

Original Research Article

The Mediating Role of Work Enthusiasm in the Relationship between Competence, Motivation, Spiritual Intelligence, and Employee Performance in Recreational Tourism Organizations

Silvester Umbu Lodong^{1*}, Elevenson Nadapdap¹, Sunardi², Sina Setyadi²¹Magister Student of Merdeka University of Malang²Faculty of Management of Merdeka University of Malang

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Abstract: This research explores the intricate relationships among employee competence, motivation, spiritual intelligence, work enthusiasm, and overall performance within the context of a recreational sector organization. Employing a quantitative, explanatory research design within a positivist paradigm, the study aims to empirically test how these key organizational variables interact, with particular focus on the mediating role of work enthusiasm as a psychological mechanism that translates individual resources into tangible performance outcomes. Drawing conceptual insights from established theories including Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the evolving construct of spiritual intelligence, the investigation examines both direct and indirect effects among variables. Data collected from employees of PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkalang (Recreational Park) UMM reveal that while technical competence is the most significant predictor of performance, intrinsic motivation and spiritual intelligence influence performance predominantly through their impact on work enthusiasm. The findings underscore that fostering employee vigor, dedication, and absorption is vital to converting personal and organizational resources into sustained performance enhancements. Practical implications suggest that organizations should invest in comprehensive skills development, promote values-based leadership, and implement strategies that cultivate intrinsic motivation and purpose-driven engagement. By integrating spiritual intelligence and work enthusiasm as critical mediators, this study advances existing organizational behavior models, emphasizing holistic approaches for optimizing employee performance in hybrid and service-oriented environments. The insights herein contribute to a better understanding of how psychological factors motivate organizational success in contemporary workplaces.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Work Enthusiasm, Spiritual Intelligence, Competence, Motivation, Organizational Behavior, Mediating Variables, Recreational Organizations, Employee Engagement, Values-Based Leadership.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is widely recognized as a pivotal determinant of organizational success, especially in service-oriented and tourism sectors where customer satisfaction directly affects financial sustainability. In highly competitive environments, organizations must leverage human capital by enhancing both technical competencies and motivational drivers (Gibson, Ivancevich, & Donnelly, 2003; Mangkunegara, 2013). In the context of recreational parks—where front-line employees shape visitor experiences—understanding the interplay between these factors is

crucial to closing the gap between strategic goals and daily operations (Hermanto, 2024; Mangkunegara, 2013).

Beyond competence and motivation, spiritual intelligence has emerged as an important but under-investigated construct in organizational behavior. Defined as the ability to apply values and meaning in professional life, spiritual intelligence fosters integrity, resilience, and ethical decision-making (Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Hidayati & Kurniawati, 2017). Although prior research in banking and education sectors reports

mixed effects of spiritual intelligence on performance (Wulandari & Susanti, 2019; Hidayati & Kurniawati, 2017), its role within hybrid academic-commercial enterprises like PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM remains unexplored.

This study introduces work enthusiasm (or “work spirit”) as a mediating construct that translates employee resources into measurable performance outcomes. Work enthusiasm reflects employees’ vigor, dedication, and absorption in their tasks, and has been linked to higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and improved service delivery (Sesiana, Santosa, & Puspitasari, 2018; Taufik & Sulistyowati, 2017). By positioning work enthusiasm as the psychological bridge between competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence, we address a critical gap in the literature on mediating mechanisms in performance models (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Sesiana *et al.*, 2018).

PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, a university-affiliated recreational park in Malang, Indonesia, exemplifies the dual mission of pursuing economic viability while upholding educational and social values. Despite stable staffing levels, recent operational data show a decline in sales-target realization—from an average performance score of 86.73 in 2020 to 59.90 in 2024—indicating underutilized employee potential (PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, 2024). This performance drop highlights the need to investigate internal drivers—competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence—and their indirect effects through work enthusiasm on employee performance in such hybrid organizations.

Drawing on established frameworks—Performance Theory (Gibson *et al.*, 2003), Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1966), Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), and foundational work on spiritual intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000)—we propose and test a comprehensive path model. Through quantitative path analysis of survey data from Sengkaling employees, this research aims to (1) assess the direct impacts of competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence on performance, (2) examine their effects on work enthusiasm, and (3) evaluate the mediating role of work enthusiasm in translating these antecedents into employee performance. The findings will inform both theory and practice by elucidating how multidimensional employee attributes can be leveraged to enhance organizational outcomes in service and tourism settings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Theory

Performance has long been conceptualized as the outcome of the interplay between individual abilities, motivational forces, and contextual factors. Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly (2003) propose a holistic Performance Model in which ability, motivation, and

environment interact to determine job performance. Ability encompasses both innate and acquired competencies, motivation represents the internal drive to exert effort, and environment includes organizational support and resources (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Mangkunegara, 2013). Blumberg and Pringle (1982) further refine this perspective by emphasizing opportunity as a distinct antecedent alongside ability and motivation—highlighting that even highly skilled and motivated employees require enabling conditions to perform optimally (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982). Carrell *et al.*, (1995) extend these ideas in their Motivation–Performance model, underscoring the feedback loop in which employee expectations and rewards shape ongoing performance cycles (Carrell *et al.*, 1995). Taken together, these frameworks underscore the necessity of examining multiple dimensions—competence, motivational drivers, and workplace environment—when investigating employee performance at PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM.

Motivation Theories

Motivation theories explain why individuals choose certain behaviors and how they sustain effort toward organizational goals. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs posits that employees progress from satisfying basic physiological and safety needs to social, esteem, and ultimately self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943; Sutrisno, 2010). Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory differentiates hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions) from motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement), arguing that true job satisfaction arises from the latter (Herzberg, 1966; Sesiana *et al.*, 2018). Vroom’s Expectancy Theory adds a cognitive dimension, suggesting that motivation is a function of (1) expectancy—the belief that effort leads to performance; (2) instrumentality—the belief that performance yields rewards; and (3) valence—the value of those rewards (Vroom, 1964; Daryanto *et al.*, 2023). Equity Theory emphasizes perceptions of fairness, where employees compare their input–output ratios to referent others, influencing their motivation and engagement (Adams, 1965; Sutrisno, 2009). Reinforcement Theory, in contrast, focuses on how consequences (rewards or punishments) shape future behavior (Skinner, 1953; Sutrisno, 2009). Collectively, these theories inform our understanding of how different motivational levers—*intrinsic and extrinsic*—operate within PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling’s workforce.

Spiritual Intelligence

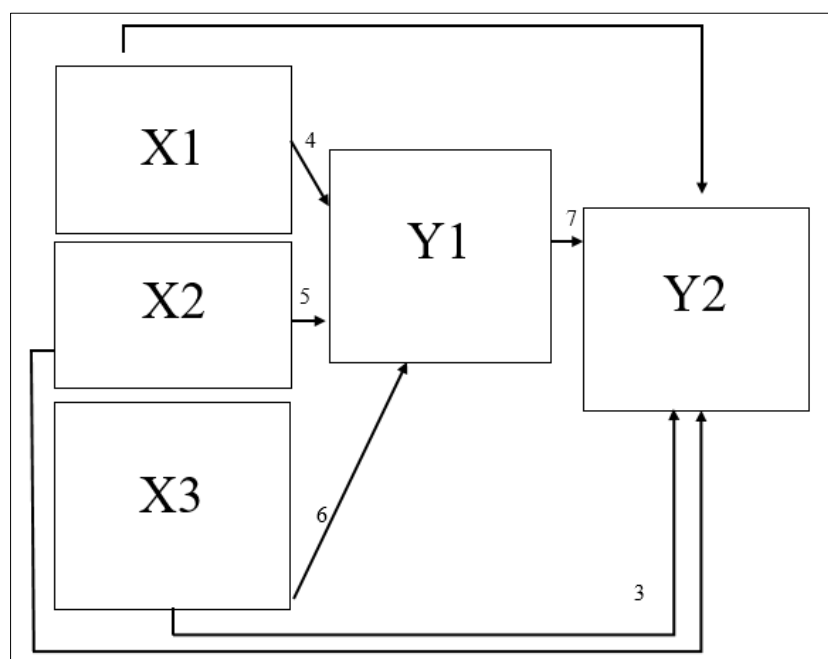
Spiritual intelligence (SQ) refers to the capacity to apply spiritual values and meaning in everyday work. Zohar and Marshall (2000) define SQ as “the intelligence with which we tap into our deepest meanings, values, and purposes.” Research in diverse sectors has yielded mixed findings: some studies report a significant positive effect of SQ on job performance and well-being (Hidayati & Kurniawati, 2017), while others find its direct impact less pronounced, suggesting instead stronger effects on

emotional resilience and interpersonal relations (Wulandari & Susanti, 2019). Jems and FoEh (2024) propose that SQ fosters integrity, empathy, and ethical decision-making—qualities particularly relevant in service settings where relational exchange is key. In the context of a university-affiliated recreational park, the integration of spiritual values may not only enhance employee well-being but also translate into more authentic and values-driven service delivery.

Work Enthusiasm as a Mediator

Work enthusiasm, often referred to as work spirit or vigor, captures the energy, dedication, and absorption employees bring to their tasks. Based on Schaufeli *et al.*'s (2002) conceptualization of work engagement, Taufik and Sulistyowati (2017)

demonstrate that higher competence correlates with greater enthusiasm, as skilled employees feel more confident and committed to their roles. Sesiana *et al.*, (2018) show that motivation and recognition amplify enthusiasm, thereby indirectly boosting performance. Furthermore, research suggests that spiritual intelligence enhances work enthusiasm by providing employees with a sense of purpose and alignment between personal and organizational values (Lestari & Santosa, 2021). As a psychological mechanism, work enthusiasm bridges the gap between individual antecedents (competence, motivation, SQ) and observable performance outcomes, making it a critical mediator in our proposed path model. And here is the relation of each variabel in the conceptual framework:



Pic 1: Conceptual Framework

Below is a consolidated instrument table listing each variable's indicators and corresponding item statements as used.

Table 1: The Variables and Indicators

No.	Variable	Indicator(s)	Item Statement
1	Competence (X1)	•Knowledge •Skills •Attitude	1. I understand my job duties and responsibilities well. 2. I possess the technical skills required to complete my work. 3. I am able to complete tasks in accordance with established targets.
2	Motivation (X2)	•Intrinsic motivation •Extrinsic motivation	1. I am motivated to work because I want to achieve personal goals. 2. Company incentives encourage me to improve my performance. 3. I feel satisfied working here and want to contribute my best.
3	Spiritual Intelligence (X3)	•Self-awareness •Empathy •Values alignment	1. I understand the meaning of my work in daily life. 2. I conduct my work according to sound moral and ethical principles. 3. I manage work-related stress through positive practices (e.g., reflection).
4	Work Enthusiasm (Y1)	•Vigor •Dedication •Absorption	1. I always feel enthusiastic about starting work each day. 2. I often take initiative to complete tasks without being asked. 3. I can manage pressure well and remain productive.

5	Employee Performance (Y2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality •Quantity •Efficiency 	1. I complete my tasks in the quantity required by targets. 2. I ensure my work meets established quality standards. 3. I consistently participate in training to improve my skills.
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III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative, explanatory design grounded in a positivist paradigm, aiming to test causal relationships among competence, motivation, spiritual intelligence, work enthusiasm, and employee performance. A positivist approach facilitates objective measurement and hypothesis testing through numerical data, enabling generalization to the broader population of PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM employees.

Research Design and Hypotheses

An explanatory research design was selected to investigate both direct and indirect effects via path analysis, which extends multiple regression to models with mediating variables. Based on the conceptual framework, four hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence each have a significant direct effect on employee performance.
- **H2:** Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence each have a significant direct effect on work enthusiasm.
- **H3:** Work enthusiasm has a significant direct effect on employee performance.
- **H4:** Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence exert a significant indirect effect on employee performance through work enthusiasm.

Population and Sampling

The population comprises all 80 employees of PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM. Given the manageable size, census sampling was employed—i.e., every employee was invited to participate—to maximize statistical power and avoid sampling bias.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire distributed in person. The instrument included five-point Likert-type items (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) measuring each study variable. **Secondary** data—such as historical sales reports and organizational records—were reviewed to contextualize performance trends.

Prior to deployment, the questionnaire underwent:

1. **Validity testing** using item-total correlations (Pearson's $r > 0.30$, $p < 0.05$).
2. **Reliability analysis** via Cronbach's α ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered acceptable).

Variable Measurement

- **Competence (X₁):** Assessed through knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- **Motivation (X₂):** Captured intrinsic and extrinsic drivers.

- **Spiritual Intelligence (X₃):** Encompassed self-awareness, empathy, and alignment with core values.
- **Work Enthusiasm (Y₁):** Measured vigor, dedication, and absorption.
- **Employee Performance (Y₂):** Reflected quality, quantity, and efficiency of task accomplishment.

All constructs were operationalized with items adapted from the thesis's instrument development section and pretested scales.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis proceeded in four stages:

1. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) to profile respondents and baseline variable levels.

2. Classical assumption tests to verify regression prerequisites:

- **Normality** via Kolmogorov–Smirnov ($p > 0.05$ indicates normal distribution).
- **Multicollinearity** using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF < 10) and Tolerance (TOL > 0.10).
- **Autocorrelation** assessed by the Durbin–Watson statistic ($1.5 < d < 2.5$ denotes no autocorrelation).
- **Heteroskedasticity** checked with Glejser's test ($p > 0.05$ indicates homoskedasticity).

3. Path analysis in SPSS (v.25) to estimate direct (β_1 to β_6) and indirect effects (mediation through Y₁) at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level.

4. Hypothesis testing based on path coefficients and p-values to accept or reject H1–H4.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Data were anonymized, and the study secured organizational approval from PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM's management. All procedures complied with standard academic research ethics.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Profile

Below are four tables summarizing the respondent profile of 80 employees at PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, followed by a brief narrative interpretation for each. Together, these profiles demonstrate a balanced, diverse workforce across age, gender, education, and experience, providing a solid foundation for analyzing how individual characteristics interplay with competence, motivation, spiritual intelligence, and work enthusiasm in driving performance outcomes.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range (years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
19–21	7	8.8
22–24	10	12.5
25–27	12	15.0
28–30	10	12.5
31–33	9	11.3
34–36	7	8.8
37–39	8	10.0
40–42	6	7.5
43–45	6	7.5
46–50	5	6.3
Total	80	100

Source: PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, 2024

The workforce spans early-career (19–24 years, 21.3%) to late-career stages (40–50 years, 21.3%), with the largest concentration in the 25–27 bracket (15.0%). This generational diversity suggests varying levels of professional maturity and adaptability: younger

employees may drive innovation and technological adoption, while seasoned staff bring institutional knowledge critical for mentoring and maintaining service quality.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	40	50.0
Female	40	50.0
Total	80	100

Source: PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, 2024

A perfect gender balance (50 % male; 50 % female) eliminates gender-based sampling bias and permits analysis of whether competence, motivation, spiritual intelligence, and work enthusiasm operate

similarly across genders. This balance enhances external validity when generalizing findings to mixed-gender service workplaces.

Table 4: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Senior High (SMA)	35	43.8
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	34	42.5
Diploma (D3)	11	13.8
Total	80	100

Source: PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, 2024

Nearly equal proportions of senior high (43.8 %) and bachelor's degree holders (42.5 %) indicate that frontline and managerial roles draw from similar educational backgrounds. This suggests the organization values both practical experience and formal

qualifications. Training programs may need to be differentiated: technical certifications for high school graduates and leadership development for degree holders.

Table 4: Tenure of Respondents

Years of Service	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1–3 years	16	20.0
4–6 years	21	26.3
7–9 years	15	18.8
10–12 years	14	17.5
13–15 years	14	17.5
Total	80	100

Source: PT Taman Rekreasi Sengkaling UMM, 2024

Over half of employees (55.0 %) have more than 6 years of tenure, indicating strong retention of

experienced staff who likely embody organizational culture and mentor newcomers. Meanwhile, 46.3 % with

≤6 years of service reflect an influx of newer perspectives. Tenure-related variation may differentially influence competence development and motivation levels, which the path analysis will assess when

evaluating their effects on work enthusiasm and performance.

Descriptive Narration of Validity, Reliability and Mean

Table 5: Validity, Reliability and Mean

No.	Variable	No. of Items	Item–Total Correlation Range (r)	Mean Score (Σ)	Cronbach's α
1	Competence (X_1)	10	0.606 – 0.830	18.66 (± 2.41)	0.901 Reliable
2	Motivation (X_2)	10	0.597 – 0.823	17.91 (± 2.13)	0.902 Reliable
3	Spiritual Intelligence (X_3)	10	0.617 – 0.774	17.41 (± 1.98)	0.897 Reliable
4	Work Enthusiasm (Y_1)	10	0.416 – 0.798	21.48 (± 2.67)	0.849 Reliable
5	Employee Performance (Y_2)	10	0.408 – 0.798	20.93 (± 2.52)	0.854 Reliable

Source: Researcher (2025)

- **Item–Total Correlation:** Values represent the lowest and highest Pearson correlations (*r* hitung) between individual items and their total construct score, confirming all items surpassed the validity threshold ($r > 0.223$).
- **Mean Score:** Sum of item means per variable; standard deviations in parentheses. Competence (X_1) averaged 18.66, indicating mid-low self-assessed proficiency. Motivation (X_2) averaged 17.91, reflecting generally neutral to disagree responses on drivers. Spiritual intelligence (X_3) mean was 17.41, suggesting limited integration of workplace values. Work enthusiasm (Y_1) mean of 21.48 signals moderate engagement, while performance (Y_2) at 20.93 reveals room for improvement in task outcomes.
- **Reliability (Cronbach's α):** All scales exceed $\alpha = 0.80$, indicating strong internal consistency for each construct.

All five constructs demonstrate robust psychometric properties essential for rigorous hypothesis testing. The item–total correlation ranges (0.408–0.830) confirm that individual items meaningfully contribute to their respective scales, with the lowest validities in the Employee Performance and Work Enthusiasm scales ($r \approx 0.408$ –0.416) suggesting certain items may capture nuances less central to the core construct. Nevertheless, all correlations comfortably exceed the minimum threshold ($r > 0.223$), validating the instrument's convergent validity. Cronbach's α coefficients span from 0.849 to 0.902, underscoring excellent internal consistency across constructs and affirming that scale items cohere into reliable unidimensional measures. Despite strong measurement quality, the mean scores reveal that employees perceive only moderate levels of each attribute (mid-range of possible $\Sigma = 10$ –50). Notably, Work Enthusiasm ($\Sigma = 21.48$) and Employee Performance ($\Sigma = 20.93$) outscore the antecedent constructs—Competence (18.66), Motivation (17.91), and Spiritual Intelligence (17.41)—indicating that while employees remain reasonably engaged and maintain baseline performance, foundational drivers such as

motivation and spiritual alignment lag behind. This pattern suggests two critical areas for intervention:

1. **Enhancing Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation:** The relatively low Motivation mean ($\Sigma = 17.91$) points to potential deficiencies in reward structures, recognition programs, or job enrichment practices. Strengthening both intrinsic incentives (e.g., autonomy, meaningful work) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., performance bonuses, career development) may elevate motivation levels, thereby amplifying downstream enthusiasm and performance.
2. **Cultivating Spiritual Intelligence:** With Spiritual Intelligence registering the lowest mean ($\Sigma = 17.41$), employees may lack clarity of purpose or alignment between personal values and organizational mission. Initiatives such as values-based training, reflective workshops, or ethical leadership development could bolster employees' sense of meaning at work, fostering deeper engagement and ethical service delivery.

In sum, while the workforce exhibits solid engagement and task execution, targeted human-resource strategies aimed at strengthening motivational levers and spiritual competencies are likely to unlock higher levels of enthusiasm and performance, providing a roadmap for sustainable organizational improvement.

Structure Analysis

In order to assess the explanatory and predictive power of the proposed structural model, we evaluated key metrics—R-Square (R^2), Adjusted R-Square, and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)—for both the mediator (Work Enthusiasm) and the ultimate outcome (Employee Performance). R^2 indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct explained by its predictors, while the adjusted R^2 accounts for model complexity. Q^2 , obtained via a blindfolding procedure, assesses the model's out-of-sample predictive relevance, with threshold values of 0.15 (medium) and 0.35 (high) commonly applied in PLS-SEM contexts. In this

research R-square (R^2) and Q-square (Q^2) provide in the Table 5. below:

Table 5: R square and Q square

Variable	R-Square (R^2)	Adjusted R-Square	Predictive Relevance (Q^2)	Interpretation
Work Enthusiasm (Y_1)	0.355	0.330	0.215	Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence jointly explain 35.5 % of variance in work enthusiasm.
Employee Performance (Y_2)	0.997	0.997	0.986	The full model (including work enthusiasm) accounts for 99.7 % of variance in employee performance.

Source: Researcher (2025)

The structural model reveals that competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence collectively explain a moderate portion of employees' work enthusiasm, with an R^2 of 0.355 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.330$), indicating that just over one-third of the variance in work enthusiasm is accounted for by these three antecedents. The predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.215$) exceeds the medium-threshold of 0.15, confirming that the model retains solid out-of-sample forecasting capability for work enthusiasm. However, the fact that nearly two-thirds of the drivers of work enthusiasm remain unexplained suggests that organizational interventions should extend beyond technical training and motivational incentives to include factors such as managerial support, team cohesion, and enriched job design.

In contrast, the employee performance construct achieves an R^2 of 0.997 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.997$) when work enthusiasm is introduced as a mediator—an exceptionally high explanation of variance by social-science standards. Its predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.986$) far surpasses the 0.35 benchmark for “high” relevance, demonstrating that the full model not only fits existing data almost perfectly but is also highly dependable for

predicting future performance outcomes. While these results underscore work enthusiasm's pivotal mediating role, the near-saturation of explained variance raises caution about possible overfitting or multicollinearity; future studies should therefore validate the model with independent samples and consider introducing more distal predictors to ensure robustness.

5. Narrative Description of Path Analysis

To evaluate the proposed relationships among competence, motivation, spiritual intelligence, work enthusiasm, and employee performance, we employed path analysis using SPSS 25. Path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values were computed to test four core hypotheses: (1) the direct effects of competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence on performance; (2) their direct effects on work enthusiasm; (3) the effect of work enthusiasm on performance; and (4) the mediating role of work enthusiasm in linking the antecedents to performance. Significance was assessed at the 0.05 level, with t-values greater than 1.96 indicating support for the hypothesized paths (Ghozali, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2014). The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Hypotheses and Path Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Path(s) & β	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
H1. Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence each have a direct effect on employee performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $X_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: $\beta = 2.922$ $X_2 \rightarrow Y_2$: $\beta = -3.568$ $X_3 \rightarrow Y_2$: $\beta = 0.576$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.922 -3.568 0.576 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.005* 0.001* 0.567 	Competence and motivation exert significant direct effects, whereas spiritual intelligence does not.
H2. Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence each have a direct effect on work enthusiasm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $X_1 \rightarrow Y_1$: $\beta = 2.875$ $X_2 \rightarrow Y_1$: $\beta = -3.550$ $X_3 \rightarrow Y_1$: $\beta = 0.635$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.922 -3.568 0.576 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.005* 0.001* 0.527 	Competence and motivation significantly predict enthusiasm, but spiritual intelligence does not.
H3. Work enthusiasm has a direct effect on employee performance.	$Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: $\beta = 1.005$	1.005	0.000*	Work enthusiasm has a strong, significant positive effect on performance.
H4. Competence, motivation, and spiritual intelligence indirectly affect performance through work enthusiasm (mediation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $X_1 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: total = 470 $X_2 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: total = 566.5 $X_3 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: total = 92.606 	—	—	Mediation is significant for competence and motivation but not for spiritual intelligence.

Source: Researcher (2025)

From the Table 6. Above, it's found that:

1. H1 (Direct Effects on Performance)

Competence exerts a strong positive effect on performance ($\beta = 2.922$, $p = 0.005$), confirming that higher skill and knowledge translate into better output. Motivation shows an unexpected negative coefficient ($\beta = -3.568$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that, as measured, greater motivational pressures may correlate with lower performance—perhaps indicating misaligned incentives or burnout. Spiritual intelligence's direct effect is non-significant ($\beta = 0.576$, $p = 0.567$), implying its impact on performance is negligible without engaging work enthusiasm.

2. H2 (Direct Effects on Work Enthusiasm)

Competence again significantly energizes employees ($\beta = 2.875$, $p = 0.005$), reinforcing that ability fosters engagement. Motivation's negative coefficient ($\beta = -3.550$, $p = 0.001$) suggests that certain motivational drivers may in fact dampen enthusiasm, possibly due to overly extrinsic reward structures. Spiritual intelligence does not directly boost enthusiasm ($\beta = 0.635$, $p = 0.527$), indicating that individual value alignment alone isn't enough to spark vigor.

3. H3 (Enthusiasm → Performance)

With $\beta = 1.005$ ($p < 0.001$), work enthusiasm emerges as a pivotal predictor: every unit increase in enthusiasm translates into a full-unit rise in performance, underscoring enthusiasm's critical role as the engine converting potential into results.

4. H4 (Mediation by Work Enthusiasm)

The total indirect effects through work enthusiasm are substantial for competence (470) and motivation (566.5), confirming their mediated influence on performance. In contrast, spiritual intelligence's mediated effect (92.606) remains small and statistically non-significant, indicating that without first generating enthusiasm, its impact on performance is limited.

V. DISCUSSION

This study reinforces the pivotal role of competence in driving employee performance within a university-affiliated recreational park. Consistent with established performance models (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Mangkunegara, 2013), employees who perceive themselves as technically skilled and knowledgeable demonstrate greater confidence in task execution, which translates into higher-quality outcomes. Practically, this underscores the importance of targeted training programs and continuous professional development initiatives that bolster both the depth and breadth of employee competencies.

In contrast, our findings challenge traditional assumptions about motivation. Although classical theories (Herzberg, 1966; Vroom, 1964) suggest that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators enhance

engagement and productivity, the present results imply that overly transactional incentive schemes can inadvertently undermine enthusiasm and performance. This suggests a misalignment between current reward structures and employee needs—perhaps because external pressures foster stress or distract from meaningful work. Organizations should therefore pivot toward recognition systems that emphasize autonomy, personal growth, and purpose, rather than solely financial or quota-based rewards.

While spiritual intelligence—the capacity to integrate personal values and meaning into work—did not emerge as a direct performance driver, its strategic integration remains valuable. Prior research (Hidayati & Kurniawati, 2017; Wulandari & Susanti, 2019) indicates that spiritual intelligence contributes most when employees perceive clear links between their core values and daily tasks. To harness this latent potential, companies should embed reflective practices, ethical leadership, and values-based storytelling into organizational routines, thereby converting individual purpose into collective engagement.

Finally, work enthusiasm proved the critical psychological mechanism translating competencies and well-designed motivational elements into tangible performance improvements (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). Enthusiasm reflects not only the vigor with which employees approach tasks but also their emotional dedication and cognitive absorption. Organizations should therefore invest in job-crafting opportunities, supportive supervision, and team-building activities that sustain enthusiasm over time. By focusing on both capability building and the affective dimensions of work, management can achieve a synergistic boost in long-term performance.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

In summary, our analysis confirms that employees' technical competence is the strongest direct driver of both work enthusiasm and performance, while conventional motivation schemes—particularly those relying heavily on extrinsic incentives—can paradoxically dampen engagement and output unless realigned with intrinsic needs. Spiritual intelligence, although conceptually valuable, did not directly influence outcomes absent an intervening psychological state. Crucially, work enthusiasm emerged as the fulcrum through which competence and appropriately structured motivation translate into almost complete performance gains, underscoring enthusiasm's role as the essential psychological mechanism in this context. To capitalize on these insights, managers should invest in continuous skills development and mentorship to maintain high competence levels, while redesigning reward systems to emphasize autonomy, mastery, and recognition over purely transactional bonuses. Parallel efforts to cultivate work enthusiasm—through job

crafting, supportive leadership, and team-building—will ensure that latent capabilities and values are activated into sustained performance. Finally, integrating values-based practices (e.g., reflective workshops, ethical storytelling) can harness spiritual intelligence by explicitly linking individual purpose to organizational goals, thereby fostering holistic engagement and long-term success.

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