

Research Article

Analysis of the effect of Leadership and Motivation on the Performance of Village Officials Mediated by Quality of Work Life

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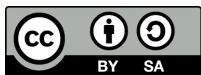
Abstract: This study aims to determine the effect of Leadership and Motivation Analysis on the Performance of Village Officials Mediated by Quality of Work Life. The population in this study were village officials in Lawang Subdistrict, Malang Regency. The sampling technique used in this study was total sampling with a total of 105 respondents. The data was processed using Smart Partial Least Square 4 (PLS) software. Based on the results of the data analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: Low leadership and motivation have not been able to contribute to improving the performance of village officials. Likewise, better leadership and motivation can contribute to the quality of work life. This study also found that a better quality of work life will contribute to the performance of village officials. Furthermore, high or improved leadership and motivation, accompanied by a good quality of work life, will improve the performance of village officials.

Keywords: Employee Performance; Leadership; Motivation; Performance; Quality of Work Life.

1. Introduction

Village governments have a strategic position as the frontline of public services that are in direct contact with grassroots communities, where around 70% of Indonesia's population lives in rural areas (BPS, 2022). Village officials play an important role in administration, implementing development through Village Funds, and empowering communities in a participatory manner. However, the implementation of modern governance principles such as New Public Management (NPM), which emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and results orientation, still faces obstacles in the form of limited human resources and the competence of village officials (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993); (Herdiana et al., 2022). This condition has resulted in the performance of village officials not being fully optimal in meeting the minimum service standards as stipulated in Permendesa Number 21 of 2020.

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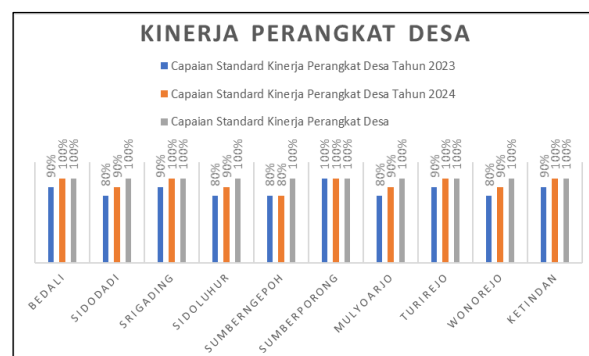


Figure 1. Performance Achievement Chart for Village Officials for the Years 2023-2024
Source: Lawang Subdistrict Village Equipment Chart (Processed, 2025).

This empirical phenomenon is reflected in the performance achievements of village officials in Lawang District, Malang Regency. Based on the 2023–2024 performance assessment data visualized in Figure 1, there is a general upward trend in performance, but there are still several villages that have not reached the optimal target of 100%. The disparity in achievements between villages shows that performance improvements have not been evenly distributed, even though they are within the same administrative area. This condition indicates the existence of internal problems within the village organization, particularly related to leadership effectiveness, work motivation, and the quality of the work environment as perceived by village officials (Hermawati, 2020).

A number of previous studies have confirmed that leadership and motivation have a significant influence on the performance of public officials (Bass & Avolio, 1994); Afrizal et al., (2024); Njunwa, (2024). However, the findings of Hermawati et al. (2019), show that this influence is not always direct but is greatly influenced by the quality of work life (QWL), which includes aspects of compensation, work atmosphere, and participation in decision-making. Nevertheless, empirical studies that comprehensively place QWL as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership, motivation, and the performance of village officials are still very limited, especially in the context of village administration in Indonesia.

Therefore, research on the influence of leadership and motivation on the performance of village officials with Quality of Work Life as a mediating variable is urgently needed. This study is not only important to fill the research gap left by previous studies, but also has practical value for local governments in formulating policies to improve the performance of village officials in a sustainable manner. By understanding the mechanism of the role of QWL, it is hoped that efforts to strengthen leadership and increase motivation can be implemented more effectively to support professional, responsive, and community-oriented village governance.

2. Literature Review

Leadership (X1)

According to Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the main purpose of leadership measurement is to determine leadership effectiveness in motivating and directing teams, which will predict the overall performance of devices and employees. The ultimate goal is to improve the work situation, improve organizational structure, and expand leadership techniques that are more efficient and adaptive to environmental changes.

Motivation (X2)

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943), motivation arises from the fulfillment of basic needs to self-actualization. When physiological and safety needs are met, employees can work with greater focus. Furthermore, social support, recognition, and opportunities for self-development will further increase work enthusiasm.

Employee Performance (Y)

Robbins & Judge (2017), and their derivative theory adapted to the legislation on the performance of Village Apparatus (Peraturan bupati No. 233 Tahun 2019), describe employee performance as the level of task achievement that reflects how effective individuals are in carrying out their work. The focus here is on effectiveness, where performance is assessed not only from the final results, but also from how well the work process is in line with the established standards.

Quality of Work Life (Z)

According to David & Edward (1983), Quality of Work Life (QWL) is the level of satisfaction, motivation, and productivity of employees that is influenced by their work experience in the organizational environment. Quality of Work Life covers various aspects that affect the well-being of employees in their work, whether physically, psychologically, or socially.

3. Research Method

This study uses an explanatory research approach with quantitative methods to explain the relationship and influence between variables tested in the research hypothesis. The explanatory approach was chosen because it aims to systematically identify the position of variables and patterns of interaction between independent, dependent, and intervening variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The quantitative method based on positivism philosophy was used because the research data was obtained through structured questionnaires, allowing for objective and standardized measurements and statistical testing of hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This study specifically analyzed the influence of leadership and motivation on the performance of village officials, with quality of work life (QWL) as a mediating variable. The research object focused on the attitudes, behaviors, and assessments of village officials relevant to these variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research location was in several areas of Lawang Subdistrict, Malang Regency, with data collection using a 1–5 Likert scale questionnaire. The conceptual framework and formulation of research hypotheses are presented as follows:

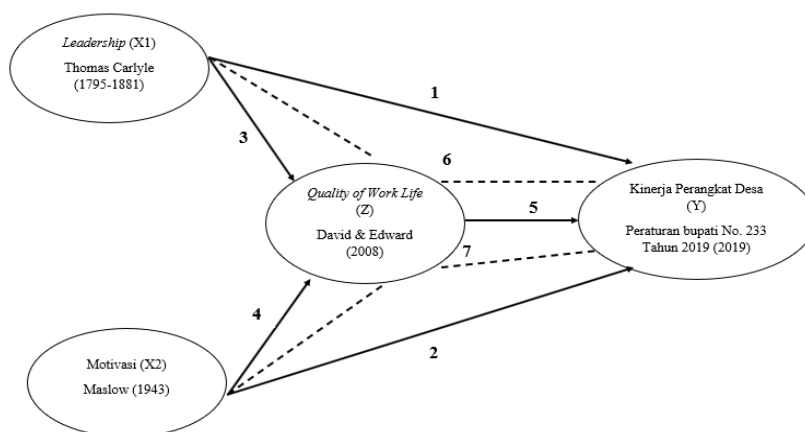


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Source: Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Maslow (1943), David & Edward (1983), Peraturan bupati No. 233 Tahun 2019 (2019)

Hypotheses:

- H1: Leadership is suspected to influence performance among village officials in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H2: Motivation is suspected to influence performance among village officials in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H3: Leadership is suspected to influence quality of work life among village officials in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H4: It is suspected that Motivation can influence the Quality of Work Life in Village Administrations in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H5: It is suspected that Quality of Work Life can influence Performance in Village Administrations in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H6: It is suspected that Leadership can influence Performance mediated by Quality of Work Life in Village Administrations in Lawang Subdistrict.
- H7: It is suspected that Motivation can influence Performance mediated by Quality of Work Life among Village Officials in Lawang Subdistrict

4. Results and Discussion

Result

In this study, we describe the characteristics of respondents by highlighting various demographic aspects relevant to the study objectives. These aspects include gender, age, occupation, and education level. This information provides a clear overview of the profile of the respondents who are the main subjects of the study.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender.

No	Gender	Amount	Percentage
1	Male	81	77,1%
2	Female	24	22,9%
Total		100	100%

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the results of the analysis of respondent characteristics by gender, of the total 105 employees who participated, 81 (77.1%) were male and 24 (22.9%) were female. These findings show that the respondents in this study were predominantly male, who were the majority in the distribution of data based on gender.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics Based on Age.

No	Age	Amount	Persentase
1	20-30 Years Old	11	10,5%
2	31-40 Years Old	33	31,4%
3	41-50 Years Old	37	35,2%
4	> 50 Years Old	24	22,9%
Total		105	100%

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The age distribution of employees shows that the majority are in the 41–50 age range, namely 37 people or 35.2%, reflecting the peak of productivity with mature work experience and optimal strategic contributions to the organization. The 31–40 age group accounts for a significant proportion with 33 employees or 31.4%, reflecting a developing workforce with great potential to take on broader roles and responsibilities in the future. Meanwhile, employees aged 20–30 years old numbered 11 people or 10.5%, who are generally still in the early stages of their careers and adapting to the work environment. As for employees over 50 years old, there were 24 people or 22.9%. Although not dominant, they play an important role through their deep experience and knowledge as a source of learning and support for organizational decision-making.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics Based on highest level of education.

No	Highest Level of Education	Amount	Percentage
1	Junior high school (SMP)	7	6,7%
2	High School/Vocational School (SMA/SMK)	72	68,6%
3	Bachelor's Degree (S-1)	26	24,8%
Total		105	100%

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on data collected from 105 employees in Lawang Subdistrict, the majority of employees have a secondary education background (high school/vocational school), namely 72 people or 68.6%, which indicates sufficient qualifications to carry out operational and administrative tasks at the local level. There are 26 employees (24.8%) with a bachelor's degree (S-1) and they generally occupy professional or managerial positions. Meanwhile, there are only 7 employees (6.7%) who are junior high school graduates and they tend to occupy supporting or basic technical positions. This data also shows that there are no employees with diploma, master's, or elementary school education.

Table 4. Respondent Characteristics Based on Occupation.

Occupation	Frequence	Percentage
Kasi Kesejahteraan	9	8,6%
Kasi Keuangan	1	1%
Kasi Pelayanan	10	9,5%
Kasi Pemerintahan	10	9,5%
Kasi Perencanaan	1	1%
Kasun Ampelgading	1	1%
Kasun Barek	1	1%
Kasun Boro	1	1%
Kasun Gading	1	1%
Kasun Gapuk	1	1%
Kasun Gebug Utara	1	1%
Kasun Gedangan	1	1%
Kasun Gunung Tumpuk	1	1%
Kasun Jeruk	1	1%
Kasun Kalianyar	1	1%
Kasun Krajan	5	4,8%
Kasun Krajan Barat	1	1%
Kasun Krajan I	1	1%
Kasun Krajan II	1	1%
Kasun Krajan Selatan	1	1%
Kasun Krajan Tengah	1	1%
Kasun Krajan Timur	2	1,9%
Kasun Krajan Utara	1	1%
Kasun Meling	1	1%
Kasun Mendek	1	1%
Kasun Ngandeng	1	1%
Kasun Pakutukan	1	1%
Kasun Paras	1	1%
Kasun Pilang	1	1%
Kasun Polaman	1	1%
Kasun Sengkrakan	1	1%
Kasun Sentong	1	1%
Kasun Setran	1	1%
Kasun Simping	1	1%
Kasun Sumberejo	1	1%
Kasun Tegalrejo	1	1%
Kasun Tlogorejo	1	1%
Kasun Turi	1	1%
Kasun Watugel	1	1%
Kaur Keuangan	9	8,6%
Kaur Perencanaan	7	6,7%

Kaur Tata Usaha Dan Umum	9	8,6%
Sekretaris Desa	10	9,5%
Total	105	100%

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The organizational structure of Lawang Subdistrict consists of 105 employees with a distribution of positions that reflects the operational needs of the government. The positions of Head of Services, Head of Government, and Village Secretary are the most numerous, each filled by 10 employees (9.5%), indicating their strategic role in public services and administration. The positions of Head of Welfare, Head of Finance, and Head of Administration and General Affairs are each filled by 9 employees (8.6%), emphasizing the importance of government support functions. Other positions, such as Head of Planning and village head, have fewer employees, reflecting a proportional distribution of human resources according to the needs of local government functions.

This study tested Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis using SmartPLS version 4 software. According to Ghazali & Latan (2017), PLS analysis involves evaluating the measurement model (outer model) and structural model (inner model). In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using PLS analysis techniques with the SmartPLS 4 program. The following is the PLS model scheme used in the analysis.

Table 5. Outer Loading.

Item	Leadership (X1)	Motivation (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Quality of Work Life (Z)
X1.1.1	0.809			
X1.1.2	0.838			
X1.2.1	0.856			
X1.2.2	0.800			
X1.3.1	0.878			
X1.3.2	0.827			
X1.4.1	0.804			
X1.4.2	0.828			
X1.5.1	0.802			
X1.5.2	0.808			
X1.6.1	0.803			
X1.6.2	0.824			
X1.6.3	0.793			
X2.1.1		0.821		
X2.1.2		0.845		
X2.1.3		0.811		
X2.2.1		0.822		
X2.2.2		0.808		
X2.2.3		0.760		
X2.3.1		0.698		
X2.3.2		0.752		
X2.4.1		0.710		
X2.4.2		0.750		
X2.5.1		0.718		
X2.5.2		0.696		
X2.5.3		0.732		

Item	Leadership (X1)	Motivation (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Quality of Work Life (Z)
Y1.1			0.785	
Y1.2			0.812	
Y2.1			0.776	
Y2.2			0.748	
Y3.1			0.736	
Y3.2			0.759	
Y4.1			0.854	
Y4.2			0.806	
Y4.3			0.741	
Y5.1			0.725	
Y5.2			0.760	
Y5.3			0.740	
Z1.1				0.829
Z1.2				0.743
Z1.3				0.765
Z1.4				0.732
Z1.5				0.809
Z1.6				0.809

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the outer loading results shown earlier, all indicators show values above 0.50, indicating that each indicator has an adequate contribution to its construct.

Table 6. Fornell-Lacker Criterion.

Item	Y	X1	X2	Z
Employee Performance (Y)	0.771			
Leadership (X1)	0.356	0.821		
Motivation (X2)	0.319	0.894	0.765	
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.434	0.807	0.819	0.782

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test in Table 6, it can be seen that each diagonal value (bolded in each construct) has a higher value than the correlations between other constructs in the same column and row. For example, the Performance (Y) construct shows an AVE square root value of 0.771, which exceeds its correlation with the variables of Leadership (0.356), Motivation (0.319), and Quality of Work Life (0.434). A similar pattern is also seen in other constructs, Leadership (0.821), Motivation (0.765), and Quality of Work Life (0.782), where the diagonal values are consistently greater than the correlations between constructs. These findings confirm that each variable has good discriminant validity, so that each construct can be clearly distinguished from one another.

Table 7. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Item	Y	X1	X2	Z
Employee Performance (Y)				
Leadership (X1)	0.364			
Motivation (X2)	0.331	0.939		
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.470	0.875	0.896	

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the results of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test in Table 7, all correlation values between variables are below the threshold of 0.90, indicating that each construct has good discriminant validity. The HTMT value between Leadership (X1) and Motivation (X2) is 0.939, between Leadership (X1) and Quality of Work Life (Z) is 0.875, and between Motivation (X2) and Quality of Work Life (Z) is 0.896. Meanwhile, the HTMT values between Performance (Y) and other variables ranged from 0.331 to 0.470. Thus, it can be concluded that each variable in this research model is able to clearly distinguish itself from other constructs, thereby meeting the criteria for discriminant validity based on the HTMT approach. The AVE values obtained in this study are presented in the following table:

Table 8. Average Variant Extracted (AVE.)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance (Y)	0.594
Leadership (X1)	0.674
Motivation (X2)	0.585
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.612

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The results of the construct validity test in Table 8, show that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all research variables is above the threshold of 0.5. This indicates that each variable has met the convergent validity criteria. In detail, the AVE values obtained are: Leadership (X1) of 0.674; Motivation (X2) of 0.585; Performance (Y) of 0.594; and Quality of Work Life (Z) of 0.612. In other words, this research model can be considered convergent valid, as each indicator is able to accurately represent the variable being measured.

Table 9. Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha.

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Employee Performance (Y)	0.941	0.938
Leadership (X1)	0.961	0.960
Motivation (X2)	0.944	0.940
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.876	0.872

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The reliability test results show that all constructs in this study have excellent reliability levels. The composite reliability values of all variables were above the threshold of 0.70, with Leadership (0.961) as the highest value, followed by Motivation (0.944), Performance (0.941), and Quality of Work Life (0.876), which still met the reliability standards. In addition, all variables also have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, thus meeting the reliability criteria. These findings confirm that all research instruments are consistent and reliable in measuring the constructs under study.

Table 10. R-Square.

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0.198	0.174
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.698	0.693

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the R-square value in Table 10, the performance variable (Y) has a value of 0.198, which indicates that only 19.8% of performance variation can be explained by the independent variables in the model, while 80.2% is influenced by other factors outside the model. Conversely, the competency variable (Z) shows an R-square value of 0.698, which means that 69.8% of the variation can be explained by the predictor variables. These findings indicate that the research model has strong explanatory and predictive power for competency, but is relatively weak to moderate in explaining performance, so that the relationship between variables is more effective in explaining competency than performance.

Table 11. F-Square.

Variable	Y	X1	X2	Z
Employee Performance (Y)				
Leadership (X1)	0.007			0.093
Motivation (X2)	0.012			0.156
Quality of Work Life (Z)	0.088			

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the results of the effect size (f^2) test, Leadership (X1) has a small but significant effect on Quality of Work Life (Z) with a value of 0.093, while Motivation (X2) shows a moderate effect with a value of 0.156. Meanwhile, the effect of Quality of Work Life (Z) on Performance (Y) is also relatively small, at 0.088. These findings indicate that Motivation plays a more dominant role in improving Quality of Work Life than Leadership. Nevertheless, Leadership and Quality of Work Life still contribute to Performance, albeit at a relatively limited level of influence.

Table 12. Hypothesis Test.

No	Influence Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics	P Values	Ket.
1	Leadership (X1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.176	0.167	1.051	0.147	Hipotesis ditolak
2	Motivation (X2) → Employee Performance (Y)	-0.236	0.197	1.196	0.116	Hipotesis ditolak
3	Leadership (X1) → QWL (Z)	0.374	0.133	2.807	0.003	Hipotesis diterima
4	Motivation (X2) → QWL (Z)	0.485	0.128	3.794	0.000	Hipotesis diterima
5	QWL (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.485	0.194	2.496	0.006	Hipotesis diterima
6	Leadership (X1) → QWL (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.181	0.100	1.814	0.035	Hipotesis diterima
7	Motivation (X2) → QWL (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.235	0.133	1.763	0.039	Hipotesis diterima

Source: Processed primary data (2025).

Discussion

The Influence of Leadership on Performance in Village Administrations in Lawang Subdistrict

The results of the study indicate that leadership and the performance of village officials in Lawang Subdistrict are both in the high category, but statistically leadership does not have a significant effect on performance (effect size 0.007). This finding contradicts the research of Budyawan et al. (2022), Baig et al. (2019), and Iwah et al. (2023), but is in line with Suhartiningtyas et al. (2022) and Ariyanti et al. (2022). The research gap lies in the high leadership scores that are not followed by an increase in performance. Field observations indicate that there is still doubt regarding the decisiveness, communication, recognition, and participation of leaders, as well as a reward system and career development that are not yet optimal, so that the performance of civil servants is more influenced by other organizational factors outside of formal leadership.

The Effect of Motivation on Performance in Village Administrations in Lawang Subdistrict

Based on descriptive analysis, motivation (average 4.11) and village apparatus performance (4.20) in Lawang Subdistrict are classified as high, but hypothesis testing shows that motivation does not have a significant effect on performance. This finding contradicts previous studies that state there is a positive influence of motivation on performance (Trisasmata & Puji Suci, 2025); (Marta et al., 2025); (Rismayanti et al., 2023); (Hapsari et al., 2024), thus creating a research gap. The phenomenon in the field shows that there are still doubts about compensation, social security, rewards, and development opportunities, so that high motivation has not been converted into optimal performance due to work environment factors and organizational systems that are not yet fully supportive.

The Influence of Leadership on the Quality of Work Life of Village Officials in Lawang District

The analysis in Lawang District showed an average leadership score of 4.16 and a Quality of Work Life (QWL) of 4.11, both of which are considered high, reflecting the village officials' ability in decision-making, communication, motivation, and good work well-being. Hypothesis testing confirmed that leadership has a positive effect on QWL, in line with research by Mukti et al. (2022) and Sugiharti et al. (2024). However, previous research rarely highlights implementation at the village level. Field observations indicate that village heads actively provide rewards, facilitate training, and conduct regular evaluations, which strengthen participatory leadership and a healthy work climate, while simultaneously improving public service performance and innovation.

The Influence of Motivation (X2) on Quality of Work Life (Z)

The results of the study indicate that the motivation and Quality of Work Life (QWL) of village officials in Lawang District are in the high category (mean 4.11), reflecting the fulfillment of psychological, social, and appreciation needs, as well as a conducive work environment. Hypothesis testing proves that motivation has a positive and significant effect on QWL, in line with the findings of Mahbub & Nasikh (2023), Efendi & Tusyanah (2024), Tanoto & Beng (2024), and Zamzami et al. (2022). However, there is a research gap in the form of limited empirical evidence in the context of village officials. Field phenomena show that work involvement, open communication, and leadership support strengthen motivation and the quality of public services.

The Influence of Quality of Work Life on Performance of Village Apparatus in Lawang District

The results of the study indicate that the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of village officials in Lawang District is relatively high (average 4.11), as is their performance (4.20), reflecting a comfortable work environment, social support, and a good work-life balance. The analysis shows that QWL has a positive effect on performance, in line with the findings of Magdalena et al. (2022), Suci et al. (2022), and Hermawati et al. (2021), however, field research is still rare to explore the mechanism of this relationship in the context of village government. Real phenomena show that village officials with high QWL are more productive, responsive, and loyal, emphasizing the need for QWL improvement programs through training, welfare support, and a harmonious work environment.

The Influence of Leadership on Performance Mediated by Quality of Work Life in Village Apparatus in Lawang District

The analysis results in Lawang District showed high scores for Leadership (4.16), Quality of Work Life/QWL (4.11), and Village Official Performance (4.20), indicating effective leadership and work quality that support optimal performance. Hypothesis testing revealed that Leadership has a positive effect on Performance through QWL as a quasi-mediator, consistent with the findings of Mukti et al. (2022). Field phenomena show that village heads with a participatory style and attention to the welfare of officials increase motivation, professionalism, and responsibility. However, previous studies rarely highlight the mediating effect of QWL at the village level, so this study fills this gap and emphasizes the importance of QWL in supporting public performance.

The Influence of Motivation on Performance Mediated by Quality of Work Life on Village Officials in Lawang District

The results of the study indicate that the motivation, performance, and Quality of Work Life (QWL) of village officials in Lawang District are in the high category. This finding aligns with previous research that suggests that work motivation positively influences performance, particularly when supported by a good quality of work life. However, there is a research gap in the context of village government, as variations in work environment support have not been extensively studied empirically. Fieldwork shows limited facilities, high administrative burdens, and minimal recognition, making QWL a key mediator for high motivation to translate into optimal performance.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research that has been conducted, several conclusions can be drawn from the results of the study. The analysis indicates that leadership does not have a positive effect on performance, which confirms that the leadership implemented by superiors has not been able to directly improve the performance of village officials in Lawang District. The results also show that motivation does not have a positive effect on performance; therefore, the motivation of village officials does not directly contribute to improved work outcomes. However, the analysis found that leadership has a positive effect on Quality of Work Life (QWL), meaning that a good leadership style can create a more comfortable, supportive, and balanced work environment for village officials, supported by factors such as decision-making skills, communication, motivation, emotional control of subordinates, and accountability.

In addition, motivation was found to have a positive effect on QWL, indicating that higher motivation leads to better perceptions of quality of work life, supported by recognition of achievements, opportunities for self-development, adequate rewards, a conducive work environment, and support from superiors and coworkers. Furthermore, QWL has a positive effect on performance, demonstrating that improvements in quality of work life significantly enhance the performance of village officials through balanced workloads and compensation, opportunities for development, a safe and comfortable work environment, and social support. The analysis also shows that leadership positively influences performance through the mediation of QWL, indicating that although leadership does not directly affect performance, improvements in QWL can enhance performance. Similarly, motivation positively influences performance through the mediation of QWL, highlighting QWL as an important connecting factor that explains how work motivation can drive improved performance when supported by a favorable quality of work life.

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