

Analysis of Work Motivation and Work Environment on the Performance of Civil Servants Who Mediated by Leadership Style at the Sub-District Office Medan Johor

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Abstract

This research examines how the work environment and employee motivation affect PNS performance at the Medan Johor Sub-district Office, with leadership style as a mediator. Prompted by poor performance linked to low motivation, uncomfortable environments, and irregular leadership, the quantitative study surveyed all PNS and applied PLS-SEM to assess direct and indirect effects. Results reveal significant positive impacts: work environment (X2) on performance (Y) (coef. = 1.445, p = 0.000); leadership style (Z) on performance (Y) (coef. = 1.522, p = 0.000); and Z mediating X2 → Y (coef. = 0.163, p = 0.017). Job motivation (X1) directly affects Y (coef. = 0.173, p = 0.002) and indirectly via Z (coef. = 0.473, p = 0.000). These findings highlight leaders' need to support effective atmospheres and motivation to boost sub-district PNS performance.

keywords: Job motivation; Work environment; Leadership style; Employee performance

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank's 2024 Government Effectiveness Index, many developing countries, including Indonesia, continue to face significant challenges in public sector performance, particularly at the sub-national level. The OECD Public Governance Review (2023) highlights persistent issues of bureaucratic inefficiency, weak accountability mechanisms, and inconsistent service quality in local government offices. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2024) further reveals that sub-district offices in several Southeast Asian countries struggle with maintaining professional standards and performance benchmarks. These global patterns underscore the critical importance of understanding factors that influence civil servant performance, especially in frontline public service delivery units such as sub-district offices.

A company's success depends heavily on its human resources, since its workforce is a valuable asset that needs close supervision and care (Rahayu and Rushadiyati, 2021). This approach to management ensures that employees can contribute to the firm's success. To effectively manage human resources, it is essential to have employees who are committed to giving their best to achieve the company's goals (F. Saputra et al., 2023). The main focus of human resource management is on staff, who are inspired to contribute to the organization's goals (Anwar, 2016). A number of supporting factors are necessary to promote productive and efficient work, including fair compensation, opportunities for personal growth, recognition of efforts, and employee participation (Widiastini et al., 2023). Workers should be driven and inspired to give their best effort and demonstrate enthusiasm for producing outstanding outcomes. As a result, it is imperative to foster an atmosphere that motivates employees to put in their best effort (Rahman, 2023).

Work motivation acts as a tool to engage and steer employees toward their duties while remaining conscious of their objectives with a sense of responsibility (D. Saputra and Fernos, 2023). Apart from motivational factors, the work environment greatly impacts employee

productivity. The workplace comprises both the physical and psychological settings that exist within the organization. Hence, it is crucial for the company to offer an appropriate work environment, covering both tangible and intangible elements. A conducive work environment can significantly improve job performance and spark employees' enthusiasm for their roles (Mudayana and Suryoko, 2016). The organization demands high performance levels from its employees to achieve the goals established by the Medan Johor Sub-District Office.

Leadership style emphasizes strict oversight, where leaders take charge of decision-making without including their team. This method can yield positive outcomes in critical scenarios, but it might also diminish employee motivation and creativity over time (Afandi, 2018). Another approach involves engaging employees in the decision-making process. When team members are allowed to express their opinions, they feel valued and more motivated, which can improve their job performance and satisfaction. The manner in which leaders manage their teams significantly impacts employee effectiveness; those who adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of their team and the circumstances often achieve superior results (Suliztyanto et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential for leaders to understand various leadership styles and apply them effectively to enhance team and organizational success (Mu'ah et al., 2023). However, in certain situations, leaders who handle all decisions independently without consulting their employees can hinder creativity and innovation. When employees sense a lack of autonomy to propose new ideas, this heavily reward- and punishment-focused method may cause them to prioritize short-term achievements instead of their personal development and the overall quality of their work, which ultimately impacts employee performance (Ferine et al., 2021).

To achieve the best performance from employees, companies take various steps to boost motivation, such as offering competitive salaries and benefits, health insurance, and organizing leisure activities to strengthen relationships and teamwork among employees (Anwar et al., 2023). Regarding the work environment, initial observations revealed that the company places a strong emphasis on checking every visitor, requiring employees who arrive on motorcycles to wear helmets in the parking lot, ensuring good ventilation for fresh air circulation, and providing adequate lighting. These efforts aim to create a positive atmosphere and help reach the company's objectives.

The researcher's observations lead him to believe that the personnel at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office are underperforming and failing to satisfy the demands of the community. This is evident in the way some employees are late, have trouble finishing their work on time, and provide substandard public services, such as causing delays in the processing of certificates and population records. This scenario demonstrates that some employees are not passionate and responsible in their positions. The primary cause of this is a decrease in their work motivation, which is seen in their low aspiration for success, lack of initiative in their duties, and passive reaction to service changes and improvements. Other factors—such as a lack of appreciation for hard work, restricted possibilities for professional advancement, and an unfavorable workplace—also contribute to lowering their enthusiasm. Consequently, there has been a decrease in employee productivity, and the services offered to the public at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office do not meet the anticipated standards

for public service. Because of these factors, the author plans to conduct a study titled *Analysis of Work Motivation and Work Environment on the Performance of Civil Servants Who Mediated by Leadership Style at the Sub-District Office Medan Johor*.

In order to meet deadlines, the standard of the public services they provide, and their creativity and responsibility, the staff at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office need to perform better. The way leaders mostly communicate without encouraging two-way conversation and the lack of feedback or praise for their workers' contributions lead to low morale among staff. This shows that their methods are not very effective in motivating and guiding the team. Furthermore, some civil servants show different levels of motivation, with clear signs of not being proactive in completing tasks, a lack of excitement for achievements, and employees who simply do what is required without aiming for outstanding results. The work environment also poses challenges, since both physical and emotional factors have not succeeded in boosting productivity. Common problems include uncomfortable working conditions, inadequate support facilities, and weak relationships among team members, especially in terms of cooperation and communication.

This research is particularly urgent and timely for several critical reasons. First, the Medan Johor Sub-District Office is currently undergoing a digital transformation initiative mandated by the national government's One-Stop Service (OSS) policy, which requires immediate improvements in civil servant performance to meet new service delivery standards. Second, recent community complaints registered in the 2024 public satisfaction survey indicated a 35% decline in service satisfaction compared to the previous year, highlighting an immediate need for performance intervention. Third, with the upcoming regional evaluation by the Ministry of Home Affairs in mid-2026, the sub-district office faces potential administrative sanctions if performance metrics are not improved. Fourth, the office is experiencing a generational shift, with 40% of senior civil servants approaching retirement in the next two years, making it critical to understand how leadership transitions affect motivation and performance. These time-sensitive factors make this research not merely academically valuable but operationally essential for the immediate future of public service delivery in the Medan Johor sub-district.

While numerous studies have examined the relationships between work motivation, work environment, and employee performance in various organizational contexts, this research offers several distinctive contributions that differentiate it from existing literature. First, this study specifically focuses on sub-district-level civil servants in Indonesia, a largely under-researched population compared to corporate employees or higher-level government officials. Most previous studies have focused on private-sector organizations or central government agencies, leaving a significant knowledge gap regarding frontline public servants who directly interact with citizens. Second, this research introduces leadership style as a mediating variable in the context of sub-district governance in Medan, North Sumatra—a unique socio-cultural setting characterized by diverse ethnic compositions and specific local government dynamics not captured in previous studies. Finally, the timing of this study coincides with Indonesia's bureaucratic reform phase 2024-2026, making it particularly relevant for understanding how sub-district offices can adapt their leadership and management practices to meet contemporary public service demands. These distinctive

elements position this research as a significant contribution to public administration literature, particularly in the Southeast Asian context.

This research examines how work motivation and the work environment directly and indirectly affect the performance of civil servants at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office, with leadership style acting as a mediating factor. The goal of this study is to evaluate how work motivation and the work environment directly impact civil servant performance at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office and how these effects are influenced indirectly through leadership style.

METHOD

The researcher applied a quantitative method. The study took place at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office, located in North Sumatra Province. The investigation was completed over a period of 3 months.

The researcher regarded the population as a large collection of items or individuals sharing attributes and characteristics that are identified for analysis and comprehension, as stated by Sugiyono (2019). All 31 full-time employees of the Medan Johor Sub-District Office were included in this study's population and sample, and they were selected directly as a census sample. As a result, the overall sample consisted of 31 individuals.

Table 1. Variable Operational Definition

Variable Type	Definition	Indicators	Scale
Employee Performance (Y)	The work done by an employee, regarding both the quality and amount, while completing the duties and responsibilities given to him, leads to overall performance (Siswadi, 2023).	1. Number of Jobs 2. Quality of Work 3. Timeliness 4. Presence 5. Collaborative Capabilities (Siswadi, 2023).	Likert
Leadership Style (Z)	A true leader should embody a spirit of leadership, which cannot be acquired in an instant or suddenly but rather develops gradually over time until it ultimately becomes a defining trait. (Basna, 2023)	1. Directional 2. Communicator 3. Mediator 4. Integrator (Basna, 2023)	Likert
Work Motivation (X2)	Motivation refers to the driving energy that inspires an individual's eagerness to engage in their tasks, leading them to collaborate, perform efficiently, and commit their full efforts to attain fulfillment. According to (Jufrizen and Sitorus, 2021)	1. The push to achieve purpose 2. Work ethic 3. Initiative 4. Creativeness 5. Sense of responsibility (Jufrizen & Sitorus, 2021)	Likert
Work Environment (X2)	The work environment encompasses aspects of the workplace, including lighting arrangements, air circulation, and elements that influence the physical conditions of the job, such as sound, vibrations, temperature, and hazardous liquid waste. (Fauzi et al. , 2023)	1. Workspace Comfort 2. Equipment 3. Work Safety 4. Communication between employees (Fauzi et al., 2023)	Likert

Source of researcher 2025

This research used MRA to look at how job happiness, employee training, knowledge connections, and work drive influence each other, including their interactions. The study uses multiple linear regression with interaction factors to see how much each independent variable affects the dependent variables individually.

One way to analyze regression with a moderating variable is through an interaction test. The MRA interaction test involves a formula that includes interaction components formed by multiplying two or more independent variables. In this research, moderation regression analysis was performed by looking at different regression equations to find out what types of moderator variables exist, as explained below:

$$Y = a_1 + b_1 x_1 + b_4 Z + b_5 X_1 Z + e_1$$

$$Y = a_2 + b_2 x_2 + b_4 Z + b_3 Z + b_6 X_2 Z + e_1$$

This study employed SEM-PLS using SmartPLS for data analysis. SEM consists of CB-SEM, developed by Jöreskog, and variance-based SEM or PLS, advanced by Wold, as outlined by Mahmud and Ratmono (2013).

Table 2. Some Software Examples from CB-SEM and SEM-PLS

Software CB-SEM	Software SEM-PLS
LISREL	SmartPLS
Amos	WarpPLS
EQS	PLS-Graph
Mplus	Visual-PLS
STATCAL	STATCAL

In 2013, Mahmud and Ratmono determined that SEM-PLS is effective with intricate models, even when the number of samples is limited. Moreover, the requirements for data distribution in SEM-PLS are not as strict as those found in CB-SEM. When utilizing CB-SEM for estimation, several requirements need to be met, including, but not limited to, a minimum sample size, normal distribution of data, and consistency among groups. In 2013, Ratmono and Mahfud found that the results from both estimation methods were notably alike, suggesting that SEM-PLS could be a suitable alternative to CB-SEM. Even though the data does not follow the rule of multivariate normality and the sample size is limited, SEM-PLS can still deliver reliable results.

SEM-PLS serves as a non-parametric alternative to CB-SEM. Moreover, it may serve as the best option for testing theories when the criteria for CB-SEM are not met. As stated by Mahfud and Ratmono (2013:9–13), the use of CB-SEM is appropriate when the data meets the criteria for CB-SEM, which include having a sufficient sample size and a normal distribution. Nevertheless, SEM-PLS should be utilized in cases where these criteria are not fulfilled. SEM-PLS uses a nonparametric approach. It can perform effectively even with rare data.

The measurement (outer) model in SEM-PLS examines convergent validity, which means that reflective indicators must have loadings over 0.70 and have significant p-values. Between 0.40 and 0.70, indicator loadings may still be deemed adequate for new instruments.

Indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 may be kept or discarded depending on how they affect composite reliability (0.70), AVE (0.50), and content validity, while indicators with loadings less than 0.40 should be eliminated. As shown by the indicator

loading findings in Table 3, low-loading indicators can be sustained if they help establish construct validity.

Table 3. Validity Testing by Loading Factor

	Moderation Effect 1	Moderation Effect 2	Leadership Style (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	Work Environment (X2)	Work Motivation (X1)
Work Environment (X2) * Leadership Style (Z)		1.522				
Work Motivation (X1) * Leadership Style (Z)	1.445					
X1.1						0.852
X1.2						0.779
X1.3						0.792
X1.4						0.77
X1.5						0.932
X2.1					0.912	
X2.2					0.877	
X2.3					0.838	
X2.4					0.761	
Y1				0.927		
Y2				0.896		
Y3				0.946		
Y4				0.935		
Y5				0.894		
Z1			0.937			
Z2			0.96			
Z3			0.918			
Z4			0.748			

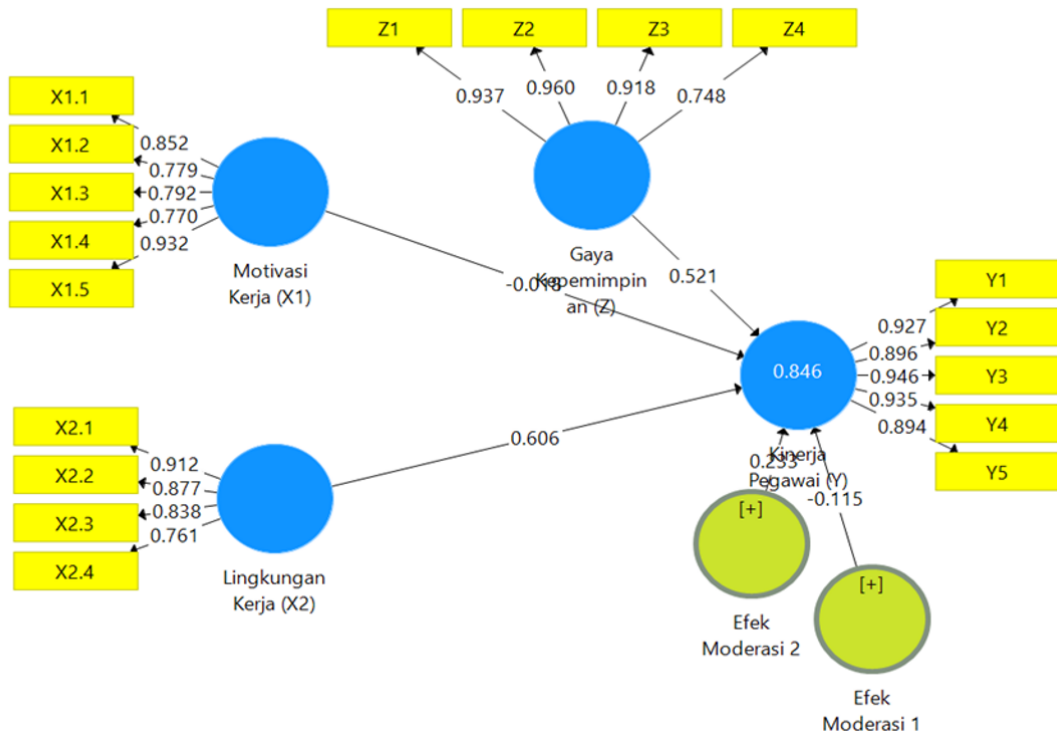


Figure 1. Validity Testing by Loading Factor

Based on Table 3 and Figure 1, all indicators exhibit loading values above 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity, which is further confirmed by the AVE results.

Table 4. Validity Testing by Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Mean Variance Extracted (AVE)
Moderation Effect 1	1.000
Moderation Effect 2	1.000
Leadership Style (Z)	0.800
Employee Performance (Y)	0.846
Work Environment (X2)	0.721
Work Motivation (X1)	0.684

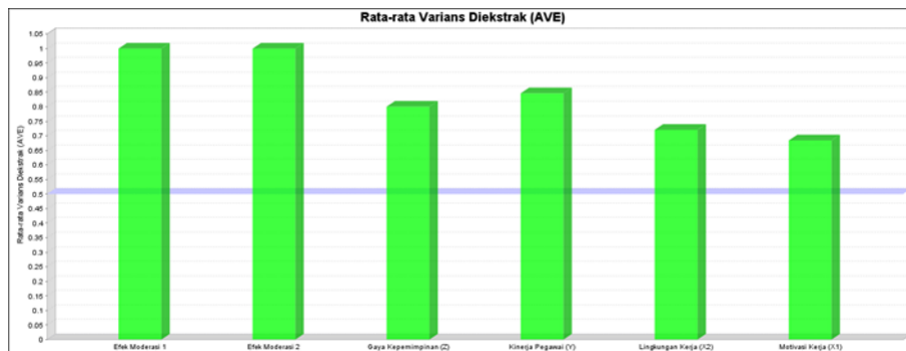


Figure 2. Validity Testing by AVE

The recommended AVE score needs to be greater than 0.5 (Mahfud and Ratmono, 2013:67). This means that any AVE score above 0.5 shows that the validity standards based on AVE have been met. Furthermore, an evaluation of reliability was performed using the CR score.

Table 5. Reliability Testing by Composite Reliability (CR)

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	Composite Reliability
Moderation Effect 1	1.000
Moderation Effect 2	1.000
Leadership Style (Z)	0.941
Employee Performance (Y)	0.965
Work Environment (X2)	0.911
Work Motivation (X1)	0.915

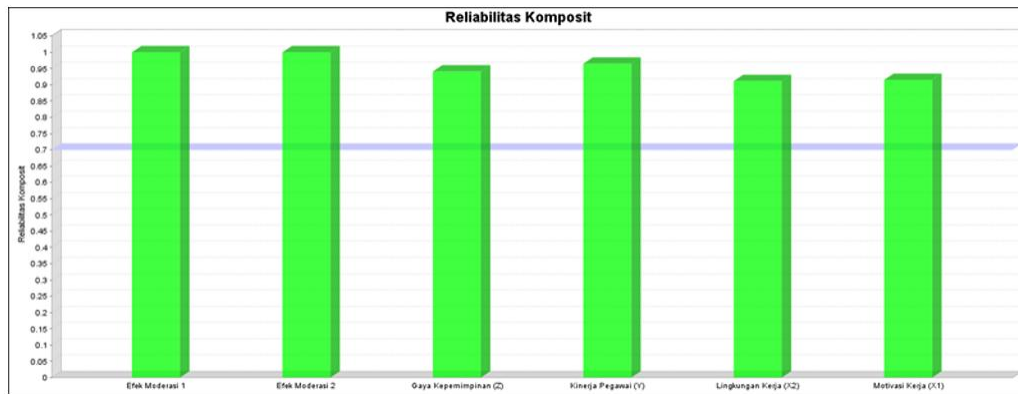


Figure 3. Reliability Testing by Composite Reliability (CR)

According to Mahfud and Ratmono (2013:67), the recommended CR value should be over 0.7. It is understood that any CR value greater than 0.7 demonstrates that it meets the reliability standards set by CR. Following this, the CA value was used to perform dependability tests.

Table 6. Reliability Testing by Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

	Cronbach's Alpha
Moderation Effect 1	1.000
Moderation Effect 2	1.000
Leadership Style (Z)	0.913
Employee Performance (Y)	0.954
Work Environment (X2)	0.869
Work Motivation (X1)	0.885

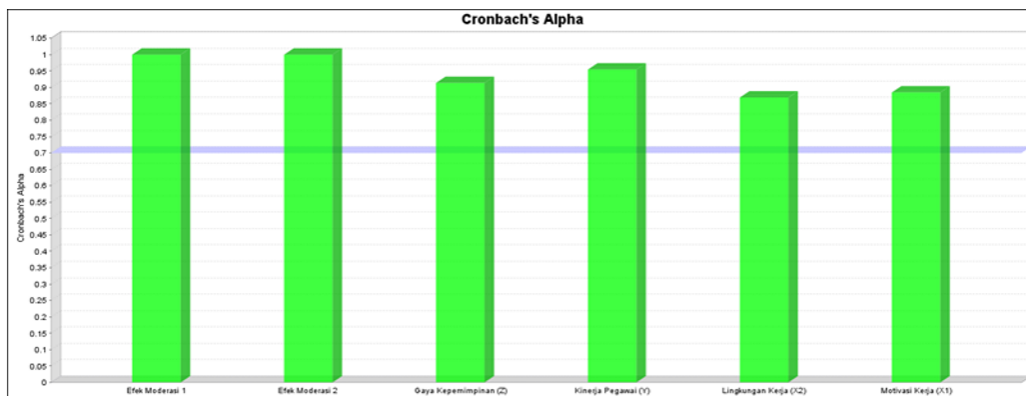


Figure 4. Reliability Testing by Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

As stated by Mahfud and Ratmono in 2013, a Cronbach's alpha higher than 0.70 signifies that reliability is deemed satisfactory, a standard achieved by every construct in this research. The Fornell–Larcker criterion was then utilized to evaluate discriminant validity, and the findings are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Discriminant Validity Testing

	Moderation Effect 1	Moderation Effect 2	Leadership Style (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	Work Environment (X2)	Work Motivation (X1)
Moderation Effect 1	$\sqrt{AVE_{Moderasi}}$ 1					
Moderation Effect 2	0.317	$\sqrt{AVE_{Moderasi}}$ 2				
Leadership Style (Z)	-0.154	-0.298	$\sqrt{AVE_Z} =$ 0.895			
Employee Performance (Y)	-0.056	-0.054	0.78	$\sqrt{AVE_Y} =$ 0.92		
Work Environment (X2)	0.116	-0.33	0.579	0.763	$\sqrt{AVE_{X2}} =$ 0.849	
Work Motivation (X1)	-0.409	0.11	0.653	0.697	0.443	$\sqrt{AVE_{X1}} =$ 0.827

Source: Processed Smart PLS

Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the AVE for each concept is greater than its connections with other concepts. This condition is met in the current research.

Influence Importance Test

Table 8 presents a summary of the results from the significance tests regarding their influence.

Table 8. Test Path Coefficient & Significance Influence

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Leadership Style -> Employee Performance	1.522	1.487	0.229	6.646	0.000
Work Environment -> Employee Performance	1.445	1.402	0.203	7.111	0.000
Work Environment*Leadership Style -> Employee Performance	0.163	0.154	0.068	02.402	0.017
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.173	0.162	0.077	3.065	0.002
Work Motivation*Leadership Style -> Employee Performance	0.473	0.497	0.107	4.438	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Processed

The information shown in Table 8 yielded the following conclusions:

1. An employee's performance is greatly improved by the leadership style.
2. The atmosphere at work has a major and beneficial impact on how well employees do their jobs.
3. The link between the workplace and employee performance is significantly influenced by leadership style.
4. Employee productivity is strongly positively influenced by work motivation.
5. The influence of work motivation on employee performance is greatly enhanced by leadership style.

Table 9. R-Square

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Performance (Y)	0.846	0.815

The R² figure of 0.846 shows that 84.6% of how employees perform can be attributed to their motivation at work, the atmosphere of the workplace, and the approach of leadership. The adjusted R² of 0.815 further validates that these factors are important indicators of performance.

Table 10. Testing the Goodness of Fit Model

	Saturated Models
SRMR	0.104
d_ULS	1.849
d_G	Not used
Chi-Square	Not used
NFI	Not used

Source: SmartPLS Processed

According to the results from checking the SRMR fit, the SRMR score is 0.104, which is lower than 0.1. This suggests that the model works well.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the PLS analysis indicate that every hypothesis proposed in this study was supported, suggesting that elements such as leadership style, work environment, and motivation have a meaningful impact on employee performance at the Medan Johor Sub-district Office. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on public sector human resource management, particularly in the context of local government administration in developing countries. The following sections provide an in-depth interpretation of each major finding, situating them within existing theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence.

The Impact of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The study reveals that work motivation exerts a statistically significant and positive influence on employee performance, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.173 and a p-value of 0.002. This finding aligns with Robbins and Judge's (2019) seminal work on organizational behavior, which posits that motivation serves as a fundamental driver in achieving organizational objectives. The relatively modest direct effect coefficient suggests

that while motivation matters, its impact is amplified when channeled through appropriate organizational mechanisms, particularly leadership interventions.

From a theoretical perspective, these results support both Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. The civil servants at Medan Johor Sub-district Office demonstrate that intrinsic motivators—such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility—work in tandem with extrinsic factors like compensation and working conditions to shape performance outcomes. The research evidence indicates that employees who possess higher levels of work motivation exhibit greater initiative in completing assigned tasks, demonstrate more creativity in problem-solving, and maintain stronger commitment to organizational goals.

The practical implications are substantial. For sub-district offices operating under resource constraints and bureaucratic rigidities, enhancing work motivation requires a multi-pronged approach. Based on the findings, recommended interventions include: (a) establishing clear performance-based recognition systems that acknowledge both individual and team achievements; (b) creating structured career development pathways that provide civil servants with visible advancement opportunities; (c) implementing regular feedback mechanisms that allow employees to understand how their contributions align with broader public service objectives; and (d) fostering a culture of meaningful work by connecting daily administrative tasks to tangible community outcomes.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the modest coefficient value suggests that motivation alone is insufficient. The research reveals that motivational energy must be properly directed and supported through other organizational factors—particularly leadership and environmental conditions—to translate into optimal performance. This finding is consistent with contemporary motivation research in public administration, which emphasizes the importance of integrated human resource management systems rather than isolated motivational interventions.

How the Workplace Environment Affects Worker Productivity

The workplace environment demonstrates a substantial and highly significant impact on employee performance, as indicated by a path coefficient of 1.445 and a p-value of 0.000. This represents the strongest direct effect among all variables examined, underscoring the critical importance of both physical and psychosocial work conditions in shaping civil servant effectiveness. The magnitude of this effect is particularly noteworthy in the context of sub-district offices, where employees often face challenging working conditions including inadequate facilities, limited technological resources, and cramped physical spaces.

These findings strongly corroborate Sedarmayanti's (2022) comprehensive research on work environment dynamics, which demonstrates that a comfortable, safe, and well-equipped workplace significantly enhances both productivity and employee satisfaction. In the specific context of the Medan Johor Sub-district Office, the research identified several environmental factors that proved especially influential: adequate lighting and ventilation systems that reduce physical fatigue; functional office equipment and technology that minimize work frustration; ergonomic furniture and spatial arrangements that support extended task performance; and organized filing and information systems that reduce time wastage in document retrieval.

Beyond the physical dimensions, the psychosocial aspects of the work environment emerged as equally critical. The study found that positive interpersonal relationships among colleagues, supportive communication patterns between supervisors and subordinates, collaborative rather than competitive team dynamics, and a workplace culture that values mutual respect and professional courtesy all contributed significantly to creating an environment conducive to high performance. Civil servants working in such environments reported higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced stress, and greater willingness to go beyond minimum job requirements.

The practical implications for sub-district office management are clear and actionable. First, even modest investments in improving physical working conditions—such as upgrading lighting systems, providing adequate cooling or heating, ensuring functional computers and printers, and organizing workspace layouts—can yield substantial performance dividends. Second, cultivating positive psychosocial environments requires deliberate attention to communication practices, conflict resolution mechanisms, team-building activities, and the establishment of clear behavioral norms that promote respect and collaboration.

What makes this finding particularly significant is its consistency across different categories of civil servants within the office. Both frontline service providers and back-office administrative staff reported similar environmental influences on their performance, suggesting that workplace environment improvements should be comprehensive rather than selective. Furthermore, the strong statistical relationship indicates that environmental interventions may offer more immediate and measurable performance improvements compared to longer-term strategies like skills training or organizational restructuring.

The research also reveals an important nuance: the work environment's influence extends beyond mere comfort to encompass functional efficiency. Civil servants indicated that well-organized work processes, clear administrative procedures, accessible information systems, and logical workflow arrangements were as important as physical comfort in determining their performance levels. This suggests that environmental improvement strategies must address both the tangible infrastructure and the intangible organizational systems that shape daily work experiences.

The Function of Leadership Style as an Intermediary Factor

Perhaps the most theoretically and practically significant finding of this research is the demonstrated mediating role of leadership style in translating both work motivation and environmental conditions into enhanced performance outcomes. The analysis reveals that leadership style exerts both a powerful direct effect on performance (coefficient = 1.522, $p = 0.000$) and significant indirect effects through its interactions with work motivation (coefficient = 0.473, $p = 0.000$) and work environment (coefficient = 0.163, $p = 0.017$).

This mediation pattern suggests that leadership operates as a critical conversion mechanism—transforming the potential energy of motivated employees and supportive environments into actual performance achievements. In other words, even highly motivated civil servants working in excellent environments may underperform if leadership practices fail to channel these resources effectively. Conversely, skilled leadership can partially

compensate for motivational or environmental deficits by providing direction, support, and inspiration that mobilize available human resources.

The theoretical implications align with contemporary transformational and servant leadership theories. Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership framework emphasizes that effective leaders elevate followers' motivation and performance through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The research data from Medan Johor Sub-district Office suggests that when leaders exhibit these behaviors—articulating compelling visions for public service, modeling professional commitment, encouraging innovative problem-solving, and providing personalized mentoring—they create a performance-enhancing climate regardless of other organizational constraints.

Furthermore, the mediation effect illuminates why some sub-district offices with similar resources and personnel profiles achieve markedly different performance outcomes. The differentiating factor often lies in leadership quality. Leaders who adopt participative decision-making styles that invite employee input on service improvements, demonstrate genuine care for subordinate professional development and personal well-being, communicate organizational expectations clearly while providing autonomy in task execution, recognize and celebrate both individual contributions and collective achievements, and model the work ethic and public service commitment they expect from staff—these leaders successfully activate the motivational and environmental resources at their disposal.

The practical implications for public sector human resource development are profound. First, leadership development should be prioritized as a strategic intervention for improving sub-district office performance. This includes providing leadership training programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, communication skills, and adaptive leadership styles tailored to local government contexts. Second, leadership selection and promotion criteria should explicitly incorporate assessments of candidates' ability to motivate teams, create positive work climates, and translate organizational resources into performance results—not merely their technical competence or seniority.

Third, current leaders should be supported with coaching and mentoring programs that help them develop more transformational and participative leadership styles, particularly for those who may have been socialized under more authoritarian bureaucratic traditions. Fourth, organizational systems should be designed to reinforce positive leadership behaviors through performance evaluations that include subordinate feedback, recognition programs that reward leadership excellence, and accountability mechanisms that address leadership failures.

The research also reveals that leadership's mediating effect is not uniform across all contexts. Leaders who demonstrate flexibility in adapting their styles to different situations, employee characteristics, and task requirements achieve stronger mediation effects. This finding supports contingency theories of leadership, which emphasize the importance of situational awareness and behavioral adaptability. For sub-district offices serving diverse communities with varied service demands, leadership versatility becomes especially critical.

Finally, the strong mediation effects suggest that investments in leadership development may offer multiplicative returns. By enhancing leadership quality,

organizations simultaneously amplify the performance benefits derived from motivational programs and environmental improvements. This finding challenges resource allocation strategies that treat these factors as independent investments and instead points toward integrated approaches that place leadership development at the center of performance improvement strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that work motivation, work environment, and leadership style significantly influence civil servant performance at the Medan Johor Sub-District Office, with all hypotheses confirmed via PLS-SEM analysis. Work motivation positively drives performance through internal aspirations and external rewards, fostering responsibility and proficiency. A supportive work environment—encompassing physical and psychological elements—boosts productivity, collaboration, and morale. Leadership style mediates these effects, as adaptive leaders who communicate, involve, and inspire teams convert motivation and conducive settings into tangible performance gains, promoting creativity and efficiency. Overall, enhancing performance demands an integrated approach of motivation strategies, environmental improvements, and leadership development to elevate governance and public service quality. For future research, longitudinal studies could explore how digital transformation initiatives under Indonesia's OSS policy moderate these relationships over time, providing insights into sustained performance in evolving bureaucratic contexts.

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