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The Influence of Leadership Style and Competence Through Work Motivation on Employee Performance at the Housing and Settlement Areas Service of Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership style and competence on employee performance with work motivation as an intervening variable at the Housing and Settlement Areas Agency of Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency. The background of this study is based on the phenomenon of declining employee performance indicators in recent years, which indicates the need for a study of the determinants of apparatus performance. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method through the distribution of questionnaires to 57 employees. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS). The results show that leadership style, competence, and work motivation have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, leadership style and competence also have a positive and significant effect on work motivation. Testing of intervening variables indicates that work motivation is able to mediate some of the influence of leadership style and competence on performance, although the direct effect is more dominant than the indirect effect. These findings emphasize the importance of the role of effective leadership and the suitability of employee competence in improving the performance of public organizations.

Kata Kunci: Leadership Style, Competence, Work Motivation, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are one of the most important elements in an organization. The excellence of an organization, whether private or public, is largely determined by the quality of its human resources. HR is viewed not only as a factor of production, but as a strategic asset that plays an active role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of organizational goals (Sutrisno, 2012). According to Sedarmayanti (2017), an organization can thrive if it has disciplined, loyal, and productive employees. Conversely, if HR is not qualified, organizational goals will be difficult to achieve even with the support of technology and capital. This demonstrates that the role of HR cannot be replaced by other factors, because HR is the only resource that possesses reason, feeling, and will.

Employee performance is a key indicator of organizational success. According to Wibowo (2014), performance is a series of behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. Robbins and Judge (2019) emphasize that performance is influenced by employee abilities, motivation, and opportunities. This aligns with empirical research showing that state apparatus performance often faces challenges due to weak motivation, inappropriate leadership styles, and inappropriate employee placement (Theodora, 2015; Basori et al., 2017). Therefore, managing internal organizational factors is crucial for the successful delivery of public services.

In the context of the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, the phenomenon of declining performance achievements in recent years indicates problems that must be addressed immediately. Data from 2023 shows that performance indicators are not meeting targets, for example, the coverage of households with clean water services only reached 5.91% of the target of 28.09% (Organization Bureau of the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, 2024). Furthermore, pre-survey results showed that most employees considered the leadership style to be inadequate, employee placement often did not match educational backgrounds, and work motivation was relatively low. These facts indicate a gap between organizational expectations and the reality on the ground.

Leadership style is a crucial factor influencing employee performance (Havidz & Yandi, 2020). According to Northouse (2016), leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve common goals. Effective leaders are able to create a conducive work climate, provide direction, and serve as role models for their subordinates (Yukl, 2013). Empirically, research by Gupron (2022) and Yuliana (2017) demonstrates that leadership style significantly influences employee performance. Ayer et al. (2015) found a similar finding, emphasizing that transformational leadership plays a significant role in increasing employee commitment and performance. Therefore, an inappropriate leadership style has the potential to weaken employee morale and reduce employee productivity.

Besides leadership, employee competency is also a determining factor in performance (Gupron, 2022). Spencer and Spencer (1993) define competency as a fundamental individual characteristic that influences how people think and act to achieve superior performance. Employees who are placed according to their competencies will work more effectively and productively (Sedarmayanti, 2017). Research by Yuliana (2017) shows that good competency directly impacts performance improvement. However, in the case of the Housing and Settlement Agency, there is a mismatch between educational background and job position. This results in low technical mastery and work effectiveness, which ultimately reduces organizational performance.

Work motivation is equally important. According to Robbins and Judge (2019), motivation is an individual's willingness to exert their best effort to achieve organizational goals. Motivation is the driving force that drives someone to work optimally (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2014). Triatna (2015) added that motivation and performance are closely related, as high motivation results in better performance. Empirically, research by Basori et al. (2017) found that motivation significantly influences employee productivity. However, initial survey results indicate that employee motivation at the Department of Housing and Settlement Areas remains low, particularly in terms of recognition and attention from leaders.

This research is crucial for finding strategic solutions to improve employee performance through improved leadership styles, competency alignment, and increased work motivation. This research gap arises because, although numerous studies have examined the relationship between leadership style, competency, and motivation on performance, only a limited number have simultaneously tested these three variables in the context of regional public organizations. The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to theory and practice. Theoretically, this research strengthens the model of the relationship between leadership style, competency, motivation, and performance. Practically, the results of this study can serve as evaluation

material for the Housing and Settlement Areas Office of East Tanjung Jabung Regency in improving the quality of human resource management.

Based on the description, the problem formulation in this study is: (1) How does leadership style influence employee performance? (2) How does competence influence employee performance? (3) How does work motivation influence employee performance? (4) How does leadership style influence work motivation? (5) How does competence influence work motivation? (6) How does leadership style influence employee performance through work motivation? and (7) How does competence influence work motivation toward employee performance?

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type. The quantitative method was chosen because this study attempts to test the causal relationship between variables measured with standardized instruments, so that the results can be analyzed statistically (Sugiyono, 2015). The explanatory nature indicates that this study aims to explain the influence of leadership style and competence on employee performance with work motivation as an intervening variable (Priyono, 2016; Bungin, 2017). Thus, this study not only describes the phenomenon but also examines the causal relationship between the variables studied.

The study population consisted of all 57 employees at the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. Given the relatively small population, the sampling technique used was a census sampling method, in which all members of the population were selected as respondents (Sugiyono, 2015). This approach is expected to comprehensively reflect the actual situation.

Data collection techniques included both literature and fieldwork. Literature studies were conducted by reviewing various literature sources to obtain a theoretical basis for the research, while fieldwork involved direct observation, informal interviews, and questionnaires distributed to employees. This combination enabled researchers to identify actual problems in the field and link them to existing theories (Jonathan, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to provide an overview of the research variables based on the collected data, while inferential analysis was conducted to test the research hypothesis. Hypothesis testing used the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The SEM-PLS method was chosen because it is able to analyze the relationship between latent variables and complex indicators, despite the relatively small sample size (Hair et al., 2014; Ghazali & Latan, 2015). Model evaluation was conducted through testing the outer model to measure the validity and reliability of indicators, and the inner model to examine the relationship between constructs. Hypothesis significance testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique with a significance level of 5% (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Respondent Characteristics

This study used 57 respondents who were employees at the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. The characteristics of the respondents in this study are described individually based on their gender, age, and education, as presented in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

| No | Respondent Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender | | | |
| 1 | Man | 39 | 68,4 |
| 2 | Woman | 18 | 31,6 |
| Total | | 57 | 100 |
| Age Group | | | |
| 1 | < 30 Years | 5 | 8,8 |
| 2 | 30 – 40 Years | 41 | 71,9 |
| 3 | 41 – 50 Years | 7 | 12,3 |
| 4 | > 50 Years | 4 | 7 |
| Total | | 57 | 100 |
| Education | | | |
| 1 | High School or Equivalent | 11 | 19,3 |
| 2 | Diploma | 14 | 24,6 |
| 3 | Bachelor degree | 29 | 50,9 |
| 4 | Master's Degree | 3 | 5,3 |
| Total | | 57 | 100 |

Source: Processed data (2025)

Descriptive Research Variables

Based on the survey conducted, the description of the variables observed in the study is summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Description of Research Variables

| No | Variable | Item | Score | Scale Range | Information |
|----|------------------|------|-------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Leadership Style | 10 | 216,3 | 193,8 – 239,3 | Good |
| 2 | Competence | 13 | 213,8 | 193,8 – 239,3 | Good |
| 3 | Work Motivation | 12 | 214,1 | 193,8 – 239,3 | Tall |
| 4 | Performance | 11 | 214,9 | 193,8 – 239,3 | Tall |

Source: Results of questionnaire data processing, 2025.

Reflective Construct Measurement Model Test Results (Outer Model)

The measurement model aims to represent the relationship between constructs and their corresponding indicator variables (commonly referred to as the outer model in PLS-SEM). The measurement model explains how the construct is measured and is reliable, valid, and reliable by examining convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2017). The outer model in SmartPLS is as follows:

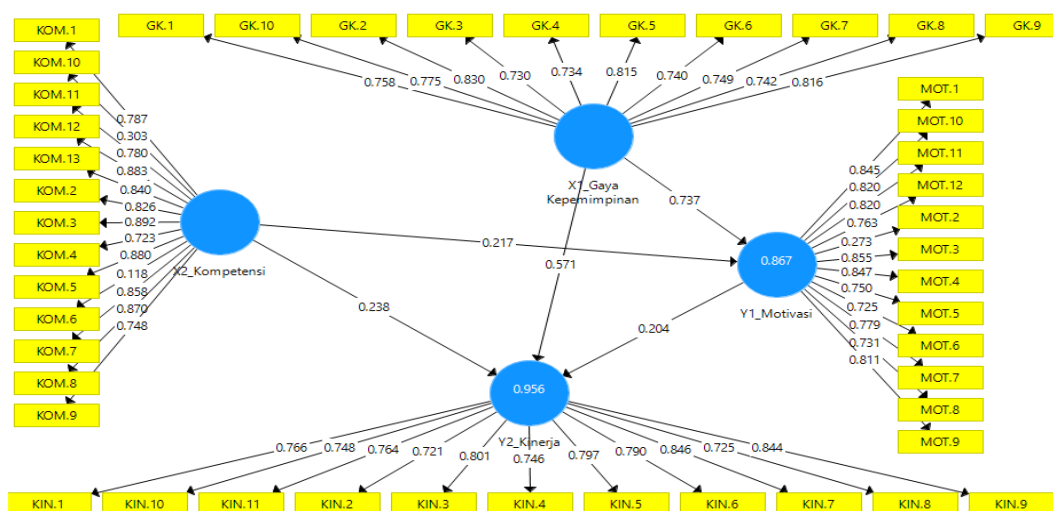


Figure 1. Outer Model of Research in SmartPLS 3

Figure 1 shows that several indicators have outer loading values below 0.7, which means they have low validity. These indicators are KOM.6 with a value of 0.118, KOM.10 with a value of 0.303, and MOT.2 with a value of 0.273. The low validity values for these three indicators are due to the inconsistent answers given by respondents to these indicators. This inconsistency could be due to respondents being lazy to answer the questionnaire items we provided or simply respondents answering the statement items carelessly.

In general, indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be removed from the scale when removing them leads to an increase in composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE). Meanwhile, indicators with very low outer loadings (below 0.40) should be eliminated from the construct (Hair et al., 2017). The following is the Outer Model of the study after re-estimation.

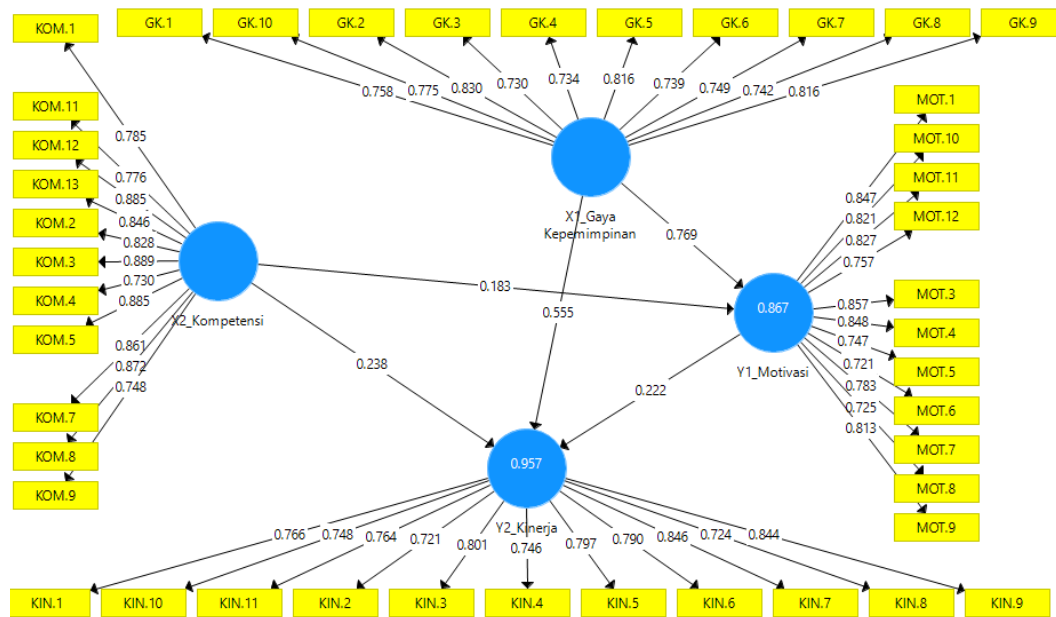


Figure 2. Outer Model of the study after re-estimation

After eliminating indicators that did not meet validity standards and re-estimating, the results can be seen in Figure 2. All indicators have met the rule of thumb criteria, with outer loading values exceeding the minimum limit of 0.7. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators used in this study are valid and suitable for building the proposed model.

In addition to conducting validity tests using outer loading values, composite reliability results are also presented to demonstrate the instrument's accuracy, precision, and consistency in measuring the construct. The composite reliability test results are as follows:

Table 3. Composite Reliability Values

| Variable | Composite Reliability | Decision |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| X1_Leadership Style | 0,936 | Reliable |
| X2_Competence | 0,960 | Reliable |
| Y1_Motivation | 0,950 | Reliable |
| Y2_Performance | 0,944 | Reliable |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3, 2024.

Based on the results in the table above, the composite reliability values for all constructs are greater than 0.7, with the minimum value being 0.936, indicated by the leadership style variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs in this study are reliable and meet the reliability test.

Structural Model Test Results (Inner Model)

Once the measurement model (outer model) has demonstrated satisfactory results, the next step in evaluating PLS-SEM results is to assess the structural model (inner model). Structural model analysis is carried out to find evidence supporting the theoretical model (the theoretical relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs) (Avkiran & Ringle, 2018).

a. R-Square Value (Coefficient of determination)

The R-square value is used to indicate the extent to which exogenous constructs explain endogenous constructs. To evaluate a structural model, the R-square value indicates the model's predictive power. The rule of thumb used is 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, indicating a strong, moderate, and weak model, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). The R-square value results can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. R Square Value

| Variable | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Y1_Motivation | 0,867 | 0,862 |
| Y2_Performance | 0,957 | 0,955 |

Source: SmartPLS 3 output, 2025.

Based on the data processing results in the table above, it shows that the work motivation variable has an R-square value of 0.867, which means that the motivation variable can be explained by the leadership style and competence constructs with a percentage of 86.7%. Meanwhile, the performance variable has an R-square value of 0.955, which means that the employee performance variable can be explained by the leadership style, competence, and motivation constructs with a percentage of 95.5%. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the structural model test (inner model) of the work motivation variable and the performance variable are included in the "strong" model category.

b. F-Square Value (f^2 Effect Size)

F-square is calculated to measure the significance of changes in the R-square value when a particular construct is removed from the model to evaluate whether the removed construct has a substantive impact on the endogenous construct. The rule of thumb for assessing the F-square value is 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, which indicate that the effect value is small, medium, and large, respectively, and an effect size with a value of less than 0.02 indicates that the variable has no effect (Hair et al., 2017). The results of the F-square value can be seen in the table below as follows:

Table 5. F-Square Value

| Variable | Motivation | Performance |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| X1_Leadership Style | 1,115 | 0,875 |
| X2_Compotence | 0,065 | 0,325 |
| Y1_Motivation | | 0,155 |
| Y2_Performance | | |

Source: SmartPLS 3 output, 2025.

Based on the results of data processing in the table above, it can be seen that there is 1 variable that has the largest contribution to the R-square value in the research model, namely the f-square value of the leadership style and competence variables on work motivation, respectively, which are 1.115 (large), and 0.065 (small). Then for the variables of leadership style, competence, and motivation on performance, respectively, which are 0.875 (large), 0.325 (large), and 0.155 (medium).

Hypothesis Testing Results

The next step is to examine the significance of the hypothesized relationships between constructs or the influence of variables on path coefficients using a bootstrapping procedure. The next step is to analyze the bootstrapping output to determine the magnitude of the T-statistic.

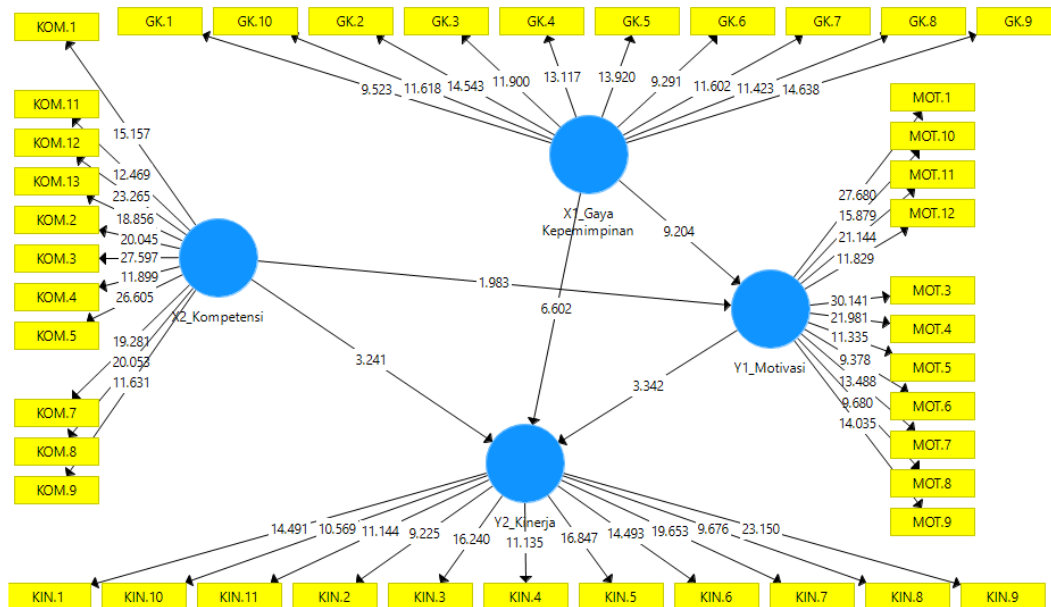


Figure 3. Model of Relationship between Research Constructs and Methods

Table 6. Complete Bootstrapping

| No | Hypothesis | Path Coefficient | T-Statistics | P Value | Decision |
|----|--|------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 1 | X1 Leadership Style -> Y1 Motivation | 0,769 | 9,204 | 0,000 | Accepted |
| 2 | X2 Competence -> Y1 Motivation | 0,183 | 1,983 | 0,048 | Accepted |
| 3 | X1 Leadership Style -> Y2 Performance | 0,555 | 6,602 | 0,000 | Accepted |
| 4 | X2 Competence -> Y2 Performance | 0,238 | 3,241 | 0,001 | Accepted |
| 5 | Y1 Motivation -> Y2 Performance | 0,222 | 3,342 | 0,001 | Accepted |
| 6 | X1 Leadership Style -> Y1 Motivation -> Y2 Performance | 0,171 | 2,119 | 0,002 | Accepted |
| 7 | X2 Competence -> Y1 Motivation -> Y2 Performance | 0,041 | 2,098 | 0,039 | Accepted |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3, 2025.

Discussion

1. The Influence of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

The results of this study indicate that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. This finding aligns with the concept of Robbins and Judge (2019), who stated that leaders play a crucial role in motivating employees to achieve organizational goals. Leaders who are able to provide direction, build communication, and create a conducive work climate will encourage improved employee performance. This finding aligns with research conducted by Widodo et al. (2018), Mardiana (2014), Susanti (2015), Susanto et al. (2023), Widodo et al. (2017), Rahul et al. (2019), and Bastari et al. (2020), which suggests that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Yuliana's (2017) research also found that appropriate leadership style significantly contributes to performance achievement. Thus,

this research confirms the importance of effective leadership in improving the performance of public organizations.

2. The Influence of Competence on Employee Performance

Research results demonstrate that competence has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. This supports Spencer and Spencer's (1993) theory, which states that competence is a fundamental characteristic that influences superior performance. Employees who are placed according to their competence will more easily complete their work effectively. Empirically, research by Yuliana (2017), Susanto et al. (2023), Purwanto & Soliha (2017), Basori et al. (2017), Aima et al. (2017), Ansori & Ali (2015), and Yuliana (2017) also shows that competence has a strong influence on work productivity. These findings suggest that to improve employee performance, organizations must ensure a match between educational background, skills, and the position they hold.

3. The Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

This study found that work motivation significantly influences employee performance. This finding aligns with Kreitner and Kinicki (2014), who assert that motivation is the driving force that drives individuals to achieve organizational goals. Robbins and Judge (2019) also stated that motivation plays a role in determining the level of effort an individual exerts at work. Empirically, research by Yuliana (2017), Basori et al. (2017), Theodora (2015), Aima et al. (2017), Rahul et al. (2019), Triatna (2015), Riyanto et al. (2017), Bastari et al. (2020), and Ayer et al. (2015) demonstrates that high motivation increases employee commitment and performance. Therefore, increasing work motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is crucial for improving employee performance.

4. The Influence of Leadership Style on Work Motivation

The research results show that leadership style has a positive effect on employee work motivation. This aligns with the leadership theory proposed by Yukl (2013), which states that leaders who are able to build good interpersonal relationships will increase the work enthusiasm of their subordinates. Northouse (2016) also emphasized that transformational leadership can provide inspiration, motivation, and emotional support to employees. Empirically, these findings are supported by research by Rahul et al. (2019) and Bastari et al. (2020), which found that leadership style significantly influences employee work motivation. Therefore, the right leadership style not only impacts performance but also increases employee work motivation.

5. The Influence of Competence on Work Motivation

This study found that competence has a significant effect on work motivation. Employees who possess skills and knowledge relevant to their jobs tend to be more motivated to complete tasks (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Empirical research by Yuliana (2017) and Basori et al. (2017) also supports this finding, showing that strong competence increases employee self-confidence and work enthusiasm. These findings confirm that improving competence through appropriate training and placement will positively impact employee work motivation.

6. The Influence of Leadership Style through Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results of this study indicate that work motivation can partially mediate the influence of leadership style on employee performance. This finding aligns with Robbins and Judge (2019), who stated that effective leadership influences motivation, which in turn impacts performance improvement. Research by Ayer et al. (2015) also demonstrated that motivation is a crucial factor in bridging the influence of leadership on performance. However, the results of this study also indicate that the direct influence of leadership style on performance is more dominant than the indirect influence through motivation. This means that strong leadership

remains a key factor in improving performance, although motivation plays a complementary role.

7. The Influence of Competence through Work Motivation on Employee Performance

This study found that work motivation also mediates the influence of competence on employee performance. This aligns with the motivation theory proposed by Kreitner and Kinicki (2014), which states that employees who feel competent in their work will be more motivated, resulting in improved performance. Research by Theodora (2015) and Basori et al. (2017) supports this finding, where high competence increases motivation and subsequently positively impacts performance. However, as with leadership variables, the direct effect of competence on performance remains greater than the indirect effect through motivation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research analysis, it can be concluded that leadership style, competence, and work motivation have a significant influence on the performance of employees of the Housing and Settlement Areas Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency. Leadership style has been proven to improve performance both directly and indirectly through work motivation. Likewise, competence has a positive effect on employee performance and also influences work motivation, which then has an impact on performance improvement. However, the direct influence of leadership style and competence on performance is more dominant than the indirect influence through work motivation. This finding confirms that strong leadership and competence factors remain the main foundation in improving the performance of public organizations, with work motivation acting as a reinforcing factor.

This study has several limitations. First, the number of respondents was relatively limited to only 57 employees in one agency, so generalizing the results to other public organizations requires caution. Second, this study used a cross-sectional quantitative design, thus unable to capture the dynamics of variable changes over time. Third, the instrument used, a questionnaire based on respondents' perceptions, has the potential to introduce subjective bias. Furthermore, this study only examined three main variables: leadership style, competence, and work motivation. Therefore, other factors that may influence performance, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and reward systems, were not adequately accommodated.

Based on the research findings and limitations, several recommendations can be put forward. First, government agencies, particularly the Housing and Settlement Agency of East Tanjung Jabung Regency, need to strengthen their leadership style by prioritizing participatory and transformational leadership patterns that can motivate employees and create a conducive work climate. Second, employee competency must be improved through ongoing training programs, job placements that match their skills, and employee empowerment based on their individual potential. Third, organizations need to pay attention to motivational aspects, both intrinsic and extrinsic, by providing clear rewards, recognition, and career development opportunities.

For future research, it is recommended that the scope be expanded to include other agencies so that the results can be compared across public organizations. Longitudinal research can also be conducted to examine the consistency of the influence of variables over time. Furthermore, incorporating additional variables such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and reward systems would provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing employee performance. Thus, future research findings are expected to provide richer theoretical contributions and broader practical benefits for human resource management in the public sector.

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