

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE AND WORK MOTIVATION IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF PRODUCTION OPERATOR EMPLOYEES AT PT MANUFAKTUR MAJALENGKA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how leadership approaches and employee motivation contribute to enhancing the job performance of production operators in a manufacturing firm based in *Majalengka*. The primary objective is to examine key elements that drive improved employee performance outcomes. Employing a quantitative methodology within a causal-associative framework, the research involves a total of 100 production staff members, all of whom are included as participants through a saturated sampling strategy. Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using SmartPLS 3. The analysis revealed that both leadership style and work motivation play critical roles in shaping employee performance metrics. These insights highlight the necessity of fostering effective leadership and maintaining strong motivational levels to cultivate a more efficient and high-performing organizational environment. Management should develop and implement participative, communicative, and inspirational leadership practices to enhance employee engagement. Additionally, organizations need to design motivation enhancement programs, incorporating both financial and non-financial incentives, such as recognition, training, and career development opportunities. Consequently, employee performance can be improved sustainably, ultimately contributing to the achievement of overall organizational objectives.

Keywords : *Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Employee Performance*



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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance serves as a vital measure of an organization's overall success. Various factors, including motivation, leadership approach, and the level of organizational commitment, have a notable impact on how productive employees are (Qalati et al., 2022a). As noted by Afandi, employee performance refers to the outcomes achieved by individuals in fulfilling their responsibilities and tasks within the expected time frame and according to established standards (Dermawan Dimas Arbi & Pohan Yuli Arnida, 2024). Many companies around the world face challenges in maintaining optimal employee performance, especially due to rapid changes in technology and market dynamics that require swift adaptation. However, in reality, many employees feel disengaged from their work. Some studies state that about 50% of the workforce in the United States is not engaged with their work, and more than 17% is completely disengaged from their work or workplace (Nugroho Adi Noora Fithriana, 2018). On a global scale, talent management, leadership mapping, and organizational commitment are key to creating reliable human resources that are productive and aligned with the organization's culture (Eliyana et al., 2019).

Employee performance trends in *Ethiopia* reveal that key factors such as assessing training needs, the availability of training resources, and employees' perceptions significantly influence overall job performance (Dagne Gebrehiwot & Elantheraiyan, 2023). A suboptimal assessment of training needs can hinder employee performance improvement, even though a positive perception of training contributes to performance. The phenomenon of employee performance in *Hong Kong* shows that responsible leadership has a significant influence on encouraging positive behaviors, including environmentally friendly behavior (Xiao et al., 2024).

Research in the *Surabaya* City government sector (Sumiati, 2021) highlights that elements such as servant leadership, professionalism, and a positive workplace culture play a crucial role in boosting employee motivation, which subsequently enhances job performance. A case study at *UD Jati Utama* in *Mojokerto, East Java* (Fernando, 2022) demonstrates a significant link between leadership style, work motivation, and employee performance. When leaders delegate effectively, motivation levels are high, and the work environment is supportive, employee productivity tends to improve significantly (Wulandari, 2021).

Employee performance challenges at *PT XYZ Majalengka* include low work motivation, which is evident from several phenomena: leaders whose behavior does not meet employee or company expectations, perceptions of inadequate leadership, employees leaving the workplace before the end of working hours, and generally suboptimal performance. The indicators of employee performance, according to Afandi, are work quality, quantity of work, accuracy in task execution, discipline,

initiative, precision, leadership, honesty, and creativity (Dermawan Dimas Arbi & Pohan Yuli Arnida, 2024).

Leadership style plays an essential role in how a leader manages an organization. As noted by Kartini Kartono, leadership style encompasses the characteristics, behaviors, temperament, and personality traits that shape how a leader interacts with others (Khaeruman et al., 2021). Transformational leadership, in particular, reflects a leader's proactive efforts to structure the organization, guide its direction, and inspire employees to work collectively toward achieving organizational goals. This includes the leader's actions to transform followers fundamentally and to translate expectations into follower success, while developing organizational culture to achieve strategic objectives (Solahudin et al., 2024). Susijawati and Harry Sulistiyowati (2023) found a positive and significant impact of leadership style on performance outcomes. Transformational leadership, in particular, plays a critical role in enhancing employee effectiveness within industrial sectors (Ángeles López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). Similarly, Shang (2023) found that transformational leadership influences employee performance in industrial settings through both direct and indirect pathways, contributing positively to performance improvement. According to Kartini Kartono, as cited by Khaeruman et al. (2021), leadership style can be identified through several key indicators: the quality of communication between leaders and subordinates, the extent to which leaders encourage employees to express ideas and suggestions, the degree of autonomy granted in task execution, and the level of attention given by leaders to employee performance.

Siagian explains that motivation serves as the internal drive that encourages members of an organization to willingly channel their abilities—such as skills, energy, and time—toward fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations. This commitment is directed at achieving both individual tasks and the broader goals set by the organization (Kadji, 2012). Work motivation significantly contributes to enhancing employee performance by addressing four fundamental emotional drivers: the desire to achieve and be rewarded, to build meaningful connections, to gain knowledge and understanding, and to feel secure and retained within the organization. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can improve employee performance (Prawira et al., 2020). High motivation, such as through incentives or rewards, encourages employees to better achieve company goals. According to Forson et al. (2021), work motivation shaped by elements such as compensation, job structure, workplace conditions, and performance management systems has a strong influence on performance improvement in *Ghana*. Similarly, Ummul Chair (2020) found that work motivation significantly impacts employee performance. Based on Siagian's theory, as cited in Aldo Herlambang et al. (Khaeruman et al.,

2021), the key indicators of work motivation include the need for self-direction, power, and job security.

This study aims to explore and analyze the influence of leadership style and work motivation on the performance of production operator employees in manufacturing companies in *Majalengka*. It offers novelty through the use of a quantitative approach based on structural analysis with SmartPLS 3 in the context of regional industries that are still minimally researched. This approach is intended to fill the research gap, as previous studies have focused more on the public sector or large companies in major cities. The study also provides theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management science, practical benefits for company management in improving performance through effective leadership and motivation strategies, and social benefits in the form of increased work productivity that positively impacts local economic growth.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilizes a causal-associative design within a quantitative framework. A quantitative approach is used to assess how leadership style and motivation contribute to improving employee performance. Leadership style is evaluated through four indicators, work motivation through three indicators, and employee performance through nine indicators. The total population in this study is 100 employees of the production operator section. The sample of this study was determined to be as many as 100 employees of the production operator section using the saturated sampling method, where all members of the population were used as samples (Sugiyono, 2013). The research was conducted at a manufacturing company located in Majalengka, Indonesia. Responses to the questionnaire items were measured using a Likert scale. To support data processing, the researchers utilized SmartPLS version 3.0. For data analysis, the study applied the SEM PLS, which was employed to examine the structural relationships and test the proposed hypotheses

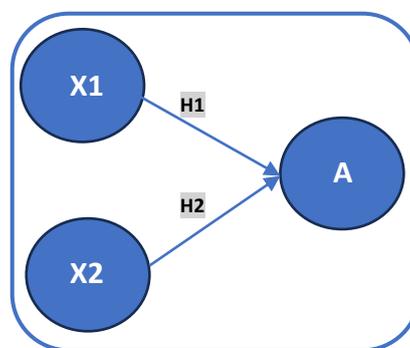


Figure 1. Framework of thought

Then the following hypotheses can be proposed and concluded:

H1: Leadership Style (X1) affects Employee Performance (Y)

H2: Work Motivation (X2) affects Employee Performance (Y)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

This research was carried out by filling in 100 production operator respondents with the following description of the respondents:

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

Category	Possible Answer	F	%
Gender	Male	42	42%
	Female	58	58%
Age	<25 years	48	48%
	26 – 35 years	46	46%
	36 – 45 years	6	6%
	>46 years	0	0%
Education	High School	95	95%
	Associate Degree	1	1%
	Bachelor Degree	4	4%
	Master's Degree	0	0%
Years of service	<1 years	46	46%
	2 years	24	24%
	3 years	30	30%
	>4 years	0	0%

Source: author's data processing 2025

In Table 1, in this study is 100 people. Of these, the majority of respondents were women, which reached 58 people. In terms of age group, the most respondents came from the age category under 25 years old. In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents hold qualifications at the senior secondary school (SLTA) level. Furthermore, with regard to work experience, most respondents have been employed for less than one year. This data shows that the respondent profile is dominated by relatively young individuals who are new to the workforce, with educational backgrounds that are generally equivalent to high school students.

Fit Model Fit Test Results

Table 2: Fit Model Data Suitability Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.081	0.081
NFI	0.704	0.704

Source: author's data processing 2025

The model fit analysis results show that the SRMR value stands at 0.081, indicating an acceptable level of model fit. Furthermore, the NFI value is 0.704. While this is below the preferred benchmark of 0.90, it is nearing the acceptable range and reflects a moderate fit.

Model Measurement Test Results

An external model analysis was conducted to assess the appropriateness of the measurement model employed in this study. Each of these test methods serves to evaluate the extent to which the indicators used are able to reflect the measured constructs.

Table 3: Model Measurement Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Leadership Style	X1.1	0.928	0.775	0.958	0.965
	X1.2	0.922			
	X1.3	0.880			
	X1.4	0.897			
	X1.5	0.855			
	X1.6	0.894			
	X1.7	0.877			
	X1.8	0.780			
Work Motivation	X2.1	0.892	0.774	0.941	0.954
	X2.2	0.891			
	X2.3	0.916			
	X2.4	0.834			
	X2.5	0.897			
	X2.6	0.847			
Employee Performance	Y1	0.933	0.724	0.977	0.979
	Y2	0.945			
	Y3	0.938			
	Y4	0.912			
	Y5	0.872			
	Y6	0.881			
	Y7	0.922			
	Y8	0.875			
	Y9	0.926			
	Y10	0.800			
	Y11	0.815			
	Y12	0.813			
	Y13	0.723			
	Y14	0.874			
	Y15	0.781			
	Y16	0.735			
	Y17	0.784			
	Y18	0.729			

Source: author's data processing 2025

Table 3 displays the outer loading values for each item utilized in this study. The analysis results indicate that all items meet the required threshold, with outer loading values exceeding 0.7. This demonstrates that each indicator significantly contributes to representing the associated construct, confirming its validity. Therefore, the indicators used in this research are considered valid and effectively represent the underlying constructs. The reliability test results further support this, showing that the measurement instruments exhibit strong internal consistency and can be relied upon for consistent results.

The measurement instrument is deemed appropriate for further analysis, ensuring that the findings generated are accurate and provide meaningful insights within the context of the research.

Structure of Analysis Model

Latent variables refer to constructs that cannot be measured directly but are inferred through one or more observable indicators or measurement variables. Assessment of this structural model is essential to ensure that the constructed model can explain the relationships between variables well.

Tabel 4: Output R Square and R Square Adjusted

Model	R Square	R Square Adjusted
X1 and X2 to Y	0.832	0.828

Source: author's data processing 2025

Table 4 presents the R Square and Adjusted R Square values for the combined influence of variables X1 and X2 on variable Y. The R Square value of 0.832 indicates that 83.2% of the variance in Y can be explained by the joint effect of X1 and X2. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.828 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, providing a more accurate estimate for the general population. Both values fall within the high category, suggesting that the model has strong explanatory power in capturing the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

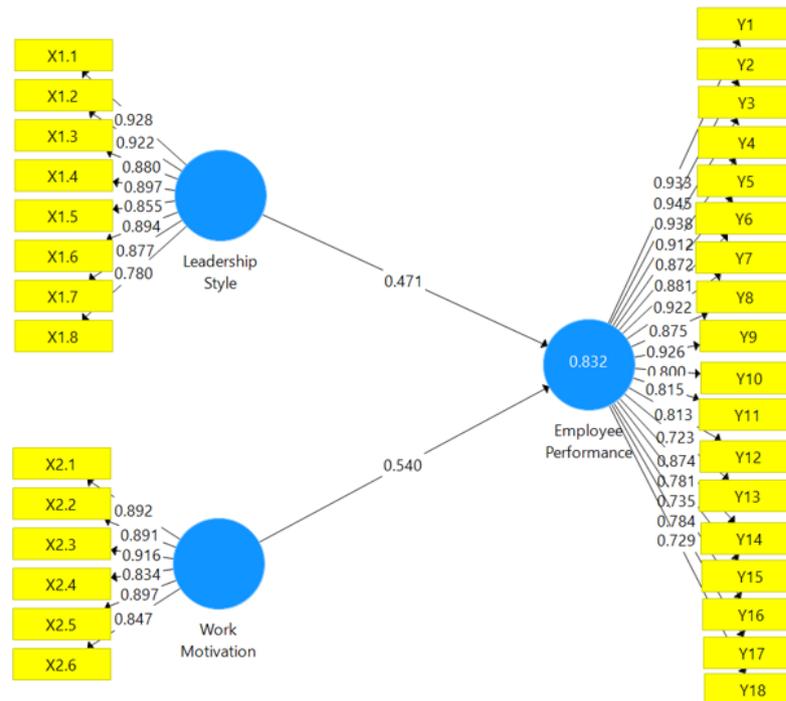
Table 5: Output F Square

Variable	Employee Performance
Leadership Style	0.797
Work Motivation	1.050

Source: author's data processing 2025

The F-value results shown in Table 5 the impact of leadership style is somewhat less than that of work motivation, it remains statistically significant. Overall, these independent variables play an important role in influencing the dependent variable, underscoring their relevance in accounting for differences in employee performance.

The definitive model in the SEM PLS analysis can be seen in the figure below:



Picture 2: Output Path Analysis

Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis directly in this study, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t Value	p Value
H1	Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0.471	0.473	0.063	7.414	0.000
H2	Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.540	0.538	0.062	8.686	0.000

Source: author's data processing 2025

The analysis of the hypothesis testing reveals that leadership approach and employee motivation each have a meaningful and positive impact on job performance. The first set of findings provides evidence that leadership practices significantly influence how well employees carry out their responsibilities, justifying the rejection of the initial null hypothesis. Likewise, the results also uphold the second hypothesis, demonstrating that motivated employees tend to show higher levels of performance. Together, these insights highlight the essential role that both leadership and motivation play in driving employee success within a workplace setting.

The following discussion will outline the implications and interpretation of the results of data analysis that have been obtained previously. A description of the

indicators of the research variables will provide information about the high and low influence of the indicators on the variables being studied. The discussion of each research hypothesis is as follows.

The Influence of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

This research explores how various dimensions of leadership behavior impact employee performance. Key elements examined include how openly leaders communicate with their teams, how supportive they are in encouraging new ideas, the degree of autonomy they allow in task execution. The analysis reveals a path coefficient of 0.471, indicating that leadership style plays a meaningful and statistically significant role in shaping how well employees perform in their roles. The main statement that influences leadership style in this study is that leaders who are always open and accessible to communicate well can explain goals, provide feedback, and listen to feedback from employees, which in turn can improve their performance. Adjustments in how leaders manage and interact with their teams can directly influence improvements in employee output. The influence of leadership approach is notable, as it helps explain differences in how employees perform by fostering a workplace atmosphere that encourages motivation and high achievement. Overall, the findings highlight that strong and supportive leadership is a key factor in enhancing employee effectiveness, which in turn drives the broader success of the organization.

Amiri et al. (2020) emphasize that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational performance, highlighting the significant impact leaders can have within an organization. This aligns with the findings of Dugaal et al. (2022) in the context of Somalia, the research revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

Motivation among employees is a significant contributor to improved job performance, as evidenced by the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The findings highlight that when employees are highly motivated, their work output tends to increase accordingly. A primary factor influencing this motivation is the assignment of complete responsibility over their duties, which encourages a stronger connection to their tasks and promotes active involvement. When individuals are trusted with greater autonomy, they are more likely to feel appreciated and recognize their meaningful contribution to organizational success. Furthermore, the ability to participate in decision-making particularly in setting work targets greatly contributes to improving employee motivation. When employees are included in these processes, they gain a greater sense of control over

their responsibilities, which fosters a stronger sense of ownership and deepens their commitment to achieving desired results.

Giving them responsibility and the opportunity to participate in decision-making not only increases work motivation, but also has the potential to improve overall employee performance. This shows that organizations that support employee participation in setting targets and providing autonomy at work..

The study by Ummul Chair (2020) revealed that work motivation significantly influences employee performance, indicating that higher motivation levels lead to improved performance outcomes. Likewise, the study by Prawiro Sudarso et al. (2020) affirmed that motivation positively and significantly influences employee performance, supporting the notion that highly motivated employees tend to deliver stronger results in their work.

CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that both leadership style and work motivation significantly influence employee performance, with effective leadership—characterized by strong communication, support in decision-making, and recognition of employee achievements—directly enhancing performance outcomes. High levels of work motivation further drive employees to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively, especially when autonomy and involvement in decision-making are encouraged, fostering greater commitment and engagement. Therefore, organizations should prioritize the development of participatory and transformative leadership styles alongside robust motivation strategies, such as comprehensive reward systems and a supportive work environment, to cultivate a high-performance culture aligned with organizational goals. For future research, it is recommended to explore the impact of digital leadership and remote work arrangements on employee motivation and performance, particularly in the context of evolving workplace dynamics and technological advancements.

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