

Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy on Police Officers' Performance: The Role of Mediation Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract: *This study purpose to examine and analyse the influence of ethical leadership and self-efficacy on police performance through perceived organizational support. A quantitative research approach with non-probability sampling was used. A total of 81 members of the Gowa Police Resort were surveyed using a questionnaire. The collected data were then analysed using Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Square. The results showed that ethical leadership and self-efficacy do not have a direct effect on police performance. However, the results differed when mediated by the perceived organizational support variable, which had a significant effect on personnel performance. Meanwhile, the direct influence of the variables ethical leadership and self-efficacy on perceived organizational support is significant, as is the variable perceived organizational support on the performance of police members. The implications of this study indicate that improving performance needs to be directed towards strengthening organizational support through the provision of work facilities, clear guidance, attention to personnel needs, recognition of contributions, enhancement of internal communication, continuous development, and the creation of a conducive work environment that supports the optimal execution of tasks.*

INTRODUCTION

The performance of police officers is not only assessed from the administrative achievements they handle but also from the quality of decisions, responsiveness, professional behaviour, adherence to procedures, and integrity (Marins et al., 2019). Discipline and public accountability demands in the police institution are key values, and the presence of ethical leaders greatly determines the standard of work behaviour of police officers (Queirós et al., 202). Leaders who are consistent in enforcing rules, transparent in decision-making, and fair in giving rewards and sanctions will shape a professional work culture, hence ethical leadership is needed (Northouse, 2025). This culture ultimately contributes to improving the quality of officer performance, both in

terms of task completion quantity and quality of public service (Sembiring et al., 2020).

The concept of ethical leadership is rooted in Bandura's (2014) Social Learning Theory. This theory explains that individuals in leadership positions become models imitated by subordinates, forming standards of work behaviour characterised by integrity. Ethical leadership demonstrates consistency in actions and fairness in attitude as an example of moral behaviour applied in task implementation (Uddin, 2023). This statement is supported by research by Siregar & Nasution (2023); Purnama et al., (2024) found that ethical leadership significantly affects employee performance, emphasising that the more ethical a leader is, the greater the tendency of subordinates to demonstrate productivity and responsibility. However, it differs from the research of Novryansyah et al., (2021), which found that ethical leadership has no effect on employees' job performance.

In addition to ethical leadership factors, the improvement of police officers' performance cannot be separated from psychological factors such as self-efficacy, which becomes very important (Waddington, 2023). Self-efficacy is the belief in a police officer's ability to organise and execute the necessary actions (Love et al., 2021), because without an adequate level of self-efficacy, police officers may experience doubt, delays in decision-making, or even a decline in task execution quality (Farges et al., 2019), even if the leadership environment has been normatively supportive. This construct is supported by Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasises that behaviour is influenced by the reciprocal interaction between individual factors, behaviour and environment (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). This theory can be understood as indicating that self-efficacy is required by police members to set goals, choose work strategies and persevere in the face of obstacles. As a consequence, a person demonstrates quality, timeliness, and consistency, thus enhancing individual performance (Songze et al., 2024). The research findings of Rachmawati et al., (2024); Jasim & Firdausy (2025) indicate that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. However, this differs from the study by Arsita & Solahuddin (2025), which found that self-efficacy does not affect performance.

In the police organisation, the factor of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) plays an important role in providing work support as it reflects the extent to which the organisation can understand and appreciate contributions and care for the welfare of police members. The variable Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in this study is used as a mediating variable to measure the performance of police members. The position of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is very vital according to Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, which states that the relationship between individuals and the organisation is based on the principle of reciprocity, where the treatment received by individuals will influence the response given to the organization (Rawashdeh et al., 2022). Police officers work within a command structure and the pressure of their duties is an important factor in maintaining their psychological stability and work motivation (Galanis et al., 2021). Research by Nugroho (2025) and Dwiputri & Wanasida (2024) found that perceived organizational support has a positive and significant effect on individual work performance.

Gowa Police Department has a strategic role in maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing professional and integrity-based public services. The hierarchical, disciplined, and command-based nature of the police organisation makes the leadership role highly dominant in shaping the work culture and behavioural standards of police members (Demirkol, 2021). Task activities at Gowa Police face a high workload, the dynamic handling of various cases, and demands for fast and professional public service. The complexity

of criminal cases, the need for rapid response to public reports, and administrative pressures in preparing reports and completing case files require each personnel to work effectively and accurately. However, in practice, there are still variations in the quality of task completion, differences in the level of diligence in case administration, and differences in service responsiveness among members.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory was developed by Albert Bandura (1986) as an extension of social learning theory which emphasises that individual behaviour is learned through the processes of observation, imitation, and internalisation of social models in the surrounding environment. Bandura stated that learning does not only occur through direct experience, but also through observing the behaviour of others (observational learning). According to Bandura (1986), there are four main processes in social learning, namely: (1) attention, (2) retention, (3) reproduction, and (4) motivation.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was first proposed by Peter M. Blau (1964), who stated that social relationships are built on reciprocal exchange. This theory emphasises that individuals will maintain social relationships if they perceive the benefits to be balanced with the contributions they make. According to Blau (1964), social exchange is not always economic or material in nature but also includes psychological exchanges such as appreciation, support, trust, and recognition. When an organisation provides fair treatment, attention to well-being, and opportunities for development to employees, they will respond with increased loyalty, commitment, and performance as a form of reciprocation for the positive treatment received.

Organizational Support Theory (OST)

Organizational Support Theory (OST) was developed by Robert Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) to explain how employees form perceptions regarding the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Employees tend to personify the organisation and treat it as an entity with intentions and concern for them. Thus, the actions of leaders as agents of the organisation play an important role in shaping these perceptions of support.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is the demonstration of normative behaviour that aligns with moral standards through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, as well as the promotion of such behaviour to subordinates through two-way communication, reinforcement (reward), and decision-making. This definition emphasises that ethical leadership is not only related to the personal character of the leader (moral person), but also how the leader actively manages ethical values within the organisation (moral manager). When leaders demonstrate integrity and fairness in every action, subordinates tend to internalise these values and apply them in their work behaviour.

H1: Ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers.

H3: Ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Organizational Support

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a concept introduced by Albert Bandura (1986) within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to organise and carry out the actions required to achieve a certain level of performance. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to set more challenging goals, exert greater effort, and possess stronger resilience when facing obstacles.

H2: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers.

H4: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is defined as employees' perception of the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), employees tend to personify the organisation as an entity with intentions and concern. When employees feel valued and cared for, they develop a sense of belonging and a moral obligation to contribute more to the organisation.

H5: Perceived Organizational Support has a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers.

H6: Perceived Organizational Support significantly mediates the effect of Ethical Leadership on the performance of police officers.

H7: Perceived Organizational Support significantly mediates the effect of Self Efficacy on the performance of police members.

Performance of police officers

The performance of police officers can be understood as the level of effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out operational duties, public service, law enforcement, and administrative responsibilities according to the professional standards set by the institution. Police performance reflects the individual's ability to complete tasks accurately, disciplinarily, and responsibly, while maintaining the integrity and accountability of the institution..

METHOD

This is an explanatory research with a quantitative approach to test causal relationships between variables through hypothesis testing (Sekaran, 2016). Data collection is carried out using survey/questionnaire methods from predetermined variable indicators, which is then analysed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Primary data in the form of respondents' answers to the exogenous variables, namely ethical leadership and self-efficacy, the performance of police members as the endogenous variable, and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as the mediating variable (Sugiyono, 2019). The research sample consists of 81 police officers serving at the Gowa Police Resort. Testing the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Model in two stages, namely the outer model and the inner model. For research with reflective constructs, the outer model is tested through the stages of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Ghozali, 2014). Then the inner model tests the relationships between latent variables through path coefficients, t-statistics (>1.96), and p-values (<0.05) obtained via the bootstrapping procedure.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristic

The characteristics of the respondents are used to provide a general overview of the profile of the members of Gowa Police who are the research sample, consisting of several aspects, namely gender, age, level of education and length of service. The presentation of these characteristics

aims to determine the composition of the respondents and provide an overview of the research analysis results.

a. Distribution by gender

The distribution of respondents by gender shows that the respondents are dominated by male members, totaling 70 people or 86.42%. Meanwhile, female respondents number 11 or 13.58%. This aligns with the characteristics of the police organisation, which is generally still dominated by male personnel, especially in operational functions that require physical readiness, discipline, mobility, and the ability to handle task dynamics in the field.

b. Distribution by age

The characteristics of respondents based on age show that respondents are dominated by the 31–40-year age group 31 people or 38.27%. Next, respondents in the 20–30-year age group numbered 22 people or 27.16%, respondents in the 41–50-year age group numbered 21 people or 25.93%, while respondents over 50 years old numbered 7 people or 8.64%. Generally, police members of productive age have good work abilities, a fairly high level of adaptability, and experience that supports the optimal implementation of police duties and functions.

c. Distribution by education level

The characteristics of respondents based on educational level are dominated by officers with a high school education, 46 people or 56.79%. Next, respondents with a bachelor's degree amount to 33 people or 40.74%, while respondents with a postgraduate education total 2 people or 2.47%. The educational level characteristics of the respondents indicate a diversity of educational backgrounds among Gowa Police officers.

d. Distribution by length of service

The characteristics of respondents according to length of service show that respondents with 11–20 years of service numbered 36 people or 44.44%. Next, respondents with more than 20 years of service numbered 21 people or 25.93%, respondents with ≤ 5 years of service numbered 20 people or 24.69%, while respondents with 6–10 years of service numbered 4 people or 4.94%.

Data Analysis

a. Outer model

The evaluation of the outer model was carried out through testing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability on the variables Ethical Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Perceived Organizational Support, and Police officers Performance. These tests were conducted to meet the criteria for validity and reliability.

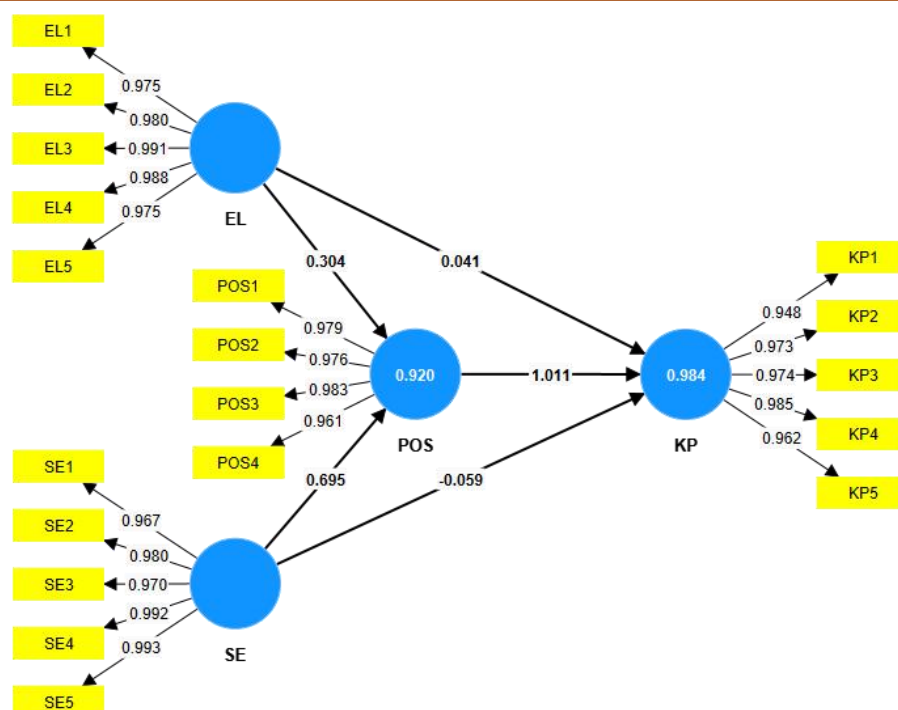


Figure 2. Path Coefficients (smart-PLS 3.0)

Table 1. AVE, Cronbach Alpha & Composite Reliability Test

Construct	Average Variance Extracted	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Ethical Leadership	0,964	0,991	0,993
Kinerja Personel	0,938	0,983	0,987
Perceived Organizational Support	0,950	0,982	0,987
Self-Efficacy	0,961	0,990	0,992

The results of the outer model testing show outer loading values >0.70 , and the results of convergent validity show AVE values >0.50 , thus it is considered to meet the validity test. Then, the results of the Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability tests indicate that all constructs are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

b. Inner model

The results of the inner model testing were conducted to determine the structural relationships among the variables Ethical Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Perceived Organizational Support on the Performance of Police Members. The evaluation of the inner model by looking at the R-Square value was used to determine the ability of the exogenous variables in explaining the endogenous variables, the path coefficients, and the direct and indirect effects between variables. Path coefficients were used to see the direction and magnitude of the relationships between variables in the research model by looking at t-statistics values > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05 .

Table 2. Path Coefficient (direct & indirect effects)

intervariable influence	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values
Ethical Leadership → Kinerja Personel	0,041	0,618	0,537
Self-Efficacy → Kinerja Personel	-0,059	0,618	0,536
Ethical Leadership → Perceived Organizational Support	0,304	1,984	0,047
Self-Efficacy → Perceived Organizational Support	0,695	4,582	0,000
Perceived Organizational Support → Kinerja Personel	1,011	11,411	0,000
Ethical Leadership → Perceived Organizational Support → Kinerja Personel	0,308	2,06	0,039
Self-Efficacy → Perceived Organizational Support → Kinerja Personel	0,703	3,517	0,000

Test results indicate that Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy do not have an impact on the performance improvement of Gowa Police members. This means that the implementation of ethical leadership by superiors has not been proven to directly enhance personnel performance at Gowa Police. These findings are in line with the research of Novryansyah et al. (2021); Gunawan & Setiawan (2022) which states that Ethical Leadership does not significantly affect performance. The similarity of these results shows that ethical leadership does not necessarily directly improve employee performance.

Ethical Leadership is indeed important in shaping good work behaviour, creating fairness, and building positive relationships between leaders and subordinates. In police organisations, member performance tends to be more influenced by formal rules, standard operating procedures (SOPs), supervisory systems, institutional targets, and command structures rather than ethically oriented leadership styles. Personnel are still required to complete tasks according to organisational standards even though perceptions of leaders' ethical behaviour vary. In other words, work success is more determined by compliance with the system than by a leader's interpersonal influence. Theoretically, Ethical Leadership often has a stronger impact on variables such as job satisfaction, trust in leadership, and work loyalty. Therefore, even when ethical leadership is present, its contribution to performance improvement is relatively small.

An individual's confidence in their self-efficacy does not automatically improve work performance because all personnel operate within the same framework. In theory, self-efficacy has a stronger impact on jobs that allow for high autonomy. However, in highly structured institutions, factors such as leadership direction, team coordination, and organisational discipline often become the main determinants of performance. In the police work environment, performance achievement is more influenced by organisational mechanisms, team coordination, and compliance with operational standards than by individual psychological factors.

The variables Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy have a positive and significant effect on

Perceived Organizational Support at Gowa Police. The better the implementation of Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy, the higher the Perceived Organizational Support felt by police members. This means that leadership based on ethical values, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and concern for subordinates can shape members' positive perceptions of organisational support, and police members who have confidence in their ability to complete tasks tend to have a more positive perception of organisational support.

The results of this study are supported by Makumbe's (2025) research, which states that Ethical Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Organizational Support. Hermawan et al. (2025) also show that Self-Efficacy has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Organizational Support.

Police officers work within an organisational environment that demands discipline, compliance with rules, and readiness to perform duties of public service and community security. The ethical behaviour of leaders can serve as a representation of organisational support because, within the police structure, leaders are often seen as the representatives of the organisation. The role of leaders is crucial in shaping members' perceptions, and members tend to feel that the organisation provides attention and support.

The variable Perceived Organizational Support has a positive and significant effect on the performance of police members. This finding indicates that the higher the organizational support perceived by the members, the higher their performance. In other words, when police members feel that the organization provides attention, recognition, facilities, guidance, and support in carrying out tasks, they will be more motivated to work optimally. The Gowa Police Department needs to pay attention to the needs of police officers in carrying out their duties, provide adequate work facilities, give clear guidance, foster open communication, and recognise their performance and contributions.

The results of this study are in line with the research of Nugroho (2025); Dwiputri & Wanasida (2024) which show that Perceived Organizational Support has a positive and significant effect on performance.

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that Perceived Organizational Support can mediate the influence of Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy on the performance of members at the Gowa Police Department. Ethical Leadership and Self-Efficacy can enhance performance if police members feel organisational support. This study reinforces the view that Ethical Leadership does not always have a direct impact on performance, but can exert an indirect influence through Perceived Organizational Support. Ethical leadership requires the intermediary of perceived organisational support in order to impact performance improvement.

The self-confidence of police officers in carrying out their duties will more effectively drive performance improvement if supported by positive perceptions of attention, recognition, facilities, and organisational support. Individual self-confidence does not always directly result in better performance. Self-efficacy requires organisational support so that an individual's potential, abilities, and self-confidence can be realised into optimal work outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Ethical Leadership and self-efficacy have no effect on the performance of police officers at the Gowa Police Resort. These results indicate that the ethical leadership implemented by the leaders has not been proven to directly enhance the performance and self-confidence of the police officers in carrying out their duties, and has not been shown to have a significant direct impact on performance improvement. However, ethical leadership and self-efficacy can improve the performance of police officers if they feel that there is tangible organisational support.

Leaders need to strengthen communication, provide fair treatment, show concern for the needs of police members, and give appreciation for their contributions and work achievements. Improving performance can be achieved by enhancing perceived organisational support as a link between ethical leadership and personnel performance. Leaders should not only demonstrate ethical behaviour but also ensure that these ethical values are felt as a real form of organisational support.

Leaders need to demonstrate fairness, honesty, openness, responsibility, and care for the needs and constraints of personnel in carrying out their duties. Personnel need to improve their skills, discipline, responsibility, and readiness to meet job demands. High self-confidence will be more effective in enhancing performance when supported by a conducive organisational environment and perceived organisational support. Open and clear communication can help police members understand their duties, responsibilities, and organisational expectations. Good communication can also increase the sense of being valued and attended to, thereby strengthening police members' perception of organisational support.

The implication of this finding is that improving the performance of police officers cannot rely solely on the ethical behaviour of leaders and the self-efficacy or confidence of personnel. Organisations need to strengthen perceived organisational support so that this confidence can be directed towards more optimal performance.

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