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Performance Under Pressure: Unpacking Direct and Non-Mediated Effects of Empowerment, Job Involvement, and Commitment on Lecturer Performance

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ABSTRACT: Private universities in South Sulawesi are striving to improve lecturer performance amid growing academic demands. This study addresses a research gap by examining how psychological empowerment, job involvement, affective commitment, and effort influence in-role performance. Based on 307 valid responses, the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that psychological empowerment, job involvement, and affective commitment significantly affect in-role performance. Effort also contributes directly to performance and mediates the relationship between affective commitment and in-role performance. However, effort does not mediate the effects of psychological empowerment or job involvement. These findings enrich organizational behavior literature by highlighting the importance of psychological and behavioral factors—particularly empowerment, commitment, and effort—in enhancing academic staff performance in under-resourced higher education institutions.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment; Effort; Job involvement; Affective commitment; In-role performance; Private universities

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INTRODUCTION

Private universities in Indonesia continue to face persistent structural and systemic challenges that directly affect institutional performance and competitiveness. Among these, lecturer performance remains a central determinant of academic quality, institutional reputation, and graduate outcomes. In-role performance reflects lecturers' fulfillment of the core responsibilities required by the *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi*—teaching, research, and community service (Tahar & Abdillah, 2021). However, performance outcomes in these domains are frequently constrained by both organizational and individual-level factors that influence lecturers' ability to meet academic expectations.

These challenges are especially pronounced in private universities across developing regions such as South Sulawesi, where lecturers often experience heavy workloads, insufficient compensation, and limited institutional support. Compensation structures tied to credit-hour teaching, delayed payment schedules, and limited access to research funding compel many lecturers to teach across multiple campuses in order to sustain their income. This creates a paradoxical environment in which faculty members are simultaneously burdened with high expectations and limited resources, ultimately reducing their motivation, limiting research productivity, and undermining community engagement activities. Compounding these issues is the shortage of qualified academic personnel: 13.6% of lecturers nationally still hold only a bachelor's degree (S-1), and doctoral degree holders remain at just 13%, well below the national target of 20% (Widodo, 2020). These structural burdens emphasize the urgency of examining psychological and motivational mechanisms that may help sustain performance under institutional constraints.

Within this context, understanding how psychological resources influence lecturer performance becomes essential. Prior research consistently highlights the significance of work attitudes such as psychological empowerment, job involvement, and affective commitment. However, empirical evidence regarding their direct effects on performance remains inconsistent. For instance, while some studies confirm that empowerment strengthens individual performance (Ochoa Pacheco & Coello-Montecel, 2023), others report limited direct effects (Siyal et al., 2023; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024). Similar inconsistencies arise in research on job involvement and affective commitment. Meta-analytic work by Zapf et al. (2021) suggests that these constructs may influence performance through mediating mechanisms such as effort rather than through straightforward direct pathways. These discrepancies indicate the necessity for further investigation into how attitudinal resources translate into behavioral performance outcomes.

Although large-scale meta-analyses such as Zapf et al. (2021) and Llorente-Alonso et al. (2024) have synthesized extensive findings on psychological empowerment, job involvement, and affective commitment, several unresolved gaps remain. First, both meta-analyses emphasize persistent inconsistencies in the direct effects of attitudinal constructs on performance outcomes and call for further research into the underlying mechanisms that explain when and how these attitudes translate into performance. However, they do not empirically test effort as a motivational pathway, leaving open the question of whether effort selectively mediates attitudinal effects. Second, while the meta-analyses primarily draw from corporate and public-sector contexts, they provide little empirical evidence from higher-education systems in developing countries, particularly those facing structural resource constraints. The unique institutional pressures faced by private universities in Indonesia—characterized by high teaching loads, limited research support, and unstable compensation structures—have not been examined in relation to motivational performance models. Third, neither meta-analysis fully addresses how contextual limitations may function as boundary conditions that moderate or inhibit the translation of motivational attitudes into behavioral performance. Therefore, this study advances the literature by empirically evaluating effort as a mediating mechanism within a resource-challenged higher-education environment and by testing theoretical propositions within a context largely absent from prior performance research.

Drawing upon Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, this study conceptualizes effort as a motivational pathway responsible for converting psychological attitudes into observable performance. SDT posits that autonomy, competence, and meaningfulness enhance intrinsic motivation and discretionary effort, which subsequently strengthen performance. Similarly, JD-R conceptualizes empowerment, involvement, and

affective commitment as personal and job resources that activate motivational processes leading to increased energy investment and performance gains. Hence, effort is not merely a statistical mediator but a theoretically grounded mechanism that explains how and why attitudinal resources translate into performance within demanding academic environments.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating these three major attitudinal constructs—psychological empowerment, job involvement, and affective commitment—within a unified motivational framework and empirically examining the mediating role of effort in the under-studied context of resource-constrained private universities in Indonesia. Unlike prior studies that treat these variables in isolation or focus primarily on corporate or public-sector institutions, this study presents a holistic examination that reflects the complexity of academic labor realities. Furthermore, the application of Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) enables simultaneous assessment of direct and indirect effects, offering empirical insight into the motivational dynamics underlying lecturer performance. Thus, this study contributes theoretically by clarifying inconsistent findings in previous research and practically by informing performance enhancement strategies appropriate for higher-education environments that operate under significant resource constraints. Nevertheless, the contextual mechanism proposed requires further empirical validation in future studies, particularly through moderation or multi-group analysis to test boundary effects more explicitly.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment is a concept applicable across various fields such as economics, management, education, psychology, community development, and social movements. The concept and processes of empowerment vary among these perspectives. (Oliveira et al., 2023) suggests that defining empowerment is challenging due to its different contexts and individuals involved. (Harvey et al., 2020) define empowerment as a process to enhance self-efficacy among organizational members by identifying and eliminating conditions that foster powerlessness, through both formal organizational practices and informal techniques providing efficacy-related information. According to (Raja & Zahid, 2020), empowerment helps employees take control of their responsibilities with sufficient belief in performing their tasks at the workplace. (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018) define empowerment as intrinsic task motivation that manifests in four cognitions reflecting individuals' orientation toward their roles. Intrinsic task motivation involves positive experiences directly derived from tasks that generate motivation and satisfaction. The four cognitions identified by (Khan et al., 2020) are meaning, competence, impact, and choice. (Celik et al., 2024) propose six dimensions of empowerment in an educational context: teacher self-efficacy, impact, opportunities for professional development, involvement in decision-making processes, teacher status, and autonomy. Empowerment, as perceived by (Abbas et al., 2021), is defined as the process by which school participants develop competence to take charge of their own development and solve their own problems. According to (Ugboro & Obeng, 2000), as cited by (Verma et al., 2022), empowerment can be understood through three key dimensions: participation in decision-making, delegation of authority, and access to information and other organizational resources. In the context of education, (Shen et al., 2020) propose that empowerment consists of two main aspects—organizational empowerment and classroom empowerment. Within an educational setting, empowerment helps enhance teachers' sense of control over their professional roles, while also fostering stronger connections with colleagues, principals, students, and the wider community.

In this study, psychological empowerment is conceptualized using the four-cognition model proposed by Spreitzer (1995), consisting of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, which align directly with the measurement instrument employed. Alternative models such as participation-based empowerment or teacher empowerment are not adopted, as they are inconsistent with the operational definition used. Mechanistically, empowerment enhances performance by increasing personal agency and intrinsic motivation (Seibert et al., 2011). Within resource-constrained private universities, empowered faculty are more likely to exert additional effort, which translates into higher in-role performance.Based on this review of the literature, the hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Psychological empowerment has a direct impact on in-role performance.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment describes how strongly individuals identify with and feel emotionally connected to their organization (Hom et al., 2017). It reflects more than just loyalty—it includes a sense of belonging and emotional investment in one's job and workplace. (Cropanzano et al., 2017) define affective commitment as a genuine emotional attachment, where individuals feel a sense of ownership toward their role, the organization, or both. This form of commitment has received considerable attention because of its strong links to important workplace outcomes like job performance, attendance, and turnover. Employees with a high level of commitment tend to be more engaged and attentive, and are far less likely to leave their jobs. Supporting this, a meta-analysis by (Meyer et al., 2002) found that the three core dimensions of organizational commitment—affective, normative, and continuance—are all negatively correlated with turnover. In short, the more committed an employee is, the more likely they are to stay. Committed employees are often seen as loyal, productive, and consistent in their work. Their commitment also correlates with positive workplace behavior, such as regular attendance, stronger job performance, and a willingness to go the extra mile for the good of the organization (Silva et al., 2023). The benefits of organizational commitment go beyond the individual organization. As (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016) point out, strong commitment helps reduce job-hopping, supports employee stability, and contributes to better overall productivity and work quality. This further reinforces the idea that fostering organizational commitment is key to long-term success.

Over time, researchers have explored organizational commitment from different angles, often categorizing it into affective and calculative (or continuance) types. Despite differences in how it's defined, the concept consistently focuses on the employee–organization relationship. According to Mowday and others (Meyer et al., 2002; Hom et al., 2017), organizational commitment is attitudinal in nature—centered on how strongly individuals identify with and are involved in their organization. (Porter et al., 1974), as cited by (Hngoi et al., 2023), describe three key components of commitment: accepting and believing in the organization's goals and values, being willing to exert effort for the organization, and a desire to remain part of it. (Alqudah et al., 2022) further unpack the three dimensions of commitment. Affective commitment keeps individuals in the organization because they genuinely *want* to stay. Continuance commitment makes them stay because they feel they *need* to. Also, normative commitment leads them to stay out of a sense of *obligation*. While affective and normative commitment are highly correlated, research by Meyer et al. (2002) confirms that these are still distinct concepts.

This study explicitly focuses on affective commitment, referring to an individual's emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This dimension is selected because it has been identified as the strongest predictor of discretionary effort (Meyer et al., 2002), the mediating variable in our model. In the PTS context, affective commitment stems from professional identity and pride in the institution. Mechanistically, emotionally committed lecturers are more willing to invest extra effort to achieve organizational goals, thereby enhancing in-role performance (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2012).These insights support the hypothesis.

H2: Affective commitment positively influences in-role performance.

Job Involvement

The concept of job involvement was initially introduced by (TM & KEJNER, 1965) as cited in (Nuis et al., 2023) and has since become a central focus in organizational behavior and work psychology. At its core, employee involvement refers to how deeply one's job performance is tied to their sense of self-worth. It involves internalizing values related to the importance and meaningfulness of one's work. People who are highly engaged tend to invest more time, energy, and personal effort into their roles. (Saks et al., 2022) describe job involvement as the degree to which individuals identify with their jobs, actively participate in their roles, and view performance as an important part of their self-esteem. Similarly, (Owens et al., 2016) define job involvement as a state where individuals are cognitively immersed, emotionally involved, and highly concerned with their current job responsibilities. It's not just about doing the work—it's about being mentally

and emotionally present in it. From a motivational perspective, job involbvement is seen as a powerful driver of both individual and organizational performance (Chowdhury et al., 2023). According to (Kurtessis et al., 2017), job involvement reflects a deep psychological connection to one's work. Engaged individuals don't just see their job as a task—they view it as a meaningful part of their life. Their sense of self becomes intertwined with their job, and their work plays a major role in shaping their identity. In other words, for highly engaged employees, their work is not just what they do—it's part of who they are.

Job involvement refers to the degree to which individuals are psychologically immersed in their work and identify with it (Kanungo, 1982). This study uses job involvement, not job engagement, which is conceptually distinct and measured through vigor–dedication–absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Alignment with measurement indicators is therefore essential. Causally, higher job involvement increases cognitive and emotional energy allocation, resulting in stronger persistence in accomplishing work responsibilities and ultimately higher in-role performance (Brown & Leigh, 1996). This mechanism is especially relevant in PTS environments that require high productivity with limited resources. (Nwibere, 2022) builds on this idea by describing job involvement as the extent to which an individual sees their job as a primary life interest—a vital source of purpose and personal fulfillment. He identifies four key aspects: (1) work becomes a central part of one's identity; (2) individuals demonstrate active involvement and dedication; (3) performance enhances self-esteem, and there is alignment between personal identity and job performance. When these elements are present, employees are more likely to experience a strong emotional and psychological connection to their roles. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Job involvement positively influences in-role performance.

Effort

Effort is a central construct in motivational theory and plays a critical role in understanding how internal attitudes transform into observable performance outcomes. While effort is often incorrectly used interchangeably with motivation, contemporary research clearly differentiates the two. Motivation represents an internal psychological state—a willingness to direct, initiate, and persist in a particular course of action—whereas effort reflects the actual intensity and duration of energy expenditure applied to task execution (Van Iddekinge et al., 2023). This distinction is essential because it positions effort not as an attitude, but as a behavioral enactment of motivation.

Early work by Mohr & Bitner (1995) recognized effort as a key determinant of performance outcomes, and Travers et al. (2015) defined it as the energy mobilized to complete tasks or a sequence of actions. Sitthiwarongchai et al. (2020) expand this view by describing effort as an internal drive to invest additional time and energy beyond minimum job requirements in pursuit of organizational goals. Tagliabue et al. (2020) further emphasize that two equally motivated individuals may deliver different performance results depending on how much effort they actually exert—highlighting effort as the proximal mechanism linking psychological intention to tangible performance.

Recent meta-analytic work by Van Iddekinge et al. (2023) reinforces this conceptualization by asserting that effort is a measurable behavioral output consisting of intensity, persistence, and direction of action, and represents the most immediate predictor of job performance. Likewise, Eisenberger et al. (2020) argue that effort reflects a conscious, voluntary decision to exceed minimal requirements and pursue excellence. Brown et al. (2015), building on Campbell and Pritchard, suggest that effort comprises three dimensions: duration (how long one works), intensity (how hard one works), and goal direction (how strategically effort aligns to objectives). The present study emphasizes duration and intensity as the most relevant attributes of effort within the academic work context.

Positioning effort as a mediating variable is theoretically justified by evidence showing that psychological attitudes do not automatically convert into performance without the activation of behavioral energy (Zapf et al., 2021). In other words, effort functions as the behavioral mechanism through which psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and job involvement are expected to influence in-role performance. Without sufficient effort, positive attitudes may remain internal intentions with limited performance consequences. Therefore, examining effort's

mediating role provides clarity for the inconsistent results reported in previous studies, where direct effects between attitudes and performance were significant in some contexts but weak or nonsignificant in others.

Effort is defined as the intensity and persistence of energy invested by individuals to complete tasks (Yeo & Neal, 2004). Effort serves as a mechanism that transforms psychological attitudes into observable work outcomes. Under competitive and resource-limited PTS conditions, effort acts as the primary driver that converts empowerment, commitment, and involvement into measurable tri dharma performance results. Accordingly, effort is positioned both as a direct predictor of in-role performance and as a potential mediator (Grant, 2008).Based on these insights, the hypotheses are proposed.

H4: Effort positively influences in-role performance.

$H5_1$: It is hypothesized that effort mediates the effect of psychological empowerment on in-role performance.

$H5_2$: *Effort is also expected to mediate the relationship between organizational commitment—specifically affective commitment—and in-role performance.*

$H5_3$: *Effort mediates the effect of job involvement on in-role performance*.

In Role Performance

In-role performance refers to the core duties and responsibilities that employees are expected to fulfill as part of their formal job roles (Cropanzano et al., 2017). These are the essential behaviors required to meet job expectations and are typically assessed based on standards such as accuracy, quality, productivity, and supporting documentation—like safety, attendance, or punctuality records (Buil et al., 2019; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). In the workplace, task performance usually aligns closely with what's outlined in job descriptions and is often linked to individual rewards and recognition. At its core, performance reflects what employees choose to do—or choose not to do—within the scope of their responsibilities. When viewed from various angles, performance can be seen as the measurable substance of an individual's work achievements.

In-role performance is particularly important because it has a direct impact on broader organizational outcomes. Within educational institutions, for instance, faculty performance is a critical factor that shapes both student success and overall institutional performance (Otache & Inekwe, 2022). Teachers and lecturers, as highlighted by (Otache & Inekwe, 2022), are central figures in the learning process, meaning that understanding what drives their performance is essential for improving education quality. Exploring the determinants of faculty performance across diverse higher education settings not only deepens theoretical understanding but also helps shape practical recommendations for institutional improvement. (Lucky & Yusoff, 2015) define faculty performance as the ability to effectively plan, deliver, and evaluate the teaching and learning process. Similarly, (Quansah, 2022) evaluate performance in terms of teaching effectiveness and excellence, while (Halim et al., 2018) highlights the triadic focus of university faculty performance: teaching, research, and community service. In Indonesia, the professional responsibilities of faculty members are formally governed by national regulations. Article 6 of Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers stipulates that lecturers are obligated to carry out teaching, conduct research and scientific development, participate in community service, plan and evaluate learning processes, and continuously enhance their qualifications and competencies in accordance with advancements in science, technology, and the arts.

The literature identifies several key variables that significantly influence in-role performance across both organizational and higher education contexts. Organizational commitment—comprising affective, normative, and continuance dimensions—impacts employee behavior differently; those with strong affective commitment are more willing to exert effort beyond formal requirements, while normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation, and continuance commitment often results in minimal performance driven by necessity (Alqudah et al., 2022). Empowerment also plays a vital role, as individuals who are involved in decision-making, granted authority, and provided access to resources tend to demonstrate higher levels of task performance (Verma & Gautam, 2022). In addition, job involvement—defined by one's emotional and cognitive investment in work—has a positive influence on performance outcomes, while effort, as the intensity and persistence applied to work tasks, contributes directly to the fulfillment

of professional responsibilities. Within the context of higher education, in-role performance among faculty members is closely linked to student learning outcomes and institutional reputation, as their performance in teaching, research, and community service forms the backbone of academic success (Halim et al., 2018). Understanding how these variables interact is essential for developing strategies to enhance lecturer involvement and effectiveness. Therefore, this study proposes a conceptual framework that emphasizes the integrated roles of organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, job involvement, and effort in shaping in-role performance, particularly in the challenging setting of resource-limited private universities.

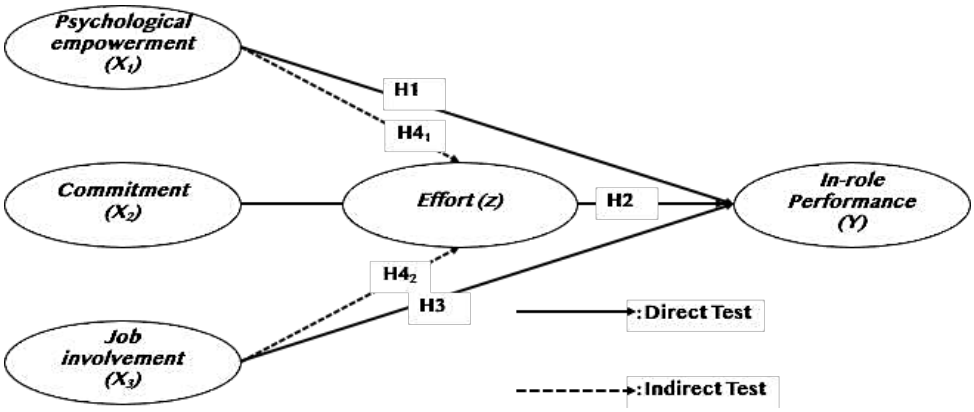

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach to ensure the collection of reliable, structured, and analytically sound data. An online questionnaire was selected as the primary method for data gathering, as it allows for consistent and efficient collection of measurable responses. This approach also ensures data uniformity, which is essential for conducting advanced statistical analyses using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The research targets all permanent faculty members holding teaching certificates across active universities in South Sulawesi, amounting to a total population of 1,522 individuals. Due to the relatively large population and the practical challenge of accessing every member, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used. This method was chosen to capture the diversity of the population—categorized by institution and academic level—while still maintaining representativeness. Although some subgroups had smaller sample sizes, proportionate stratification helped preserve the balance and integrity of the overall sample. The population for this research was defined based on three main criteria: faculty members must be actively teaching, must work at private universities, and must possess official teaching certifications as well as formal academic ranks. These criteria were used to ensure that the respondents accurately reflect the core focus of the study. The sample size for this study was determined using the widely recognized sample size calculation method developed by (Rahi, 2017). This approach is designed to estimate the minimum number of respondents needed to accurately represent a given population within a specified margin of error. The formula used is as follows:

$$n = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2(1-P)} \quad \text{..... (1)}$$

Based on the sample size determination table developed by (Rahi, 2017; Arifin et al., 2022), a minimum of 307 respondents is required to accurately represent a population of approximately 1,500 individuals. In this study, data collection was carried out using Google Forms, a platform widely recommended for social science research due to its ability to maintain respondent anonymity and privacy. The data collection process took place over a three-month period, from October to December 2023, and successfully reached the targeted sample size for statistical analysis. To test the research hypotheses, the study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0. SEM was chosen for its robust ability to analyze complex models

involving multiple variables and relationships, including mediation and moderation effects. This analytical approach is particularly well-suited for exploring theoretical frameworks from a predictive perspective, allowing the study to generate valuable insights that go beyond the observed sample.

The online questionnaire was divided into two parts. Section A collected demographic information, including gender, age, university affiliation, teaching certification status, and academic position. Meanwhile the Section B focused on measuring key constructs such as psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, job involvement, effort, and in-role performance. All measurement items were adapted from established theoretical frameworks and prior empirical studies. Respondents rated each item using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), which allowed for nuanced responses and facilitated more detailed quantitative analysis.

RESULTS

Validity and Reliability Construct

Validity and reliability tests are performed to ascertain the accuracy and consistency of the research instrument in collecting data. Validity tests assess the instrument's capacity to measure the intended target accurately. Within the framework of Partial Least Squares (PLS), the assessment of validity encompasses three key tests: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Convergent validity evaluates the degree to which indicators accurately represent the underlying construct.

In Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, a primary concern is ensuring that each indicator accurately reflects the latent construct it is intended to measure. Ideally, indicator loadings should be ≥ 0.70, which implies that the indicator explains approximately 49% of the construct's variance (since $0.70^2 = 0.49$). Higher loadings indicate stronger and more reliable representation of the construct. Loadings also contribute to convergent validity, which reflects the extent to which multiple indicators of a construct are correlated and move consistently in the same direction. Although loadings below 0.50 are generally considered weak and subject to elimination, indicators with values between 0.60 and 0.70 may still be retained if they offer theoretical justification and the model demonstrates good overall fit. According to Ghozali (2018), a construct is deemed reliable if the composite reliability exceeds 0.60 and Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70. These metrics assess the internal consistency of items in measuring the same construct. Another important measure is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), introduced by Fornell and Larcker (1981), which should ideally be at least 0.50—indicating that more than half of the construct's variance is captured by its indicators. Failing to meet these thresholds may signal problems in the model as finalized in Figure 2.

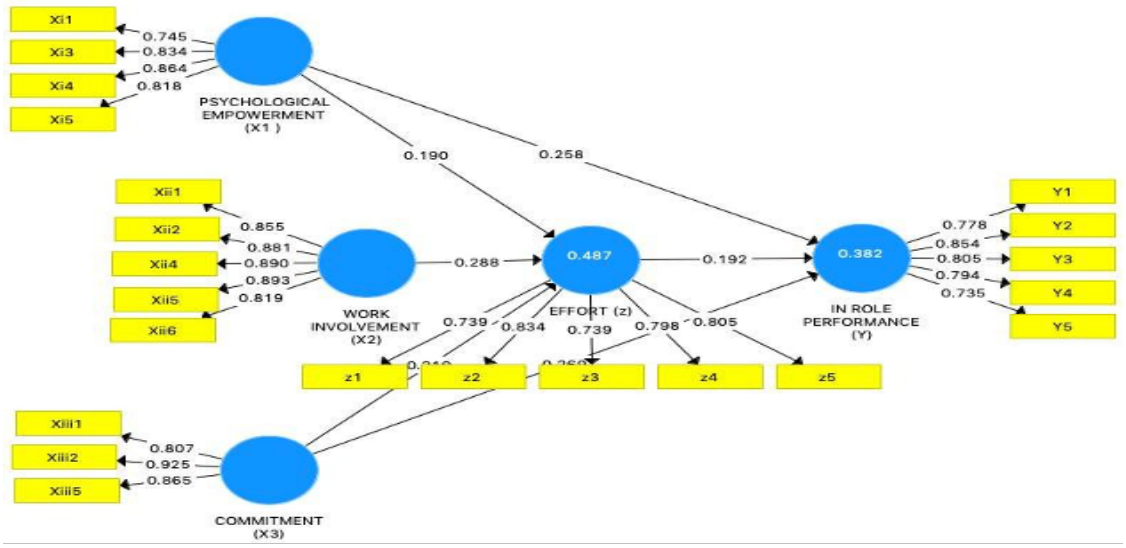

Figure 2. SEM-PLS Output Summary

Latent variable X_1 demonstrates strong explanatory power, accounting for over 70% of the variance across its four measurement items. Similarly, latent variable X_2 explains more than 80% of the variance in its five indicators, indicating a high level of consistency among the observed variables. Although the exact figure is not specified, latent variable X_3 also exhibits a substantial proportion of explained variance across its three associated items. Furthermore, latent variable Z explains over 70% of the variance within its five indicators, suggesting reliable and coherent construct measurement. Lastly, latent variable Y captures more than 73% of the variance in its respective measurement items. In summary, all latent variables in the model show strong explanatory power, each accounting for more than 70% of the variance in their corresponding indicators. This confirms the validity and robustness of the measurement model employed in the study.

Table 1 Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Construct	Item	Items Loading	CA	AVE
Psychological empowerment (X_1)	*I am confident in completing assigned tasks, feel capable of overcoming complex challenges, and possess the skills and knowledge necessary to perform the job.*	0.745	0.832	0.667
	I feel in control of my personal and career lives, able to pursue personal goals with minimal interference from others.	0.834		
	I feel that the work I do has meaningful and significant value. I have a clear understanding of both personal and organizational goals and objectives.	0.864		
	I feel free to make relevant decisions regarding my work. I have control over how work is done and decisions are made.	0.830		
Job Involvement (X_2)	*I am emotionally involved in my work, expressing positive feelings and emotions towards the tasks I perform*	0.855	0.918	0.754
	I am cognitively engaged in my work, processing information deeply and considering various aspects to achieve good outcomes.	0.890		
	I am behaviorally engaged in my work, demonstrating proactive behavior and high commitment to the tasks I undertake.	0.893		
Commitment (X3)	*I have a strong emotional connection to the campus, feeling a deep sense of attachment and belonging.*	0.807	0.835	0.751
	I consider myself an essential part of the campus community, contributing to its vibrancy and success.	0.925		
	I strive to perform at my highest level for the betterment of the campus, aiming to contribute positively to its mission and goals.	0.865		
Effort (Z)	*I dedicate significant time and effort to my work responsibilities, ensuring tasks are completed thoroughly and on time.*	0.739	0.846	0.615
	I approach my work with high intensity, focusing deeply on tasks and maintaining a strong work ethic.	0.834		
	I demonstrate perseverance in my work, overcoming challenges and staying committed to achieving goals despite obstacles.	0.805		
In Role Performance (Y)	*I actively engage in educational and teaching activities, striving to impart knowledge and support the learning process of students.*	0.854	0.853	0.631
	I am actively involved in research activities, conducting investigations and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in my field.	0.805		
	I participate actively in community service activities, working to address societal needs and contribute positively to the community.	0.794		

Based on the values presented in the table above, all variables in this study have Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) scores exceeding 0.70. This indicates that the constructs demonstrate a high level of internal consistency, and thus, can be considered

reliable and dependable for further analysis. Convergent validity was supported as outer loadings exceeded 0.70 and AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022). AVE values for Effort (0.615) and In-Role Performance (0.631) are marginally above the threshold and therefore are interpreted conservatively. Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.80 for all constructs. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the HTMT criterion, with all HTMT ratios below 0.85 and confidence intervals not straddling 1.0, confirming construct distinctiveness. Cross-loading inspection also confirmed that all items loaded highest on their intended constructs.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). As shown in the table below, all HTMT values range from 0.576 to 0.848, which remain below the recommended thresholds of 0.85 (conservative criterion) and 0.90 (liberal criterion) (Hair et al., 2022). Therefore, the results provide evidence of adequate discriminant validity, confirming that each construct is empirically distinct.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	Psych. Empowerment	Commitment	Effort	In Role Perf.
Psych. Empowerment				
Commitment	0,745			
Effort	0,620	0,726		
In Role Performance	0,618	0,639	0,576	
Job Involvement	0,687	0,848	0,695	0,704

Therefore, discriminant validity is confirmed, indicating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others.

The hypotheses were evaluated using the bootstrapping technique, which involved 5,000 resampling iterations. The acceptable threshold was determined based on t and p values, along with bias-corrected confidence intervals. The first phase involves verifying the dependability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model. Next, the following stage focuses on analyzing the structural model to determine the strength and direction of the links between the theoretical components

Table 3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Effect	*p*-value	Decision
H1: Psychological empowerment → In-role performance	.258	.006	Supported
H2: Organizational Commitment → In-role performance	.269	.001	Supported
H3: Job involvement → In-role performance	.288	.003	Supported
H4: Effort positively → In-role performance	.192	.005	Supported
$H5_1$: Psych. empowerment →Effort→ In-role perf.	.036	.051	Rejected
$H5_2$: Organizational commitment→Effort→In-role perf.	.059	.039	Supported
$H5_3$: Job involvement→Effort→In-role perf.	.055	.085	Rejected

Note Result of Direct and Indirect effect Structural Model/Hypothesis Testing. O = Original Sample; M = Sample Mean; STDEV = Standard Deviation; (IO/STDEVI) = T Statistics (Researcher, 2025)

Table 4. R-Square and Adjusted R-Square Analysis

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q^2
Effort	.487	.479	0,274
In-role Performance	.382	.372	0,228

Following recommended PLS-SEM evaluation criteria (Hair et al., 2022), these R^2 values indicate moderate explanatory power, reflecting that the predictors contribute meaningfully to the explanation of variation in effort and performance, even though the model does not account for the majority of variance. This is expected in behavioral and organizational research where numerous unobserved influences shape individual performance outcomes. Additionally, interpretation of R^2 alone is insufficient for assessing model quality, and therefore the results must be considered alongside the predictive relevance (Q^2). Positive Q^2 values indicate that the model has predictive capability beyond a naïve benchmark and contributes meaningfully to explaining the variance of key endogenous constructs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study deepen understanding of the psychological mechanisms shaping lecturer in-role performance within resource-constrained private universities in South Sulawesi. The results indicate that psychological empowerment, affective commitment, job involvement, and effort each play an important role in enhancing in-role performance, reaffirming their status as central motivational drivers in academic work. These relationships are consistent with Self-Determination Theory and the Job Demands–Resources model, both of which emphasize that personal and job-related psychological resources stimulate motivational processes that support performance-oriented behavior.

However, the study reveals that the translation of psychological attitudes into behavioral effort is uneven across constructs. Affective commitment emerges as the only attitudinal resource that effectively mobilizes effort, suggesting a motivational pathway in which emotional attachment to the institution energizes discretionary investment in work. In contrast, psychological empowerment and job involvement do not appear to operate through effort. This divergence points to a meaningful boundary condition: positive psychological states do not automatically translate into increased behavioral exertion when contextual constraints restrict the capacity to act. In academic environments characterized by high workloads, delayed or uncertain compensation, and limited institutional support, empowerment and involvement may enhance internal states without enabling lecturers to expend additional effort. This interpretation aligns with the JD-R perspective, which argues that the activation of resources depends on enabling structural conditions rather than attitude alone. The present study contributes to the literature by showing that effort selectively mediates the effect of affective commitment, but not empowerment or involvement, on in-role performance, thereby clarifying inconsistencies observed in prior research. It also extends existing knowledge by offering evidence from an underexamined private-university context in Indonesia and by framing institutional constraints as potential boundary conditions in motivational performance models.

This contextual explanation remains interpretive rather than empirically tested within the current model, as boundary-defining variables such as workload, organizational support, and leadership climate were not explicitly incorporated. Consequently, the explanation should be treated as hypothesis-generating rather than confirmatory. Future studies should directly examine whether institutional constraints condition the conversion of psychological attitudes into performance behaviors by employing moderation analysis, comparative group designs, or mixed-method approaches. The direct influence of psychological empowerment reinforces earlier findings that perceived autonomy, competence, and meaningful work enhance task execution (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024; Cvenkel, 2021). Yet, the absence of an indirect pathway through effort suggests that empowerment may influence performance through alternative mechanisms, such as improved cognitive flexibility, problem-solving capacity, or creativity, rather than through increased energy expenditure. Affective commitment stands out as a particularly robust predictor of performance and the only construct that consistently activates effort, supporting earlier studies (Alqudah et al., 2022; Oludayo et al., 2018) and aligning with SDT's assertion that internalized values foster sustained motivation. Job involvement also demonstrates a strong association with performance, consistent with prior research (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007; Zapf et al., 2021), yet its inability to activate effort suggests that enthusiasm and engagement may be internally absorbed rather than behaviorally expressed when structural barriers are present.

Taken together, the findings indicate that while multiple psychological attitudes contribute meaningfully to lecturer performance, effort functions as a selective rather than universal motivational mechanism. Emotional attachment to the institution appears to be the most reliable trigger for discretionary effort, whereas empowerment and involvement exert their influence more directly. From a practical standpoint, these results imply that performance-enhancement strategies in private universities may benefit more from strengthening affective commitment, relational climate, and professional identity than from relying solely on formal empowerment initiatives or efforts to increase task involvement. This implication is especially salient in resource-constrained institutions where structural limitations restrict the translation of individual agency into action.

Overall, the study demonstrates that psychological empowerment, affective commitment, job involvement, and effort each enhance in-role performance among lecturers in private universities, but that effort mediates performance only in the case of affective commitment. Although motivational theory often assumes effort to be a central mediating mechanism, the findings suggest that lecturer

performance in constrained institutional contexts is shaped primarily by the direct effects of psychological and emotional resources rather than by increased discretionary exertion. This non-mediated pattern represents an important contribution to the literature, indicating that under conditions of institutional pressure and structural limitation, positive work attitudes may translate directly into performance outcomes without requiring additional effort. The results underscore the strategic importance of cultivating psychological empowerment and emotional attachment as levers for improving academic performance in higher education settings facing persistent resource challenges.

Despite its theoretical and empirical contributions, the study has several limitations. It was conducted exclusively in private universities in South Sulawesi using a cross-sectional design, which limits generalizability and precludes strong causal inference. Reliance on self-reported measures raises the possibility of common method bias, and the absence of contextual variables such as workload intensity, compensation systems, leadership climate, and organizational support restricts the ability to empirically test boundary conditions. Accordingly, the contextual explanations advanced in this discussion should be viewed as exploratory. Future research should incorporate moderating variables to assess whether institutional constraints shape motivational pathways and influence how psychological attitudes convert into performance behaviors. Expanding the research to other regions and to public universities would improve transferability, while longitudinal and mixed-method designs would offer stronger insight into causal dynamics. Incorporating additional constructs such as burnout, resilience, perceived organizational support, and digital teaching capability may further illuminate the complex mechanisms underlying lecturer performance in contemporary academic environments.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

This study concludes that lecturer in-role performance in resource-constrained private universities is shaped primarily by direct psychological and emotional resources rather than by uniform increases in discretionary effort. Psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and job involvement each enhance performance, yet effort operates as a selective mechanism activated mainly through affective commitment, underscoring the central role of emotional attachment in sustaining academic performance under institutional pressure. Theoretically, these findings refine motivational models by demonstrating that effort is not a universal mediator and that attitudinal resources may exert direct performance effects when structural constraints limit behavioral discretion. Practically, the results suggest that university leaders should prioritize strategies that strengthen affective commitment, professional identity, and relational climate rather than relying solely on formal empowerment policies. However, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and focus on private universities within a single region, which restrict causal inference and generalizability. Future research should incorporate contextual moderators such as workload, leadership climate, and organizational support, extend analysis to public universities and different regions, and employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to capture how institutional constraints condition motivational pathways and shape lecturer performance over time.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards applicable to social science and educational research. The participation of respondents was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were anonymized to protect participants' privacy. The study did not involve any experiments on humans or animals that would require institutional ethical clearance.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. All authors contributed to the work impartially and independently, without any financial or personal relationships that could influence the results or interpretation of the study.

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