



Impact of Democratic Leadership, Compensation, and Work Environment on Employee Performance via Motivation

Effendy Akhirudin^{1*}, Bambang Raditya Purnomo²

^{1,2}Dr. Soetomo University, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: pendick35@gmail.com |

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the influence of democratic leadership style, compensation, and work environment on employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable. The study's objective was to analyze ASN Employees of the Sidoarjo Regency Regional Secretariat, totaling 37 people.

Research Methodology: This study used a quantitative research method. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique was used for analysis, with validity, reliability, and hypothesis tests.

Results: The study results indicate that democratic leadership, compensation, and work environment have positive and significant effects on employee work motivation and performance. In addition, work motivation positively and significantly affects employee performance and mediates the influence of democratic leadership, compensation, and work environment on employee performance.

Conclusions: Democratic leadership, compensation, and work environment all positively influence employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation. Work motivation strengthens the effects of these factors, indicating its role as a key intermediary in improving performance.

Limitations: The study is limited by its small sample size, single-agency focus, and cross-sectional design, which may affect generalizability and causal interpretation.

Contributions: This study highlights the importance of democratic leadership, fair compensation, and a supportive work environment in enhancing employee performance. Practically, it provides guidance for managers to foster motivation and optimize workplace conditions to achieve higher productivity.

Keywords: *Compensation, Democratic Leadership, Employee Performance, Work Environment, Work Motivation*

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1. Introduction

Employees are valuable assets of an organization that must be managed properly by organizational leaders in order to provide maximum contribution to the achievement of organizational goals. Human resources play an important role in determining the success and sustainability of an organization because organizational activities cannot run effectively without the support of competent employees (Nuraeni et al., 2022; Phina et al., 2022). Therefore, organizations are required to pay serious attention to employee management, especially in improving employee performance. Employee performance is one of the

main indicators used to measure the effectiveness and success of an organization in achieving its vision and mission (Sugiyono, 2010). High employee performance can increase productivity, improve service quality, and strengthen organizational competitiveness, while low performance can hinder organizational development and goal achievement (Fernando & Surjandari, 2022).

Employee performance is the result of work achieved by a person in terms of quality and quantity in carrying out duties according to the responsibilities assigned. Employee performance reflects the level of employee success in completing work effectively and efficiently (Basuki & Khalid, 2021). Therefore, every organization needs to create conditions that can encourage employees to work optimally and professionally. Good employee performance is influenced by various factors, both internal and external, such as work motivation, leadership style, compensation, and work environment (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Putri et al., 2019).

One of the important factors influencing employee performance is work motivation. Motivation is a driving force within an individual that encourages someone to act and work enthusiastically in achieving organizational goals (Kurniawanto et al., 2022). Employees who have high motivation tend to show better performance because they have a strong desire to complete tasks and responsibilities properly. The relationship between work motivation and employee performance shows positive and significant results. This means that increasing employee motivation can improve employee performance within the organization (Mairia et al., 2021; Simorangkir et al., 2021). Motivation is the drive, effort, and desire within a person that activates, directs, and maintains behavior related to work activities. Thus, work motivation becomes an important aspect that organizations must pay attention to in order to improve employee productivity and effectiveness (Satria, 2021; Sulila, 2019).

In addition to motivation, leadership style is another factor that can affect employee performance (Psychogios & Dimitriadis, 2021). Leadership style reflects how leaders influence, direct, motivate, and communicate with employees in achieving organizational objectives. Effective leadership can create a positive work atmosphere, increase employee enthusiasm, and encourage employees to perform better (Bindlish et al., 2019; Oral, 2019). On the other hand, ineffective leadership can reduce employee morale, decrease discipline, and negatively affect employee performance. Several previous studies found that leadership has a significant role in improving employee work motivation and performance (Hajjiali et al., 2022). Leaders who are able to motivate and empower employees can create stronger commitment and responsibility among employees toward their work and organizational goals (Trisnawati et al., 2021).

Another factor influencing employee performance is compensation. Compensation is a form of reward or appreciation given by an organization to employees in return for their contributions and work achievements. Compensation can be financial, such as salaries, incentives, and bonuses, or non-financial, such as recognition, career opportunities, and work facilities (Lumi & Yosef, 2022). Compensation is one of the main reasons individuals work because employees expect rewards from the organization where they work (Simorangkir et al., 2021). Adequate compensation can increase employee satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty, which in turn can improve employee performance. Compensation is an award or remuneration given to workers for their contributions and abilities in achieving organizational goals. Therefore, organizations need to provide fair and appropriate compensation to maintain employee enthusiasm and productivity (Mairia et al., 2021).

The work environment is also an important factor affecting employee performance and work motivation. A conducive work environment can create comfort, safety, and positive relationships among employees, thereby encouraging employees to work more effectively and efficiently. Conversely, an uncomfortable and inadequate work environment can reduce employee enthusiasm, concentration, and performance (Hasan, 2022). The work environment includes everything around workers that can influence the implementation of work, such as lighting, noise levels, workplace cleanliness, air circulation, and

workplace security. Organizations that provide a supportive work environment are more likely to improve employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity (Heriyanto, 2021).

The importance of leadership style, compensation, work environment, and work motivation in improving employee performance can also be observed in government institutions. Government organizations are expected to provide quality public services through professional and productive employees (Heriyanto, 2021). Therefore, improving employee performance becomes a strategic priority in public sector organizations. However, in reality, several organizational problems related to employee performance still occur. Based on interviews with several employees in the Procurement of Goods and Services Section of the Sidoarjo Regency Regional Secretariat, it was found that policies related to employee interests had not fully accommodated employee aspirations. In addition, there was inadequate coordination regarding targets and action plans at each organizational level, indicating weak communication between leaders and employees. These conditions can negatively affect employee motivation and performance because employees may feel less involved in organizational decision-making processes (Setyawati & Aristiyanto, 2021).

Poor communication and lack of employee involvement in organizational policies can create dissatisfaction and reduce employee commitment to the organization (Atouba, 2021; Hee et al., 2018). Employees who feel ignored or unsupported by leaders may experience decreased work motivation, which ultimately affects their performance. Therefore, organizations need leaders who are capable of building effective communication, creating a supportive work environment, and providing fair compensation in order to improve employee motivation and performance (Arslan & Roudaki, 2019).

Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that leadership style, compensation, work environment, and work motivation are important factors influencing employee performance. These variables are interrelated and play a significant role in determining the success of organizational activities. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research regarding the influence of leadership style, compensation, and work environment on employee performance through work motivation in order to provide a deeper understanding of factors affecting employee performance, particularly in government institutions. The results of this research are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management studies and practical contributions for organizations in formulating strategies to improve employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Democratic Leadership and Employee Performance*

Democratic leadership emphasizes participative decision-making, where leaders actively seek input and feedback from employees before making decisions. This leadership style promotes a sense of ownership among employees, encouraging them to take responsibility for their tasks and outcomes (Satria, 2021). In public sector organizations, democratic leaders foster collaboration, transparency, and trust, which can enhance employee engagement and accountability. Employees feel valued and recognized for their contributions, which boosts morale and encourages proactive behavior in fulfilling their duties (Prinhandaka et al., 2022).

Additionally, democratic leadership positively influences problem-solving and innovation, as employees are encouraged to share ideas and contribute to organizational improvements (Amegayibor, 2021). By involving employees in the decision-making process, organizations can align individual goals with institutional objectives, leading to higher efficiency and effectiveness (Rizky et al., 2021). In the context of the Sidoarjo District Regional Secretariat, adopting democratic leadership can strengthen internal communication and employee satisfaction, which ultimately improves performance outcomes and service

delivery ([Makambe & Moeng, 2019](#)).

2.2 Compensation and Work Motivation

Compensation is a fundamental extrinsic motivator that rewards employees for their efforts and achievements ([Heriyanto, 2021](#)). Fair and adequate compensation encourages employees to perform at their best, as it provides tangible recognition of their work. In the public sector, competitive compensation systems are crucial to attract and retain skilled employee, while also fostering job satisfaction and commitment. Employees who perceive compensation as equitable are more likely to maintain consistent effort, reduce absenteeism, and show loyalty to the organization ([Solihin, 2021](#); [Wahyuningsih et al., 2021](#)).

Moreover, compensation not only affects performance directly but also indirectly by enhancing work motivation. Monetary rewards, bonuses, and benefits serve as incentives that encourage employees to engage more actively with their tasks ([Hasan, 2022](#)). In addition to financial compensation, recognition-based rewards such as awards, promotions, and acknowledgment of achievements also strengthen intrinsic motivation. This dual effect—direct financial incentive and motivation-mediated performance—highlights compensation as a critical tool for enhancing both employee engagement and organizational productivity ([Anaperta et al., 2021](#); [Hasan, 2022](#)).

2.3 Work Environment and Employee Performance

A well-designed work environment is essential for facilitating optimal employee performance. Factors such as workplace safety, cleanliness, lighting, noise control, and ergonomic design directly affect employees' comfort, concentration, and productivity ([Parmenas, 2022](#)). A supportive environment fosters efficiency, reduces fatigue, and minimizes errors, enabling employees to focus on their core responsibilities. In governmental organizations, where bureaucratic processes can be rigid, an enabling environment helps employees navigate tasks effectively while maintaining high performance standards ([Abidin et al., 2022](#)).

Beyond physical aspects, the work environment also encompasses social and psychological elements, including interpersonal relationships, communication norms, and organizational culture ([Harywibowo & Hariadi, 2022](#)). A positive environment encourages teamwork, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, which collectively enhance performance. Conversely, a negative or stressful environment can lead to disengagement, reduced motivation, and higher turnover. Therefore, creating a conducive work environment is a strategic necessity for public sector organizations aiming to improve employee performance sustainably ([Hakim et al., 2022](#); [Shintani et al., 2022](#)).

2.4 Work Motivation as an Intervening Variable

Work motivation refers to the internal drive that influences an individual's effort, persistence, and focus on achieving work-related goals ([Henning et al., 2019](#)). Motivated employees are more likely to dedicate themselves fully to their tasks, take initiative, and demonstrate resilience in overcoming challenges ([Ikhsani et al., 2021](#)). In public sector organizations, work motivation acts as a bridge between leadership, compensation, work environment, and performance, translating organizational policies and management practices into tangible employee outcomes ([Van den Broeck et al., 2021](#)).

Motivation can be both intrinsic, arising from personal satisfaction and achievement, and extrinsic, influenced by rewards and recognition. Effective leadership, fair compensation, and a supportive work environment can enhance both types of motivation, creating a workforce that is committed, proactive, and results-oriented ([Breugh et al., 2018](#)). As an intervening variable, work motivation strengthens the impact of management practices on performance, highlighting the need for organizations to implement strategies that foster and sustain employee motivation over time ([Olafsen et al., 2018](#)).

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

The population in this study was the population in this study were all State Civil Apparatus employees at the Sidoarjo Regency Regional Secretariat, totaling 37 people. The number of samples was determined using saturated samples with a total of 37 respondents who were Employees of the Regional Secretariat of Sidoarjo Regency.

3.2 Analysis Method

The data analysis method used was Partial Least Squares (PLS). PLS is a new analytical technique pioneered by Herman World and is commonly referred to as soft modeling. With PLS, structural equations with relatively small sample sizes can be modeled, and multivariate normal assumptions are not required.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 1. Coefficient of Determination of Model I

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	40.900	4.123		9.920	.000
Leadership Democratic	.394	.064	.161	1.613	.042
Compensation	.398	.068	.168	1.618	.048
Work_Environ	.401	.089	.269	2.692	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Work_Motivation
Source: Processed data

Based on Table 1, the significant value of the two independent variables, namely the Democratic Leadership variable (X1) is obtained sig 0.042, the Compensation variable (X2) is obtained sig 0.048, and the Work Environment variable (X3) is obtained sig of 0.008. From the results of the test, both independent variables get a sig value smaller than α ($5\% = 0.05$), so it can be concluded that the Democratic Leadership variable (X1), Compensation (X2), and the Work Environment variable (X3) have an effect on Work Motivation (Z).

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination of Model II

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.021	1.559		1.937	.056
Democratic Leadership	.060	.017	.080	3.513	.001
Compensation	.070	.018	.084	3.713	.003
Work environment	1.022	.024	.687	41.852	.000
Work environment	.080	.027	.069	2.921	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Employee_Performamce
Source: Processed data

Based on Table 2, the results of the regression analysis of model one in the coefficient section in table 4.13 above, it can be seen that the significant value of the two independent variables, namely the Democratic Leadership variable (X1) is obtained sig 0.001, Compensation (X2) is obtained sig 0.003, the Work Environment variable (X3) is obtained sig of 0.000, and the Work Motivation variable (Z) obtained a significance of 0.004. The results of the test show that the two independent variables and one intervening variable have a significance value smaller than α ($5\% = 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Democratic Leadership variable (X1), compensation variable (X2), Work Environment variable (X3), and Work Motivation variable (Z) have an effect on Employee Performance (Y).

4.2 Discussion

Analysis of the influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable, from the results of the analysis obtained a significance value of 0.001, this result is smaller than α (0.05), so it can be concluded that there is a direct significant influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable. Analysis of the influence of the Compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable, from the results of the analysis obtained a significance value of 0.003, this result is smaller than α (0.05), so it can be concluded that there is a direct significant influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable. Analysis of the influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable, from the results of the analysis obtained a significance value of 0.000, this result is smaller than α (0.05), so it can be concluded that there is a direct significant influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable.

Analysis of the influence of the Democratic Leadership variable through the Work Motivation variable: The direct influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.080, while the indirect influence of the Democratic Leadership variable through the Work Motivation variable on the Employee Performance variable is the multiplication of the beta value of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Work Motivation variable with the beta value of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable, that is, $0.161 \times 0.069 = 0.011$. The total influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable is the direct influence plus the indirect influence, namely $0.080 + 0.011 = 0.091$. Based on the calculations above, the direct influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.080, and the indirect influence of the Democratic Leadership variable on the Employee Performance variable through the Work Motivation variable is 0.091, which indicates that the indirect influence value is greater than the direct influence. These results indicate that indirectly, the Democratic Leadership variable through the Work Motivation variable has a significant influence on the Employee Performance variable.

Analysis of the influence of the Compensation variable through the Work Motivation variable: The direct influence of the Compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.687, while the indirect influence of the Compensation variable through the Work Motivation variable on the Employee Performance variable is the multiplication of the beta value of the Compensation variable on the Work Motivation variable with the beta value of the Compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable, that is, $0.687 \times 0.269 = 0.184$. Then, the total influence of the compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable is the direct influence plus the indirect influence, namely $0.687 + 0.184 = 0.871$. Based on the calculations above, the direct influence of the Compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.687, and the indirect influence of the Compensation variable on the Employee Performance variable through the Work Motivation variable is 0.871, which means that the value of the indirect influence is greater than that of the direct influence. These results indicate that the compensation variable significantly influences the Employee Performance variable indirectly through the Work Motivation variable.

Analysis of the influence of the Work Environment variable through the Work Motivation variable: it is known that the direct influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.687, while the indirect influence of the Work Environment variable through the Work Motivation variable on the Employee Performance variable is the multiplication of the beta value of the Work Environment variable on the Work Motivation variable with the beta value of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable, which is $0.687 \times 0.269 = 0.184$, then the total influence given by the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable is the direct influence plus the indirect influence, which is $0.687 + 0.184 = 0.871$. Based on the calculations above, the direct influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable is 0.687, and the indirect influence of the Work Environment variable on the Employee Performance variable through the Work Motivation variable is 0.871, which means that the indirect influence value is greater than the direct influence. These results indicate that indirectly, the Work Environment variable through the Work Motivation variable has a significant influence on the Employee Performance variable.

5. Conclusions

After conducting research based on the collection and analysis of data obtained from respondents using PLS analysis, the conclusions of this study are as follows: Democratic leadership positively affects employee performance, compensation positively affects employee performance, and the work environment positively influences employee performance. In addition, democratic leadership positively affects employee performance through work motivation, compensation positively affects employee performance through work motivation, and the work environment positively influences employee performance through work motivation.

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Author Contributions

EA conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, and supervised data collection. BRP performed the statistical analysis, interpreted results, and drafted the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. This research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the results or interpretation of the findings.

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