



## The influence of work motivation and discipline on employee performance with leadership style as a moderating variable

Meri Faryani<sup>1</sup>, Kabul Wahyu Utomo<sup>2</sup>, Zulkifli Sultan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Master Program Bidang Minat Sumber Daya Manusia, Universitas Terbuka Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examined the influence of work motivation and discipline on employee performance, with leadership style as a moderating variable. Conducted among employees of the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue, the research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase involved a survey of 150 employees, revealing that work motivation ( $\beta = 0.50, p < 0.001$ ) and work discipline ( $\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$ ) significantly impacted employee performance. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis demonstrated that leadership style significantly moderated these effects, enhancing the positive impacts of motivation (Interaction  $\beta = 0.25, p < 0.01$ ) and discipline (Interaction  $\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$ ) on performance. Qualitative interviews further supported these findings, indicating that supportive and culturally sensitive leadership boosted employee morale and performance. The results suggested that fostering a motivated and disciplined workforce through targeted HR practices and leadership development programs is essential for improving organizational effectiveness. This study provided valuable insights for HR management and leadership in government institutions, emphasizing the importance of integrating local cultural norms into leadership practices.

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### Corresponding Author:

Meri Faryani  
Master Program at Bidang Minat Sumber Daya Manusia  
Universitas Terbuka Banda Aceh, Indonesia  
Jl. Pendidikan, Punge Blang Cut, Banda Aceh  
Email: [thanriefhandoko@gmail.com](mailto:thanriefhandoko@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are crucial for the success of any organization, particularly within government institutions. Effective HR management ensures the delivery of efficient, effective, and integrity-driven government services, thereby enhancing public trust. Key factors influencing employee performance in government contexts include work motivation and discipline (Reina & Scarozza 2021). According to Reina & Scarozza, high work motivation increases productivity, creativity, and innovation, fostering commitment and loyalty to the organization. Motivated employees are more likely to deliver high-quality services, crucial for maintaining public trust and satisfaction.

In Aceh Province, operating under special autonomy granted by Qanun regulations, the quality of human resources is even more critical. This autonomy allows

Aceh to implement tailored policies that address its unique socio-cultural and developmental challenges. This necessitates personnel who are not only competent and disciplined but also deeply motivated and attuned to local norms and values (Itang 2015). Continuous training, a culture of integrity, and effective leadership are essential for optimizing employee performance, ensuring efficient public services, and reflecting the region's autonomy and cultural heritage (Hashimy et al., 2023).

Work motivation is a critical factor that influences employee performance, driving individuals to achieve their goals, enhancing commitment to the organization, and fostering a sense of loyalty. Motivated employees exhibit higher productivity, creativity, and innovation (Basalamah 2021). In government settings, high work motivation is associated with better performance outcomes, as employees are more engaged and dedicated to their roles.

Leadership styles play a significant role in influencing work motivation. Effective leadership can inspire and motivate employees, leading to higher organizational commitment and performance (Alam et al., 2021). In Aceh Province, where government institutions operate under the special autonomy of the Qanun, it is crucial to have leaders who can motivate and guide their teams effectively. Leaders who understand the local culture and norms can better connect with their employees, fostering a more motivated and productive workforce (Ameyaw et al., 2019).

Work discipline is another critical determinant of employee performance, helping individuals focus on their goals, enhancing productivity, and improving job quality. A well-disciplined workforce is essential for maintaining order and consistency within an organization, reducing workplace accidents, and increasing overall efficiency (Rifa'i 2023). In government institutions, fair and just work discipline is necessary to prevent dissatisfaction and low morale among employees.

Effective work discipline practices are associated with positive job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. Employees who adhere to structured work discipline tend to cultivate habits that promote consistency and reliability in their work, enhancing overall productivity and output quality (Reina & Scarozza 2021). In the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue, maintaining high levels of discipline among staff is crucial for delivering quality public services and achieving the department's goals.

Leadership style significantly impacts employee motivation, discipline, and overall performance. Different leadership styles can either enhance or hinder employee engagement and productivity. A democratic leadership style, which involves employees in decision-making and encourages their participation in goal-setting, fosters creativity, innovation, and commitment (Mansaray 2019). This inclusive approach empowers employees, enhancing their sense of responsibility and ownership towards organizational objectives.

Conversely, an autocratic leadership style, characterized by centralized decision-making and limited employee involvement, can lead to feelings of undervaluation and reduced motivation (Bass, 1990). Such top-down approaches may constrain organizational adaptability and innovation (Higgs, 2009). Research shows that leadership style plays a crucial role in shaping employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance in governmental contexts (Rizvi 2016). Therefore, selecting a leadership style that aligns with organizational goals and the local cultural context is essential for promoting employee engagement and achieving sustainable performance outcomes.

Despite legislative efforts, persistent bureaucratic challenges such as corruption and inadequate public services continue to plague Indonesia. The quality of public services remains a pivotal indicator of successful reform, necessitating targeted interventions (Gabrielli, G., & Zaccaro 2017). The Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform

2010-2025 outlines Indonesia's national policy aimed at systematically enhancing public service quality (Trilestari (2021, July). )

In institutions like the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue in Aceh Province, continuous human resources (HR) development is critical. This department oversees village-level governance and community empowerment, relying on highly motivated and disciplined personnel for effective service delivery. Challenges such as knowledge gaps, communication deficiencies, and inadequate incentives highlight the urgent need for improved management and empowerment strategies.

The success of initiatives managed by the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue hinges on the performance of its personnel. Therefore, investigating the impact of motivation and discipline on civil servants' performance (ASN) is essential. Indonesian laws, including Law No. 25 of 2009, aim to enhance public service delivery by establishing clear legal frameworks. Despite these legislative efforts, community satisfaction with public services often falls short of expectations, indicating persistent challenges that warrant further (Dong et al 2010).

Relevant parties such as employees, leaders, and the community play vital roles in developing and implementing policies to improve ASN performance. Employees contribute by maintaining high levels of motivation and discipline, which enhance productivity, creativity, and service quality. Leaders influence these aspects through effective leadership styles that inspire, motivate, and guide their teams, fostering a culture of commitment and integrity. The community's involvement ensures policies are responsive to local needs and values, promoting transparency and accountability.

In Aceh Province, under special autonomy, the integration of local norms and values is essential. Leaders who understand and respect these cultural aspects can better connect with their employees and the community. Continuous training and development, fair work discipline practices, and inclusive leadership styles help create a motivated, disciplined, and high-performing workforce. This collective approach not only improves public service delivery but also supports the broader goals of governance reform and public service excellence, meeting community expectations and enhancing public trust.

Human resources are indispensable assets in government institutions, driving efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in public service delivery. In Aceh Province, governed under special autonomy, effective management of human resources is crucial for meeting local needs and fostering regional development. Work motivation and discipline significantly influence employee performance, enhancing productivity and job satisfaction (Berman et al., 2021). Leadership style plays a pivotal role in shaping these factors, with democratic approaches promoting employee engagement and innovation. Despite bureaucratic challenges, continuous HR development is essential for improving public service quality and meeting community expectations. This study underscores the importance of understanding and optimizing these dynamics to achieve sustainable performance outcomes in government institutions.

This study seeks to examine how work motivation and discipline influence the performance of ASN within the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue, with a focus on the moderating role of leadership style. By delving into these dynamics, the research aims to provide insights into optimizing public service delivery and enhancing the performance of government personnel under Aceh Province's special autonomy. The findings are expected to contribute to strategies for improving bureaucratic efficiency and service quality, aligning with broader national goals of governance reform and public service excellence (Basalamah 2021).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to examine the influence of work motivation and discipline on employee performance, with leadership style as a moderating variable. The sequential explanatory design includes two phases: quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis (Hennink et al., 2020). This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables.

### 2.1 Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative phase, data is gathered from employees at the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue using a survey method. A stratified random sampling technique ensures representation across different departments and roles (Popović 2020). The sample size is determined using the formula for a 95% confidence level. Instruments used include the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) for work motivation, a custom questionnaire for work discipline, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) for leadership styles, and standardized performance appraisal metrics for the public sector (Batista-Foguet et al., 2021).

Surveys are administered electronically and in paper form to ensure accessibility and higher response rates. Participants provide informed consent to ensure confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics to summarize sample demographics and variable distributions, multiple regression analysis to examine the effects of work motivation and discipline on performance, and hierarchical multiple regression to test the moderating effect of leadership style. Interaction terms are created to assess these effects, providing a nuanced understanding of the dynamics (Rifa'i 2023).

### 2.2 Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews are conducted with a purposive sample from diverse hierarchical levels and departments. This ensures a wide range of perspectives (Pyrko & Dörfler, 2018, July). Interviews explore participants' experiences with leadership, motivational factors, disciplinary practices, and perceived impacts on performance. Conducting interviews both in person and via video conferencing accommodates participants' preferences. Interviews are recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy.

The credibility and validity of instruments like WEIMS, the discipline questionnaire, and MLQ are ensured through rigorous testing and established reliability in prior research. WEIMS has been validated in diverse contexts, demonstrating strong psychometric properties. The discipline questionnaire, while custom, is based on established frameworks and validated through pilot testing. The MLQ is widely recognized for its robust validity and reliability in measuring leadership styles. Previous studies and trials support their effectiveness, ensuring these instruments are suitable for the current study's context and research design.

Thematic analysis is employed for qualitative data analysis. This involves initial coding, identifying patterns and themes, reviewing themes for consistency, and defining and naming final themes. The qualitative findings are compared and contrasted with quantitative results, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research questions and offering deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions, (Musa & Isha, 2021), findings from both phases to enhance the study's validity and reliability. Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights achieves a holistic view of the research problem. The integrated results are discussed in light of existing literature, providing practical implications for human resource management and leadership

practices in governmental contexts (Bryman 2017). This comprehensive approach ensures that conclusions are well-supported by multiple lines of evidence, increasing the robustness and credibility of the findings. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative data allows for a richer interpretation, offering valuable insights for theory and practice in organizational behavior and management.

Table 1: Mixed-Methods Research Methodology

| Phase              | Method                     | Participants                                | Data Collection  | Data Analysis   |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Quantitative Phase | Survey                     | Employees at Dinas Pemberdayaan             | -WEIMS for motivation<br>- Discipline questionnaire<br>- MLQ for leadership<br>- Performance metrics | Descriptive stats<br>- Multiple regression<br>- Hierarchical regression |
| Qualitative Phase  | Semi-structured Interviews | Diverse hierarchical levels and departments | Interview guide on leadership, motivation, discipline, and performance                               | - Thematic analysis<br>- Integration with quantitative results          |

Source: Data Processing, 2024

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Result

##### a. Quantitative Phas

The survey was completed by 150 employees at the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue. The respondents' demographics indicate a diverse sample: 60% male, 40% female; 20% aged 20-29, 33.3% aged 30-39, 26.7% aged 40-49, and 20% aged 50 and above. Education levels include 13.3% high school, 66.7% bachelor's degree, and 20% master's degree.

##### b. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Characteristic  | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender          |               |                |
| - Male          | 90            | 60%            |
| - Female        | 60            | 40%            |
| Age Group       |               |                |
| - 20-29         | 30            | 20%            |
| - 30-39         | 50            | 33.3%          |
| - 40-49         | 40            | 26.7%          |
| - 50 and above  | 30            | 20%            |
| Education Level |               |                |
| - High School   | 20            | 13.3%          |
| - Bachelor's    | 100           | 66.7%          |
| - Master's      | 30            | 20%            |

Source: Data Processing, 2024

##### c. Multiple Regression Analysis

The analysis reveals significant direct effects of work motivation ( $\beta = 0.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and discipline ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) on performance, explaining 47% of the variance (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.47$ ).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

| Variable                | B     | SE B | $\beta$ | t    | p       |
|-------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|---------|
| Work Motivation         | 0.45  | 0.08 | 0.50    | 5.63 | < 0.001 |
| Work Discipline         | 0.35  | 0.10 | 0.40    | 3.50 | < 0.001 |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.48  |      |         |      |         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.47  |      |         |      |         |
| F                       | 60.23 |      |         |      | < 0.001 |

Source: Data Processing, 2024

#### d. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Leadership style significantly moderates the relationship between motivation, discipline, and performance. Leadership style ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) enhances the positive effects of work motivation (Interaction  $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and discipline (Interaction  $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with an additional 10% variance explained ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.10$ ).

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Results

| Variable                  | B     | SE B | $\beta$ | t    | p       |
|---------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|---------|
| Step 1:                   |       |      |         |      |         |
| - Work Motivation         | 0.45  | 0.08 | 0.50    | 5.63 | < 0.001 |
| - Work Discipline         | 0.35  | 0.10 | 0.40    | 3.50 | < 0.001 |
| Step 2:                   |       |      |         |      |         |
| - Leadership Style        | 0.30  | 0.07 | 0.35    | 4.29 | < 0.001 |
| Step 3: Interaction Terms |       |      |         |      |         |
| - Motivation x Leadership | 0.20  | 0.06 | 0.25    | 3.33 | < 0.01  |
| - Discipline x Leadership | 0.15  | 0.05 | 0.20    | 3.00 | < 0.01  |
| R <sup>2</sup>            | 0.58  |      |         |      |         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>   | 0.57  |      |         |      |         |
| $\Delta R^2$              | 0.10  |      |         |      |         |
| F                         | 45.67 |      |         |      | < 0.001 |

Source: Data Processing, 2024

### 3.2 Qualitative Phase

#### Thematic Analysis

Semi-structured interviews with employees revealed several key themes:

##### a. Leadership Influence

In the context of our study conducted at the Department of Community Empowerment and Villages in Simeulue Regency, Aceh, it was found that involving employees in decision-making processes significantly boosts their motivation and adherence to disciplinary standards. Supportive leaders who actively engage their teams not only foster a sense of ownership and accountability but also create an environment where employees feel valued and heard (Abdullahi et al., 2020). This participatory leadership style cultivates a culture of trust and collaboration, leading to increased job satisfaction and overall performance. When employees perceive their contributions as meaningful, their commitment to organizational goals strengthens, resulting in a more disciplined and motivated workforce.

##### b. Cultural Understanding

The study, focused on the Department of Community Empowerment and Villages in Simeulue Regency, highlighted that leaders who demonstrate respect for local norms and cultural nuances play a crucial role in fostering a positive work environment. Cultural understanding was found to be pivotal in enhancing employee morale and performance (Jones 2013). When leaders acknowledge and integrate cultural values into

their management practices, they create an inclusive and harmonious workplace. This approach not only minimizes potential conflicts but also promotes a sense of belonging among employees. By valuing diverse perspectives and practices, leaders can inspire loyalty and commitment, thereby driving higher levels of engagement and productivity.

#### c. Motivation Factors.

Recognition, career opportunities, and work-life balance emerged as key motivators in the Simeulue-based study. Employees expressed that acknowledgment of their efforts and achievements significantly boosts their morale and drive. Additionally, opportunities for career advancement are critical in maintaining high levels of motivation, as they provide a clear pathway for professional growth and development. Furthermore, a balanced work-life dynamic is essential for sustaining long-term motivation, as it ensures employees can manage personal and professional responsibilities effectively (Asaari et al., 2019). These factors collectively contribute to a motivated workforce that is eager to perform and excel in their roles.

#### d. Disciplinary Practices

Clear and fair disciplinary practices were found to be fundamental to achieving high performance and job satisfaction in the studied Department of Community Empowerment and Villages in Simeulue Regency. Employees highlighted the importance of having well-defined guidelines and consistent enforcement of rules (Prasetyo et al., 2021). When disciplinary measures are perceived as transparent and equitable, it fosters a sense of justice and trust within the organization. This clarity helps in preventing misunderstandings and conflicts, thereby maintaining a harmonious workplace. Fair disciplinary practices also reinforce the importance of accountability and responsibility, which are essential for sustaining high performance and employee satisfaction.

Table 5: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

| Themes                 | Quantitative Findings   | Qualitative Insights  | Implications  |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Leadership Influence   | Leadership moderates the effects of motivation and discipline | Supportive leaders enhance motivation and adherence to norms        | Emphasize supportive, participative leadership styles in programs           |
| Cultural Understanding | Not directly measured   | Leaders respecting local culture foster a positive work environment | Train leaders on cultural sensitivity and awareness                         |
| Motivation Factors     | Work motivation significantly impacts performance             | Recognition, career opportunities, and work-life balance are key    | Focus HR practices on recognition, career development, work-life balance    |
| Disciplinary Practices | Work discipline significantly impacts performance             | Clear and fair practices are crucial for high-performance           | Maintain transparent, fair disciplinary practices for trust and consistency |

Source: Data Processing, 202

### 3.3 Pembahasan

#### a. Impact of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

Quantitative analysis shows a significant influence of work motivation on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), aligning with existing literature (Riyanto et al., 2021). Motivated employees demonstrate higher productivity and commitment. Qualitative insights reveal that recognition, career development, and work-life balance drive motivation.

b. Impact of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

Work discipline significantly impacts performance ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Disciplined employees adhere to organizational policies, contributing to overall efficiency (Rifa'i 2023). Qualitative data emphasize the importance of clear and fair disciplinary practices in enhancing job satisfaction and performance.

c. Moderating Role of Leadership Style

Leadership style significantly moderates the effects of motivation and discipline on performance (Interaction  $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for motivation; Interaction  $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for discipline). Supportive leadership amplifies these effects, aligning with transformational leadership theory (Abdullahi et al., 2020). Qualitative interviews highlight that culturally aware leaders enhance employee morale and performance.

d. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The mixed-methods approach reveals that supportive, culturally aware leadership maximizes the benefits of motivated and disciplined employees.

e. Practical Implications

In the Department of Community Empowerment and Villages in Simeulue Regency, several practical implications emerge from the study. Firstly, HR practices should prioritize recognition, career development, and work-life balance to enhance employee motivation and satisfaction (Bui et al., 2016). Recognizing employee achievements, offering clear paths for career growth, and ensuring a healthy work-life balance are crucial steps towards creating a motivated and committed workforce.

Secondly, establishing clear and fair disciplinary practices is essential for maintaining high performance and job satisfaction (Apalia 2017). Apalia emphasizes the importance of transparent and equitable disciplinary measures to foster a sense of justice and trust within the organization. Lastly, leadership development programs should focus on cultivating supportive and culturally sensitive leadership styles. The leaders who are attuned to cultural nuances and who support their employees in meaningful ways can significantly enhance organizational morale and productivity. Implementing these practices can lead to a more engaged, satisfied, and high-performing workforce in Simeulue Regency (Khalifa et al. 2016).

This study highlights the significant impact of work motivation and discipline on employee performance, with leadership style as a crucial moderating variable. Supportive and culturally aware leadership enhances motivation and discipline, leading to improved performance in government institutions. Integrating quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of these relationships, offering valuable insights for HR management and leadership development in the public sector. Implementing these insights can foster a motivated and disciplined workforce, contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of government institutions in Aceh.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the results of the discussion and statistical tests that have been carried out, based on the comprehensive analysis of work motivation, work discipline, and leadership style in the context of government institutions in Aceh Province, several key conclusions can

be drawn. Firstly, the study confirms that both work motivation and work discipline significantly contribute to employee performance within the Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa Kabupaten Simeulue. Quantitative analysis revealed strong positive associations between motivation, discipline, and performance, underscoring their critical roles in organizational success. Employees who are motivated by recognition, career growth opportunities, and a balanced work-life environment demonstrate higher levels of productivity and commitment, crucial for effective public service delivery.

Secondly, the study highlights the pivotal moderating role of leadership style in enhancing the impact of motivation and discipline on employee performance. Supportive and culturally sensitive leadership practices were found to amplify the positive effects of motivation and discipline, as evidenced by both quantitative regression results and qualitative insights. Leaders who understand local cultural norms and foster supportive work environments not only boost employee morale but also facilitate higher performance levels among their teams. Furthermore, the integration of quantitative data with qualitative findings provided a nuanced understanding of these dynamics. It revealed that while quantitative measures establish statistical relationships, qualitative insights into leadership behaviors and organizational culture enrich our understanding of how these relationships manifest in real-world settings.

Quantitative analysis reveals that both work motivation and work discipline significantly impact performance outcomes. Motivation, driven by factors such as recognition, career growth opportunities, and a balanced work-life environment, enhances employee productivity and commitment. Discipline ensures that employees remain focused, consistent, and reliable in their roles. Together, these factors have a strong positive effect on performance, with leadership style further amplifying these effects by fostering a supportive and culturally sensitive work environment.

The research is limited by its focus on a single government institution in Aceh Province, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore additional factors influencing employee performance, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and external economic conditions. Additionally, validating these findings across different governmental and cultural contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between motivation, discipline, and leadership. Expanding the study to include various settings can offer broader insights and strengthen the applicability of the results.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of targeted HR practices and leadership development initiatives in government institutions. By focusing on enhancing motivation, promoting discipline, and nurturing supportive leadership, organizations can foster a motivated and disciplined workforce. This, in turn, enhances overall organizational effectiveness and contributes to the delivery of high-quality public services aligned with local needs and aspirations in Aceh Province. Future research could further explore additional factors influencing employee performance and validate these findings across different governmental and cultural contexts.

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