Linking Religiosity and Employee Performance in the Public Sector: Does Public Service Motivation Matter?

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Abstract

Previous studies identified numerous performance predictors of employees in public sector organizations. The literature on the relationship between religiosity and public service motivation in organizations is limited. Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap and examine the link between religiosity, public service motivation, and employee performance. The data were collected from 250 public servants of the Indonesian Kepulauan Riau provincial government and analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The results showed a hypothesized model that positively promotes employee performance by religiosity and public service motivation, which agrees the relationship between religiosity and performance. This study contributes to the body of knowledge concerning the contemporary literature on human resource management in the public sector by considering religiosity and public service motivation as two crucial factors enhancing employee performance. Moreover, it provides a practical guide for policymakers and managers in enhancing employee performance by adequately implementing and facilitating public service motivation and religious practices in the workplace.

***Keywords**: Religiosity; Public Service Motivation; Employee Performance; Public Sector; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society has been globally acknowledged as religious because of the several approved religions, including Islam, Christian, Protestant, Hindu, Buddha, and Confucians. However, the country is largely occupied Islams by with a population of about 200 million (Kusumawati et al., 2020). The Indonesian constitution promotes the enfolding of religions and the practice of religious teachings. Consequently, people believe that religion is an essential feature in their everyday life, indicated by the 2000 World Value Survey (Alemán & Woods, 2016).

Religiosity relates to an individual level of attachment to religious views, convictions, and practices (Raggiotto et al., 2018). In general, religious values are internalized in the Indonesian public workplace that greatly contributes to performance. Lucchetti et al. (2016) compared the physicians' religiosity in Brazil, India, and Indonesia from 2010 to 2012. Indonesian doctors were less spiritual but religious and considered faith and religiosity during their practices. According to Yudiatmaja et al. (2018), religious values determined the public sector religiosity, including individual belief system, religious action implementation, family religiosity, realizing religious order, and faith in death.

Previous studies examined the Indonesian public administration PSM. For instance, in their comparative studies on the public workers in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Indonesia, Chang & Ryu (2017) suggested that the civil services did not consider factors related to public service motivation as a primary reason to choose a carrier in the public sector. Yudiatmaja (2017) stated that the permanent employees PSM was lower than contract employees. According to Yudiatmaja (2019), service-oriented local government public officials were affected by PSM, which was partially mediated to service orientation by organizational commitment and job satisfaction. PSM merely impacted service orientation through organization and satisfied work commitment.

Various studies have been conducted to determine employee performance in Indonesian public and private organizations. This study showed numerous factors affecting public and private officers' performance. Pawirosumarto et al. (2017) analyzed manufacturing workers' performance antecedents. The results showed that employee performance extensively relied on leadership style, motivation, and administrative regulations discipline. According to Indrayanto et al. (2014), transformational leadership positively and directly affected personal performance and its nexus intervened by trust and organizational commitment. According to Napitupulu et al. (2017), public officials' performance in the Indonesian finance ministry depended on organizational support, motivation, and affective commitment.

The study examined religiosity, PSM, and employee performance of Indonesian civil servants. However, according to (Prihandinisari et al., 2016; Yudiatmaja, 2021), there is a lack of information about their relationship. There is no truth of whether religiosity enhanced Indonesian public servants' performance because it was partially conducted. In addition, the PSM vigorous model in mediating the religiosity influence employee performance was lacking in the past studies. PSM was recognized as a mediated factor linking employee outcomes as a potential variable mediating the association (Shim et al., 2017).

This study had three theoretically and practically novels to help in filling the existing gap. Theoretically, it used two ways to add our knowledge to the current literature and offered and examined alternative hypotheses affecting religiosity employee performance through PSM. Specifically, it focused on religiosity, PSM, and

employee performance connection in Indonesian bureaucracy. It recommended that the human resource public managers and policymakers manage and enhance employee performance in the local government. Furthermore, the study purposed assessment of the effects of religiosity on employee performance and examining the mediating role of PSM among these links.

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinning

Theoretically, religiosity is differently understood by scholars. Religiousness personal aspect was highlighted by mainstream psychological research. Religious sociologists integrated social and group aspects of religious life into their conceptualizations, while religion psychologists historically focused on the values, attitudes, habits, motives, and individuals (Gebauer et al., 2017).

This study applied the sociological religion aspect to effectively analyze the problem. Weber (1946) stated that religion deals with the socio-economic, political, and natural environment. The individual responds to circumstances through a specific religious belief, covering religiosity and spirituality. The responses were manifested through various community attitudes, including the workplace (Obregon et al., 2021). Therefore, people with different religious understanding and practices had different ways of countering their environment and condition.

The Impact of Religiosity on PSM

Religion and religiosity have a rudimentary difference. Specifically, religion relates to a particular faith, such as Islam, Christian, Judaism, Hindu, and Jews, while religiosity implements faith using particular human activities, including worship, prayer, and remembrance. Therefore, religiosity is a belief in God with a duty to fulfil His laws (Achour et al., 2016). It is not a one aspect definition but includes various elements of faith, including values, practice, awareness, experience, and the influence of these elements on everyday activities (Mohd Dali et al., 2019).

Various studies investigated the prerequisite of PSM for the public workforce. For instance, Desmidt & Prinzie (2019) stated that PMS was robustly affected by socialization by the parents, religion, professional identity, political ideology, and individual demographical backgrounds (e.g., age, employment, sex, and educational achievement). According to Perry (1997), the civil servants PSM was influenced by the closeness to God and a religious perspective. PSM was highly associated with the religious activity of the individuals (Christensen & Wright, 2018). Using a literature review, Ritz, Brewer, & Neumann (2016) stated that religiousness was one of the prospective antecedents affecting PSM. The first hypothesis in this research was formulated as follow; Hypothesis 1: There is a positive impact of religiosity on PSM.

The Effect of Religiosity on Employee Performance

Religiosity was a crucial factor in enhancing individual and organizational performance. Individual job performance involves people's actions, behaviors, and contributions to the organization's objectives (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). In the heuristic perspective, individual work performance is a multi-disciplinary concept with four wide and common aspects, including task performance (employee ability to perform key tasks), contextual understanding (worker attitudes facilitating the institutional, mental, and social atmosphere to accomplish core duties), adaptive performance (staff members ability to respond to changes throughout the job or climate), and counterproductive work (detrimental behaviour to the organization's well-being) (Dåderman et al., 2020).

Empirical studies focused on religi-

osity effects on employee performance. According to (Onyemah et al., 2018; Zahrah et al., 2016), religiosity positively affects employee job performance. It indirectly affects employee performance through job satisfaction and commitment (Adi & Adawiyah, 2018; Mathew et al., 2018). David & Iliescu (2020) stated that Orthodox Christian faith employees reinforced the relationship, and religiosity positively connected the meaning of work. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated. Hypothesis 2 Religiosity will have a direct and positive performance effect on public employee.

The Relationship between PSM and Employee Performance

PSM is the inner or intrinsic public workers motives to serve the public (Breaugh et al., 2018; O'Leary, 2019). It is related to the prosocial individuals' public sector motivation in serving the public. The motives originated from intrinsic orientation attaching to the public sector workers. Public employees served society with a series of prosocial values, such as public policymaking, public interest commitment, social justice, civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Ritz et al., 2020).

Numerous researchers have currently conceptualized the vigorous nexus between PSM and individual public attendants performance (Jin et al., 2018; Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017; Lynggaard et al., 2018). Work performance was affected by how greater the motives were possessed and how much the public person-

nel actualized it. Altruistic motivation enhanced public servants impetus to devote better organization performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis was formulated as follows: Hypothesis 3: PSM is positively related to employee performance.

The Mediating Effect of PSM

The study examined religiosity link on the employee's performance as mediated by PSM, which intervenes to strengthen the relationship. Tuan (2016) stated that PSM mediated the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing of Vietnam's public officers. According to Bellé (2014), PSM moderated the relationship between transformational and transformational leadership, beneficiary contact and transformational leadership, self-persuasion interventions on the nurses' performance from public hospitals in Italy. According to Schwarz et al. (2016), subordinates' job performance was influenced by servant leadership through PSM. Schwarz et al. (2020) stated that PSM mediated the connection between China civil servant public leadership and follower job performance. Consequently, the last hypothesis offered to test was: Hypothesis 4: The relationship between religiosity and employee performance is mediated by PSM.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 demonstrates the study constructs. The model was supported by a theoretical model based on the theory and previous works. This study has one exogen (religiosity), endogen (employee
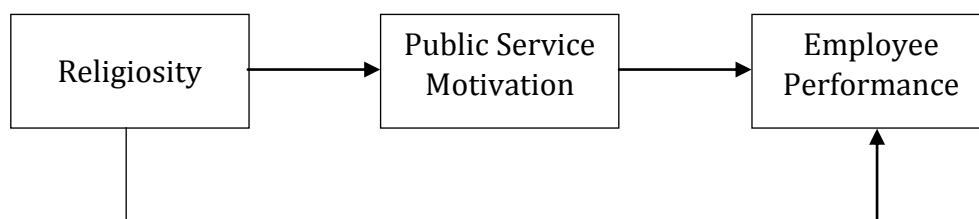

Figure 1. The Hypothesized Model
Source: Developed from Literature Review (2021)

performance), and mediating (PSM) variables. These variables yielded four hypotheses, as explained above, further analyzed in this study.

RESEARCH METHODS

Empirical study was used through a survey approach to explore its objectives. The population was 2,714 public servants in the Provincial Government of Kepulauan Riau. Using Ryan's (2013) formula, 337 public servants samples were made. A hundred public servants within the government of Kepulauan Riau Province were found using a closed questionnaire which was randomly distributed to 337 civil servants in all units. Two hundred and sixty completed questionnaires were returned, and merely 250 were validated (74% of response rate) (see Table 1). It was in an acceptable range to further analysis as suggested by the experts (Hendra & Hill, 2019). The samples quantity was appropriate to run with structural equation modelling (SEM) (Byrne, 2016).

This study used constructs validated both theoretically and empirically. To assess religiosity, we utilized an existing Delaney et al.'s (2013) religiosity instrument validated by Yudiatmaja et al. (2018) in the Indonesian local government. The study used a modified Kim's (2017) PSM scale because much contemporary studies employed a shorter scale to synchronize the public service motives with values (Andrews, 2016; Weske et al., 2020). Employee performance was measured using seven individual work performances adapted by Koopmans et al. (2016), as illustrated in Table 2. Religiosity and employee performance used a five-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (5), while the seven-point Likert scale ranged from strongly disagrees (1) to strongly agree (7).

SEM was used to validate and test hypotheses using analysis of moment structures (AMOS). IBM SPSS AMOS version 24.0 software's was used to analyze the study data. SEM was used because it was ordinarily used for larger sample sizes (Byrne, 2016; Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, it was compatible with this study, processing a greater sample. This study examined more than two variables using the mediating variable (Prastya et al., 2021; Yudiatmaja et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Analysis of survey respondents data was conducted as shown in Table 1. The data showed that male public employees (56%) were greater than females (44%). Age-wise, many respondents (34%) range from 27-36 years, indicating that millennial generations dominantly fill public employees with Bachelor's qualifications (40%). The result showed that many participants (72%) are permanent employees (in Indonesia called *Pegawai Negeri Sipil)*. The study showed that Islamic was widely embraced by 89% because Kepulauan Riau was a Malay region distinguished as the Islamic world (Samnuzulsari et al., 2019).

Measurement Model

It calculated whether the model (religiosity, PSM, and employee performance) fits the data using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Results indicated that $\chi2$ –statistic (910.275), $\chi2/d.f$ (4.894), the goodness of fit index (GFI) (0.71), root mean square approximation error (RMSEA) (0.125), comparative (CFI) (0.813), and normed fits indexes (NFI) (0.777) were unfit. This was because of $\chi2/d.f$ greater than 2.5, IFI and CFI lower than 0.9, and RMSEA more than 0.08 (Marcoulides & Yuan, 2017; Rappaport et al., 2020). Therefore, modification indices were used to revise the model and transformed to $\chi2= 289.013$, $\chi2/d.f = 1.741$, CFI = 0.97, NFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.055. Results showed a good model fit

analyzed further.

This study construct was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The statistical results ranged from 0.89 to 0.93, which is sufficient and acceptable because it was higher than 0.7 as recommended by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994). Furthermore, CFA on the full model was used to examine convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed by analyzing the standardized loading factors for each study item, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2020). The loading factors, composite re-

liability, and values of AVE ranged from 0.61 to 0.93 (all greater than 0.6), 0.88 to 0.92 (all higher than 0.7), and 0.51 to 0.62 (all more than 0.5), respectively, which was an adequate convergent validity. Statistical results provided 45% common method variance applied using Harman's single-factor test, indicating that common method bias was not a potential risk in this study (Kock, 2017).

The discriminant model involved contrasting the AVE square root with the correlations of latent variables (Voorhees et al., 2016). According to Table 3, the square root of AVE for each construct

Table 1. A Profile of Public Employees
Source: Results of SEM Analysis (2021)

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	140	56,0
Female	110	44.0
Age (years)		
17-26	70	28.0
27-36	86	34.4
37-46	62	24.8
>47	32	12.8
Religion		
Islam	223	89.0
Christian	23	9.0
Not identified	4	2.0
Educational background		
Senior high school	54	21.6
Less than Bachelor	84	33.6
Bachelor	102	40.8
Graduate	10	4.0
Length of time (years)		
>5	60	24.0
5-13	152	60.8
14-22	32	12.8
>23	6	2.4
Classification of employee		
Permanent employee	180	72.0
Non-permanent employee	70	28.0

（diagonal values) is larger than the variables. Generally, it indicates that all the constructs have acceptable validity. Table 3 shows descriptive information investigated. All variables showed positive results, though there was a discrepancy among them, such as religiosity (M = 4.21), PSM (M = 5.73), and performance (M = 3.91). PSM mean value was higher than others because it was measured using seven Likert scales. The religiosity aggregate mean of 4.21 indicated that public employees were tremendously religious. The PSM mean value was counted at 5.73, showing that the public servants were committed to the public. The employee performance means the value of 3.91 indicated that the civil servants performed well.

Structural Model

The study explored descriptive analysis and examined four hypotheses on the relationship between religiosity and PSM on employee performance. The results are illustrated in Table 4 and Figure 2. The first hypothesis indicated that religiosity and PSM had a positive and significant relationship, the data strongly supported this. Statistical test gave value （β = 0.642; SE = 0.120; t = 9.357; p < 0.001), indicating that respondents with high religiosity are more accomplished than those with lower religiosity levels. However, the relationship was not flawless, but the religiosity and employee performance were high. Religiosity was not variable shaping the fit of public officials' PSM.

The second hypothesis showed that there was a direct and positive effect of religiosity on employee performance. The results proved this hypothesis by showing （β = 0.196; SE = 0.102; t = 2.591; p < 0.05). Respondents were congruent with their religiosity and reported higher performance than those with lower religiosi-

ty congruence. However, the relationship between religiosity and employee performance was not optimal, similar to the results for religiosity-PSM. Other factors of the public workforce influenced individual performance.

The third hypothesis is positive and significant influence of PSM on employee performance. Our results met the assumption （β = 0.471; SE = 0.061; t = 5.954; p < 0.001). The participant complied with PSM reports and performed well than their counterparts. However, the connection between PSM on employees' religiosity and performance was not optimal. Consequently, other factors affected public employees' performance. The result showed that each variable had an explanatory variance (R^2) for its entire model, as follows PSM (R^2 = 0.41) and employee performance (R^2 = 0.38). The explanatory variances value was above 0.34, indicating that the study model's explanation was within an acceptable range (see Figure 2).

The hypothesis tested whether PSM mediates the nexus between religiosity and employee performance. Baron & Kenny's (1986) three stages were used to check the mediation impact. In the first phase, there was an examination of the direct effect between religiosity and employee performance. The results showed a statistic of 0.46 (p < 0.01), indicating that religiosity significantly affected employee performance. Subsequently, the mediator was used in the relationship between religiosity and employee performance. The results also showed a significant connection (p < 0.05) even though the β value reduced from 0.46 to 0.20. Therefore, the PSM was a partial mediator in the relationship between religiosity and employee. Baron & Kenny stated that there was partial mediation when a substantial direct impact of the independent and dependent variables was crucial. The mediation was complete when the rela-

Table 2. Measurement Items
Source: Results of SEM Analysis (2021)

Construct	Item	Loadings
Religiosity (Cronbach's α = 0.91; CR = 0.90; AVE =0.58)		
1. I believe that God is real and exists	REL1	0.79
2. I believe that there is life after death	REL2	0.75
3. The holy book is the word of God	REL3	0.72
4. I always routinely carry out worship	REL4	0.78
5. I take time regularly to read the scriptures	REL5	0.81
6. I believe that God's punishment exists	REL6	0.73
7. I always pray when I do activities	REL7	0.74
Public Service Motivation (Cronbach's α = 0.89; CR = 0.88; AVE =0.51)		
1. I am trying to help my community	PSM1	0.76
2. I believe that public service is my civic responsibility	PSM2	0.68
3. It means more to me than personal achievements to make a difference in society	PSM3	0.82
4. When I see others in need, it is hard for me to suppress my feelings	PSM4 PSM5	0.66
5. I am willing to sacrifice for the benefit of society	PSM6	0.66
6. I link politics with a positive thing	PSM7	0.61
7. I think that people should give back more to society than they do		0.78
Employee Performance (Cronbach's α = 0.93; CR = 0.92; AVE =0.62)		
1. I work quickly	EP1	0.89
2. I managed to plan my work, and it was done on time	EP2	0.93
3. I can fulfil my responsibilities by working together	EP3	0.87
4. I work towards the end result of what I do	EP4	0.68
5. I can set priorities in my work	EP5	0.65
6. I find creative ideas at work	EP6	0.71
7. I can deal well with the problems I experience at work	EP7	0.74

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlations
Source: Results of SEM Analysis (2021)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Religiosity	4.21	0.85	0.76		
PSM	5.73	1.23	0.64***	0.71	
Performance	3.91	0.92	0.50**	0.60***	0.79

Note: The significances of all variables are α = .001 or at the level of one-tailed and α = .05 or the level of two-tailed; The diagonal values exhibit the square root of average variance extracted (AVEs)

tionship between the independent and dependent variables remained negligible.

Sobel (1987) test was used to analyze the mediation effect. As a result, religiosity and employee performance indirect effects through PSM was 5.03 ($p < 0.01$), and $H4$ was confirmed. In general, results confirmed that religiosity had no major direct influence on the employees' performance when taking into account the PSM of these individuals. The complete model of standardized estimates and final results is illustrated in Figure 2. The cumulative indirect effect was 0.196, calculated based on the coefficients of the path among parameters.

Discussion

The results reinforced the theoretical framework developed and validated previously. Moreover, it supported and confirmed several studies in an identical area. PSM was positively affected by the employee's religiosity, and statistical analysis accepted the expected hypothe-sis. Results strengthen PSM antecedents, while several studies highlighting religiosity role, religiousness, religious values, and religious socialization in forming PSM (Charbonneau & Van Ryzin, 2017; Christensen & Wright, 2018; Thompson & Christensen, 2018).

Religiosity affected employee performance. These findings are consistent with earlier inquiries. For instance, Mathew et al. (2018) indicated that religiosity robustly predisposed Indian teachers' performance in various educational institutions. According to Zahrah et al. (2016), Islamic effect religiosity and work ethics on officers' job performance was positively impacted. According to Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2019), intrinsic motivation connected to religious motivation shaped followers' performance in Greece. PSM was highly related to employee performance. Public employees with high-level intrinsic motivation had a greater level of personal performance. Results showed that there was a positive association be-

Table 4. Hypotheses Assessment
Source: Results of SEM Analysis (2021)

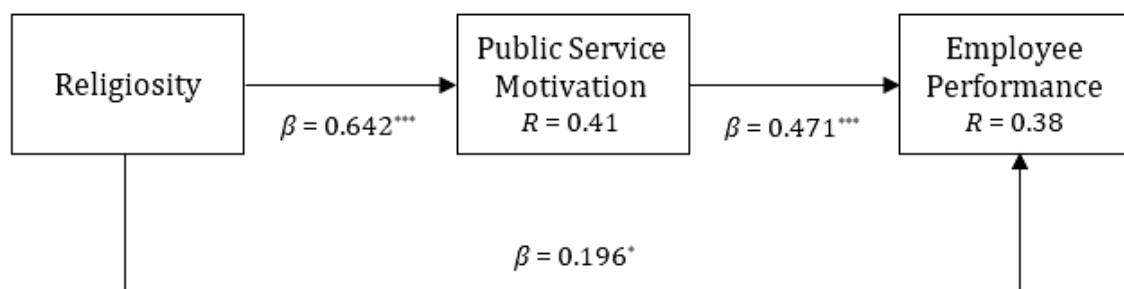| Hypothesis	Estimates	S.E.	t-Value	Decision
Religiosity ⟶ PSM	0.642	0.120	9.357***	Accepted
Religiosity ⟶ Employee Performance	0.196	0.102	2.591*	Accepted
PSM ⟶ Employee Performance	0.471	0.061	5.954***	Accepted

Note: *$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.001$

Figure 2. The Relationships among Observed Variables
Source: Results of SEM Analysis (2021)

tween PSM and job performance of public sector employees, such as China (Miao et al., 2019), Italy (Sarnacchiaro et al., 2019), the Netherlands (van Loon et al., 2018), Switzerland (Stefurak et al., 2020), and US (Borst, 2018; Ng et al., 2016). Generally, this study advances PSM role empirical evidence in the public workplace for non-western and different countries by studying Indonesian local government. The results contradict prior findings indicating that congruent was relevant for different cultures (Yudiatmaja, 2017).

This study introduced PSM as a mediator in the nexus between religiosity and the performance of public officials. The PSM intermediated the connection between religiosity and employee performance. PSM partially mediated the relationship, and there is no specific study providing evidence to deny or confirm this. However, the finding can be empirically accepted because multiple prosocial values and positive attitudes were integrated into the performance appraisal of Indonesian public employees (Napitupulu et al., 2017).

Indonesian local governments were under impetus to reform since the 1998 reform movement (Yoserizal & Yudiatmaja, 2010). Indonesian regional government highlighted the importance of religiosity and PSM in enhancing employee performance. The results showed the strategic and managerial implications for achieving bureaucratic transformation focusing on the individual performance of public employees in the local government. It was indicated that religion and PSM had a significant impact on public officials' performance. By incorporating religion and PSM in managing human resource aspects, local governments used a hypothetical model to promote employee performance. The government facilitated and appreciated the faith and religious expression of the employees. In terms of PSM, the local government provided simultaneous training and evaluation to en-

hance employees' motivation.

CONCLUSION

This study theoretically and empirically demonstrated that religiosity and PSM affected employee performance and mediated the relationship between religiosity and employee performance. The results added our insights on employee performance by highlighting religiosity and PSM in the Indonesian local governments. Practically, this study is expected to guide policymakers in improving public employees' performance by recognizing religiosity PSM as leverage factors. Furthermore, the public sector managers paid more attention to enhancing the religiosity and PSM of the subordinates to strengthen individual performance. This study intends to help the following scholars to test and develop more theoretical features of Indonesian public servants performers.

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