

Leadership, Motivation, And Performance: Decoding Workplace Dynamics at PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen

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Abstrak

Kinerja karyawan merupakan penentu fundamental produktivitas organisasi dan efektivitas operasional di sektor manufaktur. Studi ini menyelidiki sejauh mana gaya kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja memengaruhi kinerja karyawan di PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen. Dengan mengadopsi pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif, studi ini mengumpulkan data melalui kuesioner terstruktur berdasarkan skala Likert lima poin. Seluruh karyawan aktif yang berjumlah 100 orang dijadikan responden dalam penelitian ini melalui teknik sensus. Teknik ini dipilih karena memungkinkan seluruh populasi untuk diteliti secara menyeluruh tanpa pengambilan sampel. Data survei dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) yang diterapkan di SmartPLS untuk mengevaluasi model penelitian yang diusulkan dan menguji hubungan hipotesis di antara variabel-variabel dalam penelitian.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik gaya kepemimpinan maupun motivasi kerja memberikan pengaruh positif dan signifikan secara statistik terhadap kinerja karyawan. Model menghasilkan nilai R^2 sebesar 0,496, yang menunjukkan bahwa kedua faktor ini secara bersama-sama menjelaskan 49,6 persen varians dalam kinerja karyawan. Orisinalitas studi ini berasal dari pemeriksaannya terhadap perusahaan manufaktur regional di Sragen, sebuah konteks yang kurang mendapat perhatian ilmiah terkait interaksi antara kepemimpinan, motivasi karyawan, dan hasil kinerja. Temuan ini memperluas literatur manajemen sumber daya manusia dengan memberikan bukti empiris bahwa praktik kepemimpinan yang efektif dan peningkatan motivasi karyawan merupakan mekanisme strategis penting untuk meningkatkan kinerja tenaga kerja di organisasi manufaktur.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan, Motivasi Kerja, Kinerja Karyawan, Produktivitas, Sumber Daya Manusia.

Abstract

Employee performance constitutes a fundamental determinant of organisational productivity and operational effectiveness within the manufacturing sector. This study investigates the extent to which leadership style and work motivation influence employee performance at PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen. Adopting a quantitative research approach, the study collected data through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The survey was administered to all 100 active employees using a census sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS software.

The survey data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) implemented in SmartPLS to evaluate the proposed research model and test the hypothesised relationships among the study variables. The model produced an R^2 value of 0.496, indicating that these two factors jointly account for 49.6 per cent of the variance in employee performance. The study's originality derives from its examination of a regional manufacturing enterprise in Sragen, a context that has received limited scholarly attention in relation to the interplay between leadership, employee motivation, and performance outcomes. The findings extend the human resource management literature by providing empirical

evidence that effective leadership practices and enhanced employee motivation represent critical strategic mechanisms for improving workforce performance in manufacturing organisations.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Employee Performance, Productivity, Human Resources.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance represents a strategic determinant of organisational success and sustainability, particularly within firms operating in the manufacturing sector. From the perspective of human resource management, employee performance is not solely contingent upon individual competence; rather, it is substantially shaped by leadership practices and work motivation, both of which influence the attitudes and behavioural dispositions that employees bring to their professional responsibilities. As (Qonitah et al., 2024) argue, leaders must cultivate strong relational bonds with their staff, maintain open channels of communication, and provide consistent guidance and support in order to elicit more meaningful contributions and elevate overall employee performance. In a similar vein, Hadari Nawawi, as cited in (Sari, 2025) contends that leadership theory centres upon a leader's capacity to mobilise, motivate, and influence others towards purposeful action, thereby facilitating the attainment of organisational objectives through decisive and accountable decision-making. Complementing this perspective, work motivation theory posits that motivation functions as an internal force that governs the intensity, direction, and persistence of work-related behaviour, thus serving as a critical mediating mechanism between leadership and employee performance.

In the national context, various quantitative studies in Indonesia show that leadership style remains the main determinant in improving employee performance through work motivation. Research conducted by (Lukito et al., 2025) The study entitled *Factors Influencing Sustainable Employee Performance: Evidence from Family Businesses in Indonesia* demonstrates that leadership style and work motivation play pivotal roles in enhancing employee performance, while job satisfaction emerges as the most influential factor in driving sustained performance improvement. Furthermore, effective transformational leadership combined with high work motivation has been proven to significantly enhance job satisfaction, which in turn directly impacts employee performance. Leadership style constitutes a fundamental determinant of employee behaviour, shaping not only individual work engagement but also the broader trajectory of organisational performance. Leaders who adopt an contextually appropriate leadership approach demonstrate considerably greater efficacy in managing human capital, fostering intrinsic motivation amongst employees, and sustaining high levels of productivity across the organisation. This position is further corroborated by a growing body of empirical evidence, as advanced by (Pradipta & Farid Wajdi, 2024; Putra Widyatmika & Riana, 2020; Siregar, 2022), each

of whom affirms that the adoption of an effective leadership style serves as a primary catalyst in driving optimal and sustainable employee performance. Nevertheless, a contrasting perspective is offered by Arum et al. (2025), Despite the growing consensus that effective leadership enhances employee performance, further investigation is required to determine whether this relationship remains consistent across different organisational environments and workforce characteristics, not all empirical investigations have reached similar conclusions. Some studies have found that leadership fails to exert a statistically significant influence on employee performance, suggesting that the effectiveness of leadership may be contingent upon specific organisational and contextual conditions. These divergent findings underscore the need for further empirical enquiry. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H1: Leadership style serves as a direct determinant of employee performance.

Beyond the quality of leadership alone, sustained high employee performance is equally contingent upon the degree of motivational drive that employees experience in the course of fulfilling their daily duties and responsibilities. In this respect, work motivation functions as a critical bridge linking leadership effectiveness to performance outcomes, rendering the two constructs inseparable in any serious organisational effort to build competitive advantage and institutional excellence. This view is consistent with the position advanced by (Fadhel Adam Syahaical & Nur Achmad, 2025), who assert that work motivation constitutes a process governing the intensity, direction, and persistence of individual effort in pursuit of organisational goals, such that intrinsically motivated employees tend to produce performance that is both more consistent and of a higher quality. Extending this argument further, Oktavia and (Oktavia & Saputro, 2024) contend that, in the absence of adequate motivation, employee potential remains largely unrealised, irrespective of the strength of organisational leadership or the sophistication of established work systems. This dynamic ultimately manifests in measurable improvements in both the quality and quantity of employee output. In support of this contention, (Aru Setiawan & Mardiana, 2022; Firmansyah & Yulandari, 2025; Pramudya Wardani & Hartono, 2020) consistently demonstrate that work motivation plays a significant role in shaping and enhancing employee performance, notwithstanding the varying organisational contexts and workplace characteristics across which their respective studies were conducted.

H2: Work Motivation can be directly related to Employee Performance.

Based on these conditions, PT DUTA KEKAR PLASINDO Sragen, as a manufacturing company, faces a real and pressing challenge in maintaining and continuously improving employee performance amidst the ever-growing demands for productivity and operational efficiency. The varying leadership styles adopted by company leaders and the levels of work motivation among employees are strongly suspected to have a profound impact on the degree of performance achievement

within the organization. It is therefore critically important to conduct empirical research that rigorously examines the influence of leadership style and work motivation on employee performance, in order to generate robust scientific evidence that can serve as a reliable foundation for informed managerial decision-making.

To that end, this study is deliberately focused on investigating the causal relationships between leadership style and work motivation as the independent variable, and employee performance as the dependent variable. In doing so, it seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership and employee motivation shape performance outcomes within organisations, while simultaneously bridging the gaps left by prior studies, particularly within the specific context of manufacturing companies operating in the Sragen region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Styles

Leadership style represents the distinctive pattern of behavior demonstrated by a leader in influencing, guiding, and motivating employees toward the achievement of organizational goals. This behavioral pattern manifests across various aspects of leadership practice, including the way decisions are made, how communication is established, the manner in which directions and instructions are delivered, as well as the level and approach of supervision exercised over employees. In essence, leadership style serves as a reflection of a leader's fundamental approach in managing and empowering their workforce to perform at their best (Hidayat, Sholahuddin, & Saputro, 2025). Within an organizational setting, leadership style plays a crucial and indispensable role, as it directly shapes the attitudes, motivation, and work behavior of employees, all of which collectively contribute to and have a significant impact on overall performance outcomes. A well-applied leadership style not only creates a conducive and supportive work environment, but also serves as a powerful catalyst that drives employees to consistently perform at their highest potential in pursuit of shared organizational objectives.

Work Motivation

Work motivation may be understood as the constellation of internal and external forces that shape an individual's actions and sustain work-related behaviour in the pursuit of defined objectives (Prasetyo & Waskito, 2023). Within the field of human resource management, work motivation functions as a psychological determinant governing the intensity, direction, and persistence of employee effort, thereby influencing the degree of enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and organisational commitment that individuals bring to their roles. As (Sukmawati & Wicaksono, 2023) establish, motivation occupies a foundational position as the primary driver of employee performance. Drawing upon needs theory and expectancy theory, it is well evidenced that the fulfilment of employee needs, the provision of recognition and

appreciation, and the clarity of work objectives constitute key antecedents capable of substantially elevating individual motivation. When employees perceive that their needs are adequately addressed and that their efforts are genuinely acknowledged, they are inclined to exhibit a heightened sense of commitment and a stronger drive to excel in their professional responsibilities. It follows, therefore, that the deliberate and strategic management of motivation is not merely beneficial but indispensable in establishing the organisational conditions necessary to sustain optimal employee performance consistently across all levels of the institution.

Employee Performance

Employee performance may be defined as the work outcomes achieved by individuals in the execution of their duties in accordance with established organisational standards and objectives, encompassing dimensions such as output quantity, work quality, timeliness, capacity for collaboration, and adherence to prescribed rules and regulations (Prastiwi et al., 2022). It serves as a measurable reflection of the effectiveness and efficiency with which an employee contributes to broader organisational success, and as such, occupies a central position within the discourse of human resource management. As (Prasetyo & Waskito, 2023) contend, employee performance functions as a key indicator within human resource management, reflecting not only individual productivity but also the extent to which an organisation succeeds in meeting its predetermined targets. Performance outcomes are shaped by a range of interrelated factors, including individual ability, work motivation, leadership quality, and the prevailing work environment. Consequently, employees who demonstrate high levels of motivation and are supported by effective leadership tend to yield considerably more optimal performance. For this reason, employee performance is widely employed as a principal criterion for evaluating the overall effectiveness of human resource management practices within an organisation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the proposed hypotheses using numerical data collected through a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. The data were subsequently analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) implemented in SmartPLS to evaluate the proposed research model and test the hypothesised relationships among the study variables (Sugiyono, 2020). The study population comprised all employees of PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen who were still actively working at the time the research was conducted, totaling 100 employees, using the saturated sample method which emphasizes that all members of the population are involved as respondents in the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristics	n =	%
	100	
Gender		
Male	57	57%

Female	43	43%
Total		100
Age Group		
Aged 18-20	3	3%
Aged 21-30	47	47%
Aged 31-40	26	26%
Aged > 40	24	24%
Total		100
Length of Work		
Less than one year	12	12%
One to three years	54	54%
Four to six years	7	7%
Seven to nine years	4	4%
More than ten	23	23%
Total		100

The research results indicate that respondents are predominantly employees with a tenure of 1–3 years at 54%, reflecting the early to mid-phase of competency development, followed by employees with a tenure of more than 10 years at 23% as experienced personnel, while other groups are smaller. In terms of gender, the composition of respondents consists of 57% male and 43% female, indicating a relative balance although still male-dominated. Meanwhile, based on age, the majority fall within the 21–30 year range at 47% as the early productive age group with high levels of adaptability and motivation, followed by the 31–40 year age group at 26% and the 41–50 year age group at 24% as experienced groups, as well as the 18–20 year age group at only 3%.

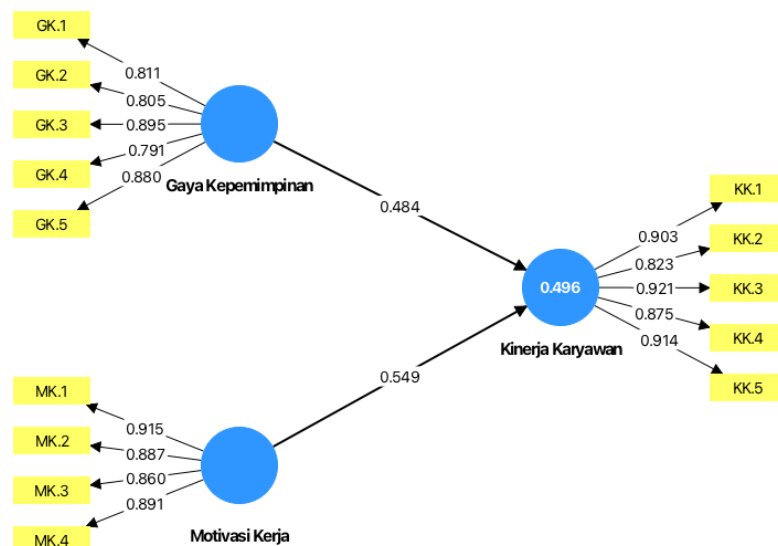


Figure 1. Outer Path Model

The analysis results indicate that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, thus declared to meet convergent validity, which indicates that each indicator is capable of strongly representing the construct, consistent with (J. F. Hair et al., 2017) who state that in the PLS-SEM approach, reflective indicators are considered convergently valid if they have an outer loading value of ≥ 0.70 .

Table 2. Construct Reliability & AVE Analysis

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Leadership Style	0.893	0.901	0.701
Employee Performance	0.933	0.936	0.789
Work Motivation	0.911	0.919	0.789

To establish convergent validity, the measurement model was examined using the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) demonstrates excellent results, where all variables in this study obtained AVE values that overall exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50. This condition indicates that each construct is capable of explaining more than half of the variance contained in its constituent indicators, so that all variables are declared to have met the required convergent validity criteria. This is consistent with the statement of (Sarstedt et al., 2021), which asserts that an AVE value of ≥ 0.50 serves as evidence of the adequacy of convergent validity of a construct, as it indicates the ability of the construct to absorb more than 50% of the information derived from its constituent indicators.

Meanwhile, The reliability analysis likewise indicated a high level of internal consistency, where all variables obtained Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that are entirely above the threshold of 0.70. Referring to (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023), a construct is declared reliable if both values reach or exceed 0.70, as these figures serve as evidence that each indicator is capable of measuring its construct in a stable and consistent manner over time. Thus, all measurement instruments used in this study have met the required standards of both validity and reliability, and can therefore be relied upon to produce accurate and trustworthy data.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Analysis

Variabel	GK	KK	MK
Leadership Style	0.837		
Employee Performance	0.442	0.888	
Work Motivation	-0.076	0.513	0.888

The discriminant validity evaluation conducted using the Fornell-Larcker criterion yielded encouraging findings, where the square root of AVE for each construct, as reflected in the diagonal values of the matrix, is consistently higher than the correlation values of that construct with other constructs in the model. This pattern confirms that each construct possesses sufficiently strong measurement uniqueness to be clearly distinguished from one another, and thus all constructs in this study are declared to have met the criteria for good discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the use of this criterion in the context of contemporary research remains regarded as relevant and valid, given its ability to empirically detect the level of differentiation between constructs, so that the potential occurrence of conceptual overlap or conceptual redundancy within the measurement model can be effectively avoided (Hilkenmeier et al., 2020)..

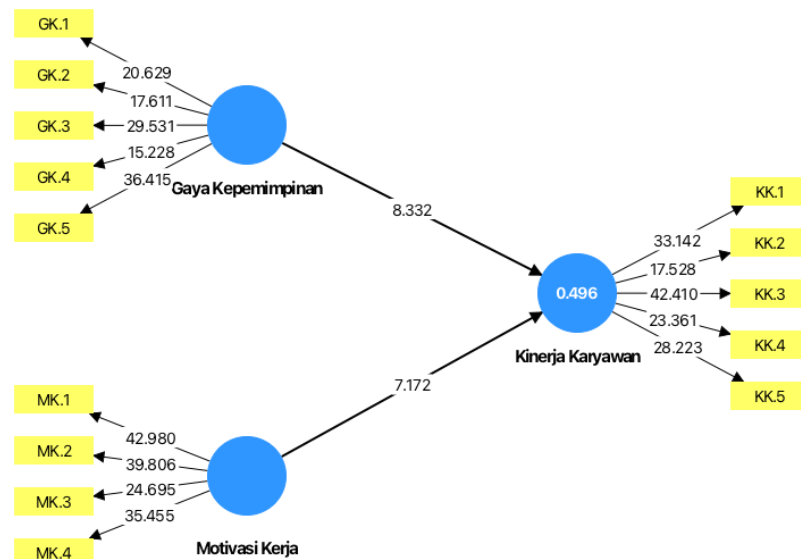


Figure 2. Inner Path Model

Table 4. R-Square Model

	R2	Adjusted R2
Employee Performance	0.496	0.485

The evaluation results of the structural model reveal that the Employee Performance variable obtained an R^2 value of 0.496, indicating that the exogenous constructs within the model are capable of explaining approximately 49.6% of the variation occurring in the endogenous variable. Referring to (J. F. Hair et al., 2017), an R^2 value of ≥ 0.50 is commonly used as the threshold that signifies the adequacy of the predictive capability of a structural model in the PLS-SEM approach. Although the value obtained falls slightly below this threshold, the figure of 0.496 can be categorized as approaching the minimum required limit, and therefore the model is still considered to possess a reasonably adequate predictive capacity in explaining the dynamics of Employee Performance. Furthermore, the Adjusted R^2 value, which does not show a significant difference from the R^2 value, indicates that the model constructed is stable and proportional, and does not experience any overfitting conditions that could potentially reduce the generalizability of the research findings.

Table 5. Direct Hypothesis Analysis

	Koefisie n	Std.Dev	t-stat	p- values
Leadership Style → Employee Performance	0.484	0.058	8.332	0.000
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.549	0.077	7.172	0.000

Leadership Style on Employee Performance

It was found that leadership style has a statistically significant and positive effect on employee performance, as supported by the probability value generated in the analysis of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a coefficient of 0.484. Thus, H1 is accepted, meaning that the higher the Leadership Style possessed by employees, the higher the Employee Performance in the Company. In reality, this condition can be directly observed within the environment of PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen, where supervisors who actively

provide direction toward daily targets, respond to operational obstacles quickly, and establish open communication with employees on the production line, have been proven to produce higher levels of output fulfillment and lower rates of work errors compared to the opposite conditions. This proves that leadership effectiveness is not merely a theoretical concept, but rather a variable that works in a real and measurable way in shaping the quality and quantity of employee work results in the field. These results are further reinforced by a number of relevant empirical studies (Sanosra et al., 2022) firmly establishing that transformational leadership possesses a remarkable and consistent capacity to inspire employees to transcend established performance standards, not merely through direct instruction, but through a deeper mechanism of genuine inspiration and meaningful empowerment that awakens intrinsic drive within each individual. Employees are more likely to adopt a positive orientation towards their work and to experience higher levels of psychological well-being in the workplace when their supervisors engage in effective empowering leadership practices, as Yassin & Hasyim (2021) contends.

Building upon this compelling insight, (Pradipta & Farid Wajdi, 2024) stating that a leader's ability to adaptively adjust their approach to the needs of the situation and the characteristics of their subordinates serves as a determining factor that directly influences productivity and work output. Accordingly, the findings of this study are not only consistent with the existing theoretical foundations, but also powerfully reinforce the argument that investing in the development of leadership quality represents a strategic and forward-thinking step that yields a tangible and far-reaching impact on the overall improvement of organizational performance.

Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The structural model revealed that work motivation positively predicts employee performance, with a standardised path coefficient of $\beta = 0.549$, and the relationship was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Thus, H2 is accepted, meaning that the higher the Work Motivation possessed by employees, the higher the Employee Performance in the Company. Work motivation is proven to have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen, indicating that employees who possess high enthusiasm and feel that their welfare needs are consistently fulfilled demonstrate more optimal performance in completing their responsibilities in a timely manner and in accordance with established standards. Therefore, these results align with research conducted by (Pradipta & Farid Wajdi, 2024; Putra Widyatmika & Riana, 2020; Siregar, 2022) with this condition reflects that motivation does not merely function as a psychological driver, but also as a genuine determinant of the quality and consistency of work output produced by employees on a day-to-day basis, which can improve employee performance.

These results are further reinforced by both theoretical foundations and relevant empirical evidence, (Mariam Iftikhar et al., 2023) affirming that employees with high levels of motivation tend to exert greater effort, demonstrate more resilience in the face of obstacles, and are far more results-oriented in their approach compared to employees with low motivation. In alignment with this (Rahkmat et al., 2016) in his hierarchy of needs states that the fulfillment of needs ranging from basic necessities to self-actualization serves as the foundational basis for the formation of internal drive that propels individuals to perform at their absolute maximum capacity in their work..

This condition can be directly observed through the results of the questionnaire distributed within the environment of PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen, where employees who feel that their basic needs are met, whether through adequate compensation, recognition of contributions, or a supportive work environment, are proven to be more consistent in meeting production targets, demonstrate lower absenteeism rates, and are more proactive in identifying and resolving operational problems. This proves that work motivation is a strategic variable whose impact can be felt in a concrete and measurable way on the overall productivity of the organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the structural model analysis, an R^2 value of 0.496 indicates that Leadership Style and Work Motivation together are capable of explaining 49.6% of the variation occurring in Employee Performance at PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen, while the remaining 50.4% is influenced by other factors outside the model that were not examined in this study. Although this value falls slightly below the ideal threshold required, it nevertheless reflects that the model possesses a reasonably adequate and relevant predictive capacity in describing the dynamics of employee performance within the company environment. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing results consistently reinforce these findings, where both Leadership Style and Work Motivation are each proven to have a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance. This implies that improving the effectiveness of leadership applied across all organizational lines, which goes hand in hand with the fulfillment of employees' needs and internal drives, represents two complementary forces that synergistically contribute to the sustained improvement of both the quality and quantity of employee work results. Thus, both variables are not only theoretically relevant, but also possess real and measurable practical implications for PT Duta Kekar Plasindo Sragen in its efforts to build a productive, competent, and highly competitive human resource base.

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