

# Original Research Article

## WORK ETHOS AS MEDIATOR OF THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RELATIONS AND PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

### **Abstract:**

The study aimed to examine the influence of human relations and the physical work environment on employee performance through work ethos. This research is quantitative, with explanatory research and a saturated sampling technique. The data used are primary data from a questionnaire of 70 respondents from the Tourism Office of Batu City, East Java, Indonesia, in 2022. Data analysis with validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing using Smart PLS. The results show that human relations significantly affect employee performance. The physical work environment positively and considerably to employee performance. Work ethos has a positive effect on employee performance. Work ethos mediates human relations and the physical work environment on employee performance. The research implies that it can improve the performance of the Batu City Tourism Office, East Java, Indonesia, by enhancing their work ethos and a comfortable physical work environment, and employees can respect and help each other.

Keywords: Human Relations, Physical Work Environment, Employee Performance, Work Ethos

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Successful management is leadership, while the core of leadership is human relations. The good and bad of management depends on the good and bad of leadership. In contrast, leadership depends on the good and bad of human relations the agency applies [1]. Good relations between employees and fellow employees and employees with superiors in certain agencies. Human relations is not just an interaction or relationship between humans in general but has a purpose in changing attitudes and views towards something so that someone involved in the interaction can act as expected solely to achieve organizational goals. The physical work environment and ethos can also influence human relations

[2]. The research results show that work ethos positively and significantly affects performance [3]. The results of the research show that human relations have a positive and significant influence on employee performance, and the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance [4] [5] [6]. Research [7] shows that human relations and work environment conditions significantly affect employees' work ethos. The work environment affects performance [8] [9] [10] [11] [12]. Work ethos has a positive effect on performance [13]. Human relations to the work environment have a positive and significant effect [14].

In contrast to the research results, human relations do not have a positive and significant influence on performance [15]. Stated that the work environment has no effective or negative effect on work ethos [16]. Meanwhile, research [17] shows that the physical condition of the domain is not positive and significantly impacts work Ethos. Work Ethos is proven to be positive and substantially affects performance. The results of human relations and physical environmental conditions on work ethos positively impact performance. Based on the research gap, this study aims to re-analyze how human relations and physical work environment conditions influence employee performance through work ethos at the Batu City Tourism Office.

## **2. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 The human relation with employee performance**

Performance is activities carried out by a person concerning work assignments in a company, department, or organization according to their potential to produce something meaningful for the organization, the wider community, or the community [18]. Employee performance is a function of the interaction between ability and motivation. Three indicators are used to measure employee performance: quantity, quality, and timeliness [19].

Human relations are interpersonal communication that occurs in an organization or company oriented to human behavior (action-oriented), as explained by [20]; human relations are human relations that are included in interpersonal communication because it takes place generally between two people

in a dialogical manner. It is said that human relations are communication because they are action-oriented, containing activities to change a person's attitude, opinion, or behavior. Human relations indicators, according to Istijanto [21], are our relationships with colleagues, relationships with superiors, relationships with clients, and relationships with the community. In previous studies, human relations significantly affect performance [4] [22] [28] [29] [30]. The hypothesis in this study:

H1: Human Relations directly affect employee performance.

### **2.2 The Physical Work Environment with employee performance**

Although it is believed that the physical environment is not the main factor in increasing employee productivity, the physical environment factor is a variable that management experts need to consider in its effect on increasing productivity. For that reason, to maximize H.R. management capabilities, both large and small factors must be collected in a synergistic management unit [23]. The indicators of the physical work environment, according to Sedarmayanti [24], are lighting/light at work, temperature at work, humidity at work, air circulation in the workplace, and noise at work. Smells at work, colors at work, decorations at work, music at work. Previous research has stated that the physical work environment has a positive and significant effect on performance [5] [6] [22] [30] [32]. The hypothesis in this study:

H2: The physical work environment has a direct effect on employee performance

### 2.3 The Work Ethos with employee performance

Work ethos is a set of basic attitudes or views employees hold to assess work as a positive thing for improving the quality of life, thus influencing work behavior in the organization [25]. According to Miller and Whoer [26], there are seven measurements of work ethos: independence, morality, free time, hard work, centralization in work, wasted time, and delay in gratification. The results of previous studies stated that work ethos significantly influences performance [13] [17]. The hypothesis in this study:

H3: Work ethos affects employee performance

### 2.4 The Work Ethos mediates human relations on employee performance

Work ethos is a mediating variable to see if there is an indirect relationship between human relations and the physical work environment on employee performance. Research conducted by [27] [31] shows that a work ethos can mediate human relations and the physical work environment on employee performance. So, the hypothesis in this study:

H4: Work ethos mediates the effect of the human relation and physical work environment on employee performance

The research framework is presented in Fig.1 as follows:

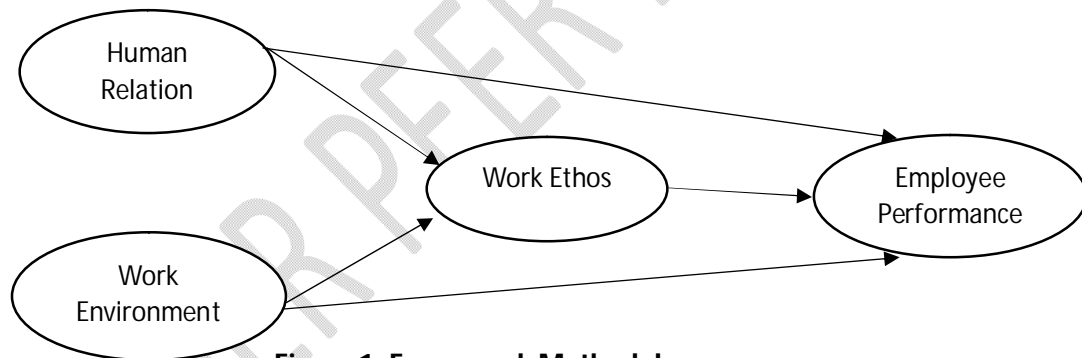


Figure 1. Framework Methodology

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

Sources of data in this study are primary and secondary data. Secondary data is data obtained from research subjects and only as research support. Secondary data in this study is obtained from the Batu City Tourism Office. In comparison, primary data is data received and processed to conduct research through the distribution of questionnaires given to employees.

This type of research is explanatory research, which tests the hypothesized variables through a quantitative approach. In this study, the data is cross-sectional, namely, the data processed by the author through the results of distributing questionnaires to respondents. The sample in this study amounted to 70 employees of the Batu City Tourism Office. The sampling technique used a saturated model, that is, from all populations the sample was sampled.

This research consists of four variables. Namely, the independent variables, namely Human Relations and Physical Work Environment; The mediating variable is work ethos; while the dependent variable is employee performance. The data test is done using validity, reliability, linearity, and hypothesis testing. Data analysis with path-Smart PLS, also known as the path analysis model, is a mediating influence between the independent and dependent variables.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of processing the validity of this research instrument, 42 statements from the four variables resulted in the overall statements being declared valid. Table 1 shows that the value of the r-count is greater than the r-table of 0,235. All items for the argument continued in the next stage. As for the results of the processing of the reliability test (Table 2), the four variables used were declared reliable with a Cronbach Alpha value > 0,60.

**Table1. Result Validity Test**

| Variable         | Item  | R-Count | Explanation | Variable             | Item | R-Count | Explanation |  |
|------------------|-------|---------|-------------|----------------------|------|---------|-------------|--|
| Human Relation   | X1.1  | 0,787   | Valid       | Employee Performance | Y.1  | 0,867   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.2  | 0,786   | Valid       |                      | Y.2  | 0,698   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.3  | 0,851   | Valid       |                      | Y.3  | 0,905   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.4  | 0,901   | Valid       |                      | Y.4  | 0,856   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.5  | 0,804   | Valid       |                      | Y.5  | 0,918   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.6  | 0,859   | Valid       |                      | Y.6  | 0,883   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X1.7  | 0,787   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |
| Work Environment | X2.1  | 0,700   | Valid       | Work Ethos           | Z.1  | 0,789   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.2  | 0,849   | Valid       |                      | Z.2  | 0,867   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.3  | 0,865   | Valid       |                      | Z.3  | 0,856   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.4  | 0,883   | Valid       |                      | Z.4  | 0,841   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.5  | 0,802   | Valid       |                      | Z.5  | 0,357   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.6  | 0,875   | Valid       |                      | Z.6  | 0,871   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.7  | 0,805   | Valid       |                      | Z.7  | 0,928   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.8  | 0,875   | Valid       |                      | Z.8  | 0,864   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.9  | 0,854   | Valid       |                      | Z.9  | 0,818   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.10 | 0,837   | Valid       |                      | Z.10 | 0,858   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.11 | 0,700   | Valid       |                      | Z.11 | 0,598   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.12 | 0,849   | Valid       |                      | Z.12 | 0,900   | Valid       |  |
|                  | X2.13 | 0,700   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |
|                  | X2.14 | 0,849   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |
|                  | X2.15 | 0,865   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |
|                  | X2.16 | 0,883   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |
|                  | X2.17 | 0,802   | Valid       |                      |      |         |             |  |

Source: processed (2022)

**Table 2. Result Reliable Test**

| Variable       | Cronbach Alpha | Explanation |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Human Relation | 0,920          | Reliable    |

|                      |       |          |
|----------------------|-------|----------|
| Work Environment     | 0,970 | Reliable |
| Employee Performance | 0,891 | Reliable |
| Work Ethos           | 0,923 | Reliable |

Source: processed (2022)

**Table 3. Result Linearity Test**

| Variable | Significant | Explanation |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| X1 – Y   | 0,83        | Linear      |
| X2 – Y   | 0,635       | Linear      |
| Z – Y    | 0,432       | Linear      |

Source: processed (2022)

**Table 4. Result Hypothesis Test**

| Test Regression              | R Square | Standardized Coefficients Beta | Significant | Explanation |
|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| H.R. - EP                    | 0,255    | 0,505                          | 0,000       | Effect      |
| WE - EP                      | 0,260    | 0,510                          | 0,000       | Effect      |
| Work Ethos - EP              | 0,584    | 0,764                          | 0,000       | Effect      |
| HR WE to E.P. via Work Ethos | 0,669    | 0,853                          | 0,000       | Effect      |

Source: processed (2022)

### Classic assumption test

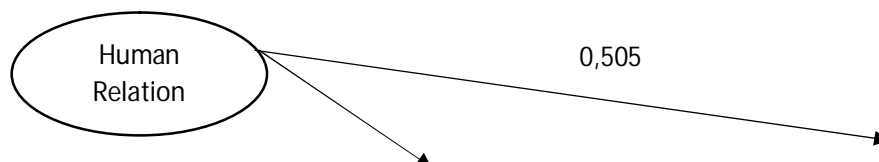
The normality test results show that the distribution is normal at a level  $> 0,05$ . Meanwhile, for the multicollinearity test, the results of this study's regression model were free due to the variables of Human Relations, Physical Work Environment, and Work Ethos, VIF value  $< 10$ , and tolerance value  $> 0,10$ . Results of the linearity test in Table 3 showed that linearity distributes the data because the p-value was  $0,05$ .

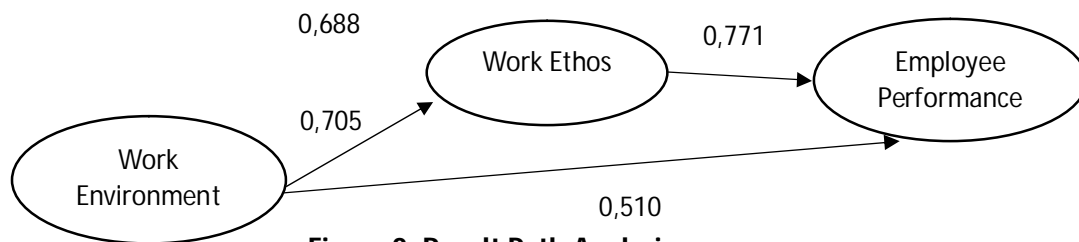
### Hypothesis Test

Based on Table 4, it is known that human relations have a direct and significant influence on performance, which means that H1 is accepted. Likewise, there is an

immediate effect of the physical work environment on performance because the significance value is less than  $0,05$ , meaning that H2 is accepted. Furthermore, work ethos on performance also has a direct and significant effect, which means that H3 is accepted. Then human relations and the physical work environment directly and significantly affect performance with work ethos as a mediation, meaning H4 is taken.

The value of R Square in Table 3 shows that the contribution of human relations, physical work environment, and work ethos to performance is  $66,9\%$ . In comparison, the remaining  $33,1\%$  is the contribution of other variables not examined.





**Figure 2. Result Path Analysis**

Based on Figure 2, it is known that there is a direct influence between human relations on employee performance, which is 0,505. According to [1], the core of successful management is leadership. In contrast, the essence of leadership is human relations. The good and bad of control depends on the good and bad of leadership. In contrast, supervision depends on the good and bad of human relations applied by the agency. It is a good relationship between employees and fellow employees and employees with superiors in the agency. Human relations is not just an interaction or relationship between humans in general but has a purpose in changing attitudes and views towards something so that someone involved in the exchange can act as expected solely to achieve organizational goals. Supported by research conducted [4] [22] [28] [29] [30], which shows that human relations have a significant positive effect on employee performance. That is, if human relations between superiors and subordinates or co-workers are managed properly, it can improve the performance of the Batu City Tourism Office employees. Improvement of Human relations can maintain tolerance between employees, respect each other, accept colleagues' opinions, and maintain relationships between fellow employees and superiors/subordinates.

Furthermore, the physical work environment on employee performance is known to have a direct and positive effect of 0,510. Supported by research conducted by [6] [22] [30] [32] [34] in his research which shows that the work environment which has a significant positive influence on employee performance. That is, a good, clean, comfortable, and safe physical work environment can improve the performance of the Batu City Tourism Office employees.

Then, work ethos on employee performance shows a direct and positive effect, 0,771. Supported by research conducted by [13] [17]. So, if the work ethos of the Batu City Tourism Office employees increases, the employee's performance will also increase. Improvement Work ethos can be working hard, being independent and not depending on other co-workers, having morality, and making the best use of free time.

Meanwhile, human relations on employee performance mediated by work ethos showed a positive effect of 0,688. Supported by research conducted by [27] [31]. So, work ethos can judge human relations on the performance of Batu City Tourism Office employees. The physical work environment on employee performance is mediated by the work ethos of a positive direct effect equal to

0,705. Supported by research conducted by [3]. That is, the work ethos can mediate the physical work environment on the performance of the Batu City Tourism Office employees.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, human relations directly influence the performance of the Batu City Tourism Office employees. The existence of good human relations, namely by maintaining relationships with fellow/superior/subordinate, mutual tolerance, and mutual respect, can improve employee performance because of a sense of security in the work environment. The contribution of this research is to provide an understanding to the Batu City Tourism Office that the relationship between

humans and the work environment can support increased performance so that work ethos can be formed and can be an indirect relationship.

#### Limit and Suggestions

Some suggestions are as participating in the City Tourism Office in Indonesia is expected to continue to develop human relations and maintain a safe and comfortable work environment so that the work ethos can emerge and improve. Based on this, employee performance is expected to continue to improve. The limitation of this research is that the questionnaires filled out by the respondents cannot be controlled properly because the researcher does not accompany them directly.

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