



The Influence Of Leadership Style, Employee Loyalty, And Work Motivation On Employee Performance At PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill (PKS)

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the importance of improving employee performance as a key factor in achieving organizational goals at PT. Mitra Puding Mas's palm oil mill. Employee performance is influenced by several internal factors, particularly leadership style, job loyalty, and work motivation. An effective leadership style can guide and influence employee behavior; job loyalty reflects commitment to the company; and work motivation serves as a driving force in improving productivity and work quality. This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership style, job loyalty, and work motivation on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. The study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method via a questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression with the aid of SPSS, accompanied by validity and reliability tests, as well as hypothesis testing via t-tests and F-tests. The results of the study indicate that leadership style and work motivation have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, while job loyalty has a significant negative effect on employee performance. Collectively, leadership style, job loyalty, and work motivation have a significant effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas's palm oil mill. These findings suggest that improving leadership style and work motivation can enhance employee performance, while job loyalty needs to be managed more effectively to contribute optimally to improved employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid industrial growth has intensified business competition, compelling companies to enhance organizational efficiency and competitiveness. In this context, human resource management plays a crucial role, as it directly contributes to productivity, efficiency, and the

sustainability of company operations (Blau, 1964). Employees who demonstrate optimal performance and high levels of loyalty constitute strategic assets in responding to the increasingly complex dynamics of the business environment (Bernardin & Russell, 1993).

Palm oil processing companies are characterized by operational demands that require continuity in production processes, strict target achievement, and compliance with high quality standards. Continuous production processes necessitate consistent employee performance to maintain operational efficiency and ensure that product quality remains in accordance with established standards. Therefore, employee performance is a key determinant of a company's operational success (Bernardin & Russell, 1993).

However, these high performance demands are not always matched by optimal human resource conditions. Based on preliminary observations and internal information, PT Mitra Puding Mas faces several issues that may affect employee performance, including a reduction in the number of employees during the 2024/2025 period by six individuals, suboptimal achievement of production targets at 19.89% compared to the 20% target, and ongoing non-compliance with work procedures.

These conditions have had an impact on production quality, as indicated by the moisture content of CPO that still exceeds the maximum limit of 0.25%. In addition, differences in levels of discipline, work enthusiasm, and the quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates suggest variations in employee loyalty, work motivation, and leadership effectiveness. If not managed effectively, these conditions may reduce production effectiveness and disrupt the sustainability of company operations.

This empirical phenomenon indicates that employee performance issues cannot be separated from internal organizational factors. Conceptually, employee performance is influenced by both internal and external organizational factors, where internal factors include leadership, loyalty, work motivation, competence, and organizational culture, while external factors encompass market conditions and regulations. Among these internal factors, leadership plays a strategic role, as it is directly related to leaders' ability to direct, influence, and guide employees toward achieving organizational goals effectively (Yukl, 2013). Effective leadership styles contribute to the creation of harmonious working relationships, a conducive work environment, and improved individual and team performance (Yukl, 2013).

In addition to leadership, loyalty and work motivation also play important roles in shaping employee behavior and performance. Loyalty reflects the level of individual commitment to the organization, manifested through compliance with regulations and a willingness to make optimal contributions, thereby helping to maintain performance stability and reduce turnover rates (Allen & Meyer, 1997). Work motivation refers to internal and external drivers that influence the intensity, direction, and persistence of employees' work behavior. High levels of motivation contribute positively to productivity and work engagement, whereas low motivation may lead to declines in work quality and discipline (Maslow, 1970; Blau, 1964).

Although leadership, loyalty, and work motivation are theoretically believed to influence employee performance, empirical research findings have been mixed. Several studies have found that leadership style, loyalty, and work motivation have a significant effect on employee performance (Saputra, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Muttaqin et al., 2023; Ginting et al., 2023). Conversely, other studies indicate that the effects of these variables are not directly significant, but are instead mediated or influenced by other variables such as job satisfaction, work discipline, and organizational culture (Sari & Nugroho, 2022; Putra et al., 2023). These differing findings suggest that the relationships among variables are contextual and influenced by organizational characteristics and the work environment. Nevertheless, studies that simultaneously examine the effects of leadership style, loyalty, and work motivation on employee performance in the palm oil processing industry remain relatively limited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains that social relationships among individuals are formed through exchange processes based on the principle of reciprocity (Blau, 1964). Within this theory, individuals are viewed as rational actors who evaluate the benefits and costs of each social interaction, both material and non-material in nature. These exchanges involve resources such as support, recognition, information, and fairness, which subsequently influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Evaluations of social exchanges determine individuals' tendencies to reciprocate the treatment they receive through positive behaviors, such as increased loyalty, commitment, motivation, and performance (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1974). The norm of reciprocity serves as the primary mechanism governing the sustainability of social relationships; thus, fair and supportive treatment within organizations fosters emotional attachment as well as constructive and sustainable work behaviors (Gouldner, 1960).

Bernardin and Russell (Bernardin & Russell, 1993) define employee performance as the observable and measurable outcomes of work-related behavior in carrying out assigned duties and responsibilities. Performance reflects not only work results but also the quality of work behavior, such as efficiency, effectiveness, compliance with procedures, and contributions to organizational goals, all of which are influenced by ability, motivation, and support from the work environment. Furthermore, Robbins and Judge (Robbins & Judge, 2013), as well as Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (Campbell et al., 1993), view employee performance as a multidimensional construct resulting from the interaction between individual abilities, motivation, and work environment conditions. Performance is assessed not only based on the achievement of work standards and targets, but also through behavioral dimensions such as discipline, integrity, cooperation, initiative, and adaptability, as well as outcome dimensions reflected in output quality and contributions to overall organizational success.

Leadership style is understood as the pattern of behaviors exhibited by leaders in influencing, directing, and motivating subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Yukl, 2013). These behavioral patterns are reflected in how leaders make decisions, communicate, provide guidance, build working relationships, and adapt their actions to task characteristics, environmental conditions, and subordinates' needs. Leadership effectiveness is not determined by a single style, but rather by the leader's ability to be adaptive and contextual in responding to dynamic organizational situations (Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2019). In line with this perspective, leadership style functions as a strategic mechanism that influences subordinates' attitudes, motivation, commitment, and performance through flexible and situational approaches (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Selecting leadership styles that are aligned with subordinates' competence levels, task characteristics, and organizational context—whether instructive, participative, delegative, transactional, or transformational—contributes to enhanced work effectiveness and the achievement of optimal performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2013). Accordingly, leadership style is viewed as a set of adaptive behaviors that plays a critical role in shaping effective working relationships and supporting improvements in both individual and organizational performance.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach because the data collected are numerical in nature and are analyzed using statistical methods to objectively examine the relationships among variables. According to Sugiyono (2017), a quantitative approach enables researchers to measure phenomena in a structured manner, test hypotheses, and draw conclusions that can be generalized to a specific population. This study is explanatory research, as it aims to explain causal relationships between independent and dependent variables through empirical testing.

The independent variables in this study include leadership style (X_1), employee loyalty (X_2), and work motivation (X_3), while the dependent variable is employee performance (Y). To analyze these relationships, this study employs multiple linear regression analysis. The selection of multiple linear regression is based on the research objective of examining the effects of more than one independent variable on a single dependent variable, both partially and simultaneously, thereby allowing the researcher to determine the relative contribution of each independent variable to employee performance (Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis using Sugiyono's (2019) approach, all research variables fall within the "good" category. These include leadership style (X_1) with a mean score of 4.23, employee loyalty (X_2) at 4.20, work motivation (X_3) at 4.22, and employee performance (Y) at 4.17, all of which are within the Likert scale range of 3.41–4.20. These results indicate that respondents' perceptions of the four variables tend to be positive; however, the findings are descriptive in nature and do not demonstrate causal relationships among the variables.

Furthermore, the instrument quality tests indicate that all statement items are valid, as the Corrected Item–Total Correlation values (r calculated) exceed the r table value (0.167), and reliable, as all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70. Specifically, leadership style has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.932, employee loyalty 0.897, work motivation 0.907, and employee performance 0.853. Therefore, the data obtained are considered reliable and suitable for use in further analysis.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was conducted to examine the effects of Leadership Style (X_1), Loyalty (X_2), and Work Motivation (X_3) on Employee Performance (Y). The results of the analysis are presented as follows:

Table 1. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Leadership Style (X_1), Loyalty (X_2), and Work Motivation (X_3) on Employee Performance (Y)
Coefficients^a

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	10.656	2.111	—	5.049	0.000
	TOTAL_X1 (Leadership Style)	0.776	0.264	1.021	2.943	0.004
	TOTAL_X2 (Loyalty)	-1.013	0.331	-0.926	-3.058	0.003
	TOTAL_X3 (Work Motivation)	0.608	0.135	0.668	4.505	0.000

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (Y)

Coefficient of Determination (R Square)

The coefficient of determination (R Square) is used to determine the extent to which all independent variables jointly contribute to or explain the dependent variable. The R^2 value is presented in the following model summary table:

Table 2. Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R Square)**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.793 ^a	0.629	0.621	3.331

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

Predictors: Leadership Style (X_1), Loyalty (X_2), and Work Motivation (X_3)**t-Test (Partial Test)**

The partial hypothesis test is used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable individually. This test is conducted by examining the significance values in the following coefficient table:

Table 3. t-Test (Partial Test)**Coefficients^a**

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	10.656	2.111	—	5.049	0.000
	TOTAL_X1 (Leadership Style)	0.776	0.264	1.021	2.943	0.004
	TOTAL_X2 (Loyalty)	-1.013	0.331	-0.926	-3.058	0.003
	TOTAL_X3 (Work Motivation)	0.608	0.135	0.668	4.505	0.000

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (Y)

F-Test (Simultaneous Test)

The simultaneous hypothesis test is used to determine the effect of all independent variables collectively on the dependent variable. This test can be conducted by observing the significance value (Sig.) in the ANOVA table. If the significance value is below 5% (0.05), then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, meaning that the research hypothesis is supported.

Table 4. F-Test (Simultaneous Test)**ANOVA^a**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2519.034	3	839.678	75.692	0.000 ^b
Residual	1486.503	134	11.093		
Total	4005.536	137			

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

^aDependent Variable: Employee Performance (Y)^bPredictors: Leadership Style (X_1), Loyalty (X_2), Work Motivation (X_3)**DISCUSSION**

The discussion in this study aims to explain the meaning of the results obtained from data analysis. Each finding is elaborated in detail with reference to theories and previous studies, in order to provide a clear picture of the conditions occurring in the field as well as the relationships among the variables under investigation.

The Effect of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

The results show that leadership style (X_1) has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Y). This is indicated by a t -value of 2.943 with a significance level of 0.004 (<0.05), meaning that the hypothesis is accepted. The regression coefficient of 0.776 indicates that an improvement in leadership style is followed by an increase in employee performance. Descriptively, leadership style is categorized as good with a mean score of 4.23. Relatively high scores are observed in the ability to provide direction, make decisions, and deliver work instructions, while some aspects such as working relationships and communication still show lower variation. This indicates that the directive function has been implemented well, but interpersonal aspects still need improvement. The research instrument is considered valid, with all items meeting validity criteria (r calculated > 0.167) and a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.932, indicating very high reliability.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with Rivai and Mulyadi (2019), who state that leadership style refers to how leaders influence and direct subordinates to achieve organizational goals. This is also supported by Goleman (2000), Northouse (2019), Robbins and Judge (2019), and Yukl (2013), who emphasize the importance of adaptive leadership in improving employee performance. Empirically, these findings align with Saputra (2020) and Khan, Rehman, and Butt (2020), who found a positive effect of leadership style on performance. However, other studies suggest that the effect may be indirect through mediating variables. These differences may be influenced by organizational conditions and employee characteristics. Overall, leadership style plays an important role in improving employee performance, where its effectiveness depends on the leader's ability to manage interpersonal relationships and adapt leadership approaches to subordinate needs and organizational conditions.

The Effect of Employee Loyalty on Employee Performance

The results show that employee loyalty (X_2) has a significant effect on employee performance (Y) at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill. This is evidenced by a t -value of -3.058 with a significance level of 0.003 (<0.05), meaning that the hypothesis is accepted. The regression coefficient of -1.013 indicates a significant effect with a negative direction. This means that an increase in loyalty in this study is followed by a decrease in employee performance.

This finding is supported by Meyer and Allen (1991), who state that continuance commitment causes employees to remain in an organization due to perceived costs of leaving rather than a drive to improve performance. In addition, Becker's (1960) side-bet theory explains that individuals tend to stay in their jobs due to accumulated investments of time, experience, and economic necessity, meaning that loyalty does not necessarily lead to higher productivity. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) also argue that organizational loyalty does not always result in optimal performance if attachment is more administrative than psychological.

Descriptively, employee loyalty is categorized as good with a mean score of 4.20. This indicates that most employees have emotional attachment, compliance with company rules, commitment to remain in the organization, and relatively high dedication. In addition, 80.40% of employees have more than six years of tenure, indicating strong loyalty and attachment to the company. However, regression results show that high loyalty does not necessarily lead to higher performance. This can be explained by the dominance of continuance commitment, where employees remain due to economic needs, job security, and employment continuity rather than performance-driven motivation. In such conditions, employees stay in the organization because they need the job, but do not always demonstrate optimal productivity.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organizational commitment consists of three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. In this study, employee loyalty is assumed to be dominated by continuance commitment rather than affective commitment, thus not directly driving performance improvement. This finding contradicts Robbins and Judge (2019), who argue that high loyalty and organizational commitment generally improve

productivity and performance. It is also inconsistent with Maulida and Askiah (2020), Sandi, Junita, and Aditi (2021), and Susanto (2025), who found a positive and significant relationship between loyalty and performance. However, this study is consistent with Sari and Nugroho (2022) and Putra et al. (2023), who found that loyalty does not always positively affect performance. This may be because employee performance is influenced by other factors such as work motivation, reward systems, job satisfaction, organizational culture, work environment, and leadership style. Additionally, a negative effect may arise from a comfort zone among long-tenured employees, reducing productivity, innovation, and discipline. In conclusion, employee loyalty has a significant effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas, but with a negative direction. Therefore, the company should not only maintain employee loyalty but also improve motivation, reward systems, career development, and performance supervision.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results show that work motivation (X_3) has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Y). This is indicated by a t-value of 4.505 with a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05), meaning that the hypothesis is accepted. The regression coefficient of 0.608 indicates that an increase in work motivation is followed by an increase in employee performance. Descriptively, work motivation is categorized as good with a mean score of 4.22. Relatively high values are found in indicators such as work relationships, trust, and responsibility, while some other aspects are lower. This indicates that motivational drivers are generally well implemented but not yet evenly distributed across all aspects.

This finding is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1970), which states that motivation arises from the fulfillment of physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Empirically, this is in line with Muttaqin et al. (2023) and Putri Andari (2022), who found that work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance. However, other studies suggest that the effect may not be significant without organizational support factors. Thus, work motivation is proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, making it an important factor in improving performance outcomes.

Overall Interpretation

The results show that leadership style, employee loyalty, and work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on employee performance, as indicated by a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05) in the F-test. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.629 (62.9%) indicates that most of the variation in employee performance can be explained by these three variables, while the remainder is influenced by other factors outside the model. Partially, employee loyalty is the most dominant variable based on the absolute coefficient value, followed by work motivation and leadership style, although the direction of loyalty's effect is negative in this model. This indicates that employee attachment, motivation, and leadership direction collectively contribute significantly to changes in employee performance. Descriptively, all variables are categorized as good, although some aspects still show relatively lower values, such as long-term commitment, reward systems, and career development, indicating room for improvement to further enhance employee performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study regarding the influence of leadership style, employee loyalty, and work motivation on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill. This indicates that the better the leadership style implemented, the higher the employee performance. Leaders who are able to provide direction, make

decisions, and build effective work communication can improve employee work effectiveness. Employee loyalty has a significant effect on employee performance; however, the direction of the relationship is negative. This finding indicates that high loyalty does not necessarily lead to improved employee performance. This condition is presumed to occur because employee loyalty is more influenced by economic needs, job security, and long tenure, so that attachment to the organization is not always accompanied by increased productivity.

Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill. This shows that the higher the employees' work motivation, the higher their performance. Work motivation is an important factor in encouraging work enthusiasm, responsibility, and achievement of work targets. Based on the t-test results, leadership style, employee loyalty, and work motivation each have a significant partial effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill. This is indicated by significance values below 0.05, namely 0.004 for leadership style, 0.003 for employee loyalty, and 0.000 for work motivation. Thus, all research hypotheses are accepted. Leadership style and work motivation have a positive effect on employee performance, while employee loyalty has a negative effect on employee performance.

Simultaneously, leadership style, employee loyalty, and work motivation have a significant effect on employee performance at PT. Mitra Puding Mas Palm Oil Mill. This is proven by the F-test result with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. The coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.629 indicates that 62.9% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by leadership style, employee loyalty, and work motivation, while the remaining 37.1% is influenced by other factors outside this study.

Based on the research findings, all variables are categorized as good to very good. However, the company still needs to improve several aspects such as interpersonal relations of leaders, reward systems, career development, and the management of employee loyalty in order to further enhance productivity and employee performance optimally.

LIMITATION

The company is expected to improve the quality of its leadership style, particularly in terms of communication, interpersonal relationships, and approaches to employees. Leaders need to be more adaptive, open, and able to provide clear direction so that employees feel more motivated in their work.

The company needs to manage employee loyalty more effectively so that high loyalty can be aligned with improved performance. This can be achieved through the provision of rewards, objective performance evaluations, career development systems, and increased employee involvement in company activities.

The company is advised to enhance employee work motivation through the provision of incentives, recognition of work achievements, training opportunities, and the creation of a comfortable and conducive work environment so that employees' work enthusiasm can continue to increase.

The company needs to conduct regular and transparent performance evaluations so that each employee clearly understands the work targets that must be achieved. A clear performance appraisal system can help improve discipline, responsibility, and work productivity.

Considering that most employees have relatively long tenure, the company should encourage innovation and competency development to prevent employees from falling into a comfort zone that may reduce work productivity.

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