Determinants of Employee Performance in Public Training Institutions: Mediating Role of Engagement in the Context of BDK Kemenag RI

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh Kompetensi Pegawai (EC) dan Komitmen Organisasi (OC) terhadap Kinerja Pegawai (EP), baik secara langsung maupun tidak langsung melalui Keterlibatan Pegawai (EE) sebagai variabel mediasi. Kinerja Aparatur Sipil Negara di 14 Balai Diklat Keagamaan (BDK) yang berada di bawah naungan Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (Kemenag RI) masih berada di bawah target nasional 120%, yang berdampak pada menurunnya efektivitas layanan publik. Pendekatan kuantitatif asosiatif digunakan dengan metode Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) terhadap 178 Aparatur Sipil Negara yang dipilih melalui stratified random sampling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa EC dan OC berpengaruh signifikan terhadap EP, serta keduanya juga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap EE. EE sendiri memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap EP. Selain itu, EE terbukti memediasi secara signifikan pengaruh EC terhadap EP dan pengaruh OC terhadap EP. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa EE merupakan variabel yang paling dominan dalam meningkatkan EP, dan menjadi kontribusi kebaruan dalam konteks manajemen kinerja sektor publik. Implikasinya, peningkatan EE dapat dilakukan melalui pelatihan yang menumbuhkan rasa memiliki, penguatan budaya organisasi, komunikasi dua arah, dan pemberian penghargaan terhadap loyalitas pegawai di lingkungan BDK Kemenag RI.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Employee Competence (EC) and Organizational Commitment (OC) on Employee Performance (EP), both directly and indirectly through Employee Engagement (EE) as a mediating variable. Civil servants at 14 Religious Training Centers (BDK) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) continue to fall short of the national performance target of 120%, undermining the effectiveness of public service delivery. A quantitative associative approach was employed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) on data collected from 178 civil servants selected through stratified random sampling. The findings reveal that EC and OC significantly affect EP, and both also significantly influence EE. EE itself has a substantial, positive impact on EP. Furthermore, EE significantly mediates the relationships between EC and EP, and between OC and EP. These results highlight EE as the most dominant factor in improving EP and position it as a novel contribution to public sector performance management research. The practical implications suggest that increasing EE can be achieved through training that fosters a sense of ownership, strengthens organizational culture, encourages two-way communication, and recognizes employee loyalty across BDK units within Kemenag RI.

INTRODUCTION

The Society 5.0 era is a concept of an intelligent and technology-based society. This era has caused many organizations in government bureaucracies to feel much pressure from global competition, which can positively or negatively impact developing countries. Indonesia is a developing country whose government institutionsp have experienced bureaucratic delays due to Human Resources (HR) that are not well prepared to keep up with the level of global

competition in an increasingly digitalized era (Ekarini et al., 2024; Kadarisman et al., 2022). Under these conditions, the government bureaucracy must strive to innovate because the quality of employees depends on how a government institution can support the performance of its employees (Gunawan et al., 2023; Kadarisman et al., 2022; Potočan et al., 2021; Rahmadani et al., 2024). The implementation of various innovations is needed to improve business processes, starting from effective knowledge management (Kusbandrijo et al., 2025; Putra & Wijayanto, 2022), the quality of HR (Marsus, 2023), increased public satisfaction (Wijayanto & Suhardi, 2015), and an efficient management system (Pindarwati & Wijayanto, 2015).

Improving the quality of HR in the Society 5.0 era can increase the demand for more optimal employee professionalism in government agencies by emphasizing work efficiency (Hadijaya & Anggraeni, 2023). Good HR planning can overcome the shortage or excess of government employees. Thus, government agencies can ensure that employees can carry out government tasks, and qualified employees can increase a country's competitiveness in global trade (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Heslina & Syahruni, 2021; Jumady & Lilla, 2021; Knies et al., 2024; Sugiarti et al., 2021; Tensay & Singh, 2020), and the public has a positive sentiment toward the performance of the Indonesian government. It can also generate many opportunities for political entities and create a wiser decision-making process (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The high level of global competition is also felt by one of the government agencies in Indonesia, namely the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI), so an improvement in the quality of employee performance is required to be more optimal (Agus R & Rusdiah, 2024; Ahmad & Ma'rifataini, 2023; Saimroh, 2017).

Improving employee performance must be done through internal and external improvement efforts (Ikhsannudin & Pakpahan, 2021; Jufrizen et al., 2024). Internal improvements include improving management, development, and employee quality (Anne & Grønholdt, 2001; Llopis & Tarí, 2003; Van Assen, 2021). Employee productivity can be increased through good management, including training and coaching, improving the agency's overall performance in achieving its goals (Dharma et al., 2023; Fauzan, 2023). In this case, superior quality employees can help achieve the agency's goals (Harahap & Pogo, 2023), because they can demonstrate performance results that have character and a good level of faith in the vision and mission of the Kemenag RI in the future. Optimal performance results and the ability to formulate strategic policies in the Society 5.0 era are forms of employee responsibility towards the Kemenag RI (Jufrizen et al., 2024).

Kemenag RI organizes affairs within the Indonesian government in the spirituality (religion) field, simultaneously strengthening religious moderation (Ahmad & Ma'rifataini, 2023). The majority of Indonesians are Muslim but remain constitutionally secular (Butt, 2020; Colbran, 2010; Seo, 2013; Subchi et al., 2022). As part of the Indonesian identity, religion, and belief are the two most important things in social life, which at the same time are a strength for the Kemenag RI in establishing religious harmony (Saragih & Fitrianti, 2023; Suryani, 2024). The Kemenag RI has vital technical implementation units for employee training in every city, namely the Religious Training Center (BDK). The BDK units in every city in Indonesia are responsible for organizing education and training for administrative and religious technical personnel. The BDK Kemenag RI has 14 units spread across Indonesia. As a developing country that has the largest area in Southeast Asia and a high population density, it has impacted the inability of the BDK of the Kemenag RI to carry out its duties (Ahmad & Ma'rifataini, 2023; Colbran, 2010; Emmers, 2005; Hidayat et al., 2024; Muhamad, 2024; Nahdohdin et al., 2019). The task of the BDK Kemenag RI is to organize training and education for Civil Servants (PNS) by the Kemenag RI vision and mission in the hope of the Indonesian government (Ahmad & Ma'rifataini, 2023; 2015). The author has proven this inability in previous research data (Rahmadani et al., 2025), which

projects the average performance of the BDK Kemenag RI at 108.72 percent (Kemenag RI, 2024, pp. 57–58), meaning that it is still far from the government target of 120 percent by KMA Regulation No. 94 of 2021.

Based on previous research (Rahmadani et al., 2025), employee performance is not optimal; the BDK Kemenag RI for the three (3) years 2020-2023 have shown yearly fluctuations. In 2020-2021, there was a 4.13 percent increase in employee achievement. Then, in 2022, there was a 4.74 percent decrease in performance and a 6.03 percent increase in 2023. The fluctuating data represents the performance of employees in 14 BDK Kemenag RI, which is improving but has not yet reached the government target and has come under public scrutiny for being unprofessional. However, despite extensive research on the relationships between Employee Competency (EC), Organizational Commitment (OC), and Employee Performance (EP), few studies have positioned Employee Engagement (EE) as a mediating variable—particularly within public sector training institutions such as BDK Kemenag RI. This gap limits our understanding of how internal psychological mechanisms like EE translate organizational and individual inputs into improved EP. The public assumes that civil servants in 14 BDK Kemenag RI are not serious about carrying out their responsibilities at work. Table 1 is a data representation of the Professionalism Index (PI) of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) of 14 BDKs in Indonesia in 2024 which supports the author's opinion that the BDK Kemenag RI cannot organize employee training optimally.

Table 1.
Results of IP ASN Measurement in 14 BDK Kemenag RI in 2024

Number	Work Unit	Number Of Employees	Qualifications 25%	Leadership Training	Functional Training 40%	Other Technical Training	Performance 30%	Discipline 5%	Total Score 100%
1	BDK Surabaya	66	19.24	12.27	11.97	7.27	25.91	5.00	**81.67**
2	BDK Makassar	53	20.19	13.58	10.66	5.85	25.09	5.00	**80.38**
3	BDK Semarang	68	17.94	12.90	12.43	5.74	25.74	4.97	**79.71**
4	BDK Bandung	60	18.50	11.25	13.29	6.33	25.17	5.00	**79.54**
5	BDK Jakarta	49	17.14	11.79	11.48	7.14	26.94	5.00	**79.49**
6	BDK Banjarmasin	43	17.91	11.51	11.74	4.88	25.58	4.86	**76.49**
7	BDK Manado	48	17.71	9.38	10.36	6.67	25.42	5.00	**74.53**
8	BDK Denpasar	61	16.25	11.07	11.39	5.41	25.16	5.00	**74.28**

Number	Work Unit	Number Of Employees	Qualifications	Leadership Training	Functional Training	Other Technical Training	Performance	Discipline	Total Score
			25%		40%		30%	5%	100%
9	BDK Medan	59	18.05	10.17	9.45	6.10	24.83	4.85	**73.45**
10	BDK Ambon	16	18.44	9.38	9.69	5.63	25.00	5.00	**73.13**
11	BDK Palembang	70	17.93	7.39	9.57	5.57	25.50	5.00	**70.96**
12	BDK Prov Aceh	48	17.19	10.94	7.97	3.96	25.42	5.00	**70.47**
13	BDK Padang	56	16.79	8.44	7.68	5.18	25.36	5.00	**68.44**
14	BDK Papua	29	17.24	8.79	6.90	3.45	25.52	5.00	**66.90**
	Total	**726**	**17.89**	**10.63**	**10.33**	**5.66**	**25.47**	**4.98**	**74.96**

Source: Rahmadani et al (2025)

Table 1 represents the IP ASN measurement results in 14 BDK Kemenag RI in 2024. Based on the measurement results, the Surabaya BDK has the highest score of 81.67 percent. This highest score represents the performance of Surabaya BDK employees, who have the best work professionalism compared to other BDKs. Meanwhile, the lowest value is in the Papua unit BDK, with a value of 66.90 percent. This lowest score represents the performance of BDK Papua employees, who are the worst and most unprofessional in their work compared to other BDKs. Furthermore, the average overall score for work professionalism in the 14 BDK Kemenag RI is 74.96 percent. This value shows that the professionalism level of ASN employees at BDK Kemenag RI falls into the "Moderate" category, indicating suboptimal employee performance across the 14 units (Rahmadani et al., 2025). Based on internal evaluations and official reports from Kemenag RI, managerial training programs in units such as BDK Papua and Padang have shown low success rates, as reflected in their below-average IP ASN scores. The respondents did not specifically mention the types of training they attended. However, internal evaluations identified most of the underperformance in these units as occurring in leadership and functional technical training aimed at implementing-level civil servants. Therefore, this study focuses on individual-level factors—particularly competence and work engagement—as explanatory variables for post-training employee performance.

The ineffective performance evaluation has tarnished the image of the 14 BDK Kemenag RI. The negative image of the agency is the main reason why the public has lost confidence in the Indonesian government (Monggesang et al., 2023) and why the BDK Kemenag RI has not achieved the government's targets. The negative sentiment attached to the image of the BDK Kemenag RI has made the author want to measure EP based on several dimensions, namely attitude, work quality, reliability, and work quantity (Mangkunegara, 2000, p. 65). The urgency of this EP measurement is also to increase the number of ASNs who excel at work and have a high sense of responsibility (Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Jumady & Lilla, 2021) toward the BDK Kemenag RI. In addition to the EP factor, the author believes other factors have prevented the BDK Kemenag RI from reaching the government target. These suspicions include, for example,

sub-optimal EE, EC, which has not reached a better level, and OC, which has not advanced the agency.

As an initial explanation, the author will discuss the EC factor. EC is analogous to employees' abilities, skills, and capabilities supported by employees' attitudes when working in an agency or company (Wibowo, 2016, p. 276; Wijayanti & Sari, 2023). Employees with a high level of work concentration have skills and competencies that align with the needs of government organizations, tend to collaborate well with their teams, and have thoughtful problem-solving abilities (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). In addition, it can increase EP and create higher EE; this is in line with previous research, which proves that EC has a positive and significant effect on the EP factor (Albalushi & Zaidan, 2019; Harwina, 2022; Kurniasih et al., 2022; Maizar et al., 2023; Nasrul et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2021; Pitafi et al., 2018; Sulantara et al., 2020; Sunatar, 2022). On the other hand, according to research by Kotamena et al. (2021) and Kharisma & Rosia (2022), EC does not significantly affect EP but is influenced by other factors. Another factor is that EC can influence EE. This statement is in line with previous research (Fadilah & Helmi, 2023; Haruna & Marthandan, 2017; Heslina & Syahruni, 2021; Nasrul et al., 2020; Rahmayani et al., 2021; Salsabila & Lo, 2023; Suryawati & Nugraha, 2024; Tyas et al., 2020; Veriyanti & Nurhayati, 2022) which prove that EC has a substantial impact on the EE factor.

The OC factor refers to how individuals feel connected to the agency, including identifying themselves with its will and wanting to become a member (Zeng et al., 2024). Employees with a high sense of OC can create a comfortable work atmosphere. A comfortable work atmosphere will motivate individuals psychologically, increase work enthusiasm, and ensure that employees' work tasks are by the targets set by the agency, which in turn contributes to the achievement of the agency's goals (Luthans et al., 2015, p. 22; Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 47). The high level of OC towards the agency can stimulate an overall increase in EP and EE. In line with previous research that proves that OC has a positive and significant effect on EP (Folorunso et al., 2014; Hendri, 2019; Leitão et al., 2019; Mohammadi & Karupiah, 2020; Musabah et al., 2017; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Rita et al., 2018; Suharto et al., 2019; Susanty & Miradipta, 2013). On the other hand, three studies from previous researchers (Bagis et al., 2021; Rembet et al., 2020; Triwahyuni & Ekowati, 2017), state that the OC factor does not have a significant influence on the EP factor but rather on other factors. Other factors, such as OC, can influence EE. This statement aligns with previous research (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Trofimov et al., 2017), proving that OC positively and significantly impacts EE.

Decisively, a less-than-optimal EE factor can reduce EP at the Kemenag RI. According to Sendawula et al. (2018), the EE factor is very important because it contributes to ensuring a positive attitude from employees towards where they work. This positive attitude explains how employees dedicate themselves fully to the BDK Kemenag RI so that it can increase EP and improve employee retention. In line with previous research from Nazir & Islam (2017), Meswantri & Awaludin (2018), Sendawula et al. (2018), Sugianingrat et al. (2019), Hermawan et al. (2020), Rafia et al. (2020), Rembet et al. (2020), Tensay & Singh (2020), Amjed et al. (2021), Gemilang & Riana (2021), and Sungmala & Verawat (2021), which proves that there is a positive and significant influence on the EE factor on the EP factor. However, other studies disagree, namely Mulyati & Herawati (2022), Diem et al. (2023), and Rezeki et al. (2023), which prove that EE is not the main factor that can cause a decrease in EP, but rather other factors.

Based on the urgency of improving the image of the 14 BDK Kemenag RI and achieving the government's targets in the following year, the factors described by the author can help the BDK Kemenag RI optimally improve public engagement in the Society 5.0 era. Thus, this study aims to determine the effect of EC and OC on BDK EP, which EE mediates. In previous studies

(Aboramadan et al., 2020; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Trofimov et al., 2017), the EE variable was used as a dependent variable, proving that OC influences EE. As an independent variable, as in previous studies from Tensay & Singh (2020), Hendrik et al. (2021), and Sungmala & Verawat (2021), which states that EE has a substantial impact on EP. In addition, the EE variable used as a mediating variable can be a novelty in this research, and several previous studies show variations in results can create gaps and novelty in research.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationships between EC, OC, and EP, few have specifically explored EE as a mediating variable—particularly within public training institutions such as BDK under Kemenag RI. Most existing research treats EE as an independent or dependent variable, while its intervening role between EC, OC, and EP has received limited empirical attention. Furthermore, quantitative studies employing SEM-PLS to test such mediation models remain scarce in the Indonesian public sector, especially within religious training institutions like BDK Kemenag RI. This gap constrains the ability of public organizations to design targeted HR interventions that enhance performance through employee engagement. Accordingly, this study addresses the gap by offering theoretical insights and practical recommendations for strengthening employee performance in government-based training institutions.

Based on the aforementioned gaps and the context of performance challenges within BDK Kemenag RI, this study investigates the extent to which EC and OC influence EP directly and indirectly. It further explores whether EC and OC significantly affect EE and whether EE, in turn, has a significant effect on EP. In addition, this study examines the mediating role of EE in the relationship between EC and EP, as well as between OC and EP, to better understand the mechanisms through which individual and organizational factors contribute to employee performance in public training institutions.

Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework of the Study
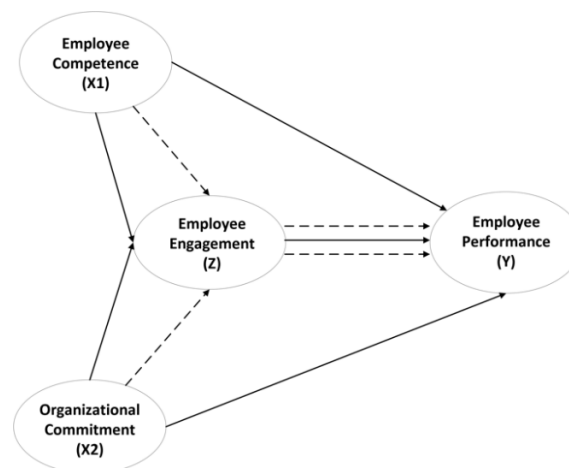
Source: Analysis by Researcher (2025)

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 presents the proposed relationships among the study variables. It positions EC and OC as independent variables that directly and indirectly influence EP. EE acts as a mediating variable that channels the effects of EC and OC on EP. The solid arrows indicate direct effects, while the dashed arrows represent indirect effects through EE. By illustrating these linkages, Figure 1 guides the formulation and testing of the seven hypotheses developed in this research.

Literature Review

Employee Performance (EP)

Employee Performance (EP) is the performance of individuals, which is determined based on their responsibilities and the quality and quantity of their work (Mangkunegara, 2000, p. 65). Another perspective on EP, according to Colquitt et al. (2019, pp. 44–49), is an employee's response or attitude towards the organization that can impact the achievement of goals. This attitude has led employees to desire results that benefit themselves and the BDK Kemenag RI.

Previously, the author had researched EP in the same case study, but EP was influenced from other perspectives (Rahmadani et al., 2025), and the results of the study also explained that EP in 14 BDK Kemenag RI had not fully met the government's target achievements. Therefore, all Regional Offices of the BDK Kemenag RI must align government achievements by measuring employee performance influenced by other factors such as EC, OC, and EE. In this context, the author measures the EP variable based on the dimensions and indicators that refer to Mangkunegara's theory (2000, p. 65), namely Quality of Performance (QP), Quantity of Work (QW), Reliability (R), and Attitude (A). First, the "QP" dimension has accuracy, precision, skill, and cleanliness indicators. Second, the "QW" dimension has routine and non-routine or extra work indicators. The third dimension, "R," has instruction, ability, initiative, caution, and expertise indicators. The last, the "A" dimension has indicators of behavior toward coworkers, behavior toward work, and cooperation with organizations.

For decades, EP has been studied in various contexts, including the government sector, to understand employee behavior, concepts, and resources that can improve EP (Bagis et al., 2021; Monggesang et al., 2023). The author has integrated much literature on employee behavior and the factors that can improve their performance, enabling the 14 BDK Kemenag RI to utilize, exploit, and invest in employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities. The current problem in the 14 BDK Kemenag RI is that the EP is not optimal because it does not meet the Indonesian government's target (120% according to KMA Regulation No. 94 of 2021), and the level of professionalism of ASN employees in the BDK Kemenag RI is in the "Moderate" category. These problems have made the Indonesian public lose confidence in their government due to rampant nepotism and corruption (Rahmadani et al., 2024; Tambunan, 2023), causing the public to have negative sentiments. There is a need to align employee skills with the organization's vision and mission, to have employees who excel in their work, and to have employees who have a high sense of responsibility towards their institution to improve the performance of the 14 BDK Kemenag RI. This alignment will also improve the ability of employees in the 14 BDK Kemenag RI to provide optimal public services, be emotionally intelligent, have competent skills, and be actively involved in their work (Bagis et al., 2021; Ballard & Montgomery, 2017; Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Drouvelis & Paiardini, 2022; Eckhard et al., 2023; Jumady & Lilla, 2021; Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2020; Monggesang et al., 2023).

Employee Engagement (EE)

Employee Engagement (EE) has been variously described as the psychological state of an individual that is temporary, positive-thinking, job-related satisfaction, and fluctuates in individuals over short periods, then characterized by work ethic, optimism, dedication, and absorption. Employees at the 14 BDK Kemenag RI can show different levels of engagement from one moment to the next, and the organization can focus on measuring

EE in moments when employees can bring themselves to work (Boccoli et al., 2023; Robbins & Judge, 2023, p. 40; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, pp. 13–14).

In this study, the author measured EE based on three dimensions adopted from Schaufeli and Bakker's theory (2010, pp. 13–14), namely (1) vigor, (2) dedication, and (3) absorption. The "Vigor" dimension describes employees with high work enthusiasm, excellent work resilience, enthusiasm for achieving the organization's vision and mission, and perseverance in overcoming work challenges. Meanwhile, the indicators for measuring the vigor dimension are energy level, resilience, willingness to try, and not giving up easily. Furthermore, the dimension of "dedication" explains the likes and dislikes that represent individuals during work, employee self-esteem, enthusiasm, creativity, a sense of usefulness, and employee readiness in facing the challenges of globalization. The indicators for measuring dedication are feeling valued, enthusiastic, inspired, valuable, and challenging. Furthermore, "absorption" explains how employees can concentrate fully on a particular task. The indicators for measuring absorption are full attention, high concentration, and enjoying work.

Research by Amjed et al. (2021) explains that organizations must recruit employees with a higher level of engagement to work on various tasks to achieve higher organizational sustainability. Thus, organizations can save on the financial resources spent on recruitment. In addition, employees with a higher level of work engagement will maintain a pleasant working relationship with their manager or supervisor. Thus, based on the study's results, EE has been proven to positively and significantly affect the EP factor. This statement is also in line with research from Nazir & Islam (2017), Meswantri & Awaludin (2018), Sendawula et al. (2018), Sugianingrat et al. (2019), Hermawan et al. (2020), Rafia et al (2020), Rembet et al (2020), Tensay & Singh (2020), Gemilang & Riana (2021), and Sungmala & Verawat (2021). However, there are also cons, namely the differences in research results that prove that EE has no influence on EP, such as research from Mulyati & Herawati (2022), which explains that leadership and teamwork are the factors that most influence EP. Then there is research from Diem et al. (2023), which demonstrates that employee satisfaction factors most influence EP, and finally, research from Rezeki et al. (2023) proves that transformational leadership factors greatly influence EP, not EE factors. The diversity of previous research results has made the author want to establish the relationship of the EE variable to the EP variable at the 14 BDK Kemenag RI.

Employee Competence (EC)

Employee Competence (EC) is the ability of individuals to perform work based on a combination of skills and knowledge, supported by the attitude of employees towards the work they are doing (Wibowo, 2016, p. 276; Wijayanti & Sari, 2023). The concept of competence in the public and private sectors is fundamental when facing challenges in the era of digitalization. The digital era brings about the impact of rapid change, more complex problems, and uncertainty about the future related to people's lives (Sutrisno, 2017, p. 275). Meanwhile, according to Boulter et al., (2014), the definition of competence includes the essential characteristics of individuals in an agency that enable them to achieve maximum work quality to realize the agency's vision and mission.

The author measures the EC in the BDK Kemenag RI using five (5) skill categories that refer to Wibowo's theory (2016, p. 276). The first, Task Achievement (TA), is a competency category related to achieving maximum employee performance. The indicators used to measure TA are result orientation, work initiative, and continuous improvement. Second, Relationships are competency categories related to communication skills, practical

cooperation with others, and understanding and meeting their needs. The indicators for measuring relationships are cooperation, interpersonal care, and conflict resolution. Third, Personal Attributes (PA) are a collection of individual intrinsic competencies related to how individuals think, feel, learn, and develop. The indicators used to measure PA are integrity, self-development, and way of thinking. The fourth, Managerial, is a competency category focusing explicitly on management, supervision, and human resources development. Motivating, empowering, and developing others are the indicators used to measure managerial. Finally, Leadership is a competency category related to the individual's ability to lead an organization and to achieve predetermined goals. Strategic thinking, change management, and organizational commitment are the indicators used to measure Leadership.

Competent BDK Kemenag RI employees will demonstrate a high level of work concentration, can collaborate, solve problems, and be highly motivated (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005), thus improving Employee Performance (EP) and creating high Employee Engagement (EE). The author uses the EC theory as a basis for research, and several previous studies have proven that EC significantly affects EP (Albalushi & Zaidan, 2019; Harwina, 2022; Kurniasih et al., 2022; Maizar et al., 2023; Nasrul et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2021; Pitafi et al., 2018; Sulantara et al., 2020; Sunatar, 2022). However, other studies have proven that EC does not have a significant effect on EP but rather on employee satisfaction and professional communication skills (Kotamena et al., 2021); then on the work environment, job satisfaction, and work motivation (Kharisma & Rosia, 2022). Furthermore, based on other literature, EC can also significantly influence EE (Fadilah & Helmi, 2023; Haruna & Marthandan, 2017; Heslina & Syahruni, 2021; Nasrul et al., 2020; Rahmayani et al., 2021; Salsabila & Lo, 2023; Suryawati & Nugraha, 2024; Tyas et al., 2020; Veriyanti & Nurhayati, 2022). The diversity of previous research results has made the author want to prove the relationship of the EC variable to the EP variable and the EC variable to the EE variable in the BDK Kemenag RI. In addition, the innovation that is also an added value in this study is using the EE variable as a mediating or intervening variable.

Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational Commitment (OC) is an individual's psychological state that describes the relationship between employees and the agency in influencing their decision to stay at work (Armstrong, 2022, p. 210). Meanwhile, Luthans et al. (2015, p. 22) and Robbins & Judge (2017, p. 47), analogize OC as employees who have a high sense of commitment to create a comfortable work atmosphere. A relaxed work atmosphere will motivate employees psychologically, increase work enthusiasm, and ensure that employees have completed work tasks and targets set by the agency to contribute to achieving the agency's goals.

The author measures OC using three (3) dimensions adopted from Robbins & Judge's theory (2017, p. 47). The first dimension, Affective Commitment (AC), is an individual who will continue to work for the agency because they are emotionally involved and believe in its values. The indicators used to measure AC are feeling proud, attached, and like they own the company. The second dimension is Sustainable Commitment (SC), which involves how an employee receives adequate compensation, making the employee choose to stay and commit to their agency. The indicators used to measure SC are attention to welfare, appreciation, and feeling the need to work. The third dimension is Normative Commitment (NC), which includes the moral responsibility that encourages individuals to

continue working for an agency because they feel they have an ethical responsibility to do so. The indicators used to measure NC are unethical, benefits, and unfulfilled obligations.

The high level of OC against the BDK Kemenag RI can stimulate an overall increase in EP and EE; this is in line with previous research that proves that OC has a substantial impact on EP (Folorunso et al., 2014; Hendri, 2019; Leitão et al., 2019; Mohammadi & Karupiah, 2020; Musabah et al., 2017; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Rita et al., 2018; Suharto et al., 2019; Susanty & Miradipta, 2013). On the other hand, several studies show different results, namely that OC does not significantly affect EP. This rejection occurs because other factors can influence EP, for example, job satisfaction (Triwahyuni & Ekowati, 2017), organizational culture (Bagis et al., 2021), Employee Engagement, and Organization Citizenship Behaviors (Rembet et al., 2020). Based on other research literature, OC can also significantly influence EE factors (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Trofimov et al., 2017). The diversity of previous research results has made the author want to prove the relationship of the OC variable to the EP variable and the EC variable to the EE variable in the BDK Kemenag RI. In addition, the innovation that is also an added value in this study is using the EE variable as a mediating or intervening variable.

This study develops the research model and tests the proposed hypotheses using a quantitative approach grounded in the above theoretical framework. While many studies have demonstrated that EC positively influences EP (Hendrik et al., 2021; Wibowo, 2016, p. 276), other research suggests that the relationship is not always statistically significant. For example, Tensay and Singh (2020) found that employee competence may not translate directly into performance in highly bureaucratic settings due to organizational constraints, rigid structures, or lack of autonomy. Similarly, Sungmala and Verawat (2021) observed variations in EC–EP linkage depending on employee engagement levels and institutional support. These contradictory findings highlight the need to investigate the EC–EP relationship further within the context of public sector organizations such as BDK Kemenag RI.

EE has emerged as a crucial psychological mechanism linking individual attributes and organizational outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, pp. 13–14). EC and OC can enhance an employee's sense of purpose, involvement, and energy at work—elements that define engagement. In turn, highly engaged employees are more likely to exert discretionary effort and perform beyond expectations Nazir & Islam (2017). Therefore, positioning EE as a mediating variable between EC/OC and EP is theoretically grounded and supported by empirical evidence from organizational behavior research. This study builds on this framework to examine how EE functions as a pathway through which competence and commitment influence performance in religious training institutions.

While numerous studies affirm that EC and OC positively influence EP, other findings suggest these relationships are context-dependent. Some studies report that EC has no significant effect on EP unless mediated by factors like motivation or job satisfaction (Kharisma & Rosia, 2022; Kotamena et al., 2021). Similarly, while OC often correlates positively with EP, several scholars have found its effect insignificant or indirect, particularly in highly bureaucratic or hierarchical settings (Bagis et al., 2021; Triwahyuni & Ekowati, 2017). Although previous studies generally support positive relationships between EC, OC, and EP, some findings reveal inconsistencies, particularly in public or hierarchical institutions. For instance, EC does not always translate into performance unless mediated by psychological mechanisms such as engagement or motivation. Similarly, OC may have limited influence in rigid organizational environments. These

contradictions indicate a theoretical gap and justify the inclusion of EE as a mediating variable in this study, especially within public training institutions like BDK Kemenag RI. Furthermore, although EE is commonly treated as an outcome of EC or OC, emerging evidence supports its role as a mediator that can strengthen or weaken the impact of these antecedents on EP. The inconsistency across these findings suggests a theoretical gap—highlighting the need to examine EE not only as an outcome but also as a mechanism that links EC and OC to EP, particularly in public sector training institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Figure 2.
Seven Research Hypotheses Model
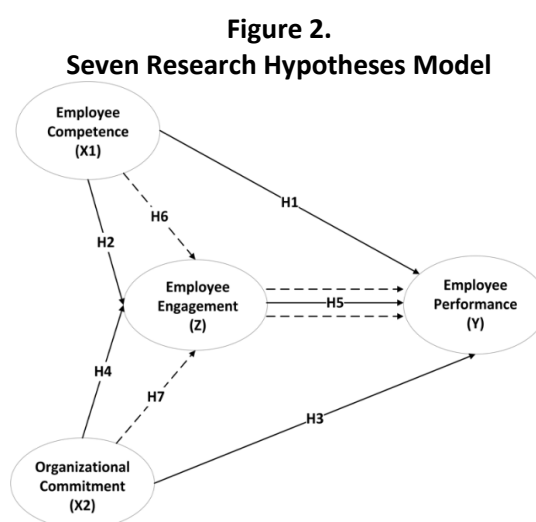
Source: Analysis by Researcher (2025)

The author has displayed the research model with seven (7) hypotheses in Figure 2. The author uses four variables in these seven hypotheses: (X_1) Employee Competence and (X_2) Organizational Commitment as independent variables. Then, (Y) Employee Performance as the dependent variable. Finally, (Z) Employee Engagement as an intervening variable. The straight arrow in Figure 2 represents the relationship of variables with direct influence, while the dotted arrow explains the relationship of variables with indirect (intervening) influence.

Population and Sample

This study employs a quantitative associative approach to examine the influence of EC (X_1) and OC (X_2) on EP (Y), with EE (Z) acting as a mediating variable. The author conducted this study periodically from December 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025. The author identified a population of 711 civil servants working across 14 BDK units under Kemenag RI. To ensure proportional representation, the author applied a stratified random sampling technique, treating each training center as a distinct stratum. Based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2021, pp. 15–17), the author selected 178 respondents—approximately 25% of the total population. The author collected primary data using a structured, self-administered questionnaire composed of closed-ended statements measured on a five-point Likert scale: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.
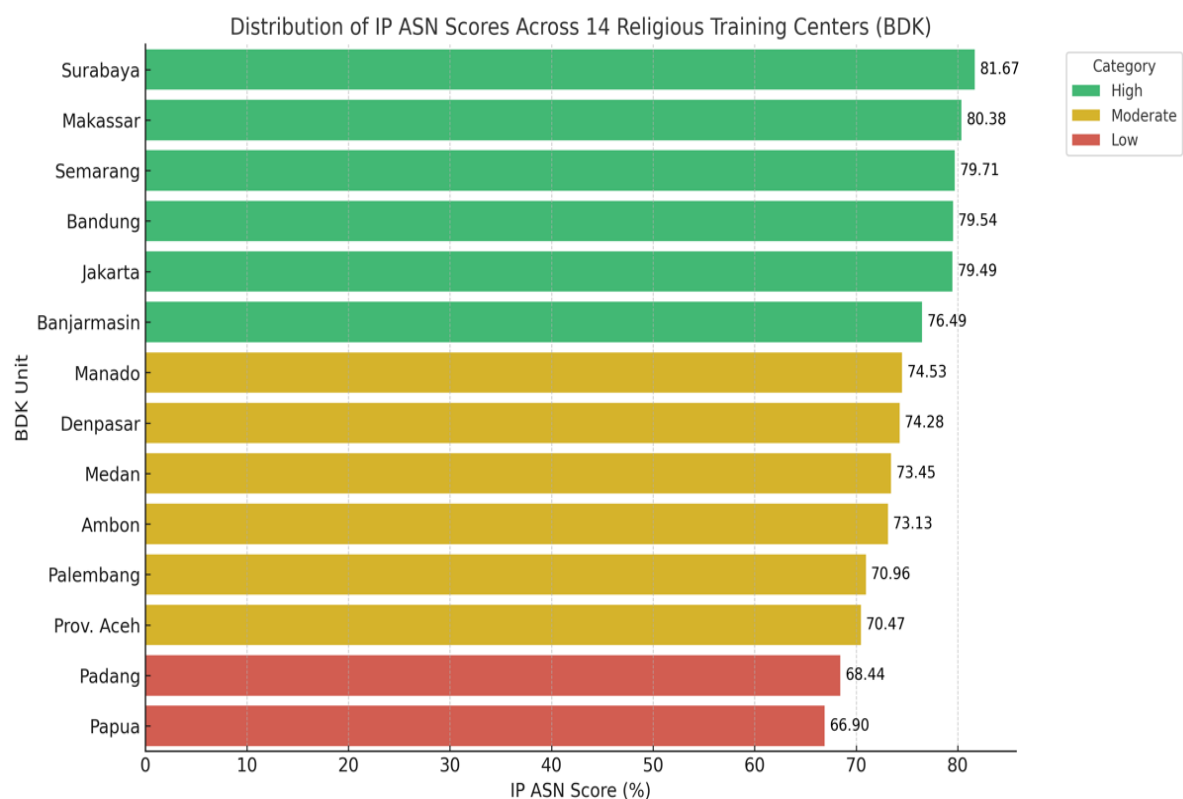
To ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, the author conducted several statistical tests. The author confirmed convergent validity through factor loadings above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50. Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceeded 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. The author also tested discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which confirmed that each

construct was empirically distinct. The author proportionally allocated respondents across the 14 BDK units as follows: 16 from BDK Surabaya, 14 from BDK Makassar, 15 from BDK Semarang, 14 from BDK Bandung, 12 from BDK Jakarta, 10 each from BDK Banjarmasin, Manado, Ambon, Aceh, and Padang, 13 from BDK Denpasar, 12 from BDK Medan, 14 from BDK Palembang, and 8 from BDK Papua. This distribution ensured a balanced and representative sample across institutional contexts. The author used Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the SmartPLS 4.0 software for data analysis. The author tested seven hypotheses involving direct and indirect relationships among EC, OC, EE, and EP. To assess explanatory and predictive power, the author used R-squared (R^2) and Q-squared (Q^2) values. Additionally, the author conducted a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples drawn from the original dataset (n = 178) using SmartPLS 4.0 and a 95% confidence level (t-critical ≥ 1.653) to determine the significance of each hypothesized path. This approach enabled the author to model complex causal relationships involving latent constructs in behavioral and social science research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As outlined earlier in Table 1, the Professionalism Index (IP ASN) across the 14 BDK Kemenag RI shows notable variation. To improve clarity and accessibility, Figure 3 provides a visual distribution of IP ASN scores across these centers. This representation allows for more precise comparison, highlighting strengths and performance gaps that may require managerial attention.

Figure 3.
Distribution of IP ASN Scores Across 14 Religious Training Centers (BDK) – 2024

Distribution of IP ASN Scores Across 14 Religious Training Centers (BDK)

BDK Unit	IP ASN Score (%)	Category
Surabaya	81.67	High
Makassar	80.38	High
Semarang	79.71	High
Bandung	79.54	High
Jakarta	79.49	High
Banjarmasin	76.49	High
Manado	74.53	Moderate
Denpasar	74.28	Moderate
Medan	73.45	Moderate
Ambon	73.13	Moderate
Palembang	70.96	Moderate
Prov. Aceh	70.47	Moderate
Padang	68.44	Low
Papua	66.90	Low

Source: Analysis by Researcher (2025)

Figure 4.
Performance Achievement Trend of BDK Employees (2020–2023)
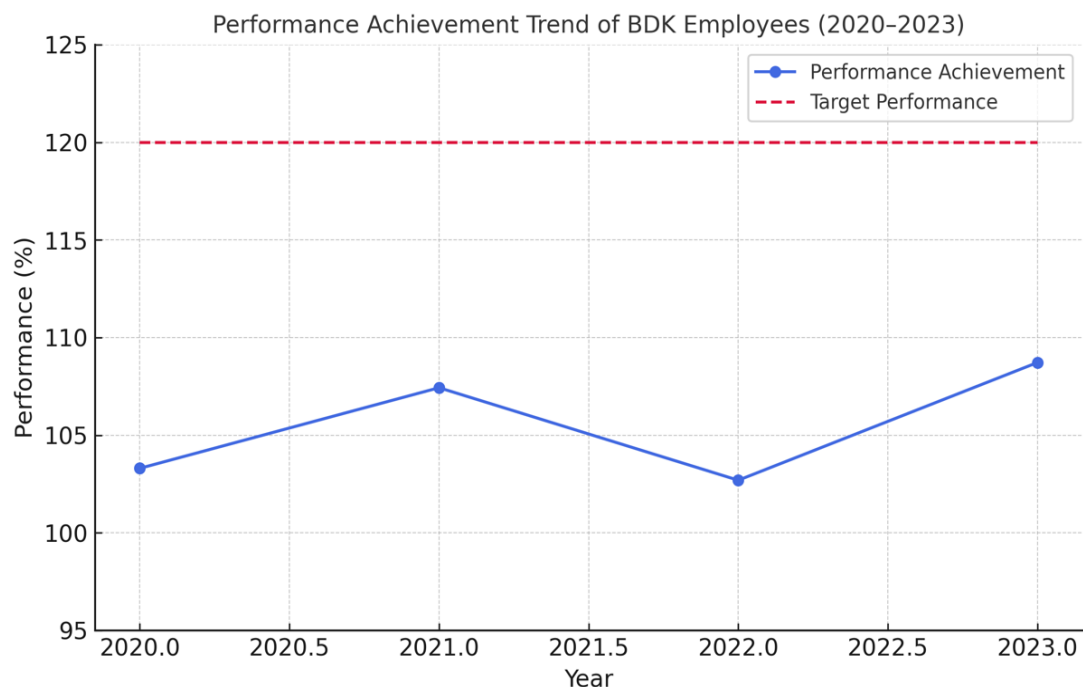

Source: Analysis by Researcher (2025)

Figure 3 illustrates that BDK Surabaya, Makassar, and Semarang fall into the "High" category, with Surabaya leading at 81.67%. In contrast, Padang and Papua, with scores of 68.44% and 66.90% respectively, are categorized as "Low." Most remaining BDKs fall within the "Moderate" range (70–80%), emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to enhance overall professionalism. In response to the institutional performance issues outlined earlier, the following practical implications are proposed based on the IP ASN distribution analysis. The performance disparities illustrated in Figure 3 offer valuable insights for policy formulation within BDK Kemenag RI. Low-performing centers like Padang and Papua may benefit from targeted interventions, including tailored leadership development programs, intensive technical training, and enhanced performance monitoring. In contrast, high-performing units like Surabaya can serve as models for mentorship and benchmarking. This segmentation highlights the importance of tailored strategies to elevate employee professionalism and meet the national target of 120%. Figure 4 illustrates the performance achievement trend of BDK employees from 2020 to 2023. Although performance showed modest growth overall, none of the years reached the national target of 120%. This visual trend confirms the need for more strategic, long-term interventions to bridge the gap between actual and expected performance levels.

1. **Interpretation of Validity and Reliability Test Results**

Figure 5.
Path Diagram of PLS Processing Results
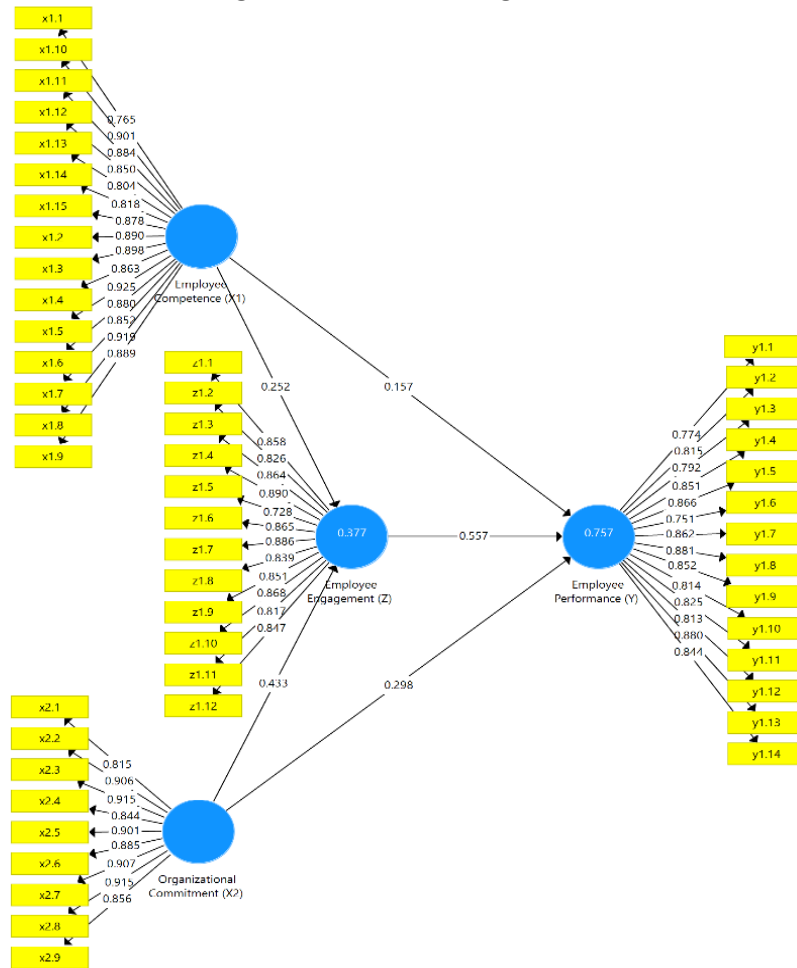
Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

Table 2.
Results of Outer Research Model with Seven Hypotheses

Research Variable Indicators	Four Research Variables			
	EC (X$_1$)	OC (X$_2$)	EP (Y)	EE (Z)
EC on indicator 1	0.765			
EC on indicator 2	0.890			
EC on indicator 3	0.898			
EC on indicator 4	0.863			
EC on indicator 5	0.925			
EC on indicator 6	0.880			
EC on indicator 7	0.852			

Research Variable Indicators	Four Research Variables			
	EC (X_1)	OC (X_2)	EP (Y)	EE (Z)
EC on indicator 8	0.919			
EC on indicator 9	0.889			
EC on indicator 10	0.901			
EC on indicator 11	0.884			
EC on indicator 12	0.850			
EC on indicator 13	0.804			
EC on indicator 14	0.818			
EC on indicator 15	0.878			
OC on indicator 1		0.815		
OC on indicator 2		0.906		
OC on indicator 3		0.915		
OC on indicator 4		0.844		
OC on indicator 5		0.901		
OC on indicator 6		0.885		
OC on indicator 7		0.907		
OC on indicator 8		0.915		
OC on indicator 9		0.856		
EP on indicator 1			0.774	
EP on indicator 2			0.815	
EP on indicator 3			0.792	
EP on indicator 4			0.851	
EP on indicator 5			0.866	
EP on indicator 6			0.751	
EP on indicator 7			0.862	
EP on indicator 8			0.881	
EP on indicator 9			0.852	
EP on indicator 10			0.814	
EP on indicator 11			0.825	
EP on indicator 12			0.813	
EP on indicator 13			0.880	

Research Variable Indicators	Four Research Variables			
	EC (X_1)	OC (X_2)	EP (Y)	EE (Z)
EP on indicator 14			0.844	
EE on indicator 1				0.858
EE on indicator 2				0.826
EE on indicator 3				0.864
EE on indicator 4				0.890
EE on indicator 5				0.728
EE on indicator 6				0.865
EE on indicator 7				0.886
EE on indicator 8				0.839
EE on indicator 9				0.851
EE on indicator 10				0.868
EE on indicator 11				0.817
EE on indicator 12				0.847

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

The research results refer to the output in Figure 5, the research path diagram, and Table 2, the Outer Model test results, which show valid results because they have loading values in each indicator that have met the statistical test standards (≥ 0.70) (Hair et al., 2021, p. 14). Thus, the variables in this study are suitable for further testing, namely, finding the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value.

Table 3.
Results of Construct Reliability and Validity Tests

Variables	(α)	Omega-a	CR	AVE
X_1	0.977	0.978	0.979	0.755
X_2	0.965	0.966	0.970	0.780
Y	0.965	0.966	0.969	0.690
Z	0.964	0.965	0.968	0.716

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

The author analyzed each research variable's construct validity and reliability (X_1, X_2, Y, and Z) based on the AVE value. The AVE value for variables X_1, X_2, Y, and Z shows the average value of variance extracts with a value > 0.5 as a determinant of convergent validity that has passed statistical tests. Furthermore, Table 3 shows the Composite Reliability (CR) test results for all research variable constructs, which is above 0.7, which means that all variable constructs in this study have met the statistical test criteria for the reliability test. Statistically, all variables in this study have also passed the reliability test because all values meet the Discriminant Validity (DV)

criteria, or the construct can explain more than 50% of the variance in the indicator. Furthermore, the lowest CR value was for the EE variable, which was 0.968, while the highest value was for the EC variable, which was 0.979. The conclusion is that all variables in this study also obtain an AVE value of more than 0.50 (AVE > 0.50) so that the variables EC, OC, EP, and EE have been statistically tested as valid and are reliable based on "α" value (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70).

Table 4.
Interpreting the Fornell-Larcker Test

	X_1 (EC)	Z (EE)	Y (EP)	X_2 (OC)
EC	0.869			
EE	0.502	0.846		
EP	0.608	0.808	0.831	
OC	0.577	0.579	0.711	0.883

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

The results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion (FLC) test in Table 4 show that the four construct variables in this study (EC, EE, EP, and OC) have passed the statistical test. The FLC test passed in this study because all construct variables have a discriminant validity value that has passed statistical tests or is significant based on the AVE root value.

2. **Structural Model**

Table 5.
Interpretation of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Variable	R-Square	R^2	Q^2 Predicted	Q^2 Testing
EP (Y)	0.757	0.752	0.509	0.848
EE (Z)	0.377	0.368	0.264	

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

Table 5 explains the varying R^2 values; the R^2 value on the Y variable is 0.752, demonstrating the strength of variable Y because variables X_1, X_2, and Z are independent variables. The value of 0.752 on the Y variable falls into the "Strong" category. Furthermore, the value of the Z variable is 0.368, which explains that the increase in Z is due to the independent variables, namely X_1 and X_2—the value of the Z variable is in the "medium" category.

Table 5 shows the R-Square value result on variable Y of 0.757. The R-Square value explains that variables X_1, X_2, and Z have influenced variable Y by 75.7 percent, and other factors outside the independent variables influence the remaining 24.3 percent. Furthermore, variable Z has an R-Square value of 0.377, explaining that variables X_1 and X_2 have influenced variable Z by 37.7 percent, and other factors outside the independent variables influence the remaining 62.3 percent.

Furthermore, the Q2 prediction value for variable Y is 0.509. The Q2 value for variable Y explains that variables X_1, X_2, and Z can predict the variance of variable Y at a "moderate" category level.

Meanwhile, the Q2 value on variable Z is 0.264, meaning that variable X_1 and variable X_2 can predict the variance of variable Z at a "weak" category level. Based on the Q2 test results for both variables, namely variable Y and variable Z, the Q2 value obtained is 0.848. This research model explains that the endogenous latent variable has a more excellent value or is in the "strong" category in Q2 and has a value of 0, so the model has predictive relevance. Thus, the exogenous latent variable as the explanatory variable (variable Y) can predict its endogenous variable, namely variable Z, or this research model has a Q2 value in the "good" category.

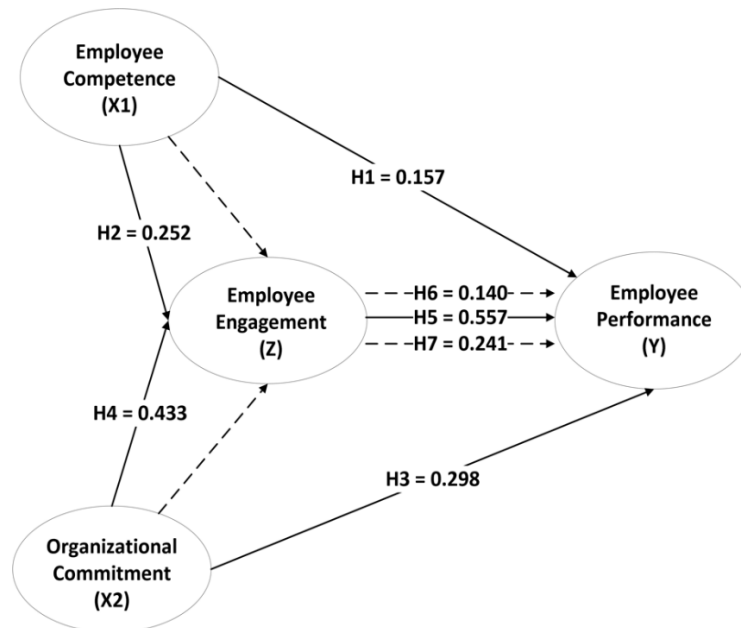3. **Results of Testing the Seven Research Hypotheses**

The author analyzed the test results of the seven research hypotheses through the bootstrapping procedure with a system confidence level of 95 percent and a t-table value of 1.653 according to the research sample. Thus, the research hypothesis will be significantly affected if it has a t-value > 1.653. Table 6 presents the results of the Direct Effect (DE) and Indirect Effect (IE) hypothesis tests using SEM-PLS, based on the values: "O" for the Original Sample, "M" for the Sample Mean, "STDEV" for the Standard Deviation, "(|O/STDEV|)" for *t*-statistics, *p*-value, and "C" for the conclusion.

Table 6.
Results of SEM-PLS Structural Model Analysis for All Seven Hypotheses (DE and IE)

Formulation of Hypothetical Research Problems	O	M	STDEV	(|O/STDEV|)	P-Values	C
H1: DE X_1 (EC) → Y (EP)	0.157	0.155	0.059	2.666	0.008	Positive and significant
H2: DE X_1 (EC) → Z (EE)	0.252	0.254	0.085	2.963	0.003	Positive and significant
H3: DE X_2 (OC) → Y (EP)	0.298	0.288	0.075	3.956	0.000	Positive and significant
H4: DE X_2 (OC) → Z (EE)	0.433	0.436	0.092	4.728	0.000	Positive and significant
H5: DE Z (EE) → Y (EP)	0.557	0.568	0.084	6.632	0.000	Positive and significant
H6: IE X_1 (EC) → Z (EE) → Y (EP)	0.140	0.145	0.054	2.616	0.009	Positive and significant
H7: IE X_2 (OC) → Z (EE) → Y (EP)	0.241	0.250	0.074	3.255	0.001	Positive and significant

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

Figure 6.
Structural Model Resulting from SEM-PLS Analysis

Source: Primary Data that the author processed with SEM-PLS, 2025

Table 6 presents the results of the seven research hypotheses, all of which exhibit positive and statistically significant relationships. Figure 6 illustrates these findings through the structural model resulting from the SEM-PLS analysis conducted using SmartPLS. The figure visually maps the direct and indirect effects among Employee Competence (EC), Organizational Commitment (OC), Employee Engagement (EE), and Employee Performance (EP), including the standardized path coefficients and the explanatory power (R^2) of each endogenous variable.

Hypotheses Test

1. **H1: Employee Competence (EC) and Employee Performance (EP)**

H1 in this study explains that the EC factor positively and significantly influences the EP factor in each unit in 14 BDK Kemenag RI. The acceptance of the first hypothesis from the statistical test results in Table 6 represents that the stronger the influence of EC on each civil servant, the better the quality of EP in the BDK Kemenag RI. The author draws a conclusion based on the statistical test of the t-value, which is 2.666 > 1.653, and based on the p-value, which is 0.008 < 0.05; the value "O" indicates a positive influence of 0.157. Thus, Hypothesis 1 in this study is accepted. These results confirm the theory about EC put forward by Wibowo (2016, p. 276) and the research of Wijayanti & Sari (2023), namely that agencies can assess the abilities and attitudes of each employee in doing work through their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, Mangkunegara's (2000, p. 65) EP theory states that EP is the achievement of employee performance, which is by their responsibilities when viewed in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, every BDK agency of the Kemenag RI must improve EP to reach the government target of 120%. In addition, Society 5.0, which continues to develop in all government sectors, especially in 14 BDK Kemenag RI, has had a significant impact. Therefore, through the influence of EC on EP, it is hoped that ASN employees can have the competencies needed to respond to the era of digitalization, and government policies will not experience delays in the bureaucracy (Kadarisman et al., 2022; Sutrisno, 2017, p. 275). Thus, it can increase EP in the BDK Kemenag RI.

Employees with a high level of competence can demonstrate high concentration at work, the ability to collaborate with teams, problem-solving skills, high motivation, and a quality leadership spirit. Based on this study, ASN employees feel that they have EC skills such as Task Achievement (results orientation, work initiative, and continuous improvement), Relationship (cooperation, interpersonal care, and conflict resolution), Personal Attributes (integrity, self-development, and way of thinking), Managerial (motivating, empowering, and developing others), and Leadership (strategic thinking, change management, and organizational commitment). Furthermore, employees also have skills that are in the EP factor, such as "QP" (accuracy, precision, skill, and cleanliness), "QW" (routine and non-routine or extra output), "R" (instruction, ability, initiative, caution, and expertise), and "A" (behavior towards coworkers, behavior towards work, and cooperation with the company).

Based on the results of the most dominant dimension (Relationship-Cooperation and Personal Attributes-Integrity) in the EC variable in this first hypothesis, it explains that employees in 14 BDK Kemenag RI feel that they can work together with their fellow workers and show their integrity in their work. Meanwhile, the lowest dimension is "Managerial-Motivating," meaning employees cannot motivate their coworkers. Furthermore, in the EP variable, the most dominant dimension is "Reliability-Instructions," which explains that employees feel they can properly follow the instructions given by their superiors (leaders). Meanwhile, the dimension with the lowest value is "Work Quantity-Extra output," meaning that employees sometimes feel they can produce additional output when needed. The findings in this study are also in line with previous research that proves the positive and significant influence of the EC factor on the EP factor (Albalushi & Zaidan, 2019; Harwina, 2022; Kurniasih et al., 2022; Maizar et al., 2023; Nasrul et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2021; Pitafi et al., 2018; Sulantara et al., 2020; Sunatar, 2022).

2. **H2: Employee Competence (EC) and Employee Engagement (EE)**

Hypothesis two in this study explains that the EC factor positively and significantly affects the EE factor in each BDK Kemenag RI. The acceptance of H2 from the statistical test results in Table 6 represents that the higher the EC's influence on each civil servant's ability, the better the EE for the BDK Kemenag RI. The author draws a conclusion based on the statistical test of the t-value, which is 2.963 > 1.653, and based on the p-value, which is 0.003 < 0.05; the value "O" indicates a positive influence of 0.252. This finding aligns with the opinions of experts who describe EC, which the author discussed in the previous point (H1). In addition, the results of the second hypothesis test confirmed the theory by Robbins and Judge (2023, p. 40) that EE is a characteristic that helps employees perform better. EC can be a factor that increases self-efficacy and EE at work. Managers or leaders at the BDK Kemenag RI are skilled in increasing EE, competence, and self-efficacy by creating an attractive work environment. BDK Kemenag RI has a clear mission, objectives, job expectations, and a system and supporting information to assist employees. The superiors or managers at the BDK Kemenag RI have ensured a work environment that does not frustrate employees. They also provide constructive feedback, personal training, and guidance and are willing to help employees develop to fulfill career opportunities.

This effective collaboration will help realize the organization's vision and mission in the future, align with government targets, and meet the challenges of the Society 5.0 era. EE has encouraged civil servants to be optimistic and enthusiastic by combining Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption (EE dimensions) and the EC dimension (author discussed in the first hypothesis). The author has also explained the most dominant dimension of the EC factor in the first hypothesis (H1). Furthermore, in the EE factor, the most dominant dimension is "Absorption-Happy with work," meaning that employees at 14 BDK Kemenag RI feel that their work is what they enjoy

the most. Meanwhile, the dimension with the lowest value is "Dedication-Feeling valued," meaning that some employees feel their work is not very valuable. The findings in this study are also in line with previous research that proves the positive and significant influence of the EC factor on the EE factor (Fadilah & Helmi, 2023; Haruna & Marthandan, 2017; Heslina & Syahruni, 2021; Nasrul et al., 2020; Rahmayani et al., 2021; Salsabila & Lo, 2023; Suryawati & Nugraha, 2024; Tyas et al., 2020; Veriyanti & Nurhayati, 2022).

3. **H3: Organizational Commitment (OC) and Employee Performance (EP)**

The third hypothesis in this study explains that the OC factor positively and significantly influences the EP factor in each BDK unit of the Kemenag RI. The acceptance of this third hypothesis from the statistical test results in Table 6 represents that the higher the influence of OC on civil servants, the higher the quality of EP in the BDK Kemenag RI. The author draws a conclusion based on the statistical test of the t-value, which is 3,956 > 1,653, and based on the p-value, which is 0.000 < 0.05; the value "O" indicates a positive influence of 0,298. This study's findings align with expert opinion in describing the EP factor that the author discussed in the first hypothesis. The theory put forward by Armstrong (2022, p. 210) is also in line with the results of this study, namely that the psychological condition of employees in 14 BDK Kemenag RI dramatically influences their behavior and decision to continue working in the government. In addition, OC shows a high level of employee commitment to the agency to create a comfortable work atmosphere, and their work tasks can be completed by the targets given by superiors (leaders) (Luthans et al., 2015; Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 47) at the BDK Kemenag RI. Increasing EP is necessary for the sustainability of the BDK Kemenag RI in the short term, but it also serves as the primary foundation for long-term sustainability in the Society 5.0 era while remaining based on religion. The increasing demands for optimal employee professionalism in the Society 5.0 era make it necessary for the BDK Kemenag RI to make sure efforts, such as providing support through training or special seminars to improve employees' ability to compete globally (Hadijaya & Anggraeni, 2023).

The aspects of support provided by the BDK Kemenag RI to increase OC are affective commitment (feeling proud, feeling attached, and feeling that one owns the company), continuous commitment (concern for welfare, appreciation, and feeling the need for work), and normative commitment (unethicality, profit, and unfulfilled obligations). Meanwhile, the author has explained the aspects provided by the BDK Kemenag RI supporting EP in the first hypothesis (H1). The author in H1 has elaborated in detail on which dimensions are the most dominant in the EP factor. In addition, the OC variable's most dominant dimension is "Affective commitment-Feeling proud," meaning that employees feel honored to be part of the BDK Kemenag RI. Meanwhile, the dimension with the lowest score is "Normative commitment-Unfulfilled obligations," meaning that some employees at the BDK Kemenag RI feel they still have unfulfilled responsibilities. The findings in this study are also in line with previous research that proves the positive and significant influence of the OC factor on the EP factor (Folorunso et al., 2014; Hendri, 2019; Leitão et al., 2019; Mohammadi & Karupiah, 2020; Musabah et al., 2017; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Rita et al., 2018; Suharto et al., 2019; Susanty & Miradipta, 2013).

4. **H4: Organizational Commitment (OC) and Employee Engagement (EE)**

The author draws conclusions based on the results of the statistical test of the fourth hypothesis in Table 6, namely the t-value 4.728 > 1.653, and based on the p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, the value "O" indicates a positive effect of 0.433. The statistical test results represent that the OC factor has a positive and significant impact on the EE factor, so the fourth hypothesis in this study is accepted. In the scope of government, organizational commitment to employee welfare is essential because it can maintain harmony, improve organizational effectiveness, and make

employees more involved with the BDK Kemenag RI. Employees who transfer their positive feelings to the BDK Kemenag RI will make employees react to the organization's goals and increase their productivity in terms of work. The findings of the fourth hypothesis align with expert opinion, namely through explaining H3 regarding the OC factor. Then, the author discusses the EE factor in H2 in detail. In addition, the author has also discussed the support provided by the BDK Kemenag RI to improve OC on H3 and the EE aspect on H2. The author explains the most dominant and lowest score dimension of the OC factor on H3 and mentions the most dominant and lowest score dimension of the EE factor on H2. The findings in this study are also in line with previous research by Trofimov et al. (2017), Nazir & Islam (2017), and Aboramadan et al. (2020) that proves the positive and significant influence of the OC factor on the EE factor.

5. **H5: Employee Engagement (EE) and Employee Performance (EP)**

The author draws conclusions based on the statistical test results of the fifth hypothesis from Table 6, namely 6.632 > 1.653, and the p-value, namely 0.000 < 0.05; the value of "O" indicates a positive influence of 0.557. These results explain that the EE factor has a positive and significant relationship with EP. Employee concern for work has led to a strong emotional attachment to the BDK Kemenag RI. Employees will identify with their goals and the organization's values so that they want to work at the BDK Kemenag RI. If employees enjoy their work at the BDK Kemenag RI, they will feel feedback such as comfort, motivation, and satisfaction, enabling them to work to the best of their ability. The results of this fifth hypothesis align with experts' opinions in explaining the EE factor in H1 and the EP factor in H2. Thus, the increase in the EE factor in the BDK Kemenag RI has reflected the attitude of civil servants willing to commit themselves to implementing the agency's vision, mission, and goals. Employees' attitudes towards the BDK Kemenag RI can foster a sense of ownership and high responsibility for every job. It also allows employees to be directly involved, positively impacting the progress of the BDK Kemenag RI in producing employee performance in line with government achievements. Employee involvement can make it easier for the management team to carry out the process of employee training, compensation, and career development for government employees (Boccoli et al., 2023). The author has explained the dimensions of the most dominant EP factor and the lowest score in H1. Meanwhile, the most dominant dimension and the lowest score of the EE factor is in H2. Furthermore, this study's findings align with previous studies that explain that the EE factor can positively and significantly influence the EP factor. The results of this H5 are in line with research from Nazir & Islam (2017), Meswantri & Awaludin (2018), Sendawula et al. (2018), Sugianingrat et al. (2019), Hermawan et al. (2020), Rafia et al. (2020), Rembet et al. (2020), Tensay & Singh (2020), Amjed et al. (2021), Gemilang & Riana (2021), and Sungmala & Verawat (2021).

6. **H6: Employee Competence (EC), Employee Performance (EP), and Employee Engagement (EE)**

Based on the interpretation of the statistical test results for the sixth hypothesis in Table 6, the t-value is 2.616 > 1.653, the p-value is 0.009 < 0.05, and the value "O" on H6 shows a positive influence of 0.140. The results of the H6 test confirm that the EC factor positively and significantly influences the EP factor through the EE factor as an intervening variable. The EE factor as an intervening variable of EC and EP is a novelty in this study. So, through this advantage, it can provide a new perspective for readers and as a consideration for other researchers that the EE factor can strongly influence the EC and EP factors in an organization in the government sector. The EC factor measures workability, including employee knowledge of their work, how employees can communicate well, outstanding skills, and employee work

attitude while at the BDK Kemenag RI. Good employee competence can help employees compete globally with their competencies to increase their EP at the BDK Kemenag RI. EE can encourage positive psychological effects from employees, such as feelings of pleasure so that employees become enthusiastic or have high enthusiasm for doing work. This enthusiastic attitude will encourage employee work performance by helping the BDK Kemenag RI achieve its goals. On the other hand, the role of the BDK Kemenag RI in committing to employees' welfare will improve the work environment, and employees will feel comfortable working because of the harmony of their goals with the BDK Kemenag RI. In several previous hypotheses, the author has discussed the most dominant dimensions with the lowest scores from the EC, EP, and EE factors. For example, H1 explains the most dominant dimensions of the EC and EP variables. Furthermore, H2 explains the most dominant dimensions of the EE variable.

7. **H7: Organizational Commitment (OC), Employee Performance (EP), and Employee Engagement (EE)**

Based on the interpretation of the statistical test results for the seventh hypothesis in Table 6, the t-value is 3.255 > 1.653, and based on the p-value of 0.001 < 0.05, the "O" value indicates a positive effect of 0.241. The results of the analysis of the H7 explain that the OC factor has a positive and significant impact on the EP factor through the EE factor as an intervening variable. Thus, H7 in this study is accepted. Previous research by Nazir & Islam (2017), Trofimov et al. (2017), and Aboramadan et al. (2020), the EE variable is used as the dependent variable, proving that OC affects EE. The EE factor as an intervening variable that affects the OC and EP factors is new in research. Thus, through the advantages of this study, it can provide a new perspective for readers, the world of research in the government sector, especially in the field of employee training, and as food for thought for other researchers that the EE factor can have a strong influence on the OC and EP factors. The OC factor is an important basic concept that describes the relationship between employees and the BDK Kemenag RI and how the commitment of the BDK Kemenag RI can influence employee satisfaction and employee involvement with the organization to increase EP. OC can also predict employee turnover, determine the willingness of employees to put the interests of the BDK Kemenag RI before personal interests, the desire of employees to work hard on behalf of the BDK Kemenag RI, the belief of employees in the values and goals of the BDK Kemenag RI, and how the government organization can maintain their membership. The EE factor predicts the influence of employees actively involved in their work and demonstrates higher efficiency. The synergy between employee engagement and performance management can encourage employees to perform at their best at the BDK Kemenag RI. The author has explained the most dominant dimension and the dimension with the lowest score of the OC factor in H3. In addition, the most dominant dimension is the one with the lowest score of the EP factor in H1, and the most superior dimension is the dimension with the lowest score of the EE factor in H2.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Employee Competence (EC) and Organizational Commitment (OC) significantly influence Employee Performance (EP), both directly and indirectly, through the mediating role of Employee Engagement (EE). The results statistically supported all seven hypotheses proposed in this study, demonstrating strong and meaningful relationships among EC, OC, EE, and EP. EE plays the most dominant role in shaping EP, reinforcing its strategic importance in enhancing performance within public training institutions such as BDK Kemenag RI. These findings suggest that BDK leaders should prioritize strengthening EE to improve employee outcomes. They are encouraged to implement structured, competency-based training programs, promote two-way communication, provide continuous feedback, and recognize

employee contributions. Low-performing units like BDK Papua and Padang should receive targeted engagement and leadership development initiatives, while high-performing units like BDK Surabaya can serve as benchmarks and mentorship models. In the long term, BDK Kemenag RI should integrate EE indicators into performance appraisals and leadership evaluations. Institutionalizing engagement-focused HR practices will elevate employee professionalism, improve the quality of public service delivery, and help rebuild public trust in government-run training institutions.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several actionable insights for managing human resources across the 14 Religious Training Centers (BDK) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI). First, since previous analysis demonstrates that Employee Competence (EC) influences Employee Performance (EP) both directly and indirectly through Employee Engagement (EE), training programs should extend beyond technical skill development. Future programs should also aim to cultivate emotional engagement and a stronger sense of ownership in the workplace. Second, the finding that Organizational Commitment (OC) also affects EP via EE underscores the importance of reinforcing organizational culture. Organizations can achieve this by internalizing institutional values, facilitating structured two-way communication between leadership and staff, and formally recognizing employee loyalty and contributions. Third, given that EE emerges as the strongest driver of EP, fostering engagement should be a top priority in HR strategies. Concrete steps include involving employees in decision-making, fostering a supportive work environment, and maintaining a consistent and transparent feedback mechanism. By implementing these recommendations, civil servants within the BDK Kemenag RI are more likely to perform professionally, productively, and in alignment with national performance targets.

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