

Performance Optimization through Motivation

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of well-being and humanistic leadership style on employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable among employees of PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat. This research adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. The research sample consists of 100 employees, determined using a census technique. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that well-being has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and work motivation. Humanistic leadership style also has a positive and significant influence on employee performance and work motivation. However, work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance. In addition, work motivation does not mediate the relationship between humanistic leadership style and employee performance, nor does it mediate the relationship between well-being and employee performance. These findings indicate that employee performance is more strongly influenced directly by well-being and humanistic leadership style rather than through work motivation as a mediating variable.

Keywords: Well-Being, Humanistic Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Employee Performance.

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Introduction

Employee performance is a fundamental factor that determines the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. Without optimal performance from all employees, it is difficult for an organization to maintain competitiveness, especially in the public service sector which demands high service quality and customer satisfaction. One important factor influencing employee performance is well-being or job well-being. Well-being encompasses not only physical aspects but also psychological and social aspects that make individuals feel satisfied, happy, and have meaning in their work. Job well-being is formed when basic human needs—autonomy, competence, and social relatedness—are met in the work environment. Employees with high levels of well-being tend to be more productive, have strong organizational commitment, and are more resilient to work pressures. In addition to employee well-being, leadership style also plays an important role in shaping employee behavior and work attitudes. In the context of modern organizations, the emergence of a humanistic leadership style presents a new paradigm emphasizing human values, empathy, fairness, and respect for the dignity of each individual. Leaders with a humanistic style not only focus on achieving organizational targets but also pay attention to the balance between employee needs and company goals. This leadership style emphasizes open communication, providing emotional support, and respecting individual differences. Humanistic leaders are able to foster mutual trust and loyalty within the team, thereby creating a conducive work climate and improving subordinate performance. The relationship between well-being and humanistic leadership style with employee performance is often not direct but mediated by other psychological factors such as work motivation. Work motivation is an internal drive that influences a person's behavior in achieving organizational goals. Motivated employees have a strong desire to deliver their best work results, take initiative, and are oriented towards achievement. According to Robbins and Judge (2019), work motivation can be influenced by various factors such as recognition, career development opportunities, job satisfaction, and leadership style. Humanistic leaders can increase their subordinates' motivation through approaches that appreciate, listen to, and support individual potential.

If not balanced with good psychological conditions and a humanistic leadership style, this can lower employee morale and work motivation, which ultimately impacts the overall decline in organizational performance. Several previous studies indicate that job well-being positively influences employee motivation and performance. Similarly, humanistic leadership style has been proven to increase employee loyalty and productivity through healthy interpersonal relationships (Luthans, 2017; Kim & Lee, 2021). However, the relationship between these two factors and performance is often mediated by work motivation. Employees with good levels of well-being and leadership support will be more motivated to work optimally, which in turn impacts performance improvement. For example, there are still delays in completing administrative work, a lack of initiative in customer service, and low engagement in innovative activities. These phenomena can indicate a decline in work motivation or suboptimal implementation of humanistic leadership in the work environment. Therefore, this research is important to analyze the extent to which employee well-being (well-being) and humanistic leadership style influence employee performance, both directly and through the mediating role of work motivation. In terms of quantity, 66.7% of respondents admitted to being unable to complete work according to the targeted amount, and only 33.3% were able to meet these targets. This condition indicates obstacles in productivity, whether due to high workload, lack of time planning, or low work motivation. Meanwhile, regarding timeliness, 56.7% of respondents stated they were not always able to complete work within the set deadlines, while 43.3% were able to meet the deadlines. Overall, these results show that aspects of quality, quantity, and timeliness still need special attention so that employee performance can improve comprehensively and sustainably.

Problem Formulation

1. Does Well-being have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
2. Does Humanistic Leadership Style have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
3. Does Well-being have a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
4. Does Humanistic Leadership Style have a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
5. Does Work Motivation have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
6. Does Well-being have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?
7. Does Humanistic Leadership Style have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat?

Research Objectives

1. To test and analyze the influence of Well-being on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
2. To test and analyze the influence of Humanistic Leadership Style on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
3. To test and analyze the influence of Well-being on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
4. To test and analyze the influence of Humanistic Leadership Style on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
5. To test and analyze the influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
6. To test and analyze the influence of Well-being on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
7. To test and analyze the influence of Humanistic Leadership Style on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.

Employee Performance

According to Dessler (2019), performance is the work results of a person in carrying out their responsibilities, measured based on standards of productivity, efficiency, and work effectiveness. According to Mangkunegara (2017), employee performance is the work results both in quality and quantity achieved by a person in carrying out their duties according to the responsibilities given by the organization.

Indicators of Employee Performance According to Mangkunegara (2017):

1. Work quality
2. Work quantity
3. Timeliness
4. Responsibility
5. Cooperation

Factors Influencing Employee Performance

Factors influencing employee performance according to Mangkunegara (2017) can be divided into several main groups, namely:

1. Work Motivation, the higher the employee's motivation, the greater the drive to achieve work targets.

2. Competence, the abilities, skills, and knowledge possessed by an employee positively influence work results.
3. Work Discipline, discipline in time, responsibility, and regulations increases work effectiveness.
4. Work Environment, a comfortable, safe, and conducive work atmosphere positively influences productivity.
5. Leadership, a good leadership style is able to motivate and direct employees to work optimally.
6. Compensation and Recognition, fair rewards foster satisfaction and improve performance.
7. Organizational Culture: positive values, norms, and habits within the organization encourage employee work spirit.
8. Training and Development, improving abilities through training significantly impacts work quality.
9. Communication and Teamwork, effective communication and team synergy facilitate task execution.
10. Employee Health and Well-being, good physical and mental conditions support productivity and performance.

Well-Being

According to Huppert (2019), well-being is a state of an individual indicating optimal psychological functioning, characterized by happiness, vitality, meaning in life, and the ability to adapt to challenges. According to Diener et al. (2018), well-being is an individual's welfare condition that includes life satisfaction, positive emotional experiences, and the absence of negative emotions, describing a person's level of happiness and quality of life.

Indicators of Well-Being

According to Diener et al. (2018), namely:

1. Life satisfaction
2. Positive emotions
3. Low negative emotions
4. Life balance
5. Meaning in life

Humanistic Leadership Style

According to Han, Seo, & Yoon (2020), humanistic leadership is an approach that places humans at the core of the organization, where leaders act as guides, listeners, and facilitators in developing employee potential. According to Kim and Lee (2021), humanistic leadership is a leadership style oriented towards human values, such as empathy, respect for individual dignity, and concern for employee welfare, with the aim of building mutually respectful and supportive work relationships.

Indicators of Humanistic Leadership Style

According to Kim & Lee, 2021:

1. Empathy towards subordinates (empathy)
2. Open and two-way communication (open communication)
3. Respect for individual dignity (respect for human dignity)
4. Fairness and honesty in decisions (fairness)
5. Support for employee self-development (developmental support)

Work Motivation

According to Hasibuan (2019), work motivation is the provision of a driving force that creates a person's enthusiasm to work with zeal in order to achieve organizational goals. According to Robbins and Judge (2019), work motivation is a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of a person in achieving work goals.

Indicators of Work Motivation According to Robbins & Judge (2019):

1. Direction of effort (direction)
2. Work intensity (intensity)
3. Persistence (persistence)
4. Clear goals (goal orientation)
5. Satisfaction with results (job satisfaction)

Conceptual Framework

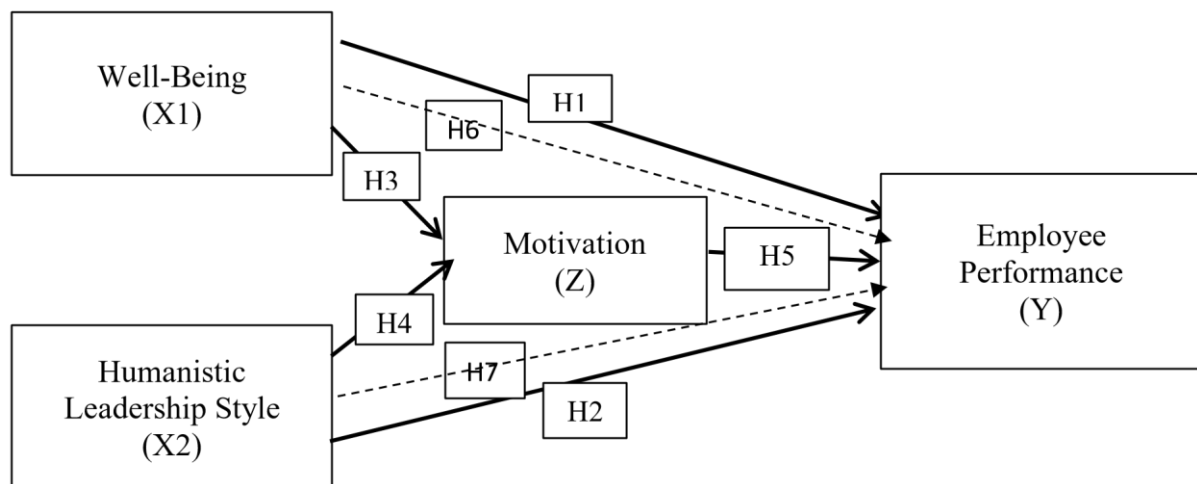


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypotheses

- H1 Well-being has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H2 Humanistic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H3 Well-being has a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H4 Humanistic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H5 Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H6 Well-being has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.
- H7 Humanistic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Work Motivation at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Binjai Barat.

Research Type

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2020), quantitative research aims to explain phenomena through numerical measurement and statistical analysis, so that research results can be generalized. This research also uses an associative approach, which is research aimed at knowing the relationship or influence between two or more variables. According to Sugiyono

(2018), associative research is used to analyze the relationship between independent variables (independent) and dependent variables (dependent), either directly or indirectly.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at PT PLN (Persero) Customer Service Unit (ULP) Binjai Barat, located at Jl. Jenderal Gatot Subroto, Binjai Barat District, Binjai City, North Sumatra Province.

Research Time (Narration)

This research was conducted from November to December 2025. The research implementation was carried out in stages and systematically so that each process runs according to the research plan.

Research Population and Sample

According to Arikunto (2019), population is the entire research subject, whether humans, objects, or phenomena, that serves as the source of research data. Based on this definition, the population in this study are all employees of PT PLN (Persero) Customer Service Unit (ULP) Binjai Barat, totaling 83 employees. According to Sugiyono (2018), a sample is a part of the number and characteristics possessed by that population. Meanwhile, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2020), a sample is a portion of individuals or elements from the population taken to represent the characteristics of the entire population. In this study, the sampling technique used was saturation sampling (census sampling), totaling 83 employees.

Research Data Sources

According to Sugiyono (2018), data sources are the subjects from which data is obtained. The data used in research can be obtained from primary or secondary sources depending on the purpose and needs of the research. Meanwhile, according to Arikunto (2019), data sources are everything that can provide information relevant to the research problem, whether in the form of people, documents, or other objects.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this research was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) assisted by SmartPLS 3.0 software. This technique is used because it is able to analyze complex relationships between latent variables, both reflective and formative, and does not strictly require normally distributed data. According to Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2022), PLS-SEM is a variance-based structural equation modeling approach used to estimate a model of cause-and-effect relationships between latent variables and their indicators, as well as between latent variables in the structural model. This method is more flexible compared to covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) because it can be used for small samples and non-normally distributed data.

Analysis Steps Using Smart PLS 3.3.3

Data analysis with SmartPLS 3.0 is carried out through two main stages, namely evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model):

1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model) This stage is used to assess the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. The outer model test includes:
 - a. Convergent validity
 - b. Discriminant validity
 - c. Construct reliability ≥ 0.7

2. Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model) This stage is used to assess the relationships between latent variables in the research model. According to Ghozali and Latan (2019), the inner model test includes:
 - a. R^2 value to measure the level of influence of independent variables on the dependent variable.
 - b. T-statistic test and p-value to test the significance of relationships between variables.
 - c. f^2 value to assess the effect size between variables.
 - d. Bootstrapping is used to test the significance of path relationships between latent variables.

Results Outer Model Analysis

The purpose of evaluating the outer model is to assess the validity and reliability of a specific model. This analysis will be based on loading influence, AVE (Average Variance Extracted), discriminant validity, and composite reliability.

Factor Loading

Factor loading is the first step in validating the model; the requirement is that it must be greater than 0.6 for the indicator to be considered valid. If not valid, it must be based on the model (Husein, 2015). To understand the outer model analysis of this research, see the following figure:

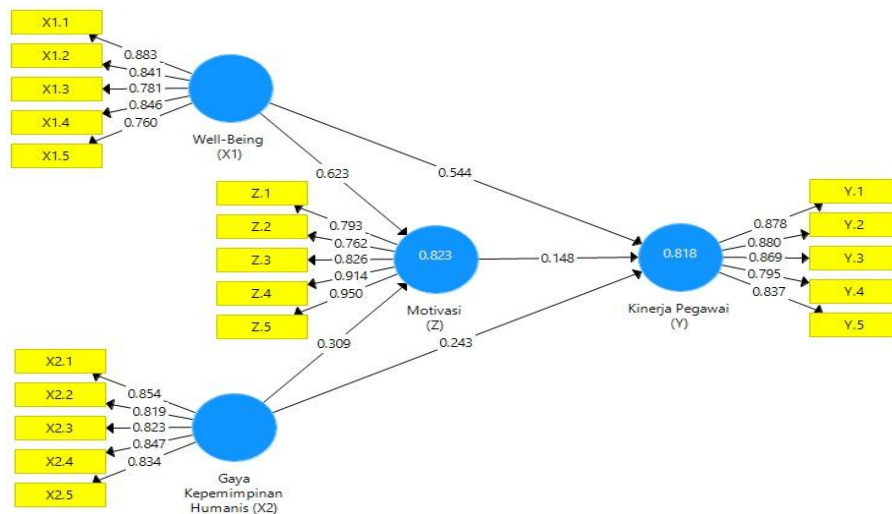


Figure 2. Outer Model

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

Looking at the graph above, it can be seen that each variable has a loading factor of 0 for the latent variable and a loading factor of 0.7 for the manifest variable, this shows that all indicators and their loading factors are valid. The regression analysis of this research is as follows:

substructure 1

$$Z = b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e_1$$

$$Z = 0,623 + 0,309 + e_1$$

For substructure 2

$$Y = b_2X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_5Z + e_2$$

$$Y = 0,544 + 0,243 + 148 + e_2$$

Table 1. Outer Loadings

	Humanistic Leadership Style (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivation (Z)	Well-Being (X1)

X1.1				0,883
X1.2				0,841
X1.3				0,781
X1.4				0,846
X1.5				0,760
X2.1	0,854			
X2.2	0,819			
X2.3	0,823			
X2.4	0,847			
X2.5	0,834			
Y.1		0,878		
Y.2		0,880		
Y.3		0,869		
Y.4		0,795		
Y.5		0,837		
Z.1			0,793	
Z.2			0,762	
Z.3			0,826	
Z.4			0,914	
Z.5			0,950	

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

Based on the outer loadings test results, all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70. This shows that each indicator has met the convergent validity criteria and is able to reflect its construct well. Thus, all indicators are declared valid and suitable for use in the research model.

Discriminant Validity

In addition, there is a discriminant validity test (Discriminant Validity) which is seen from the Fornell-Lacker Criterion value and the AVE value of each instrument statement on reflective indicators in this research. Both of these tables are used to ensure that the variables in this research are valid.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Humanistic Leadership Style (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivation (Z)	Well-Being (X1)
X1.1	0,771	0,800	0,856	0,883
X1.2	0,719	0,808	0,730	0,841
X1.3	0,640	0,728	0,687	0,781
X1.4	0,771	0,738	0,742	0,846
X1.5	0,731	0,570	0,653	0,760

X2.1	0,854	0,708	0,673	0,704
X2.2	0,819	0,770	0,736	0,733
X2.3	0,823	0,749	0,801	0,781
X2.4	0,847	0,645	0,677	0,743
X2.5	0,834	0,665	0,681	0,711
Y.1	0,683	0,878	0,668	0,704
Y.2	0,741	0,880	0,805	0,769
Y.3	0,750	0,869	0,703	0,796
Y.4	0,636	0,795	0,647	0,733
Y.5	0,800	0,837	0,765	0,790
Z.1	0,749	0,603	0,793	0,724
Z.2	0,596	0,573	0,762	0,624
Z.3	0,691	0,731	0,826	0,732
Z.4	0,765	0,823	0,914	0,840
Z.5	0,836	0,827	0,950	0,865

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

Based on the discriminant validity test results, each indicator has the highest loading value on the construct it measures compared to other constructs. This shows that each indicator is able to distinguish the measurement model constructs, which have met the discriminant validity criteria.

Composite reliability

In the composite reliability study, each variable's reliability value is compared; if the variable's value is greater than 0.60 then the research is considered reliable; if between 0.60 and 0.7, then it is not reliable; There are several blocks to determine whether the research is reliable, valid, or not. Among them are the Cronbach's Alpha value, Composite Reliability, and AVE which can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliabilitas Komposit	Rata-rata Varians Diekstrak (AVE)
Humanistic Leadership Style (X2)	0,892	0,920	0,698
Employee Performance _(Y)	0,906	0,930	0,727
Motivation _(Z)	0,904	0,929	0,726
Well-Being _(X1)	0,881	0,913	0,678

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

Based on the construct reliability and validity test results, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. This indicates that all constructs have met the reliable and valid criteria, and are thus suitable for use in structural model analysis.

Inner Model Analysis

Evaluation of the structural model (inner model) is performed to ensure that the created base model is accurate and reliable. Several examples of checks performed in the primary model evaluation are as follows:

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The R square test is used by the dependent variable to measure how far the model's ability is in explaining the variation of the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2015). The output results from SmartPLS 3.0 software regarding R square are as follows:

Table 4. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Performance _ (Y)	0,818	0,811
Motivation _ (Z)	0,823	0,819

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

Based on the R Square values, the Employee Performance (Y) variable has a value of 0.818 and Motivation (Z) of 0.823, which shows that most of the variation in these two variables can be explained by the independent variables in the model. The high Adjusted R Square values also confirm that the research model has strong explanatory power.

Hypothesis Testing

Specific analysis in this research was carried out by looking at T-Statistics and P-Values. Speculation is used to find out if T-Statistics > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.05. The following are the results of the Direct Impact Path Coefficients:

Table 5. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Humanistic Leadership Style (X2) -> Employee Performance _ (Y)	0,243	1,963	0,025	Accepted
Humanistic Leadership Style (X2) -> Motivation _ (Z)	0,309	3,111	0,001	Accepted
Motivation _ (Z) -> Employee Performance _ (Y)	0,148	1,230	0,110	Rejected
Well-Being _ (X1) -> Employee Performance _ (Y)	0,544	3,795	0,000	Accepted
Well-Being _ (X1) -> Motivation _ (Z)	0,623	6,310	0,000	Accepted

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

1. Humanistic Leadership Style on Employee Performance

The influence of humanistic leadership style on employee performance is positive with a coefficient of 0.243, T Statistic value of 1.963, and P Values 0.025 (< 0.05). These results

indicate that the better the humanistic leadership style, the more employee performance tends to increase.

2. Humanistic Leadership Style on Motivation

Humanistic leadership style has a positive effect on motivation with a coefficient value of 0.309, T Statistic 3.111, and P Values 0.001 (< 0.05). This shows that humanistic leadership can significantly increase employee motivation.

3. Motivation on Employee Performance

Motivation has an influence coefficient of 0.148, with T Statistic 1.230 and P Values 0.110 (> 0.05). These results indicate that motivation has not been able to provide a significant influence on improving employee performance.

4. Well-Being on Employee Performance

Well-being has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a coefficient of 0.544, T Statistic value of 3.795, and P Values 0.000 (< 0.05). This shows that employee well-being is a dominant factor in improving performance.

5. Well-Being on Motivation

Well-being has a strong positive influence on motivation with a coefficient of 0.623, T Statistic 6.310, and P Values 0.000 (< 0.05). This confirms that the higher the level of employee well-being, the higher their work motivation.

Table 6. Path Coefficients (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Humanistic Leadership Style (X2) -> Motivation (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,046	1,164	0,122	Rejected
Well-Being (X1) -> Motivation (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0,092	1,151	0,125	Rejected

Source : Smart PLS3.3.3

6. Influence of Humanistic Leadership Style on Employee Performance through Motivation

The test results show an indirect influence coefficient value of 0.046, with T Statistic 1.164 and P Values 0.122 (> 0.05). These results indicate that motivation is not able to mediate the influence of humanistic leadership style on employee performance, so the hypothesis is rejected.

7. Influence of Well-Being on Employee Performance through Motivation

The indirect influence of well-being on employee performance through motivation has a coefficient of 0.092, with T Statistic 1.151 and P Values 0.125 (> 0.05). This indicates that motivation does not act as a mediating variable, so the hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

After obtaining the research results, the researcher draws conclusions as follows:

1. Humanistic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, so the hypothesis is accepted.
2. Humanistic leadership style is proven to be able to significantly increase employee motivation, so the hypothesis is accepted.
3. Motivation does not have a significant effect on employee performance, so the hypothesis is rejected.

4. Well-being has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, so the hypothesis is accepted.
5. Well-being has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, so the hypothesis is accepted.
6. Motivation is not able to mediate the influence of humanistic leadership style on employee performance, so the hypothesis is rejected.
7. Motivation does not act as a mediating variable in the relationship between well-being and employee performance, so the hypothesis is rejected.

Suggestions

1. Management needs to continue developing a humanistic leadership style by increasing empathetic communication, fairness, and attention to employee needs, as it is proven to be able to improve employee performance and motivation.
2. The company is advised to prioritize well-being improvement programs, such as work-life balance, a healthy work environment, and psychological support, because well-being is the most dominant factor in improving employee performance.
3. Considering that motivation does not significantly affect performance, the company needs to pay attention to other factors such as work systems, workload, facilities, and role clarity so that employee performance can improve optimally.
4. Human resource management policies should focus more on welfare and harmonious work relationships to create productive and committed employees.
5. Further research is suggested to add other variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or organizational culture as mediating or moderating variables to explain the relationship between leadership, well-being, and performance more comprehensively.

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