

THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP, WORK MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT THE REGIONAL
INSPECTORATE OF SOUTHEAST SULAWESI PROVINCE

**PENGARUH KEPEMIMPINAN, MOTIVASI KERJA DAN KETERLIBATAN KARYAWAN
TERHADAP KINERJA KARYAWAN DI KANTOR INSPEKTORAT DAERAH PROVINSI
SULAWESI TENGGARA**

Nita Wahyuni, Abdul Azis Muthalib, Nofal Supriadin

Magister Management, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Enam Enam Kendari

*nitakendarii@gmail.com, abdulazismuthalib@gmail.com, nofalsupriaddin42@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement are key factors influencing organizational productivity and effectiveness, including in the public sector. However, in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, structural challenges and resource limitations often hinder the optimal performance of employees, highlighting the importance of analyzing these three variables. This study identifies a knowledge gap concerning the relationship between leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement and their impact on employee performance in a complex public sector environment. The research methodology employed a quantitative approach through questionnaire surveys administered to 48 employees in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province to examine the significant effects of these variables on employee performance. The study's findings reveal that leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement significantly influence performance, with work motivation emerging as the dominant variable, thus providing a basis for more effective human resource development strategies in the public sector.

Keywords: employee engagement; leadership; employee performance; work motivation

ABSTRAK

Kepemimpinan, motivasi kerja, dan employee engagement adalah faktor-faktor kunci yang mempengaruhi produktivitas dan efektivitas organisasi, termasuk dalam sektor publik. Namun, di Inspektorat Daerah Provinsi Sulawesi Tenggara, tantangan struktural dan keterbatasan sumber daya seringkali menghambat optimalisasi kinerja pegawai, menjadikan pentingnya analisis terhadap ketiga variabel tersebut. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi gap pengetahuan tentang keterkaitan antara kepemimpinan, motivasi kerja, dan employee engagement serta pengaruhnya terhadap kinerja pegawai dalam lingkungan sektor publik yang kompleks. Metodologi penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif melalui survei kuesioner kepada 48 pegawai di Inspektorat Daerah Provinsi Sulawesi Tenggara untuk menguji pengaruh signifikan dari variabel-variabel tersebut terhadap kinerja pegawai. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan, motivasi kerja, dan employee engagement secara signifikan mempengaruhi kinerja, dengan motivasi kerja sebagai variabel dominan, sehingga memberikan dasar bagi strategi pengembangan sumber daya manusia yang lebih efektif di sektor publik.

Kata kunci: employee engagement; kepemimpinan; kinerja pegawai; motivasi kerja

1. INTRODUCTION

In the world of work, leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement are the three main factors that interact with each other in affecting organizational productivity and effectiveness. Effective leadership provides clear direction and goals, and creates a positive work climate to encourage optimal performance from employees. According to (M. Abbas, 2023; Achen et al., 2019) Leadership includes the ability of a leader to influence his subordinates to be able to achieve common goals efficiently. In addition, good leadership plays a role in motivating employees to be more committed to their work, which ultimately has an

impact on improving the overall performance of the organization (Affandi et al., 2023; Aisyah et al., 2023). Therefore, leadership is an essential element in creating a productive work environment. Work motivation is also an important component that cannot be ignored in the context of human resource management. Motivation encourages individuals to work hard, dedicated, and responsible for their tasks. (Aldalur & Perez, 2023; Ariana & Sugiyarto, 2023) states that work motivation is an internal and external factor that affects the intensity, direction, and perseverance of an individual in work. High motivation increases work morale, so that individuals are able to achieve the targets that have been set by the organization with satisfactory results. In this context, leaders who are able to provide the right motivation will be able to steer employees towards better performance and higher organizational goals.

Employee engagement, or employee engagement, is a factor that plays an important role in improving employee performance and the organization as a whole. Employee engagement includes a high sense of belonging, commitment, and responsibility for the work done. According to (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023), employee engagement is a psychological state in which employees are completely physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their work. Employees who have a high level of engagement tend to work with dedication and focus to achieve organizational goals (Acharya & Anand, 2020). This involvement helps organizations in building a productive and innovative work culture, which is indispensable in a competitive work environment. Effective leadership is an important foundation for organizational success, because leaders play the role of the main director and decision-maker in moving the organization towards goals. (Asraf & Supriaddin, 2024) stated that effective leaders are able to adapt leadership styles to individual situations and needs, so as to be able to create a productive work environment. With good leadership, communication between leaders and subordinates becomes more open, which in turn increases trust and collaboration within the work team. (Affandi et al., 2023) stated that leaders who have good communication skills tend to be more successful in encouraging employee engagement and motivation. Therefore, effective leadership does not only focus on direction, but also on employee support and development.

Leadership effectiveness can also be seen from a leader's ability to provide clear direction and concrete goals to employees. When organizational goals are clearly communicated, employees tend to be more motivated to work hard and focus on the desired results (Acharya & Anand, 2020; Adha et al., 2019). In addition, a leadership style that supports creativity and innovation provides space for employees to contribute more optimally in achieving the organization's vision. Previous researchers have also found that participatory leaders can increase employee morale and commitment, especially when employees feel recognized and valued (Aisyi et al., 2024). Effective leaders are able to integrate employees' personal aspirations with organizational goals, resulting in strong synergy within the team. Work motivation is an important element that affects the level of productivity and dedication of employees in achieving organizational targets. According to (Filbeck et al., 2022), work motivation is a combination of internal and external factors that encourage employees to work hard and achieve desired results. Factors such as awards, recognition, and career development opportunities are proven to increase employee motivation to perform better (Achen et al., 2019; Affandi et al., 2023). High motivation will create employees who are more motivated and enthusiastic in facing job challenges, which in turn contributes to individual and organizational performance. Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand the factors that affect employee motivation in order to manage human resources effectively.

In addition, work motivation has been shown to have a significant influence on improving employee performance, especially when employees feel their work is meaningful and valuable. (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Asraf & Supriaddin, 2024) found that motivated employees show high commitment and loyalty, which is important for organizational stability and growth. In this case, the right motivation can be likened to the energy that moves

employees to achieve organizational goals. Organizations that are able to provide the right motivational encouragement can make the most of their employees' potential. This motivation ultimately builds a competitive and productive work environment, which is important in an ever-evolving world of work. In addition, effective motivation can increase innovation and creativity in daily work. According to (Acharya & Anand, 2020), motivation that comes from supportive leadership will encourage employees to think creatively and find new solutions to the challenges they face. Therefore, leaders who are able to provide strong motivation not only create productive but also innovative employees. This is especially relevant in the context of organizations that are constantly adapting to changes in the external environment. Thus, work motivation is a key factor that drives the success and sustainability of the organization in the long term.

Employee engagement is a crucial aspect in determining organizational performance, especially in terms of employee loyalty and responsibility for their duties. (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; UK, 2024) Defines employee engagement as the physical, emotional, and cognitive involvement of an employee in his or her work. With high engagement, employees tend to show strong commitment and dedication to the organization, which ultimately has an impact on increased productivity (B. Abbas & Nur, 2023; Arief et al., 2021)). (Basalamah et al., 2019; Gašić & Berber, 2023) stated that employee engagement creates a sense of belonging that encourages employees to make maximum contributions. Therefore, high employee engagement is an important factor in achieving optimal organizational performance. Further, employee engagement has a positive influence on innovation and organizational effectiveness. (Power & Surroundings, n.d.) states that employees who are actively involved in their work tend to have creative ideas and are more proactive in solving problems. When employees feel valued and have an important role in the company, they will be encouraged to work more diligently and efficiently. Research shows that companies with high levels of employee engagement typically have lower turnover rates, indicating that employee engagement also affects organizational stability (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Arief et al., 2021). Thus, employee engagement plays an important role in retaining quality employees and encouraging them to continue to contribute.

Employee engagement also helps create a healthier work environment and supports the psychological well-being of employees. (Rizky et al., 2023; Saks, 2022) stated that high engagement creates a positive and collaborative work atmosphere, which is important for the mental well-being of employees. When employees feel connected to their work, stress levels decrease, and job satisfaction increases. A work environment that supports employee welfare will ultimately increase productivity and work quality. Therefore, employee engagement is not only beneficial for individual employees, but also supports the success of the organization as a whole.

Based on the exposure of theory and previous research, the relationship between leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement with employee performance has been recognized in various organizational contexts. This research is motivated by the need for a deep understanding of how these three factors interact in influencing employee performance in the public sector. (Agustina, 2019) stated that public sector organizations often face specific challenges, including in terms of motivating employees and ensuring their involvement in carrying out their duties. In the context of the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, these three factors are very relevant to be researched. Therefore, this research is focused on an in-depth analysis of how leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement impact employee performance in this institution. This research is also based on the understanding that every organization needs an effective strategy to optimize human resource performance. (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu, 2020; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023) stated that an in-depth understanding of the factors that affect employee performance is an important step in developing the right human resources policy. By analyzing the influence of leadership,

work motivation, and employee engagement, it is hoped that public organizations can identify effective measures to improve the performance of their employees. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of performance management strategies within the Regional Inspectorate. Thus, this research becomes relevant in providing applicable recommendations for public sector organizations.

In addition, this research is expected to contribute to the literature that discusses the relationship between the three variables in the context of public sector work. (Aini, 2019) stated that research on leadership, motivation, and employee engagement in the public sector still needs to be strengthened in order to provide appropriate practical guidance. The researcher hopes that the results of this study will not only be beneficial for the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, but also for other organizations operating in the public sector. The findings from this study can be used as a foundation to develop new approaches to improving employee performance through adaptive leadership strategies, innovative work motivation programs, and increased employee engagement. Effective leadership is often considered an important foundation for achieving organizational success, but in reality, many organizations still fail to implement optimal leadership principles at all levels of management. According to (Aini, 2019), ineffective leaders tend to fail to inspire and direct their subordinates to achieve organizational goals in an efficient way. (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu, 2020; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023) It also notes that failure in leadership can result in decreased motivation, reduced employee engagement, and even hinder team productivity. Moreover (Agustina, 2019) highlights that when leaders are unable to adapt their leadership style to individual needs and situations, the relationship between leaders and employees becomes less harmonious and collaborative. This indicates a clear gap between the importance of effective leadership in theory and its implementation in work practice, especially in public sector organizations that often face complex managerial and bureaucratic challenges.

Work motivation is an important factor that supports employee productivity, but in many cases, organizations still struggle to create an environment that is able to motivate employees consistently. (Rizky et al., 2023; Saks, 2022) emphasizing that low motivation can result in a decrease in employee morale and dedication, which has a direct impact on the achievement of organizational targets. The failure of organizations to meet these motivational needs is often caused by a lack of understanding of the internal and external factors that drive motivation (Aini, 2019). Research (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu, 2020; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023) found that when employees' motivational needs are not met, employees tend to feel dissatisfied, which ultimately increases the risk of turnover. This shows that the gap between the importance of work motivation and its implementation in the world of work is still the main challenge for human resource management in various sectors.

Employee engagement has been recognized as an important factor that can increase employee productivity and commitment, but unfortunately, engagement rates in many organizations are still relatively low. (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu, 2020; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023) explained that lack of engagement can lead to low loyalty and increased absenteeism, which has an impact on organizational stability. This low level of engagement shows that many organizations have not been able to create a strong sense of ownership and responsibility in their employees. According to (Power & Surroundings, n.d.) Employee engagement requires physical, emotional, and cognitive involvement, but when these conditions are not met, employees tend to feel alienated from their jobs. As such, the lack of attention to increasing employee engagement creates gaps that need to be addressed, particularly in organizations that want to achieve optimal performance and retain quality employees. While various studies state that the synergy between good leadership, strong work motivation, and high engagement levels can drive improved employee performance, in reality, the integration of these three factors is still rarely applied effectively in many organizations. (Power & Surroundings, n.d.) mentioned that these three factors should complement each other to create an optimal work

environment, but most organizations only focus on one aspect, such as leadership or work motivation. (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu, 2020; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023) adding that in the absence of a holistic approach, organizations risk facing unmotivated and under engaged employees in their work. Northouse (2018) also highlights that this lack of synergy causes the potential of employee performance to not be fully maximized. Therefore, it is important for organizations to align these three factors in their human resource management strategies to achieve more effective results.

In the public sector, especially in institutions such as the Regional Inspectorate, research that explores the influence of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement on employee performance is still relatively minimal. (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Arief et al., 2021). noting that the public sector often faces unique challenges such as complex bureaucracy and limited budgets, which makes managing employees more difficult. Other researchers, such as (Agustina, 2019) shows that the public sector requires a different approach to employee management than the private sector, due to the structural and administrative challenges it faces. (Achen et al., 2019; Affandi et al., 2023) highlighting that further research is needed to identify management factors that are appropriate to the characteristics of the public sector. Thus, the existence of this research gap is the main motivation to understand and improve the performance of employees within the Regional Inspectorate through a more in-depth analysis of these factors.

This research is important and urgent to be carried out considering the low performance of employees in various public sector organizations, which is influenced by the less optimal implementation of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement. In the context of the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, this problem can hinder the effectiveness of the supervision and service function to the community. Additionally, the public sector often faces structural challenges, such as complex bureaucracy and limited resources, which hinder the effective management of employees. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive solution by identifying and analyzing the relationship between these three factors in an effort to improve employee performance. The findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of more effective and sustainable human resource management strategies in the public sector.

Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze the influence of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement on employee performance in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. Through this approach, this study is expected to be able to identify how each of these variables affects performance separately and synergistically. Thus, this study not only measures the level of influence of each factor, but also provides a more holistic picture of the dynamics of the three in the context of the public sector. The results of this study will be the basis for practical recommendations in the development of policies and programs that are able to increase productivity and service quality in the Regional Inspectorate.

Based on the problems that have been identified, this study proposes several hypotheses to test the influence of the main variables on employee performance in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. The first hypothesis is whether leadership has an effect on employee performance in the environment. This hypothesis is important to understand the extent of leadership's role in improving employee work effectiveness and commitment. Furthermore, this study also explores whether work motivation has a significant influence on employee performance, considering that motivation is a key driving factor that can increase productivity and dedication in carrying out tasks. The last hypothesis tested is whether employee engagement, or employee engagement, affects employee performance, where high engagement is expected to create a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the organization's tasks and goals. Through testing this

hypothesis, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that affect employee performance in the public sector.

2. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative research design with a survey approach to test the influence of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement on employee performance in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. This design was chosen to obtain numerical data that can be analyzed statistically, thus allowing the researcher to identify the relationship between the variables studied. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to selected respondents. Each question in the questionnaire is structured based on the main variables that are in accordance with the research objectives. This design is considered suitable because it provides results that can be quantitatively measured(Ansori, 2020; Azhari et al., 2023). The population in this study is employees at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, with a total sample of 48 respondents selected based on certain characteristics. The selection of the sample was carried out by considering demographic aspects such as gender, age, and education level to reflect the diversity of respondent characteristics. This method of data collection allows researchers to understand the variation in perception among respondents. With a sufficient number of respondents, the results of this study are expected to have high validity. The data obtained from the sample was analyzed to measure the level of leadership influence, work motivation, and employee engagement.

The main instrument used in this study is a questionnaire consisting of items related to leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement. Each instrument has been tested for validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. The data collection procedure is carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents in their work environment to minimize bias. The collected data is then analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to identify correlations and influences between the variables studied. This process is carried out systematically to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the research results.

3. RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Man	23	48%
Woman	25	52%
TOTAL	48	100
Age		
24-30	7	15%
24-30	8	17%
31-37	7	15%
38-44	17	35%
45-51	9	19%
TOTAL	48	100%
Education		
SMA	13	27%
Strata 1	25	52%

Strata 2	10	21%
TOTAL	48	100%

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Based on the data on the characteristics of respondents in the study entitled "The Influence of Leadership, Work Motivation, and Employee Engagement on Employee Performance at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province," it can be seen that out of a total of 48 respondents, as many as 23 people (48%) are male, while 25 people (52%) are female. This proportion shows a balance in gender representation, with slightly more female respondents than men. In terms of age, the respondents to this study varied with an age range that reflected the diversity of ages of employees in the Regional Inspectorate. The most respondents were in the age range of 38-44 years, namely 17 people (35%). Followed by respondents in the age group of 45-51 years which amounted to 9 people (19%). The age groups of 24-30 years and 31-37 years each have the same number, namely 7 people (15%) for the age of 24-30 years and 8 people (17%) for the age of 31-37 years. This shows that most of the respondents are at a relatively mature age, which is expected to have adequate work experience in the context of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement.

In terms of education level, the majority of respondents have Strata 1 (S1) education as many as 25 people (52%), which shows a fairly high level of education in the work environment of the Regional Inspectorate. Furthermore, there were 13 (27%) respondents with high school education and 10 people (21%) with Strata 2 (S2) education. This variation in education level provides a comprehensive picture of the academic background of the employees involved in the study, where higher education can be one of the factors that contribute to the quality of employee performance as well as how they respond to leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement in the organization.

Mean, STDEV, T-Values,
P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Employeeed Engagement -> employee performance	0.345	0.354	0.097	3.554	0.000
Leadership - > employee performance	0.374	0.377	0.118	3.178	0.002
Work motivation -> employee performance	0.390	0.385	0.069	5.654	0.000

»

Confidence Intervals

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
Employeed Engagement -> employee performance	0.345	0.354	0.175	0.536
Leadership - > employee performance	0.374	0.377	0.127	0.592
Work motivation -> employee performance	0.390	0.385	0.259	0.510

Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
Employeed Engagement -> employee performance	0.345	0.354	0.010	0.155	0.520
Leadership - > employee performance	0.374	0.377	0.003	0.100	0.590
Work motivation -> employee performance	0.390	0.385	-0.005	0.261	0.514

Source: SEM PLS 2024 Data Processing Results

Based on the results of the study which aims to analyze the influence of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement on employee performance at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province, it was found that the three independent variables had a significant influence on employee performance. The results of the Path Coefficients analysis showed that the coefficient of influence of employee engagement on employee performance was 0.345 with a T-statistic value of 3.554 and a P-value of 0.000, indicating a significant influence. The leadership variable also showed a significant influence with a coefficient of 0.374, a T-statistic of 3.178, and a P-value of 0.002. Meanwhile, work motivation has the strongest influence on employee performance with a coefficient of 0.390, T-statistic 5.654, and P-value 0.000. These values show that all three variables have a significant contribution to improving employee performance. In addition, the results of the Confidence Intervals and Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected analyses reinforce these findings with relatively stable confidence intervals. At the 95% confidence interval, the influence of employee engagement on employee performance ranged from 0.175 to 0.536, while leadership ranged from 0.127 to 0.592. Work motivation, which has the greatest influence, is in the confidence interval of 0.259 to 0.510. In the Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected, no significant bias was found in the results of this study, where the bias values for all variables

were low, indicating data consistency. Overall, the results of this study indicate that employee engagement, leadership, and work motivation have an important role in improving employee performance, which can be used as a basis for human resource development policies within the Regional Inspectorate.

This study shows that the variables of employee engagement, leadership, and work motivation significantly affect employee performance at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. Based on the Path Coefficients analysis, employee engagement has a coefficient of 0.345 with a T-statistic value of 3.554 and a P-value of 0.000, which indicates that employee engagement plays a significant role in influencing employee performance. This shows that the level of employee engagement in their work has a direct impact on their performance. Leadership also has a significant influence on employee performance with a coefficient of 0.374, a T-statistic value of 3.178, and a P-value of 0.002. This indicates that leadership qualities in the organization play an important role in driving better employee performance. The results of further analysis also show that work motivation has the greatest influence on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.390, T-statistic 5.654, and P-value 0.000. With these values, it can be concluded that work motivation is the most dominant factor compared to employee engagement and leadership. This figure or graph of the distribution of T-statistics and coefficients can be used to show a comparison of the influence of the three variables on employee performance. From the graph, it can be seen that work motivation has a higher coefficient and T-statistical value compared to the other two variables, which shows the importance of maintaining and improving employee work motivation as a priority in the human resource development strategy in the Regional Inspectorate.

In the analysis of Confidence Intervals and Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected, it was found that all three variables had consistent confidence intervals and did not show significant bias. For example, employee engagement has a confidence interval in the range of 0.175 to 0.536, while leadership has a range of 0.127 to 0.592. Work motivation, which is the variable with the greatest influence, has a confidence interval from 0.259 to 0.510. These findings show the consistency of the data and reinforce the conclusion that these three variables significantly affect employee performance. The absence of significant bias shows that the data produced is accurate and reliable to provide an overview of the influence of the three variables on employee performance within the Regional Inspectorate.

The figure below presents a structural model that illustrates the influence of the three independent variables on employee performance variables in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province.

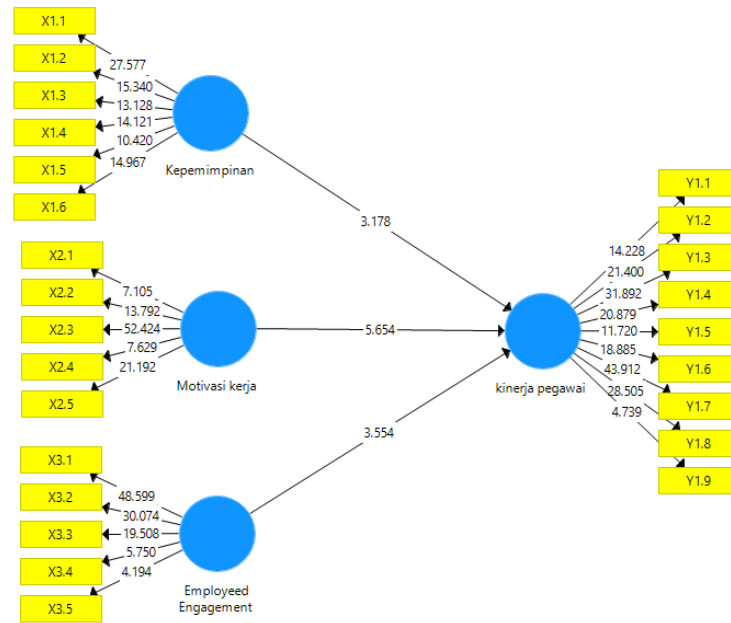


Figure 1: SmartPLS, 2024

The figure above shows the results of structural model analysis that describes the influence of leadership variables, work motivation, and employee engagement on employee performance at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. Each variable has its own indicator which is measured through the value of the loading factor. The Leadership variable (with indicators X1.1 to X1.6) has a loading factor ranging from 10,420 to 27,577, with an influence coefficient on employee performance of 3,178, indicating that leadership has a significant influence on employee performance. Furthermore, the Work Motivation variable (with indicators X2.1 to X2.5) showed a loading factor value between 7,105 and 52,424, and had an influence coefficient of 5,654 on employee performance. This confirms that work motivation has the greatest influence compared to the other two variables, which is in line with the finding that work motivation is the most dominant variable in influencing employee performance. The Employee Engagement variable (with indicators X3.1 to X3.5) has a loading factor value ranging from 4,194 to 48,599 and provides an influence coefficient of 3,554 on employee performance. Although the contribution of employee engagement is lower than work motivation, the influence is still significant on employee performance. In addition, the Employee Performance variable (Y1.1 to Y1.9) was measured by indicators that had a loading factor between 4,739 to 43,912, indicating that this model overall has good reliability in measuring employee performance variables in the public sector organizational environment. This result emphasizes the importance of these three variables in creating an improvement in employee performance in the Regional Inspectorate.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The discussion of the results of this study shows that leadership variables, work motivation, and employee engagement have a significant influence on employee performance at the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. These findings provide an answer to the first gap, which is the failure to implement effective leadership in many organizations. The results of the analysis show that leadership has an influence coefficient of 0.374 with a T-statistic of 3.178, which indicates a positive and significant influence. This result is in line with

the opinion of Yukl (2019) who stated that effective leadership is very decisive in inspiring and directing subordinates to achieve organizational goals efficiently. Thus, effective leadership can be used as a basis in the development of organizational policies, especially in the public sector environment, to increase employee productivity and work quality.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also highlight the importance of work motivation in improving employee performance, which answers the second gap related to the lack of organizational ability to create an environment that motivates employees consistently. Work motivation had the highest coefficient of 0.390 with a T-statistic of 5.654, indicating that work motivation was the most dominant factor among the three variables studied. Robbins and Judge (2021) emphasized that high motivation is able to increase individual dedication and productivity in organizations. With these findings, the researcher recommends that public sector organizations, such as Regional Inspectorates, pay more attention to factors that affect employee motivation, such as awards, recognition, and career development opportunities, in order to create a supportive and challenging work environment.

Third, findings related to employee engagement show that employee engagement also plays a significant role in improving performance, with an influence coefficient of 0.345 and a T-statistic of 3.554. This answers the third gap regarding low engagement rates in many organizations. Employee engagement, according to (Achen et al., 2019; Affandi et al., 2023), encompassing employees' emotional, physical, and cognitive commitment to their work, which drives loyalty and better performance. The results of this study show that the Regional Inspectorate needs to develop programs to increase engagement, such as the provision of training and self-development opportunities, so that employees feel more connected and accountable for their work. By increasing engagement, organizations can achieve greater stability and commitment from employees.

Fourth, this study shows that all three variables — leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement — have a significant contribution to employee performance, which responds to the fourth gap about the importance of the synergy of the three factors. In practice, these results show that the integration of good leadership, high work motivation, and strong employee engagement contributes to more optimal performance improvements. (Adha et al., 2019) suggest that the synergy between these three factors is necessary to create a harmonious and productive work environment. Therefore, the researcher recommends that public sector organizations need to adopt a holistic approach in human resource management to maximize employee performance potential.

The results of this study make a significant contribution to literature related to the public sector, especially in the Regional Inspectorate, which answers the fifth gap regarding the lack of research in the public sector that discusses the influence of these three variables. In the context of complex bureaucracy and budget constraints, these findings show that effective leadership, high work motivation, and employee engagement can be a solution to improve employee performance despite structural challenges. (Achen et al., 2019; Affandi et al., 2023) emphasizing the importance of an adaptive and innovative approach in facing public sector challenges. With the results of this study, it is hoped that the Regional Inspectorate and other public sector organizations can develop a more effective and sustainable human resource policy strategy, which ultimately supports the improvement of services to the community.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement significantly affect employee performance in the Regional Inspectorate of Southeast Sulawesi Province. These three variables play an important role in creating a productive work environment, where work motivation is proven to have the strongest influence compared to the other two variables. These findings underscore that to improve employee performance, organizations need to adopt a holistic approach that involves effective

leadership, consistent work motivation, and efforts to increase employee engagement. By integrating these three aspects, public sector organizations can improve efficiency and productivity performance, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of services to the community. The results of this study provide a solid basis for the development of more effective human resource policies in the public sector environment.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to enriching the literature on the influence of leadership, work motivation, and employee engagement on performance in the public sector, which has been minimally explored so far. From a practical perspective, the results of this study can be a reference for policymakers in designing human resource management strategies, especially in the Regional Inspectorate, to optimize employee performance. These findings also provide concrete solutions to the challenges of employee management in the public sector which are often hampered by bureaucracy and budget constraints. However, this study has limitations, especially in the scope of the sample limited to one local government agency, so the results may not be fully representative of the public sector in general. For future research, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted with a wider scope and consider additional variables that may affect employee performance, in order to enrich the understanding and effectiveness of human resource management in the public sector.

6. REFERENCES

- Ab Wahab, M., & Tatoglu, E. (2020). Chasing productivity demands, worker well-being, and firm performance: The moderating effects of HR support and flexible work arrangements. *Personnel Review*, 49(9), 1823–1843. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-01-2019-0026>
- Abbas, B., & Nur, M. (2023). ANALYSIS OF INCREASING EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AT THE SECRETARIAT OF THE REGIONAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SOUTHEAST SULAWESI PROVINCE. *POMA JOURNAL: PUBLISH OF MANAGEMENT*, 1(1), 208–220.
- Abbas, M. (2023). Impact of Organizational Culture and Leadership Behaviors on Organizational Employees' Socialization. *Kurdish Studies*, 11(2), 3930–3937. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v11i2.284>
- Abdelwahed, N. A. A., & Doghan, M. A. A. (2023). Developing Employee Productivity and Performance through Work Engagement and Organizational Factors in an Educational Society. *Societies*, 13(3). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13030065>
- Acharya, S., & Anand, G. (2020). A study on quality of work life, motivation and employee engagement among nurses in private hospitals of Indore. *International Journal of Public Sector ...*, Query date: 2024-02-08 10:53:48. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSPSPM.2020.110138>
- Achen, R. M., Dodd, R., Lumpkin, A., & Plunkett, K. (2019). Servant as leader: The effects of servant-leaders on trust, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions in intercollegiate athletics. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 6(1), 2.
- Adha, R., Qomariah, N., & ... (2019). The Influence of Work Motivation, Work Environment, and Work Culture on the Performance of Employees of Jember Regency Social Service. *Research Journal ...*, Query date: 2024-05-07 14:17:57. http://jurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/PENELITIAN_IPTEKS/article/view/2109
- Affandi, N., Hidayat, S., Eryanto, H., & Hidayat, D. R. (2023). Higher Education Governance and Lecturer Performance: The Role of Leadership, Commitment, and Culture. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 23(6), 185–195. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v23i6.5966>
- Agustina, E. (2019). Implementation of quality public services for the community. *Journal of Legal Literacy*, Query date: 2024-10-14 08:57:43. <http://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=1256492&val=14336&titl>

- e=PELAKSANAAN%20PELAYANAN%20PUBLIK%20BERKUALITAS%20BAGI%20MASYARAKAT
- Aini, N. (2019). Evaluation of employee performance to realize public services in the perspective of good governance. *Journal of Social and Political Science Innovation, Query date: 2024-05-07 06:18:38*. <http://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=971917&val=14959&title=Evaluasi%20Kinerja%20Pegawai%20Untuk%20Mewujudkan%20Pelayanan%20Publik%20Dalam%20Perspektif%20Good%20Governance>
- Aisyah, N., Setyaningrum, R., Budiarti, E., & ... (2023). Meta-analytic review of servant leadership and team member exchange (TMX) theory. *JPPI (Journal of Research ..., Query date: 2024-09-24 00:56:47*. <https://jurnal.iicet.org/index.php/jppi/article/view/1690>
- Aisyi, R., Syafitri, D., Ekasani, D., Rizqi, M., & ... (2024). Building Effective Communication on Employee Job Satisfaction: The Role of Leader Member Exchange (LMX) in Organizations. *Journal of Management ..., Query date: 2024-09-24 00:56:47*. <https://ejournal.arimbi.or.id/index.php/JUMABEDI/article/view/69>
- Aldalur, I., & Perez, A. (2023). Gamification and discovery learning: Motivating and involving students in the learning process. *Heliyon, 9*(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13135>
- Anh, D. B. H. (2024). Examining Factors Influencing Employee Engagement: A Study of Universities in Ho Chi Minh City. *Journal of Logistics, Informatics and Service Science, 11*(1), 392–404. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.33168/JLISS.2024.0125>
- Ansori, M. (2020). *Quantitative research methods Edition 2*. books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rKbJDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=metode+kualitatif&ots=jMSWtS-IZC&sig=1sBMxzv4uCC6mfngUln4VoCiGpY>
- Ariana, P. E. P., & Sugiyarto, K. H. (2023). *The level of high school students' motivation to learn chemistry in the Covid-19 pandemic situation*. 2013. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0110720>
- Arief, N., Purwana, D., & Saptono, A. (2021). Effect of quality work of life (QWL) and work-life balance on job satisfaction through employee engagement as intervening variables. *The International Journal of ..., Query date: 2024-02-08 10:53:48*. <http://www.growingscholar.org/journal/index.php/TIJOSW/article/view/120>
- Asraf, A., & Supriaddin, N. (2024). Triple Bottom Line on Business Performance: Examining the Moderating Role of Managerial Competencies. *Indo-Fintech Intellectuals: Journal of Economics and Business, 4*(5), 1767–1777.
- Azhari, M., Bahri, M. A. F., Asrul, M., & Rafida, T. (2023). *Quantitative research methods*. books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=P7OpEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=metode+kualitatif&ots=efC0HUwbU7&sig=F39y3VK93P1DCKDuzQTaXe5xIHU>
- Basalamah, I., Ramli, H., & ... (2019). Effect of commitment, compensation, and leadership on employee performance and sharia engagement as variable Intervening. ... of *Accounting & ..., Query date: 2024-01-19 01:52:51*. <https://ejournal.aibpmjournals.com/index.php/IJAFAP/article/view/360>
- Power, I., & Around, P. in. (n.d.). Operational Area of PT. Pertamina Asset 3 Subang Field (Innovation on Community Empowerment Based on Food Resources Around the Operation Area of PT *Scientific Journal of Community Service ..., Query date: 2024-08-24 03:43:23*. <https://www.academia.edu/download/105812118/7909.pdf>
- Filbeck, G., Robbins, E., & Zhao, X. (2022). Social capital during the coronavirus pandemic: The value of corporate benevolence. *Applied Economics, 54*(13), 1460–1472. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2021.1977773>

- Gašić, D., & Berber, N. (2023). The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements and Turnover Intentions among Highly Educated Employees in the Republic of Serbia. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(2). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13020131>
- Rizky, A., Ramli, A., & Mariam, S. (2023). Leader-member exchange, communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, employee engagement and employee performance. *Journal of Business Lanterns*, Query date: 2024-09-24 02:33:14. <https://www.academia.edu/download/107840995/585.pdf>
- Saks, A. M. (2022). Caring human resources management and employee engagement. *Human Resource Management Review*, 32(3). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100835>