Employee Performance: Improvement through Strengthening Employee Engagement

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Abstract

Recent research on organizational behaviour underlined that employee engagement is a key element in promoting higher levels of employee performance. Five state community colleges in Indonesia serve as the research setting for examining the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, as well as identifying and analyzing the dominant and least prominent indicators of employee engagement. The principal source is collected from participants by questionnaires. The respondents are 180 employees both lecturers and administrative staffs of 5 State community colleges of Indonesia. SPSS software facilitates the statistical examination of the collected data. The statistical results suggest that greater employee engagement is associated with better employee performance. The model's R^2 value of 0.530 indicates that it explains 53.0% of the variance in employee performance. This study contributes to organizational behaviour research by underlining the significant of employee engagement practices to implement. The outcomes point to the value of state community colleges placing greater emphasis on strengthening the employee engagement practices especially in term of re-designing jobs to be more challenging and arranging favourable work conditions. In addition, state community colleges should build psychological safety and trust, offer structured stress-management resources, and cultivate adaptable leadership.

Keywords: employee engagement, employee performance, challenging jobs, favorable work conditions, employee's resilience

1. Introduction

Organizational performance reflects the extent to which planned activities and policies are implemented effectively to achieve the vision, objectives, goals, and mission established in the organization's strategic plan (Sudarmanto et al., 2022). Organizations require consistent high levels of performance from individual employees to improve overall organizational performance and survive in a competitive business environment (Addison, Lane, & Teixeira, 2008).

Measurable actions and activities serve as indicators of performance. Furthermore, both the quantity of work completed and the quality of its outcomes serve as indicators of individual, group, and organizational performance and can be measured (Akhtar & Mittal, 2010). Organizational performance reflects employee performance or vice versa (Nazir & Islam, 2017), so, it can be argued that when employees perform well, organizational performance is also high. Reversely, if employee performance is low, it results in poor organizational performance. Several empirical studies measure employee performances using a single source, employees, to provide subjective assessments of themselves in relation to attitudes and performance (Hong et al., 2000) and (Cekmecelioglu & Gunsel, 2013). Other research adopts self-assessment techniques and

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considers creativity when measuring employee performance. Prior studies identify creativity as one of the ways in which employee performance is demonstrated (Hassan et al., 2015); (Ismail et al., 2018).

As stipulated by law No. 12 of 2012, Article 59, State Community College is a Higher Education Institution that delivers vocational training at Diploma I and/or Diploma II levels in one or more scientific or technological fields, tailored to regional excellence or specific demands. Community college in Indonesia were established in 2014 consisting of 5 work units those are the West Aceh State community college, Pacitan, Blitar, Rejang Lebong, and Yogyakarta. Each community college conduct a study program in accordance with their respective local excellences

As a work unit under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology c.q. Directorate General of Higher Education, the 5 community colleges carry out their main tasks and functions as well as performance targets in the form of 8 Key Performances Indicators as stated in regulation of ministry of education and culture 210/M/2023. In its journey, the 5 state community colleges have not been able to achieve performance targets due to various problems. This condition provides a proof of the importance of research on employee performance. According to recent studies, many antecedent factors associate with employee performance directly or indirectly. This study focuses on employee engagement. So that this study investigates the effect of employee engagement on staff performance across five public community colleges in Indonesia as well as elaborate and analyze the dominant and minor indicators of the employee engagement variable.

Employee engagement is characterized by employees' internal desire to perform their work effectively, which strengthens behaviors, is highly motivated, demonstrate enthusiasm and take pride in their work while striving to accomplish organizational objectives. Higher levels of employee engagement are associated with better work performance (Hasan, et al., 2022). There is a relation between employee engagement and organizational performance (Dajani, 2015). A strong sense of engagement may be reflected in employees' initiative, creativity, forward-thinking behavior, and willingness to expand their knowledge (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Engaged employees tend to have high energy levels, enabling them to complete their work more effectively and efficiently (Ismail et al., 2025). They also demonstrate greater dedication to their work, making them more willing to contribute beyond the formal demands of their jobs. Furthermore, high engagement makes employees more focused on their work and better able to maintain consistent performance quality (Sabila & Izzati, 2025). The accumulation of various positive behaviors ultimately leads to improvements in individual, team and organizational performance (Sudaryanto & Hanny, 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Performance

By implementing activities and policies aligned with its strategic plan, an organization seeks to achieve the goals and objectives that define its vision and mission (Sudarmanto et al., 2022). In Grote's (2005) view, effective employee performance involves more than completing assigned tasks; it also requires maintaining quality, demonstrating productivity, fostering innovation, and adhering to organizational expectations. Management establishes specific targets as commitments, and the extent to which employees or organizations achieve them reflects their performance (Nica, 2016). The term performance originates from the concepts of job performance and actual performance, which refer to work achievements or results that an individual is expected to attain (Dirkes & Weaver, 2016). Performance assessment varies according to the unit of

analysis. For individuals, it examines the extent to which employees fulfill their principal duties and deliver the results expected by their institution. For groups, the focus shifts to collective effectiveness in completing essential tasks and meeting predetermined goals. At the institutional level, performance is reflected in the successful implementation of core activities that support the realization of organizational vision and mission. Finally, program performance is determined by evaluating whether the activities undertaken have produced the outcomes intended by the program.

Drawing on previous viewpoints, Fung et al. (2017) developed a framework that classifies employee performance into distinct categories: (1) in-role behaviour, which encompasses employees' job-related knowledge, accuracy, productivity, and work organization skills (2) extra-role behaviour, concerns employees' contributions beyond their core task requirements, including reliability, observance of organizational guidelines, proactive action, and cooperation with colleagues. Regarding creativity, researchers generally share the view that it involves producing "something" novel that also has practical value (Reaves, 2015). The "four Ps" serve as a framework for examining creativity, covering "Person," "Process," "Press," and "Product". (Reaves, 2015). The "Person" aspect of creativity concerns the individual's personal qualities and characteristics that contribute to creative thinking. Process is the underlying mechanism by which a person thinks creatively. Press describes how environmental conditions interact with individuals to facilitate creative performance.

Ximenes et al. (2019) identify creativity as one of the dimensions through which employee performance can be assessed. Developing better and innovative ways of doing things involves both creativity and innovation. Creativity occurs during the idea-generation stage, while innovation takes place when these ideas are implemented to improve procedures, practices, or products. Creativity can arise within individuals, work teams, organizations, or across multiple interconnected levels. Creativity is seen as something new, an idea that is visible and ready to use that is created by individuals or work teams (Gupta & Banerjee, 2012).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is reflected in employees' voluntary dedication to their work and their commitment to supporting organizational objectives (Pradana and Indiyati, 2025). A study by Katili, Wibowo, and Akbar (2021) found that employee engagement directly supports the enhancement of employee effectiveness in the steel industry company. Similarly, a study by Kurnia and Aslam (2021) shows that employee performance improves significantly as a result of employee engagement. Kahn (1990) argued that meaningful work and psychological safety are important conditions for employee engagement. Engagement encompasses three dimensions which are affective, cognitive, and behavioural.

The extent to which employees remain absorbed in their tasks and devote their attention to completing their responsibilities reflects their level of engagement at work (Saks, 2016). Engagement reflects how committed employees are to their roles (Ogueyungbo et al., 2020). Kahn (1990) linked employee engagement to the meaningfulness of work and employees' feelings of safety in the workplace. Engagement consists of behavioural, cognitive, and affective components, while the behavioural component reflects an employee's willingness to go beyond formally established work duties. Macey and Schneider (2018) identified three aspects of behavioural engagement which are taking initiative, demonstrating proactive behaviour, and extending role responsibilities. Adaptability is another aspect associated with behavioural engagement, reflecting employees' capacity to respond to evolving work demands (Kahn, 1990).

The concept of cognitive engagement refers to employees' mental focus on their work roles and awareness of the organisation's goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). A sustained positive attitude towards work enables employees to maintain mental focus and psychological presence in their organisational roles, which characterises cognitive engagement (Ikon & Chika, 2017). The affective dimension of engagement is characterised by employees' willingness to perform exceptionally well and foster a psychological contract with their organisation. High levels of task effectiveness and organisational citizenship behaviour are characteristic of emotionally engaged employees, who also tend to maintain work–life balance and experience fewer signs of burnout.

The relationship and involvement that occurs closely physically, cognitively and emotionally between a person and his role in a job, which is then referred to as employee engagement (Yalabik et al., 2013). Employee engagement falls into three (3) categories: Engaged, Not Engaged, and Actively Disengaged (Gallup, 2019). In the study by Krekel, Ward, and De Neve (2019), it is illustrated that employee engagement has a positive correlation with employee performance as well as with firm performance profitability.

Goal attainment among engaged employees involves more than completing assigned duties. It also requires the effective application of individual abilities, sustained professional behaviour, and a willingness to examine work outcomes and introduce improvements whenever discrepancies arise (Al-dalahmeh et al., 2018). By fostering employee engagement, organisations may strengthen their overall performance and improve customer-related outcomes. At the same time, greater engagement can be associated with fewer workforce-related problems, such as frequent absences, staff departures, fraudulent conduct, workplace accidents, and employee dissatisfaction. Employee engagement is described as members of an organization who engage their physical abilities, mental capacities, and emotions throughout the execution of their job duties (Yalabik et al., 2013). Employee engagement is a mental state of employees or ivvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvndividuals characterised by positive work attitudes and strong professional motivation (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

Employees' attitudes and feelings towards work, organization, leadership, and other aspects affect their behaviour and performance. Employees always want there to be a match between their feelings, attitudes and behaviour even though in certain conditions and situations the three aspects, such as feelings, attitudes, and behaviour, are not always in line (Truxillo, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2015). Workers who actively invest their energy and effort in performing their duties will devote more attention to their work depending on the amount of job resources available. Therefore, it is important for employees to always be surrounded by a supportive work environment (such as autonomy, variety of skills, and opportunities for development). These resources will then positively affect employee engagement. Employees who experience engagement tend to approach their work with energy, demonstrate dedication to their responsibilities, and become deeply immersed in their professional activities. These characteristics reflect the three principal dimensions of engagement (Yalabik et al., 2013). Furthermore, the Employee engagement indicators are described as follows:

a. Vigour represents employees' energy, endurance, and persistence in dealing with workplace challenges. Higher vigour levels indicate greater enthusiasm, stamina, and sustained effort during work.
b. Dedication represents employees' strong commitment to their work, reflected in a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, pride, inspiration, and appreciation of challenging tasks.
c. Absorption refers to a state of deep concentration in which employees feel happy and immersed in their work, causing them to perceive time as passing quickly.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and procedure

This study utilises a survey-based quantitative methodology. The sample of his study was 180 lecturers and administrative staff of 5 state community colleges spread out 5 provinces in Indonesia. The sample was taken using random techniques with the justification that everyone had the same understanding of employee engagement practices at each campus. Data was collected by questionnaire that was distributed by google form to the WA group of the staff. The questionnaire consists of statements regarding employee engagement and employe performance scoring 1 to 5 of Likert's scale. The data analysing was carried out with SPSS version 29.

3.2 Variables and Indicators

The variables and indicators of the study as follows:

Table 1 Variables and Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Number of Items	Reference
Employee Engagement	Vigor	6	Schaufeli et. al., (2006)
	Dedication	5	
	Absorption	6	
Employee Performance	In-Role Behaviors	5	Fung, et al., (2017), Ximenes, et al., (2019)
	Extra-Role Behaviors	7	
	Creativity	9	

Source: Schaufeli et al., (2006), Fung et. al., (2017), Ximenes et al., (2019)

3.3 Measurement Validation

Instrument validity testing was conducted using Product Moment technique. The evaluation criteria indicate that when the correlation coefficient (riT) exceeds or equal to the table correlation value (rtable) of 0.216, the questionnaire indicators are considered valid—meaning they inflective measure the intended variables—and can thus serve as data collection tools. Statistic results indicate that all indicators for the variables of Employee Engagement, as well as Employee Performance yielded correlation coefficients exceeding the table correlation value (rtable) of 0.216. Instrument reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha technique. The testing criteria state that a reliability coefficient of 0.6 or higher indicates that the questionnaire indicators are reliable—or consistent—in measuring the variables. A summary of the reliability test outcomes reveals that all Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.6.

In this study the measurement model (outer model) which is an important step in the analysis model aiming to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators utilised to assess the variables. Convergent validity testing within the outer model evaluates the degree to which measurement items adequately capture their intended latent variables. For an indicator to be deemed valid, its factor loading must be positive and above 0.6. Every indicator met the specified criterion, with factor loading values exceeding 0.6. Hence, all measurement items demonstrate acceptable validity in assessing the constructs of employee engagement and employee performance.

Table 2 Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Loading Factor	Result
Employee Engagement	0.680	Valid
Employee Performance	0.655	Valid

Source: SPSS output 2026

Continued with reliability testing using Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. The evaluation criteria specify that if Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.6 as well as composite reliability exceeds 0.7 then the variable is deemed sufficiently reliable. The outcomes of the calculation of Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are summarised in the following table.

Table 3 Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Employee Engagement	0.928	0.939
Employee Performance	0.936	0.942

Source: SPSS output 2026

Drawing on the findings from the reliability test shown in Table 3, can be observed that employee engagement, since the Cronbach's alpha value for employee performance exceeds 0.6 and its composite reliability value is above 0.7, the indicators employed to measure both employee engagement and employee performance are classified as reliable.

4. Results and Discussion

The sample of this study are the employees of 5 state community college consist of lectures and academic staffs. The data shows clearly that most respondents are in the age of 26 – 55. It can be said they are in a productive age. Instead of, most respondents are having years of service of less then 10 years meaning that they have not enough experience in performing the jobs as well as the affiliation aspects.

Table 4 Respondents Characteristic

No.	Characteristics	Criteria	Frequency (person)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Man	87	48.2
		Women	93	51.8
2	Age	≤ 25	13	7.2
		26 - 55	161	89.2
		≥ 55	7	3.6
3	Education	Bachelor	87	48.2
		Master	89	49.4
		Doctor	4	2.4
4	Years of service	≤ 10	141	78.3
		11 - 20	28	15.7
		≥ 20	11	6.0
5	Types	Lecturer	91	50.6
		Administrative Staff	89	49.4

Source: Questionaire result 2026)

Structural model is measured by looking at the structural coefficient and R-Square. The path coefficient shows the significance of the relationship between latent variables, while R-Square shows the percentage of variance explained by the model. The goodness-of-fit model is employed to determine the extent to which endogenous variables account for variations in exogenous variables, or alternatively, to identify the extent of the contribution made by exogenous variables to endogenous variables. The assessment of model goodness of fit is conducted using R-squared.

Table 5 Goodness of Fit Model Test with R-Square

Endogenous Variable	R-Square
Employee Performance	0.530

Source: SPSS output 2026

The R-square of the employee performance variable is 0.530 (53.0%). This indicates that the contribution of employee engagement to employee performance is 53.0%, the rest of the 47.0% is attributed to other variables not examined in this study.

Besides using R-square also uses influence size f-square which is used to measure how strongly exogenous variables affect endogenous variables, when the f-square value lies within the range of 0.02–0.15, the effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable is classified as small. If the f-square value ranges from 0.15 to 0.35, the exogenous variable demonstrates a moderate effect on the endogenous variable. In comparison, an f-square value greater than 0.35 signifies a substantial effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable.

Table 6 Goodness of Fit Model Test with F Square

Exogen Variable	Endogen Variable	F Square	Impact
Employee engagement	Employee Performance	0.612	Large

Source: SPSS output

Table 6 informs that the effect size of employee engagement in explaining employee performance is 0.612. The test results show that the influence of the of employee engagement on employee performance is more than 0.35. This means that employee engagement has a great influence on employee performance.

The last test is the direct influence hypothesis test, utilised to evaluate the statistical significance of the direct effects that exogenous variables exert on endogenous variables. Under the specified testing criteria, a probability value that is less than or equal to the predetermined significance level (alpha (α) = 5%) demonstrates that the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables is statistically significant.

Table 7 Direct Influence Test

Exogenous Variable	Endogenous Variable	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values
Employee Engagement	Employee Performance	0.692	8.994	0.000

Source: SPSS output 2026

The estimated structural equation for the relationship between the two variables is Employee Performance = + 0.692 Employee Engagement. The path coefficient for the effect of employee engagement on employee performance is 0.692, with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. The test results confirm that the coefficient indicates a positive relationship and that the p-value is less than the significance level (alpha = 5%). The results suggest that employee engagement

contributes positively and significantly to employee performance. Thus, the better the employee engagement tends to improve employee performance.

Referring to the questionnaire, several items with low scores include employees possess mental resilience in the work, feel challenged by the job; feel time flies when they are working; and feel happy when they work hard. To increase employee performance through employee engagement, state community colleges should improve the resilience of the employees, restructure the jobs which challenge the employees and redesign favourable work conditions and environment so that employees feel happy in performing the jobs. In addition, state community colleges should build psychological safety, offer structured stress-management resources, and cultivate adaptable leadership.

Building psychological safety and trust can be done by treating employee's mistakes as learning data rather than punishable offenses, creating safe spaces or forums where employees can flag unmanageable workloads early without fear of looking weak, and using quick pulse surveys to catch structural stressors before they cause burnout. Cultivating adaptable leadership, managers must shift from command-and-control tactics to a people-first mindset focused on shared problem-solving and continuous learning. Adaptable leaders do not pretend to have all the answers during a crisis; instead, they guide employees through ambiguity by building trust and remaining flexible in their approach. Offering structured stress-management resources, organizations must move beyond occasional wellness lectures and implement accessible, evidence-based tools that integrate directly into the workday. Providing the right infrastructure helps employees process pressure before it converts into chronic exhaustion. In addition, manager provide short-term, no-cost confidential therapy sessions for staff and their families and partner with online platforms like "Talkspace" to eliminate travel time and long scheduling waitlists.

The impact of employee engagement on employee performance remains an undeniable factor. When employees feel engaged, they will be immersed in their work, not feel tired because they enjoy their work, there is no pressure, everything is done comfortably. Of course, all these conditions will have a positive influence on employee performance. Employees who have a high commitment to their work, they understand the goals of the organization very well (Al-dalahmeh et al., 2018). Employee engagement, is shown that employees do not give up easily when facing difficulties, have great resilience, have a strong sense of involvement in their work, as well as concentration and focus, and are not burdened with their work. Vigour, dedication, and absorption are the three fundamental dimensions that define employee engagement (Yalabik et al., 2013). In fact, employee engagement do affect employee performance. Employee engagement is a foundational driver of organizational performance (Dharshini & Mahendiran, 2026) This is not automatic but requires synergy between management and employees. Management creates a conducive, dynamic environment and provides opportunities for creativity and innovation for employees, and employees understand their position in the organization, that the organization is where they are not only to earn income but also to achieve the highest career level, and all of that they can achieve when they are able to contribute optimally to achieving organizational goals.

5. Conclusion

The study found that employee engagement as measured by indicators of vigor, dedication, and absorption has a positive influence on employee performance. This study suggests that in running an organization, employee engagement program and practises should not be compromised. This is very critical as employee performance is influenced by employee engagement. Practically, it is necessary for the state community college to pay more attention to

maintain the quality of employee performance by redesigning challenging jobs for employees and creating conducive work conditions including autonomy, variety of skills, and opportunities for development so that employees more focus and enjoy while working. Moreover, state community colleges should build psychological safety, offer structured stress-management resources, and cultivate adaptable leadership to enhance the employee's resilience.

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