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The Mediating Role Of Work Motivation In The Effect Of Leadership And Competence On Personnel Performance At The Professional And Security Affairs Division Of The Bali Regional Police

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Abstract

Effective institutional performance within police oversight functions depends heavily on how leadership and competence shape personnel motivation and work outcomes. This study examines the direct and indirect effects of leadership and competence on personnel performance, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable, among 125 personnel at Bidpropam of the Bali Regional Police. A quantitative causal design was employed, using census sampling, a validated five-point Likert questionnaire, and path analysis complemented by Sobel testing to assess mediation. Findings reveal that leadership and competence each significantly strengthen work motivation and personnel performance, while work motivation itself significantly enhances performance; however, motivation mediates only the competence-performance pathway, not the leadership-performance pathway, reflecting the division's hierarchical, command-driven character. These results indicate that competence-driven confidence fosters motivation more effectively than directive leadership alone. The study concludes that strengthening leadership control practices, personnel self-concept, recognition systems, and technical proficiency are essential strategies for sustaining optimal, accountable performance within professional and security oversight units.

Keywords: leadership; competence; work motivation; personnel performance; mediation

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive institutional environment, organizations are required to continuously strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of every operational dimension, particularly the performance of their human resources. Individual performance within an organization is shaped not only by technical skill but also by the interaction between leadership quality, employee competence, and the level of work motivation they generate (Mangkunegara, 2011). Leadership stands out as a primary determinant of workplace culture, team morale, and behavioral outcomes, since leaders who provide clear direction, open communication, and consistent support tend to cultivate a positive climate that directly stimulates employees' willingness to perform (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Alongside leadership, competence encompassing technical proficiency as well as social and behavioral skill constitutes a foundational asset that enables employees to translate knowledge and attitude into effective task execution (Rahmat & Basalamah, 2019). Work motivation frequently functions as the psychological bridge connecting these input variables to performance outcomes, and recent empirical evidence confirms that motivation significantly mediates the relationship between leadership, competence, and employee performance (Rahmawan et al., 2024). This mediating pattern has been corroborated across sectoral contexts, where transformational leadership was shown to enhance performance through heightened motivation among public-sector employees, while competence has similarly been found to elevate motivation and, in turn, performance within regional government settings (Prianka & Trisnawati, 2022).

These theoretical relationships carry particular relevance for the Professional and Security Affairs Division (Bidpropam) of the Bali Regional Police, an internal oversight unit responsible for safeguarding the professionalism, discipline, and integrity of police personnel across six operational sub-divisions comprising 125 officers. Preliminary observation within this division reveals unresolved concerns regarding leadership practice namely inconsistent and centralized decision-making, formalistic rather than psychologically responsive motivational efforts, predominantly one-directional communication, imbalanced supervisory control, and occasional emotional volatility among superiors. Parallel concerns emerge in the competence domain, where personnel display uneven intrinsic drive, limited self-confidence in exercising professional judgment, uneven regulatory understanding, and inconsistent technical and analytical skill. These conditions coincide with fluctuating levels of work motivation and uneven performance outcomes, ranging from commendable case-handling efficiency to delayed processing and inconsistent documentation. Such phenomena justify a systematic investigation into

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how leadership and competence influence personnel performance, and the extent to which work motivation mediates that influence within this strategic law-enforcement unit.

Based on this background, the study addresses the following research problems: (1) how leadership influences work motivation; (2) how competence influences work motivation; (3) how leadership influences personnel performance; (4) how competence influences personnel performance; (5) how work motivation influences personnel performance; (6) how leadership influences personnel performance through work motivation; and (7) how competence influences personnel performance through work motivation, all within Bidpropam of the Bali Regional Police.

Correspondingly, this study aims to examine and analyze the direct effects of leadership and competence on work motivation, the direct effects of leadership, competence, and work motivation on personnel performance, and the indirect effects of leadership and competence on personnel performance as mediated by work motivation within this division.

The findings are expected to yield both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the study contributes to the development of human resource management literature, particularly regarding how leadership and competence shape motivational and performance dynamics within security and law-enforcement institutions. Practically, the results are intended to inform division leadership in formulating evidence-based strategies to strengthen leadership practices, enhance personnel competence, and cultivate sustained work motivation, thereby supporting optimal and accountable performance across the division's oversight functions.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with a causal approach, aimed at examining the direct and indirect effects of leadership and competence on personnel performance, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable. The population comprised all 125 personnel of the Professional and Security Affairs Division (Bidpropam) of the Bali Regional Police, distributed across six operational sub-divisions. Given that the population size fell below the conventional threshold requiring proportional sampling, a census technique was applied, whereby the entire population was designated as respondents rather than a drawn subsample (Arikunto, 2021). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire measuring indicators of leadership, competence, work motivation, and personnel performance, supplemented by in-depth interviews and documentary review to enrich contextual understanding. Each questionnaire item was

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scored using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, a widely adopted instrument for capturing individual perceptions and attitudes within organizational research (Sugiyono, 2023). Prior to substantive analysis, the research instrument underwent validity testing, with items considered valid at a correlation coefficient of at least 0.30, and reliability testing, with internal consistency confirmed through a Cronbach's Alpha threshold of at least 0.60. Classical assumption tests normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were subsequently conducted to ensure the regression model's suitability for unbiased estimation. The primary analytical technique applied was path analysis, an extension of multiple linear regression designed to estimate causal relationships among predetermined variables based on established theory, allowing simultaneous examination of both direct and indirect pathways. Two structural equations were formulated to represent, respectively, the influence of leadership and competence on work motivation, and the combined influence of leadership, competence, and work motivation on personnel performance. The significance of each path coefficient was evaluated against a 0.05 probability threshold, while the mediating role of work motivation in the indirect pathways was further tested using the Sobel Test, with a Z-value exceeding 1.98 indicating a statistically significant mediation effect.

RESULT

Descriptive analysis of the four research constructs revealed predominantly favorable perceptions among respondents. Leadership recorded the highest mean score, placing it in the very good category, whereas competence, work motivation, and personnel performance each fell within the good category, with self-concept, physical-need fulfillment, and work quality emerging as the comparatively weaker indicators within their respective constructs.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean Score	Category
Leadership (X1)	4.43	Very Good
Competence (X2)	4.20	Good
Work Motivation (Y1)	4.23	Good
Personnel Performance (Y2)	4.29	Good

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Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement instrument was evaluated for validity and reliability. All items across the four constructs produced corrected item-total correlation coefficients well above the 0.30 threshold, and each construct achieved a Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.60, confirming that the instrument was both valid and internally consistent.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Correlation Coefficient Range	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Leadership (X1)	0.866–0.919	0.935	Valid & Reliable
Competence (X2)	0.650–0.786	0.781	Valid & Reliable
Work Motivation (Y1)	0.816–0.938	0.908	Valid & Reliable
Personnel Performance (Y2)	0.600–0.881	0.853	Valid & Reliable

Classical assumption testing confirmed the regression model's suitability for unbiased estimation. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of .200, exceeding the .05 significance threshold and indicating normally distributed residuals. Tolerance values for all predictors exceeded 0.10 with corresponding VIF values below 10, ruling out multicollinearity, while the Glejser test yielded significance values above .05 for all variables, indicating homoscedasticity. The overall model fit, derived from the total coefficient of determination across both structural sub-models, reached 0.723, indicating that leadership, competence, and work motivation jointly accounted for 72.3% of the variance in personnel performance, with the remaining 27.7% attributable to factors outside the model.

Path analysis results, summarized in Table 3, demonstrate that five of the seven hypothesized relationships were statistically significant at the direct-effect level, while Sobel testing of the two indirect pathways yielded divergent outcomes for the mediating role of work motivation.

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Table 3. Path Analysis Results: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

No.	Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Sig.	Decision
1	Leadership → Work Motivation	0.317		.000	Supported
2	Competence → Work Motivation	0.515		.000	Supported
3	Leadership → Performance	0.326		.003	Supported
4	Competence → Performance	0.472		.000	Supported
5	Work Motivation → Performance	0.243		.039	Supported
6	Leadership → Performance via Motivation		0.103 (Z=1.84)		Not Supported
7	Competence → Performance via Motivation		0.168 (Z=1.98)		Supported

The resulting structural model, integrating all significant direct pathways alongside the two tested indirect pathways, is presented in Figure 1.

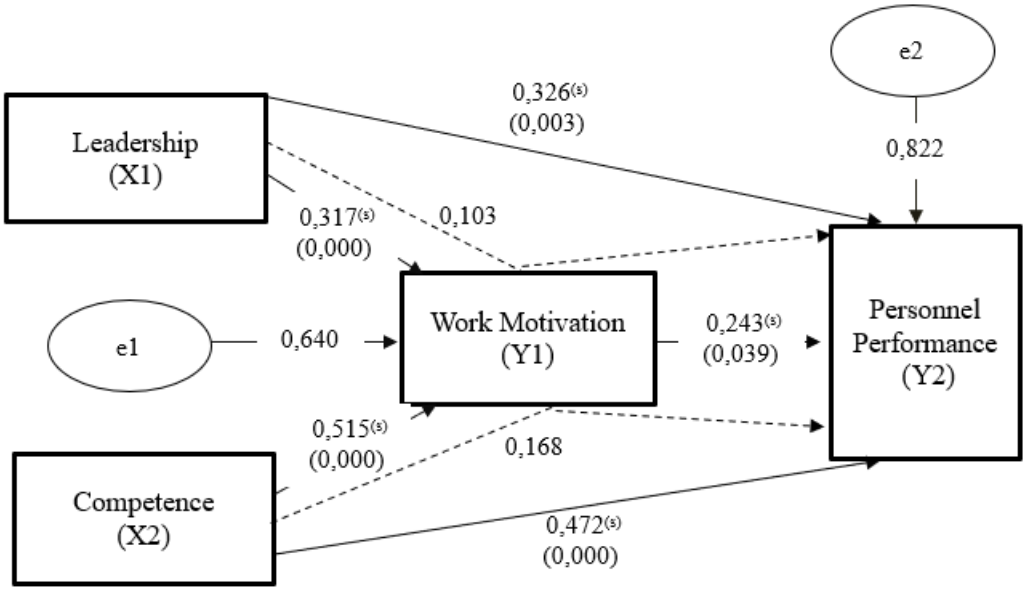


Figure 1. Final path model illustrating the direct and indirect relationships

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DISCUSSION

The Influence of Leadership on Work Motivation

The results confirm that leadership exerts a positive and significant effect on work motivation, indicating that stronger leadership practice corresponds with higher motivational levels among personnel. Leadership can be understood as the process through which a leader influences, directs, and guides subordinates toward accomplishing agreed organizational objectives (Terry, 2021). Within Bidpropam of the Bali Regional Police, clear directive capacity, consistent guidance, and harmonious superior-subordinate relations appear to translate into stronger internal drive among personnel, a pattern consistent with prior findings that effective leadership significantly elevates employee motivation (Anisatuzzuhriah et al., 2023).

The Influence of Competence on Work Motivation

Competence was also found to significantly enhance work motivation, suggesting that personnel with stronger knowledge, skill, and self-concept exhibit greater enthusiasm toward their duties. Competence can be defined as an individual's underlying characteristic that is causally linked to effective or superior job performance (Rachmaniza, 2020). Personnel who feel adequately equipped to handle professional responsibilities tend to display greater confidence and initiative, a relationship corroborated by prior research demonstrating that competence enhancement strengthens motivational outcomes, particularly when competence aligns with job demands (Pasulu et al., 2023).

The Influence of Leadership on Personnel Performance

Leadership was similarly shown to exert a direct, positive, and significant influence on personnel performance. Leadership represents an effort to influence others by providing encouragement and guidance in pursuing shared objectives (Badu & Djafri, 2017). Within a hierarchically structured law-enforcement unit such as Bidpropam, decisive direction, effective communication, and balanced supervisory control appear to translate directly into improved task execution, aligning with prior evidence that effective leadership styles cultivate commitment and elevate employee performance (Ramadhani & Indawati, 2021).

The Influence of Competence on Personnel Performance

Competence likewise demonstrated a significant direct effect on personnel performance, indicating that better-equipped personnel achieve stronger work outcomes.

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Competence reflects an individual's marketable capability, manifested through creativity and innovation in task execution (Sinaga et al., 2019). Personnel who possess sound knowledge, favorable dispositions, and adequate technical skill are better positioned to complete assignments accurately and efficiently, consistent with prior findings that competence development through training improves work quality and task timeliness (Alamsyah et al., 2025).

The Influence of Work Motivation on Personnel Performance

Work motivation was found to significantly and positively influence personnel performance, confirming that higher motivational levels correspond with stronger work outcomes. Work motivation constitutes the internal and external forces that drive an individual's persistence and direction of effort (Luthans et al., 2020). Personnel whose physical, safety, social, and esteem needs are reasonably met tend to demonstrate greater discipline and commitment, a pattern echoed in prior studies showing that motivation particularly its intrinsic dimension substantially strengthens individual performance outcomes (Nurudin, 2020).

The Influence of Leadership on Personnel Performance through Work Motivation

Contrary to expectation, work motivation did not significantly mediate the relationship between leadership and personnel performance, as the Sobel Z-value of 1.84 fell short of the 1.98 critical threshold. This outcome suggests that leadership within Bidpropam translates into performance largely through direct command, supervision, and structured accountability rather than by first cultivating motivational states an interpretation consistent with the division's hierarchical, discipline-oriented organizational character. This finding diverges from prior studies reporting significant mediation of motivation between leadership and performance (Fajrin & Susilo, 2018), a divergence plausibly attributable to the more formal and command-based structure of police institutions relative to conventional organizational settings (Hidayat, 2026).

The Influence of Competence on Personnel Performance through Work Motivation

In contrast, work motivation was confirmed to significantly mediate the relationship between competence and personnel performance, with a Sobel Z-value of 1.98 meeting the critical threshold. This indicates that competence enhances performance not only directly but also indirectly by first strengthening personnel's confidence and internal drive, which subsequently translates into more disciplined and responsible work behavior. This

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result reinforces prior research demonstrating that motivation functions as a meaningful mediating mechanism linking competence to performance in comparable government and law-enforcement settings (Rahmawan et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that leadership and competence each exert positive and significant direct effects on both work motivation and personnel performance within Bidpropam of the Bali Regional Police, while work motivation itself significantly enhances personnel performance, confirming that a leadership style marked by clear direction and emotional steadiness, together with well-developed personnel competence, jointly cultivates a workforce that is motivated, disciplined, and effective in fulfilling its oversight duties. Notably, work motivation does not mediate the leadership-performance relationship, implying that performance gains stem more directly from command, supervision, and structured accountability inherent to the division's hierarchical character, whereas motivation meaningfully bridges the competence-performance relationship, indicating that competence translates into stronger outcomes partly by strengthening personnel's confidence and internal drive. Accordingly, division leadership is encouraged to strengthen subordinate-control practices through more structured supervision and periodic evaluation, reinforce personnel's self-concept via mentoring, career development, and relevant training, adopt more objective and merit-based recognition systems to sustain motivation, and prioritize technical coaching and continuous quality evaluation to elevate work outcomes. Future inquiry should extend this model to other police oversight units and incorporate additional explanatory variables such as organizational culture, work discipline, and job satisfaction to capture the remaining variance in personnel performance beyond leadership, competence, and motivation.

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