Work Motivation as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Workplace Spirituality, Intellectual Intelligence, and Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of work motivation as a mediating variable in the relationship between workplace spirituality, intellectual intelligence, and employee performance. A quantitative research approach was employed using a saturated sampling technique, in which the entire population of 35 employees was included as the research sample. The variables examined were workplace spirituality, intellectual intelligence, work motivation, and employee performance. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach.

The findings reveal that workplace spirituality has a positive and significant effect on both work motivation and employee performance. In contrast, intellectual intelligence has no significant effect on either work motivation or employee performance. Furthermore, work motivation does not significantly affect employee performance and is unable to mediate the relationships between workplace spirituality and employee performance or between intellectual intelligence and employee performance.

These findings suggest that fostering workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' motivation and performance. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to strengthen a work environment that supports spiritual values, promote employees' psychological well-being, and improve performance management systems and competency development to achieve optimal and sustainable employee performance.

Keywords: *workplace spirituality; intellectual intelligence; work motivation; employee performance.*

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a key determinant of organizational success because it is directly associated with productivity, work effectiveness, and the achievement of organizational goals. In modern organizations, employee performance is influenced not only by technical competencies but also by non-technical factors, such as workplace spirituality, intellectual intelligence, and work motivation. Previous studies have shown that workplace spirituality fosters meaningful work, enhances employee engagement, and promotes positive work behaviors (Abizari & Ruslaini, 2021; Nusraningrum et al., 2024). Meanwhile, intellectual intelligence contributes to employees' analytical abilities, decision-making, and problem-solving skills (Latief & Asniwati, 2023; Alpisarrin et al., 2024). However, several studies have reported that work motivation does not consistently mediate the relationships between these variables and employee performance (Yusuf & Edalmen, 2024).

The phenomenon of declining employee performance remains a challenge for many organizations. Secondary data obtained from PT. Bintara Mitra Andalan for the period of July–December 2024 indicate a steady increase in the number of employees demonstrating suboptimal performance, as reflected in absenteeism, failure to achieve performance targets, low initiative, and a growing number of administrative errors. In July 2024, 12 employees exhibited attendance-related problems and 14 employees failed to meet their performance targets. By December 2024, these figures had increased to 22 and 23 employees, respectively. In addition, there were indications of low integrity and ethical awareness, including a tendency to blame colleagues, poor teamwork, and the acceptance of information without proper verification. These conditions suggest weaknesses in workplace spirituality and critical thinking, which may have contributed to the decline in employee performance.

Most previous studies have examined the direct effects of workplace spirituality or intellectual intelligence on employee performance (Abdul Latiff, 2021; Rahmawaty et al., 2021). However, studies that simultaneously investigate these two variables with work motivation as a mediating variable remain limited. This research gap is significant because a comprehensive understanding of how workplace spirituality and intellectual intelligence interact through work motivation to influence employee performance is still lacking.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the influence of workplace spirituality and intellectual intelligence on employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable. This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the understanding of the role of non-technical factors in improving organizational performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study population consisted of all 35 employees of PT Bintara Mitra Andalan. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling, in which all members of the population were selected as research respondents.

Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with the assistance of SmartPLS software, as it is suitable for examining relationships among latent variables and mediation models with a relatively small sample size (Ghozali, 2021).

The data analysis was conducted in two stages: outer model evaluation and inner model evaluation. The outer model evaluation included testing convergent validity (loading factor > 0.70), discriminant validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50), Composite Reliability (> 0.70), and Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.70). Subsequently, the inner model evaluation was performed by assessing the R-Square (R^2) and Effect Size (f^2) values to determine the model's ability to explain the relationships among the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

R-Square

The R-square value indicates the extent to which the model explains the variance of the endogenous variables. In this study, the Work Motivation (Z) variable achieved an R-square value of 0.869, indicating that 86.9% of the variance in work motivation is explained by workplace spirituality and intellectual intelligence. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance (Y) variable obtained an R-square value of 0.831, indicating that 83.1% of the variance in employee performance is explained by workplace spirituality, intellectual intelligence, and work motivation. These findings demonstrate that the proposed structural model has strong explanatory power and can therefore be considered a well-fitting model.

Tabel 1. R-Square Values

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Work Motivation	0.869	0.860
Employee Performance	0.831	0.814

Source: SmartPLS output, processed by the authors (2026).

Path Coefficient Test Results

The results of the direct hypothesis testing among variables provide several findings that explain the relationships within the research model. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, H1 was accepted, indicating that the spiritual environment within the organization has a positive and significant effect on employees' work motivation.

Since the p-value of 0.086 is greater than 0.05, H2 was rejected, indicating that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on work motivation. These results suggest that employees' cognitive abilities are not always the primary factor in enhancing their motivation to work.

Furthermore, the spiritual environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This is evidenced by the p-value of 0.007, which is less than 0.05, indicating that a work environment with spiritual values can directly improve employee performance.

In contrast, as indicated by the p-value of 0.542, which is greater than 0.05, H4 was rejected, meaning that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on employee performance. In addition, work motivation also does not significantly affect employee performance, as the p-value of 0.440 is greater than 0.05; therefore, H5 was rejected. These findings indicate that employees' performance in this study is more dependent on the work environment than on individual characteristics such as intellectual intelligence or work motivation.

Table 2. Path Coefficient Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Intellectual Intelligence → Employee Performance	0.103	0.074	0.169	0.610	0.542
Intellectual Intelligence → Work Motivation	0.302	0.291	0.176	1.715	0.086

Workplace Spirituality → Employee Performance	0.645	0.684	0.239	2.703	0.007
Workplace Spirituality → Work Motivatio	0.661	0.673	0.165	4.015	0.000
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.187	0.178	0.243	0.772	0.440

Source: SmartPLS output, processed by the authors (2026).

Mediation Test Results

In this research model, work motivation did not function as a mediating variable based on the results of the indirect effect analysis. In the relationship between the spiritual environment and employee performance (H6), the calculated t-value was 0.741, which is lower than the t-table value of 1.96, and the p-value was 0.459, which is greater than 0.05. These results indicate that the indirect effect is not statistically significant; therefore, work motivation does not mediate the relationship between the spiritual environment and employee performance.

Furthermore, in the relationship between intellectual intelligence and employee performance through work motivation (H7), the calculated t-value was 0.620, which is lower than 1.96, and the p-value was 0.536, which is greater than 0.05. These findings indicate that there is no significant mediating effect, meaning that work motivation does not mediate the relationship between intellectual intelligence and employee performance.

Therefore, both findings suggest that the effects of the independent variables on employee performance are more direct than those operating through the mediating mechanism of work motivation.

Table 3. Mediation Test Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Intellectual Intelligence → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.057	0.060	0.091	0.620	0.536
Spiritual Environment → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.124	0.112	0.167	0.741	0.459

Source: SmartPLS Output, processed by the researcher (2026).

Path coefficient

At the 5% significance level, a relationship is considered significant when the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-statistic is greater than 1.96. The direct relationships among the variables were evaluated using the path coefficients, while the indirect relationships were analyzed through specific indirect effects using the bootstrapping approach. The results of the path coefficient analysis in this study illustrate the relationships among the variables examined.

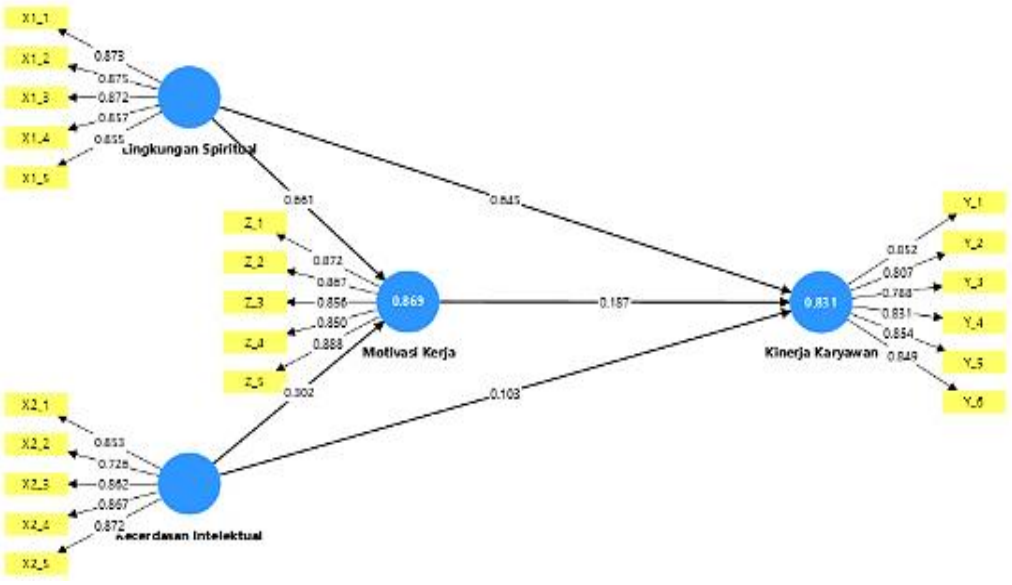


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model Results

1. The Effect of the Spiritual Environment on Work Motivation

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the spiritual environment has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of employees at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan Semarang, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This finding supports the proposed hypothesis, indicating that improvements in the organization's spiritual environment are associated with increased employee work motivation.

From a theoretical perspective, a work environment characterized by shared values, work ethics, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and a sense of meaning in work serves as a factor that strengthens employees' intrinsic motivation to perform their duties. Therefore, the non-material aspects of the work environment make a meaningful contribution to enhancing employee work motivation.

The descriptive analysis shows that the spiritual environment variable has a mean score of 3.45, which falls within the good category. Based on the distribution of respondents' answers, the highest-rated indicator was employees' attachment to the organization, particularly their willingness to remain with the organization over the long term. In contrast, the relatively lower score was found for the workload pressure indicator, suggesting that some employees still experience pressure in carrying out their responsibilities.

These findings indicate that although the overall spiritual environment is considered good, workload remains an important aspect that requires further attention to prevent it from reducing employees' work motivation.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Rahmawati & Supriyanto (2021) and Hidayat et al. (2023), who also found that the spiritual environment has a positive and significant effect on work motivation.

2. The Effect of Intellectual Intelligence on Work Motivation

The hypothesis testing results indicate that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on the work motivation of employees at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan Semarang, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.086, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis was rejected, indicating that employees' level of intellectual intelligence is not directly associated with an increase in work motivation.

From a theoretical perspective, intellectual intelligence, reflected in analytical thinking, problem-solving ability, logical reasoning, and the ability to understand information, is considered a factor that can enhance individual work effectiveness. However, the findings of this study indicate that intellectual intelligence is not the primary factor driving employees' work motivation. This suggests that work motivation is influenced not only by cognitive abilities but also by other factors, such as the work environment, organizational support, and employees' intrinsic motivation.

The descriptive analysis shows that the intellectual intelligence variable has a mean score of 3.26, which falls within the high category. Based on the distribution of respondents' answers, the highest-rated indicator was the ability to find solutions to work-related problems. In contrast, the relatively lower score was observed for the ability to remember important information, indicating that some employees still experience limitations in memory and information processing related to their work.

These findings suggest that although employees generally possess a high level of intellectual intelligence, this ability does not directly enhance their work motivation. This condition indicates that employees' work motivation is influenced more by non-cognitive factors than by intellectual ability alone.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Hartini (2024) and Rifki Zaidan et al. (2025), which also reported that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on employees' work motivation.

3. The Effect of the Spiritual Environment on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the spiritual environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan Semarang, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.007, which is lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), and a path coefficient of 0.645. These findings support the proposed hypothesis, indicating that a stronger spiritual environment within the organization is associated with higher employee performance.

From a theoretical perspective, a spiritual environment characterized by shared values, work ethics, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and a sense of meaning in work creates a positive workplace atmosphere. Such conditions enhance employees' sense of responsibility, productivity, and work quality in

carrying out their duties. Therefore, the non-material aspects of the work environment make a meaningful contribution to improving employee performance.

The descriptive analysis shows that the spiritual environment variable has a mean score that falls within the good category. Based on the distribution of respondents' answers, the highest-rated indicator was employees' attachment to the organization, particularly their willingness to remain with the organization over the long term. In contrast, the relatively lower score was found for the workload pressure indicator, suggesting that some employees still experience work-related pressure in performing their duties.

These findings indicate that although the spiritual environment has generally been well established, workload pressure remains an area that requires attention to ensure that employees' comfort and performance are not adversely affected.

The implications of this study suggest that the company should strengthen an organizational culture based on spiritual values by fostering harmonious working relationships, enhancing a sense of togetherness, and creating meaningful work experiences for employees. In addition, the company should manage workloads proportionately to enable employees to perform optimally without experiencing excessive work pressure.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Hartini (2024), who found that workplace spirituality has a positive effect on employee performance.

4. The Effect of Intellectual Intelligence on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results indicate that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on employee performance at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan Semarang, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.542, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis was rejected, indicating that employees' level of intellectual intelligence does not directly influence their performance.

From a theoretical perspective, intellectual intelligence, reflected in analytical thinking, problem-solving ability, logical reasoning, and the ability to understand information, is considered a factor that can support individual work effectiveness. However, the findings of this study suggest that employee performance is not determined solely by intellectual ability but is also influenced by other factors, such as work experience, motivation, the work environment, and the company's management system.

The descriptive analysis indicates that the intellectual intelligence variable falls within the high category. Based on the distribution of respondents' answers, the highest-rated indicator was the ability to find solutions to work-related problems. In contrast, the relatively lower scores were observed for the ability to remember important information and understand work-related information, indicating that some employees still experience limitations in memory and comprehension.

These findings suggest that although employees generally possess a high level of intellectual intelligence, this ability does not make a significant contribution to improving employee performance. This condition indicates that effective job performance requires not only cognitive abilities but also practical skills, work experience, and the ability to adapt to the work environment.

The implications of this study suggest that the company should balance the development of employees' intellectual abilities with practical training, opportunities to gain work experience, and the strengthening of non-technical competencies to achieve optimal employee performance.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Ratnasari et al. (2020), who reported that individual ability does not always have a significant effect on improving employee performance.

5. The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results indicate that work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan Semarang, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.440, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis was rejected, indicating that employees' level of work motivation does not directly influence their performance.

From a theoretical perspective, work motivation is an internal drive that can enhance employees' enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and willingness to perform their duties. However, the findings of this study indicate that work motivation is not the primary factor contributing to improved employee performance. This suggests that employee performance is influenced not only by work motivation but also by other factors, such as work systems, supervision,

organizational culture, and employees' individual capabilities.

The descriptive analysis shows that the work motivation variable has a mean score of 3.41, which falls within the high category. Based on the distribution of respondents' answers, the highest-rated indicator was job satisfaction. In contrast, the relatively lower score was found for the initiative and work persistence indicator, suggesting that some employees have not yet fully developed the drive to take initiative and maintain consistent work performance.

Furthermore, the descriptive analysis of the employee performance variable shows a mean score of 3.10, which also falls within the high category. The highest-rated indicator was work discipline and responsibility, whereas the relatively lower score was observed for innovation and creativity. These findings indicate that employees tend to perform their duties routinely and comply with existing work procedures but have not yet fully optimized innovation in their work.

These findings suggest that employees' work motivation has not been fully translated into improved productivity, innovation, and work quality. Therefore, a high level of work motivation does not necessarily lead to better employee performance unless it is supported by an effective work system and an organizational culture that encourages performance development.

The implications of this study suggest that the company should channel employees' work motivation through a well-defined work system, measurable performance targets, and an organizational culture that promotes innovation and the continuous development of employees' competencies.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of I'tamara and Hadi (2021), who reported that work motivation is not always the primary factor in improving employee performance because its influence may become weaker when compared with other factors, such as the work environment, work discipline, and the organizational system.

6. The Indirect Effect of the Spiritual Environment on Employee Performance through Work Motivation

The mediation test results indicate that the p-value of 0.459 is greater than 0.05 and the t-statistic of 0.741 is lower than 1.96. Therefore, work motivation does not mediate the relationship between the spiritual environment and employee performance.

These findings suggest that although the spiritual environment has a significant direct effect on both work motivation and employee performance, work motivation is not an effective mediating mechanism in this relationship. Based on the descriptive analysis, the relatively low scores for the initiative and work persistence indicators of work motivation may explain the weak mediating role of this variable.

The implications of these findings indicate that the spiritual environment contributes more directly to shaping positive work behavior than indirectly through work motivation. This suggests that employees may respond to a spiritually supportive work environment by improving their performance without requiring a corresponding increase in motivation as an intervening mechanism.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Lie and Yanuar (2024), who reported that work motivation does not always have a direct impact on employee performance.

7. The Indirect Effect of Intellectual Intelligence on Employee Performance through Work Motivation

The mediation test results indicate that the p-value of 0.536 is greater than 0.05 and the t-statistic of 0.620 is lower than 1.96. Therefore, work motivation does not mediate the relationship between intellectual intelligence and employee performance.

These findings indicate that intellectual intelligence does not have a significant effect on employee performance, either directly or indirectly. Although the descriptive analysis shows that intellectual intelligence is generally in the high category, weaknesses in memory ability and the less optimal level of work motivation in terms of initiative contribute to the lack of a strong relationship among the variables.

The implications of these findings suggest that the company should place greater emphasis on other factors such as organizational culture, work systems, and leadership in improving employee performance.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Lukia Zuraida et al. (2023), who found that work motivation does not always have a significant direct effect on employee performance because its influence may weaken when it is not supported by other factors such as the work environment, organizational system, and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the SEM-PLS analysis regarding the influence of the spiritual environment and intellectual intelligence on employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable at PT Bintara Mitra Andalan, it can be concluded that the spiritual environment has a positive and significant effect on both work motivation and employee performance directly. In contrast, intellectual intelligence does not show a significant effect on either work motivation or employee performance. Furthermore, work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance and does not mediate the relationship between either the spiritual environment or intellectual intelligence and employee performance

RECCOMENDATION

Based on the research findings, the company is recommended to strengthen the development of a spiritual work environment by instilling values of meaningful work, togetherness, ethics, and supportive communication, as well as managing workload to reduce work pressure. Although intellectual intelligence did not show a significant effect on performance in this study, the development of cognitive abilities (such as memory, understanding complex information, and decision-making) through training and workshops remains important as a long-term investment.

The company is also advised to channel employees' motivation through clear targets, a structured work system, and objective performance evaluations in order to maximize internal drive. To encourage innovation and teamwork, practical recommendations include providing space for creative ideas (idea-sharing programs and team discussion forums), implementing a fair reward system, and ensuring consistent coaching and supervision.

In addition, strengthening a conducive organizational culture and a transparent human resource management system including initial selection processes, periodic evaluations, and strict enforcement of discipline is necessary to maintain optimal employee performance.

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