
A Systematic Literature Review on the Relationship Between Human Character, Key Employee Indicators, and Outstanding Performance in Organizational University Context

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Abstract

This systematic literature review explores the integration of human character development and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in enhancing organizational performance, specifically within higher education institutions. The study investigates how emotional intelligence, ethical leadership, and personal traits influence academic outcomes and institutional success. Through an analysis of selected articles published between 2020 and 2025, it was found that human character attributes, such as self discipline and integrity, play a significant role in boosting employee performance and satisfaction. Furthermore, KPIs, when aligned with personal development, have a more substantial impact on organizational outcomes than when used in isolation. The findings highlight the importance of integrating both human character and KPIs into performance management systems to create a positive organizational culture and improve academic performance. Universities, particularly in underdeveloped regions, must adopt a holistic approach to performance management that includes both quantitative metrics and personal development strategies to foster long term growth and competitiveness.

Keywords: Human Character, Key Performance Indicators, Organizational Performance, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance often suffers from inadequate management of human character and key performance indicators (KPIs). Research highlights that personal traits like extraversion and agreeableness can positively influence performance outcomes (Eshet & Harpaz, 2021), emotional management and engagement are crucial for optimizing productivity (Asti et al., 2022), and effective use of KPIs, along with employee training and development, has been shown to enhance organizational outcomes by improving individual capabilities (Jalloh & Ming, 2020; Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). Neglecting to address these factors leads to performance stagnation and high turnover, making it vital for organizations to integrate character assessment and performance management systems effectively,

a concept that can be applied to universities in Indonesia, where the ultimate goal is to build a stronger nation by fostering both academic excellence and personal development in students, preparing them to contribute to the country's growth and success.

Human character plays an integral role in shaping organizational behavior and influencing employee performance. It is widely recognized that individual characteristics, such as emotional intelligence and ethical standards, significantly impact workplace dynamics and decision-making processes (Nguyen & Crossan, 2021; Silva, 2021). Character-based judgment, a critical aspect of organizational learning, facilitates stronger interpersonal interactions and enhances team performance, promoting organizational success (Arthur et al., 2021; Crossan et al., 2022). Furthermore, strong leadership, grounded in ethical character, can greatly influence an organization's performance by fostering trust and guiding employees through challenges, which is essential for achieving long-term organizational goals (Widyatmoko et al., 2020). In this context, character traits such as honesty and empathy contribute to creating an organizational culture that values fairness and collaboration, ultimately improving organizational outcomes (Lazorenko, 2021; Leavitt et al., 2021). Moreover, research emphasizes the importance of integrating character development within human resource management (HRM) strategies to enhance employee engagement and performance, creating a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Bowen, 2024; Chams & Blandón, 2019; Fernando et al., 2020). Character's influence is thus integral to organizational behavior, playing a critical role in achieving high employee performance and fostering a productive, ethical work environment (Aali, 2022; Dey et al., 2022; Iqbal & Parray, 2024; Khan et al., 2022).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are vital tools for measuring employee performance, aligning individual efforts with organizational goals, and enhancing productivity, efficiency, and goal achievement (Amoah & Majanja, 2022; Trukhmanov et al., 2021; Zaglyadin, 2023). They help organizations monitor contributions, identify performance gaps, and facilitate decision-making (Klimanova et al., 2023; Florencondia et al., 2024), while also motivating employees by setting clear, measurable targets (Biriuchynska, 2023; Harry Purwoko, 2023). KPIs promote continuous improvement and organizational growth by highlighting areas for personal and professional development (Amoah & Majanja, 2022; Sardjono et al., 2020; Tambare et al., 2022). Human character traits, such as emotional intelligence, self-discipline, and emotional stability, significantly impact performance (Rodjam et al., 2020; Liu, 2024; Wijayanto & Riani, 2021; Jocelyne, 2020), with personality traits like optimism and openness linked to higher performance (Ugoani, 2020). Integrating KPIs with these traits ensures that performance metrics reflect personal growth and development (Aguilera et al., 2024; Jackson et al., 2023; Jeffries et al., 2022), with training and development programs playing a key role (Nuraini, 2023). Despite the benefits, organizations face challenges in aligning human character with KPIs, requiring a shift in culture and a comprehensive approach to performance evaluation (Gong et al., 2021; Verhaelen et al., 2021).

Based on the lack of integration between human character and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in current literature, this systematic literature review (SLR) aims to fill the gap by exploring the relationship between these two factors and their impact on outstanding performance in organizational and university contexts. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of human character traits such as emotional intelligence, leadership, and ethical standards, many organizations and universities still struggle to effectively integrate these traits with measurable performance metrics. By reviewing and synthesizing relevant studies, this SLR seeks to identify best practices and strategies for harmonizing human character development with KPI implementation, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of organizational performance and academic excellence. The findings from this review will provide valuable insights for universities, particularly in regions outside Java, to improve their performance management systems, foster a culture of excellence, and prepare students for success in both academic and professional spheres.

METHOD

This research uses a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to explore the relationship between human character, key performance indicators (KPIs), and organizational performance in universities. The review will focus on studies published between 2020 and 2025, indexed in reputable databases like Scopus and high-ranking SINTA journals, ensuring credible, peer-reviewed sources. Key search terms such as "human character," "KPIs," "employee performance," and "university performance" will guide the selection of relevant studies. The SLR will synthesize findings to provide insights for enhancing performance management strategies in universities, particularly in regions outside Java, by integrating human character and KPIs to improve academic and organizational success.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The table below summarizes the main insights and conclusions from the chosen studies, which have been critically evaluated to understand the impact of integrating human character and KPIs in enhancing university performance. The results will provide a comprehensive overview of the most relevant contributions to the field and help identify patterns and gaps in current research.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings from Selected Articles (2020 – 2025)

No	Subcategory	Key Findings
1	Human Character and Employee Performance	Emotional intelligence (EI) moderates the impact of COVID-19 stress on work performance, with higher EI linked to better outcomes (Sadovyy et al., 2021). Age-related changes in personality traits, such as Conscientiousness, influence counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Pletzer, 2021). Employee integrity (EI) positively affects work performance, mediated by job satisfaction and organizational identification (Konadu et al., 2024). Self-leadership, promoting

No	Subcategory	Key Findings
2	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	<p>individual responsibility, enhances organizational effectiveness (Ugoani, 2021). In education, self-discipline improves teachers' performance (Chiang et al., 2024). Islamic work ethic enhances task performance through psychological capital, moderated by ethical leadership (Qasim et al., 2022). EI is also crucial in the tourism sector for improving staff satisfaction and productivity (Bozhkova et al., 2022). Human capital investments, like training, improve job performance in the banking sector (Bohórquez et al., 2023; Rahman & Akhter, 2021). Achievement motivation, along with traits like conscientiousness, boosts job performance (Guo et al., 2021). Integrating human character development with performance metrics is essential for organizational success.</p>
3	Organizational Performance in University Context	<p>KPIs are vital for performance management. Non-financial KPIs like Stock Level and Supplier Quality Score were key to organizational resilience during disruptions (Werner et al., 2021). A review of business model KPIs identified 35 key studies, highlighting their role in managing business models (Ven et al., 2023). In Ghanaian university libraries, measurable KPIs significantly improved staff performance (Amoah & Majanja, 2022). In higher education, sustainability KPIs such as green product purchases were crucial for campus sustainability (Bashir et al., 2023). Sustainability KPIs also helped guide public sector decision-making in Egypt (Alsaïd & Ambilichu, 2023). OKRs improve performance measurement by aligning KPIs with organizational goal (Rompho, 2023). Dashboards for data-driven decision-making also optimize KPI management (Betchoo, 2023). KPIs sustain internal alignment in organizations, driving strategic implementation (Bellisario et al., 2021). Optimizing enterprise performance appraisal systems based on KPIs improves competitiveness (Peng, 2022). Lastly, KPIs in postgraduate research support systems help assess and improve student supervision and academic support (Millin et al., 2022).</p> <p>Human resource practices, such as recruitment, faculty development programs, and performance assessment, are critical in enhancing faculty job performance and satisfaction, especially in Indian government-run universities (Alam, 2022). The integration of AI in higher education has a significant impact on students' cognitive achievements, fostering engagement and academic success (Jaboob et al., 2025). In Russia, university performance is measured through key indicators such as research, financial, and international recognition, with targeted support enhancing global competitiveness (Guseva et al., 2022). Classroom environment and teacher competency significantly impact student engagement and academic performance, with engagement mediating these factors (Hanaysha et al., 2023). Student satisfaction, influenced by interpersonal interactions, directly affects university experience and academic outcomes (Wong & Chapman, 2023). Higher education institutions have shifted to virtual learning models, improving service quality and performance management (Camilleri, 2021). Leadership and governance challenges in public universities must align performance management systems to sustain university growth and quality (Bianchi & Caperchione, 2022). Faculty development in assessment and feedback is critical to competency-based education in medical fields, highlighting the need for improvement in non-technical skills</p>

No	Subcategory	Key Findings
		(Steinemann et al., 2021). Higher education institutions play a crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), requiring strategic planning alignment across hierarchical levels (Serafini et al., 2022). Effective faculty development can address gaps in skill assessments, essential for fostering high-quality educational outcomes in vocational higher education (Muhdar et al., 2022).

Source: Summary from Selected Articles, Processed by Researcher (2025).

Discussion

The relationship between human character and employee performance in higher education institutions (HEIs) has gained attention, with emotional intelligence (EI) playing a key role in mitigating stress and improving work outcomes, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic (Sadovyy et al., 2021). Age-related personality changes and emotional regulation further highlight the importance of non-cognitive skills in enhancing teaching effectiveness and organizational performance (Pletzer, 2021). Additionally, the strategic use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in universities, such as research output and sustainability goals, helps align operations with long-term strategic objectives, improving both academic progress and institutional growth (Werner et al., 2021; Bashir et al., 2023; Ven et al., 2023; Rompho, 2023).

Leadership, particularly emotional intelligence and ethical leadership, is crucial for integrating human character traits and KPIs, fostering trust, and promoting a collaborative culture in universities (Crossan et al., 2022; Arthur et al., 2021). This systematic literature review (SLR) highlights the importance of integrating human character development with KPIs for improving university performance, especially in underdeveloped regions outside major hubs like Java in Indonesia. A holistic approach combining both human character and KPIs fosters a positive organizational culture and enhances academic outcomes, preparing graduates for leadership in an increasingly complex world (Asti et al., 2022; Wong & Chapman, 2023; Guseva et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that emotional intelligence, ethical leadership, and personal development are essential factors that contribute not only to improved academic outcomes but also to fostering a positive organizational culture. While KPIs remain vital for measuring academic and operational success, it is evident that neglecting the human character dimension limits their effectiveness. By incorporating both human character and KPIs into performance management systems, universities, especially those outside major academic hubs like Java in Indonesia, can improve their competitiveness, foster sustainable growth, and better prepare students for the challenges of an interconnected world, ultimately contributing to the development of well rounded and capable graduates.

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