



# The Effect of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Practices on the Performance and Well-Being of Lecturers at Private Universities in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This study examines the effect of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices on the performance of lecturers at private universities in Indonesia, with lecturer well-being considered as a mediating factor. Growing attention to sustainability in higher education has raised questions about how institutional governance and social responsibility influence academic staff outcomes. The objective of this research is to analyze whether ESG practices improve lecturers' performance directly and indirectly through their well-being. A quantitative causal explanatory design was employed. Primary data were collected through questionnaires from 120 lecturers at private universities selected using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to evaluate both measurement and structural models. The results indicate that ESG practices have a positive and significant effect on lecturer performance and lecturer well-being. In addition, lecturer well-being significantly mediates the relationship between ESG practices and performance. These findings highlight the importance of ESG for lecturer welfare.

**Keywords:** ESG Practices, Lecturer Performance, Lecturer Well-Being, Private Universities, Sustainability Management

## Introduction

In an era of globalization and higher education reform, private Indonesian universities confront increasing competitive challenges, necessitating a shift away from old administrative procedures and toward more sustainable and responsible management practices. The Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework has lately acquired traction in this setting. ESG is a multidimensional framework for assessing how firms address environmental impact, social responsibility, and governance quality (Eccles et al, 2014) (Gillan et al, 2021). Although ESG was originally designed for the corporate sector, higher education institutions are increasingly using it as a strategic tool for improving institutional reputation and creating long-term value.

Lecturers are universities' principal intellectual asset and play an important part in executing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which encompasses teaching, research, and community service. However, empirical evidence suggests that lecturer performance frequently changes as a result of heavy workloads, institutional complexity, and opaque

governance mechanisms. Lecturer well-being continues to be a crucial concern at many Indonesian private universities, both monetarily and psychologically. Inadequate well-being may have a detrimental impact on work motivation, resulting in lower teaching quality and research productivity. As a result, a complete management approach, such as ESG, is required to ensure that environmental conditions, social interactions, and governance structures coexist harmoniously within the institutional setting.

Within the university context, the environmental dimension of ESG refers not only to energy efficiency or environmental activities, but also to the quality of the physical and organizational work environments encountered by academic staff. The social dimension emphasizes institutional responsibility to lecturers through inclusive policies, career development possibilities, employment security, and equal treatment in the workplace. Meanwhile, the governance dimension emphasizes leadership accountability, transparency in decision-making, and fairness in pay schemes. Previous research in the corporate and industrial sectors has found that effective ESG implementation can boost employee loyalty, job happiness, and productivity (Akbar et al, 2024) (Wiyono et al, 2025) (Friede et al, 2015). Nonetheless, empirical research on the relationship between ESG practices and academic staff outcomes in higher education, particularly at Indonesian private universities, is lacking.

The theoretical foundation of this work is Stakeholder Theory, which contends that companies are accountable not just to shareholders but also to a variety of stakeholders who influence or are affected by organizational activities (Aziz et al, 2024). In the context of private universities, lecturers are an important internal stakeholder group. Institutional success in establishing academic excellence is heavily reliant on how well institutions manage relationships with their teachers and respond to their professional and personal requirements. The adoption of ESG principles can thus be viewed as a tangible embodiment of stakeholder-oriented management. Environmental activities exhibit institutional responsibility for creating sustainable working environments, social policies reflect a commitment to equity and human development, and governance procedures guarantee transparency and accountability in organizational decision-making (Wiyono et al, 2025). When these aspects are consistently used, lecturers are more likely to respond with increased organizational engagement and professional productivity (Wiyono et al, 2025) (Velte, 2017).

Lecturer performance in higher education is often assessed using the Tri Dharma framework, which includes instructional activities, scientific research, and community engagement. Optimal performance is dependent not only on individual competencies, but also on an institutional support structure that promotes academic activities and administrative operations (Purwanto et al, 2023). At the same time, human well-being is becoming more widely acknowledged as a multifaceted concept that encompasses financial security, psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and work/life balance. Stable well-being conditions can increase lecturers' commitment to institutional goals and eliminate psychological barriers that may impede academic productivity. The relationship between well-being and performance is frequently reciprocal. Lecturers

with adequate financial and psychological well-being are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and produce better academic results. Poor governance structures and inadequate support systems, on the other hand, may cause work stress and lower professional productivity (Aziz et al, 2024). Within the ESG paradigm, the social and governance components are viewed as critical mechanisms for sustaining lecturer well-being, which contributes to long-term institutional performance.

Despite increasing interest in ESG in organizational research, there is still a considerable study gap addressing how ESG practices affect lecturer well-being and performance in higher education institutions (Gillan et al, 2021). Many management policies in private institutions continue to focus on cost savings without taking into account the long-term effects of governance procedures on academic staff well-being. Addressing this gap is critical to understanding how sustainability-focused management approaches can improve both human resource results and institutional performance.

Based on this background, the current study seeks to investigate the impact of ESG practices on lecturer performance and well-being in private Indonesian institutions. Furthermore, this study looks into how lecturer well-being influences the relationship between ESG practices and lecturer performance. The findings are expected to help advance the human resource management and sustainability management literature in higher education, as well as provide practical recommendations for private university administrators looking to improve their academic staff's quality of life and professional productivity.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study used a quantitative technique and a causal-explanatory research design to investigate the correlations between the variables specified in the research model. This design was used to investigate the causal impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices on lecturer performance and well-being in private Indonesian institutions. The quantitative method allows for the use of statistical procedures to assess given hypotheses and provide empirical generalizations about how institutional policies linked to sustainability and governance affect human resource outcomes in higher education institutions.

Primary data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire issued to lecturers at private universities. The survey questionnaire was developed using constructs from past research on ESG implementation, employee well-being, and organizational performance in higher education and organizational management literature.

### **Population and Sampling**

This study's population included lecturers from private universities across Indonesia, both full-time and part-time academic workers. Due to the population's large geographic distribution, stringent inclusion criteria were used to assure data relevance and trustworthiness. Respondents were required to have a National Lecturer Identification

Number (NIDN) or Special Lecturer Identification Number (NIDK) and at least one year of teaching experience at their respective institutions. This criterion verified that respondents had adequate expertise and knowledge of institutional governance procedures and organizational policies (Aziz et al, 2024).

This study used non-probability sampling combined with a purposive sampling method. This strategy was used to verify that the respondents chosen were directly related to the research environment. The planned sample size was between 100 and 150 respondents. This sample size is consistent with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) guidelines, which suggest a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators in the study model to enable stable statistical estimate (Purwanto et al, 2023).

The questionnaire was issued online to enable for rapid data collecting from academics situated throughout Indonesia while maintaining the reliability and accuracy of the primary data received.

### **Variable Measurement and Operational Definitions**

To ensure clarity in data collection and measurement, each variable in the study was operationally defined based on relevant literature in human resource management and sustainability studies. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **ESG Practices (Independent Variable)**

ESG practices were measured based on lecturers' perceptions of institutional commitment across three key dimensions (Wiyono et al, 2025):

#### *Environmental Dimension*

This dimension includes indicators such as institutional energy efficiency policies, administrative digitalization (paperless systems), and the availability of environmentally supportive and comfortable physical working facilities.

#### *Social Dimension*

This dimension captures institutional policies related to human resource development, equal treatment without discrimination, job security, and support for lecturers' psychological well-being and professional development.

#### *Governance Dimension*

This dimension focuses on organizational transparency and accountability, including transparency in compensation systems, leadership accountability in decision-making processes, and fairness in promotion mechanisms for academic positions.

### **Lecturer Well-Being (Mediating Variable)**

Lecturer well-being refers to the extent to which lecturers perceive satisfaction with both material and non-material aspects of their professional environment. The indicators include:

- Financial Satisfaction, referring to the adequacy of salary, research incentives, and financial rewards relative to workload.
- Psychological Satisfaction, referring to job security, work–life balance, and a sense of appreciation from the institution

### **Lecturer Performance (Dependent Variable)**

Lecturer performance represents the professional outcomes of lecturers in fulfilling academic responsibilities according to the Indonesian higher education system (Purwanto et al, 2023). Performance was evaluated based on the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which includes:

- Teaching, measured through teaching quality and administrative discipline in learning processes.
- Research, measured through productivity in scientific publications and academic innovations.
- Community Service, measured through lecturers' involvement in community-based problem-solving and social engagement activities.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which allows for the simultaneous investigation of measurement and structural models. This method was chosen because it is appropriate for complex path models and may produce valid estimates with moderate sample sizes while avoiding tight data normality requirements (Aziz et al, 2024). The analysis was conducted in different stages:

First, the measuring model (outer model) was assessed to determine the validity and reliability of the research constructs. Convergent validity was determined by factor loadings with a threshold value more than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to confirm that each construct was empirically distinct. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were used to determine reliability (both should be more than 0.70 (Purwanto et al, 2023).

Second, the structural model (inner model) was assessed in order to identify the strength and importance of the links between variables. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was utilized to evaluate how ESG practices impact lecturer well-being and performance. To test the importance of the hypothesized correlations, path coefficients were computed using the bootstrapping approach, with T-statistics larger than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05 (Hendriarto et al, 2025).

Finally, a mediation analysis was used to determine whether lecturer well-being mediates the association between ESG practices and lecturer performance. The

bootstrapping method was used to assess the mediation effect, which determined whether ESG practices influence lecturer performance directly or indirectly via lecturer well-being (Liana et al, 2025).

### Data Availability and Ethical Considerations

This study's dataset consists of anonymous survey responses from teachers at private Indonesian universities. Upon reasonable request, the corresponding author will share the data supporting the study's conclusions. Participation in the study was totally voluntary, with respondents providing informed consent prior to completing the questionnaire. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were kept strictly confidential for research purposes only.

### Result and Discussion

This part offers the empirical results from the data collecting and statistical analysis used to test the proposed hypotheses. The analysis covers respondent characteristics, measurement model evaluation, structural model assessment, and hypothesis testing. The findings are presented objectively, and the discussion analyzes their importance in light of ESG practices in private universities.

### Respondent Characteristics

A total of 120 lecturers from private universities in Indonesia participated in this study. The demographic profile of respondents includes gender, age, length of service, and academic rank. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

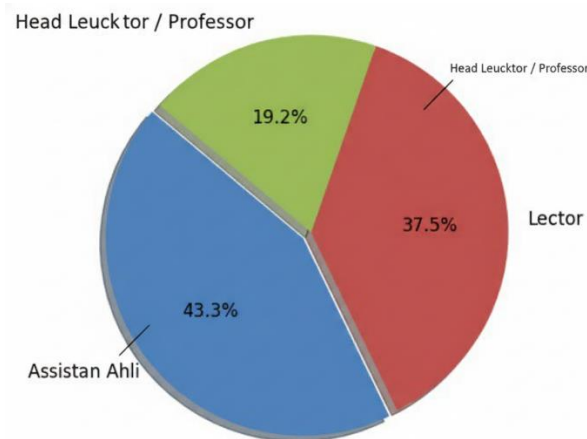
**Table 1.** Demographic profile of respondents (n = 120)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	48.3
	Female	62	51.7
Age	25–35 years	35	29.2
	36–45 years	54	45.0
	>45 years	31	25.8
Years of Service	1–5 years	42	35.0
	6–10 years	48	40.0
	>10 years	30	25.0
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	52	43.3
	Lecturer	45	37.5
	Associate Professor / Professor	23	19.2

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents are in the productive academic age group of 36–45 years (45%). This group typically represents lecturers who are actively developing their academic careers and therefore tend to have greater awareness of institutional governance and social support policies. In terms of working experience, 40%

of respondents have worked for 6–10 years, indicating that they have sufficient exposure to institutional policies and organizational changes.

The distribution of respondents by academic rank is illustrated in Figure 1. The majority of respondents hold the positions of Assistant Professor (43.3%) and Lecturer (37.5%). This profile reflects the typical structure of private university lecturers in Indonesia, where many academics are still progressing toward higher academic ranks.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of respondents by academic rank.

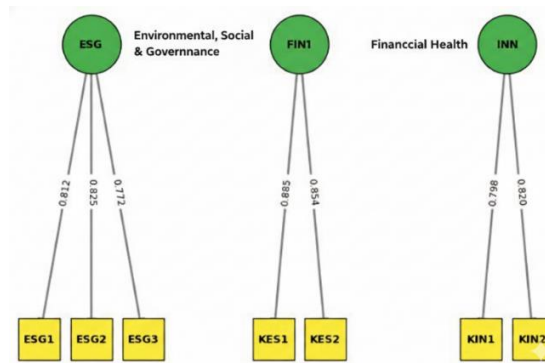
The dominance of respondents at early and mid-career academic levels suggests that issues related to governance transparency, research support, and career promotion are particularly relevant to their professional development (Aziz et al, 2024). The diversity of respondents strengthens the reliability of the dataset for further statistical analysis.

### Measurement Model Evaluation

The measuring model (outer model) was assessed to ensure that all indicators employed in the study accurately represented their respective latent variables. The examination includes tests for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability.

### Convergent Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity was assessed based on factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of the measurement model analysis are illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Measurement model (outer model) result

All indicators show loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each indicator strongly represents its corresponding construct. Furthermore, the AVE values for ESG practices, lecturer well-being, and lecturer performance exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50. This result confirms that the latent constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators (Purwanto et al, 2023).

The detailed results of convergent validity and reliability testing are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Convergent validity and reliability results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
ESG Practices (X)	ESG1	0.812	0.645	0.895	0.840
	ESG2	0.825			
	ESG3	0.772			
Lecturer Well-Being (M)	WB1	0.885	0.710	0.920	0.890
	WB2	0.854			
Lecturer Performance (Y)	LP1	0.798	0.632	0.880	0.815
	LP2	0.820			

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was determined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The results show that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds the correlations between constructs. In addition, HTMT values are less than 0.85, indicating that each variable is empirically unique from the others.

### Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability coefficients were used to assess reliability. As demonstrated in Table 2, all constructs have reliability values more than 0.70, suggesting strong internal consistency and validating measuring instrument dependability (Aziz et al, 2024). Since all measurement model criteria were met, the study moved on to evaluate the structural model.

### Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model (inner model) evaluation was conducted to examine the predictive power of the research model and the relationships between the variables. The strength of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), while the significance of the relationships was tested using the bootstrapping procedure.

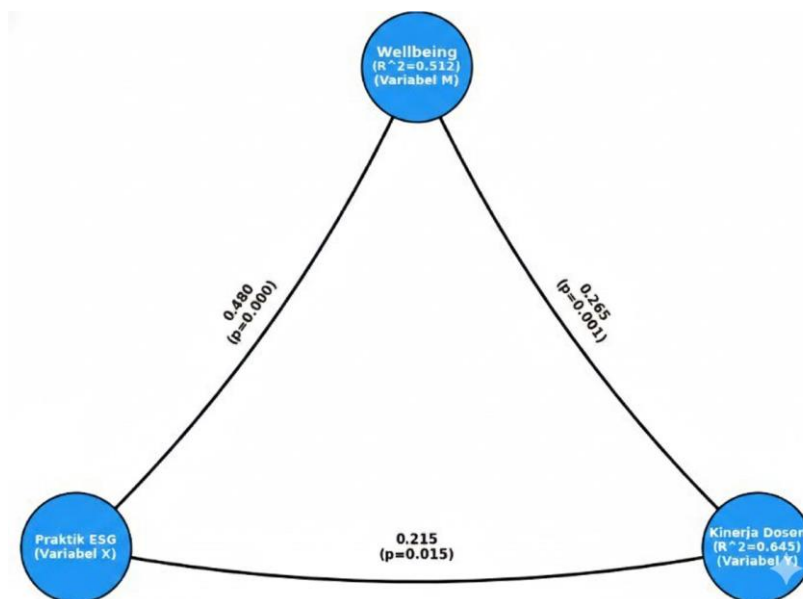
The R-square results for the endogenous variables are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** R-Square values of endogenous variables

Dependent Variable	$R^2$	Model Strength
Lecturer Well-Being	0.512	Moderate
Lecturer Performance	0.645	Strong

As shown in Table 3, ESG practices explain 51.2% of the variance in lecturer well-being. Meanwhile, ESG practices and lecturer well-being together explain 64.5% of the variance in lecturer performance. These results indicate that the proposed model has strong predictive capability in explaining lecturer performance in private universities.

The structural relationships among the variables are illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Structural model (inner model) results

Hypothesis testing results for the direct effects are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Direct effects hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
H1	ESG Practices → Lecturer Performance	0.215	2.430	0.015	Supported
H2	ESG Practices → Lecturer Well-Being	0.480	6.120	0.000	Supported

The results in Table 4 show that ESG practices have a positive and significant effect on lecturer performance ( $\beta = 0.215$ ) ( $p = 0.015$ ). This finding indicates that stronger institutional commitment to environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and good governance contributes to improved academic performance among lecturers.

Furthermore, ESG practices have a significant positive effect on lecturer well-being ( $\beta = 0.480$ ) ( $p < 0.001$ ). This result suggests that transparent governance, fair institutional policies, and supportive social environments play an important role in improving lecturers' quality of life within private universities.

The mediation effect of lecturer well-being was examined using bootstrapping analysis. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Indirect effect (mediation analysis)

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
H3	ESG Practices → Well-Being → Performance	0.265	3.850	0.001	Significant

The results in Table 5 indicate that lecturer well-being significantly mediates the relationship between ESG practices and lecturer performance ( $\beta = 0.265$ ) ( $p = 0.001$ ). This finding demonstrates the presence of partial mediation.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence regarding the importance of integrating ESG principles into higher education management, particularly in private universities.

First, the results confirm that ESG practices positively influence lecturer performance. This finding suggests that sustainability-oriented institutional policies are not merely symbolic initiatives but serve as operational mechanisms that enhance academic productivity (Eccles et al, 2014) (Friede et al, 2015). Environmental initiatives such as digital administration systems and efficient campus facilities reduce administrative burdens and allow lecturers to focus more on research and teaching activities. This finding supports previous studies indicating that modern and well-structured working environments contribute to higher academic productivity (Purwanto et al, 2023).

Second, ESG practices were found to have a strong positive impact on lecturer well-being. This result highlights that lecturers' quality of life is not determined solely by financial compensation but also by their perception of fairness, inclusiveness, and transparency within the institution. Social policies related to professional development opportunities, equal treatment, and institutional support for psychological well-being contribute significantly to lecturers' job satisfaction. These findings align with Arifin (2024), who emphasized that institutional social support is a key predictor of academic job satisfaction and burnout prevention.

Third, the mediation analysis shows that lecturer well-being plays a significant role in strengthening the impact of ESG practices on lecturer performance. This finding suggests that sustainability policies influence academic outcomes through a psychological and organizational mechanism. ESG initiatives that enhance lecturers' financial and psychological stability create stronger engagement and motivation, which ultimately translate into higher professional performance (Velte, 2017). This mechanism is consistent with the argument that perceived organizational support fosters stronger employee engagement and productivity (Liana et al, 2025).

From a practical perspective, these findings imply that private universities should not rely solely on regulatory pressure or infrastructure development to improve academic performance. Instead, institutional leaders should integrate ESG principles into human resource management strategies that prioritize lecturer well-being. When lecturers perceive fair governance, supportive social environments, and sustainable institutional policies, they are more likely to respond with stronger professional commitment and improved academic performance.

## Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence on the importance of integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into the management of private universities in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that ESG practices contribute positively to both lecturer performance and lecturer well-being. These results indicate that institutional policies emphasizing environmental efficiency, social fairness, and transparent governance can strengthen academic productivity within higher education institutions.

The study also reveals that lecturer well-being plays a mediating role in the relationship between ESG practices and lecturer performance. This suggests that the effectiveness of ESG initiatives in improving academic outcomes depends largely on their ability to enhance lecturers' quality of life and job satisfaction. In this context, lecturer well-being functions as a mechanism that translates institutional support into stronger professional motivation and improved performance.

From a practical perspective, private university management should prioritize initiatives that support sustainable and transparent institutional practices. Efforts such as the digitalization of administrative systems to improve operational efficiency and the implementation of transparent remuneration and career advancement systems may help strengthen lecturer engagement and institutional trust. Future research may expand the

scope of this study by involving larger samples or conducting comparative analyses with public universities, as well as by exploring additional moderating variables such as organizational culture to better understand the dynamics influencing academic performance in higher education.

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