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THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING WITH WORK MOTIVATION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF POLICE MEMBERS IN THE LHOKSEUMAWE POLICE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effects of digital leadership and personnel training on the performance of Indonesian National Police personnel, both directly and indirectly through work motivation as an intervening variable at the Lhokseumawe Resort Police. This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population consisted of 495 police personnel assigned to eight functional units. A total of 120 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that digital leadership has a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.502$; $p < 0.001$) and personnel performance ($\beta = 0.431$; $p = 0.003$). Personnel training has a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.342$; $p = 0.015$), but it does not have a significant direct effect on personnel performance ($\beta = -0.285$; $p = 0.998$). Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on personnel performance ($\beta = 0.435$; $p < 0.001$). Work motivation partially mediates the effect of digital leadership on personnel performance ($\beta = 0.164$; $p = 0.002$; VAF = 27.5%) and fully mediates, or demonstrates indirect-only mediation, the effect of personnel training on performance ($\beta = 0.191$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, improving police personnel performance requires effective digital leadership and training programs that strengthen personnel motivation to apply their competencies in carrying out their duties. The findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the high degree of multicollinearity between digital leadership and personnel training.

Keywords: digital leadership, personnel training, work motivation, personnel performance, Indonesian National Police.

INTRODUCTION

Public-sector performance depends on the ability of personnel to translate institutional mandates into timely, accurate, accountable, and citizen-oriented services. This requirement becomes particularly stringent in policing because personnel performance directly affects public safety, legal certainty, social order, and institutional legitimacy. The Indonesian National Police therefore requires members who can execute operational duties consistently while adapting to rapid changes in administrative systems, public communication, and technology-enabled service delivery. The expansion of digital government and integrated public-service platforms has altered the expected content of police work. Personnel must now combine conventional policing competence with digital literacy, data-based coordination, rapid information processing, and disciplined use of organizational systems.

Digital transformation does not automatically improve organizational performance. Technology produces operational value only when leaders formulate a coherent digital direction, align new systems with work priorities, manage resistance, and support personnel during implementation. Digital leadership consequently extends beyond the technical use of devices or applications. It involves strategic vision, technology awareness, innovation orientation, data-informed decision making, collaborative coordination, and the capacity to lead organizational change (Kane et al., 2019; Westerman et al., 2014). In a police organization, these capabilities influence how personnel understand digital procedures, respond to changing service standards, and integrate technology into daily operational routines.

Training represents a second critical mechanism because organizational digitalization creates recurrent competence gaps. Personnel must learn new procedures, applications, reporting mechanisms, and coordination practices, yet formal participation in training does not guarantee transfer to the workplace. Training generates

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performance gains when the program addresses actual task needs, provides relevant practice, develops confidence, and receives managerial reinforcement after completion (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Noe, 2020). A weak transfer environment can separate learning outcomes from operational behavior. Consequently, personnel may acquire knowledge without applying it consistently, especially when supervisors provide limited feedback, assignments do not require the new competence, or organizational incentives do not reward implementation.

Work motivation provides a plausible psychological mechanism that connects leadership and training with performance. Self-determination theory explains that individuals sustain high-quality effort when the work environment supports competence, autonomy, and social relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Digital leadership can strengthen these conditions by clarifying expectations, reducing uncertainty, supporting problem solving, and recognizing personnel contributions. Training can also increase perceived competence and confidence. However, these resources influence performance only when personnel develop sufficient willingness, persistence, and responsibility to apply them. Motivation therefore functions not merely as an additional predictor but as a conversion mechanism through which organizational resources become observable work behavior.

Previous studies summarized in the thesis produced inconsistent results. Several studies reported positive effects of digital leadership and training on employee performance, whereas other studies found that these relationships became significant only through motivation or other intervening conditions. Similar inconsistencies appeared in the relationship between motivation and performance. These differences indicate that leadership, training, motivation, and performance form a context-dependent system rather than a set of universally linear relationships. Public organizations with hierarchical structures, formal procedures, high operational risk, and strong accountability requirements may produce a different pattern from commercial organizations. This contextual uncertainty establishes the need for empirical examination within a territorial police organization.

The present study addresses that need at the Lhokseumawe Resort Police. It develops an integrated model in which digital leadership and personnel training predict performance directly and indirectly through work motivation. The study contributes by testing whether training produces an immediate performance effect or requires a motivational pathway, and by examining whether digital leadership operates simultaneously through structural direction and psychological activation. The study asks whether digital leadership and training affect work motivation, whether each variable affects personnel performance, whether motivation affects performance, and whether motivation mediates the two organizational antecedents. The resulting evidence can guide leadership development, training design, performance management, and digital transformation within policing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Leadership and Personnel Performance

Digital leadership describes the capacity to direct organizational transformation by combining strategic judgment, technological understanding, and human-centered change management. Avolio et al. (2014) conceptualize technology-mediated leadership as a process in which information systems alter the source, transmission, and reach of leadership influence. Kane et al. (2019) similarly argue that successful digital transformation depends more on people, organizational learning, and leadership than on technology alone. This perspective positions the leader as an architect of meaning and coordination. The leader explains why technology matters, connects digital practices with operational objectives, and creates behavioral norms for responsible adoption.

The study operationalizes digital leadership through digital vision, technological competence, innovation orientation, data-based decision making, change leadership, collaboration, and a growth mindset. These dimensions represent complementary mechanisms. Digital vision provides direction; technological competence establishes credibility; innovation orientation supports experimentation; data-based decision making improves analytical discipline; change leadership manages transition; collaboration connects functional units; and a growth mindset normalizes continuous learning. Together, these dimensions should strengthen personnel performance by reducing ambiguity, improving coordination, accelerating decisions, and supporting the disciplined application of digital tools.

Personnel Training, Transfer, and Performance

Training constitutes a planned organizational effort to facilitate the acquisition of job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Noe et al., 2020). Human capital theory treats such investment as a means of increasing productive capability, while strategic human resource management emphasizes alignment between development activities and organizational objectives. The present study evaluates training through program objectives, material relevance, trainer competence, instructional methods, personnel participation, gains in knowledge and skills, and application of learning. This final dimension is decisive because performance depends on transfer rather than attendance.

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The Kirkpatrick framework distinguishes learning from behavioral application and organizational results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Personnel may report that a course was useful and may demonstrate knowledge gains, yet operational routines can remain unchanged. Transfer requires opportunity to perform, supervisor support, feedback, compatible procedures, and incentives. This distinction supports two competing expectations. Training may directly improve performance because competence enables more accurate and efficient work. Alternatively, training may exert its principal effect by increasing confidence, perceived capability, and motivation, which subsequently stimulate application. The mediation model tests these mechanisms explicitly.

Work Motivation as an Intervening Mechanism

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that determine the intensity, direction, and persistence of work behavior. Goal-setting theory emphasizes clear objectives and feedback, while self-determination theory emphasizes the quality of motivation and the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Locke & Latham, 2002). In the present model, motivation includes effort intensity, goal direction, persistence, achievement need, affiliation, responsibility, and self-development. These dimensions capture both sustained task effort and the social and developmental conditions relevant to police work.

Digital leadership can raise motivation by providing direction, competence support, accessible communication, and recognition during change. Training can raise motivation by increasing mastery and reducing anxiety about task demands. Motivation should then improve performance because motivated personnel persist in difficult assignments, comply with standards, coordinate with colleagues, and invest discretionary effort. Within the ability-motivation-opportunity framework, training primarily develops ability, leadership shapes opportunity and direction, and motivation activates the use of available capability (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Mediation therefore follows a coherent theoretical logic: resources affect performance when personnel convert them into sustained behavior.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Digital leadership has a positive effect on work motivation.
H2: Personnel training has a positive effect on work motivation.
H3: Digital leadership has a positive effect on personnel performance.
H4: Personnel training has a positive effect on personnel performance.
H5: Work motivation has a positive effect on personnel performance.
H6: Work motivation mediates the effect of digital leadership on personnel performance.
H7: Work motivation mediates the effect of personnel training on personnel performance.

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

The study used a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional survey design. The research was conducted at the Lhokseumawe Resort Police and examined four latent variables: digital leadership and personnel training as exogenous constructs, work motivation as an intervening construct, and personnel performance as the endogenous construct. The population consisted of 495 active police personnel distributed across eight functional units: Intelligence and Security, Criminal Investigation, Traffic, Samapta, Community Development, Water and Air Police, Vital Object Security, and the Integrated Police Service Center.

The study selected 120 respondents through purposive sampling. Eligible respondents were active members of the Lhokseumawe Resort Police, had at least one year of service, had participated in job-related training or development, understood or had used digital work or service systems, and voluntarily completed the questionnaire. This selection strategy ensured that respondents had direct experience with the phenomena under investigation. The sample included 74 men and 46 women. The largest age group was 30 to 35 years, representing 33.3 percent of respondents, and the largest tenure group had 11 to 20 years of service, representing 35.0 percent.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
Age	< 25 years	12 (10.0)
	25-29 years	38 (31.7)
	30-35 years	40 (33.3)
	> 35 years	30 (25.0)
Gender	Men	74 (61.7)

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Characteristic	Category	n (%)
	Women	46 (38.3)
Education	Senior secondary	60 (50.0)
	Diploma and bachelor	52 (43.3)
	Master and doctoral	8 (6.7)
Tenure	< 5 years	18 (15.0)
	5-10 years	36 (30.0)
	11-20 years	42 (35.0)
	> 20 years	24 (20.0)

Measurement and Data Collection

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Digital leadership comprised seven indicators: digital vision, technological competence, innovation orientation, data-based decision making, change leadership, collaboration, and growth mindset. Personnel training comprised training objectives, material, trainer competence, method, participation, knowledge and skill improvement, and application of training outcomes. Work motivation comprised effort intensity, goal direction, persistence, achievement need, affiliation, responsibility, and self-development. Personnel performance comprised work quality, work quantity, timeliness, responsibility, teamwork, discipline, and initiative.

Primary data came from completed questionnaires, while institutional documents and relevant literature provided secondary support. The design relied on self-reported perceptions because the model measured leadership experience, training quality, motivational states, and work behavior. This approach allowed the study to estimate latent relationships, although it also introduced common-method and perceptual limitations that require cautious interpretation.

Data Analysis

The study analyzed the data using partial least squares structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 4. The measurement model assessment examined indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. The structural model assessment considered collinearity, coefficients of determination, effect sizes, predictive relevance, model-fit indices, and bootstrapped path coefficients. A relationship was treated as statistically significant when the t statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p value was below 0.05.

Mediation was evaluated through specific indirect effects and the relationship between direct and indirect paths. The thesis also calculated variance accounted for for the digital leadership pathway. A VAF value between 20 and 80 percent indicated partial mediation. For training, a significant indirect path combined with a nonsignificant direct path indicated indirect-only or full mediation. Because the thesis reported high collinearity between digital leadership and training and weak global model fit, the present article treats the structural coefficients as evidence conditional on the current model specification rather than definitive causal estimates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model

All four constructs met the reported thresholds for internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.776 to 0.872, composite reliability ranged from 0.770 to 0.864, and average variance extracted ranged from 0.534 to 0.548. These values indicate that the indicators shared adequate variance with their intended constructs and that the scales produced internally consistent scores. The relatively narrow AVE range also suggests comparable measurement strength across the four constructs. Nevertheless, reliability and convergent validity do not by themselves establish construct distinctiveness. The thesis identified high collinearity between digital leadership and training, which implies conceptual overlap or highly correlated respondent evaluations.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Digital leadership	0.776	0.811	0.770	0.534
Personnel training	0.804	0.823	0.777	0.536
Work motivation	0.872	0.877	0.864	0.548
Personnel performance	0.825	0.846	0.825	0.541

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The measurement results provide a sufficient basis for structural estimation but require a qualified interpretation. When respondents view good leadership as inseparable from opportunities for development, digital leadership and training may capture related aspects of organizational support. This overlap can inflate explanatory power and destabilize individual path estimates. The issue becomes especially relevant for the training-to-performance coefficient, which displayed an extreme standard error in the source output. Thus, the measurement model supports construct reliability, while the discriminant and collinearity concerns limit the precision of causal attribution.

Structural Model Explanatory Power and Fit

The structural model explained 88.5 percent of the variance in personnel performance and 83.3 percent of the variance in work motivation. These R-square values indicate strong in-sample explanatory power. The thesis reported a Q-square value of 0.981 and a descriptive goodness-of-fit value of 0.681. However, the standardized root mean square residual was 0.127, exceeding the 0.08 benchmark, and the normed fit index was 0.513. The strong R-square statistics therefore coexist with weak global fit. This pattern reinforces the need to distinguish predictive concentration within the sample from overall model adequacy.

Table 3. Structural Model Summary

Indicator	Value	Interpretation
R^2: personnel performance	0.885	Strong explained variance
Adjusted R^2: personnel performance	0.882	Strong explained variance
R^2: work motivation	0.833	Strong explained variance
Adjusted R^2: work motivation	0.832	Strong explained variance
Q^2	0.981	Positive predictive relevance
GoF	0.681	Large descriptive value
SRMR	0.127	Does not meet < 0.08 criterion
NFI	0.513	Low global fit

The discrepancy between high explained variance and unsatisfactory global fit has substantive implications. It suggests that the model captures a dominant shared organizational perception but may not reproduce the covariance structure with sufficient precision. High collinearity between digital leadership and training can produce precisely this pattern. Accordingly, the results remain useful for identifying managerial mechanisms, but they should not support claims that the present specification exhaustively represents police performance. Replication with refined measures, objective performance indicators, and a larger probability sample would provide a stronger test.

Direct Effects

Table 4. Direct Effects and Hypothesis Decisions

Path	β	t	p	Decision
Digital leadership → work motivation	0.502	3.964	< 0.001	H1 supported
Personnel training → work motivation	0.342	2.442	0.015	H2 supported
Digital leadership → personnel performance	0.431	2.963	0.003	H3 supported
Personnel training → personnel performance	-0.285	0.002	0.998	H4 not supported
Work motivation → personnel performance	0.435	3.693	< 0.001	H5 supported

Digital leadership produced the largest direct effect on work motivation. The coefficient of 0.502 indicates that leadership practices oriented toward digital vision, technological support, collaboration, and change management were associated with stronger personnel effort, persistence, responsibility, and development orientation. This finding supports the proposition that digital transformation is fundamentally a leadership and human-behavior process. Leaders reduce uncertainty by explaining priorities and demonstrating appropriate technology use. They also strengthen perceived competence by making support available when personnel encounter digital obstacles. These mechanisms satisfy the motivational conditions emphasized by self-determination theory and provide a behavioral explanation for the positive path.

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Digital leadership also exerted a positive direct effect on personnel performance. The coefficient of 0.431 suggests that clear digital direction and coordinated implementation improve work quality, timeliness, discipline, initiative, and collaboration independently of the motivational pathway. In operational terms, digital leadership can accelerate the transmission of instructions, improve access to information, standardize reporting, and enhance coordination among functional units. This direct path implies that leadership changes the structure of work as well as the psychological state of personnel. The result therefore supports an integrated interpretation in which leadership simultaneously improves operational opportunity and motivational activation.

Personnel training positively affected work motivation, with a coefficient of 0.342. Training can increase motivation by reducing perceived task difficulty, strengthening professional confidence, and signaling organizational investment in personnel development. When program objectives and materials correspond to actual assignments, participants can see a credible connection between learning and future effectiveness. This connection encourages persistence and self-development. The result is consistent with the ability-motivation-opportunity framework because capability-building activities can also influence the willingness to deploy newly acquired capability.

In contrast, personnel training did not have a significant direct effect on performance. The reported coefficient was negative and statistically nonsignificant. This result does not establish that training harms performance. Instead, it indicates that participation and perceived training quality did not translate automatically into observable performance within the current model. The source output for this path also contained an extreme standard deviation, which signals estimation instability. Substantively, the result highlights the transfer problem: learning remains disconnected from performance when personnel lack opportunities to apply new skills, supervisor coaching, feedback, compatible assignments, or incentives for implementation. The outcome-based level of the Kirkpatrick framework therefore requires conditions beyond the training event itself.

Work motivation positively affected personnel performance, with a coefficient of 0.435. Motivated personnel sustain effort, maintain task direction, persist under operational pressure, accept responsibility, and coordinate more effectively. This path confirms that performance cannot be explained by capability and systems alone. Police work includes uncertain situations, demanding service interactions, and procedural responsibilities that require voluntary concentration and persistence. Motivation converts formal resources into consistent behavior and therefore occupies a central position in the model.

Indirect Effects and the Mediating Role of Work Motivation

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

Indirect Path	β	t	p	Mediation
Digital leadership → motivation → performance	0.164	3.080	0.002	Partial, complementary; VAF 27.5%
Personnel training → motivation → performance	0.191	3.908	< 0.001	Indirect-only or full mediation

Work motivation partially mediated the effect of digital leadership on personnel performance. The direct and indirect coefficients were both positive and significant, while the VAF value of 27.5 percent fell within the partial-mediation interval used in the thesis. Digital leadership consequently improves performance through two simultaneous channels. The first channel restructures work by improving direction, coordination, and technology use. The second channel strengthens willingness by increasing confidence, clarity, involvement, and developmental support. The complementary pattern means that managerial interventions should not choose between digital systems and personnel motivation. Effective transformation requires both.

Work motivation fully mediated the effect of personnel training on performance. Training significantly increased motivation, and motivation significantly increased performance, whereas the direct training-to-performance path was not significant. This is the most practically important finding. It indicates that training functions as a latent resource whose performance value depends on motivational conversion. Personnel may return from training with greater knowledge but apply it only when they perceive relevance, receive recognition and support, understand performance expectations, and have opportunities to practice. Training evaluation should therefore extend beyond attendance and test scores to post-training behavior, supervisor reinforcement, and performance evidence.

The difference between the two mediation patterns clarifies the distinct organizational roles of leadership and training. Digital leadership directly shapes the work environment and therefore retains an immediate performance effect. Training primarily changes individual capacity and requires an activation mechanism before that capacity

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appears in work outcomes. In AMO terms, leadership influences opportunity and motivation, whereas training strengthens ability and contributes to motivation. This distinction explains why a uniform human-resource policy would be insufficient. Police management should develop leaders who create enabling digital conditions while redesigning training systems around transfer, coaching, and motivational reinforcement.

Managerial Implications

The findings indicate that the Lhokseumawe Resort Police should treat digital leadership as an operational capability rather than a symbolic commitment to technology. Leaders should communicate the purpose of each digital procedure, demonstrate its use, ensure rapid assistance, use data in supervision, and coordinate implementation across units. These practices can strengthen performance directly and simultaneously cultivate motivation. Leadership development should therefore integrate technology literacy, change communication, coaching, ethical data use, and cross-unit collaboration.

Training management should begin with unit-specific needs analysis and should connect learning objectives with actual tasks. Programs should use simulations, cases, digital practice, and problem solving that resemble operational conditions. After training, supervisors should assign opportunities for application, observe performance, provide feedback, and recognize successful implementation. The organization should integrate training completion with development plans and performance expectations. Such a transfer system addresses the empirical finding that training reaches performance principally through motivation.

Performance management should also protect the motivational pathway. Clear targets, fair recognition, developmental opportunities, role clarity, and supportive supervision can help personnel sustain the effort required to use digital systems consistently. Nonfinancial recognition, trust, expanded responsibility, and access to further development may complement formal rewards. The central managerial implication is that technology, leadership, training, and motivation should operate as a coordinated system rather than as separate administrative programs.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital leadership and work motivation constitute direct determinants of police personnel performance at the Lhokseumawe Resort Police. Digital leadership positively affected both motivation and performance, showing that leaders contribute through operational direction and psychological support. Personnel training positively affected motivation but did not produce a significant direct effect on performance. Work motivation positively affected performance and functioned as the mechanism that converted organizational inputs into sustained work behavior.

The mediation results refine the interpretation of the model. Work motivation partially and complementarily mediated the effect of digital leadership on performance, with a VAF value of 27.5 percent. Motivation fully mediated the effect of training on performance. Thus, training generates performance value when the organization creates conditions that encourage personnel to apply acquired competence. Police organizations should strengthen digital leadership, conduct needs-based training, provide post-training application opportunities, and align recognition and supervision with the expected use of new skills.

The findings require methodological caution. The study used purposive sampling, cross-sectional self-report data, and a single organizational setting. The model also showed high collinearity between digital leadership and training, an unstable training-to-performance estimate, SRMR of 0.127, and NFI of 0.513. Future research should refine overlapping indicators, use probability or longitudinal designs, incorporate objective performance measures, and examine additional mechanisms such as digital culture, organizational support, readiness for change, work engagement, and training transfer. These improvements would clarify causal direction and strengthen the generalizability of the model.

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