Abstract: This study presents a model linking individual characteristics, employee engagement, and employee performance. The primary objective was to investigate the direct effect of individual characteristics on employee performance and its indirect effect through employee engagement. This study used a non-probability sampling technique with a saturation sampling type. The data were obtained by a questionnaire from a sample of 118 respondents of millennial employees in the media and information technologies sector in Yogyakarta. Data were analyzed by used variance-based SEM (SEM-PLS) and found four significant paths models. The result reveals that individual characteristics have a positive and significant effect on improving employee performance. Moreover, individual characteristics are significantly positive in increasing employee engagement, while employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The mediation test result indicated that employee engagement could partially mediate the relationship of individual characteristics on employee performance. Further research can incorporate variables that influence millennial performance, such as job characteristics, intention to leave, job satisfaction, and other variables to improve strategies in enhancing millennial performance.

Keywords: Individual Characteristics, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance

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greater role in the workplace. There are three groups of workers in an organization: the first generation dubbed the baby boomers generation. The second generation is called the X generation, and the third generation is the Y generation, known as the millennial generation. Solomon (1992) defined a millennial generation, that is, a generation born after 1980. The year 1999 is the birth year limit of the millennial generation put forward by Zemke et al. (2000).

Durkin (2007) explained that the millennial generation differs from attitudes to personalities exhibited by millennial employees. Therefore, Domeyer (2006) stated that organizations need to pay attention to HR policies to match the needs of millennials. Because organizations must recognize the unique characteristics and differences that lie in each generation, that must be managed so that millennial employees can work effectively to improve the performance of Millennial employees (Jalil et al., 2015).

In their research, Jalil et al. (2015) stated that individual characteristics influence increased employee performance. Millennial generation characteristics can benefit organizations to improve organizational performance (Wang and Wirsching, 2015). Individual characteristics of the millennial generation that stand out are digital natives, which shows that millennials have expertise and ability in technology (Zemke et al., 2000). Tulgan and Martin (2001) add that the millennial generation has tech-savvy, which is a generation that can utilize technology very well. Also, millennials have many desires to foster optimism and high morale, and have high creativity. Millennial generation employees will assist organizations engaged in the media and information technology sector. Millennial employees are believed to have high creativity that increases employee and organizational productivity (Hanvongse et al., 2011). That can be accommodated by companies based on technology, one of which is a company engaged in technology.

Many organizations that work in the media and information technologies sector prefer to employ millennial employees. The performance of millennial employees in the media and information technologies sector has increased. Increasing performance is encouraged due to adequate work facilities that support millennial performance, such as the availability of facilities for sports and play for employees that can be used when employees want to relax while working. A Comfortable working atmosphere is also one of the supporting factors to improve employee performance. Employee performance increases along with the organization’s ability to combine organizational policies with millennial generation characteristics (Wang and Wirsching, 2015). Millennials prefer to work for companies that can adjust to millennial desires regarding the workplace. Millennials want a workplace that has flexibility in working hours and freedom in carrying out work, and a comfortable working atmosphere. The media and information technology sector can meet to adjust to millennial desires.

In this regard, the problem faced by organizations engaged in the media and information technologies sectors is coordinating the character of the millennial generation so that employee performance can improve. Organizations must continue to maintain performance even improve employee performance.

Several previous studies related to the effect of individual characteristics on employee performance show inconsistent research results. Research conducted by Karatepe et al. (2006), Hanafi (2016), Grobelna (2018), and Hidayah (2018) showed that individual characteristics have a positive effect on employee performance, while research conducted by Susanti (2016) and Mindarti (2015), showed that individual characteristics negatively affect employee performance.

In addition, research conducted by Rehman et al. (2015), Jakfar (2014), Pujiwati and Susanty (2015), and Jalil et al. (2015) showed that individual characteristics significantly influence employee performance. But instead, research conducted by Niebuhr and Norris (1982), Setiawan (2013), and
Sumantri et al. (2017) showed that individual characteristics do not significantly influence employee performance.

The description of the research gap above shows that the antecedents of employee performance examined can give inconsistent results. Therefore, this research was conducted by integrating a broader research model and developing the model of previous research studies by Karatepe (2006), Hanafi (2016), Grobelna (2018), Hidayah (2018), Rehman et al. (2015), Jakfar (2014), Pujiwati dan Susanty (2015), and Jalil et al. (2015). The research model built in this study was tested and analyzed on the objects: millennial employees in Media and Technology Information Sectors. These diverse research results provide a loophole for further research to determine the extent of employee engagement as a mediator in the relationship between individual characteristics and employee performance. In this study, the employee engagement variable is a mediating variable that engages the relationship between individual characteristics and employee performance. That is similar to Ihya et al. (2019)’s research opinion, which stated the need to add mediating variables between individual characteristics and employee performance.

Research conducted by Ongore (2014) and Pocnet et al. (2015) showed a significant relationship between individual characteristics and employee engagement. Sacks (2006) stated that individual differences could be potential predictors of employee engagement, so one of the factors that affect employee engagement is individual characteristics. Researchers are starting to give special attention to employee engagement, one of the key determinants that can encourage employee performance levels (Macey et al., 2009). It is expected that the research could answer whether or not individual employee engagement can bridge the relationship of individual characteristics toward employee performance of millennial employees in the media and technology sectors of Yogyakarta.

**HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

This study conducted by Hanafi (2016) explained that individual characteristics have a positive and significant relationship to employee performance. Individual characteristics become predictors of employee performance. This study indicates that individual characteristics within the organization can support the performance of the individuals concerned in the organization. The research results by Hanafi (2016) are supported by the results of research performed by Grobelna (2018) and Karatepe et al. (2006), who explained that individual characteristics are one important component that can shape employee performance. Based on some of the previous studies above, it is known that there are positive and significant influences of individual characteristics on employee performance.

**H¹: Individual Characteristics Have a Positive and Significant Effect on Employee Performance.**

Individual characteristics, in addition to influencing employee performance, also have influences on employee engagement. Research conducted by Grobelna (2018) examined the effect of individual characteristics on employee engagement by taking a sample of 222 hotel employees in Poland. According to the results of these studies that individual characteristics affect employee engagement. The results of this study are also supported by research performed by Pocnet et al. (2015), where the study results showed that individual characteristics have a positive effect on employee engagement. Thus, it can be said that more positive individual characteristics will increase employee engagement. Based on the above research, it is known that there are positive and significant influences between individual characteristics on employee engagement.

**H²: Individual Characteristics Have a Positive and Significant Effect on Employee Engagement**

In addition to individual characteristics, employee engagement can also affect performance. Employee engagement is believed to be a predictor of employee performance. Sugianingrat et al. (2019) examined the effect of employee engagement on the performance of employees and took samples of non-starred hotel employees. The results showed...
that there was a significant influence between employee engagements on employee performance. The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Nazir and Islam (2017), which showed that employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. That shows that if employee engagement increases, it will improve employee performance in the organization. Based on the above research, it is suspected that there is an influence of employee engagement on employee performance.

\[ H_3: \text{Employee Engagement Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Employee Performance} \]

Individual characteristics can influence the performance given to the organization. The characteristics possessed can create employee engagement. That can create maximum performance due to employee engagement. Hee et al. (2018) confirmed that employee engagement is positively and significantly mediating the relationship of individual characteristics on employee performance. From the description above, the writer formulates the fourth hypothesis as follows:

\[ H_4: \text{Employee Engagement Mediates the Effect of Individual Characteristics on Employee Performance} \]

**METHOD**

This research is explanatory research using a quantitative approach to measure the model’s construct and analyze the relationship between one construct variable and another construct. This research was conducted in the media and information technologies sectors. That consists of six companies engaged in the film, animation, game, tv, radio, software development, and incubation industries. This study considers that many companies engaged in the media and information technologies sectors industry employ millennial employees, of which around 90% are millennial employees.

The target population used in this study is employees who belong to the millennial group, aged 21 to 40 years. Based on data obtained from the sector media and information technologies, 250 employees are the population. The sampling approach was used non-probability sampling with saturated samples technique. But, at the time of data collection, there were only 118 data that researchers could collect. 118 respondents consisted of 6 media and information technologies sectors, with the following details as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1. Respondents Distribution**

| Companies     | Frequency (Orang) |
|---------------|-------------------|
| MSV           | 50                |
| RBTV          | 17                |
| Radio MQFM    | 17                |
| PT.TE         | 12                |
| PT.GIT        | 16                |
| Incubator     | 6                 |
| **Total**     | **118**           |

Data analysis techniques using SEM PLS using the SmartPLS 3.0 application. Testing the research hypothesis is determined based on the significance value or critical value \( (\alpha) \) of 0.5% and the value of the path coefficient.

**RESULTS**

The majority of respondents were millennials 21-40 years old, but most were aged 21-30 years (68.6 percent or 81 people). In addition, the majority of respondents were male employees in six media and information technologies sectors (59.3 percent or 70 people). Eighty-four people, or 72 percent of respondents, were contract employees. Most of the respondents were worked at the staff level (82 percent or 97 people). More than half of respondents have worked between 1 to 3 years in the media and information technologies sectors.

Table 2 indicates that the scale, magnitude, and statistical appropriateness are acceptable. The average variance extracted (value) for all latent variables in the individual characteristic model, employee engagement, and employee performance was 0.809, 0.668, and 0.891, greater than 0.05. Thus it can be
said that all constructs meet the validity requirements based on AVE.

**Reliability and Average Varian**

On average, Cronbach Alpha for reliability criteria is quite high; employee performance had the highest value. Sequentially, Cronbach alpha coefficient values for the three scales reported in this study ranged from 0.782 to 0.916; they are still acceptable. The value of composite reliability (CR) is 0.866; 0.852; and 0.918 (above 0.80) in sequence. Thus, the entire construct is reliable, both according to the criteria of composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha.

Table 3 presents the R-squared values among the research model observed.

**Table 3. R-Squared**

| Variable       | R-square |
|----------------|----------|
| Employee Engagement | 0.566    |
| Employee Performance | 0.718    |

The following equation assessed the Goodness of Fit (GoF) in this study

\[
\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\text{AVE} \times R^2} = \sqrt{0.860 \times 0.645} = 0.745
\]

0.745 indicates that the model has a large enough predictive value. Individual characteristics and employee engagement explain 87% of the Q-Squared Predictive Relevance value for employee performance.

Furthermore, based on the hypothesis test result presented in Table 2, the analysis model is illustrated in Figure 1.

The following is the illustration path analysis model:

![Path Analysis Model](image)

From Figure 1 and Table 3, hypothesis 1 is accepted. The effect of individual characteristics on employee performance was positive and significant, with a p-value of 0.00 under critical value 0.05. Based on these findings, hypothesis 1 is accepted, which means a positive and significant effect of individual characteristics on employee performance. Therefore, the high implementation of millennial characters into their work will increase the performance of millennial employees in the media and technology sector. Individual characteristics are measured based on six indicators: digital native, collaborative, self-confidence, optimism, creativity, and work ethic (Zemke et al., 2013; Tulgan and Martin, 2001). Characteristics of millennial generation employees in organizations engaged in the media and
information technologies sector can improve employee performance. That means that the more millennial characteristics applied in the workplace, the higher the performance of millennial employees.

Hypothesis 2 is accepted. The effect of individual characteristics on employee engagement was found to be significant, with a $p$-value of 0.00 under critical value 0.05. It can be said that hypothesis 2 is accepted, which means that higher implementation of millennial characters can increase employee engagement of millennial employees in the media and information technologies sectors.

Hypothesis 3 is accepted. The effect of employee engagement on employee performance was found to be significant, with a beta coefficient of 0.347 and $p$-value 0.00 under critical value 0.05. It can be said that higher employee engagement can increase employee performance in the millennial employee in the media and information technologies sectors.

Hypothesis 4 is accepted. Based on the result of the mediation test (using the Sobel test), employee engagement can play an essential role in mediating the effect of individual characteristics on employee performance; therefore, hypothesis 4 is accepted. Based on the result of mediation tests that have been conducted, employee engagement is categorized as partial mediation, given the indirect effect of individual characteristics on employee performance through employee engagement found to be significant. It can be performed that the employee engagement of millennial employees in the media and information technology sector will further encourage the effect of individual characteristics on employee performance.

**DISCUSSION**

**The Influence of Individual Characteristics on Employee Performance**

Individual characteristics have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The characteristics of millennial generation employees in the media and technology sector companies can improve employee performance. That shows that the higher the individual characteristics of the millennial generation that are applied when employees work can improve the performance of millennial employees. In theory, Kreitner and Kinicki (2005) provided conclusions on the positive effect of individual character on work performance, motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Research by Grobelna (2018) showed a relationship between individual characteristics and employee performance in the hotel industry. In addition, the media and technology sector’s companies have the slogan “Economy Creative Park”, which matches the character of millennials who have digital native characters and high creativity to improve performance.

Employees can continue to maintain and enhance positive millennial characteristics such as work ethic and abilities to achieve the best performance of employees. That can improve the performance of millennial employees and hoped that Individual characteristics can support organizations to achieve goals through digital native, collaboration, creativity, self-confidence, optimism, and work ethic. Employees already have pretty good individual characteristics that have been applied by millennial employees while working. The formation of individual characteristics of millennial employees, which are quite good, is indicated by the ability of employees

| Relationship | Path Coefficient | $p$-value | Decision |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|----------|
| Individual Characteristics $\rightarrow$ Employee Performance | 0.350 | 0.000 | Supported |
| Individual Characteristics $\rightarrow$ Employee Engagement | 0.347 | 0.001 | Supported |
| Employee Engagement $\rightarrow$ Employee Performance | 0.359 | 0.000 | Supported |
to use the technology used at work. The results are following previous research conducted by Hidayah (2018), Hanafi (2016), Grobelna (2018), Karatepe (2006), and Kore et al. (2018).

The Effect of Individual Characteristics on Employee Engagement

Individual difference is one of the most researched concepts related to work behavior. Individual characteristics are characters that can differentiate between one individual and another. Kreitner and Kinicki (2005) differentiate individual characteristics into five aspects: personality, self-concept, ability, attitude, and emotions.

Based on this study’s findings, individual characteristics have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. That shows that the higher the individual characteristics possessed by millennial employees who work in the media and information technology sector can increase employee engagement. Individual characteristics are one of the potential factors determining employee engagement in an organization (Sacks, 2006).

The organization can maintain employee engagement through vigor and dedication to the organization where millennial employees work. They have a high attachment to the organization to increase employee engagement. That is following the individual characteristics of millennial employees who have a high work ethic value and capable abilities to encourage employees to have vigor and absorption behavior so that they can support the organization in achieving goals.

Millennial employees have quite good individual characteristics that have been applied when employees work. Such as having the ability to use technology at work or having a high work ethic value manifested in a high sense of responsibility for the work done. So that it affects the employee’s sense of attachment to the organization in which work, the results of this study are consistent with the findings by Ongore (2014), Pocnet et al. (2015), Gulamali (2017), Grobelna (2018), and Ziapour and Kianipour (2015), stated that individual characteristics have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.

The Effect of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance

The research results have shown that employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Employee engagement is measured using three indicators, namely vigor (enthusiasm), dedication, and absorption. High employee engagement can improve quality, quantity, attendance, punctuality, and cooperation. Employee engagement is a strong predictor of employee performance (Macey et al., 2009).

According to Mone and London (2018), high employee engagement can encourage hope for enthusiasm and dedication to the organization.

The condition of millennial employees who work in the media and information technology sector often gets assignments requiring employees to work together with other employees who are still in the same division. Moreover, millennial employees can complete work on time so that they can support efforts to improve organizational performance.

Employees have a fairly good employee engagement in the organization. The formation of a fairly good employee engagement is indicated by employees who are willing to provide more energy than usual so that the business entity becomes successful. The results of this study support the research findings by Konrad (2006), Macey et al. (2009), and Mone and London (2018).

Employee Engagement Can Mediate the Relationship between Individual Characteristics and Employee Performance

The results showed that employee engagement could provide a mediating effect from the influence of individual characteristics on employee performance. The results of individual characteristics variables towards employee engagement and employee engagement to employee performance show significant results. The existence of a direct influence between individual characteristics on employee performance has shown significant results, so it can be concluded that the role of employee engagement in this study is as partial mediation. That proves that individual characteristics can improve millennial employees who work in the media and information technology sector.
technology sector with or without involving employee engagement.

This study indicates that millennial employees have a fairly good perception of the individual characteristics possessed by millennial employees in the organization. Millennial employees have a high work ethic value, which is manifested through a high sense of responsibility for the tasks assigned by the organization and can encourage employee engagement to produce good employee performance. Individual characteristics of the digital native, collaborative, self-confidence, optimism, creativity, and work ethic encourage employees to feel attached to employees and the organization. That can determine employees at work.

The findings of this study are supported by previous research, namely Ongore (2014), Pocnet et al. (2015), Gulamali (2017), Grobelna (2018), and Ziapour and Kianipour (2015) showed that there is a significant relationship between individual characteristics and employee attractiveness. Research conducted by Konrad (2006), Macey et al. (2009), and Mone and London (2018) which showed that employee engagement has a significant effect on employee performance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the effect of individual characteristics on employee performance, both directly and indirectly, through employee engagement by millennial employees in the media and information technology sector. The research finding shows that individual characteristic has an important effect on employee performance. Moreover, individual characteristics have a role in increasing employee performance and employee engagement. One important finding from this study is that the individual characteristics of millennial employees increase employee engagement. The mediation test results show that employee engagement can provide an essential mediating role in the relationship between individual characteristics on employee performance.

The research findings show an important relationship between individual characteristics and employee performance for millennial employees in the media and information technologies sectors. Practically, this suggests the company takes care of the character of millennials better; therefore, the employees can support the organization’s performance. After finding the causes of employee performance, companies can take effective HRM policies. The company should motivate and give spirit to the millennial employees. Moreover, companies have to give appreciation to the employee that had a great job in their work. So, employee engagement can increase automatically that can also affect their performance.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship of individual characteristics, employee engagement, and employee performance of millennial employees in the media and information technologies sectors. This study generates a final model frame worked based on the analysis by revealing the conceptual development model that has been tested, emphasizing that there are inconsistencies of the result in the direct influence of individual characteristics on employee performance.

LIMITATIONS

This study used only six companies that work in the media and information technologies sectors, so the result of this study can be a generalization to another media and technology sector. This study used two ways of collecting data, namely online and offline questionnaires. Therefore, further research should choose one most effective way of collecting data using questionnaires with millennial respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Companies engaged in the media and information technology sector need to conduct evaluations related to applying millennial character to support work in the organization so that all employees can use their characters optimally to achieve maximum employee performance. Other than that, the company should motivate and give spirit to the millennial employees. Moreover, companies have to give appreciation to the employee that had a great job in their work. So, employee engagement can increase
Enhancing Millennial Performance through Individual Characteristics and Employee Engagement

automatically that can also affect their performance.

This study uses six companies engaged in the media and information technology sector so that further research is expected to be more specific in one field but on large companies. In addition, further research is expected to add and examine another variable that is not included in this research model, including job satisfaction, job characteristics, and job design.

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