

The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Influence of Human Resource Quality on Employee Performance at the West Medan District Office

Fatma Chairina, Muhammad Isa Indrawan, Elfitra Desy Surya

Abstract

Employee performance is an important factor in determining the quality of public services in government agencies, including the West Medan Sub-District Office. Differences in work quality, timeliness, and employee initiative levels indicate that employee performance is not yet fully optimal. This study aims to analyze the effect of human resource (HR) quality on employee performance, the effect of HR quality on work motivation, the effect of work motivation on employee performance, and the role of work motivation in mediating the effect of HR quality on employee performance at the West Medan Sub-District Office. This study uses a quantitative approach with a census method of all 60 civil servants (PNS). Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of the SmartPLS application. The results showed that HR quality had a positive and significant effect on employee performance and work motivation. In addition, work motivation also had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of the indirect effect test prove that work motivation acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between human resource quality and employee performance. These findings indicate that improving human resource quality needs to be accompanied by strengthening work motivation so that employee performance can be optimally improved. This study is expected to serve as a basis for the Medan Barat Subdistrict Office in formulating human resource development policies and strategies to increase work motivation in order to improve public service performance.

Keywords: Human Resource Quality, Work Motivation, Employee Performance

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Introduction

Employee performance is one of the key factors in determining the success of public service delivery in government agencies. The Sub-District Office, as a government unit at the sub-district level, has a strategic role in providing administrative services, government coordination, and guidance to the community. The quality of public services is highly dependent on the ability of employees to carry out their duties effectively, efficiently, and professionally. Ridwan et al. (2020) state that employee performance reflects the level of individual success in carrying out tasks measured based on predetermined standards, targets, and criteria. Therefore, improving employee performance is an important requirement for the West Medan Sub-District Office in realizing optimal public services.

However, in practice, employee performance at the West Medan Sub-District Office still shows variations. Some of the problems found include delays in completing administrative tasks, differences in the quality of work between sections, and a lack of initiative among some employees in carrying out their duties. This condition is in line with the views of Robbins and Judge (2020), who state that employee performance is often influenced by individual and organizational factors that have not been optimally managed. These variations in performance indicate that efforts to improve employee performance still require serious attention from management.

One of the main factors affecting employee performance is the quality of human resources (HR). Hasibuan (2021) explains that the quality of HR reflects the ability of employees to carry out their work based on competence, professionalism, and work character. Employees who have adequate knowledge, skills, and work experience will be better able to complete tasks effectively and produce optimal performance. Conversely, limitations in the quality of human resources can lead to low productivity and poor work quality. Therefore, improving the quality of human resources is a strategic issue that must be addressed by the West Medan Sub-District Office.

However, good human resource quality does not automatically guarantee optimal employee performance. Employees with high competence will not necessarily show maximum performance if they are not supported by strong work motivation. Robbins and Judge (2020) emphasize that work motivation is an internal drive that influences the direction, intensity, and persistence of an individual's behavior at work. Without adequate motivation, the potential and abilities of employees will not be optimally utilized in the performance of their duties.

Work motivation plays an important role in encouraging employees to work more disciplined, responsible, and take initiative in completing their work. Vo et al. (2022) explain that work motivation stems from basic individual needs, such as competence, autonomy, and social connectedness, which encourage employees to work productively and effectively. Employees who feel capable, have flexibility in their work, and are supported by a positive social environment tend to show higher work motivation and have an impact on performance improvement.

In the context of government organizations, work motivation also acts as a variable that bridges the relationship between HR quality and employee performance. Good human resource quality will encourage increased work motivation, which ultimately has a positive impact on employee performance. Ridwan et al. (2020) emphasize that work motivation can strengthen the influence of internal employee factors on organizational performance achievement. Therefore, work motivation is considered relevant as a mediating variable in the relationship between human resource quality and employee performance.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that improving employee performance at the West Medan Sub-District Office does not only depend on the quality of human resources, but also on how employee work motivation is formed and managed. Therefore, this study is important to analyze the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of human resource quality on employee performance at the West Medan Sub-District Office. The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of public sector human

resource management studies and serve as a basis for practical considerations for sub-district leaders in formulating more effective and sustainable employee development policies.

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Definition of Employee Performance

Ridwan et al. (2020) define performance as the overall results or level of success of an individual in a certain period when carrying out tasks, compared to predetermined and agreed-upon work standards, targets, and criteria.

Factors Affecting Employee Performance

Factors Affecting Employee Performance according to Ridwan et al. (2020):

1) Quality of Human Resources

HR quality includes the knowledge, skills, abilities, and expertise possessed by employees. The higher the HR quality, the greater the ability of employees to produce optimal performance.

2) Leadership

The style, attention, support, and direction of leaders greatly determine the success of employees' work. Leaders who are able to motivate, set an example, and provide guidance can improve the performance of their employees.

3) Organizational Culture

Values, norms, habits, and behavior patterns in the work environment influence employee behavior. A conducive organizational culture, such as values of hard work, discipline, and cooperation, will encourage better performance.

4) Reward System

Rewards in the form of compensation, incentives, recognition, and promotions play a role in increasing work motivation. Employees who receive rewards commensurate with their achievements tend to perform better.

Employee Performance Indicators

According to Ridwan et al. (2020), employee performance indicators consist of:

1) Work Quality

Describes the level of accuracy, precision, compliance with standards, and quality of employee work results.

2) Work Quantity

Describes the amount of work that employees are able to complete within a certain period.

3) Timeliness

Assessing employees' ability to complete work within the specified time limit.

4) Responsibility

Describes the seriousness of employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

5) Teamwork

Assessing employees' ability to work effectively with colleagues.

6) Initiative

Assessing employees' internal drive to act without waiting for instructions.

Work Motivation

Understanding Work Motivation

According to Vo et al., 2022, work motivation is a drive that stems from individual needs (competence, autonomy, social relationships) that encourages productive and effective individual work behavior.

Indicators of Work Motivation

The indicators of work motivation according to Vo et al., 2022 are as follows:

1) Competence

Refers to an individual's ability to perform tasks well and feel capable of mastering their work. In this study, competence is measured through "highest level of education achieved" as a proxy.

- 2) **Autonomy**
Refers to an individual's freedom and control over how they perform their work, namely the ability to make their own decisions and have choices in their work.
- 3) **Social connectedness**
Refers to the individual's need to feel connected, accepted, and have positive relationships with others in the work environment, for example, feeling that they belong to a group, are supported by coworkers, and have a sense of social belonging.

Human Resource Quality

Definition of HR Quality

Hasibuan (2021) defines human resource quality as the ability of employees to perform their jobs based on competence, professionalism, and work character, thereby enabling them to deliver optimal work results for the organization.

Indicators of Human Resource Quality

According to Hasibuan (2021), indicators of human resource quality include:

- 1) **Knowledge**
The level of employees' mastery of their field of work and job duties.
- 2) **Skills**
Technical and non-technical abilities that support job performance.
- 3) **Competency**
An individual's capacity to perform tasks effectively and efficiently.
- 4) **Work Attitude**
The behavior and work ethic demonstrated in the performance of tasks.
- 5) **Work Experience**
The length and variety of an employee's experience that can enhance work maturity.
- 6) **Creativity and Innovation**
The ability to create or propose new ideas at work.

Conceptual Framework

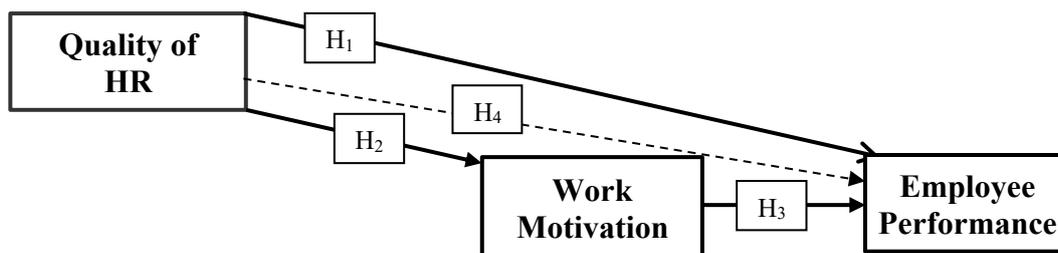


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁ : The quality of human resources has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the West Medan Subdistrict Office.
- H₂ : The quality of human resources has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the West Medan Subdistrict Office.
- H₃ : Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the West Medan Subdistrict Office.
- H₄ : The quality of human resources has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation at the West Medan Subdistrict Office.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research can be defined as a method based on positivism philosophy, used to study a specific population or sample, with sampling techniques generally conducted randomly, data collection using research instruments, and quantitative/statistical data analysis with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This type of quantitative research was conducted to create a study aimed at adjusting a study and analyzing the quality of human resources and organizational culture on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable at the West Medan Sub-District Office.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the West Medan Sub-District Office, located at Jalan Budi Pembangunan No.1, Pulo Brayan Kota, West Medan Sub-District, Medan City. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2021) defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. The population and sample in this study are all employees with civil servant (PNS) status at the West Medan Subdistrict Office. There are 60 employees with PNS status. In this study, the entire population was used as the sample, which is known as a population study.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results

Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis using the PLS Algorithm produced the following results:

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Employee Performance	Quality of HR	Work Motivation
X1.1		0.792	
X1.2		0.833	
X1.3		0.887	
X1.4		0.812	
X1.5		0.814	
X1.6		0.833	
Y.1	0.728		
Y.2	0.899		
Y.3	0.804		
Z.1			0.851
Z.2			0.813
Z.3			0.855

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, which show the results of outer model testing through loading factor/outer loadings values, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70 . This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. Therefore, it can be

concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

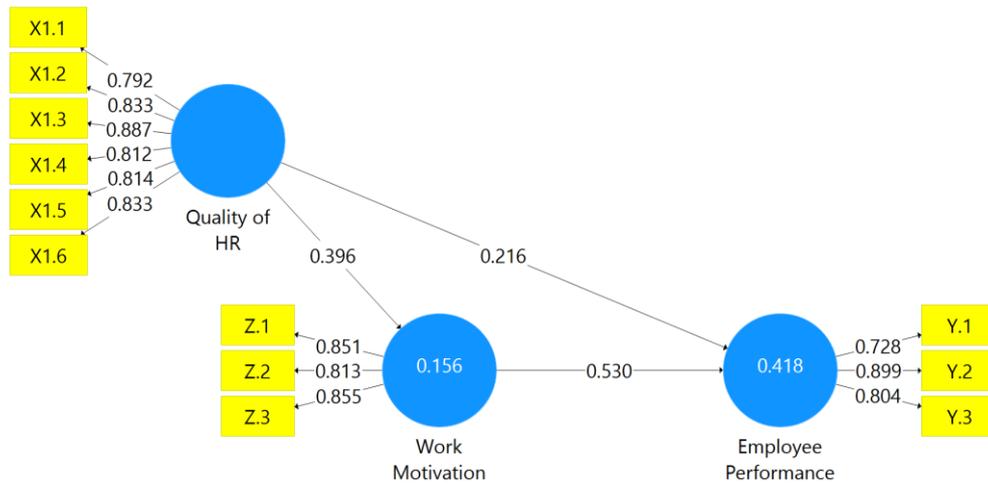


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance	0.744	0.776	0.853	0.662
Quality of HR	0.909	0.911	0.929	0.687
Work Motivation	0.791	0.795	0.878	0.705

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is declared reliable and suitable for use in structural model testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

In assessing the model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the Rsquare estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Work Motivation	0.156	0.149
Employee Performance	0.418	0.408

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square values for both dependent variables. For the work motivation variable, the R square value is 0.156, meaning that the influence of human resource quality is 0.156 or 15.6%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for teacher performance is 0.418, meaning that human resource quality and work motivation account for 0.418 or 41.8%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct effect between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data analysis results show the direct effect values in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Quality of HR -> Employee Performance	0.216	2.759	0.006	Accepted
Quality of HR -> Work Motivation	0.396	5.433	0.000	Accepted
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.530	7,612	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

The results in Table 4 show the following direct influence values:

1. Human resource quality has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 2.759 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.006 below 0.05, meaning that human resource quality has a real effect on employee performance because the significance value is above 0.05 . The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that compensation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Sihotang & Indrawan, 2023; Manullang & Ferine, 2024).
2. HR quality has a positive and significant effect on work motivation with a t-statistic value of 5.433 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that HR quality has a significant effect on work motivation because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that HR quality has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (Abrori et al., 2024; Rusianto & Khasmir, 2023).
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 7.612 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation has a significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies, which found that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Pohan & Rizky, 2024).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

The indirect effects between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects values. The data analysis results show the indirect effect values in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Quality of HR -> Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.210	4.407	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: human resource quality has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation with a t-statistic value of 4.407 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation acts as an intervening variable between human resource quality and employee performance.

Conclusion

1. Human resource quality has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the West Medan Subdistrict Office.
2. Human resource quality has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the West Medan Sub-District Office.

3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the West Medan Sub-District Office.
4. Human resource quality has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation at the Medan Barat Subdistrict Office.

Recommendations

1. Employee performance with the lowest score was "I produce work that meets the established standards." Therefore, the recommendation is to improve understanding and consistency in the application of work quality standards through the development of clearer SOPs, regular socialization, and continuous monitoring and feedback, so that every employee is able to produce work that meets the established standards optimally.
2. Work motivation with the lowest score was "I have the flexibility to manage my work to complete tasks." The office needs to strengthen the provision of targeted work autonomy while still providing clear guidelines and targets, as well as guidance from superiors, so that employees' flexibility in managing their work can be utilized optimally without reducing compliance with procedures and the quality of work results.
3. Human resource quality with the lowest score: "I have the knowledge required for my job." The office needs to improve employee competency development through relevant training, regular knowledge updates, and job placements that match employee skills, so that their knowledge is truly in line with job requirements.

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