

# The Influence of Individual Characteristics and Ethical Behavior on Employee Performance Mediated by Organizational Commitment

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## Abstract

This study aims to obtain empirical evidence of the influence of individual characteristics and ethical behavior on employee performance mediated by organizational commitment. The population in this study were all employees of the Regional Secretariat of Probolinggo City, totaling 147 people. The determination of the number of samples using the Slovin formula, which is 96 people. The data analysis technique used in this study is Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using smartPLS software version 4.0. The results of the study indicate that better individual characteristics can encourage increased employee performance. Better individual characteristics can encourage increased organizational commitment. Better ethical behavior can encourage increased employee performance. Better ethical behavior can encourage increased organizational commitment. Higher organizational commitment can encourage increased employee performance. Organizational commitment plays a role in mediating part of the influence of individual characteristics on employee performance. Organizational commitment plays a role in mediating part of the influence of ethical behavior on employee performance.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a vital element in determining the success of an organization, both in the public and private sectors. This is not only influenced by the technology and management systems implemented, but more than that, it depends on the human resources who carry out their duties and responsibilities. According to Mangkunegara (2017), employee performance reflects work results which are measured based on the quality and quantity achieved by individuals in carrying out tasks according to the responsibilities given. In this context, Bernardin and Russell (2013) state that performance is the achievement of certain functions or activities within a certain period of time, while Handoko (2016) emphasizes the importance of systematic evaluation to assess employee work performance. Simamora (2014) added that performance is the

level of achievement of tasks that make up an employee's work in an organization. Thus, focusing on managing and improving employee performance is an important agenda for organizations.

In the public sector, performance measurement is an important instrument in ensuring government accountability towards society. Strategic planning is a crucial first step in directing the performance of government agencies, including the Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat. Integration between human resource capabilities and other resources is very necessary to answer local, national and global demands. The Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat's Strategic Plan for the 2019–2023 period notes that although several performance indicators are close to the target, such as in the program to increase the capacity of apparatus resources, there are a number of programs whose results are not yet optimal, indicating the need for a more targeted and comprehensive strategy to improve performance.

The factors that influence employee performance are diverse, including individual characteristics, ethical behavior, and organizational commitment. Gibson et al. (2017) revealed that individual characteristics, such as personality, perceptions and attitudes, can influence work outcomes. Variations in individual backgrounds also create differences in adaptation to organizational values. In addition, ethical behavior is another significant factor in influencing performance. Schumann et al. (2014) stated that ethical behavior reflects decisions based on morality and transparency, while research by Anwar et al. (2020) shows a positive correlation between ethical behavior and employee performance. This factor is relevant in the public sector, where ethical values often guide decision making.

Organizational commitment also plays an important role in determining employee productivity. Meyer et al. (1993) describe this commitment as an employee's emotional attachment to organizational values, which can increase their dedication to their duties. Zurnali (2017) emphasized that organizations that succeed in building organizational commitment have higher levels of productivity. Several previous studies, such as those conducted by Ajie and Supratikta (2021) and Wahyunanti et al. (2023), found a positive relationship between individual characteristics, ethical behavior, and employee performance, with organizational commitment as a mediator.

However, the research results show variability. Several studies, such as those conducted by Endartanto et al. (2023), states that the influence of individual characteristics on performance can be mediated by organizational commitment. In the context of the Probolinggo City Government, the challenges faced include improving the quality of government governance, aligning programs with central policies, and optimizing public services. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 7 of 2018 is an important basis for developing strategies that are able to answer these challenges.

Based on the identification of this problem, this research seeks to answer questions related to the influence of individual characteristics and ethical behavior on employee performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. Through an evidence-based approach, this research aims to provide an empirical contribution to improving employee performance at the Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat. By

placing organizational commitment as a mediating variable, it is hoped that this research will be able to provide new insights regarding human resource management in the public sector.

This research is also expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research can be a reference for further studies regarding the relationship between individual characteristics, ethical behavior and employee performance. Meanwhile, practically, this research provides guidance for organizations in identifying and managing factors that influence employee performance. This is expected to support the achievement of organizational goals more effectively.

In a broader framework, it is hoped that the results of this research will not only be relevant for the Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat, but also for other public sector organizations that face similar challenges. With a focus on individual characteristics, ethical behavior, and organizational commitment, this research offers a holistic approach to improving employee performance, ultimately supporting overall organizational success.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Individual Characteristics**

According to Kridharta & Rusdianti (2017), individual characteristics are characteristics that have certain characteristics so that they can show differences in individual characteristics with other individuals. Individual characteristics can be seen from an employee's ability to overcome existing problems, how employees motivate themselves and the initiative to work together to solve problems. According to Hajati et al. (2018) stated that individual characteristics are characteristics that exist in that individual which are often referred to as traits. This has an interconnected and interrelated relationship between objects and individuals. The attitudes, needs and interests of an individual can be called individual characteristics.

### **Ethical Behavior**

Prawirosentono (2014) stated that ethics is knowledge that discusses the behavior and habits of society related to norms that distinguish between right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate and refers to religious laws, state policies and also the customs adhered to. Wirawan (2015) stated that ethics is a conception that discusses right and wrong actions. Ethics states whether a person's actions or behavior are in accordance with morals or deviate from morals.

### **Organizational Commitment**

According to Luthans (2011), organizational commitment is a reflection of employee loyalty and an ongoing process in which organizational members express their attention to the organization and confidence in accepting the organization's values and goals. According to Robbins & Judge (2015) organizational commitment is a situation where an employee sides with the goals of the organization and has the desire to maintain his or her membership in the organization.

## **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him (Mangkunegara, 2015). Performance is often thought of as the achievement of tasks, where the term task itself comes from thinking about the activities required by workers (Pusparini, 2018). Performance is the result of work achieved by a person based on job requirements, requirements usually called work standards, namely the level that is expected for a particular job to be completed and compared to the goals or targets to be achieved (Bangun, 2018).

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a quantitative approach with explanatory research. This approach aims to test the causal relationship between hypothesized variables through numerical data-based measurements and statistical analysis. Explanatory research was chosen because it allows testing direct or indirect relationships between independent variables, mediating variables and dependent variables. The analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM), with the help of SmartPLS 4 software for testing relationships between variables and IBM SPSS Statistics 25 for descriptive statistical analysis.

The subjects of this research were employees of the Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat, with a population of 147 employees. The research sample was determined using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance level of 6%, resulting in a sample of 96 respondents. The sampling technique used is proportionate stratified random sampling, which ensures proportional representation of each section in the population. Primary data was obtained through a questionnaire prepared on a Likert scale, while secondary data in the form of a general description of the research institution was obtained through official documentation.

Data processing is carried out in two stages. First, descriptive analysis to provide a general description of the characteristics of respondents and research variables. Second, inferential analysis uses PLS-SEM to test the hypothesis of the relationship between variables, either directly or through mediating variables. The validity and reliability of the instrument were tested using convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability. The structural model is assessed based on the R-square, Q-square and path coefficient values, which are then used to draw conclusions regarding the causal relationship between variables. This approach provides relevant empirical results to answer research questions and supports the development of human resource management strategies in the public sector.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**

##### **Measurement Model**

Evaluation of the measurement model was carried out to describe the relationship between the indicator blocks and the construct variables. These indicators need to be

tested for reliability which consists of an indicator reliability test and an internal consistency reliability test. Meanwhile, the validity test consists of a convergent validity test and a discriminant validity test.

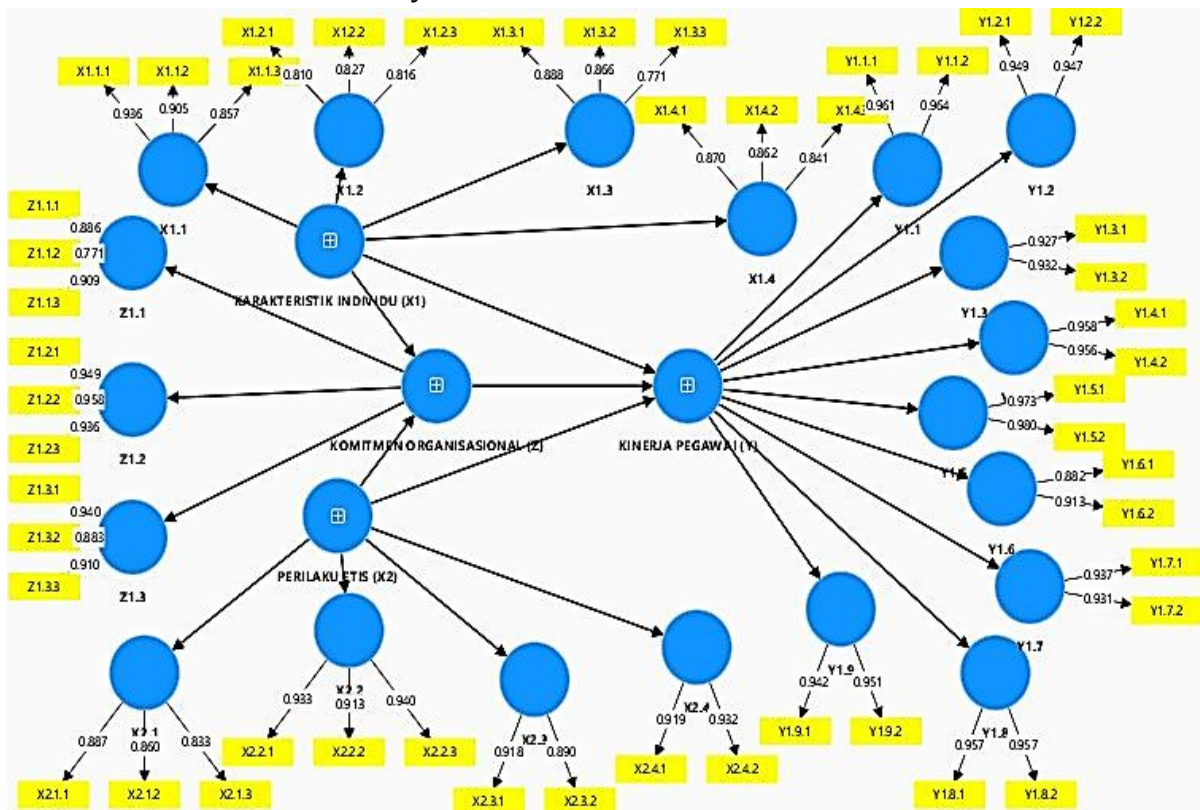


Figure 1. Measurement Model

### Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Another method for assessing discriminant validity is to use the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compares the square root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct with the correlation between other constructs in the model.

Table 1. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variabel	Karakteristik Individu (X1)	Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	Perilaku Etis (X2)
Karakteristik Individu (X1)	0.914			
Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	0.801	0.973		
Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	0.910	0.870	0.963	
Perilaku Etis (X2)	0.896	0.838	0.870	0.966

The table above shows that the square root value of the AVE (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for each construct is greater than the correlation value between the construct and other constructs in the model.

### Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Collinearity Statistics states that the constructs formed are not interconnected (very high) or there are no multicollinearity problems which can be measured using the Variance Inflated Factor (VIF).

Table 2. Collinearity Statistics (VIF) Inner Model

Variabel	Karakteristik Individu (X1)	Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	Perilaku Etis (X2)
Karakteristik Individu (X1)		6.014	5.066	
Kinerja Pegawai (Y)				
Komitmen Organisasional (Z)		9.292		
Perilaku Etis (X2)		9.150	5.066	

The table above shows the VIF value of the correlation between constructs is smaller than 10. So it can be said that the correlation between constructs is low, meaning that the model in this research does not have multicollinearity.

### R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>)

The coefficient of determination is a way to assess how much an endogenous construct can be explained by an exogenous construct.

Table 3. Hasil Uji Koefisien Determinasi

Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	0.939	0.937
Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	0.962	0.960

In the table above, it can be seen that the R-Square value of the endogenous construct of Organizational Commitment obtained is 0.939 or 93.9%. These results show that Individual Characteristics and Ethical Behavior have an influence of 93.9% on Organizational Commitment. In the opinion of Sarstedt et al. (2017), the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) value shows that the model can be said to be strong because the value is greater than 0.75.

Then the R-Square value for the endogenous construct of Employee Performance obtained was 0.962 or 96.2%. These results show that Individual Characteristics, Ethical Behavior, and Organizational Commitment have an influence of 96.2% on Employee Performance. In the opinion of Sarstedt et al. (2017), the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) value shows that the model can be said to be strong because the value is greater than 0.75.

### Research Hypothesis Testing

The bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS produces t-statistic values for each relationship path used to test the hypothesis. The t-statistic value will be compared with the t-table value. Research that uses a confidence level of 95% so that the level of precision or inaccuracy limit ( $\alpha$ ) = 5% = 0.05, the t-table value is 1.96.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hipotesis	Path	T-Statistics	P-Values	Kesimpulan
H1	Karakteristik Individu (X1) -> Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	2.343	0.019	Dapat diterima
H2	Karakteristik Individu (X1) -> Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	5.186	0.000	Dapat diterima
H3	Perilaku Etis (X2) -> Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	4.485	0.000	Dapat diterima
H4	Perilaku Etis (X2) -> Komitmen Organisasional (Z)	17.484	0.000	Dapat diterima
H5	Komitmen Organisasional (Z) -> Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	5.304	0.000	Dapat diterima
H6	Karakteristik Individu (X1) -> Komitmen Organisasional (Z) -> Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	3.568	0.000	Dapat diterima
H7	Perilaku Etis (X2) -> Komitmen Organisasional (Z) -> Kinerja Pegawai (Y)	5.124	0.000	Dapat diterima

Based on the data presented in the table above, it can be seen that of the 7 hypotheses proposed in this research, all of them can be accepted because each effect shown has a T-Statistics value > 1.96 and a P-Values value < 0.05.

## Discussion

### The Influence of Individual Characteristics on Employee Performance

From the results of hypothesis testing, it is known that individual characteristics are able to improve the performance of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees. This is in accordance with the results of previous research by Ajie & Supratikta (2021), Wahyunanti et al. (2023), Dwijayanthi et al. (2021), Nurbaya et al. (2022), and Ningrati & Sumartik (2023) who state that there is a positive and significant influence of individual characteristics on employee performance.

Then, to see how big the direct influence of the Individual Characteristics variable is on the Employee Performance variable can be seen in Table 5.16. The table shows that the direct effect of the Individual Characteristics variable on the Employee Performance variable has an  $f^2$  value of 0.061, which indicates a small effect because it is above the value of 0.02. Individual characteristics are individual differences with other individuals. The most important resources in an organization are human resources, people who provide their energy, talent, creativity and effort to the organization so that an organization can remain an existence. Individual characteristics are characteristics or special traits possessed by employees that can make them have different abilities from other employees to maintain and improve their performance.

### The Influence of Individual Characteristics on Organizational Commitment

From the results of hypothesis testing, it is known that individual characteristics are able to increase the organizational commitment of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat

employees. This is in accordance with the results of previous research by Riana et al. (2021), Dwijayanthi et al. (2021), Nurbaya et al. (2022), and Ningrati & Sumartik (2023) which states that there is a positive and significant influence of individual characteristics on organizational commitment.

Then, to see how big the direct influence of the Individual Characteristics variable is on the Organizational Commitment variable can be seen in Table 5.16. The table shows that the direct effect of the Individual Characteristics variable on the Organizational Commitment variable has an  $f^2$  value of 0.187, which indicates a moderate effect because it is above the value of 0.15. As a common resource for all organizations, it is employees who will determine the success of a company. In carrying out all activities, a company or organization cannot be separated from the role of employees as managers. Individual characteristics are closely related to organizational commitment to employees. Specific individual characteristics or special traits possessed by an employee that can make him or herself have different abilities from other people to maintain and improve work within the organization (Ardian et al., 2015). So the organization needs to pay attention to the policy of implementing the attitudes of each employee in order to retain employees in the organization. Therefore, one way that needs to be done to maintain employee commitment is to apply individual character.

### **The Influence of Ethical Behavior on Employee Performance**

From the results of hypothesis testing, it is known that ethical behavior can improve the performance of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees. This is in accordance with the research results of Anwar et al. (2020), Oladimeji & Abdulkareem (2022), Lestaluhu et al. (2023), Idrus et al. (2023), Sudrajat et al. (2023), and Shemeis (2023) who concluded that ethical behavior has a significant effect on performance.

Then, to see how big the direct effect of the Ethical Behavior variable is on the Employee Performance variable can be seen in Table 5.16. The table shows that the direct effect of the Ethical Behavior variable on the Employee Performance variable has an  $f^2$  value of 0.250, which indicates a moderate effect because it is above the value of 0.15.

Ethics are the basic things that individuals have when doing something. In ordinary society, ethics is often also called morals, namely things that regulate the good and bad of an action. Work ethics in an organization is the key to ethical behavior from employees. According to Yousef (2001), organizations that focus on work ethics will have human resource management who can work professionally. Work ethics are normative rules that contain a system of values and moral principles which serve as guidelines for employees in carrying out their work duties within the company (Mangkuprawira, 2009). The aim of work ethics in a philosophical view is to obtain the same idea for all humans at all times and places regarding the standards of good and bad behavior as far as the human mind can know. However, in trying to achieve this goal, work ethics experiences difficulties, because the views of each group in this world about good and bad have different criteria.

### **The Influence of Ethical Behavior on Organizational Commitment**

From the results of hypothesis testing, it is known that ethical behavior can increase the organizational commitment of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees. This is in accordance with the results of previous research by Endartanto et al. (2023), Anwar et al. (2020), Bahadori et al. (2021), Gul et al. (2021), Idrus et al. (2023), and Shemeis (2023) who concluded that work ethics (ethical behavior) has been partially proven to increase organizational commitment.

Then, to see how big the direct effect of the Ethical Behavior variable is on the Organizational Commitment variable can be seen in Table 5.16. The table shows that the direct effect of the Ethical Behavior variable on the Organizational Commitment variable has an  $f^2$  value of 1.793, which shows a large effect because it is above the value of 0.35. Ethical behavior is a manifestation of ethics implemented in business organizations. Ethical behavior can generally be defined as behavior that is considered right or wrong, and therefore directs what people should and should not do (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2002) in Pio (2015).

Work ethic (ethical behavior) is a situation when someone does work more diligently so that the work results are better (Prasada et al, 2020). According to Cahyadi (2018), a person's work ethic is closely related to the behavior, personality and character of that individual. According to Sinamo (in Bawelle and Sepang, 2016) work ethic is a set of behaviors based on strong cooperation, firm beliefs and accompanied by a strong commitment to the work paradigm.

### **The Effect of Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance**

From the results of hypothesis testing, it is known that organizational commitment is able to improve the performance of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees. This is in accordance with the results of previous research by Endartanto et al. (2023), Anwar et al. (2020), Misnan et al. (2023), Suharto et al. (2019), Lestaluhu et al. (2023), Nurbaya et al. (2022), Ningrati & Sumartik (2023), Idrus et al. (2023), Sudrajat et al. (2023), and Shemeis (2023) which states that organizational commitment makes a real contribution to improving performance.

Then, to see how big the direct effect of the Organizational Commitment variable is on the Employee Performance variable can be seen in Table 5.16. The table shows that the direct effect of the Organizational Commitment variable on the Employee Performance variable has an  $f^2$  value of 0.418, which shows a large effect because it is above the value of 0.35.

HRM is the most important thing in an organization, because it concerns human resources who can contribute to the company to achieve company goals. Apart from that, the activities and functions need to ensure that human resources work effectively and fairly for the company (Sutrisno, 2016). The quality of human resources determines the company's performance supported by its workforce. Workforce or employee performance is the work result achieved in a certain unit of time. Basically, workforce performance affects the productivity of the company where the employee works, so it is necessary to know the factors that influence employee performance.

### **The Influence of Individual Characteristics on Employee Performance Mediated by Organizational Commitment**

The results of the hypothesis test show that individual characteristics are able to improve the performance of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees, mediated by organizational commitment. Based on the opinion of Baron & Kenny (1986), Organizational Commitment acts as partial mediation on the influence of Individual Characteristics on Employee Performance. This is because the relationship between Individual Characteristics and Organizational Commitment is significant, the relationship between Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance is significant, then also the direct relationship between Individual Characteristics and Employee Performance is significant.

### **The Influence of Ethical Behavior on Employee Performance Mediated by Organizational Commitment**

The results of hypothesis testing show that ethical behavior can improve the performance of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees, mediated by organizational commitment. Based on the opinion of Baron & Kenny (1986), Organizational Commitment acts as partial mediation on the influence of Ethical Behavior on Employee Performance. This is because the relationship between Ethical Behavior and Organizational Commitment is significant, the relationship between Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance is significant, and then also the direct relationship between Ethical Behavior and Employee Performance is significant.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that good individual characteristics, such as the ability to complete work, training, job satisfaction and self-control, contribute significantly to increasing the performance and organizational commitment of Probolinggo City Regional Secretariat employees. In addition, ethical behavior which includes adherence to personal ethics and morals also encourages increased employee performance and commitment.

Organizational commitment is proven to have a direct influence on improving employee performance. Employees who have high commitment tend to be loyal to the organization and believe that their loyalty has a positive impact on the organization. This commitment also partially mediates the influence of individual characteristics and ethical behavior on employee performance, indicating its role as an important element in this relationship.

Overall, this research shows that developing individual characteristics, ethical behavior, and organizational commitment can significantly improve employee performance. Organizations are advised to adopt approaches that encourage ethics, training and job satisfaction to create an environment that supports high commitment and optimal performance.

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