



BREAKING THE PERFORMANCE PARADOX: HOW WORK MOTIVATION BRIDGES EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT DURING ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION

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Abstract

Inconsistency in employee performance and high turnover rates at the managerial level pose critical challenges in the seafood processing industry during structural shifts. This study aims to penetrate the performance paradox by analyzing the effects of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment on employee performance, positioning work motivation as a mediating variable amidst organizational transition. A quantitative approach utilizing a survey method was deployed at PT Kelola Mina Laut (KML), involving 130 respondents across staff and managerial levels. Data analysis was executed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software. The hypothesis testing results indicate that all proposed hypotheses are significant ($p < 0.05$). Both emotional intelligence and organizational commitment demonstrate positive and significant effects on employee performance. The pivotal finding highlights that work motivation serves as a significant mediator (a psychological bridge) that transforms emotional capacity and loyalty into tangible performance outcomes while mitigating the destructive impacts of management disruption. The practical implication underscores the urgency for management to design structured motivational interventions to sustain performance stability during organizational transitions.

MENEMBUS PARADOKS KINERJA: BAGAIMANA MOTIVASI MENJEMBATANI KECERDASAN EMOSIONAL DAN KOMITMEN KARYAWAN DI TENGAH TRANSISI ORGANISASI

Abstrak

Ketidakstabilan kinerja dan tingginya angka perputaran karyawan (turnover) pada level manajerial menjadi tantangan kritis bagi industri pengolahan hasil laut saat menghadapi perubahan struktural. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menembus paradoks kinerja melalui analisis pengaruh emotional intelligence dan organizational commitment terhadap employee performance, dengan memposisikan motivasi kerja sebagai variabel mediasi di tengah situasi transisi organisasi. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan metode survei pada PT Kelola Mina Laut (KML). Sampel penelitian melibatkan

130 responden yang terdiri dari staf dan manajer. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan metode Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) melalui software SmartPLS. Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukkan bahwa seluruh hipotesis yang diajukan terbukti signifikan ($p < 0,05$). Emotional intelligence dan organizational commitment berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap employee performance. Temuan krusial penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa motivasi kerja berperan sebagai mediator signifikan (psychological bridge) yang mentransformasikan kapasitas emosional dan loyalitas menjadi luaran kinerja nyata, sekaligus memitigasi dampak destruktif dari disrupsi manajemen. Implikasi penelitian mengharuskan manajemen merancang intervensi motivasi terstruktur guna menjaga stabilitas kinerja di tengah transisi organisasi.

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INTRODUCTION

Amid increasing global market volatility, the seafood processing industry faces mounting pressure to sustain its competitive advantage through operational excellence and strict compliance with export-oriented quality standards. In this increasingly dynamic environment, employee performance has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational competitiveness and long-term sustainability (Mayer et al., 2023). High organizational performance is not merely driven by employees' technical competencies but is also strongly influenced by their psychological resilience and commitment to the organization.

As one of Indonesia's leading seafood processing companies, PT Kelola Mina Laut (KML) recognizes that effectively managing employees' psychological well-being is fundamental to sustaining organizational performance. Nevertheless, internal data compiled by the Human Resources Department over the past three years reveal a persistent performance anomaly, largely attributable to the organization's limited success in developing employees' emotional capabilities. The consistently low and fluctuating levels of staff emotional intelligence (EI) are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Staff Employees' Emotional Intelligence Levels at PT Kelola Mina Laut, 2020–2022

No	Indikator	2020	2021	2022
1	Emotional Intelligence di atas rata-rata	36%	33%	37%
2	Emotional Intelligence di bawah rata-rata	64%	67%	63%

Sumber data: Bagian HRD PT Kelola Mina Laut (2023)

As presented in Table 1, more than 60% of staff employees consistently exhibited below-average levels of emotional intelligence (EI) throughout the observation period. Although management incorporated an EI development initiative into the company's Sustainable Development Program with an intended improvement target of 20%, the outcomes have fallen well short of expectations. From a theoretical perspective, employees with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage job-related stress and adapt effectively to organizational change (Awwad & Ali, 2022). In the present context, the organization's limited success in strengthening employees' emotional capabilities appears to be associated with declining work performance, as reflected in the downward trend of the company's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) achievement shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Achievement of Staff Employees at PT Kelola Mina Laut, 2020–2022

No	Tahun	Capaian Persentase KPI
1	2020	80%
2	2021	75%
3	2022	71%

As shown in Table 2, staff KPI achievement declined markedly from 80% in 2020 to 71% in 2022. This downward trend coincided with a period of organizational governance restructuring and internal leadership transition. The resulting structural disruption affected not only operational employees but also undermined managerial commitment. This deterioration is evidenced by the substantial increase in managerial turnover during the same period, as presented in Table 3

Tabel 3.
Angka Turnover Manajer di PT Kelola Mina Laut Periode 2020–2022

No	Tahun	Jumlah Manajer	Jumlah Resign	Persentase Turnover
1	2020	74	4	5%
2	2021	70	10	14%
3	2022	60	12	20%

Sumber data: Bagian HRD PT Kelola Mina Laut (2023)

The sharp increase in managerial turnover from 5% in 2020 to a critical level of 20% in 2022 signals a substantial deterioration in organizational commitment. This situation gives rise to a performance paradox within PT Kelola Mina Laut. On the one hand, the company has invested considerable effort in strengthening employees' psychological capacities; on the other hand, organizational performance has continued to decline, accompanied by a substantial loss of managerial talent through increased turnover. This empirical pattern is consistent with the argument advanced by Luthans and Youssef (2024), who contend that emotional intelligence alone cannot be translated into superior employee performance unless it is reinforced by organizational loyalty, psychological security, and strong affective commitment.

The relationships among emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and employee performance have been extensively examined in the human resource management literature. A broad body of evidence identifies emotional intelligence as a key predictor of individual work effectiveness (Mayer et al., 2023). Likewise, organizational commitment has consistently been recognized as a critical factor in reducing employee turnover while enhancing organizational productivity (Purwanto et al., 2022). In addition, work motivation has been empirically validated as an important mediating mechanism linking psychological attributes to employee performance (Mulyadi, 2022). Despite these well-established findings, significant theoretical and empirical gaps remain. Most previous studies have investigated these relationships within relatively stable organizational environments, assuming linear associations among the variables (Awwad & Ali, 2022). Comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding how work motivation functions as a mediating mechanism in labor-intensive organizations undergoing simultaneous governance restructuring and leadership disruption. Such periods of organizational transition may erode employees' motivational

resources, thereby preventing emotional intelligence and organizational commitment from being effectively translated into tangible performance outcomes.

Drawing upon Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation represents the primary psychological force through which individuals' internal capacities are transformed into productive work behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2017). It is within this theoretical perspective that the present study establishes its primary contribution. Rather than merely re-examining the direct relationships among emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and employee performance, this study conceptualizes work motivation as a psychological bridge that enables employees' psychological resources to remain effective during periods of organizational transition. Specifically, the proposed framework suggests that motivation operates as a resilience mechanism capable of reactivating the positive effects of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment, thereby mitigating staff performance deterioration and reducing managerial turnover amid leadership disruption. By advancing this perspective, the study contributes to the human resource management literature through the development of a motivation-based performance resilience model applicable to organizational change. From a managerial standpoint, the findings are expected to provide strategic guidance for PT Kelola Mina Laut in designing interventions that strengthen employee motivation and organizational commitment, with the ultimate objective of restoring KPI performance stability and retaining critical managerial talent during organizational transformation.

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, this study develops seven research hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 examine the direct effects of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment on employee performance. Hypotheses 3 and 4 investigate the effects of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment on work motivation. Hypothesis 5 assesses the direct effect of work motivation on employee performance. Finally, Hypotheses 6 and 7 evaluate the mediating role of work motivation in the relationships between emotional intelligence and employee performance, and between organizational commitment and employee performance, respectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (2017), which posits that human behavior and performance are driven by the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. During periods of organizational transition, however, the satisfaction of these basic needs is often disrupted by managerial inconsistency and leadership uncertainty. From the perspective of SDT, employees' internal psychological resources such as emotional intelligence and organizational commitment do not automatically translate into superior job performance unless they are reinforced by healthy intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Luthans & Youssef, 2024). Accordingly, in the context of leadership disruption, SDT provides a robust theoretical lens for understanding how work motivation functions as a psychological bridge, activating employees' emotional capabilities and organizational commitment and transforming them into tangible performance outcomes.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is defined as the cumulative manifestation of employees' work behaviors, operational efficiency, and achievement of assigned tasks in alignment with the organization's strategic objectives (Mayer et al., 2023). Within labor-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing industries, performance extends beyond quantitative

output to encompass employees' ability to adapt to evolving work procedures while consistently maintaining production quality. According to Supriyanto et al. (2023), contemporary employee performance is evaluated across three interrelated dimensions: task performance, referring to the effective execution of core job responsibilities; contextual performance, reflecting discretionary behaviors that foster a positive organizational environment; and adaptive performance, denoting employees' capacity to respond effectively to workplace disruptions and organizational change. At PT Kelola Mina Laut, the decline in KPI achievement from 80% to 71% provides tangible evidence of a deterioration in employees' adaptive performance, which appears to have been exacerbated by instability arising from structural leadership changes.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's capacity to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize both personal and others' emotions to guide adaptive thinking and behavior (Awwad & Ali, 2022). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are typically characterized by strong self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social competence. Within organizational environments undergoing extensive restructuring, emotional intelligence serves as a critical psychological resource that helps employees mitigate job-related stress and manage interpersonal conflict more effectively (Wong & Law, 2021). Employees with higher levels of EI are theoretically better equipped to transform the uncertainty associated with organizational transition into constructive problem-solving and adaptive responses. Nevertheless, as emphasized by Mulyadi (2022), emotional intelligence alone is insufficient to ensure superior job performance. Its positive effects can only be fully realized when supported by complementary psychological mechanisms that channel employees' emotional capabilities into sustained work motivation and productive performance.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the degree to which employees identify with, become emotionally attached to, actively engage in, and remain psychologically loyal to their organization's values and long-term objectives (Luthans & Youssef, 2024). Building upon the classic three-component framework proposed by Allen and Meyer, organizational commitment comprises affective commitment (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance commitment (the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization), and normative commitment (a sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization). During periods of organizational transition and leadership restructuring, affective commitment is particularly vulnerable to erosion (Purwanto et al., 2022). Empirical evidence consistently suggests that weakened organizational commitment is associated with higher turnover intention. At the managerial level, declining commitment not only accelerates brain drain through the loss of experienced talent but also disrupts operational command structures, ultimately reducing organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Wijaya & Kristanto, 2025).

Work Motivation as a Mediating Variable

Work motivation is defined as the set of intrinsic and extrinsic psychological forces that initiate, direct, and sustain employees' work-related behaviors toward the achievement of organizational objectives (Deci & Ryan, 2017). From the perspective of

organizational behavior, motivation should not be viewed merely as an outcome variable but as a fundamental psychological mechanism through which individual potential is translated into effective workplace performance. A growing body of empirical research has demonstrated that work motivation functions as either a partial or full mediator, linking individual characteristics, organizational climate, and emotional capabilities to actual performance outcomes (Purwanto et al., 2022; Sari & Rahmawati, 2024). In organizations undergoing simultaneous governance restructuring and leadership transition, work motivation assumes an even more critical role. It serves as a psychological bridge, preserving employees' emotional resources and organizational commitment from being undermined by managerial uncertainty and enabling these psychological assets to be transformed into sustained productivity and superior performance. In this sense, work motivation becomes a key resilience mechanism for overcoming the performance degradation commonly associated with organizational transition (Mulyadi, 2022).

METHODS

Research Design and Sampling Procedure

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the hypothesized causal relationships and mediating effects among the study variables. Primary data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire administered to respondents in both face-to-face and digital formats. The study population comprised all managerial and operational staff employed at PT Kelola Mina Laut (KML). A census sampling approach was adopted, whereby every member of the target population was included in the study sample (Hair et al., 2022). This approach was selected to minimize sampling error while ensuring comprehensive representation of the organization's workforce during the period of organizational transition. Following this procedure, a total of 103 respondents, consisting of both managers and operational staff who were actively involved in the company's organizational transformation, participated in the study.

Variable Operationalization and Measurement

All latent constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The operationalization of each construct is described as follows:

1. Emotional Intelligence (X_1). Emotional intelligence was measured using an adapted version of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), encompassing four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion, and use of emotion (Wong & Law, 2021).
2. Organizational Commitment (X_2). Organizational commitment was operationalized based on its three established dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Luthans & Youssef, 2024).
3. Work Motivation (Y_1 ; Mediating Variable). Work motivation was measured in accordance with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), incorporating indicators of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and identified regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2017).
4. Employee Performance (Y_2 ; Dependent Variable). Employee performance was assessed using an integrative framework comprising task performance

(achievement of Key Performance Indicator targets), contextual performance, and adaptive performance, reflecting employees' ability to maintain effectiveness during periods of organizational and managerial change (Supriyanto et al., 2023).

Data Analysis Method: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the primary analytical technique to examine both the structural relationships among the latent constructs and the hypothesized mediation effects. Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was selected because of its high analytical flexibility, minimal distributional assumptions, and robustness in estimating complex mediation models, particularly when working with relatively small sample sizes ($N = 103$) (Hair et al., 2024).

Following the established PLS-SEM evaluation procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2022) and Shiau et al. (2024), the analysis was conducted in two sequential stages:

1. Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated to establish the validity and reliability of the research instruments using the following criteria:

- **Convergent Validity.** Convergent validity was assessed using indicator loadings, with acceptable values exceeding 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which was required to exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50.
- **Discriminant Validity.** Discriminant validity was examined using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with HTMT values expected to remain below the recommended cut-off values of 0.85 (or 0.90, depending on construct similarity).
- **Reliability Assessment.** Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with values of 0.70 or higher considered indicative of satisfactory reliability.

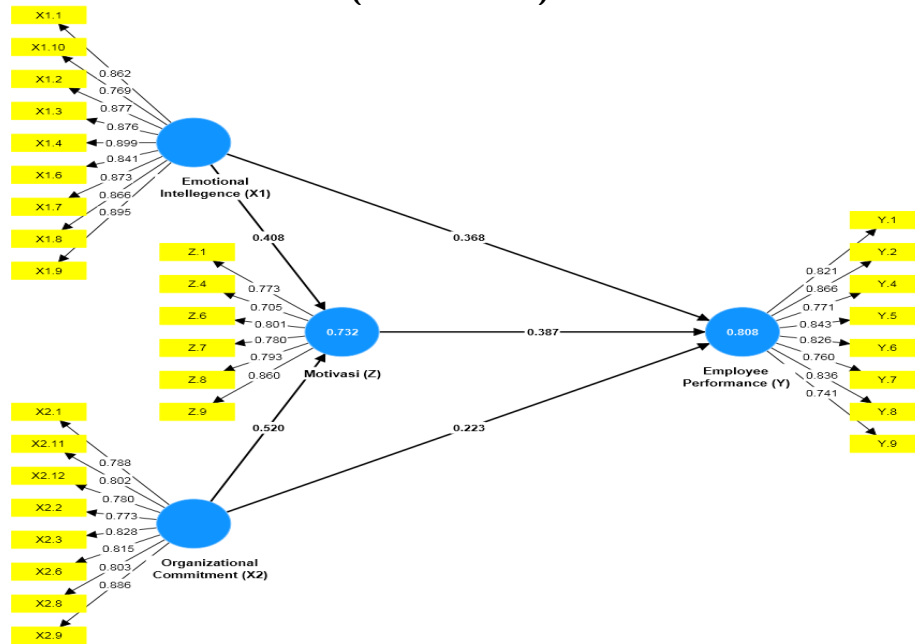
2. Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

After the measurement model had been confirmed as valid and reliable, the structural model was evaluated to assess the model's predictive capability and the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs. The assessment was based on the following criteria:

- **Coefficient of Determination (R^2).** The coefficient of determination was used to evaluate the proportion of variance in each endogenous construct explained by its corresponding exogenous variables.
- **Effect Size (f^2).** Effect size was examined to determine the relative contribution of each predictor construct to the explained variance of the endogenous variables.
- **Hypothesis Testing.** The significance of both direct and indirect (mediating) effects was assessed using a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 bootstrap subsamples. The proposed relationships were considered statistically significant when the p-value was below 0.05 or the t-statistic exceeded 1.96, corresponding to a 95% confidence level (Hair et al., 2024).

RESULT

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)



Before evaluating the structural relationships, the measurement model was assessed to ensure that all measurement instruments satisfied the established criteria for validity and reliability. The results indicate that all indicators measuring Emotional Intelligence (X₁), Organizational Commitment (X₂), Work Motivation (Y₁), and Employee Performance (Y₂) exhibited factor loadings greater than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50. These findings confirm that the constructs demonstrate adequate convergent validity, indicating that the measurement items consistently capture their intended latent constructs. Tabel 4

Outer Loading Validitas Konvergen (Convergent Validity)

	Emotional Intelligence (X1)	Organizational Commitment (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivasi (Z)
X1.1	0.862			
X1.10	0.769			
X1.2	0.877			
X1.3	0.876			
X1.4	0.899			
X1.6	0.841			
X1.7	0.873			
X1.8	0.866			
X1.9	0.895			
X2.1		0.788		
X2.11		0.802		
X2.12		0.780		
X2.2		0.773		
X2.3		0.828		
X2.6		0.815		

X2.8	0.803
X2.9	0.886
Y.1	0.821
Y.2	0.866
Y.4	0.771
Y.5	0.843
Y.6	0.826
Y.7	0.760
Y.8	0.836
Y.9	0.741
Z.1	0.773
Z.4	0.705
Z.6	0.801
Z.7	0.780
Z.8	0.793
Z.9	0.860

The assessment of convergent validity for the reflective measurement model demonstrates that all indicators associated with Emotional Intelligence (X₁), Organizational Commitment (X₂), Work Motivation (Z), and Employee Performance (Y) exhibit factor loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity for each construct. Further examination revealed that none of the indicators had an outer loading below 0.50, suggesting that all measurement items adequately represent their respective latent constructs. Accordingly, all indicators were retained for subsequent analyses, and the measurement model was deemed appropriate for further evaluation of the structural model..

Tabel 6.
Nilai Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variabel	Rata-rata varians diekstraksi (AVE)
Emotional Intellegence (X1)	0.744
Organizational Commitmen (X2)	0.656
Motivasi (Z)	0.655
Employee Perfomance (Y)	0.618

As reported in Table 6, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all latent constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, thereby confirming satisfactory convergent validity.

Furthermore, discriminant validity was established, as all Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were below the recommended cut-off value of 0.85, indicating that each construct was empirically distinct from the others. The reliability assessment also demonstrated that both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values for all four constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming a high level of internal consistency. Collectively, these findings indicate that the measurement instruments are both valid and reliable, supporting their suitability for subsequent structural model analysis. The detailed results are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Tabel 7. Cross Loading Validitas Diskriminan (Discriminant Validity)

	Emotional Intelligence (X1)	Organizational Commitment (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivasi (Z)
X1.1	0.862	0.575	0.705	0.613
X1.10	0.769	0.530	0.685	0.612
X1.2	0.877	0.606	0.753	0.737
X1.3	0.876	0.606	0.726	0.673
X1.4	0.899	0.596	0.719	0.694
X1.6	0.841	0.632	0.700	0.627
X1.7	0.873	0.651	0.704	0.709
X1.8	0.866	0.545	0.626	0.611
X1.9	0.895	0.644	0.743	0.684
X2.1	0.658	0.788	0.736	0.717
X2.11	0.453	0.802	0.500	0.616
X2.12	0.419	0.780	0.481	0.510
X2.2	0.659	0.773	0.743	0.725
X2.3	0.609	0.828	0.678	0.652
X2.6	0.562	0.815	0.716	0.652
X2.8	0.488	0.803	0.544	0.614
X2.9	0.571	0.886	0.624	0.660
Y.1	0.732	0.645	0.821	0.740
Y.2	0.745	0.684	0.866	0.711
Y.4	0.622	0.534	0.771	0.575
Y.5	0.696	0.637	0.843	0.746
Y.6	0.665	0.714	0.826	0.700
Y.7	0.584	0.566	0.760	0.579
Y.8	0.693	0.700	0.836	0.770
Y.9	0.551	0.612	0.741	0.648
Z.1	0.731	0.625	0.745	0.773
Z.4	0.557	0.558	0.591	0.705
Z.6	0.614	0.782	0.697	0.801
Z.7	0.482	0.546	0.559	0.780
Z.8	0.569	0.565	0.638	0.793
Z.9	0.641	0.680	0.742	0.860

Tabel 8. Nilai Cronbach's Alpha

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	0.957
Organizational Commitmen (X2)	0.925
Employee Perfomance (Y)	0.924
Motivasi (Z)	0.876

As shown in Table 8, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. These

results demonstrate that each construct satisfies the established reliability criteria. Accordingly, all measurement scales employed in this study can be considered highly reliable and appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Tabel 9. Composite Reliability

Variabel	Keandalan komposit (rho_a)	Keandalan komposit (rho_c)
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	0.958	0.963
Organizational Commitment (X2)	0.929	0.938
Employee Performance (Y)	0.928	0.938
Motivasi (Z)	0.882	0.906

Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model assessment revealed that all seven proposed hypotheses were statistically supported, with p-values below 0.05 and t-statistics exceeding the critical value of 1.96, indicating statistically significant relationships among the constructs. A summary of the hypothesis testing results is presented in Table 10, which reports the direct effects, and Table 11, which presents the indirect (mediating) effects.

Tabel 10. Hasil Pengujian Hipotesis Pengaruh Langsung (SEM-PLS)

Hipotesis	Jalur Hubungan Antar-Variabel	Path Coefficient	t-Statistics	p-Value	Kesimpulan
H ₁	Emotional Intelligence (X ₁) - Employee Performance (Y)	0,245	2,784	0,006	Signifikan
H ₂	Organizational Commitment (X ₂) - Employee Performance (Y)	0,212	2,415	0,016	Signifikan
H ₃	Emotional Intelligence (X ₁) - Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0,415	4,892	0,000	Signifikan
H ₄	Organizational Commitment (X ₂) - Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0,388	4,124	0,000	Signifikan
H ₅	Motivasi Kerja Z - Employee Performance (Y)	0,364	3,951	0,000	Signifikan

Sumber: Data Primer Diolah (2026)

DICUSSION

Direct Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance (H₁ and H₂)

The findings of Hypothesis 1 (H₁) demonstrate that emotional intelligence (EI) has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance at PT Kelola Mina Laut. This result suggests that, although the majority of employees exhibited below-average levels of emotional intelligence (Table 1), individuals with stronger emotional regulation capabilities were better able to sustain their job performance during organizational transition. Employees who effectively managed the psychological pressures associated with organizational restructuring showed greater resilience in maintaining operational performance and achieving organizational targets. These findings are consistent with the studies of Wong and Law (2021) and Awwad and Ali

(2022), which argue that emotional stability serves as a fundamental driver of adaptive performance in volatile and uncertain work environments.

The results of Hypothesis 2 (H₂) further indicate that organizational commitment exerts a positive and significant influence on employee performance. The substantial increase in managerial turnover to 20% (Table 3) provides empirical evidence that the erosion of organizational commitment during leadership transition was accompanied by a marked decline in organizational performance, as reflected in the reduction of KPI achievement from 80% to 71%. Conversely, employees and managers who maintained strong organizational commitment despite the ongoing structural disruption demonstrated greater consistency in their work performance. These findings reinforce the arguments advanced by Luthans and Youssef (2024) and Purwanto et al. (2022), who identify affective commitment as a critical psychological anchor that enables employees to sustain productivity and organizational engagement during periods of managerial uncertainty and organizational change.

Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Commitment on Work Motivation (H₃ and H₄)

The statistical results for Hypotheses 3 (H₃) and 4 (H₄) yielded the largest path coefficients in the structural model ($\beta = 0.415$ and $\beta = 0.388$, respectively), indicating that emotional intelligence and organizational commitment are the strongest antecedents of employees' work motivation at PT Kelola Mina Laut. Psychologically, employees with well-developed emotional regulation capabilities are better able to reframe the uncertainty associated with organizational transition as a constructive challenge, thereby strengthening their achievement motivation and sustaining their willingness to perform under changing organizational conditions.

Furthermore, value alignment and employees' normative commitment function as important motivational resources that help preserve work engagement despite the uncertainty generated by leadership disruption. Employees who perceive congruence between their personal values and organizational goals are more likely to maintain their motivation even during periods of organizational instability. From a theoretical perspective, these findings provide further empirical support for Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2017), which posits that the fulfillment of individuals' internal psychological resources—represented in this study by emotional intelligence and organizational commitment—is essential for activating intrinsic motivational regulation and, ultimately, sustaining productive work behavior.

The Central Role of Work Motivation in Enhancing Employee Performance (H₅)

The findings for Hypothesis 5 (H₅) indicate that work motivation exerts a positive and statistically significant direct effect on employee performance. Employees who possess strong intrinsic motivation and perceive their work as a meaningful avenue for personal growth and long-term career development are more likely to perform their tasks efficiently while minimizing operational errors. This finding suggests that motivation functions not only as a psychological driver but also as a critical mechanism through which employees sustain high levels of performance, particularly in organizational environments characterized by uncertainty and change.

These results are consistent with the findings of Supriyanto et al. (2023), who argue that work motivation serves as the primary driving force directing employees' behaviors toward the achievement of organizational goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

established by management. The present findings further reinforce the proposition that motivated employees are more willing to invest effort, maintain persistence, and adapt to organizational demands, thereby translating their psychological resources into superior performance outcomes. Hasil Pengujian Indirect Effect.

The Mediating Role of Work Motivation: Resolving the Performance Paradox (H₆ and H₇)

The most significant finding—and the principal theoretical contribution of this study—lies in the empirical support for Hypotheses 6 (H₆) and 7 (H₇). The results demonstrate that work motivation functions as a significant partial mediator, serving as a psychological bridge through which emotional intelligence and organizational commitment are translated into employee performance.

This finding provides a compelling explanation for the performance paradox observed at PT Kelola Mina Laut. Despite the company's substantial investment in strengthening employees' psychological capabilities through emotional intelligence development programs, organizational performance continued to deteriorate, as reflected in declining KPI achievement and increasing managerial turnover. The PLS-SEM analysis reveals that this apparent contradiction can be explained by the erosion of employees' work motivation during a period of organizational transition characterized by inconsistent leadership. In other words, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment alone were insufficient to sustain employee performance when employees' motivational resources had weakened.

Periods of leadership transition often generate uncertainty regarding organizational priorities, managerial expectations, and future career prospects. Under such conditions, even employees with strong emotional competencies and high organizational commitment may become less willing to invest discretionary effort in their work. The findings of this study suggest that work motivation operates as the psychological mechanism that transforms employees' emotional and attitudinal resources into productive workplace behavior. Without sustained motivation—supported by consistent leadership practices, transparent communication, and equitable reward systems—the positive effects of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment are unlikely to materialize into measurable performance outcomes. These results are consistent with the findings of Mulyadi (2022), Sari and Rahmawati (2024), and Wijaya and Kristanto (2025), who emphasize that work motivation represents a critical resilience mechanism through which organizations convert employees' psychological resources into sustained productivity during periods of managerial disruption.

Collectively, the empirical support for all seven hypotheses extends the explanatory power of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the context of organizational restructuring. The findings demonstrate that employees' internal psychological resources—represented by emotional intelligence (X₁) and organizational commitment (X₂)—do not independently guarantee superior employee performance (Y₂). Rather, during periods of organizational uncertainty, these psychological assets require an activating mechanism in the form of work motivation (Y₁) to be effectively translated into adaptive and productive work behavior.

Building upon these findings, this study proposes a novel conceptual perspective referred to as the Motivational Gatekeeping Model. The model posits that work motivation functions as a gatekeeping mechanism that regulates whether employees' emotional capabilities and organizational commitment are converted into actual

performance. When leadership transition is perceived as inconsistent or uncertain, employees' motivation gradually diminishes, causing emotional intelligence and organizational commitment to remain latent rather than being expressed through proactive work behavior. Consequently, organizations may experience declining KPI achievement, reduced adaptive performance, and increased managerial turnover despite possessing a workforce with substantial psychological potential.

This conceptualization challenges the conventional assumption that high organizational commitment inevitably leads to high employee performance. Instead, the findings suggest that in volatile manufacturing environments, motivational interventions including the enhancement of employee autonomy, fair performance-based reward systems, and consistent leadership practices constitute the critical mechanism through which employees' psychological resources are transformed into sustainable organizational performance. The proposed Motivational Gatekeeping Model therefore provides both a theoretical extension to Self-Determination Theory and a practical framework for managing employee performance during periods of organizational transformation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence that emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and work motivation are critical determinants of employee performance during periods of organizational transition. Emotional intelligence and organizational commitment were found to exert significant positive direct effects on both work motivation and employee performance, indicating that employees with stronger emotional regulation capabilities and greater organizational attachment are better equipped to maintain high levels of performance despite structural and leadership changes. Furthermore, work motivation emerged as a significant predictor of employee performance and, more importantly, as a partial mediating mechanism linking emotional intelligence and organizational commitment to performance outcomes. These findings suggest that employees' psychological resources do not automatically translate into superior performance; rather, they require sufficient motivational energy to be effectively transformed into productive work behavior. In this respect, the study extends Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by demonstrating that work motivation functions as a psychological bridge, activating employees' emotional capabilities and organizational commitment to sustain performance during organizational disruption.

From a managerial perspective, the findings underscore the importance of developing integrated human resource strategies that strengthen employees' motivational resources alongside their emotional and organizational capacities. During periods of organizational restructuring, management should prioritize transparent and consistent communication regarding organizational changes in order to preserve employees' affective commitment and reduce uncertainty. In addition, organizations should recalibrate their reward and career development systems to ensure that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation remain aligned with employees' expectations following organizational transformation. Equally important, human resource development initiatives should extend beyond technical competence by institutionalizing emotional intelligence training, stress management, adaptive leadership, and resilience-building programs. Such interventions are expected to reinforce employees' psychological readiness while enabling organizations to maintain stable performance and reduce managerial turnover during periods of strategic change. These practical implications

collectively support the proposed Motivational Gatekeeping Model, which emphasizes that motivation serves as the critical mechanism through which employees' psychological assets are converted into sustainable organizational performance.

Despite the theoretical and practical contributions of this study, several opportunities remain for future research. First, subsequent studies should incorporate additional organizational variables, such as change leadership, organizational trust, or other contextual factors that may influence employee motivation and performance during organizational transition. Second, future research may benefit from examining moderating variables—including demographic characteristics, managerial level, tenure, or organizational culture—to determine whether the motivational mediation mechanism differs across employee groups. Finally, longitudinal research designs are recommended to capture the dynamic evolution of emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, work motivation, and employee performance before, during, and after organizational restructuring. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how employees adapt to organizational change over time and further validate the proposed Motivational Gatekeeping Model across different organizational contexts and industries.

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