

The Influence of Transformational Leadership, Organizational Climate, and Work Competence on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and Burnout at Bapenda Surabaya

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Article Info :

Received:
24-9-2025
Revised:
26-10-2025
Accepted:
28-11-2025

Abstract

This study develops and validates a novel dual-mediation model to explain how transformational leadership, organizational climate, and work competence influence employee performance at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of Surabaya. Using data from 188 employees analyzed with PLS-SEM, the model distinguishes two psychological mechanisms: the motivational pathway (job satisfaction) and the strain pathway (burnout). The findings show distinct and theoretically meaningful patterns. Transformational leadership and work competence directly improve employee performance, whereas organizational climate enhances performance only indirectly through job satisfaction, indicating full mediation. Job satisfaction emerges as the dominant mechanism, demonstrating that motivation-driven processes are more decisive for shaping performance in a public-sector bureaucracy. Although transformational leadership and organizational climate significantly reduce burnout, burnout itself shows no meaningful influence on performance a counterintuitive yet theoretically relevant result that suggests a strong resilience effect among employees. The study's primary theoretical contribution lies in contrasting and validating these two mediating pathways, providing evidence that motivational mechanisms outweigh strain-based mechanisms in explaining employee performance. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening transformational leadership, continuous competence development, and supportive organizational climates to enhance performance in public revenue agencies.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Climate, Work Competence, Job Satisfaction, Burnout.



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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of local government institutions in managing regional revenue has increasingly depended on the quality of organizational processes and human resource capabilities, especially as administrative complexity grows in modern public-sector environments (Dessler, 2021). In Surabaya, the Regional Revenue Agency stands at the center of fiscal governance, yet the decline in revenue realization from 93.09% in 2020 to 88.76% in 2024 indicates that structural and organizational challenges are undermining institutional efficiency despite the city's economic expansion. This discrepancy reflects deeper internal dynamics that cannot be fully explained through macroeconomic fluctuations, pointing instead to leadership instability, uneven competence, and organizational climate issues that often characterize bureaucratic settings under pressure (Robbins & Judge, 2022). The presence of such internal misalignments highlights the urgency of studying the behavioral and psychological mechanisms that shape employee performance in high-stakes public service roles.

Frequent leadership rotations have disrupted policy continuity and diminished employees' clarity about expectations, weakening the motivational structure that typically emerges under stable transformational leadership practices (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When leadership shifts too rapidly, employees struggle to form consistent perceptions of support and direction, creating uncertainty that often translates into reduced commitment and inconsistent performance outputs (Colquitt et al., 2021). Organizational cultures marked by ambiguity and inconsistent reinforcement patterns tend to weaken collaboration and shared meaning, limiting the emergence of productive norms that strengthen collective performance (Aboramadan et al., 2020). These issues signal that leadership quality, stability, and behavioral consistency deserve deeper evaluation to understand their role in shaping performance outcomes in revenue-generating government institutions.

At the same time, the organizational climate in various units of the agency demonstrates symptoms of instability characterized by fragmented communication, low psychological safety, and perceptions of procedural inequity, all of which influence employee attitudes and work behavior (Luqman et al., 2020). When employees operate in climates that lack cohesion and clarity, they tend to experience higher uncertainty and emotional exhaustion, which ultimately erodes both motivation and performance quality (Maslach et al., 2001). An unsupportive climate also weakens trust in managerial decisions and reduces the likelihood of proactive behavior, especially in environments where digital transformation is reshaping core administrative processes (Gunawan et al., 2025). These conditions illustrate how climate-related perceptions form an essential part of the psychological infrastructure that determines employee performance in public service contexts.

Competence gaps among employees have become more visible as the agency undergoes digitization, and these gaps are particularly evident in analytical tasks, data management, and adaptive problem-solving demands that accompany administrative modernization (Iskamto, 2022). Employees who possess insufficient competencies often face higher operational barriers, slower work cycles, and elevated mental load, conditions that can gradually escalate into strain when job demands exceed personal resources (Satriawan, 2022). Competence also influences employees' confidence in handling new technologies, and low efficacy levels often exacerbate frustration when roles require rapid adaptation to evolving systems (Wulandari et al., 2023). Such realities emphasize that competence is not only a technical attribute but also a psychological determinant of performance capacity within dynamic public institutions.

Existing empirical studies on public-sector performance often emphasize isolated predictors such as competence, climate, or leadership, which leads to fragmented theoretical insights and limits the ability to understand performance as an outcome of interconnected mechanisms (Noe et al., 2022). Research that focuses solely on competence tends to overlook the influence of contextual variables embedded in organizational culture and leadership practices, resulting in partial explanations of employee behavior (Iskamto, 2022). Studies on organizational climate similarly fall short when they do not incorporate leadership styles that shape employees' psychological interpretations of their environment (Luqman et al., 2020). These gaps demonstrate the need for a more integrative model that captures the interplay of structural, interpersonal, and individual factors in shaping employee performance.

Transformational leadership is widely recognized as a leadership style capable of elevating employee motivation, enhancing meaning at work, and strengthening psychological resilience through inspirational communication and individualized support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When enacted consistently, such leadership has the potential to mitigate pressures during periods of organizational change, yet inconsistency in its application can weaken employees' sense of stability and belonging (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). Leadership styles that fail to cultivate trust and clarity may inadvertently contribute to elevated stress levels, especially when employees operate under increasing performance demands linked to public revenue administration (Colquitt et al., 2021). These dynamics reinforce the importance of examining transformational leadership not merely as a structural factor but as a psychological force that shapes employee outcomes.

The psychological states of job satisfaction and burnout represent critical mediating constructs that influence how organizational conditions translate into employee performance, particularly in work environments where demand fluctuations are common (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job satisfaction reflects the degree to which employees perceive their needs and expectations as fulfilled through their work experiences, influencing motivation, allegiance, and long-term commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Burnout, conversely, arises from persistent emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, outcomes strongly linked to environments where resources fail to match workload demands (Maslach et al., 2001). Understanding these psychological pathways is crucial because they directly shape how employees respond to pressures within fiscal management institutions.

The present study adopts a dual-mediation framework by integrating job satisfaction as a motivational pathway and burnout as a strain pathway to capture the multidimensional psychological processes that influence employee performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This model incorporates transformational leadership, organizational climate, and work competence as key antecedents to evaluate whether performance is primarily driven by enhanced motivation or reduced strain within a

bureaucratic setting. Such an approach advances organizational behavior research by moving beyond single-mediator or single-predictor models and by highlighting the complexity of performance formation in public institutions (Hair et al., 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). These theoretical contributions are expected to provide actionable insights for restructuring human resource strategies and strengthening performance improvement initiatives within the Regional Revenue Agency of Surabaya.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design, drawing a proportional stratified random sample of 188 respondents from a population of 354 Bapenda Surabaya employees to ensure representation across organizational units, with data collected through a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The measurement model underwent a rigorous validity and reliability assessment in which six indicators were removed for failing to reach the required outer loading threshold of >0.70 , and the refined instrument met all psychometric criteria, including loadings above 0.70, AVE values exceeding 0.50, Composite Reliability scores above 0.90, and satisfactory discriminant validity established through the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Data analysis employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4 because the model incorporates multiple exogenous variables and dual mediators, prioritizes prediction and variance explanation consistent with PLS-SEM's strengths, and aligns with methodological recommendations for non-normal data and moderate sample sizes in public-sector research. Hypothesis testing followed a sequential analytical procedure beginning with the evaluation of the measurement (outer) model and continuing with the structural (inner) model, using a bootstrapping resampling method with 5,000 subsamples to determine the significance of both direct and indirect effects.

The study variables and their indicators are summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variable	Type	Indicators
Transformational Leadership (X1)	Independent	1. Idealized Influence 2. Inspirational Motivation 3. Intellectual Stimulation 4. Individualized Consideration
Organizational Climate (X2)	Independent	1. Autonomy 2. Leader Support 3. Reward Orientation 4. Innovation & Risk-Taking
Work Competence (X3)	Independent	1. Adaptability 2. Critical Thinking 3. Collaboration
Variable	Type	Indicators
Job Satisfaction (Z1)	Mediating	1. The Work Itself 2. Supervision 3. Pay & Promotion 4. Coworkers
Burnout (Z2)	Mediating	1. Emotional Exhaustion 2. Depersonalization/Cynicism 3. Reduced Professional Efficacy
Employee Performance (Y)	Dependent	1. Task Performance 2. Contextual Performance (OCB) 3. Counterproductive Work Behavior (Avoidance)

The conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 1, posits that Transformational Leadership, Organizational Climate, and Work Competence directly affect Employee Performance. Additionally, these relationships are mediated by Job Satisfaction (positive mediation) and Burnout (negative mediation).

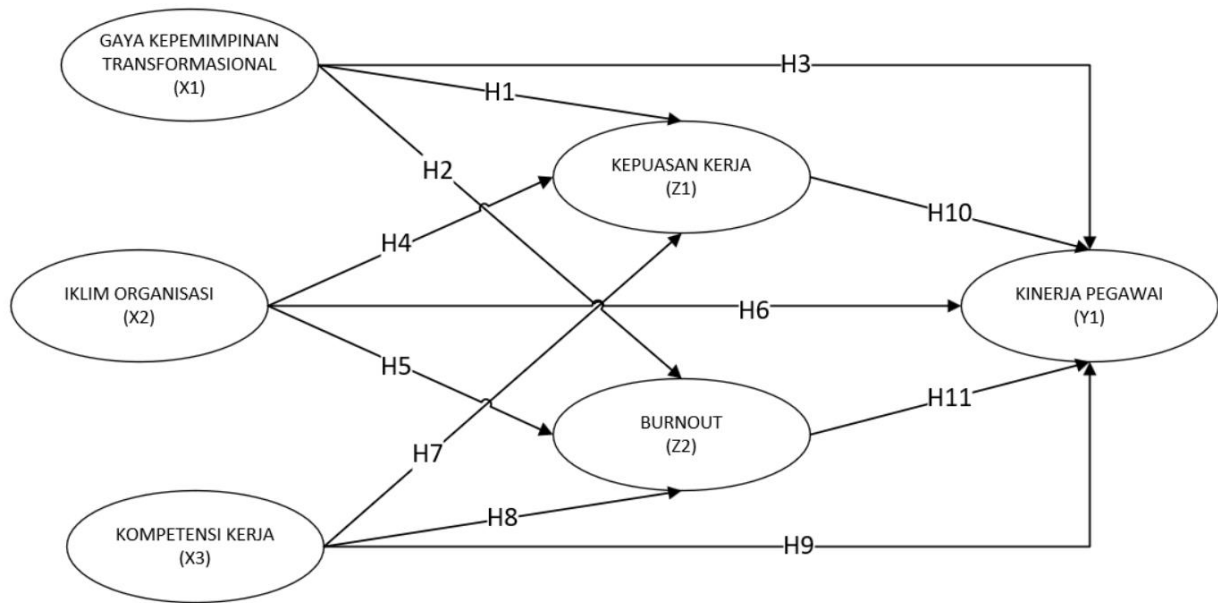


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on this framework, the study formulates 11 main hypotheses (H1-H11) concerning the direct and mediating effects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The empirical results provide a clear pattern of relationships that both confirm and refine established theoretical expectations. Transformational leadership significantly enhances job satisfaction (H1), reduces burnout (H2), and directly improves employee performance (H3). These findings extend Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership theory by demonstrating its dual capacity to strengthen positive psychological states while simultaneously mitigating strain within a bureaucratic environment. The simultaneous motivational and buffering effects suggest that leadership behaviors such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration serve as both performance activators and psychological protectors in public-sector settings:

Table 2. Expected Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothes is	Path Influence	Path Coefficient (β)	t-statistic	p-value	Conclusion
H1	X1 → Z1	0.426	7.293	0.000	Significant, Accepted
H2	X1 → Z2	-0.254	3.749	0.000	Significant, Accepted
H3	X1 → Y1	0.150	2.168	0.030	Significant, Accepted
H4	X2 → Z1	0.207	3.187	0.001	Significant, Accepted
H5	X2 → Z2	-0.249	3.196	0.001	Significant, Accepted
H6	X2 → Y1	0.042	0.558	0.577	Not Significant, Rejected
H7	X3 → Z1	0.138	2.135	0.033	Significant, Accepted

H8	$X3 \rightarrow Z2$	-0.032	0.401	0.688	Not Significant, Rejected
H9	$X3 \rightarrow Y1$	0.303	4.532	0.000	Significant, Accepted
H10	$Z1 \rightarrow Y1$	0.220	2.535	0.011	Significant, Accepted
H11	$Z2 \rightarrow Y1$	-0.101	1.465	0.143	Not Significant, Rejected

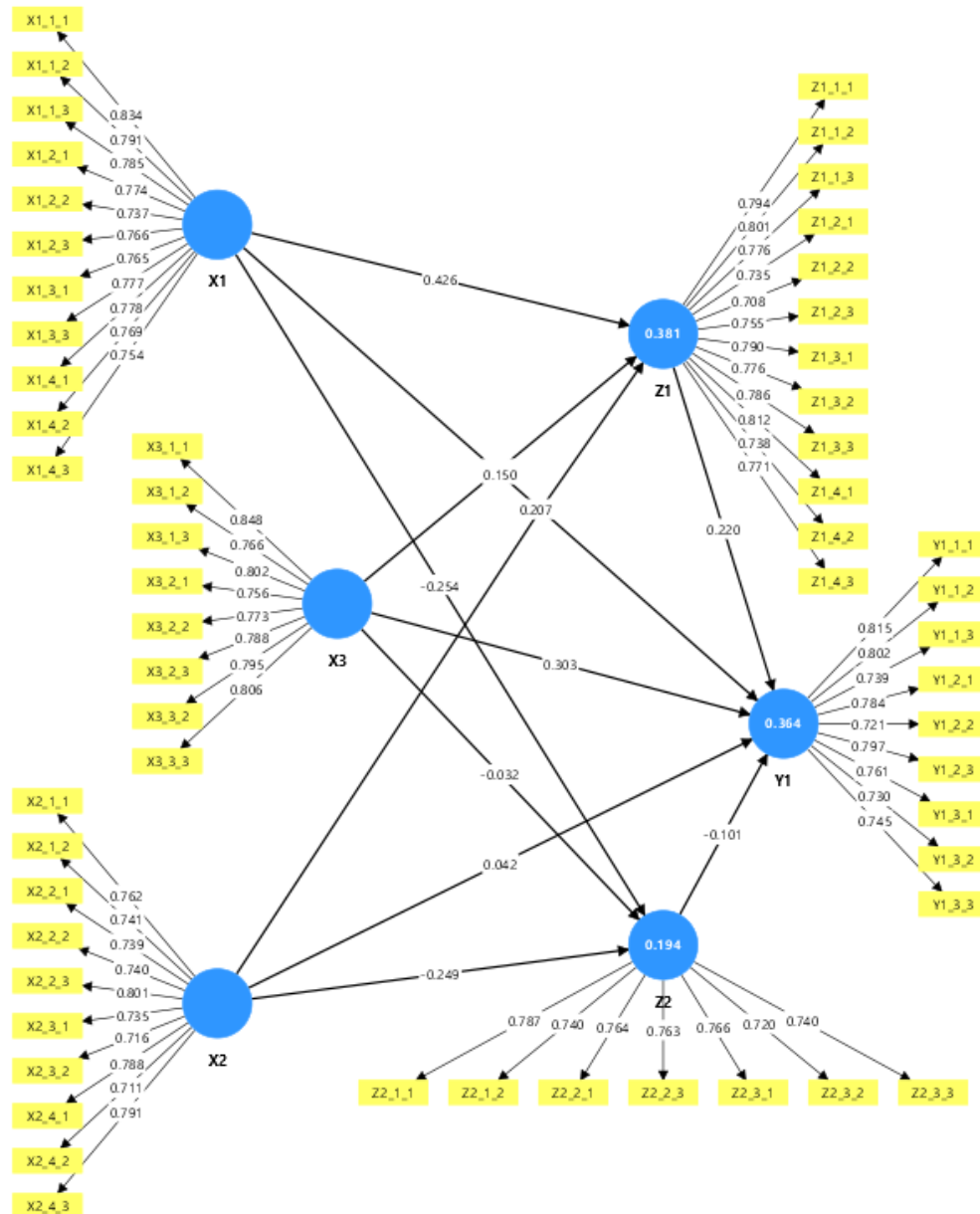


Figure 2. PLS model diagram

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction

The findings indicate that transformational leadership exerts a substantial and statistically significant effect on job satisfaction, as reflected in the coefficient showing a strong positive association supported by a high t-value and a p-value well below the 0.05 threshold. This reinforces the theoretical proposition that inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation cultivate positive affective reactions among employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When leaders articulate a compelling vision, demonstrate ethical conduct, and provide developmental support, employees perceive their work as more meaningful, fair, and aligned with their psychological

needs (Colquitt et al., 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2022). Such leadership behaviors strengthen the affective bond between employees and their organization, resulting in elevated job satisfaction consistent with previous empirical findings (Baiquny et al., 2023; Le et al., 2025).

The magnitude and significance of the statistical results underscore the centrality of leadership in shaping satisfaction within bureaucratic public-sector environments where operational demands are high and structural rigidity is common. From the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources Model, transformational leadership functions as a critical social resource that counterbalances environmental pressures and amplifies motivational forces (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These dynamics are particularly relevant in digitally evolving institutions such as Bapenda Surabaya, where employees rely on supportive leadership to navigate uncertainty and skill adaptation challenges (Gunawan et al., 2025). Therefore, the evidence positions transformational leadership as a vital psychological catalyst that activates the motivational pathway central to the dual-mediation model.

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Burnout

The statistical results demonstrate that transformational leadership significantly reduces burnout, as shown by a negative coefficient accompanied by a strong t-value and a highly significant p-value. This supports the theoretical view that leaders who communicate clearly, provide emotional reassurance, and cultivate a climate of trust help diminish emotional exhaustion and cynicism among employees (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). When leadership reduces ambiguity, supports autonomy, and encourages intellectual engagement, employees experience fewer psychological stressors that typically lead to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Such findings align with studies showing that transformational leaders act as emotional stabilizers who buffer the negative effects of workplace pressure (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Bhaskara et al., 2024).

Beyond its statistical significance, the effect highlights the importance of leadership in environments where administrative tasks are demanding and error tolerance is low. Transformational leaders provide employees with cognitive and emotional resources that prevent resource depletion, consistent with the Conservation of Resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). By fostering trust and relational warmth, leaders mitigate the risk of burnout even when workloads and procedural complexities increase. These results position leadership as a key organizational buffer that safeguards employee well-being in public revenue institutions.

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The study reveals that transformational leadership exerts a direct and statistically significant effect on employee performance, as indicated by a positive coefficient supported by a t-value exceeding the critical threshold. Although the effect size is moderate, it demonstrates that leadership behavior contributes meaningfully to both task performance and contextual performance. Employees respond to inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation by exhibiting initiative, improved problem-solving capabilities, and cooperative behaviors that enhance performance outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2021). These findings support the argument that transformational leaders mobilize employees' psychological energy to meet organizational objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2022).

The significance of this relationship gains particular importance within public-sector institutions where structural constraints often limit behavioral discretion. In such contexts, leadership becomes a primary driver of engagement and performance, providing direction and motivation that compensate for bureaucratic rigidity (Le et al., 2025). The findings reflect the AMO framework, which posits that leadership strengthens the motivation component needed for employees to fully utilize their abilities (Iskamto, 2022; Satriawan, 2022). Thus, transformational leadership emerges as a performance-enhancing mechanism even within highly regulated administrative systems.

Influence of Organizational Climate on Job Satisfaction

The results show that organizational climate has a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction, supported by a statistically meaningful coefficient and t-value. Employees interpret supportive supervisor behavior, autonomy, fair rewards, and innovation opportunities as signals of an enabling psychological environment that enhances satisfaction (Luqman et al., 2020). These perceptions strengthen employees' emotional attachment to their role and increase their sense of comfort and fairness within the organization (Aboramadan et al., 2020). This finding is consistent with evidence that

a positive climate encourages favorable affective responses among public-sector employees (Hanifeliza & Putri, 2024).

The findings reflect the importance of organizational climate as a contextual resource that fosters optimism and reduces frustration in complex administrative environments. Climate shapes daily interactions, clarifies expectations, and supports autonomy all of which contribute to emotional well-being and fulfillment (Noe et al., 2022; Dessler, 2021). Employees evaluate the fairness and clarity of systems when forming satisfaction judgments, and a healthy climate ensures that these evaluations are positive. Therefore, climate functions as an essential antecedent of satisfaction, supporting the motivational pathway of the model.

Influence of Organizational Climate on Burnout

The analysis reveals that organizational climate significantly decreases burnout, as indicated by a negative and statistically significant coefficient. A climate characterized by support, transparency, and collaborative norms provides psychological resources that mitigate emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001). These results align with the Job Demands–Resources Model, which posits that work environments rich in resources protect employees from strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Empirical studies confirm that an inclusive and supportive climate lowers the psychological costs of demanding public-sector work (Hanifeliza & Putri, 2024; Aboramadan et al., 2020).

The significance of the effect underscores the protective value of climate in high-pressure organizational contexts. Supportive norms reduce ambiguity, conflicts, and feelings of isolation—all of which are known drivers of burnout in administrative institutions. With adequate relational and procedural resources, employees maintain higher emotional stability and resilience (Colquitt et al., 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2022). As such, organizational climate functions as a systemic buffer that helps sustain employee well-being.

Influence of Organizational Climate on Employee Performance

The study finds that organizational climate does not significantly influence employee performance, as the coefficient associated with this relationship is statistically negligible. This suggests that climate alone does not directly translate into behavioral performance improvements within highly formalized bureaucratic systems. Employees may perceive a positive climate but remain bound by procedural constraints that limit the immediate expression of enhanced performance (Robbins & Judge, 2022). These results support earlier research that climate affects performance primarily through mediating psychological states such as job satisfaction (Hanifeliza & Putri, 2024).

The pattern of full mediation through job satisfaction indicates that climate must first be internalized emotionally before influencing performance outcomes. Climate provides foundational psychological cues, but performance behaviors require deeper motivational activation that satisfaction delivers (Colquitt et al., 2021). This dynamic is consistent with public administration studies emphasizing that structural context alone is insufficient to drive performance unless it translates into meaningful affective responses (Gunawan et al., 2025). Thus, climate functions as an indirect rather than direct determinant of performance.

Influence of Work Competence on Job Satisfaction

The statistical results indicate that work competence significantly enhances job satisfaction, supported by a meaningful coefficient and a t-value exceeding the criterion for significance. Employees who possess adaptability, critical reasoning, and collaborative capabilities experience greater mastery and confidence in performing their tasks (Iskamto, 2022). These abilities reduce frustration and foster a sense of achievement, which enhances satisfaction through intrinsic motivation (Satriawan, 2022). The findings align with prior research demonstrating that competence strengthens satisfaction by enabling employees to meet role expectations effectively (Wulandari et al., 2023).

Competence becomes increasingly crucial within digitally transforming institutions where employees face complex systems and evolving procedural requirements. Individuals who feel capable of navigating these challenges are more likely to experience positive affective outcomes and reduced anxiety. HRM theory suggests that competence development enhances autonomy and professional identity, both of which contribute to job satisfaction (Dessler, 2021; Noe et al., 2022). Thus, competence

functions as a psychological enabler that supports the motivational pathway within the dual-mediation framework.

Influence of Work Competence on Burnout

The analysis indicates that work competence does not have a significant effect on burnout, as the coefficient lacks statistical significance. This suggests that competence, although vital for performance, does not substantially reduce emotional exhaustion or depersonalization (Maslach et al., 2001). High-competence employees may still experience strain when confronted with heavy administrative workloads, frequent policy changes, and procedural complexity factors external to their ability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These results indicate that burnout is less influenced by individual capabilities than by contextual and relational factors such as climate and leadership.

This finding aligns with studies showing that competence enhances performance but does not necessarily shield employees from emotional fatigue unless accompanied by strong organizational support (Wulandari et al., 2023; Gunawan et al., 2025). Competence enables employees to meet job demands, yet it does not replenish the psychological resources needed to cope with prolonged stress. Therefore, the absence of significance underscores that burnout mitigation requires systemic interventions rather than reliance on individual strengths. This insight refines theoretical understanding in the public-sector domain by highlighting the limits of individual competence.

Influence of Work Competence on Employee Performance

The empirical results show that work competence exerts the strongest direct effect on employee performance among all predictors, supported by a large positive coefficient and a highly significant t-value. Employees who possess high adaptability, analytical skill, and collaboration capacity demonstrate superior task execution and contextual performance (Iskamto, 2022). These abilities directly influence productivity, accuracy, and service responsiveness, which are critical in revenue administration contexts (Satriawan, 2022). The findings reaffirm AMO theory, positioning competence as the primary driver of performance outcomes.

Given the increasing digitization of public finance management, competence becomes indispensable for meeting organizational performance standards. Employees with strong technical and cognitive abilities navigate complex tax systems more efficiently, produce higher-quality outputs, and adjust more quickly to procedural reforms. Human resource management literature similarly underscores the importance of competence development as a strategic lever for enhancing organizational effectiveness (Dessler, 2021; Noe et al., 2022). Thus, competence serves as a structural engine of performance within Bapenda Surabaya.

Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

The findings show that job satisfaction significantly improves employee performance, confirmed by a positive and statistically significant coefficient. Employees who feel satisfied with their work are more engaged, motivated, and committed to meeting performance expectations (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Satisfaction enhances both task performance and discretionary behaviors such as cooperation and initiative, consistent with social exchange theory (Colquitt et al., 2021). This effect aligns with studies showing that satisfaction is a crucial driver of service quality and productivity in the public sector (Gunawan et al., 2025).

The strength of the relationship highlights the central role of satisfaction as a psychological mediator between organizational conditions and behavioral outcomes. When climate, competence, and leadership improve satisfaction, employees channel these positive emotions into improved performance. This mirrors previous findings that satisfaction provides the motivational energy necessary to sustain performance even in highly regulated environments (Hanifeliza & Putri, 2024). Thus, job satisfaction represents the primary motivational pathway of the dual-mediation structure.

Influence of Burnout on Employee Performance

The analysis reveals that burnout does not significantly influence employee performance, as the coefficient lacks statistical significance. Despite experiencing emotional exhaustion or cynicism, employees appear able to maintain their performance levels, possibly due to strong organizational norms, formal accountability mechanisms, or internalized public service values (Robbins & Judge,

2022). This deviates from traditional burnout theory, which predicts performance decline with increased exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). However, recent public administration research has identified similar resilience patterns among government employees (Bhaskara et al., 2024).

The insignificance of burnout suggests the presence of moderating variables such as resilience, peer support, or duty orientation that shield performance from psychological strain. The Job Demands Resources Model recognizes that individuals with high external demands may still sustain performance if buffer resources exist (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This finding offers a meaningful theoretical refinement by showing that burnout does not always translate into behavioral deficits in bureaucratic structures. Instead, its influence appears more pronounced on well-being rather than performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study provides comprehensive empirical evidence that employee performance at Bapenda Surabaya is shaped through intertwined motivational and structural mechanisms, with transformational leadership, organizational climate, and work competence each contributing distinct roles within the organizational system. Transformational leadership demonstrates consistent influence by strengthening job satisfaction, reducing burnout, and directly enhancing performance, confirming its dual function as both a motivational driver and a psychological buffer. Organizational climate improves satisfaction and lowers burnout, yet its non-significant direct effect on performance indicates that positive environmental perceptions must first translate into favorable affective states before generating behavioral change. Meanwhile, work competence emerges as the strongest direct predictor of performance and a significant contributor to job satisfaction, although it does not mitigate burnout, highlighting the limits of technical ability in addressing emotional strain. The mediation analysis confirms job satisfaction as the dominant mechanism through which organizational and individual factors shape performance, whereas burnout does not significantly predict performance, suggesting the presence of occupational resilience characteristic of public-sector employees. Collectively, these findings underscore the primacy of motivational pathways over strain-based pathways in explaining performance outcomes and offer actionable insights for designing leadership development, climate enhancement, and competence-building strategies in government revenue institutions.

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