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Unraveling the Drivers of Lecturer Performance: A Systematic Review of Reward Systems, Visionary Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Commitment

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to systematically examine and synthesize the factors that influence lecturer performance in higher education, particularly those related to the reward system, visionary leadership, organizational culture, and organizational commitment. The study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA model, through the process of identifying, filtering, selecting, and including articles from reputable databases, resulting in 57 relevant articles for analysis. The results showed that the reward system was the most consistent factor directly influencing lecturer performance, followed by organizational culture, which plays a role in creating a conducive work environment and encouraging innovation. Meanwhile, visionary leadership showed an inconsistent direct influence, but contributed indirectly through mediating variables. In this case, organizational commitment emerged as a key variable (key mediator) that bridges the influence of various organizational factors on lecturer performance. The discussion shows that lecturer performance is influenced by complex interactions between structural and psychological factors that are multidimensional and non-linear. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of an integrative approach in managing lecturer performance through strengthening the reward system, developing an adaptive organizational culture, implementing effective leadership, and increasing organizational commitment as a strategy for improving sustainable performance.

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Introduction

Lecturer performance is a key factor in determining the quality and competitiveness of higher education institutions, particularly in facing the increasingly complex demands of globalization in higher education. Lecturers are not only required to carry out teaching duties but also to be active in research and community service as part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. However, various studies show that lecturer performance in many institutions remains suboptimal, particularly in terms of research productivity and international scientific publications. This situation indicates that improving lecturer

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performance is a strategic issue that requires serious attention from various stakeholders in higher education (Nguyen et al., 2023; Kim & Park, 2022; Rahman et al., 2022; García-Morales et al., 2018; Al-Omari et al., 2021).

Many studies have identified that lecturer performance is influenced by complex and interacting organizational and individual factors. Among these factors, the reward system is a crucial determinant that can increase lecturer motivation and productivity through the provision of financial and non-financial incentives. Furthermore, visionary leadership plays a strategic role in providing direction and inspiration for lecturers to achieve institutional goals. A strong organizational culture can create a conducive work environment, while organizational commitment serves as a psychological bond that encourages individuals to contribute optimally. The combination of these factors is believed to have a significant influence on lecturer performance, both directly and indirectly (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2024; Ferreira & Oliveira, 2022).

However, previous research has shown inconsistent findings regarding the influence of these variables on lecturer performance. Some studies found that rewards and organizational culture directly influence performance, while others showed that visionary leadership does not always have a direct influence, but rather through mediating variables such as organizational commitment or job satisfaction. This inconsistency indicates the complexity of the relationships between variables that are not yet fully understood, and the need for a more comprehensive approach to integrate existing empirical findings (Khan et al., 2022; Liu & Wang, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022).

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach is a relevant method for systematically synthesizing and evaluating various existing research findings. The SLR method, using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model, enables researchers to select articles transparently, systematically, and replicatively, resulting in a comprehensive and reliable synthesis. Through this approach, research can identify patterns of relationships, research gaps, and directions for future theory and practice development (Page et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009; Kitchenham et al., 2009; Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003).

Based on the results of the literature selection process using the PRISMA method, this study analyzed 57 scientific articles relevant to the topic of lecturer performance and the factors that influence it, specifically reward systems, visionary leadership, organizational culture, and organizational commitment. These articles came from various reputable international journals and covered various higher education contexts in various countries. This literature analysis aims to identify the dominant factors influencing lecturer performance, understand the mechanisms of relationships between variables, and formulate a more comprehensive conceptual model to explain lecturer performance in higher education (Nguyen et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022; Kim & Park, 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024)

This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to enriching the literature on lecturer performance, particularly in integrating various organizational and psychological factors into a coherent conceptual framework. Furthermore, in practical terms, the results of this study can serve as a basis for university administrators in formulating effective strategic policies to improve lecturer performance sustainably, through strengthening reward systems, developing visionary leadership, establishing a strong organizational culture, and enhancing organizational commitment.

Method

Research Design

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings related to factors influencing lecturer

performance, specifically reward systems, visionary leadership, organizational culture, and organizational commitment. The SLR method was chosen because it provides a systematic, transparent, and replicable synthesis of empirical evidence. The review process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which emphasize the stages of article identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Page et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009).

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A literature search was conducted in several reputable scientific databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using the following keyword combinations: "lecturer performance," "academic performance," "reward system," "visionary leadership," "organizational culture," and "organizational commitment." Boolean operators such as AND and OR were used to broaden and narrow the search results to ensure relevance. The search process was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure data freshness.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the articles analyzed, this study established the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

(1) The article is the result of empirical research (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods).
(2) The research focus relates to the performance of lecturers or educators in higher education.
(3) Examines one or more variables: reward systems, leadership (especially visionary/transformational), organizational culture, and organizational commitment.
(4) The article is published in a reputable scientific journal (indexed by Scopus, WoS, or at least SINTA for local contexts).
(5) The article is available in full text and in English or Indonesian.
(6) Published between 2015 and 2025

Exclusion criteria included:

(1) Articles in the form of opinion pieces, editorials, non-peer-reviewed proceedings, or non-scientific reports.
(2) Research that does not focus on the context of higher education.
(3) Articles that have no direct connection to the variables being studied.
(4) Duplicate articles from different databases.
(5) Articles that do not provide clear data or research results.

Article Selection Process

The article selection process is carried out through four main stages according to the PRISMA flow, namely:

(1) Identification. A total of 312 articles were obtained from the initial search results in various databases.
(2) Screening. After removing approximately 78 duplicate articles, screening was carried out based on title and abstract, leaving approximately 189 articles.
(3) Eligibility. The next stage was an eligibility assessment through a full-text review. At this stage, approximately 132 articles were eliminated because they did not meet the inclusion criteria.
(4) Included. The final selection results showed that 57 articles met all criteria and were used as primary sources in this SLR analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic and comparative synthesis approach, grouping research results based on the variables studied, identifying patterns of relationships between variables, and comparing findings across studies. Furthermore, an analysis of research methods, study contexts, and key findings was conducted to identify research gaps and identify directions for developing a conceptual model of lecturer performance.

Results and Discussion

Based on the literature selection process using the PRISMA approach, 57 articles that met the inclusion criteria were systematically analyzed. These articles came from various countries, with research predominantly from Asia (approximately 52%), followed by Europe (28%), and other regions (20%). In terms of methodology, the majority of studies used a quantitative approach (±70%), followed by mixed methods (±20%) and qualitative (±10%). This indicates that studies on lecturer performance are still dominated by quantitative approaches with analysis techniques such as regression and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The Dominance of Organizational Variables in Influencing Lecturer Performance

The synthesis of 57 analyzed articles shows that organizational commitment is the most frequently studied variable, accounting for 78% of the research, followed by organizational culture (65%), reward system (61%), and leadership (including visionary leadership) (59%). The high frequency of organizational commitment in various studies indicates that this variable is seen as a key factor in explaining lecturer performance. Theoretically, organizational commitment reflects an individual's level of emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization, which ultimately motivates individuals to contribute their best. This is in line with the findings of Meyer and Allen (1991) and is reinforced by recent empirical studies showing that organizational commitment has a significant influence on performance through increased loyalty and work engagement (Khan et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023).

Organizational culture emerged as the second most dominant variable studied. This suggests that the social environment and values developed within the organization play a significant role in shaping lecturers' work behavior. A strong and adaptive organizational culture can create work norms that support collaboration, innovation, and improved academic quality. Research by Zhao et al. (2024) and Ferreira & Oliveira (2022) shows that organizational culture positively influences lecturer performance by increasing work engagement and a conducive work climate. Thus, organizational culture serves not only as a context but also as a driving mechanism for performance.

Furthermore, the reward system also plays a significant role in improving lecturer performance. As a form of external reinforcement, rewards can boost work motivation, both financially and non-financially. This finding is supported by research by Rahman et al. (2022) and Liu & Wang (2023), which states that a fair and transparent reward system can increase lecturer productivity, particularly in research activities and scientific publications. However, several studies also show that the effect of rewards is not always direct, but can be mediated by other variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Leadership studies, particularly visionary leadership, represent a relatively high proportion of research, but with more varied results. Although theoretically, leadership plays a strategic role in directing and inspiring organizational members, empirical results indicate that its influence on lecturer performance is not always immediately significant. Research by García-Morales et al. (2018) and Sutrisno et al. (2024) revealed that leadership more often influences performance through mediating variables such as work

motivation, organizational commitment, and organizational culture. This suggests that visionary leadership operates at a strategic level and requires an internalization process before impacting individual performance.

Approximately 82% of the studies in this review showed a positive influence between these variables on lecturer performance. This finding strengthens the assumption that organizational factors play a significant role in improving academic performance. However, approximately 18% of the studies showed insignificant or indirect results. This inconsistency can be explained by several factors, such as differences in research context, respondent characteristics, analysis methods, and the presence of mediating variables that have not been optimally accounted for. Studies by Zhao et al. (2024) and Nguyen et al. (2023) confirm that the relationship between organizational variables and performance is complex and often involves mediating and moderating mechanisms.

The Role of the Reward System as the Main Determinant of Lecturer Performance from a Structural-Psychological Perspective

The findings of this study confirm that lecturer performance is the result of a complex interaction between structural and psychological factors within higher education organizations, with the reward system emerging as the most consistent determinant with a direct influence on performance. Within a structural framework, rewards function as organizational instruments designed to direct individual behavior through incentive mechanisms, both financial and non-financial. Meanwhile, from a psychological perspective, rewards act as external reinforcement (extrinsic reinforcement) capable of increasing work motivation, effort intensity, and individual achievement orientation. This is in line with motivational theories such as Expectancy Theory and Reinforcement Theory, which state that individuals will improve their performance when there is a clear relationship between effort, performance, and the rewards received.

Empirically, various studies have shown that an effective reward system has a significant impact on improving lecturer performance, particularly in the context of research productivity and scientific publications. A study by Rahman et al. (2022) found that providing performance-based incentives directly increased lecturers' academic output, particularly in international publications. This finding is supported by Liu and Wang (2023), who stated that fair and transparent rewards not only increase productivity but also strengthen perceptions of organizational justice, which ultimately impacts performance improvement. Furthermore, research by Nguyen et al. (2023) shows that reward systems play a role in increasing work engagement, which is an important mediator in the relationship between rewards and performance

Rewards also serve as a strategic mechanism for directing lecturers' work priorities in line with institutional goals. In the context of higher education, where lecturer performance is measured through the *Tridharma* (Three Pillars of Excellence) indicators, a structured reward system can encourage lecturers to focus more on activities with strategic value, such as research, publication, and community service. Research by Al-Omari et al. (2021) shows that organizations that implement performance-based reward systems tend to have higher levels of productivity compared to organizations without clear reward systems. This suggests that rewards serve not only as a motivational tool but also as a managerial instrument in controlling and directing work behavior.

However, the effectiveness of rewards is determined not only by the size of the incentive, but also by the individual's perception of the fairness and relevance of the reward. A study by Kim and Park (2022) confirmed that rewards that do not meet expectations or are perceived as unfair can reduce motivation and even negatively impact

performance. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that reward systems are designed fairly, transparently, and aligned with the needs and expectations of lecturers.

Organizational Culture as a Driver of Collective Behavior and Lecturer Performance

Many studies have shown that organizational culture is a crucial factor in shaping collective behavior among lecturers and contributes significantly to improved performance. From a structural-psychological perspective, organizational culture reflects a system of shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide actions and interactions within the workplace. A strong and adaptive culture not only creates social order but also builds a collective identity capable of aligning individual goals with organizational objectives. This aligns with the view that organizational culture functions as a social control mechanism that indirectly directs the behavior of organizational members toward desired performance.

Various studies have shown that a positive organizational culture has a direct impact on improving lecturer performance, particularly through the creation of a conducive work environment. A study by Zhao et al. (2024) found that an organizational culture that supports innovation and collaboration significantly increases lecturers' academic productivity. This finding is supported by Ferreira and Oliveira (2022), who stated that a strong organizational culture can increase work engagement, which ultimately impacts the quality of teaching and research. Furthermore, research by Nguyen et al. (2023) shows that organizational culture plays a role in strengthening lecturers' work commitment and motivation, thereby improving performance sustainably.

Organizational culture also serves as a catalyst for driving innovation in learning and research. In the dynamic context of higher education, an organization's ability to adapt to change depends heavily on values that support creativity and continuous learning. Research by García-Morales et al. (2018) shows that an innovative organizational culture can improve performance by strengthening organizational learning and innovation. This confirms that culture not only creates stability but also drives transformation within an organization.

However, the effectiveness of organizational culture is largely determined by the degree to which these values are internalized by lecturers. A strong culture that is not well internalized tends to remain merely a formal symbol without any real impact on performance. A study by Rahman et al. (2022) emphasized that the fit between organizational values and individual values (person-organization fit) is a critical factor in determining the success of organizational culture in improving performance. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that the values developed are not only communicated but also consistently implemented in daily practice.

Organizational Commitment as a Key Mediating Variable in Improving Lecturer Performance

One of the important contributions of this study is the finding that organizational commitment acts as a key mediator in the relationship between organizational factors and lecturer performance. From a structural-psychological perspective, organizational commitment reflects the level of emotional attachment, loyalty, and an individual's desire to remain part of the organization and contribute to the achievement of its goals. Thus, organizational commitment functions as an internal mechanism that bridges the influence of external factors such as leadership and organizational culture on actual work behavior. This is in line with Social Exchange theory, which states that when individuals feel valued and supported by the organization, they will reciprocate by increasing their commitment and performance.

Many studies have shown that organizational commitment plays a significant role as a mediator in improving lecturer performance. A study by Khan et al. (2022) found that leadership does not directly influence performance, but rather primarily through

increased organizational commitment. This finding is supported by Nguyen et al. (2023), who demonstrated that organizational commitment is a link between human resource management practices and academic performance. Furthermore, research by Rahman et al. (2022) also confirmed that a strong organizational culture will improve lecturer performance if it is able to build high levels of commitment among lecturers. Thus, organizational commitment not only acts as an intermediary variable but also as an amplifier of the influence of other organizational variables.

Organizational commitment contributes to transforming organizational policies and conditions into concrete work behaviors. Visionary leadership and organizational culture essentially operate at the level of values and strategic direction, but without Meyer et al. (2002) and supported by Zhao et al. (2024) shows that individuals with high levels of commitment tend to have higher levels of work engagement, thus being able to translate organizational policies into concrete performance. This confirms that organizational commitment functions as a linking mechanism between organizational systems and performance output.

However, the effectiveness of organizational commitment as a mediator is also influenced by the quality of the relationship between the individual and the organization. A study by Kim and Park (2022) showed that a positive commitment will improve performance, but normative or forced commitment does not always produce optimal performance. Therefore, organizations need to build commitment based on emotional attachment (affective commitment), not simply obligations or structural pressures.

Visionary Leadership and the Dynamics of Indirect Influence on Lecturer Performance

Based on research findings, it shows that visionary leadership has an inconsistent pattern of influence on lecturer performance, especially in direct relationships. Within a structural-psychological framework, visionary leadership operates at a strategic level, emphasizing the formulation of future direction, inspiration, and alignment of organizational goals. However, due to its long-term oriented nature, the impact of visionary leadership is not always directly reflected in lecturers' daily operational activities, such as teaching, research, and community service. This explains why in a number of studies, visionary leadership does not show a significant direct influence on performance, despite its conceptually important role in the organization.

Many studies have shown that visionary leadership is more effective when mediated by psychological and contextual variables. A study by García-Morales et al. (2018) found that vision-oriented leadership improves performance through increased organizational learning and innovation, rather than directly. This finding is supported by Sutrisno et al. (2024) who showed that leadership influences lecturer performance through work motivation. Furthermore, research by Nguyen et al. (2023) revealed that effective leadership increases organizational commitment, which then impacts performance improvement. Thus, visionary leadership tends to work through a mediating mechanism involving internal individual factors.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of visionary leadership is largely determined by the organization's ability to transform the vision into concrete policies and practices. A vision that is not translated into concrete work programs, reward systems, and organizational culture tends not to have a significant impact on performance. Research by Zhao et al. (2024) shows that the gap between vision and implementation is one of the main causes of the weak influence of leadership on performance. This confirms that the success of visionary leadership lies not only in the ability to formulate a vision, but also in the organization's capacity to execute it.

The level of internalization of the vision by lecturers is also an important determining factor. A study by Kim and Park (2022) showed that when lecturers understand and accept the organization's vision, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of work engagement, which ultimately improves performance. Conversely, if the vision is merely symbolic and not deeply understood, its influence on work behavior is very limited. Therefore, organizational communication and lecturer participation in the vision formulation process are crucial aspects in increasing the effectiveness of visionary leadership.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 57 articles using the PRISMA approach, it can be concluded that lecturer performance is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by complex interactions between structural and psychological factors in higher education organizations, where the reward system, organizational culture, visionary leadership, and organizational commitment have significant contributions both directly and indirectly; the findings indicate that the reward system is the factor that most consistently has a direct influence on performance because it functions as an external reinforcement that increases academic motivation and productivity, while organizational culture plays a role in creating a conducive work environment and encouraging collaboration and innovation, while visionary leadership tends not to have a direct influence but works through indirect mechanisms; in this context, organizational commitment appears as a key variable (key mediator) that bridges the influence of various organizational factors on lecturer performance by internalizing organizational values and policies into real work behavior, so that overall the relationship between variables is non-linear and interrelated, which indicates the need for an integrative approach in improving lecturer performance through strengthening the reward system, developing an adaptive organizational culture, implementing effective leadership, and increasing organizational commitment, while opening opportunities for further research to examine other variables and develop a more comprehensive conceptual model.

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