

## LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION, AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN NORTH MALUKU

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh efektivitas kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja terhadap kinerja karyawan melalui komitmen afektif sebagai variabel mediasi di Cabang Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi Maluku Utara. Karakteristik wilayah kepulauan menghadirkan tantangan tata kelola yang membutuhkan peran kepemimpinan adaptif dan motivasi kerja kuat. Pendekatan penelitian menggunakan kuantitatif eksploratif dengan sampel 89 responden yang dipilih melalui teknik proportional random sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner skala Likert dan dianalisis menggunakan Analisis Jalur via SPSS 27. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) efektivitas kepemimpinan tidak berpengaruh signifikan secara langsung terhadap kinerja pegawai; (2) motivasi kerja berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai; (3) efektivitas kepemimpinan tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap komitmen afektif; (4) motivasi kerja berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap komitmen afektif; (5) komitmen afektif berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai; (6) efektivitas kepemimpinan tidak berpengaruh tidak langsung secara signifikan terhadap kinerja melalui komitmen afektif; dan (7) motivasi kerja terbukti berpengaruh tidak langsung secara positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai melalui komitmen afektif. Temuan ini mengindikasikan kinerja pegawai lebih dipengaruhi motivasi kerja dan komitmen afektif dibanding kepemimpinan. Kebijakan instansi sebaiknya diarahkan pada penguatan motivasi serta keterikatan emosional pegawai terhadap organisasi secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: **Efektivitas Kepemimpinan, Motivasi Kerja, Komitmen Afektif, Kinerja Karyawan**

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the effects of leadership effectiveness and work motivation on employee performance, with affective commitment as a mediating variable at the Branch Offices of the Department of Education of North Maluku Province. The archipelagic nature of the region presents unique governance challenges, requiring adaptive leadership and strong motivation. Utilizing an exploratory quantitative approach, a sample of 89 respondents was selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected via structured Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using Path Analysis via SPSS 27. The results indicate that: (1) leadership effectiveness has no significant direct effect on employee performance; (2) work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance; (3) leadership effectiveness has no significant effect on affective commitment; (4) work motivation has a*

*positive and significant effect on affective commitment; (5) affective commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance; (6) leadership effectiveness has no significant indirect effect on performance through affective commitment; and (7) work motivation has a positive and significant indirect effect on employee performance through affective commitment. These findings imply that employee performance is more heavily driven by motivation and affective commitment than direct leadership. Institutional policies should focus on strengthening motivation and fostering employees' emotional attachment to the organization sustainably.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership Effectiveness, Work Motivation, Affective Commitment, Employee Performance*

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## INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources is a fundamental determinant of organizational success, particularly within public institutions responsible for delivering essential services. In the education sector, effective human resource management ensures that policies translate into high-quality services and equitable access (Yuniarti et al., 2021). Improving employee performance has therefore become a strategic priority for government agencies seeking to enhance public accountability.

The urgency of optimizing performance is highly evident in the Regional Branch Offices of the Education Department (Cabang Dinas Pendidikan) at the district and municipal levels in North Maluku Province, Indonesia. These frontline offices face significant administrative and logistical challenges due to North Maluku's archipelagic landscape, where vast maritime boundaries separate geographically dispersed islands. Employees must maintain exceptional adaptability and responsiveness despite severe transportation barriers and limited accessibility.

These persistent logistical constraints are reflected in the organizational performance of the North Maluku Provincial Education and Culture Office. Official reports show a continuous decline in the strategic Education Development Index, which dropped sharply from 99.27% in 2023, to 89.99% in 2024, and further down to 70.69% in 2025. This downward trend indicates that maintaining stable performance is increasingly difficult, making the improvement of frontline employee productivity an urgent managerial priority.

In a geographically challenging public sector, work motivation serves as a critical psychological process that energizes and sustains employee efforts (Luthans, 1998; Kanfer et al., 2008), allowing them to overcome administrative delays and communication barriers. Alongside motivation, leadership effectiveness is another vital factor expected to provide clear direction and enhance productivity. However, previous empirical findings regarding leadership's direct impact on performance remain inconsistent, suggesting that leadership may instead operate indirectly through internal psychological mechanisms.

Affective commitment—defined as an employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization—presents a plausible mediating mechanism. Employees with strong affective commitment demonstrate greater loyalty and voluntarily exert extra effort to achieve organizational goals (Asnaldi et al., 2023; Fatmawati et al., 2021).

Despite extensive literature on these variables, empirical evidence explaining how these relationships operate within public organizations in geographically fragmented archipelagic regions remains limited. Most existing research focuses on mainland urban settings or private institutions, leaving a significant gap in the understanding of regional government agencies operating under unique geographical constraints.

This study directly addresses this research gap by examining the influence of leadership effectiveness and work motivation on employee performance through the mediating role of affective commitment within the Regional Branch Offices of the Education Department in North Maluku Province. By integrating organizational and psychological perspectives, this research contributes empirical evidence to the literature on decentralized public sectors and offers practical insights for human resource management in remote island regions.

## METHOD

This explanatory quantitative study examines the direct and indirect relationships among leadership effectiveness, work motivation, affective commitment, and employee performance. The research was conducted at ten Regional Branch Offices of the Education Department across North Maluku Province from January to May 2026.

Out of a total population of 114 civil servants and PPPK employees, the sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 89 respondents selected through proportional random sampling (Sugiyono, 2019). Data were gathered via questionnaires (distributed in person and via Google Forms) and supported by secondary data from the 2023–2025 organizational Performance Reports (LKj).

The questionnaire measured four constructs using a five-point Likert scale: Leadership Effectiveness ( $X_1$ ), assessed through leader-member relationships, task structure, and positional power; Work Motivation ( $X_2$ ), involving achievement, responsibility, career advancement, job characteristics, and rewards; Affective Commitment ( $Y_1$ ), measured by organizational pride, emotional attachment, and loyalty; and Employee Performance ( $Y_2$ ), evaluated via work quality, quantity, timeliness, and attendance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prior to executing the primary structural pathway equations, a descriptive statistical overview highlighting the baseline demographic profile of the participants was systematically performed. This structural contextualization provides a clearer framework for interpreting the subsequent psychological and behavioral interactions among the observed workforce. The empirical data gathered from the total sample size of 89 respondents operating across the decentralized regional branch networks was compiled and evaluated. The focused distribution concerning the structural composition of the active public sector personnel across North Maluku Province is thoroughly organized and presented within Table 1 below:

**Table Demographic Profile and Characteristics of Respondents (N = 89)**

| Demographic Variables | Classification Categories | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender                | Male                      | 46            | 51.7%          |
|                       | Female                    | 43            | 48.3%          |

|                   |                             |           |               |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Age               | Under 40 Years Old          | 22        | 24.7%         |
|                   | 40 – 50 Years Old           | 52        | 58.4%         |
|                   | Over 50 Years Old           | 15        | 16.9%         |
| Employment Status | Civil Servants (PNS)        | 40        | 44.9%         |
|                   | Government Employees (PPPK) | 49        | 55.1%         |
| <b>Total</b>      |                             | <b>89</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

*Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026)*

Based on the explicit distribution illustrated in Table 1, the gender composition within the regional Branch Offices reveals a relatively balanced configuration, with male personnel comprising 51.7% of the total cohort, slightly outnumbering female counterparts who account for 48.3%. Looking structurally at the chronological maturity parameters, the workforce exhibits a heavily dense concentration within the mid-to-senior age tiers, where individuals aged between 40 and 50 years old represent the clear majority at 58.4%, while personnel over 50 years old constitute 16.9% of the administrative sample. This mature age profile strongly aligns with the operational reality of regional education branches, where leadership nodes are traditionally occupied by long-tenured personnel. Furthermore, the employment status distribution unveils an evolutionary composition within the modern administrative apparatus of North Maluku Province, where Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) emerged as the majority group representing 55.1% of the sample, compared to institutional Civil Servants (PNS) who constitute 44.9%. This specific composition reflects the ongoing bureaucratic paradigm shifts and localized civil service employment updates, indicating that the baseline public service delivery is actively sustained by a blend of highly experienced senior officers and emerging non-traditional public personnel.

### **Instrument Verification and Structural Path Results**

Before evaluating the primary structural model, a thorough verification of the operational research instruments was systematically conducted to guarantee complete data integrity. This instrumentation phase relies on two primary metric check blocks: internal validity testing and reliability testing. Based on the initial validity testing utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation method, every single measurement item embedded within the distributed questionnaires was officially declared valid. This structural conclusion was statistically substantiated because the calculated r-count values for all indicator points strictly exceeded the critical r-table threshold at a 5% statistical significance level, proving that each individual item accurately captured and reflected its intended research construct. A detailed summary of the validity coefficients for the indicators of Leadership Effectiveness, Work Motivation, Affective Commitment, and Employee Performance is thoroughly organized within Table 2 below:

**Table Validity Testing Results for Research Instruments**

| Research Variables                         | R-Count Range | R-Table Value | Empirical Status |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| Leadership Effectiveness (X <sub>1</sub> ) | 0.412 – 0.785 | 0.207         | Valid            |
| Work Motivation (X <sub>2</sub> )          | 0.456 – 0.812 | 0.207         | Valid            |
| Affective Commitment (Y <sub>1</sub> )     | 0.501 – 0.794 | 0.207         | Valid            |
| Employee Performance (Y <sub>2</sub> )     | 0.489 – 0.834 | 0.207         | Valid            |

*Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026)*

As clearly outlined in Table 2, all measurement variables exhibit an r-count configuration that sits well above the critical baseline minimum of 0.207 (for N = 89 at a 5% error margin). This confirms that no questionnaire statement suffers from measurement noise or conceptual misalignment, allowing all elements to progress safely into the reliability evaluation phase. Following the validation check, a reliability analysis was carried out to measure the internal consistency of the structural questions. The empirical output demonstrated that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for every single independent, mediating, and dependent variable safely exceeded the universally accepted baseline standard of 0.60, as detailed within Table 3 below:

**Table Reliability Testing Summary for Research Variables**

| Research Variables                         | Cronbach's Alpha | Reliability Threshold |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Leadership Effectiveness (X <sub>1</sub> ) | 0.842            | > 0.60                |
| Work Motivation (X <sub>2</sub> )          | 0.887            | > 0.60                |
| Affective Commitment (Y <sub>1</sub> )     | 0.815            | > 0.60                |
| Employee Performance (Y <sub>2</sub> )     | 0.891            | > 0.60                |

*Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026)*

The reliability metrics structured within Table 3 demonstrate that all structural components score significantly higher than the 0.60 threshold, with Employee Performance and Work Motivation leading at 0.891 and 0.887 respectively. This statistical confirmation indicates that the operational measurement scales possess an elite degree of stability and internal consistency, rendering the collected field data highly reliable for subsequent multivariate path modeling. Consequently, with all instrument verification parameters fully satisfied, the analysis advanced directly to the structural pathway execution.

The empirical evaluation of the structural path model was executed across two sequential, progressive linear regression phases designed to isolate direct and indirect structural dependencies. The first regression equation specifically isolated the structural capacity of behavioral antecedents—namely leadership effectiveness and work motivation—in driving the formation of employee affective commitment. The second structural equation evaluated the simultaneous, combined impacts of leadership effectiveness, work motivation, and the psychological mediator of affective

commitment on the ultimate dependent metric of employee performance. A comprehensive, formalized summary of the structural path coefficients, standardized beta values, and corresponding statistical significance indicators derived from the operationalized SPSS software output is structured within Table 4 below:

**Table Summary of Structural Path Coefficients and Statistical Significance Indicators**

| H  | Hypothetical Structural Path                                                                                 | Path Coefficient (Beta) | Significance Value (Sig.) | Empirical Conclusion         |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| H1 | Leadership Effectiveness (X1) -> Employee Performance (Y2)                                                   | 0.112                   | 0.245                     | Positive, Non-Significant    |
| H2 | Work Motivation (X2) -> Employee Performance (Y2)                                                            | 0.432                   | 0.000                     | Positive, Highly Significant |
| H3 | Leadership Effectiveness (X1) -> Affective Commitment (Y1)                                                   | 0.154                   | 0.188                     | Positive, Non-Significant    |
| H4 | Work Motivation (X2) -> Affective Commitment (Y1)                                                            | 0.580                   | 0.000                     | Positive, Highly Significant |
| H5 | Affective Commitment (Y1) -> Employee Performance (Y2)                                                       | 0.315                   | 0.002                     | Positive, Highly Significant |
| H6 | Affective Commitment (Y1) mediates the effect of Leadership Effectiveness (X1) on Employee Performance (Y2). | 0.3969                  | 1.96                      | Rejected                     |
| H7 | Affective Commitment (Y1) mediates the effect of Work Motivation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y2).          | 2.7514                  | 1.96                      | Accepted                     |

*Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026)*

## Discussion of Empirical Findings

### Exploring the Impact of Leadership Effectiveness on Performance

The multivariate statistical outputs reveal an intriguing empirical reality where leadership effectiveness does not exert a direct, statistically significant influence on actual employee performance metrics at the regional Branch Offices of the Education Department in North Maluku Province. This lack of direct significance is clearly evidenced by the calculated path coefficient of 0.112 coupled with a significance value that visibly exceeds the critical alpha threshold ( $\text{Sig. } 0.245 > 0.05$ ). This specific finding offers a compelling, contrarian theoretical contribution to public administration literature, as it deliberately challenges mainstream organizational assumptions that employee productivity is inherently and directly dependent upon the immediate, active behavior of executives. Within the localized administrative framework of North Maluku, this structural anomaly can be robustly interpreted through the lens of the Substitutes for Leadership Theory originally advanced by Kerr and Jermier. In highly

centralized regional public sector bureaucracies, the paths of task execution, service delivery operational rhythms, and individual employee targets are strictly formalized and pre-programmed by rigid structural regulations. The daily activities of the personnel are heavily governed by strict administrative frameworks, statutory mandates, and annual Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) handed down directly from the central provincial department office.

Consequently, the regional public servants predominantly execute their assigned vocational duties within highly structured, pre-defined regulatory parameters that operate independently of interpersonal relationships or localized managerial charisma. Because of this rigid administrative setup, direct interpersonal instructions, personal charisma, or ad-hoc adjustments in an individual leader's style do not yield substantial fluctuations in day-to-day workplace productivity. The employees clearly recognize that as long as they adhere rigorously to established SOPs, satisfy statutory compliance, and follow the technical manuals, the mandatory baseline of public service requirements is inherently met. The formal systems and entrenched institutional rules within the civil service framework effectively substitute for the active behavioral interventions of an immediate executive, anchoring organizational stability but rendering the direct path of leadership style non-significant in shifting performance margins. Furthermore, this institutional insulation implies that public service continuity in remote branches is structurally protected from leadership volatility, meaning that even if an executive exhibits suboptimal leadership capabilities, the baseline administrative outputs of the branch remain stable due to the automated nature of bureaucratic accountability.

### **Exploring the Critical Influence of Work Motivation on Performance**

In stark contrast to the leadership path, work motivation demonstrates an exceptionally powerful, directly positive, and highly significant contribution toward ultimate employee performance parameters. The structural standardized beta coefficient of 0.432, paired with an absolute significance level ( $\text{Sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$ ), underscores that any systematic organizational investment in cultivating employee work motivation will directly manifest as a substantial, observable increase in operational performance metrics across the department. Given the vast, uniquely challenging maritime geography separating the regional branch offices across North Maluku Province, field execution requires an intense level of internal psychological drive that surpasses standard institutional expectations. Public sector personnel deployed in archipelagic environments routinely face severe operational headwinds, ranging from highly erratic inter-island maritime transport networks and dangerous seasonal sea conditions to structural digital communication failures and unstable electricity grids in remote sub-districts.

Under these restrictive conditions, employees possessing elevated levels of intrinsic motivation demonstrate markedly superior operational resilience. This internal psychological drive is profoundly fueled by a sense of *batiniah* job satisfaction, an authentic ethical awareness of their public service accountability, and a deep moral duty toward the educational advancement of regional youth across marginalized island communities. High work motivation transforms the psychological profile of the civil servants, empowering them to actively seek creative workarounds and maintain high service consistency despite severe structural infrastructure deficiencies. When motivation is successfully nurtured, personnel do not view geographical boundaries or transport overloads as absolute barriers but rather as surmountable professional conditions, thereby directly advancing the qualitative and quantitative service outputs of the educational branch offices. This empirical reality reinforces the notion that in marginalized or physically isolated public sectors, the psychological energy of the workforce serves as the primary operational engine that compensates for material and structural deficits.

#### **Variable Structural Impacts on Employee Affective Commitment**

The structural path modeling demonstrates that leadership effectiveness fails to significantly participate in generating or altering employee affective commitment within this public institution, as indicated by the non-significant statistical parameters (Beta = 0.154, Sig. 0.188 > 0.05). Conversely, work motivation yields a profoundly robust, directly positive, and highly significant impact on the cultivation and structural retention of affective commitment, carrying an extensive path coefficient of 0.580 (Sig. 0.000 < 0.05). This divergent finding highlights a critical organizational reality regarding the psychological contract of civil servants in peripheral administrations. Authentic emotional attachment, genuine organizational pride, and sincere institutional loyalty among these public servants do not originate from interpersonal relationships, superficial leader traits, or individual executive styles.

Instead, this profound emotional alignment develops organically from within the employee when their daily motivational needs and psychological expectations are actively and systematically fulfilled by the work environment. Grounded in motivational theory, when a public institution successfully integrates institutional validation, provides transparent structures for career progression, and offers meaningful avenues for individual self-actualization, employees experience a structural cognitive shift. The fulfillment of these motivational drivers directly touches the psychological core of the personnel, prompting them to view the organization not merely as a source of material livelihood, but as a core extension of their personal and professional identity. Consequently, while formal leadership behavior remains a distant administrative reality overshadowed by impersonal guidelines, well-managed work

motivation acts as an immediate catalyst that naturally fosters a deep, long-term emotional bond and authentic vocational commitment to the public service mission, rendering the workforce structurally self-governing and emotionally resilient.

### **The Mediating Function of Affective Commitment as a Full Mediator**

The most vital structural breakthrough identified in this empirical framework is the verification of how affective commitment functions as a psychological mediator across different paths. Crucially, the Sobel test results confirm that affective commitment fails to mediate the relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee performance ( $t\text{-statistic} = 0.3969, p > 0.05$ ). This structural breakdown on the leadership path reinforces the reality that since leadership style does not alter the levels of organizational loyalty ( $X1 \rightarrow Y1$ ), it cannot be channeled through emotional mechanisms to shift final productivity margins. The daily operations within these remote branches rely heavily on formalized compliance and automated bureaucratic accountability, rather than the emotional influence of a supervisor.

In stark contrast, affective commitment successfully functions as a significant and robust mediator bridging internal work motivation directly to final employee performance outcomes ( $t\text{-statistic} = 2.7514, p < 0.05$ ). This full mediation effect is profoundly anchored in the unique demographic profile of the respondents within the regional Branch Offices of the Education Department in North Maluku Province, where the vast majority of the active workforce consists of long-tenured, senior civil servants. For public servants who have reached advanced professional maturity in terms of both career longevity and biological age, the underlying cognitive parameters guiding their workplace behavior have undergone a clear evolutionary shift.

For these mature individuals, the primary orientation toward daily work has transitioned away from the pursuit of short-term material rewards, competitive career maneuvering, or immediate extrinsic compliance. Instead, their professional focus is driven by deeper, values-based dedication and an internalized ethos of public service *pengabdian*. When high work motivation successfully triggers a robust affective commitment within these senior personnel, it activates an authentic willingness to dedicate their intellectual capital, time, and physical energy toward securing institutional goals. They are structurally inclined to engage in discretionary work behaviors that go far beyond basic contractual mandates, establishing a form of organic organizational citizenship behavior. This emotional loyalty serves as the single most critical social capital asset for public institutions operating in logistically isolated environments. In essence, the cultivation of a sincere affective commitment effectively serves as a structural lever, allowing genuine vocational dedication to actively mitigate, buffer, and compensate for the severe regional infrastructure deficits and geographical limitations inherent to an archipelagic territory.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings, this study concludes that leadership effectiveness does not exert a significant direct or indirect influence on employee performance or affective commitment at the Regional Branch Offices of the Education Department in North Maluku Province. The highly formalized civil service framework, coupled with a demographic dominated by highly experienced senior employees, effectively substitutes for active leadership behavioral interventions, allowing the baseline administrative outputs of the branch to remain stable independently of executive style. Conversely, work motivation demonstrates an exceptionally powerful contribution, directly and indirectly enhancing both affective commitment and final employee performance metrics. Through Sobel test evaluation, affective commitment is proven to be a vital mediating mechanism that channels work motivation into enhanced performance, transforming internal drives into long-term organizational loyalty and structural resilience against archipelagic logistical deficits.

From a practical perspective, the Regional Branch Offices of the Education Department in North Maluku Province should prioritize human resource strategies aimed at maintaining internal work motivation through transparent career growth, supportive environments, and non-financial recognition. Efforts should focus on fostering a deep sense of organizational belonging and emotional attachment rather than relying purely on top-down, structural commands. Although leadership effectiveness did not yield direct performance shifts, executives are encouraged to adopt a more participative and transformational approach to better support the psychological well-being of the workforce. Finally, future studies should introduce additional institutional variables such as organizational culture, workload, and physical work facilities across diverse generational cohorts to enrich the empirical understanding of public sector performance under complex geographical constraints.

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