

Work Motivation and Effective Leadership as Drivers of Employee Performance: Evidence from Kerinci Regency

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the effect of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office, considering that employee performance has not been fully optimal in supporting organizational effectiveness.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 47 employees selected as the research sample. The data were analyzed using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance.

Findings: The findings reveal that work motivation and leadership style have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.387 indicates that work motivation and leadership style explain 38.7% of the variance in employee performance, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors outside the research model. These results demonstrate that improving employee motivation and implementing appropriate leadership styles can significantly enhance employee performance.

Research Implications: This study provides practical implications for the Kerinci Regency Education Office by highlighting the importance of improving employee motivation and adopting supportive leadership to enhance employee performance and public service quality. Theoretically, this study supports the understanding of the relationship between work motivation, leadership style, and employee performance in the public sector. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the Kerinci Regency Education Office as a local government education institution, which has received limited attention in previous research.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is one of the most important determinants of organizational success, particularly in public sector institutions that are directly responsible for delivering public services. High employee performance contributes to organizational effectiveness, productivity, and the achievement of institutional goals. In government organizations, employee performance reflects the ability of public institutions to provide quality services, implement policies effectively, and maintain public trust. Therefore, improving employee performance has become a strategic issue in human resource management literature and public administration studies.

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain employees' efforts toward achieving organizational goals. It reflects the willingness of employees to exert effort, maintain persistence, and accomplish work responsibilities effectively. Meanwhile, leadership style is defined as the pattern of behavior adopted by leaders to influence, guide, and motivate employees in achieving organizational objectives. Leadership style shapes communication, decision-making, employee engagement, and the overall

organizational climate, making it one of the most influential managerial factors affecting employee performance.

Although employee performance is influenced by various factors such as organizational culture, compensation, work environment, job satisfaction, and employee competence, this study specifically focuses on work motivation and leadership style because these variables are considered the most manageable organizational factors within the Kerinci Regency Education Office. Preliminary observations indicate that several performance issues, including low employee initiative, inconsistent work discipline, and limited communication between supervisors and employees, are closely associated with employees' motivational conditions and leadership practices. Therefore, these two variables were selected as the primary determinants to provide practical recommendations that can be directly implemented by organizational leaders. Previous studies have emphasized that employee performance is strongly influenced by both internal and external organizational factors, particularly work motivation and leadership style. Work motivation encourages employees to perform tasks enthusiastically, responsibly, and productively, while leadership style determines how leaders influence, direct, and inspire employees to achieve organizational objectives. According to Panggabean et al. (2021), leadership style and motivation significantly affect employee performance because motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher commitment and productivity in completing organizational tasks.

Motivation is generally defined as an internal drive that stimulates individuals to achieve organizational and personal goals. Employees with strong work motivation tend to exhibit better job satisfaction, discipline, and organizational commitment, which ultimately improve performance outcomes. Research conducted by Manikottama et al. (2019) found that motivation has a positive and significant influence on employee performance and represents one of the strongest predictors of organizational productivity. Similarly, Hanasi (2023) explained that motivated employees are more likely to adapt to organizational changes and demonstrate higher individual performance within dynamic work environments.

In addition to motivation, leadership style also plays a critical role in shaping employee behavior and performance. Effective leadership creates a supportive organizational climate, enhances communication, and encourages employee participation in achieving institutional objectives. Leaders who adopt participative and transformational leadership approaches are more capable of motivating employees and fostering positive workplace relationships. Research by Silitonga et al. (2022) demonstrated that leadership has a significant positive relationship with employee performance because leaders influence employee morale, cooperation, and work discipline. Furthermore, Afriani et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership positively affects employee performance both directly and indirectly through motivation as an intervening variable.

Several empirical studies have also confirmed the simultaneous relationship between motivation, leadership style, and employee performance across different organizational contexts. Bakhri and Rizal (2021) reported that leadership and motivation jointly influence employee performance significantly, indicating that organizations need to strengthen both motivational systems and leadership effectiveness to optimize employee productivity. Likewise, Charli et al. (2023) highlighted that transformational leadership and work motivation contribute substantially to improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

Despite extensive studies on employee performance, empirical research focusing on public sector institutions in regional government organizations remains relatively limited, particularly within local education offices in Indonesia. The Kerinci Regency Education Office plays an important role in managing educational administration and public educational services. However, preliminary observations indicate that employee performance within the institution has not yet reached optimal levels. Several issues, such as limited employee

initiative, inconsistent work discipline, and ineffective communication between leaders and employees, may influence organizational performance outcomes. These conditions indicate the importance of examining factors that can improve employee performance, especially work motivation and leadership style.

This study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. Unlike previous studies that predominantly examined these relationships in private organizations or general public institutions, this research provides empirical evidence from a regional government education office, where studies remain relatively scarce. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the local public education administration context, offering a more context-specific understanding of how work motivation and leadership style influence employee performance in government institutions responsible for delivering educational services. The findings are expected to enrich the human resource management literature while providing practical recommendations for policymakers and organizational leaders in improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness within regional education offices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grand Theory

This study is grounded in Motivation Theory and Leadership Theory to explain employee behavior and performance within public sector organizations. Motivation Theory suggests that employees are more likely to perform effectively when their psychological and work-related needs are fulfilled. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivational factors (e.g., achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth) and hygiene factors (e.g., salary, supervision, and working conditions), both of which influence employee satisfaction and performance (Herzberg, 1968). In public sector organizations such as the Kerinci Regency Education Office, hygiene factors are generally regulated through government policies; therefore, improving intrinsic motivational factors becomes essential for encouraging employees to deliver higher-quality public services, demonstrate greater initiative, and achieve organizational objectives.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) further explains that employees are more motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci et al., 2017). Although Indonesian government institutions operate within a bureaucratic system characterized by formal regulations and hierarchical decision-making, employees still require opportunities to develop competencies, participate in decision-making, and receive recognition for their contributions. Within the Kerinci Regency Education Office, fulfilling these psychological needs may encourage employees to become more engaged in their work, adapt more effectively to administrative changes, and improve the quality of educational public services. Therefore, SDT provides an appropriate theoretical perspective for understanding how intrinsic motivation contributes to employee performance in the Indonesian public sector.

Leadership Theory also serves as an important theoretical foundation for this study. Leadership is defined as the ability of leaders to influence, direct, and motivate employees toward achieving organizational goals. Transformational Leadership Theory argues that leaders enhance employee performance by articulating a shared vision, providing intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the context of government organizations, transformational leadership is particularly relevant because public managers are expected not only to ensure compliance with regulations but also to foster innovation, collaboration, and employee commitment while maintaining accountability in public service delivery. Consequently, leadership style plays a strategic role in improving employee morale, communication, work discipline, and organizational effectiveness within public institutions.

The relationship between work motivation, leadership style, and employee performance is further explained through Social Exchange Theory, which posits that employees tend to reciprocate positive treatment received from leaders and organizations with favorable work attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In public sector organizations, supportive leadership, fair treatment, and recognition of employee contributions can strengthen trust and organizational commitment, ultimately encouraging employees to perform beyond their formal job requirements. This theoretical perspective helps explain why leadership style and work motivation are expected to positively influence employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office.

Work Motivation and Employee Performance

Work motivation is considered one of the key determinants of employee performance because it influences employees' willingness to exert effort in achieving organizational goals. Employees with strong motivation generally show greater enthusiasm, discipline, and responsibility in performing their duties. Motivation encourages employees to improve work quality, complete tasks efficiently, and contribute positively to organizational effectiveness. Several previous studies have confirmed the positive relationship between work motivation and employee performance. Research by Cerasoli et al. (2014) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation significantly improves employee performance, particularly in organizational settings that require creativity and commitment. Similarly, Gagné et al. (2015) found that motivated employees tend to exhibit higher productivity, stronger organizational engagement, and better work outcomes. In the public sector context, employee motivation is essential because motivated employees are more capable of providing effective public services and maintaining institutional accountability.

Furthermore, research conducted by Rasheed et al. (2016) indicated that work motivation positively affects employee efficiency and organizational productivity. Employees who receive recognition, career opportunities, and supportive work environments are more likely to achieve higher performance levels. Therefore, organizations need to strengthen motivational systems to encourage employee effectiveness and organizational success.

H1: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Leadership Style and Employee Performance

Leadership style is another important factor affecting employee performance because leaders play a strategic role in directing, influencing, and motivating employees. Effective leadership creates a conducive organizational environment that supports employee productivity, collaboration, and discipline. Leaders who communicate clearly, provide support, and involve employees in decision-making processes tend to foster better employee performance. Transformational leadership is widely recognized as one of the most effective leadership approaches in improving organizational performance. According to Wang et al. (2011), transformational leadership positively influences employee performance by increasing motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Leaders who inspire employees and provide clear organizational visions are more capable of encouraging employees to perform beyond expectations.

Research by Hoch et al. (2018) also found that leadership style significantly affects employee performance and team effectiveness. Employees who perceive supportive and participative leadership tend to demonstrate stronger work engagement and better task accomplishment. Similarly, Breevaart and Bakker (2018) explained that leadership behavior influences employee psychological well-being and productivity through increased motivation and trust. In public sector organizations, leadership style becomes increasingly important because government institutions require effective coordination, accountability, and employee

discipline. Leaders who implement participative and transformational leadership approaches can improve communication, reduce organizational conflict, and strengthen employee performance.

H2: Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Work Motivation, Leadership Style, and Employee Performance

Employee performance is influenced not only by individual motivation or leadership independently, but also by the interaction between both factors simultaneously. Employees who possess strong work motivation and are supported by effective leadership tend to demonstrate higher productivity, stronger organizational commitment, and better work outcomes. Leadership style can strengthen employee motivation through encouragement, recognition, and supportive communication.

Research by Lee et al. (2020) found that leadership and motivation simultaneously contribute to employee performance improvement because effective leadership enhances employees' intrinsic motivation and work engagement. Similarly, Alrowwad et al. (2020) explained that leadership style and employee motivation jointly affect organizational performance and employee productivity. Organizations that combine motivational strategies with effective leadership practices tend to achieve better organizational effectiveness. Moreover, Banks et al. (2016) highlighted that transformational leadership positively influences employee motivation, which subsequently improves employee performance. This indicates that leadership and motivation are complementary factors that play a strategic role in organizational success. In government institutions, leaders who are capable of motivating employees and creating supportive organizational climates are more likely to improve employee performance and service quality.

H3: Work motivation and leadership style simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to analyze the influence of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on testing causal relationships among variables through statistical analysis, while explanatory research aims to explain the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable systematically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population in this study consisted of all employees of the Kerinci Regency Education Office. Due to the relatively small population size, this study applied a saturated sampling technique, or census method, in which all population members were selected as respondents. Therefore, the total sample consisted of 47 employees. The use of saturated sampling allows researchers to obtain comprehensive and representative data from the entire population under study (Sugiyono, 2022). Primary data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was designed to measure three variables, namely work motivation, leadership style, and employee performance. Indicators of work motivation were adapted from dimensions developed by Gagné et al. (2015), including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and self-development. Leadership style indicators included communication, support, participation, direction, and decision-making abilities as suggested by Wang et al. (2011). Meanwhile, employee performance was measured through indicators such as work quality, work quantity, effectiveness, punctuality, and responsibility based on the organizational behavior framework proposed by Robbins and Judge (2019). In addition to questionnaires, supporting information was also obtained through preliminary observations and organizational documentation. Data analysis was conducted

using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before hypothesis testing, the research instrument was tested through validity and reliability analyses to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire items. An instrument was considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded the required significance level, while reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, classical assumption tests consisting of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests were performed to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical assumptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Instrument Testing

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability tests to ensure that the questionnaire items accurately and consistently measured the research variables.

1. Validity Test

The validity test was conducted using the Pearson product-moment correlation by comparing the correlation coefficient (r -count) of each questionnaire item with the critical value of the Pearson correlation table (r -table). With a sample size of 47 respondents, the degree of freedom was calculated as $df = n - 2 = 45$. At a significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed), the corresponding r -table value was 0.288. Questionnaire items with r -count values greater than 0.288 were considered valid. The results indicated that all questionnaire items measuring work motivation, leadership style, and employee performance exceeded the r -table value, confirming that all items were valid and suitable for further analysis.

2. Reliability Test

The reliability test was performed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure the consistency of the questionnaire items. A variable is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The reliability test results are presented in Table 1.

Table1. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria
Work Motivation	0.812	Reliable
Leadership Style	0.845	Reliable
Employee Performance	0.793	Reliable

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 1, all variables obtained Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating that the research instrument has good internal consistency and reliability. Thus, the questionnaire items used in this study are considered reliable for measuring work motivation, leadership style, and employee performance variables.

Classical Assumption Tests

Before performing multiple linear regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical assumptions. The tests included normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests.

1. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to determine whether the residual data were normally distributed. A regression model is considered normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05. The test results showed a significance value of 0.200, which is higher than 0.05. Therefore, the residual data in this study were normally distributed, indicating that the regression model fulfilled the normality assumption.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Alpha	Criteria
0.200	0.05	Normally Distributed

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 2, the significance value of 0.200 is greater than 0.05, indicating that the residual data were normally distributed. Therefore, the regression model fulfilled the normality assumption.

2. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted using the Glejser test to identify whether there was inequality of residual variance in the regression model. A model is considered free from heteroscedasticity if the significance value of each independent variable exceeds 0.05. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Sig. Value	Alpha	Criteria
Work Motivation	0.998	0.05	No Heteroscedasticity
Leadership Style	0.095		No Heteroscedasticity

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 3, all variables obtained significance values above 0.05, indicating that the regression model did not experience heteroscedasticity problems.

3. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test was performed by examining the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. A regression model is considered free from multicollinearity if the Tolerance value is greater than 0.10 and the VIF value is less than 10. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Criteria
Work Motivation	0.895	1.118	No Multicollinearity
Leadership Style	0.895	1.118	No Multicollinearity

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 4, all independent variables showed Tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values lower than 10. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables, and the regression model fulfilled the classical assumption requirements for further analysis

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. The regression analysis results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	t-value	Sig.
Constant	11.093	2.745	0.009
Work Motivation	0.326	3.124	0.003
Leadership Style	0.377	3.344	0.002

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 5, the multiple linear regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = 11.093 + 0.326X_1 + 0.377X_2$$

The regression results indicate that both work motivation and leadership style have positive effects on employee performance. The positive regression coefficient of 0.326 for work motivation implies that, holding leadership style constant, an improvement in employees' work motivation is associated with an increase in employee performance. Practically, this finding suggests that initiatives such as providing recognition, career development opportunities, and performance-based incentives may contribute to improving employees' work outcomes.

Similarly, the regression coefficient of 0.377 for leadership style indicates that, assuming work motivation remains constant, improvements in leadership practices are associated with higher employee performance. In practical terms, leaders who communicate effectively, provide clear direction, encourage employee participation, and offer constructive feedback are more likely to enhance employees' productivity and work effectiveness. Since the regression coefficient for leadership style is larger than that for work motivation, leadership style appears to have a relatively stronger contribution to employee performance within the Kerinci Regency Education Office.

The constant value of 11.093 represents the estimated employee performance score when both independent variables are statistically equal to zero. However, because the variables were measured using Likert-scale questionnaire items, a value of zero for work motivation and leadership style does not occur in practice. Therefore, the constant should be interpreted as a statistical parameter that helps define the regression equation rather than as a meaningful representation of actual employee performance under real organizational conditions.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the t-test to examine the partial effect of each independent variable on employee performance and the F-test to analyze the simultaneous effect of work motivation and leadership style on employee performance.

1. Partial Test (t-test)

The t-test was conducted to determine whether work motivation and leadership style individually have a significant effect on employee performance. The results of the t-test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. t-test

Model	t-test	t-table	Sig.	Info.
Work Motivation	3.124	2.014	0.003	H ₁ Accepted
Leadership Style	3.344		0.002	H ₂ Accepted

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 6, the work motivation variable obtained a t-value of 3.124, which is greater than the t-table value of 2.014, with a significance value of 0.003 lower than 0.05. This result indicates that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H₁) is accepted. Furthermore, the leadership style variable obtained a t-value of 3.344, which is also greater than the t-table value of 2.014, with a significance value of 0.002 lower than 0.05. This finding demonstrates that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Thus, the second hypothesis (H₂) is accepted. These findings indicate that both work motivation and leadership style individually contribute to improving employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office.

2. Simultaneous Test (F-test)

The F-test was conducted to determine whether work motivation and leadership style simultaneously influence employee performance. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Simultaneous Test (F-test) Results

F-test	F-table	Sig.	Info
15.497	4.06	0.000	H ₃ Accepted

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 7, the regression model obtained an F-value of 15.497 with a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This finding indicates that work motivation and leadership style simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H₃) is accepted. The results of hypothesis testing confirm that both work motivation and leadership style are important determinants of employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. Employees with higher motivation and

supported by effective leadership tend to demonstrate better performance in carrying out organizational responsibilities.

3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the extent to which work motivation and leadership style explain variations in employee performance. The results of the coefficient of determination test are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

R Square	Adjusted R Square	Information
0.413	0.387	Moderate

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (2026)

Based on Table 7, the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.387 indicates that work motivation and leadership style explain 38.7% of the variation in employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. Practically, this finding suggests that improving employee motivation and leadership practices can contribute to better employee performance. However, employee performance is influenced by many other factors beyond these two variables. An Adjusted R^2 of 38.7% indicates a moderate level of explanatory power, which is acceptable in human resource management research where employee behavior is affected by multiple factors. The remaining 61.3% of the variation may be explained by other variables, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, employee competence, and organizational commitment. Future research is recommended to include these variables to provide a more comprehensive explanation of employee performance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office. This finding supports motivation theory, particularly Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci et al. (2017), which explains that employees with higher intrinsic motivation tend to demonstrate stronger commitment, productivity, and work effectiveness. Employees who receive recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for self-development are more likely to improve their performance because motivation encourages them to achieve both personal and organizational goals.

The findings also align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which emphasizes that motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, and career growth significantly influence employee satisfaction and performance. In the context of public organizations, motivated employees tend to perform their duties more effectively and demonstrate stronger accountability in providing public services. This study confirms that motivation is an important factor in improving employee productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Empirically, the findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in international contexts. Research by Cerasoli et al. (2014) found that intrinsic motivation positively influences employee performance because motivated employees tend to exhibit stronger engagement and work commitment. Similarly, Kuvaas et al. (2017) reported that work motivation significantly improves employee performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, Olafsen et al. (2018) explained that motivated employees are more capable of adapting to organizational challenges and maintaining higher productivity levels. These findings strengthen the argument that work motivation is a strategic determinant of employee performance in both private and public sector organizations.

In addition, the results demonstrate that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding supports transformational leadership theory, which states that leaders who inspire, support, and involve employees in organizational processes are more likely to improve employee productivity and organizational commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Effective leadership creates a supportive organizational climate that

enhances communication, teamwork, and employee morale, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes.

The findings are also consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which explains that employees reciprocate supportive treatment from leaders through positive work attitudes and improved performance (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Leaders who provide guidance, recognition, and participative decision-making opportunities encourage employees to work more effectively and responsibly. In public sector institutions, leadership style becomes increasingly important because organizational success depends heavily on coordination, discipline, and employee engagement. The results of this study are in line with several previous international studies. Hoch et al. (2018) found that transformational leadership significantly improves employee performance by strengthening trust, motivation, and organizational commitment. Likewise, Breevaart et al. (2014) demonstrated that transformational leadership positively affects employee work engagement and daily performance. Research by Banks et al. (2016) also confirmed that leadership style plays a significant role in shaping employee attitudes and improving organizational productivity. Therefore, the findings of this study reinforce previous evidence that effective leadership is a critical factor in enhancing employee performance within public organizations.

Furthermore, the simultaneous test results reveal that work motivation and leadership style jointly have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding indicates that employee performance is not determined by a single factor but rather by the interaction between individual and organizational factors. Employees who possess strong motivation and are supported by effective leadership tend to demonstrate better productivity, responsibility, and organizational commitment. This result supports previous studies conducted by Lee et al. (2020), which found that leadership and motivation simultaneously influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Alrowwad et al. (2020) explained that organizations that combine motivational strategies with effective leadership practices are more capable of achieving higher organizational performance. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.387 indicates that work motivation and leadership style explain 38.7% of employee performance variation, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors such as organizational culture, compensation, work environment, and employee competence.

Overall, this study confirms that strengthening employee motivation and implementing effective leadership styles are essential strategies for improving employee performance in public sector organizations. These findings provide practical implications for government institutions, particularly in designing human resource management policies that emphasize motivational development and leadership effectiveness to achieve better organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work motivation and leadership style have positive and significant effects on employee performance at the Kerinci Regency Education Office, both partially and simultaneously. Leadership style has a stronger influence than work motivation, indicating the important role of leaders in improving employee performance. Together, these two variables explain 38.7% of the variation in employee performance. Theoretically, this study supports motivation theory and transformational leadership theory. Practically, the Kerinci Regency Education Office is encouraged to improve employee motivation through training and recognition, while leaders should adopt more supportive leadership practices. These efforts are important to improve the quality of public services. However, their implementation may be constrained by limited resources and organizational policies. Future research is recommended to examine other factors, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, work environment, and compensation.

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