The Influence of Work Competence and Employee Engagement on Employee Performance with Organizational Culture as a Moderating Variable

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Abstract.
Purpose: This study examines the influence of job competence and employee engagement on employee performance at Yayasan Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong, Medan, with organizational culture as an intervening variable in the SEM-PLS model. Research Methodology: A quantitative explanatory design was applied using a census technique involving all 127 foundation employees from elementary, junior high, and senior high school units, including teachers, security officers, janitors, administrative staff, and educational personnel. Primary data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using SEM-PLS by evaluating the measurement model, discriminant validity, collinearity, model fit, coefficient of determination, effect size, and bootstrapping-based hypothesis testing. Results: The measurement model met validity and reliability criteria, as outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.901 to 0.936, composite reliability ranged from 0.918 to 0.946, and AVE ranged from 0.693 to 0.770. HTMT, Fornell-Larcker, and inner VIF results also indicated acceptable discriminant validity and no multicollinearity. However, the structural model showed weak explanatory power, with R-squared values of 0.032 for employee performance and 0.007 for organizational culture. All direct and indirect hypotheses were rejected because their p-values exceeded 0.05. Conclusions: Job competence, employee engagement, and organizational culture were not dominant predictors of employee performance in this foundation context. Limitations: The study was limited to one educational foundation and used heterogeneous job categories. Contributions: This study contributes empirical evidence that employee performance in educational foundations may require broader explanatory variables beyond competence, engagement, and organizational culture, particularly leadership, motivation, compensation, work environment, and performance appraisal systems.
Keywords: *Work Competence, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Organizational Culture, SEM-PLS and Educational Foundation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a strategic issue in the management of educational organizations because the quality of school services is highly dependent on the quality of human resources who carry out academic, administrative, service, and student development functions. Globally, Gallup reports that employee engagement will decline from 23% to 21% by 2024, and this condition is estimated to reduce global economic productivity by US$438 billion (Gallup, 2025). Changes in the world of work also increasingly demand competency strengthening, as the World Economic Forum estimates that 39% of workers' core skills will change by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2025). Therefore, research on work competencies, employee engagement, organizational culture, and employee performance is highly relevant in explaining how educational organizations maintain productivity, service quality, and institutional competitiveness (Yao et al., 2022; Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023).

In Indonesia, the issue of human resource performance in education is increasingly important because schools operate in an environment that demands improved service quality, compliance with competency standards, and adaptability to changes in curriculum and learning technology. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that the 2024 Education Statistics contain key data on the number of schools, classrooms, sanitation, and teachers at the national and provincial levels, providing the education sector with a critical database for evaluating service quality and human resources (BPS, 2025). BPS data indicates that in the 2023/2024 academic year, there were approximately 3.03 million teachers in Indonesia, making the quality of education staff performance a major national issue (BPS, 2025). In North Sumatra, the large number of

schools, teachers, and students indicates that educational institutions such as the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation require professional, measurable, and service-quality-oriented employee management (Putranto et al., 2026; Rudiatna et al., 2025).

Ideally, educational organizations expect each employee to possess work competencies commensurate with their responsibilities, demonstrate emotional attachment to the institution, and work within an organizational culture that supports collaboration. Research by Putranto et al. (2026) shows that professional competence and work engagement significantly influence teacher performance. Research by Rudiatna et al. (2025) also shows that teacher competence and school culture positively influence job satisfaction, which in turn impacts teacher performance improvement. These findings reinforce the expectation that competent, psychologically engaged school employees with a positive work culture will produce better performance (Putranto et al., 2026; Rudiatna et al., 2025).

The reality in many educational organizations shows that the quality of employee performance is determined not only by individual abilities, but also by work engagement and perceived organizational cultural support in daily work. Sari and Budiono (2025) found that organizational culture positively influences work engagement and employee performance. Yao et al. (2022) explained that work engagement has a significant relationship with job performance, but this relationship requires the support of adequate psychological resources and a work environment. Thus, the gap between expectations and reality lies in the need for empirical testing to determine whether organizational culture truly strengthens the influence of work competence and employee engagement on employee performance at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation (Sari & Budiono, 2025; Yao et al., 2022).

If this issue is not promptly investigated, foundations could potentially make human resource development decisions based on general perceptions rather than measurable empirical evidence. Employee performance that has not been systematically mapped can impact the effectiveness of administrative services, the consistency of task execution, the quality of internal communication, and support for the learning process. Employee engagement that has not been properly managed can also weaken employee enthusiasm, dedication, and willingness to contribute their best to the institution. An untested organizational culture, its role as a moderator, can prevent foundations from understanding whether values, norms, leadership, and work habits truly strengthen employee competence and engagement in generating performance (Gallup, 2025; Rudiatna et al., 2025).

The work competency variables in this study can be measured numerically through indicators of work knowledge, work skills, ability to complete tasks, professional attitude, and ability to adapt to job demands. The employee engagement variable can be measured through indicators of work enthusiasm, dedication, involvement in work, sense of belonging to the organization, and willingness to make the best contribution. The employee performance variable can be measured through indicators of work quality, work quantity, punctuality, responsibility, cooperation, and service orientation. All of these indicators can be assessed using a Likert scale, so that the data can be analyzed quantitatively using moderated regression or SEM-PLS (Putranto et al., 2026; Sari & Budiono, 2025).

The organizational culture variables in this study can be measured through indicators of shared values, work norms, cooperation, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistency in implementing organizational rules. As a moderating variable, organizational culture was tested to determine whether values and work habits in the foundation were able to strengthen or weaken the influence of work competence on employee performance. Organizational culture was also tested to determine whether a positive work atmosphere could strengthen the influence of employee engagement on employee performance. The novelty of this study lies in the use of organizational culture as a moderating variable in the context of a multi-level educational foundation for elementary, middle, and high schools in Medan City, whereas many previous studies have placed organizational culture as an independent or mediating variable (Rudiatna et al., 2025; Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023).

Based on these global, national, and regional phenomena, this study emphasizes that employee performance in educational institutions needs to be analyzed through individual and organizational factors simultaneously. Work competency represents an employee's capacity to carry out tasks effectively, while

employee engagement represents the psychological attachment that drives employees to work with enthusiasm, dedication, and focus. Organizational culture is positioned as a contextual factor that can strengthen the relationship between ability, engagement, and work outcomes. Therefore, the research title "The Effect of Work Competence and Employee Engagement on Employee Performance with Organizational Culture as a Moderating Variable at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation" has a relevant phenomenological and theoretical basis for quantitative study.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the influence of work competency and employee engagement on employee performance and to examine the role of organizational culture as a moderating variable in this relationship. This research is expected to produce empirical evidence that will help foundations formulate policies for improving competency, strengthening employee engagement, and establishing an organizational culture that supports the quality of educational services. The research results can also be used as a basis for developing training programs, performance evaluations, strengthening internal communication, and developing work values across school levels. Therefore, this research is feasible because it connects the practical needs of foundations with the development of a relevant, measurable, and scientifically accountable empirical model.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Job Competencies

Job competency is an employee's ability to perform tasks based on mastery of knowledge, skills, work attitudes, problem-solving, and adaptability to job demands (Robbins & Judge, 2024; Spencer & Spencer, 2008). In this study, the dimensions of Job Competencies can be measured through job knowledge, technical skills, ability to complete work, professional attitude, and adaptability. Kharub et al. (2025) emphasized that a competency-based system is important for assessing the suitability of employee abilities to job demands, while Putranto et al. (2026) found that professional competency has a significant effect on teacher performance. In the context of the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, job competency is important because school employees need to understand administrative tasks, educational services, cross-level communication, and school operational support. Thus, job competency is the main basis for explaining the quality of employee contributions in educational organizations (Kharub et al., 2025; Putranto et al., 2026).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a positive psychological state when employees have energy, dedication, and full involvement in their work (Kahn, 1990, 2016). In this study, the dimensions of employee engagement can be measured through vigor or work enthusiasm, dedication or pride and commitment, and absorption or full focus on work. Yao et al. (2022) explain that work engagement is related to job performance through the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources Model, while Jufrisen et al. (2024) found that work engagement has a significant effect on employee performance. Siswadi et al. (2025) also showed that work engagement plays a significant role in improving employee performance in the organizational context in Medan, North Sumatra. Thus, employee engagement is important to understand the extent to which school employees work with enthusiasm, responsibility, and are oriented towards the success of the institution (Jufrizen et al., 2024; Siswadi et al., 2025; Yao et al., 2022).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a system of values, norms, beliefs, work habits, and behavioral patterns that guide organizational members in their work (Afiyah et al., 2024; Keyton, 2011). In this study, the dimensions of organizational culture can be measured through shared values, work norms, cooperation, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistency of organizational rules. Vasumathi et al. (2025) showed that cultural dimensions such as team spirit, synergy, trust, and collective achievement can increase employee productivity, commitment, adaptability, and engagement. Aggarwal (2024) also found that organizational culture dimensions have a positive effect on job performance and satisfaction, making culture an important contextual factor in performance management. In the context of schools, organizational culture can guide employee work behavior so that academic services, administration, and internal relations run in line with the goals of the foundation (Aggarwal, 2024; Vasumathi et al., 2025).

Employee Performance

Employee Performance is the result of employee work that shows the level of task achievement according to organizational standards (Robbins & Judge, 2024). In this study, the dimensions of Employee Performance can be measured through work quality, work quantity, punctuality, responsibility, cooperation, effectiveness, and service orientation. Putranto et al. (2026) showed that professional competence and work engagement have a significant effect on teacher performance, while Sari and Budiono (2025) showed that organizational culture and work engagement have a positive effect on employee performance. In educational foundations, employee performance is not only seen from the completion of administrative tasks, but also from the quality of service to students, parents, teachers, and school leaders. Thus, employee performance is a primary output variable that reflects the success of competence, engagement, and organizational culture in supporting the quality of educational services (Putranto et al., 2026; Sari & Budiono, 2025).

Job competencies, which encompass work knowledge, technical skills, task completion ability, professional attitude, and adaptability, can shape work behavior patterns that support organizational culture. Competent employees tend to understand work standards, maintain consistent service delivery, and exemplify professional behavior to their colleagues. In the school context, employee competencies can strengthen dimensions of organizational culture such as shared values, work norms, cooperation, internal communication, quality orientation, and consistent rules. Kharub et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of competency dimensions in employee assessment (Kharub et al., 2025), while Vasumathi et al. (2025) suggest that a strong organizational culture is formed through synergy, trust, and collective achievement (Vasumathi et al., 2025). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H1: Job competencies have a positive effect on organizational culture.

Employee engagement, encompassing vigor, dedication, and absorption, can encourage employees to actively maintain positive values, norms, and work habits within the organization. Employees with high work zeal, dedication, and focus tend to strengthen dimensions of organizational culture such as cooperation, internal communication, quality orientation, participatory leadership, and consistent work behavior. In the context of educational foundations, high engagement can be seen through employees' willingness to support school activities, maintain good relationships across levels, and participate in achieving the institution's goals. Yao et al. (2022) explain that work engagement is a psychological condition related to positive work behavior (Yao et al., 2022), while Sari and Budiono (2025) demonstrate a positive relationship between organizational culture, work engagement, and employee performance (Sari & Budiono, 2025). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H2: Employee engagement has a positive effect on organizational culture.

A strong organizational culture, characterized by shared values, work norms, cooperation, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistent rules, can guide employees to work according to foundation standards. A healthy organizational culture helps employees understand expected behaviors, maintains coordination, and increases accountability in completing tasks. Employee performance, measured by work quality, quantity, punctuality, responsibility, cooperation, effectiveness, and service orientation, will improve when the work culture supports discipline and collaboration. Vasumathi et al. (2025) found that organizational culture positively impacts employee productivity, commitment, adaptability, and engagement (Vasumathi et al., 2025), while Aggarwal (2024) demonstrated a positive influence of organizational culture on job performance (Aggarwal, 2024). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Organizational culture has a positive effect on employee performance.

Job competencies, which encompass work knowledge, technical skills, task completion ability, professional attitude, and adaptability, are key assets for employees to achieve effective performance. Employees with strong competencies are better able to complete work with high quality, adequate quantity, punctuality, responsibility, collaboration, and a service orientation. In school organizations, job competencies help employees understand the needs of students, parents, teachers, and leaders, enabling more professional educational services. Putranto et al. (2025) found that professional competencies significantly influence teacher performance (Putranto et al., 2026), while Kharub et al. (2025) confirmed that competency

dimensions are relevant for assessing employee performance (Kharub et al., 2025). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H4: Job competencies have a positive effect on employee performance.

Employee engagement, consisting of vigor, dedication, and absorption, can increase employee energy, commitment, and focus in carrying out their work. Engaged employees tend to demonstrate better work quality, punctuality, responsibility, cooperation, effectiveness, and a stronger service orientation. In the context of the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, engagement is important because school employees need to maintain enthusiasm for educational services and work consistency across elementary, middle, and high school levels. Yao et al. (2022) showed that work engagement correlates with job performance, while Jufrizen et al. (2024) and Siswadi et al. (2025) found that work engagement significantly influences employee performance (Jufrizen et al., 2024; Siswadi et al., 2025; Yao et al., 2022). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H5: Employee engagement has a positive effect on employee performance.

Job Competencies, which include work knowledge, technical skills, task completion ability, professional attitude, and adaptability, can have a stronger influence on Employee Performance if supported by a harmonious Organizational Culture. An organizational culture that includes shared values, work norms, cooperation, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistent rules can be a pathway that transforms individual abilities into collective work behavior. Employee Performance, measured by work quality, work quantity, timeliness, responsibility, cooperation, effectiveness, and service orientation, will be more easily achieved when employee competencies are guided by a clear work culture. Putranto et al. (2025) showed that competencies have a direct effect on performance, while Vasumathi et al. (2025) and Aggarwal (2024) emphasized that organizational culture plays an important role in improving performance (Aggarwal, 2024; Vasumathi et al., 2025). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H6: Organizational Culture mediates the effect of Job Competencies on Employee Performance.

Employee engagement, encompassing vigor, dedication, and absorption, can improve employee performance when employees' energy, dedication, and focus are guided by a supportive organizational culture. Organizational culture, encompassing shared values, work norms, collaboration, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistent rules, can serve as a mechanism that channels work engagement into productive behavior. Employee performance, encompassing work quality, quantity, punctuality, responsibility, cooperation, effectiveness, and service orientation, will increase if employee engagement is reinforced by a positive work culture. Sari and Budiono (2025) demonstrated that organizational culture and work engagement are related to employee performance, while Yao et al. (2022) and Jufrizen et al. (2024) demonstrated that engagement has a significant relationship with performance (Jufrizen et al., 2024; Sari & Budiono, 2025; Yao et al., 2022). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H7: Organizational culture mediates the effect of employee engagement on employee performance.

II. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative research type with an explanatory research or causal-associative approach, because it aims to test the influence of work competence and employee engagement on employee performance with organizational culture as a moderating variable at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation (Sugiyono, 2019; Suwarno & Nugroho, 2023). The methodological approach used is based on a positivistic paradigm, namely measuring organizational phenomena through numerical data, standardized instruments, and statistical hypothesis testing. The main data source is primary data obtained directly from all foundation employees through short structured interviews and the distribution of closed questionnaires based on a Likert scale (Ghozali, 2021), while secondary data can be obtained from foundation documents, employee structures, school profiles, and relevant scientific literature. The study population is all 127 employees of the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation at elementary, junior high, and high school levels, consisting of 12 security guards, 20 cleaning staff, 83 teachers, 9 educators, and 3 admins, with a distribution of 50 elementary school employees, 43 junior high school employees, and 34 high school

employees. Because the population size is relatively affordable and all members of the population are involved, the sampling method used is saturated/census sampling, so that all employees are made respondents of the study (Suwarno et al., 2026). The inclusion criteria for this study were active foundation employees working in elementary, junior high, or high school units, including security, cleaning, teachers, education staff, and administrators, willing to complete the questionnaire, and understanding the research instrument statements. Exclusion criteria were employees on extended leave, inactive during the data collection period, interns or temporary honorary employees who were not part of the foundation's permanent employee structure, and respondents who completed the questionnaire incompletely. The use of quantitative questionnaires and models for testing relationships between variables are in accordance with the principles of PLS-SEM, which emphasizes testing structural models based on latent constructs and measurable indicators (Hair et al., 2022).

Data processing was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) because the research model involves several latent constructs, direct relationships, and testing the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between work competency and employee engagement on employee performance. The analysis stages began with data editing, coding questionnaire answers, checking incomplete data, tabulating respondent data, and descriptive analysis to describe employee characteristics based on school units and types of work. Next, an outer model evaluation was carried out to test the validity and reliability of the construct through outer loading values, Average Variance Extracted or AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and discriminant validity through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT. After the measurement model was declared valid and reliable, the analysis continued on the inner model by looking at the collinearity statistics or VIF values, path coefficients, R-Square, F-Square, Q-Square, and the significance of the relationship between variables through the bootstrapping procedure. Moderation testing was conducted by forming interaction variables, namely Job Competence, Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement. Organizational Culture, to determine whether organizational culture strengthens or weakens the influence of the two independent variables on employee performance. The results of the hypothesis test were determined based on the path coefficient, t-statistic, p-value, and confidence interval, so that the decision to accept or reject the hypothesis has an objective statistical basis. SEM-PLS was chosen because it is suitable for predictive research, can be used on complex models with relatively limited sample sizes, and can evaluate the quality of measurement models and structural models simultaneously (Hair et al., 2022). This approach is expected to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings because each indicator is systematically tested before the relationships between variables are further analyzed.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Result

Based on Table 1, the number of respondents in this study was 127 employees of the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, consisting of elementary, middle, and high school students. Respondent characteristics based on gender indicate that 93 respondents (73%) were female, while 34 respondents (27%) were male, resulting in a female-dominated employee composition. Based on educational attainment, the majority of respondents (92%) had a bachelor's degree (72%), while 35 respondents (28%) had a high school or equivalent degree. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the 25–30 age group (102%) (80%), followed by 16 (13%) under 25 years old (under 25%), and 9 (7%) aged 31–40 years old (over 31%). This composition indicates that the study respondents were predominantly productive-age employees with a bachelor's degree and possessing good adaptive potential to work demands, organizational culture, and performance improvement within the foundation.

Based on position, respondents consisted of 12 security personnel or 9%, 20 cleaning staff or 16%, 83 teachers or 65%, 9 staff/educational staff or 7%, and 3 admins or 2%. The majority of respondents were teachers, with details of 32 elementary school teachers, 30 junior high school teachers, and 21 high school teachers, so the results of this study largely represent employees who are directly related to the learning process and educational services. Based on length of service, respondents with a work period of 4–6 years

numbered 68 people or 54%, a work period of 1–3 years numbered 53 people or 42%, and a work period of <1 year numbered 6 people or 4%, which indicates that most employees have sufficient work experience in understanding the foundation's systems and culture. Based on school units, respondents came from elementary schools as many as 50 people or 39%, junior high schools as many as 43 people or 34%, and senior high schools as many as 34 people or 27%, while the number of students served consisted of 977 elementary school students, 532 junior high school students, and 435 senior high school students. Overall, these respondent characteristics indicate that the research data is quite representative for measuring work competencies, employee engagement, organizational culture, and employee performance, because it covers all school levels, all major job categories, as well as employees with relevant work experience.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristic Result

Respondent Characteristic (N=127)							
Gender	Male	34	27%	Last Education	High School	35	28%
	Female	93	73%		Bachelor's	92	72%
Number Teachers	Elementary	32		Employee Status	Permanent	-	
	Junior	30			Contract	127	100%
	Senior	21		Years of service (years)	< 1	6	4%
Job Position	Security	12	9%		1–3	53	42%
	Janitor	20	16%		4–6	68	54%
	Teacher	83	65%	Total Students in School	Elementary	977	
	Staff	9	7%		Junior	532	
	Admin	3	2%		Senior	435	
Respondent Age (years)	< 25	16	13%	Number Employees (School)	Elementary	50	39%
	25–30	102	80%		Junior	43	34%
	31–40	9	7%		Senior	34	27%

Based on the SEM-PLS outer loading results in Figure 1, all indicators in each construct have met the convergent validity criteria, because the loading values of all indicators are above the recommended limit of 0.708, which is the limit indicating that the construct is able to explain more than 50% of the indicator variance (Hair et al., 2022). In the Job Competencies variable, the indicators have loading values between 0.857–0.902, with the highest indicator being TaskCompl_ability = 0.902, so the dimensions of adaptability, job knowledge, job skills, proactive attitude, and task completion ability are considered valid in representing job competencies. In the Employee Engagement variable, the loading values are between 0.735–0.931, with the highest indicator being Dedication = 0.931 and the lowest indicator being FocusOn_work = 0.735, but all are still worthy of being retained because they exceed the minimum criteria. In the Organizational Culture variable, all indicators are also valid with loading values of 0.760–0.941, where Qual_orientation = 0.941, Consistent_rules = 0.938, and Leadership = 0.933 are the strongest indicators in shaping the foundation's organizational culture.

In the Employee Performance variable, the loading value is in the range of 0.837–0.878, so that the indicators of punctuality, responsibility, service orientation, work effectiveness, work quality, and work quantity are consistently able to explain employee performance; thus, all indicators in the measurement model can be maintained for further analysis, such as construct reliability testing, AVE, discriminant validity, and inner model testing, because a good reflective model must meet indicator reliability, internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity before structural testing is carried out (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

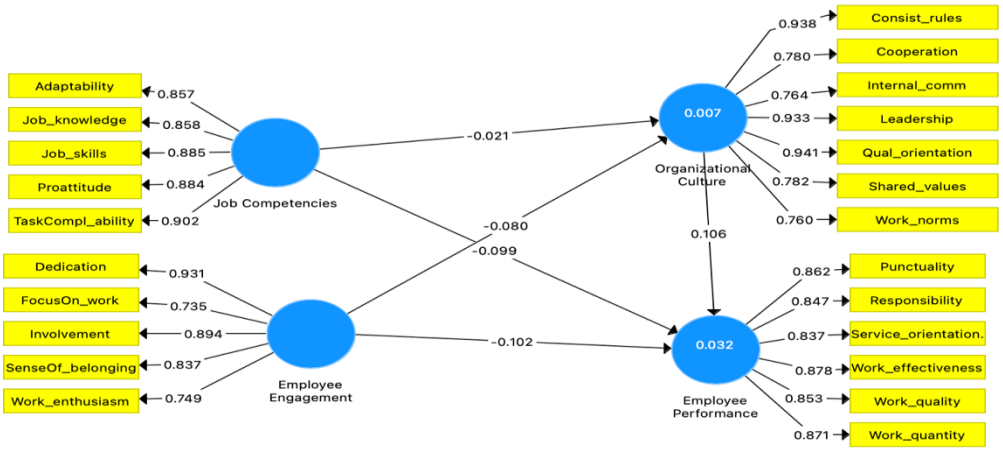

Fig. 1. The results of the SEM PLS (Outer Loading)

Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Job Competence (X1)	0.927	0.956	0.944	0.770
Employee Engagement (X2)	0.901	1.027	0.918	0.693
Organizational Culture (Z1)	0.936	0.960	0.946	0.717
Employee Performance (Y1)	0.931	0.970	0.944	0.736

Based on Table 2, the results of convergent validity and reliability indicate that all research variables have met the feasibility criteria for the measurement model in SEM-PLS. The Cronbach's Alpha value for all variables is above 0.70, namely Job Competence at 0.927, Employee Engagement at 0.901, Organizational Culture at 0.936, and Employee Performance at 0.931, so that all constructs have excellent internal consistency. The Composite Reliability (CR) value is also above 0.70, ranging from 0.918 to 0.946, indicating that the indicators in each variable have strong and stable construct reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of all variables is above 0.50, namely Job Competence of 0.770, Employee Engagement of 0.693, Organizational Culture of 0.717, and Employee Performance of 0.736, so it can be concluded that each construct is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators and has met convergent validity. The rho_A value for most variables is also in the good range, although the Employee Engagement rho_A value of 1.027 slightly exceeds the ideal limit of 1.00, so this construct is still acceptable because it is supported by Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE values that meet the criteria, but still need to be examined at the advanced model evaluation stage. Thus, all variables in this study, namely Job Competence, Employee Engagement, Organizational Culture, and Employee Performance, are declared valid and reliable for use in testing the structural model or inner model, in accordance with the criteria that the loading value, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability must meet the minimum standards in SEM-PLS analysis (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Value Results

Variabel	EE	EP	JC	OC
Employee Engagement (EE)				
Employee Performance (EP)	0.090			
Job Competence (JC)	0.125	0.097		
Organizational Culture (OC)	0.084	0.114	0.052	

Based on Table 3, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) results show that all relationships between variables have values far below the recommended maximum limit, namely 0.85 or 0.90, so that the research model has met the criteria for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021). The

HTMT value between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance is 0.090, Job Competence and Employee Engagement is 0.125, and Job Competence and Employee Performance is 0.097, which indicates that the three constructs have clear conceptual differences and do not overlap. Furthermore, the HTMT value between Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement is 0.084, Organizational Culture and Employee Performance is 0.114, and Organizational Culture and Job Competence is 0.052, which also indicates that organizational culture is empirically different from other constructs. The highest value in the table is 0.125, which indicates the relationship between Job Competence and Employee Engagement. However, this value remains very low and far from the threshold for discriminant problems. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study, namely Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Job Competence, and Organizational Culture, have their own unique constructs, making them suitable for use in the next stage of SEM-PLS structural model testing.

Table 4. Fornell-Lercker Criterion Results

Variable	EE	EP	JC	OC
Employee Engagement (EE)	**0.833**			
Employee Performance (EP)	-0.105	**0.858**		
Job Competence (JC)	-0.061	-0.094	**0.878**	
Organizational Culture (OC)	-0.079	0.116	-0.017	**0.847**

Based on Table 4, the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion indicate that all constructs in the study have met the criteria for discriminant validity, because the square root value of AVE on the main diagonal is greater than the correlation value between other variables. The diagonal value for Employee Engagement (EE) is 0.833, Employee Performance (EP) is 0.858, Job Competence (JC) is 0.878, and Organizational Culture (OC) is 0.847, all of which are higher than the correlation between constructs below it. The correlation between variables appears very low, such as EE with EP is -0.105, EE with JC is -0.061, EP with JC is -0.094, OC with EE is -0.079, OC with EP is 0.116, and OC with JC is -0.017. These low correlation values indicate that each variable has different conceptual characteristics and there is no overlap in measurements between variables. Thus, the variables Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Job Competence, and Organizational Culture can be stated to have their own unique constructs, so that the research instrument is suitable for use in the structural analysis or inner model stage. This result is in line with the Fornell-Larcker criteria which state that discriminant validity is met if the square root of the AVE of a construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs in the research model (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Based on Table 5, the results of Collinearity Statistics (inner VIF) show that all relationships between variables in the structural model have very low VIF values, which are in the range of 1.004 to 1.010. The VIF value of Employee Engagement to Employee Performance is 1.010, Job Competence to Employee Performance is 1.004, and Organizational Culture to Employee Performance is 1.007, so the three predictor variables do not show symptoms of multicollinearity in explaining employee performance. Furthermore, the VIF value of Employee Engagement to Organizational Culture is 1.004 and Job Competence to Organizational Culture is 1.004, which also indicates that the two independent variables do not overlap excessively in influencing organizational culture.

Table 5. Collinearity Statistics (inner VIF) Results

Variable	EE	EP	JC	OC
Employee Engagement (EE)		1.010		1.004
Employee Performance (EP)				
Job Competence (JC)		1.004		1.004
Organizational Culture (OC)		1.007		

All of these values are far below the maximum limit commonly used in SEM-PLS, namely VIF <5, even meeting the more stringent criteria of VIF <3.3, so the structural model is considered free from collinearity problems. Thus, the variables Job Competence, Employee Engagement, and Organizational

Culture are suitable for use in testing the inner model because each has a different contribution and there is no excessive correlation between the predictor variables in this research model (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 6. R-Square Adjusted & F-Square Value Result

Variable	F-Square				R-Square	
	EE	EP	JC	OC	R^2	Adjusted
Employee Engagement (EE)		0.011		0.006		
Employee Performance (EP)					0.032	0.009
Job Competence (JC)		0.010		0.000		
Organizational Culture (OC)		0.011			0.007	-0.009

This research can still be continued, because low R-Square and F-Square results do not automatically make the research fail or infeasible. In SEM-PLS, research feasibility is not only determined by R-Square and F-Square, but also by indicator validity, construct reliability, discriminant validity, collinearity, and bootstrapping/path coefficient results. Based on previous results, outer loading, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, HTMT, Fornell-Larcker, and VIF have met the criteria, so the measurement model is still feasible to continue to hypothesis testing. However, the results of Table 6 show that the explanatory power of the structural model is very weak, because the R-Square Employee Performance is only 0.032 and the R-Square Organizational Culture is only 0.007, while all F-Square values <0.02, which means the effect of each predictor variable is very small or almost insignificant in practice. According to Hair et al. (2022), the R-Square value indicates the predictive ability of the model, while the F-Square indicates the size of the predictor variable's contribution to the endogenous variable; so low values can still be reported, but must be analyzed carefully (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 7. Model Fit Test Results

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.066	0.066
d_ULS	1.220	1.220
d_G	1.307	1.307
Chi-Square	799.168	799.168
NFI	0.732	0.732
rms Theta	0.221	

Based on Table 7, the results of the Model Fit Test indicate that the research model has a fairly good level of fit in the SRMR indicator, but still need to be examined in several other fit measures. The SRMR value of 0.066 in the saturated model and the estimated model is below the recommended limit of 0.08, so the model can be stated to have an acceptable residual error level and indicates that the model structure has an adequate fit between the empirical correlation matrix and the estimated correlation matrix. The d_ULS value of 1.220 and d_G of 1.307 indicate a measure of model discrepancy, but its interpretation should be compared with the bootstrap confidence interval value to ensure whether the model truly meets the fit criteria. The Chi-Square value of 799.168 indicates a discrepancy between the model and the data, but in SEM-PLS this measure is generally not a primary indicator because it is sensitive to the number of samples and model complexity. Furthermore, the NFI value of 0.732 is still below the ideal criteria of 0.90, and the rms Theta value of 0.221 is above the recommended limit of around 0.12, so it can be concluded that although the model has a decent SRMR, the overall model fit is still classified as suboptimal and needs to be interpreted carefully. Thus, the study can still be continued to test the hypothesis, but the results of this model fit need to be explained as a limitation that the model still has moderate structural fit capabilities, so that the development of other variables such as leadership, work motivation, job satisfaction, compensation, or work environment can be considered in subsequent studies.

Table 8. Hypothesis Relationship Results

	Hypothesis Relation	O	M	STDEV	STDEV	P-Value
H 1	JC → OC	-0021	-0.015	0.125	0.171	0.864
H 2	EE → OC	-0.080	-0.078	0.125	0.640	0.522
H 3	OC → EP	0.106	0.107	0.117	0.908	0.364
H 4	JC→ EP	-0101	-0.109	0.092	1.095	0.274
H 5	EE → EP	-0.111	-0.118	0.119	0.930	0.353
H 6	JC → OC → EP	-0.002	-0.003	0.019	0.120	0.904
H 7	EE → OC → EP	-0.008	-0.011	0.020	0.415	0.678

Note: Employee Engagement (EE), Employee Performance (EP), Job Competence (JC), Organizational Culture (OC)

Based on Table 8, the results of the hypothesis relationship test indicate that all hypotheses in the research model are rejected, because all p-values are greater than 0.05. In the direct relationship, Job Competence to Organizational Culture has a negative coefficient of -0.021 with a p-value of 0.864, so that job competency does not have a significant effect on organizational culture. Employee Engagement to Organizational Culture also shows a negative coefficient of -0.080 with a p-value of 0.522, so that employee engagement has not been proven to be able to significantly improve organizational culture. Furthermore, Organizational Culture to Employee Performance has a positive coefficient of 0.106 with a p-value of 0.364, but the effect is not significant; while Job Competence to Employee Performance has a negative coefficient of -0.101 with a p-value of 0.274, and Employee Engagement to Employee Performance has a negative coefficient of -0.111 with a p-value of 0.353, so that job competency and employee engagement have not been proven to have a significant effect on employee performance. In the indirect relationship, Job Competence → Organizational Culture → Employee Performance has a coefficient of -0.002 with a p-value of 0.904, while Employee Engagement to Organizational Culture to Employee Performance has a coefficient of -0.008 with a p-value of 0.678, so that organizational culture is not proven to mediate the relationship between work competence and employee engagement on employee performance. Thus, these results indicate that the variables of Job Competence, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Culture have not become dominant factors explaining Employee Performance at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, so that employee performance is likely more influenced by other variables outside the model, such as leadership, work motivation, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, workload, evaluation system, or clarity of work roles.

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on Table 8, all hypotheses are rejected because the p-values for H1 to H7 are all above the 0.05 significance level. This condition indicates that Job Competence, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Culture have not been proven to have a direct or indirect influence on Employee Performance at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation. Statistically, these results are in line with the previously very low R-Square values, namely 0.032 for Employee Performance and 0.007 for Organizational Culture, so the model is only able to explain a small portion of the variation in employee performance and organizational culture. The rejection of all hypotheses may occur due to the heterogeneous characteristics of respondents, namely teachers, administrators, educational staff, security, and cleaning staff who have different work standards, performance indicators, and competency demands, so the relationship between variables is not statistically strong. This finding can also be understood through research by Yao et al. (2022) who explained that the relationship between engagement and performance is not always linear, and Sabuhari et al. (2020) who found that organizational culture adaptation does not always have a significant effect on employee performance in certain contexts (Sabuhari et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2022).

The results of Hypothesis 1 testing indicate that Job Competence has no significant effect on Organizational Culture, with a path coefficient of -0.021 and a p-value of 0.864, thus rejecting the

hypothesis. These results indicate that improving employee work competencies, such as job knowledge, work skills, task completion ability, professional attitude, and adaptability, is not strong enough to form an organizational culture that includes shared values, work norms, internal communication, leadership, quality orientation, and consistent rules. Conceptually, this result can occur because organizational culture is a collective value system that is shaped more by leadership, foundation policies, communication, work habits, and managerial systems, rather than solely by individual employee competencies. This finding differs from the study by Rulia et al. (2021) which found that employee competency and organizational commitment influence organizational culture, but is still understandable because the study was conducted in a hospital context and included organizational commitment as a supporting factor (Rulia, 2021). Thus, at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, employee work competency has not been proven to be a major factor in shaping organizational culture because culture is more systemic and institutional than individual.

The results of testing Hypothesis 2 indicate that Employee Engagement does not significantly influence Organizational Culture, with a path coefficient of -0.080 and a p-value of 0.522, thus rejecting the hypothesis. This means that engagement dimensions such as work enthusiasm, dedication, work focus, involvement, and sense of belonging have not been statistically proven to strengthen the foundation's organizational culture. This condition may occur because employee engagement more closely reflects an individual's psychological state regarding their work, while organizational culture is a pattern of values, norms, and collective work systems that require management support, leadership, and policy consistency. These results are not entirely in line with research that positions engagement as a crucial mechanism in improving work outcomes, such as Jufrizen et al. (2024) who found that work engagement plays a role in the relationship between leader-member exchange and employee performance (Jufrizen et al., 2024). Thus, employee engagement at this foundation may not yet be a significant enough collective force to shape organizational culture, especially if it is not supported by a uniform communication, reward, and leadership system across elementary, middle, and high school units.

The results of Hypothesis 3 testing indicate that Organizational Culture does not significantly influence Employee Performance, with a positive path coefficient of 0.106 and a p-value of 0.364, thus rejecting the hypothesis. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that organizational culture has a tendency to improve performance, but this influence is not yet statistically strong enough to be declared significant. This result differs from Aggarwal (2024) who found that dimensions of organizational culture have a positive influence on job performance and satisfaction, and differs from other studies that place culture as an important factor in improving employee work behavior (Aggarwal, 2024). However, the results of this study are still in line with Sabuhari et al. (2020) who found that organizational culture adaptation does not have a significant influence on employee performance and is unable to act as a mediator in certain contexts (Sabuhari et al., 2020). Thus, the organizational culture at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation may not have been strongly internalized into employees' daily work behavior, so it has not had a significant impact on work quality, work quantity, timeliness, responsibility, effectiveness, and service orientation.

The results of Hypothesis 4 testing indicate that Job Competence does not significantly influence Employee Performance, with a path coefficient of -0.101 and a p-value of 0.274, thus the hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that employee work competencies, such as job knowledge, skills, ability to complete tasks, professional attitudes, and adaptability, have not been proven to be able to directly improve employee performance. This result differs from Putranto et al. (2025) who found that professional competence significantly influences teacher performance, and differs from Fitrio et al. (2023) who showed that competence plays a role in improving employee performance through service quality agility (Fitrio et al., 2023; Putranto et al., 2026). The difference in results may be caused by the context of this study which involved all types of foundation employees, not just teachers or employees with homogeneous job characteristics. Thus, work competencies may need to be supported by other factors, such as role clarity, evaluation systems, motivation, leadership, compensation, and work environment, to have a significant impact on performance.

The results of the H5 test indicate that Employee Engagement does not significantly influence Employee Performance, with a path coefficient of -0.111 and a p-value of 0.353, thus the hypothesis is

rejected. This finding indicates that work enthusiasm, dedication, work focus, involvement, and sense of belonging have not been proven to directly improve employee work quality, quantity, punctuality, responsibility, effectiveness, and service orientation. This result differs from Putranto et al. (2025) who found that work engagement significantly influences teacher performance (Putranto et al., 2026), and differs from Jufrisen et al. (2024) who showed that work engagement and job satisfaction are important mechanisms in improving employee performance (Jufrizen et al., 2024). However, this result can be explained by Yao et al. (2022) who stated that the relationship between work engagement and job performance is not always linear, and can even be inverted U-shaped if engagement is not balanced with adequate psychological resources and work support (Yao et al., 2022). Thus, employee engagement at this foundation may not have been converted into performance because employees need additional support such as leadership, welfare, work facilities, workload balance, and a clear reward system.

The results of Hypothesis 6 testing indicate that Organizational Culture does not mediate the effect of Job Competence on Employee Performance, with an indirect path coefficient of -0.002 and a p-value of 0.904, thus rejecting the hypothesis. This means that job competency is not proven to improve employee performance through organizational culture as an intermediary pathway. This result may occur because the initial path from Job Competence to Organizational Culture and the final path from Organizational Culture to Employee Performance are both insignificant, so the mediation effect cannot be statistically established. This finding differs from Dewi and Fitrio (2022) who showed that organizational culture and competency can improve employee performance when mediated by adaptive millennial leadership (Fitrio et al., 2023), but is in line with Putranto et al. (2025) who found that OCB does not mediate the effect of professional competence on teacher performance (Putranto et al., 2026). Thus, the work competency of foundation employees is likely more appropriately tested as a direct influence or through other mediators such as job satisfaction, work motivation, organizational commitment, or leadership support, rather than through organizational culture as a sole mediator.

The results of Hypothesis 7 testing indicate that Organizational Culture does not mediate the effect of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance, with an indirect path coefficient of -0.008 and a p-value of 0.678, thus the hypothesis is rejected. This means that employee engagement has not been proven to improve employee performance through organizational culture as an intermediary pathway. This result differs from Putranto et al. (2025) who showed that work engagement significantly influenced teacher performance and OCB mediated the effect of engagement on performance (Putranto et al., 2026), and differs from Jufrisen et al. (2024) who found that work engagement plays an important role in improving employee performance (Jufrizen et al., 2024). However, this result is understandable because organizational culture in this study was not significant on performance, so it was unable to function as a connecting mechanism between engagement and performance. Thus, employee engagement at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation is likely to be more effective in influencing performance if channeled through variables that are closer to individual work behavior, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intrinsic motivation, psychological capital, or organizational citizenship behavior.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the primary objective of analyzing the influence of Job Competence and Employee Engagement on Employee Performance, with Organizational Culture as a connecting variable, has not received significant empirical support. The test results indicate that Job Competence has no significant effect on Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement has no significant effect on Organizational Culture, and Organizational Culture has no significant effect on Employee Performance. Furthermore, Job Competence and Employee Engagement were also not proven to have a significant direct effect on Employee Performance. Therefore, the research problem formulation and hypotheses testing the direct relationship between these variables are not statistically acceptable in the context of the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation.

The results also indicate that Organizational Culture is unable to mediate the effect of Job Competence on Employee Performance and is unable to mediate the effect of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance. This finding indicates that organizational culture at the foundation is not yet a strong mechanism for converting job competency and employee engagement into improved performance. Theoretically, these results provide an important contribution because they demonstrate that the relationship between competency, engagement, organizational culture, and performance is not always direct or automatic. The novelty of this research lies in the finding that, in the context of a multi-level educational foundation, namely elementary, middle, and high schools, variables often considered strong in explaining performance did not demonstrate a significant influence when tested across all employee categories, such as teachers, administrators, educators, security guards, and cleaning staff.

Overall, this study concludes that Job Competence, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Culture are not yet dominant factors in explaining Employee Performance at the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation. This is reinforced by the R-Square value for Employee Performance of 0.032 and the R-Square for Organizational Culture of 0.007, indicating that the model's ability to explain variations in employee performance and organizational culture is still very low. This finding does not imply that job competency, engagement, and organizational culture are unimportant, but rather that these three variables are not strong enough on their own without the support of other organizational factors. Therefore, the results of this study imply that improving foundation employee performance needs to be viewed more broadly through a combination of leadership, motivation, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, workload, role clarity, and performance evaluation systems.

Further research is recommended to develop the model by adding other variables that are more closely related to employee work behavior, such as transformational leadership, work motivation, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, workload, role clarity, organizational commitment, and reward systems. Future researchers can also separate respondents based on job groups, for example teachers and non-teachers, because each group has different task characteristics, performance standards, and competency requirements. For the Medan Mulia/Mian Zhong Foundation, the results of this study can serve as a basis for conducting a more comprehensive evaluation of human resource management, not only through competency training and strengthening organizational culture, but also through improvements in work systems, internal communication, task allocation, supervision, and performance evaluation. Thus, the foundation can develop performance improvement strategies that are more targeted, data-driven, and in accordance with the actual needs of employees in elementary, middle, and high schools.

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