

THE MEDIATION ROLE OF WORK MOTIVATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPETENCY, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SATPOL PP AND WH EMPLOYEES IN LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture on employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable. This research was conducted at the Pamong Praja and Wilayatul Hisbah Police Unit (Satpol PP and WH) of Lhokseumawe City. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a sample of 186 respondents determined through the Slovin formula and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results of the study show that competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture have a positive and significant effect on work motivation. In addition, competence, transformational leadership, organizational culture, and work motivation also have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The main finding of this study is that work motivation is proven to partially mediate the influence of competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture on employee performance. Thus, improving employee performance requires strengthening competencies, transformational leadership, and organizational culture in an integrated manner, with work motivation as a psychological mechanism that strengthens the influence of these three variables.

Keywords: Competence, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture, Work Motivation, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the strategic environment of the public sector in recent years have pushed government organizations to operate more effectively, adaptively, and prioritize quality public service. Bureaucratic reform no longer focuses solely on administrative aspects but also demands increased human resource capacity, strengthened accountability, and sustained optimization of organizational performance. In the context of modern governance, the quality of the apparatus is a key factor determining the success of public organizations in carrying out their service, oversight, and regulatory enforcement functions.

In Indonesia, strengthening bureaucratic reform continues through various government policies aimed at increasing the effectiveness of public organizations. The success of bureaucratic reform is generally reflected in improved public service quality, achievement of organizational targets, strengthened performance accountability, and the ability of civil servants to carry out their duties professionally. Therefore, employee performance is a crucial aspect in determining the success of public sector organizations. Robbins and Judge (2022) explain that employee performance is a key factor influencing organizational effectiveness because it is directly related to the achievement of organizational goals and the quality of services provided to the public. Armstrong (2020) also emphasizes that the quality of human resources is a crucial element in increasing organizational productivity and success.

Employee performance is measured not only by the number of activities carried out, but also by the organization's ability to achieve targets, complete tasks effectively, and provide a tangible impact on society. Optimal employee performance reflects work effectiveness, accuracy in task execution, apparatus discipline, the ability to complete work on target, and the creation of quality public services. Conversely, low employee performance can impact organizational effectiveness, hamper work program implementation, reduce public trust, and prevent the organization from achieving its goals optimally. One public organization facing complex work challenges is the Public Order and Public Order Agency (Satpol PP and WH). These organizations are responsible for maintaining public order and security, enforcing regional regulations, and monitoring public compliance. Specifically in Aceh

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Province, Satpol PP and WH have additional authority to enforce Islamic law based on Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2014. This situation makes the work demands of Satpol PP and WH employees more complex than similar organizations in other regions because employees are required not only to have administrative and technical skills, but also social communication skills, conflict management, law enforcement, and high moral integrity. The magnitude of the organization's responsibilities should ideally be balanced by adequate staff performance. However, empirical data shows that the organization's performance still faces a number of issues that require serious attention. Based on the Lhokseumawe City 2026 Regional Work Plan (RKPK), the organization's performance in 2024 fell far short of the established targets . The data can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Performance Achievements of the Satpol PP and WH of Lhokseumawe City in 2024

Measuring Instrument	Target %	Actual Results	Achievement Level
Performance achievements against the 2024 RKPK	100%	9.78%	Very Low
Achievements of the "Improving Public Order and Security" program	100%	20.4%	Very Low
Achievements towards the 2023-2026 RPK	100%	66.34%	Very Low

Source: Lhokseumawe City RKPK (2026)

Based on Table 1, the organization's performance remains very low. The actual achievement of the 2024 Regional Work Plan (RKPK) only reached 9.78 percent of the 100 percent target. Furthermore, the achievement of programs to improve public order and security also reached only 20.4 percent. This situation indicates that the organization's program implementation has not been optimal, resulting in the organization's targets not being achieved according to established plans. Organizational performance issues are also evident in the increasing number of violations of Islamic law in Lhokseumawe City. Despite a relatively high level of law enforcement, the number of violations by the community actually increased significantly in 2024. This situation indicates that the effectiveness of the oversight and guidance functions has not been optimal. The development of Islamic law violations in Lhokseumawe City can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Development of Violations and Enforcement of Islamic Sharia in Lhokseumawe City (2022–2024)

Year	Number of Violations	Enforcement (%)
2022	141 cases	95%
2023	64 cases	88%
2024	308 cases	95%

Source: Lhokseumawe City RKPK (2026).

Table 2 shows that the number of violations of Islamic law increased significantly in 2024, reaching 308 cases, compared to only 64 cases the previous year. Although the law enforcement rate reached 95 percent, the high number of violations indicates that the implementation of oversight, guidance, and prevention functions has not been fully effective in fostering public compliance. This indicates that high levels of enforcement activity have not yet produced optimal organizational outcomes . The phenomenon of low organizational performance is suspected to be related to the condition of human resources within the organization. Quantitatively, the number of employees of the Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the Public Order Agency (WH) is quite large, namely 349 personnel consisting of 97 ASN and 252 PPPK. The increase in the number of personnel has not been accompanied by an increase in the quality of apparatus competency. Personnel data shows that the majority of employees are still dominated by high school graduates or equivalent, namely 263 people or approximately 75.36 percent of the total employees. Meanwhile, employees with a bachelor's degree number only 70 people and a master's degree 3 people. There are even employees with junior high school and elementary school education.

This phenomenon indicates that most employees still have limited formal education, even though the duties of Satpol PP and WH require technical skills, communication skills, decision-making skills, conflict resolution skills, and a good understanding of regulations. Spencer and Spencer (1993) explain that competence is a basic individual characteristic directly related to work ability and the achievement of superior performance. Low employee competence can result in ineffective, slow task execution, and an inability to produce optimal work quality. In addition to formal education, employee competency is also reflected in low employee participation in functional training. Of the 349 employees, only a small percentage had participated in technical training relevant to the organization's tasks. The data can be seen in Table 3 below:

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Table 3 Training Participation of Satpol PP and WH Employees in Lhokseumawe City

No	Types of Training	Number of participants	Percentage of Total Employees
1	Basic Civil Service Police Training	349	100%
2	Civil Service Police Functional Training	17	4.87%
3	PPNS Training	5	1.43%

Source: Lhokseumawe City Satpol PP and WH Personnel Data (2026).

Table 3 shows that only 17 employees, or 4.87 percent, participated in the Public Order Officer (Pol PP) Functional Training, and only 5 employees, or 1.43 percent, participated in the Civil Service Officer (PPNS) Training. This low level of training participation indicates that the development of technical competencies among civil servants is still suboptimal. Yet, functional training is crucial for improving employee capabilities in carrying out law enforcement, community oversight, and conflict resolution in the field. In addition to competence, transformational leadership is also suspected to be a problem within organizations. RKPK data shows that the participation of civil servants (ASN) in structural training decreased from 17.78 percent in 2023 to 7.82 percent in 2024. This condition indicates that leadership capacity development within organizations remains relatively low. However, transformational leadership is essential for building work morale, providing motivation, strengthening employee commitment, and driving organizational change for the better. Bass and Riggio (2006) explain that transformational leaders are able to influence subordinates through work vision, inspiration, individual attention, and intellectual stimulation, thus encouraging employees to work beyond expected targets.

Other issues are also evident in the organizational culture aspect. Data from the Integrity Assessment Survey (SPI) shows that the organizational integrity index decreased from 69.44 in 2023 to 64.37 in 2024. Furthermore, the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP) remains in category B with a score of 61.12, falling short of the BB target of 71.20. The decline in the integrity index and the suboptimal SAKIP score indicate that the organization's work culture, apparatus discipline, accountability, and performance orientation still need improvement. According to Robbins and Judge (2022), organizational culture is a system of values and norms that shape the behavior of organizational members. A strong organizational culture can create work discipline, increase employee responsibility, strengthen teamwork, and encourage orientation toward achieving organizational goals. Conversely, a weak organizational culture can lead to low work commitment, weak coordination, and a decline in the quality of employee performance.

In addition to these three factors, work motivation is also thought to play a significant role in improving employee performance. Armstrong (2020) explains that work motivation is an internal and external drive that influences an individual's enthusiasm, behavioral direction, and persistence at work. Employees with high work motivation tend to exhibit better work ethic, are more disciplined, more responsible, and are able to complete tasks optimally. Conversely, low work motivation can cause employees to work passively, be less productive, and not be oriented towards achieving organizational goals. In line with the issue of employee performance, which is still influenced by individual abilities, the organizational environment, and work motivation, this study uses Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura as a theoretical basis. This theory explains that individual behavior is influenced by the interaction between personal factors, the environment, and psychological processes (Bandura, 1986). In this study, competence represents personal factors related to employee abilities in carrying out work, while transformational leadership and organizational culture are environmental factors that can influence employee behavior and work enthusiasm. The interaction of these factors then forms work motivation that impacts employee performance improvement.

The use of Social Cognitive Theory is relevant in this study because improving employee performance is not only determined by individual abilities but also influenced by organizational environmental conditions and employee work motivation. Employees who have high competence and are supported by transformational leadership and a good organizational culture tend to have higher work motivation, thereby improving organizational performance. This is supported by research by Azizah et al. (2025) which shows that competence and transformational leadership influence employee work motivation and performance. In addition, research by Utami and Safira (2025) also explains that transformational leadership has an important role in improving employee work behavior and performance through the Social Cognitive Theory approach. Several previous studies strengthen the argument that work motivation plays an important role as a mediating variable in the relationship between competence, transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee performance. Research by Rahmawan et al. (2024) on personnel of the

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Yogyakarta Regional Police found that work motivation is able to fully mediate the effect of transformational leadership on personnel performance, as well as mediate the effect of competence on performance. These results indicate that competence and transformational leadership do not necessarily directly produce optimal performance without strong work motivation in employees. Dami's (2024) research also demonstrated that competence has a positive influence on government employee work motivation. Good competence increases employees' self-confidence, self-efficacy, and internal drive to perform optimally. Thus, work motivation serves as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of competence on improving employee performance. Furthermore, Monica's (2025) research demonstrated that work motivation can strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Transformational leaders who provide vision, inspiration, individual attention, and psychological support have been shown to increase subordinate motivation, which in turn improves employee work quality and productivity.

Similar findings are also supported by research by Putra and Dewi (2019), which states that work motivation mediates the influence of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee performance. A healthy organizational culture, supported by inspirational leadership, can create a conducive work environment that encourages employees to work with greater discipline, responsibility, and focus on achieving organizational goals. Nurasniar's (2021) research found that competence and organizational culture directly influence employee performance, although work motivation, in the context of her study, was not yet a significant mediator. These results indicate that the effectiveness of work motivation as a mediating variable can vary depending on organizational characteristics, the work environment, and employee conditions. Therefore, research on the mediating role of work motivation remains relevant for further study in public sector organizations with their unique characteristics.

Furthermore, research by Uliyah and Ariyanto (2021) shows that work motivation mediates the influence of competence on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), although it does not mediate the relationship between organizational culture and OCB. This finding confirms that work motivation is an important psychological variable that can strengthen positive employee work behavior. In the context of transformational leadership and organizational culture, research by Fauzan et al. (2023) proves that transformational leadership and organizational culture have a positive effect on employee performance through organizational commitment as a mediating variable. Meanwhile, research by Virgiawan et al. (2021) found that organizational culture mediates the relationship between motivation and transformational leadership on employee performance. This shows that the relationship between organizational variables and performance often operates through specific mediating mechanisms, including work motivation, organizational culture, and organizational commitment. Research by Mohammed and AL-Abrow (2023) also shows that transformational leadership has a positive effect on organizational performance and innovation through the mediation of organizational culture and shared leadership. Meanwhile, Shirini and Xenikou (2022) demonstrated that organizational culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness. These two studies reinforce the view that organizational environmental factors play a significant role in explaining improved organizational performance.

The performance of the Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the Wilayatul Hisbah (Islamic Law Enforcement Agency) employees still requires serious attention, as reflected in the low target achievement, increasing violations of Islamic law, limited competency, suboptimal leadership, and a work culture that needs improvement. This organization, however, has a significant responsibility in maintaining order and overseeing Islamic law, which demands professionalism. Furthermore, previous research indicates a research gap regarding the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture on performance. Some studies support this mediation role, while others do not. Therefore, the relationship between these variables needs to be reexamined in different organizational contexts. Research examining the influence of competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture on employee performance through work motivation has been more focused on government agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector. Research on public order and Islamic law enforcement organizations such as the Satpol PP and Wilayatul Hisbah is limited. This is despite the fact that these organizations have far more complex task characteristics, demanding administrative skills, regulatory enforcement, social conflict resolution, persuasive communication, and integrity in carrying out their duties in the field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework of the Research

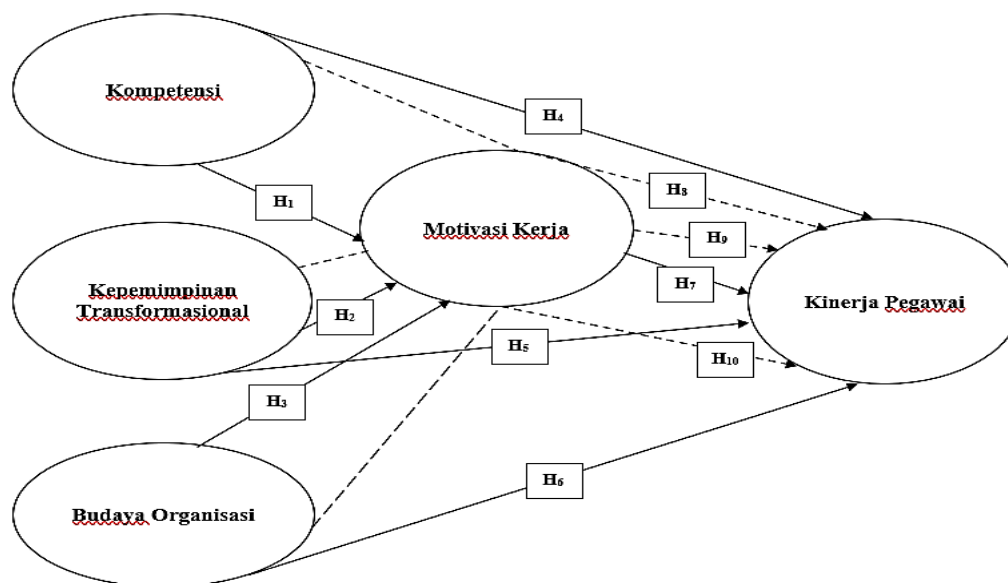


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Processed by Researchers, (2026).

Research Hypothesis

The Influence of Competence on Work Motivation

Competence is a fundamental individual characteristic that influences work effectiveness. Spencer & Spencer (1993) outlined that competence encompasses knowledge, skills, self-image, personal traits, and drive, which collectively shape a person's capacity to complete tasks. Bandura (1986) in his Social Cognitive Theory positions competence as a personal factor that shapes self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to achieve specific work outcomes. Meanwhile, work motivation is a psychological process that regulates the direction, strength, and consistency of a person's behavior in the workplace. Armstrong (2020) describes work motivation as the primary driver for efficiently achieving organizational goals. Theoretically, competence drives work motivation through three mechanisms: increased self-efficacy, reduced work-related anxiety, and the formation of positive outcome expectations. Highly competent employees are generally more confident, more focused, and confident that their efforts will yield optimal performance, thus triggering greater work motivation. Empirical evidence supports this. Uliyah & Ariyanto (2021) reported a significant positive effect of competence on work motivation. Amrin & Hamsal (2024) emphasized competence as a key predictor of work motivation in the retail sector. Dami (2024) confirmed the direct effect of competence on work motivation for government employees. Rahmawan et al. (2024) also found a significant impact of personnel competence on work motivation. Mulyana et al. (2021) demonstrated that ability (a component of competence) is closely related to motivation.

H1: Competence has a positive influence on the work motivation of members of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Work Motivation

Transformational leadership is a style that changes the values, attitudes, and behaviors of subordinates through inspiring vision, role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), this style functions as an environmental factor that influences individual beliefs and actions through observational learning and verbal persuasion. Therefore, leadership not only provides direction but also shapes the mindset and level of confidence of subordinates. Empirical research supports this positive influence. Alwali & Alwali (2022) stated that transformational leadership improves performance through job satisfaction (related to motivation). Mohammed & Al-Abrow (2023) found its role in improving organizational performance with motivation as a key factor. Riyanto et al., (2021) demonstrated the influence on performance through work discipline that reflects motivation. Azmy & Perkasa (2024) stated that this style encourages innovative

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behavior supported by high motivation. Monica (2025) proved that work motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on performance.

H₂ : Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on the work motivation of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Work Motivation

The influence of culture on work motivation occurs through the internalization of values, reward systems, and social interactions. Internalized organizational values trigger intrinsic motivation; a fair reward system strengthens extrinsic motivation; a culture of cooperation and innovation creates a sense of belonging and positive challenges that boost work morale. Overall, a positive organizational culture strengthens individuals' drive to perform optimally. Empirically, Widarko & Anwarodin (2022) demonstrated the direct influence of organizational culture on work motivation. Ibrahim et al., (2022) showed that organizational culture improves performance through communication related to motivation. Uliyah & Ariyanto (2021) found that motivation mediates the influence of culture on work behavior. Shirini & Xenikou (2022) emphasized the role of culture in increasing effectiveness through motivation. Mulyana et al., (2021) and Tresnawati et al., (2024) also demonstrated the contribution of organizational culture to performance supported by work motivation.

H₃ : Organizational culture has a positive influence on the work motivation of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Competence on Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to a person's achievement in carrying out assigned tasks, with indicators of quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, independence, and sense of responsibility (Tresnawati et al., 2024; Armstrong, 2020). Competence, as described by Spencer & Spencer (1993), is an innate individual characteristic that has a causal relationship with superior performance. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), competence acts as a personal factor that directly influences behavior (performance) through self-regulation and self-efficacy mechanisms. Highly competent individuals usually set more ambitious targets, are more resilient in facing obstacles, and are better able to organize actions to achieve desired results. Rahmawan et al., (2024) found that competence significantly influenced performance among personnel of the Yogyakarta Regional Police, with motivation as a mediator. Astuti (2024) among employees of the Tegal Regency Bappedalitbang confirmed the positive influence of competence on performance, directly and indirectly via motivation. Dami (2024) at the Kupang Harbormaster Office showed that competence is the main predictor of port sector performance. Marvin et al., (2025) emphasized that competence, along with motivation and organizational culture, is a key factor in improving organizational performance.

H₄: Competence has a positive effect on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

According to Bass & Riggio (2006), transformational leadership can change the motivation, values, and behavior of subordinates so that they work beyond personal interests for the sake of the organization. In Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), this leadership style acts as an environmental factor that influences behavior (performance) through vicarious learning and verbal persuasion. Transformational leaders become role models observed and imitated by subordinates, so that performance improves as the standards of behavior they exemplify are internalized.

Empirically, numerous studies have demonstrated the positive influence of transformational leadership on performance. Mohammed & Al-Abrow (2023) in the Iraqi healthcare sector demonstrated a positive influence on organizational performance through shared leadership and organizational culture. Azmy & Perkasa (2024) in public transportation found improved employee performance through innovative work behavior. Alwali & Alwali (2022) in Iraqi hospital doctors demonstrated an influence on performance through job satisfaction. Budur & Demir (2022) in the general organizational sector demonstrated an influence on performance through OCB. Riyanto et al., (2021) in the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT) employees demonstrated an influence on performance, both directly and through work discipline.

H₅: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

Robbins & Judge (2022) define organizational culture as a system of shared values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions shared by all members and shaping distinctive behavioral patterns. In Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), organizational culture is an environmental factor that influences individual behavior through observational learning and reciprocal determinism. Individuals do not passively accept environmental influences but actively interpret cultural values and adjust their behavior to align with organizational expectations. A strong and positive culture functions as an effective behavioral control system without close supervision. Previous research consistently demonstrates the positive influence of organizational culture on performance. Shirini & Xenikou (2022) in Greece demonstrated that organizational culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness (closely related to employee performance). Tresnawati et al., (2024) at the Bekasi City Metro Police Department demonstrated a significant direct influence of organizational culture on the performance of Indonesian National Police officers (characteristics similar to Satpol PP). Widarko & Anwarodin (2022) at the Blitar Regency Civil Servant (ASN) found the influence of culture on performance through OCB as a mediator. Mulyana et al., (2021) on teachers in Tangerang proved a significant influence of culture on teacher performance. Ibrahim et al., (2022) on Batam port employees also found the influence of culture on performance through communication as a mediator.

H₆: Organizational culture has a positive influence on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The influence of motivation on performance occurs through five psychological mechanisms, (1) the direction of priority task choice behavior; motivated employees choose challenging tasks that contribute significantly, (2) the intensity of effort how much energy, time, attention is devoted; highly motivated employees work hard and do not give up easily, (3) perseverance the ability to survive long term despite difficulties, (4) the quality of cognitive processing of motivated employees to think systematically, analytically, creatively, (5) initiative and proactive behavior taking action without orders, very valuable in the dynamic operational work of Satpol PP and WH. Previous research has very consistently shown the positive influence of work motivation on performance. Astuti (2024) at the Bappedalitbang of Tegal Regency proved the significant positive influence of motivation on performance as well as mediation.

H₇: Work motivation has a positive influence on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Mediation Effect of Work Motivation on Competence on Performance

Competence includes knowledge, skills, self-concept, personal traits, and motives (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Bandura (1986) in Social Cognitive Theory stated that the relationship between personal factors (competence) and behavior (performance) is not direct, but rather through cognitive-affective processes. Work motivation transforms potential competence into real achievements. High competence does not necessarily result in superior performance without motivation; competence generates motivation, then motivation is realized in performance. Three stages of mediation: (1) high competence increases self-efficacy (confidence in completing tasks), (2) self-efficacy triggers motivation (enthusiasm, persistence, initiative, extra work), (3) motivation is realized in performance (quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, responsibility). Without motivation, competence is only hidden potential. Empirically, various studies support the mediating role of motivation. Dami (2024) at the Kupang Harbormaster's Office proved that work motivation significantly mediates the influence of competence on performance. Rahmawan et al., (2024) on DIY Regional Police personnel found motivation as a mediating variable between competence and performance.

H₈: Work motivation mediates the influence of competence on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Mediation Effect of Work Motivation on Leadership on Performance

Bass & Riggio (2006) define transformational leadership as a style that changes the motivation, values, and behavior of subordinates through inspiring vision, role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention. In Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), environmental factors influence behavior through cognitive-affective processes, not automatically. Work motivation serves as an internal bridge between leadership and performance. Transformational leaders cannot "command" high performance; they create the psychological conditions for

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subordinates to be motivated. Four dimensions trigger motivation (1) charisma, respect, trust, intrinsic motivation, (2) inspiration, vision & meaning, motivation (3) intellectual stimulation, creative challenge, motivation, (4) individual attention, personal support, need for actualization. The motivation that is built is manifested in superior performance.

H₉: Work motivation mediates the influence of transformational leadership on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

The Mediation Effect of Work Motivation on Organizational Culture on Performance

Robbins & Judge (2022) define organizational culture as a system of shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide member behavior. In Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), culture is an environmental factor that influences individual perceptions, but its influence on behavior is indirect, but rather through cognitive-affective processes. Work motivation acts as an internal mechanism that mediates the relationship between organizational culture and performance; a positive culture does not automatically improve performance before shaping employee motivation. Empirical research consistently supports the mediating role of motivation. Uliyah & Ariyanto (2021) proved that motivation mediates culture on OCB, Widarko & Anwarodin (2022) found that OCB (motivation-based) mediates culture and ASN performance, Shirini & Xenikou (2022) confirmed the role of motivation in mediating culture on effectiveness, Ibrahim et al., (2022) showed that communication (related to motivation) mediates culture and performance, Tresnawati et al., (2024) confirmed motivation as a reinforcing factor in the influence of culture on performance.

H₁₀: Work motivation mediates the influence of organizational culture on the performance of employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah of Lhokseumawe City.

METHOD

The target subjects in this study include all employees at the Satpol PP and WH Lhokseumawe City. The location of the research is carried out. Population is defined by Bougie & Sekaran (2020) as all entities with certain characteristics that are the focus of the research. In this study, the population referred to is all ASN at Satpol PP and WH Lhokseumawe City. Based on Law No. 20/2023, ASN consists of two categories, namely PNS and PPPK. Based on personnel data as of January 2026, the total ASN population is 349,349 people, with a breakdown of 97 PNS and 252 PPPK. The entire population is classified as a finite population because the number is known with certainty. The sample is a part of the population that represents the overall characteristics (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). Determination of the number of samples in this study was carried out using the Slovin formula, because the population is known with certainty and the study aims to obtain a statistically controllable error rate.

From the calculation process that has been carried out, a sample size of 186 respondents was obtained. The sampling technique used was probability sampling with the simple random sampling method. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2020), simple random sampling is a sampling technique that provides an equal opportunity to each member of the population to be selected as a respondent. In this study, all employees of the Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the WH were first recorded in a single population list (sampling frame). Next, each employee was given a serial number from 1 to 349, then a random selection was carried out using the Microsoft Excel application (RAND function) to obtain 186 different numbers. Employees whose numbers were selected were designated as research respondents, while employees whose numbers were not selected were not included in the sample. With this procedure, each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected as a research sample .

According to Ghozali (2018), primary data is data obtained directly from primary sources or respondents through a data collection process carried out by researchers in accordance with research needs. Primary data is collected specifically to answer the problem formulation and test the established hypotheses. In this study, primary data is quantitative data obtained directly from respondents through the distribution of questionnaires to all employees of the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah (Satpol PP and WH) of Lhokseumawe City. The questionnaire was compiled using a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of the variables of competence, transformational leadership, organizational culture, work motivation, and employee performance. According to Ghozali (2018), secondary data is data obtained indirectly by researchers through various previously available sources. Secondary data is used to complement and support primary data in the research analysis process.

In this study, secondary data were obtained from official documents of the Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and the WH (WH), personnel reports, laws and regulations related to the research object, and various scientific literature in the form of books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and other

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relevant reference sources as a theoretical basis and support for the preparation of research instruments. Referring to Bougie & Sekaran (2020), data collection in this study was carried out using a survey approach, using a questionnaire as the main data collection tool. The questionnaire was prepared based on the operational definition of each variable. The statement items were adapted from previous research whose instruments have been proven valid and reliable. In addition, the questionnaire used a five-tiered Likert scale and was designed in a closed-ended question format. This study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 4 to analyze the influence between latent constructs. The reason for choosing this method is because it is suitable for prediction-oriented research and is able to test models involving several variables at once, namely competence, transformational leadership, and organizational culture on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable (Hair et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis Using PLS-SEM

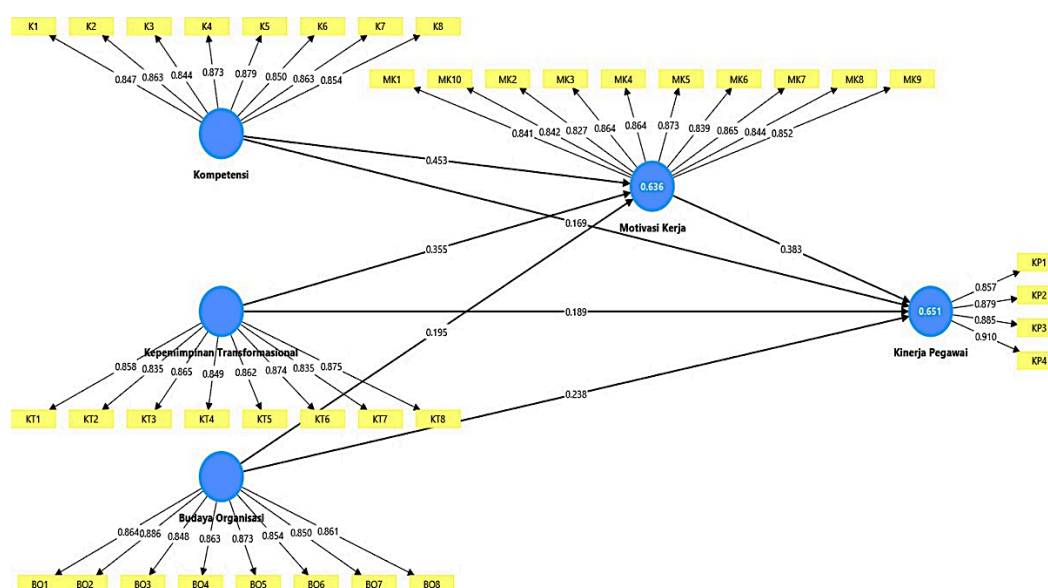


Figure 2 Model After Smart PLS Data Processing

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Model Fit Test (SRMR)

Table 4 Model Suitability Test Results (SRMR)

Parameter	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Rule of Thumb	Information
SRMR	0.041	0.041	< 0.08	Fit
d ULS	1,239	1,239	-	-
d G	0.914	0.914	-	-
Chi-square	880,305	880,305	-	-
NFI	0.876	0.876	Approaching 1	Fit

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Based on Table 4, the SRMR value is 0.041, which is much smaller than 0.08, indicating that the research model has met the goodness of fit criteria. The very low SRMR value indicates that the difference between the observed correlation matrix and the correlation matrix predicted by the model is relatively small. The NFI value of 0.876, which is close to 1, also indicates that the model has a good level of fit with the research data. Thus, the structural model used is worthy of further analysis.

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Collinearity Test (VIF)

Table 5 Collinearity Test Results (VIF)

Exogenous Variables	Work Motivation (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	Information
Competence (X ₁)	1,298	1,861	No collinearity occurs
Transformational Leadership (X ₂)	1,371	1,717	No collinearity occurs
Organizational Culture (X ₃)	1,460	1,564	No collinearity occurs
Work Motivation (Z)	-	2,746	No collinearity occurs

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

All VIF values are well below the required threshold (<5.0), indicating no significant collinearity issues in the research model. Thus, model parameter estimation can be performed accurately, and the relationships between constructs can be interpreted validly.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 6 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Latent Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted	Information
Employee Performance (Y)	0.651	0.644	On the Way to Strong
Work Motivation (Z)	0.636	0.630	Currently

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Based on Table 6, the Work Motivation variable obtained an R- square value of 0.636 and an Adjusted R- square value of 0.630. These results indicate that 63.6% of the variation in Work Motivation can be explained by Competence, Transformational Leadership, and Organizational Culture. Meanwhile, the remaining 36.4% is explained by other factors outside the research model.

Direct Effect

Direct effect testing between variables was conducted to determine the causal relationship between latent constructs in the research model. The results of the direct effect testing are presented in Table 5.16 below:

Table 7 Results of the Direct Effect Test

Path Coefficient	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics	P-values	Information
Competence → Work Motivation	0.453	0.454	0.049	9,221	0,000	Accepted
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation	0.355	0.354	0.052	6,767	0,000	Accepted
Organizational Culture → Work Motivation	0.195	0.195	0.053	3,673	0,000	Accepted
Competence → Employee Performance	0.169	0.169	0.060	2,813	0.005	Accepted
Transformational Leadership → Employee Performance	0.189	0.188	0.062	3,062	0.002	Accepted
Organizational Culture → Employee Performance	0.238	0.238	0.051	4,695	0,000	Accepted
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.383	0.384	0.070	5,475	0,000	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

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Indirect Effect (Mediation)

Table 8 Indirect Effect Test Results

Path Coefficient	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistic s	P-values	Information
Competence → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.174	0.174	0.038	4,561	0,000	Accepted
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.136	0.136	0.032	4,230	0,000	Accepted
Organizational Culture → Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.075	0.075	0.024	3,102	0.002	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Discussion

The Influence of Competence on Work Motivation

This study demonstrates that competence has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and Public Order Agency (WH) employees. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that competence is a personal factor that contributes to the development of self-efficacy. Employees who possess the ability and belief in their own capacity tend to be more confident in completing work, are more willing to face challenges, and have higher intrinsic motivation. Thus, competence not only improves technical skills but also strengthens self-confidence, which forms the basis for work motivation. The results of this study are also consistent with various previous studies. Dami (2024) found that competence is a primary determinant of work motivation in government organizations. Similar findings were reported by Uliyah and Ariyanto (2021) and Rahmawan et al., (2024), who demonstrated that competence significantly influences work motivation in the public sector. Furthermore, Amrin and Hamsal (2024) demonstrated that competence is a crucial factor in enhancing employee work motivation in the private sector. When linked to the empirical conditions of the Lhokseumawe City Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) and the WH (WH) officers, the results of this study indicate a gap that requires attention. Descriptive data shows that the average employee competency score is only 2.999, indicating that the competency level is still in the medium to low category. This condition is supported by the characteristics of the respondents, where 68.3% of employees have a high school education background, while only 4.87% have attended the Civil Service Police Functional Training and 1.43% have attended the PPNS Training. This fact indicates that the majority of employees have not received adequate educational provisions or technical training to carry out their duties optimally.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Work Motivation

The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and Public Order Agency (WH) employees. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that the social environment, including leader behavior, plays a role in shaping individual beliefs and behavior through observational learning and verbal persuasion. Leaders who are able to serve as role models, clearly communicate the organization's vision, provide inspirational motivation, encourage innovation, and pay attention to individual needs will increase employee self-confidence, engagement, and work enthusiasm. The results of this study are also consistent with various previous studies. Mohammed and Al-Abrow (2023) found that transformational leadership can improve organizational performance by increasing work motivation. Riyanto et al., (2021) showed that transformational leadership contributes to improved performance through work discipline that reflects high employee motivation. Furthermore, Monica (2025) proved that work motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance, while Fauzan et al., (2023) concluded that transformational leadership influences performance by strengthening organizational commitment.

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Work Motivation

The results of the study indicate that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of Lhokseumawe City Satpol PP and WH employees. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which positions organizational culture as an environmental factor that shapes individual behavior through social learning processes. A culture that encourages participation, consistency, adaptability, and a clear organizational vision will be internalized by employees as a guideline for their work. A work environment that provides opportunities for participation, supports learning, and has a clear organizational direction will increase employees' sense of belonging, commitment, and motivation in carrying out their duties. The results of this study are also consistent with the research of Widarko and Anwarodin (2022), which proves that organizational culture directly influences the work motivation of state civil servants. Ibrahim et al., (2022) found that organizational culture improves performance through organizational communication that can encourage work motivation, while Shirini and Xenikou (2022) emphasized that organizational culture is a crucial factor in increasing organizational effectiveness through shaping employee motivation.

The Influence of Competence on Employee Performance

The results of the study demonstrated that competence had a positive and significant effect on the performance of Lhokseumawe City Satpol PP and WH employees. The path coefficient of 0.169 indicates that competence directly contributes to improved performance, although the magnitude of the effect is still lower than that of organizational culture and work motivation. This finding indicates that improving competence remains an important prerequisite for producing better employee performance. According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), competence is a personal factor that influences work behavior through the formation of self-efficacy and self-regulation. Employees who possess adequate knowledge, skills, and abilities will be more confident in carrying out their duties, able to make appropriate decisions, work more effectively, and are able to overcome various obstacles that arise during the implementation of the work. Thus, competence is an important foundation in producing optimal performance. This finding is in line with research by Amrin and Hamsal (2024) which proves that competence has a direct effect on employee performance. Rahmawan et al., (2024) also found that competence improves the performance of police personnel both directly and through work motivation. Similar results were reported by Astuti (2024) who showed that competence has a positive influence on employee performance, while Marvin et al., (2025) emphasized that competence is one of the main factors that determines the success of improving organizational performance.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the performance of Lhokseumawe City Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) and Public Order Agency (WH) employees. This finding aligns with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains that leader behavior, as an environmental factor, can influence employee work behavior through social learning processes. Leaders who are able to serve as role models, inspire, provide intellectual challenges, and pay attention to the individual needs of subordinates will encourage better work enthusiasm, commitment, and performance. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Mohammed and Al-Abrow (2023), Alwali and Alwali (2022), Budur and Demir (2022), and Riyanto et al. (2021), which prove that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee performance both directly and through mediating variables.

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

This study demonstrates that organizational culture has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), organizational culture is an environmental factor that influences behavior through social learning processes and reciprocal determinism. A culture oriented toward results, teamwork, innovation, and stability will encourage employees to work in a more focused, collaborative, and responsible manner. This finding is consistent with research by Tresnawati et al. (2024), Widarko and Anwarodin (2022), Mulyana et al. (2021), and Ibrahim et al. (2022), which shows that organizational culture significantly influences performance improvement.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results of the study indicate that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Based on Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), work motivation is the result of the interaction between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. Motivated employees will demonstrate a clear behavioral direction, high effort intensity, persistence in the face of difficulties, better thinking skills, and initiative and proactive behavior at work. This finding is supported by research by Astuti (2024), Jakfar (2024), Rahmawan et al. (2024), Amrin and Hamsal (2024), Yunus et al. (2024), and Widarko and Anwarodin (2022), which shows that work motivation is a strong predictor of employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Work Motivation in the Relationship between Employee Competence and Performance

The results of the study indicate that work motivation mediates the influence of competence on the performance of Lhokseumawe City Satpol PP and WH employees. This finding indicates that competence will have a more optimal impact on performance when accompanied by high work motivation. This finding is in accordance with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains that competence as a personal factor increases self-efficacy, namely an individual's belief in their ability to complete a task. This belief then encourages the emergence of work motivation in the form of enthusiasm, perseverance, initiative, and a willingness to give their best effort. High motivation is then manifested in increased quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and responsibility in work. The results of this study are supported by the findings of Dami (2024), Rahmawan et al., (2024), Astuti (2024), Amrin and Hamsal (2024), and Uliyah and Ariyanto (2021) who concluded that work motivation can mediate the relationship between competence and performance, so that employee competence can make a greater contribution to performance achievement.

The Mediating Role of Work Motivation in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

This study proves that work motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance. These findings indicate that transformational leadership improves performance not only through direct influence but also through increased employee work motivation. According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), transformational leadership, as an environmental factor, influences work behavior through psychological processes. Leaders who are able to serve as role models, convey a clear vision, provide intellectual stimulation, and pay attention to individual needs will build employee intrinsic motivation. This motivation then encourages employees to work with greater enthusiasm and commitment, resulting in higher performance. These findings align with research by Monica (2025), Alwali and Alwali (2022), Riyanto et al. (2021), and Azmy and Perkasa (2024), which demonstrate that work motivation is an important mechanism explaining the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Work Motivation in the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

The results of the study indicate that work motivation mediates the influence of organizational culture on employee performance. This finding indicates that organizational culture influences performance through two mechanisms: directly as the primary influence and indirectly through increased work motivation. According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), organizational culture, as an environmental factor, shapes employee behavior through cognitive and affective processes. A culture that encourages participation, innovation, cooperation, and appreciation for employee contributions will increase intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This motivation then encourages employees to demonstrate better performance. This finding is supported by research by Uliyah and Ariyanto (2021), Widarko and Anwarodin (2022), Shirini and Xenikou (2022), Ibrahim et al., (2022), and Tresnawati et al., (2024), which proves that work motivation is a mechanism that strengthens the relationship between organizational culture and performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions outlined in the previous chapter, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of Lhokseumawe City Satpol PP and WH employees. The higher an employee's competence, the higher their work motivation, making competence the most dominant factor in increasing work motivation.

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2. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on work motivation. Leadership that provides role models, inspiration, individual attention, and encouragement of innovation has been shown to increase employee motivation.
3. Organizational culture has a positive and significant influence on work motivation. A participatory, adaptive, consistent, and goal-oriented organizational culture can increase work motivation, although its influence is smaller than that of competence and transformational leadership.
4. Competence has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees with good knowledge, skills, and abilities tend to perform more optimally.
5. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Effective leadership can improve performance by providing vision, motivation, role modeling, and support to subordinates.
6. Organizational culture has a positive and significant influence on employee performance, and is an exogenous variable that has the greatest direct influence on improving performance.
7. Work motivation has a positive and significant influence on employee performance, and is also the most dominant variable in improving performance.
8. Work motivation partially mediates the influence of competence on employee performance. Increased competence will have a greater impact on performance if accompanied by increased work motivation.
9. Work motivation partially mediates the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance. Transformational leadership can improve performance both directly and through increased work motivation.
10. Work motivation partially mediates the influence of organizational culture on employee performance. A positive organizational culture not only improves performance directly but also through increased work motivation.

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