine the strength and meaning of the relationship between variables. This analysis is the basis for answering the hypotheses that have been formulated previously, as well as to identify the most dominant path of influence in improving employee performance through the factors studied. Details of the hypotheses can be seen in Table 5.

Hypothesis	Constructs	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P values	F square	Decision
H1	K -> KO	0.278	3.247	0.001	0.087	Supported
H2	BO -> KO	-0.200	2.078	0.019	0.045	Supported
H3	K -> KP	0.186	2.359	0.009	0.058	Supported
H4	BO -> KP	-0.131	1.420	0.078	0.030	Rejected
H5	KO -> KP	0.560	6.673	0.000	0.504	Supported
H6	K -> KO -> KP	0.156	2.769	0.003	-	Supported
H7	BO -> KO -> KP	-0.112	1.928	0.027	-	Supported

Table 5. Result of hypothesis testing.
Source: Data Processing 2025
* K : Competence, BO = Organizational Culture; KO : Organizational Commitment; KP : Employee Performance

The analysis shows that competence has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment (Estimate = 0.278; CR = 3.247; p = 0.001). This means that the higher the competence of employees, the stronger their commitment to the organization. This finding is in line with Robbins & Judge (2017), which states that individuals who feel competent in their work tend to be more emotionally and affectively attached to the organization. This study reinforces previous findings by showing that increasing technical and interpersonal competence has a real impact on organizational loyalty. In addition, the effect of organizational culture on organizational commitment was found to be significant with a negative direction (Estimate = -0.200; CR = 2.078; p = 0.019). This is a new and unexpected finding as most previous studies, such as by Kreitner & Kinicki (2014), showed a positive relationship. Under conditions of inappropriate culture, work effectiveness decreases as employees' sense of belonging to the institution decreases. Delfi (2023) added that a work culture that does not

support collaboration, clarity of values, and trust will weaken employee commitment. The analysis also shows that competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance (Estimate = 0.186; CR = 2.359; p = 0.009). This finding confirms that improving technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills can encourage work productivity. In line with the opinion of Mangkunegara (2017), competence is the main determinant in achieving optimal performance. In addition, this finding is reinforced by Andriani, Akob, & Mappamiring (2024) who explain that individual competence is one of the main determinants in building commitment and encouraging productive performance. Muhammad (2016) also stated that employees who have technical skills and skills are better able to complete tasks and have a high sense of responsibility for work. Nahdhiah and Bahiroh (2022) added that good competence has a positive impact on employees' emotional attachment to the organization. Then, the results of the analysis show that the direct effect of organizational culture on employee performance is not statistically significant, indicated by an estimate value of -0.131 with a Critical Ratio (CR) value of 1.420 and a p-value of 0.078 (> 0.05). This indicates that organizational culture does not have a significant direct influence on improving employee performance in the context of this study. This finding suggests that while organizational culture plays an important role in shaping the work environment and shared values within an institution, its impact on employee performance is not necessarily direct. Organizational culture may play a greater role indirectly through mediating variables such as work motivation, organizational commitment, or emotional attachment of employees. This finding is in line with the research of Lumbanraja et al. (2014) which suggests that the effect of organizational culture on performance is often indirect, especially when the culture is not fully internalized by employees in their daily work behavior. Furthermore, organizational commitment is proven to have a significant positive effect on performance (Estimate = 0.560; CR = 6.673; p = 0.000). This indicates that employees who have high attachment to the organization tend to work more productively and responsibly. This finding reinforces the theory of Allen & Meyer (1997) and the research results of Tella et al. (2007). In addition, this finding is also supported by Fajria and Juhaeti's research (2023) which states that organizational commitment, especially affective and normative, contributes significantly to improving employee work quality. Coryka and Wibawa (2023) also asserted that commitment acts as a catalyst in strengthening the relationship between organizational variables and performance outcomes, clarifying the importance of the presence of commitment in the organizational structure.

The results of indirect path analysis show that there is a significant effect of competence on employee performance through mediation of organizational commitment (Estimate = 0.156; CR = 2.769; p = 0.003). This finding indicates that increasing competence does not directly improve employee performance, but through strengthening organizational commitment first. This is in line with the findings of Albrecht et al. (2015), which explains that good technical and behavioral competence in employees will strengthen emotional attachment to the organization, thus having a positive impact on improving performance. Meanwhile, organizational culture also shows a significant indirect effect on employee performance through organizational commitment, although with a negative relationship direction (Estimate = -0.112; CR = 1.928; p = 0.027). This research is in line with Miza et al. (2023) which states that organizational culture affects performance through the mediation of motivation and work commitment. The implication of this result is quite interesting, as it indicates that an organizational culture that is inappropriate or not aligned with employee values can reduce the level of organizational commitment, which in turn has a negative impact on performance. This finding strengthens the results of direct analysis in H2, and is in line with the opinion of Lumbanraja et al. (2014) which states that the effect of organizational culture on performance tends to be indirect and highly dependent on the presence of mediating variables such as commitment and motivation.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it is found that competence has a significant direct and indirect effect on employee performance through organizational commitment. This means

that good competence not only improves performance directly, but also strengthens commitment which then has a positive impact on performance. In contrast, organizational culture has no direct effect on employee performance, but has an indirect effect through organizational commitment, albeit in a negative direction. These findings confirm that organizational commitment plays an important mediating role in the relationship between competence, organizational culture and employee performance. Therefore, strengthening employee competencies and creating an organizational culture that is aligned with employee values need to be a priority in improving performance in a sustainable manner.

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