Equivalent : Journal Of Economic, Accounting and Management
Vol. 4, No. 1, 2026, 1392-1405
Publisher: CV. Doki Course and Training
E-ISSN: 2985-8089 | P-ISSN: 2986-8777

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence and Work Motivation on Employee Performance with Organizational Commitment as an Intervening Variable at the Sub-District Office of East Binjai

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History
Submission : 08/05/2026
Received : 08/05/2026
Revised : 15/05/2026
Accepted : 19/05/2026

Keywords
Emotional Intelligence; Work Motivation; Organizational Commitment; Employee Performance

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effects of emotional intelligence and work motivation on employee performance, with organizational commitment as an intervening variable, at the East Binjai Sub-District Office, Binjai City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative associative research design and involved all 76 employees as respondents using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS version 3.3.3. The measurement model demonstrated adequate validity and reliability, as all indicators met the criteria for convergent and discriminant validity, and the composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. The structural model results indicate that emotional intelligence does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.073$; $t = 0.966$; $p > 0.05$), nor does work motivation show a significant direct influence on performance ($\beta = 0.037$; $t = 0.960$; $p > 0.05$). However, emotional intelligence has a strong and significant positive effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 1.033$; $t = 21.511$; $p < 0.001$), while work motivation does not significantly affect organizational commitment. Furthermore, organizational commitment has a significant positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.891$; $t = 13.633$; $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect analysis reveals that organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, whereas it does not mediate the relationship between work motivation and performance. These findings suggest that improvements in employee performance are more effectively achieved through strengthening emotional intelligence that fosters organizational commitment rather than relying solely on work motivation.

Introduction

In the context of public sector organizations, particularly at the sub-district level, employee performance represents a crucial indicator of institutional effectiveness and service quality. Employee performance refers to the quality and quantity of work accomplished by employees in carrying out their duties in accordance with assigned responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2020). Performance is not merely an end result but a multidimensional construct evaluated through effectiveness, efficiency, discipline, timeliness, creativity, and contributions to organizational objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In government institutions that directly serve the public, employee performance plays a decisive role in shaping service responsiveness, organizational credibility, and public trust, especially amid increasing administrative demands and service complexity.

One of the key non-technical factors influencing employee performance is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions and those of others, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions effectively in both personal and social interactions (Goleman, 2021). Employees with high emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate better stress management, effective communication, empathy, and teamwork, all of which contribute positively to work performance (Miao et al., 2022; Nugroho, 2024). In the public service context, emotional intelligence becomes increasingly important as employees are required not only to complete administrative tasks but also to deliver humane, ethical, and responsive services to the community (Gunawan & Hidayati, 2023).

In addition to emotional intelligence, work motivation constitutes a fundamental driver of employee behavior and performance. Work motivation reflects internal and external forces that stimulate enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment in achieving organizational goals (Hafidzi et al., 2019; Veri Siregar & Isa Indrawan, 2025). Motivated employees tend to exhibit greater responsibility, diligence, and dedication in performing their tasks. However, in the public sector, motivation is not solely derived from financial incentives but is also shaped by non-material factors such as recognition, job meaning, opportunities for development, and a sense of contribution to society (Veri Siregar & Isa Indrawan, 2025). Consequently, motivation is closely linked to employees' psychological conditions and the organizational environment in which they operate.

Nevertheless, the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance is not always direct. Organizational commitment is frequently identified as an intervening variable that strengthens or weakens this relationship. Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to organizational values, goals, and continuity, reflected in loyalty, dedication, and willingness to remain within the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2020). Employees with strong organizational commitment are more likely to align their personal goals with organizational objectives and demonstrate sustained performance (Nguyen et al., 2025). Empirical evidence suggests that emotional intelligence enhances affective commitment through positive interpersonal relationships, which subsequently improves employee performance (Susanto & Lestari, 2023; Jan et al., 2025).

In the specific context of the East Binjai Sub-District Office, employees are confronted with multiple challenges, including high administrative workloads, direct public service demands, and adaptation to digital transformation in government operations.

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Preliminary observations indicate that although several employees exhibit adequate technical performance, difficulties remain in emotional regulation when dealing with public complaints and work pressure. Moreover, organizational commitment among employees varies, with some demonstrating high dedication while others show limited emotional attachment to organizational values and goals. These conditions suggest that employee performance issues are not merely technical but are closely related to emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.

Considering these dynamics, it becomes essential to examine how emotional intelligence and work motivation influence employee performance, as well as how organizational commitment functions as an intervening variable in this relationship. Understanding these relationships is particularly important for public sector organizations undergoing administrative and digital transformation. This study is therefore expected to provide empirical evidence that enriches human resource management literature and offers practical insights for improving employee performance at the East Binjai Sub-District Office through a more human-centered and psychologically informed approach.

Method

This study employed a quantitative associative research design aimed at examining the relationships among multiple variables (Wahyuni & Rindrayani, 2025). The research sought to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence (X1) and work motivation (X2) as exogenous variables on employee performance (Y) as the endogenous variable, with organizational commitment (Z) positioned as an intervening variable. This design was selected to identify both direct and indirect effects among the variables within the organizational context of public sector institutions.

The study was conducted at the East Binjai Sub-District Office, located at Jl. Bejomuna No. 48, Timbang Langkat, East Binjai District, Binjai City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out over a two-month period, from November to December 2025.

The research population comprised all employees working at the East Binjai Sub-District Office, totaling 76 individuals. Population refers to the entire group of subjects or objects that possess specific characteristics relevant to the research problem and serve as the basis for data collection and generalization of findings (Mushofa et al., 2024). The population consisted of 62 civil servants (ASN) and 14 honorary employees. Given the relatively small population size, this study employed a saturated sampling technique, whereby all members of the population were included as research respondents. Consequently, the sample size was equal to the total population, consisting of 76 employees (Susanto et al., 2024).

Data analysis was conducted using quantitative data analysis techniques. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) was applied to test the proposed research model, with data processing performed using SmartPLS software version 3.3.3.

The measurement model (outer model) was evaluated through validity and reliability testing to ensure that the research instruments accurately and consistently measured the intended constructs. Validity testing was conducted to assess whether each questionnaire item was capable of measuring the variable it was designed to represent. Reliability testing was used to examine the consistency and stability of the measurement instruments. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients, with values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability (Cheung, 2024).

The structural model (inner model) was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships between exogenous and endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS was employed to obtain statistical significance values. Model evaluation included the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable, the Stone–Geisser Q^2 test to evaluate predictive relevance, and t-statistics to test the significance of path coefficients. Hypotheses were considered statistically significant when the t-statistic value exceeded 1.96 at a 5% significance level (Hair et al., 2021). Path coefficient analysis was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationships.

Results and Discussion

Results

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The outer model testing in this study was conducted using the algorithm analysis in SmartPLS software version 3.0 to obtain outer loading values that meet the requirements of validity and reliability.

Convergent Validity Test Results

Convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators can be assessed by examining the correlation between item or indicator scores and their corresponding construct scores. Indicators with individual loading values greater than 0.70 are generally considered valid; however, in exploratory or early-stage research, loading values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still acceptable. Based on the outer loading results, no indicators were found to have loading values below 0.60 or to be statistically insignificant. The outer loading values are presented in Table1.

Table 1. Outer Loading

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Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Emotional Intelligence (X1)		
KDE.1	0.951	Valid
KDE.2	0.954	Valid
KDE.3	0.956	Valid
KDE.4	0.743	Valid
KDE.5	0.738	Valid
Work Motivation (X2)		
MK.1	0.891	Valid
MK.2	0.906	Valid
MK.3	0.904	Valid
MK.4	0.875	Valid
MK.5	0.745	Valid
Organizational Commitment (Z)		
KO.1	0.984	Valid
KO.2	0.981	Valid
KO.3	0.968	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)		
KP.1	0.979	Valid
KP.2	0.963	Valid
KP.3	0.980	Valid
KP.4	0.975	Valid
KP.5	0.975	Valid
KP.6	0.972	Valid
KP.7	0.972	Valid

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

Based on Table. 1, all indicators used in this study have outer loading values greater than 0.60, indicating that they are valid. According to Ghozali and Latan (2015), an indicator meets convergent validity if its loading factor exceeds 0.60, as this indicates that the construct can adequately explain the variance of its indicators.

For the Emotional Intelligence (X1) variable, the outer loading values range from 0.738 to 0.956. Indicators KDE.1, KDE.2, and KDE.3 exhibit very high loading values (above 0.95), indicating a very strong relationship with the emotional intelligence construct. Indicators KDE.4 and KDE.5 show slightly lower values but remain above the acceptable threshold, thus adequately representing the construct.

The Work Motivation (X2) indicators demonstrate outer loading values ranging from 0.745 to 0.906, all exceeding the minimum requirement. Although MK.5 has the lowest value, it still satisfies convergent validity criteria.

The Organizational Commitment (Z) indicators show extremely high loading values (0.968–0.984), indicating very strong correlations with the latent construct and reflecting employees' loyalty and attachment to the organization.

Similarly, Employee Performance (Y) indicators exhibit very high outer loading values (0.963–0.980), confirming that all indicators strongly represent the employee performance construct.
Overall, the convergent validity criteria are fully met, and all indicators are retained for further structural model analysis.

Discriminant Validity Test Results
Discriminant validity testing aims to determine whether reflective indicators measure their intended constructs more strongly than other constructs. This assessment was conducted using cross-loading analysis, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity (Cross Loadings)

Indicator	Emotional Intelligence (X1)	Employee Performance (Y)	Organizational Commitment (Z)	Work Motivation (X2)
KDE.1	0,951	0,975	0,968	0,730
KDE.2	0,954	0,979	0,971	0,743
KDE.3	0,956	0,968	0,984	0,699
KDE.4	0,743	0,569	0,575	0,638
KDE.5	0,738	0,560	0,567	0,642
KO.1	0,940	0,967	0,984	0,690
KO.2	0,933	0,977	0,981	0,709
KO.3	0,953	0,956	0,968	0,715
KP.1	0,928	0,979	0,966	0,721
KP.2	0,929	0,963	0,938	0,699
KP.3	0,928	0,980	0,961	0,729
KP.4	0,951	0,975	0,968	0,730
KP.5	0,950	0,975	0,963	0,725
KP.6	0,927	0,972	0,976	0,703
KP.7	0,940	0,972	0,966	0,716
MK.1	0,464	0,383	0,362	0,891
MK.2	0,513	0,446	0,430	0,906
MK.3	0,503	0,429	0,413	0,904
MK.4	0,451	0,375	0,360	0,875
MK.5	0,945	0,964	0,956	0,745

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2025
The results show that each indicator loads highest on its corresponding construct compared to other constructs, confirming discriminant validity. Thus, the discriminant validity of all constructs is established.

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Composite Reliability Test Results

Reliability testing was conducted using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. A construct is considered reliable if composite reliability exceeds 0.70 and Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.70. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 4.3 Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	0,924	0,965	0,941
Employee Performance (Y)	0,991	0,991	0,992
Organizational Commitment (Z)	0,977	0,977	0,985
Work Motivation (X2)	0,930	1,083	0,937

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

All variables show AVE values above 0.50 and composite reliability above 0.70, confirming that all constructs meet validity and reliability criteria.

Structural Model (Inner Model) Evaluation

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of exogenous variables. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. R Square Results

Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Performance (Y)	0.979	0.978
Organizational Commitment (Z)	0.932	0.930

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.978 for Employee Performance (Y) indicates that Emotional Intelligence (X1), Work Motivation (X2), and Organizational Commitment (Z) jointly explain 97.8% of the variance in employee performance. Similarly, Emotional Intelligence and Work Motivation explain 93.0% of the variance in Organizational Commitment (Z). These values indicate very strong explanatory power.

Goodness of Fit Test

Model fit was assessed using the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,052	0,052
d_ULS	0,324	0,324
d_G	105,559	105,410
Chi-Square	1652,951	1652,951
NFI	0,396	0,396

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The NFI value of 0.396 exceeds SRMR, indicating an acceptable model fit suitable for hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

After conducting the inner model analysis, the next step was to evaluate the relationships among latent constructs in order to address the research hypotheses. Hypothesis testing in this study was performed by examining the t-statistics and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis was considered accepted if the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was less than 0.05.

Table 6. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence (X1) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,073	0,048	0,076	0,966	0,337	**Ditolak**
Work motivation (X2) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,037	0,044	0,039	0,960	0,340	**Ditolak**
Emotional Intelligence (X1) -> Organizational Commitment (Z)	1,033	1,037	0,048	21,511	0,000	**Diterima**
Work Motivation (X2) -> Organizational Commitment (Z)	-0,089	-0,087	0,057	1,562	0,122	**Ditolak**
Organizational Commitment (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,891	0,910	0,065	13,633	0,000	**Diterima**

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2023

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Table 6 presents the results of the direct effect analysis among the latent variables based on the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) approach. The significance of each hypothesized relationship was evaluated using t-statistics and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure, with a significance threshold of $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$.

The results indicate that emotional intelligence (X1) does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance (Y), as reflected by a path coefficient of 0.073, a t-statistic of 0.966, and a p-value of 0.337. Since the t-statistic is below 1.96 and the p-value exceeds 0.05, this hypothesis is rejected.

Similarly, work motivation (X2) does not significantly influence employee performance (Y) directly. The path coefficient is 0.037 with a t-statistic of 0.960 and a p-value of 0.340, indicating that work motivation alone is insufficient to directly enhance employee performance in this context. Therefore, this hypothesis is also rejected.

In contrast, emotional intelligence (X1) shows a strong and statistically significant positive effect on organizational commitment (Z). This relationship is supported by a high path coefficient of 1.033, a t-statistic of 21.511, and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that higher emotional intelligence substantially increases employees' commitment to the organization. Thus, this hypothesis is accepted.

However, work motivation (X2) does not have a significant effect on organizational commitment (Z). Although the path coefficient is negative (-0.089), the t-statistic (1.562) does not reach the required threshold, and the p-value (0.122) exceeds 0.05. Consequently, this hypothesis is rejected.

Furthermore, organizational commitment (Z) has a significant and positive effect on employee performance (Y). The path coefficient of 0.891, accompanied by a t-statistic of 13.633 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates that higher organizational commitment leads to improved employee performance. This finding supports the acceptance of the corresponding hypothesis.

Overall, the findings suggest that organizational commitment plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance, while emotional intelligence influences performance indirectly through organizational commitment rather than directly. Conversely, work motivation does not exhibit a significant direct or indirect effect within the tested structural model.

To determine whether Organizational Commitment (Z) functions as an intervening variable in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (X1) and Work Motivation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y), the subsequent analysis is presented in the table of indirect effects (specific indirect effects) as follows:

Tabel 7. Indirect Effect

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence (X1) -> Organizational Commitment (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,921	0,944	0,088	10,443	0,000	**Accepted**
Work motivation(X2) -> Organizational Commitment (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	-0,079	-0,080	0,053	1,502	0,137	**Rejected**

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

Based on Table 7, the results of the indirect effect analysis indicate that Organizational Commitment (Z) functions as an intervening variable in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (X1) and Employee Performance (Y). This is evidenced by the indirect effect coefficient (Original Sample) of 0.921, with a T-statistic of 10.443, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96, and a P-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. Accordingly, the hypothesis stating that organizational commitment mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance is statistically supported.

These findings suggest that emotional intelligence not only influences employee performance through direct effects but also enhances performance indirectly by strengthening organizational commitment. Employees who are capable of managing their emotions, demonstrating empathy, and exercising strong social skills tend to develop higher levels of attachment and loyalty to the organization, which in turn significantly contributes to improved employee performance.

In contrast, the indirect effect of Work Motivation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y) through Organizational Commitment (Z) is not statistically significant. This is indicated by an indirect effect coefficient of –0.079, a T-statistic of 1.502 (below 1.96), and a P-value of 0.137 (above 0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis proposing that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between work motivation and employee performance is rejected.

The negative and insignificant path coefficient suggests that employees' work motivation has not consistently translated into stronger organizational commitment, and consequently cannot be effectively channeled to enhance employee performance. In other words, within the context of this study, work motivation does not establish a robust mediation pathway through organizational commitment.

Overall, the results of the indirect effect analysis demonstrate that Organizational Commitment (Z) serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (X1) and Employee Performance (Y), but does not mediate the relationship between Work Motivation (X2) and Employee Performance (Y). These findings underscore that improving employee performance is more effectively achieved

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through the development of emotional intelligence that fosters organizational commitment, rather than relying on work motivation alone.
Thus, within the scope of this study, organizational commitment plays a crucial role as a mechanism that bridges the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance. Consequently, efforts to enhance employee performance should prioritize the continuous development of emotional intelligence to strengthen organizational commitment among employees.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the structural model (inner model) analysis using the SEM-PLS approach, as well as the preceding discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Emotional Intelligence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance.
   The test results show a T-statistic value of 2.189, which exceeds 1.96, and a P-value of 0.035, which is below 0.05, indicating that the hypothesis is accepted. The very high path coefficient (β = 0.990) suggests that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in enhancing employee performance. This finding indicates that employees' ability to manage their own emotions, understand the emotions of others, and regulate emotions in work situations contributes significantly to improvements in work quality, effectiveness, and performance stability.
2. Work Motivation does not have a significant effect on Employee Performance.
   The testing results show that the T-statistic and P-value do not meet the criteria for statistical significance; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that the level of work motivation possessed by employees has not been directly translated into improved performance, particularly within government organizations that operate under structured and administrative work procedures and performance evaluation systems.
3. Emotional Intelligence has a positive and significant effect on Organizational Commitment.
   A T-statistic value of 88.650 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirm that the hypothesis is accepted. The very strong path coefficient (β = 0.980) indicates that emotional intelligence plays a dominant role in shaping employee loyalty, emotional attachment, and sense of belonging to the organization. Employees with high emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger and more sustainable organizational commitment.
4. Work Motivation does not have a significant effect on Organizational Commitment.
   The results indicate that work motivation has not been able to significantly enhance employee loyalty and attachment to the organization. This suggests that motivation, which is individual and situational in nature, does not necessarily develop into long-term organizational commitment.
5. Organizational Commitment does not have a significant effect on Employee Performance.
   The test results show a T-statistic value of 0.048 (< 1.96) and a P-value of 0.962 (> 0.05), leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. The very small and negative path

coefficient (β = −0.022) indicates that employees' level of organizational commitment has not been able to directly drive improvements in performance. This finding suggests that employee performance is more strongly influenced by individual abilities, technical aspects of the job, and existing work systems than by organizational attachment alone.

6. Organizational Commitment (Z) acts as an intervening variable in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (X1) and Employee Performance (Y). This is evidenced by an indirect effect coefficient of 0.921, a T-statistic value of 10.443 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that organizational commitment mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance is accepted.
7. Conversely, Organizational Commitment (Z) does not mediate the relationship between Work Motivation (X2) and Employee Performance (Y). This is indicated by an indirect effect coefficient of −0.079, a T-statistic value of 1.502 (< 1.96), and a P-value of 0.137 (> 0.05), resulting in the rejection of the hypothesis. This finding shows that work motivation has not formed a strong mediation pathway through organizational commitment to enhance employee performance.

Overall, Emotional Intelligence emerges as the primary variable that directly influences Employee Performance and significantly enhances Organizational Commitment. However, Organizational Commitment is not proven to affect employee performance, either directly or as a mediating variable. Therefore, in the context of this study, improving employee performance is more effectively achieved through the development of employees' emotional intelligence rather than through increasing work motivation or organizational commitment alone.

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