

Why Resilient Leadership Fails to Enhance Employee Performance

Arief Mujiono^{1*}, Kusuma Chandra Kirana², Syamsul Hadi³

^{1,2,3} *Departement of Master Management,
Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University, Indonesia*

Abstract

Purpose - This study aims to examine the direct influence of Resilient Leadership on Employee Performance in the local public sector.

Design/methodology/approach - A quantitative approach was applied, using data from 100 employees in one of the government offices in Indonesia. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which included instrument testing, model fit evaluation, hypothesis testing, and mediation.

Originality - This study contributes to the field of leadership and human resource management by emphasizing the limitations of relying solely on Resilient Leadership to improve employee outcomes.

Findings and Discussion - Resilient Leadership does not have a significant direct effect on Employee Performance. This indicates that the role of resilient leadership requires the support of other factors to enhance employee performance effectively.

Conclusion - The study provides insights that relying solely on resilient leadership is insufficient to drive employee performance, particularly in government institutions that face structural limitations and strict regulations.

Keywords - Resilient Leadership, Employee Performance, Public Sector

Introduction

Employee performance is a vital component in determining the success of an organization, particularly in the public sector, which is expected to provide optimal services to the community (Alzoubi et al., 2024)(Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2023). In an era of increasingly complex and high-pressure work environments, especially in government institutions bound by rigid regulations, achieving high employee performance remains a pressing challenge. Various studies highlight that the quality of leadership is among the most decisive factors in determining employee outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2020; Park et al., 2022). In this context, resilient leadership has emerged as a leadership style that is adaptive and capable of navigating uncertainty and change.

The demand for resilient leadership has grown significantly, especially after global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic volatility that impacted the stability of public service delivery (Alzoubi et al., 2024). Leaders with resilience are expected to serve as a stabilizing force who

can sustain team performance and morale under pressure (Ludwikowska, 2023). This becomes increasingly important in government settings where structural constraints and rigid bureaucratic systems can hinder performance innovation and adaptability (Sajadi & Ghaderi, 2023). Consequently, exploring the role of resilient leadership in driving employee performance is highly relevant for contemporary public administration.

Leadership has long been linked to employee performance outcomes. Studies have shown that transformational and servant leadership positively affect job satisfaction, motivation, and employee productivity (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Breevaart et al., 2014). Resilient leadership, while relatively newer in the literature, integrates emotional stability, adaptability, and forward-looking behavior that could significantly influence how employees respond to organizational pressures (Harland et al., 2005; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there is still limited empirical testing of how directly this leadership style influences measurable performance outcomes, particularly in public institutions.

Despite its growing relevance, the effectiveness of resilient leadership on employee performance remains debatable. Some studies report a positive influence of resilient leadership on employee engagement and psychological well-being (Kuntz et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2013), yet others suggest that without the support of ethical behavior and adaptive human resource practices, the effect may be minimal or indirect (Narayan & Liao, 2021; Tamunomiebi & Ibiwari, 2022). Furthermore, few studies have focused on its direct impact in rigid bureaucratic systems where leaders' flexibility may be constrained. This creates a gap in the literature, particularly in the context of government institutions in developing countries like Indonesia.

This study attempts to fill that gap by directly examining the influence of resilient leadership on employee performance within a public sector setting in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that often incorporate multiple mediating variables or focus on private sector organizations, this research isolates the direct relationship, providing a clearer picture of whether resilient leadership alone is sufficient to improve performance in a bureaucratic environment. In doing so, it contributes to the body of knowledge in leadership and human resource management by providing empirical evidence that challenges assumptions about the universality of leadership effectiveness.

Given the increasing complexity of public service demands and the heightened need for effective leadership in turbulent environments, this study is both timely and significant. It offers practical implications for leadership development in government institutions and informs policymakers about the limitations of relying solely on leadership traits to enhance employee performance. By focusing on the public sector in Indonesia, this research also adds a contextual dimension to the global discourse on leadership effectiveness and organizational performance.

Literature Review

The relationship between resilient leadership and employee performance can be explained through the lens of Social Learning Theory

(SLT). This theory posits that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of behaviors demonstrated by others, especially those they consider role models (Ludwikowska, 2023). In organizational contexts, leaders serve as behavioral models for employees, shaping a work environment that supports positive behavior and promotes optimal performance (Kumar et al., 2020).

Within this framework, resilient leaders demonstrate behaviors such as stress management, adaptability to change, effective decision-making under pressure, and consistent communication during crises. Employees observe and emulate these traits, internalizing values such as perseverance, confidence, and problem-solving orientation.

Ethical behavior also plays a mediating role in this relationship. Resilient leaders tend to act with integrity, consistency, and a strong commitment to team development—qualities that employees are likely to adopt through social learning, ultimately contributing to higher individual and team performance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is an individual's ability to carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively, including productivity, efficiency, and quality of work (Czura dkk., 2024). In addition to focusing on the end result, employee performance also involves behavior and efforts made during the work process (Dewi dkk., 2024). Employee performance is measured through five main dimensions, namely service quality, efficiency and productivity, compliance with procedures, team collaboration, and initiative and innovation (Dogbe dkk., 2024). Various factors that influence employee performance such as leadership, mental well-being, training and development, human resource policies, and work environment (Ludwikowska, 2023). Transformational leadership and supportive HR policies can increase employee motivation and productivity. In addition, a conducive work environment and good mental well-being contribute to work effectiveness, while a conflict-filled environment can reduce performance Caniëls & Curseu (2024).

Resilient Leadership

Resilient leadership is the ability of leaders to face challenges, adapt to change, and maintain team motivation and well-being amidst uncertainty (Ludwikowska, 2023). This leadership includes five main dimensions, namely adaptability to change, stress management, quick and accurate decision making, effective communication in crisis, and commitment to team development (Dogbe dkk., 2024). Resilient leadership contributes to team performance, job satisfaction, and organizational efficiency by creating a stable and supportive work environment (Czura dkk., 2024). In addition, this leadership influences a collaborative organizational culture, organizational sustainability, and increased employee productivity through effective resource management and strategic decision making in critical situations (Komatsu, 2022).

Hypothesis Development

The Influence of Resilient Leadership on Employee Performance

The impact of resilient leadership on employee performance is increasingly recognized, particularly in dynamic and crisis-prone environments such as the public sector. Resilient leaders play a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture, enhancing adaptability, and promoting a proactive and ethical workforce. One key study that thoroughly examines this relationship is Czura et al. (2024), which provides robust empirical evidence on how leadership resilience contributes to organizational performance.

According to Czura et al. (2024), resilient leadership significantly mediates the relationship between soft skills (e.g., emotional intelligence, communication, adaptability) and organizational outcomes, such as employee productivity and motivation. The study emphasizes that leaders who demonstrate resilience under pressure not only maintain their own composure and decision-making effectiveness but also act as emotional anchors for their teams. These leaders model positive coping strategies, encourage open communication, and reduce uncertainty—factors that directly enhance employee engagement and performance.

Furthermore, the research highlights that trust-building is a central mechanism through which resilient leaders influence employee behavior. By maintaining consistency, fairness, and transparency during difficult times, resilient leaders foster a psychologically safe environment. This in turn motivates employees to go beyond basic job requirements, show initiative, and collaborate more effectively. In essence, trust serves as the social glue that strengthens the leader–employee dynamic and enables high performance.

Czura et al. also stress the importance of balancing stability and flexibility—a hallmark of resilient leadership. In bureaucratic public sector institutions where regulations often limit agility, resilient leaders find creative ways to empower their teams within the constraints. This adaptability not only improves task execution but also enhances job satisfaction and commitment.

In summary, Czura et al. (2024) show that resilient leadership: Promotes trust and ethical conduct, Strengthens team resilience and morale, Encourages proactive behavior and innovation, Helps navigate uncertainty without sacrificing performance standards. These findings reinforce the theoretical assumption proposed in Hypothesis 1 (H1):

H1: Resilient Leadership has a positive influence on Employee Performance.

Methods, Data, and Analysis

The subjects of the study were employees in One of the offices in the Indonesian. Then the objects of the study included the variables Employee Performance and Resilient Leadership. The population of the study was all employees totaling 100 people. From a population that was not too large, this study used the census method so that all employees were made respondents. The research variables consisted of independent variables (Resilient Leadership), dependent variables (Employee Performance).

The research data is primary data collected directly through a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains closed statements with

predetermined answer choices, using a Likert scale of 1–5. Before use, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement. Data analysis was carried out using inferential statistical methods to see the relationship between variables using SmartPLS version 4.0. The instruments in the study are as follows.

Table 1. Statement Items

Resilient Leadership	
Adaptability to Change	Leaders are able to quickly adjust work policies when there are regulatory changes from the center. Leaders are able to direct staff to meet the evolving needs of society.
Stress and Pressure Management	Leaders remain calm when facing crisis situations in the field. Leaders are able to maintain team spirit even under high work pressure.
Ability to Make Quick and Accurate Decisions	Leaders are able to make strategic decisions in a short time for the sake of smooth public services. Leaders consider input from staff before making important decisions.
Effective Communication in Crisis	Leaders provide clear information about policy changes. Leaders encourage openness to find solutions to problems faced.
Commitment to Team Development	Active leaders encourage training to improve staff's ability to perform tasks. Leaders appreciate innovative ideas from staff to improve public services
Employee Performance	
Quality of Service	I always provide services according to the needs of the community. I try to provide satisfactory work results for the community.
Efficiency and Productivity	I complete tasks on time by utilizing available resources effectively. I can complete my work efficiently without sacrificing the quality of the results.
Compliance with Procedures	I carry out my duties in accordance with the regulations in force in the agency. I always ensure compliance with government policies in every task I do.
Collaboration in Teams Initiatives and Innovations	I work closely with co-workers to ensure smooth work flow. I support my team in achieving common goals I often provide innovations to improve work efficiency in this agency. I took the initiative to find new and better ways to complete tasks.

Results

Respondent's Characteristics

This study groups respondents into four groups based on gender, age, education and length of service. This is done to analyze the comparison of the number of participants from each category.

Table 2. Respondent’s Characteristics

	Total (n = 100)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	58	58
Female	42	42
<i>Age (years old)</i>		
<20	0	0
20 to 29	10	10
30 to 39	29	29
>40	61	61
<i>Education</i>		
Junior High School	4	4
Senior High School	22	22
Diploma	9	9
S1 (Bachelor)	60	60
S2 (Master)		
<i>Working Period (years)</i>		
<1	2	2
1-5	23	23
6-10	15	15
>10	60	60

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

The data analysis shows that 58% of respondents are male and 42% are female. Most respondents (61%) are over 40 years old, followed by 30-39 years (29%) and 20-29 years (10%), indicating a predominantly mature workforce with extensive experience. Regarding education, 60% hold a Bachelor's degree (S1), 5% a Master's degree (S2), 9% a Diploma III, 22% completed high school, and 4% finished junior high school, suggesting a relatively high educational background. In terms of work experience, 60% have worked for over 10 years, 15% for 6-10 years, 23% for 1-5 years, and only 2% for less than a year, highlighting that most respondents have substantial professional experience.

1. Indicator Test

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is assessed based on the correlation between indicator scores and their constructs. An indicator is considered valid if its correlation value exceeds 0.70. If it fails to meet this criterion, it must be eliminated.

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test

Ins.	Resilient Leadership	Employee Performance	Description
	X	Y	
X1.1	0,710		Valid
X1.10	0,728		Valid
X1.2	0,862		Valid
X1.5	0,845		Valid
X1.6	0,709		Valid

Ins.	Resilient Leadership	Employee Performance	Description
	X	Y	
X1.7	0,849		Valid
X1.8	0,836		Valid
X1.9	0,866		Valid
Y1.10		0,812	Valid
Y2.1		0,839	Valid
Y2.2		0,824	Valid
Y2.3		0,909	Valid
Y2.4		0,847	Valid
Y2.5		0,797	Valid
Y2.7		0,818	Valid
Y2.8		0,904	Valid
Y2.9		0,853	Valid

The analysis results show that most indicators in this study demonstrate good validity, with loading factor values generally above 0.70. The Convergent Validity table confirms that nearly all indicators have loading factors above 0.70, indicating a strong correlation with their constructs. This suggests that the measurement instrument used is highly accurate in assessing the intended constructs, supporting the overall validity of the measurement model.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is evaluated based on the cross-loading values between indicators and their constructs. An indicator is considered valid if it has a higher cross-loading value for its own construct than for other constructs.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test

Ins.	Resilient Leadership	Employee Performance	Description
	X	Y	
X1.1	0,710	0,550	Valid
X1.10	0,728	0,752	Valid
X1.2	0,862	0,601	Valid
X1.5	0,845	0,557	Valid
X1.6	0,709	0,446	Valid
X1.7	0,849	0,655	Valid
X1.8	0,836	0,573	Valid
X1.9	0,866	0,629	Valid
Y1.10	0,600	0,812	Valid
Y2.1	0,691	0,839	Valid
Y2.2	0,599	0,824	Valid
Y2.3	0,729	0,909	Valid
Y2.4	0,676	0,847	Valid

Ins.	Resilient Leadership	Employee Performance	Description
	X	Y	
Y2.5	0,552	0,797	Valid
Y2.7	0,589	0,818	Valid
Y2.8	0,665	0,904	Valid
Y2.9	0,626	0,853	Valid

The analysis results show that all constructs in this study exhibit good discriminant validity. Each indicator has a higher loading value on its respective construct compared to its cross-loading values on other constructs. This is confirmed through data processing using SmartPLS 4.0, which indicates that all indicators meet the discriminant validity criteria, as their loading factors are consistently higher for their own constructs than for others. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement instrument used in this study is valid.

Composite Reliability

Composite/Construct Reliability measures the reliability of indicators within a variable. A variable is considered reliable if its composite reliability value exceeds 0.70.

Table 5. Composite Reliability Test

	Composite Reliability	Description
Resilient Leadership (X)	0,953	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0,927	Reliable

The analysis results indicate that all variables in this study demonstrate a high level of reliability. All composite reliability values significantly exceed the 0.70 threshold, confirming that each construct in this study maintains strong internal consistency and is reliable for measuring the intended variables. This finding highlights the instrument's stability and consistency in accurately assessing each construct.

2. Goodness-of-Fit

The model fit test is carried out by looking at the results of the SmartPLS version 3.0 output estimation compared to the criteria as explained in the following table.

Table 6. Goodness-of-Fit Results

Fit Summary	Cut off	Estimate	Description
SRMR	< 0.10	0.081	Fit
d_ULS	CI > OS	(CI 1,202 < (OS) 1,686	Not Fit
d_G	CI > OS	(CI 1,164 > (OS) 0,844	Fit

Fit Summary	Cut off	Estimate	Description
Chi-Square	X^2 statistic < X^2 table	406,270 > 123,225	Not Fit
NFI	Close to 1	0.818	Fit
rms Theta	<0.12	0.189	Not Fit

Overall, the SRMR, d_G, and NFI indicators support the model as a good model, while d_ULS, Chi-Square, and RMS Theta indicate that there are still shortcomings that need to be fixed so that the model fit is more optimal.

3. Hypothesis Testing

Inner Model or structural models test hypotheses by analyzing the relationships between latent variables based on substantive theory.

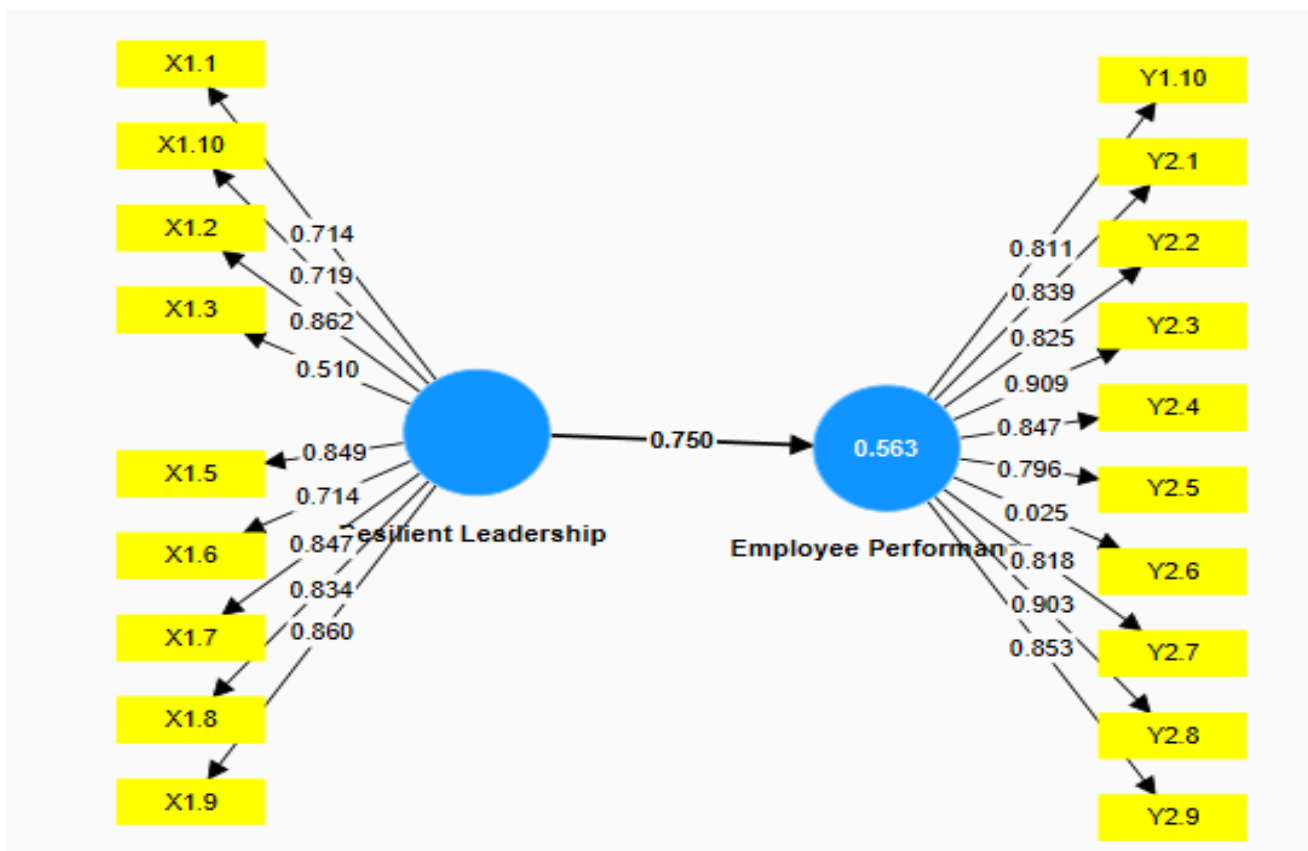


Figure 2. Inner Model

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results

	Sign	Or. Samp	t-statistic	p-value	Description
Resilient Leadership → Employee Performance	(-)	0.061	0.626	0.532	Not Proven

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis show that not all hypotheses in this study are proven. The hypothesis (H1) which tests the effect of resilient leadership on employee performance is not proven, indicated by a P value of 0.532 (> 0.05).

Discussion

The Influence of Resilient Leadership on Employee Performance

The findings of this study show that resilient leadership does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance, contradicting much of the existing literature which suggests that resilient leaders enhance motivation, adaptability, and overall employee outcomes (Al Nahyan et al., 2024; Al-Ansi et al., 2023). This result requires closer examination through the lens of Social Learning Theory (SLT).

According to SLT (Bandura, 1977), individuals learn behaviors, attitudes, and values through observing and modeling the actions of others, especially those in leadership roles. In the organizational context, resilient leaders are expected to demonstrate adaptive coping strategies, emotional regulation, and ethical decision-making, which employees observe and internalize over time (Ludwikowska, 2023). Ideally, such modeling fosters a culture of resilience and proactive problem-solving, which translates into better employee performance (Kumar et al., 2020).

However, in this study, that theoretical relationship did not materialize. One plausible explanation is that the organizational environment failed to support the mechanisms of social learning. In highly bureaucratic and formalized government institutions, opportunities for close interaction between leaders and subordinates may be limited. Without frequent, transparent leadership behavior on display—or in the absence of feedback and reinforcement—employees may not have the conditions necessary to emulate positive behavior (Czura et al., 2024).

Moreover, SLT emphasizes the importance of reinforcement and observational frequency. If resilient behavior by leaders is not consistently visible or rewarded within the organizational system, employees are unlikely to perceive it as valuable or worthy of imitation (Rosario & Vargas, 2024). This limitation may be especially pronounced in public sector organizations where structural rigidity, limited innovation incentives, and hierarchical decision-making restrict informal learning processes (Dewi et al., 2024). These findings suggest that resilient leadership, while conceptually powerful, must be supported by a conducive environment for social learning to occur. Such an environment includes mentorship opportunities, collaborative team dynamics, recognition systems, and clear ethical standards, all of which encourage employees to internalize and replicate observed behaviors (Ludwikowska, 2023).

Furthermore, the lack of significant impact in this study aligns with the view that leadership influence is contingent on institutional context. When rigid rules, lack of autonomy, or inadequate HR policies dominate, even the most resilient leaders may struggle to affect individual behavior and performance. This reinforces Bandura's (1986) notion that learning is both personal and situational, and not all environments enable behavioral modeling equally.

Future research should examine how specific organizational factors—such as visibility of leadership behavior, availability of mentorship, and feedback mechanisms—moderate the relationship between leadership and employee performance. Qualitative approaches could also be used to explore

how employees perceive and interpret leadership behavior in bureaucratic institutions. Additionally, intervention-based studies that incorporate leadership training aligned with SLT principles may provide insight into how modeling can be made more effective in public sector settings.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that resilient leadership does not have a direct effect on employee performance, so that the resilience of a leader alone is not enough to improve employee performance. Further studies can explore other factors that have the potential to strengthen this relationship in order to provide deeper insights for organizational management.

Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the cross-sectional research design limits the understanding of the causal relationship between variables, because the data were collected at one point in time. Further studies with a longitudinal approach can provide deeper insights into the dynamics of the relationship between resilient leadership and employee performance. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaires as a data collection method has the potential to cause respondent subjectivity bias. Future studies are advised to combine qualitative methods, such as interviews or observations, to increase the validity of the results. Third, this study was conducted in a specific organizational context, so the generalization of the results to other sectors is still limited. Further studies can expand the scope of the sample and consider other moderating or mediating variables that can enrich the understanding of the relationship between the variables studied.

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