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The Influence of Democratic Leadership Style and Motivation on Employee Competence and Its Implications For The Quality of Public Services in The Regional Financial and Asset Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of motivation and democratic leadership style on competency. the impact of motivation and democratic leadership style on public service excellence. how proficiency affects the caliber of public services. the impact on the caliber of public services of democratic leadership and competence-based incentive. The West Tanjung Jabung Regency's Regional Finance and Asset Agency in Indonesia's Jambi Province is where this study was carried out. Both primary and secondary data were utilized in this investigation. 86 individuals who utilized services at the West Tanjung Jabung Regency's Regional Finance and Asset Agency made up the study's population. A sample of the total population was taken because there were less than 100 people. Saturated sampling, often known as the census method, was the sample strategy employed. Descriptive and verification analysis of the data were done using Path Analysis and the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. SmartPLS 3.0 software used to help process the data. The study's findings indicated that the democratic leadership style was successfully used. The level of motivation among employees to complete their task was deemed strong. Employee proficiency was rated as high. Likewise, the community's public services were rated as having a high level of quality. According to the study's findings, democratic leadership motivation and style meaningfully and favorably affect the caliber and proficiency of public services. By using a democratic leadership style, public services may be created with greater quality and staff competency. In a similar vein, strong job motivation maximizes the quality of public services and enhances individual competency. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that a key element affecting service quality is personnel competency. Additionally, competence functions as a mediating variable, enhancing the impact of motivation and democratic leadership style on the caliber of public services. This suggests that enhancing employee competency can amplify the beneficial effects of both factors in initiatives to raise the caliber of public services.

Keywords: Democratic Leadership Style, Motivation, Competence, Quality of Public Services

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform is a major challenge facing various organizations in the era of globalization and information. This is due to the limited ability of skilled organizational leaders to carry out management functions that can become skilled leaders in managing organizational resources in an effort to achieve quality public services.

Essentially, the quality of public service is directed at professional agency employees serving the public. Therefore, service quality refers to a leader's principle of managing their subordinates to ensure their performance is carried out effectively and can be considered effective in serving the public, as well as to create good governance in a country. This condition requires the creation of a conducive work climate that provides comfort for all parties, thus achieving quality work results.

A leader's role should be to design, implement, coordinate, and complete various activities related to service provision to achieve predetermined goals. In other words, public service management encompasses planning, implementing, directing, and coordinating service activities to achieve predetermined public service objectives (Moenir, 2016).

A leader's task is to ensure the organization functions effectively and efficiently. To achieve this, leaders need to inspire, encourage, and encourage subordinates to work effectively and efficiently. Northouse (2013) explains that a democratic leadership style is one that grants broad authority to subordinates. Whenever a problem arises, subordinates are always included as a whole team. In a democratic leadership style, leaders provide ample information about the tasks and responsibilities of their subordinates. In theory, this democratic leadership approach inspires employees to go above and beyond their typical performance. In other words, it can increase subordinates' trust and confidence, which will impact the quality of public services. Research (Djunaedi & Gunawan, 2018) confirms that democratic leadership has the ability to influence others to cooperate in achieving predetermined goals by jointly determining various activities between leaders and subordinates. Research (Alkaff & Khusnul Hasanah, 2022) confirms that a democratic leadership style has a meaningful influence on the quality of public services.

Motivation is a crucial factor in employees because it drives a person to work enthusiastically and achieve optimal results. Robbins & Judge (2017) state that motivation is a factor that directs and drives a person's behavior or desire to carry out an activity, expressed in the form of hard work. Therefore, if someone has a desire to achieve, they will make diligent efforts towards good work results. Zahari et al. (2022) stated that employee motivation to work, develop personal skills, and improve future capabilities is influenced by feedback regarding past public service and development. Research results (Talle, 2016) confirm that work motivation meaningfully influences the quality of public services.

Besides motivation, one factor that must be considered in achieving good quality public services is employee competency. According to Zeithami-Parasurman-Berry (in Sedarmayanti, 2017), the relationship between employee competency and public service quality is as follows: "To determine the quality of service perceived by the public, it lies in ten dimensions of service quality, one of which is competency, namely the requirement for officers to possess good knowledge and skills in providing services." Research results (Furima et al., 2024) confirm that competency meaningfully influences the quality of public services.

The author is interested in studying the quality of public services, as shown by the statement above. 1) The impact of democratic leadership style and motivation on competency; 2) The impact of democratic leadership style and motivation on public service quality are the

two main goals of the study. 3) How competency affects the standard of public services. 4) How the quality of public services is affected by democratic leadership and competence-based motivation.

METHODS

The study was carried out in Indonesia's Jambi Province at the West Tanjung Jabung Regency's Regional Finance and Asset Agency. This study included both primary and secondary data. original data is information that the researcher personally gathers from original sources, whereas secondary data is information that has been published, used by the organization, or documented, according to Sugiyono in Sudirman et al. (2020). The study employed competence (Y) as a mediating variable, public service quality (Z) as a dependent (endogenous) variable, democratic leadership style (X1) and motivation (X2) as independent (exogenous) factors (Pranata, 2022).

The research included 86 service consumers from the West Tanjung Jabung Regency's Regional Finance and Asset Agency. Arikunto (2012) states that if there are less than 100 individuals in the population, the whole sample is obtained. Nonetheless, a sample of 10–15% or 20–25% of the population can be taken if it exceeds 100. The entire community was sampled because the study's population size was limited to 100 responders. The census method (saturated sampling) was the sampling strategy. According to Sugiyono (2018), saturation sampling is a sampling strategy in which every member of the population is employed as a sample. Path Analysis with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method was employed in the statistical analysis. SmartPLS 3.0 software used to help process the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Research Factors

Descriptive analysis of the data from this study was used to analyze respondents' responses to each indicator of the variables studied. The results of questionnaires distributed to 90 respondents regarding the variables of democratic leadership style, motivation, competence, and quality of public service at the Regional Finance and Asset Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Analysis Per Variable

No	Variable	Item	Total Score	Range Scale	Category
1	Democratic Leadership Style (X ₁)	12	3954	3508,8 – 4334,3	Good
2	Motivation (X ₂)	14	4615	4093,6 – 5056,7	High
3	Competence (Y)	9	2976	2631,6 – 3250,7	High
4	Public Service Quality (Z)	12	3959	3508,8 – 4334,3	Good

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of this study indicate that each employee has a constructive perception of the variables of democratic leadership style, motivation, competence, and public service quality. The total score for each variable: democratic leadership style was 3954, categorized as good; motivation was 4615, categorized as high; competence was 2976, categorized as high; and the public service quality variable was 3959, categorized as good.

Measurement Model Test (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity Testing

Testing for convergent validity is a method of determining how well a measuring device or instrument captures the same concept. For the indicators or items employed in the model to accurately reflect the same construct, convergent validity is essential in the context

of statistics and data analysis, especially in latent variable-based models like Partial Least Squares (PLS).

1. Loading Factor

The loading factor is a crucial element in evaluating a measurement model. A high loading factor value indicates that the indicator effectively measures the latent construct, while a lower value indicates potential problems in the model. Proper use and interpretation of loading factors helps in ensuring the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument or model being developed.

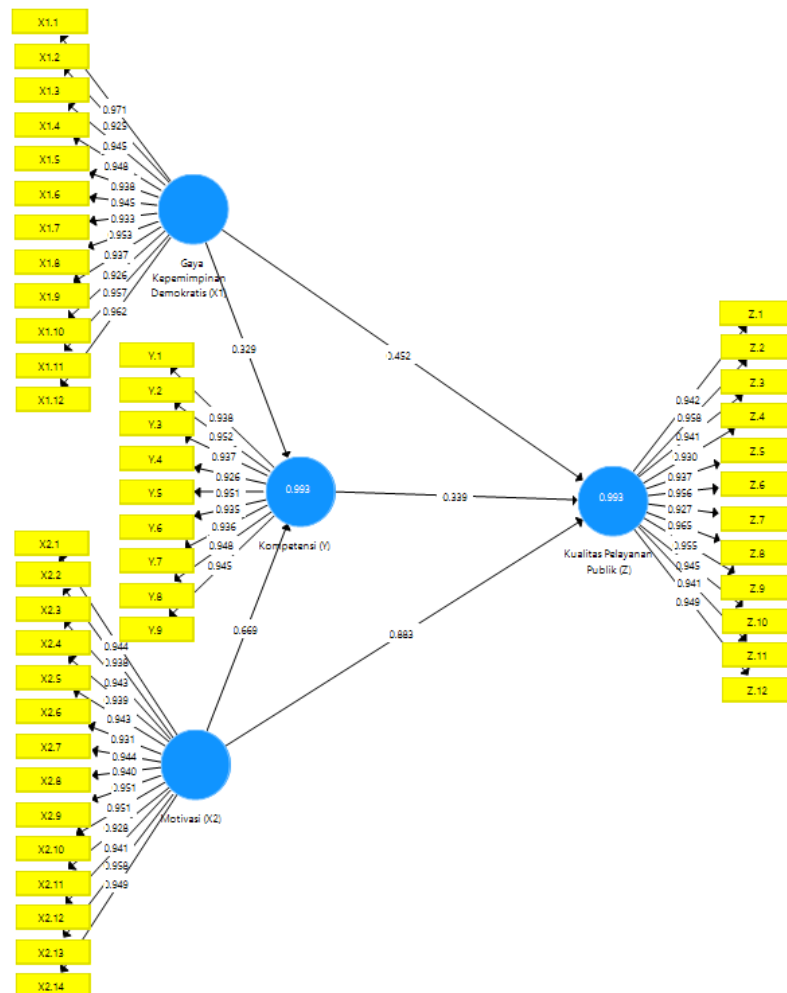


Figure 1. Outer Loading

Based on the outer loading values in Figure 1, it can be seen that all indicators for each research variable Democratic Leadership Style (X1), Motivation (X2), Competence (Y), and Public Service Quality (Z), have loading values above 0.70. This indicates that each indicator has excellent convergent validity and is suitable for use as a representative of its construct.

2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

AVE is used to ensure that the indicators in the model truly reflect the latent construct being measured and are not meaningfully influenced by other variables. If the AVE value is greater than 0.5, the latent construct has adequate convergent validity and the indicators used in the model adequately reflect the construct being measured. The AVE values are as follows:

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted Values

Variable	AVE Value	Description
Democratic Leadership Style (X1)	0.893	Valid
Motivation (X2)	0.889	Valid
Competence (Y)	0.885	Valid
Public Service Quality (Z)	0.894	Valid

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

Table 2 shows the AVE values for each variable in the model. All variables have AVE values above the minimum threshold of 0.50. These high AVE values indicate that each construct in this model has met the convergent validity criteria.

Discriminant Validity Test

In order to make sure that every notion in every latent variable is unique from the others, the discriminant validity test employs cross-loading values. A cross-loading value of more than 0.7 indicates that an indicator satisfies discriminant validity. The discriminant validity test yielded the following findings:

Table 3. Cross-Loading

Item	Democratic Leadership Style (X ₁)	Motivation (X ₂)	Competence (Y)	Public Service Quality (Z)
X1.1	0.971	0.966	0.960	0.966
X1.2	0.925	0.917	0.918	0.912
X1.3	0.945	0.952	0.943	0.949
X1.4	0.948	0.936	0.939	0.932
X1.5	0.938	0.933	0.923	0.938
X1.6	0.945	0.944	0.938	0.940
X1.7	0.933	0.932	0.938	0.932
X1.8	0.953	0.947	0.952	0.943
X1.9	0.937	0.934	0.937	0.933
X1.10	0.926	0.924	0.926	0.924
X1.11	0.957	0.948	0.948	0.946
X1.12	0.962	0.950	0.951	0.955
X2.1	0.936	0.944	0.930	0.941
X2.2	0.932	0.938	0.934	0.941
X2.3	0.937	0.943	0.931	0.951
X2.4	0.937	0.939	0.951	0.924
X2.5	0.937	0.943	0.935	0.936
X2.6	0.931	0.931	0.936	0.927
X2.7	0.937	0.944	0.948	0.937
X2.8	0.929	0.940	0.945	0.928
X2.9	0.950	0.951	0.942	0.955
X2.10	0.952	0.951	0.944	0.948
X2.11	0.924	0.928	0.918	0.920
X2.12	0.935	0.941	0.936	0.937
X2.13	0.953	0.958	0.952	0.954
X2.14	0.945	0.949	0.945	0.943
Y.1	0.933	0.932	0.938	0.932
Y.2	0.953	0.947	0.952	0.943

Item	Democratic Leadership Style (X ₁)	Motivation (X ₂)	Competence (Y)	Public Service Quality (Z)
Y.3	0.937	0.934	0.937	0.933
Y.4	0.926	0.924	0.926	0.924
Y.5	0.937	0.939	0.951	0.924
Y.6	0.937	0.943	0.935	0.936
Y.7	0.931	0.931	0.936	0.927
Y.8	0.937	0.944	0.948	0.937
Y.9	0.929	0.940	0.945	0.928
Z.1	0.933	0.934	0.934	0.942
Z.2	0.940	0.951	0.939	0.958
Z.3	0.942	0.944	0.949	0.941
Z.4	0.931	0.934	0.934	0.930
Z.5	0.932	0.929	0.927	0.937
Z.6	0.945	0.950	0.941	0.956
Z.7	0.928	0.917	0.912	0.927
Z.8	0.956	0.962	0.954	0.965
Z.9	0.962	0.950	0.951	0.955
Z.10	0.941	0.946	0.932	0.945
Z.11	0.932	0.938	0.934	0.941
Z.12	0.933	0.939	0.926	0.949

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

All of the indicators in the research variables have cross-loading values higher than 0.7, as shown in Table 3. Given that all of the indicators in this study have cross-loading values higher than 0.7, these findings suggest that the indicators had strong discriminant validity when it came to creating the variables.

Reliability Test

The degree of trustworthiness of a measurement tool is assessed by a composite reliability test. If the loading values of any variable are more than 0.70, they are all regarded as dependable. The following table displays each variable's Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values:

Table 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability	Description	Cronbach Alpa	Description
Democratic Leadership Style (X ₁)	0.990	Reliabel	0.989	Reliabel
Motivation (X ₂)	0.991	Reliabel	0.990	Reliabel
Competence (Y)	0.986	Reliabel	0.984	Reliabel
Public Service Quality (Z)	0.990	Reliabel	0.989	Reliabel

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

In Table 4, the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for the four variables—Democratic Leadership Style, Motivation, Competence, and Public Service Quality—were above 0.70. Thus, these results indicate that all measurement instruments in this study have proven reliable, both in terms of internal consistency and indicator stability. This strengthens the validity of the instruments used and provides a strong foundation for proceeding to the structural model analysis stage. This high reliability also indicates that the research results can be trusted to describe the relationships between variables in the model.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

1. R Square

According to Hair et al. (2020), the coefficient of determination is a gauge of how well exogenous latent variables work together to forecast an endogenous variable construct. This means that the coefficient shows how much of the endogenous construct's variance can be accounted for by all associated exogenous constructs. The range of R² values is 0 to 1, where larger values correspond to greater predicted accuracy.

Table 5 shows the results of R-square estimation using SmartPLS 3:

Table 5. R-Square Values	
Variable	R-Square
Competence (Y)	0.993
Public Service Quality (Z)	0.993

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

Based on the estimated R-Square values shown in Table 5, the competency variable (Y) has an R-Square value of 0.993, equivalent to 99.3 percent, while the public service quality variable (Z) has an R-Square value of 0.993, or 99.3 percent. These R-Square values indicate the proportion of variability in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in the research model. Thus, 99.3 percent of the variation in competency can be explained by the democratic leadership style and motivation variables, while the remaining 0.7 percent is explained by other factors outside the model. Similarly, 99.3 percent of the variation in public service quality can also be explained by the democratic leadership style and motivation, while only 0.7 percent is influenced by other factors.

2. Q-Square

In the event that the Q-Square value is larger than 0 (> 0), the model is deemed to have important predictive value. Here is the formula to determine the predictive-relevance value:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - R^2_1)(1 - R^2_2) \\
 Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - 0,993^2)(1 - 0,993^2) \\
 Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - 0,986)(1 - 0,986) \\
 Q^2 &= 1 - (0,014)(0,014) \\
 Q^2 &= 1 - 0,0002 \\
 Q^2 &= 0,9998
 \end{aligned}$$

The study's model is appropriate for explaining endogenous variables since the Q-square calculation result was 0.9998, which is more than zero.

Structural Model Testing

In SEM-PLS analysis, the structural value of the model in this study can be seen from the direct effects value, also known as the path coefficient.

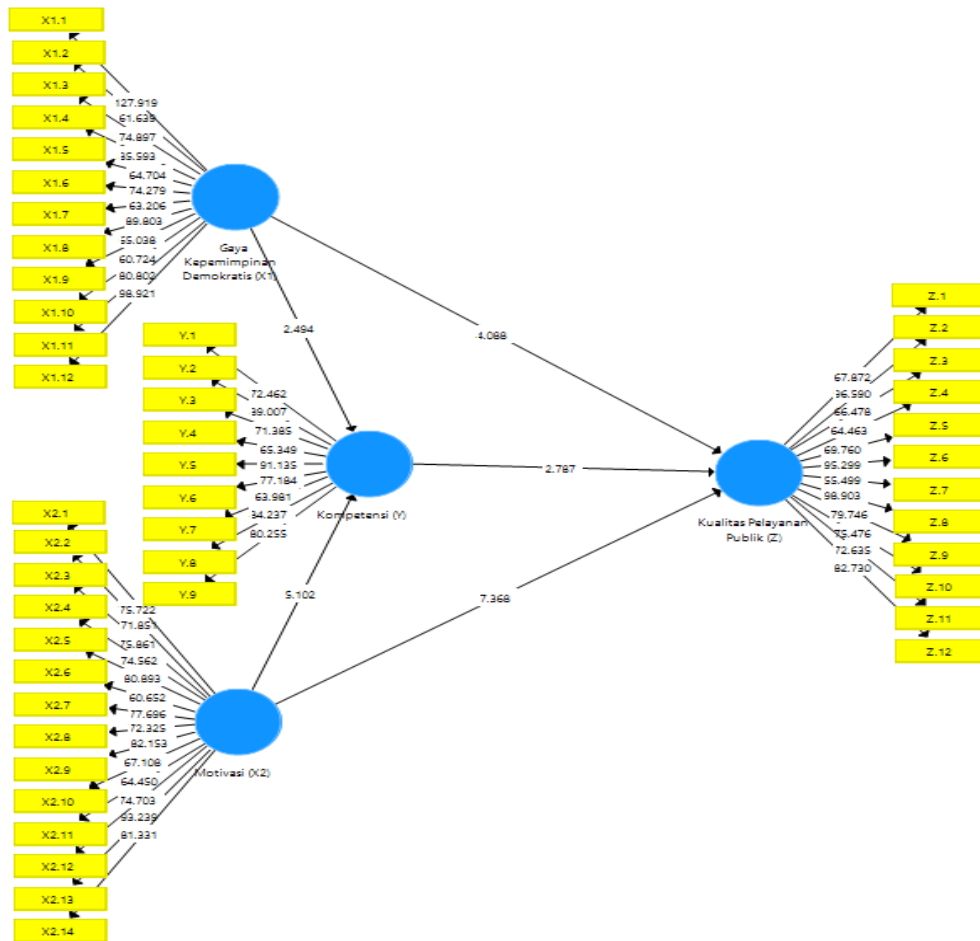


Figure 2. Bootstrapping

To understand the structural model in this study, see the following table:

Table 6. Path Coefficient

Interactions Between Variables	Path Coefficient
Democratic Leadership Style (X1) -> Competence (Y)	0.329
Motivation (X2) -> Competence (Y)	0.669
Democratic Leadership Style (X1) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.452
Motivation (X2) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.883
Competence (Y) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.339
Democratic Leadership Style (X1) -> Competence (Y) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.111
Motivation (X2) -> Competence (Y) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.226

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

Based on the patch coefficient analysis results in Table 6, the following explanations can be obtained:

1. The direct impact of democratic leadership style on competence is 0.329, meaning that a one-unit increase in democratic leadership style leads to a 0.329 increase in competence. This impact is constructive.
2. The direct impact of motivation on competence is 0.669, meaning that a one-unit increase in motivation leads to a 0.669 increase in competence. This impact is constructive.

3. The direct impact of democratic leadership style on public service quality is 0.452, meaning that a one-unit increase in democratic leadership style leads to a 0.452 increase in public service quality. This impact is constructive.
4. The direct impact of motivation on public service quality is 0.883, meaning that a one-unit increase in motivation leads to a 0.883 increase in public service quality. This impact is constructive.
5. The direct impact of Competence on the Quality of Public Services is 0.339, meaning that if Competence increases by one unit, the Quality of Public Services can increase by 0.339. This impact is constructive.
6. The indirect impact of Democratic Leadership Style on the Quality of Public Services through Competence is 0.111, meaning that if Democratic Leadership Style increases by one unit, the Quality of Public Services can increase indirectly through Competence by 0.111. This impact is constructive.
7. The indirect impact of Motivation on the Quality of Public Services through Competence is 0.226, meaning that if Motivation increases by one unit, the Quality of Public Services can increase indirectly through Competence by 0.226. This impact is constructive.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted on the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables by comparing the p-values of the path coefficients with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The test can be considered highly meaningful if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) or using the t-table value of 1.96, with the criteria for rejecting and accepting the hypothesis: if the t-statistic $>$ t-count, the hypothesis is rejected, and if the t-statistic $<$ t-count, the hypothesis is accepted (Ghozali & Latan, 2012). Table 7 provides the estimated output for the structural model test.

Table 7. Estimation Output for Structural Model Testing

Interactions Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Democratic Leadership Style (X1) -> Competence (Y)	0.329	0.318	0.121	2.719	0.007
Motivation (X2) -> Competence (Y)	0.669	0.680	0.120	5.561	0.000
Democratic Leadership Style (X1) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.452	0.441	0.106	4.251	0.000
Motivation (X2) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.883	0.892	0.123	7.179	0.000
Competence (Y) -> Public Service Quality (Z)	0.339	0.337	0.123	2.743	0.006

Source: Data Processing with Smart PLS Version 3.0, (2025)

The results of the structural model estimation test output in Table 7 can be explained as follows:

1. The Impact of Democratic Leadership Style on Competence

The hypothesis test findings show a path coefficient of 0.329 in the link between competence and the democratic leadership style variable. Since the P-value is 0.007, which is less than 0.05 ($0.007 < 0.05$), and the t-statistic value is $2.719 > 1.96$, hypothesis H1 is accepted. These findings suggest that a democratic leadership style meaningfully and favorably affects competence. Thus, competency will be greatly impacted by a greater emphasis on democratic leadership.

2. The Impact of Motivation on Competence

The hypothesis test findings show that there is a 0.669 path coefficient between the competence and motivation variable. The hypothesis H1 is accepted as the t-statistic value is $5.561 > 1.96$ and the P-value is 0.000, both of which are less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). These findings show that competence is constructively and meaningfully impacted by motivation. Thus, competence will rise in tandem with motivation.

3. The Impact of Democratic Leadership Style on Public Service Quality

A path coefficient of 0.452 is shown by the hypothesis test findings between the democratic leadership style variable and the caliber of public services. Since the P-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the t-statistic value is $4.251 > 1.96$, hypothesis H1 is accepted. According to these findings, democratic leadership style meaningfully and favorably affects the caliber of public services providing them.

4. Hypothesis Testing the Impact of Motivation on Public Service Quality

According to the hypothesis test results, there is a route coefficient of 0.883 between the motivation variable and the caliber of public services. Hypothesis H1 is accepted as the t-statistic value is $7.179 > 1.96$ and the P-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). The findings show that the quality of public services is constructively and meaningfully impacted by motivation. This implies that public services will be of higher quality if motivation rises.

5. Hypothesis Testing: The Impact of Competence on the Quality of Public Services

According to the hypothesis test results, there is a 0.339 path coefficient between the competency variable and the caliber of public services. Hypothesis H1 is accepted as the t-statistic value of 2.743 is higher than 1.96 and the P-value is 0.006, which is less than 0.05 ($0.006 < 0.05$). These findings suggest that expertise meaningfully and favorably affects the caliber of public services. This implies that public services will be of higher quality as competency rises.

DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Democratic Leadership Style, Motivation, Competence, and the Quality of Public Services

Descriptive analysis shows that the democratic leadership style has been implemented effectively. Employee motivation in carrying out their work is classified as high. Employee competence is categorized as high. Likewise, the quality of public services provided to the public is categorized as high. This condition indicates that if a democratic leadership style works well, and employees are motivated to carry out tasks supported by their competencies, the quality of service provided to the public will increase.

2. The Impact of Democratic Leadership Style on Competence

According to the study's findings, competency is constructively and meaningfully impacted by the democratic leadership style variable. Research by Jaspin et al. (2021), Bayu et al. (2024), and Mitang & Kiha (2019) supports this conclusion, demonstrating that a democratic leadership style meaningfully and favorably affects competence.

A democratic leadership style has been shown to have a meaningful influence on competence because leaders consistently involve employee participation in the decision-making process. Leaders are not authoritarian, but rather provide a space for deliberation and openness in resolving problems facing the organization. Participation in this process allows employees to better understand the context and objectives of their work, thereby improving their ability to clearly identify tasks and responsibilities. Thus, this leadership style fosters a sense of ownership of their work, increases honesty in their work performance, and motivates employees to actively seek solutions to emerging issues. Clear direction from leaders

supports employees' understanding of work priorities and targets, while facilitating the implementation of competency values such as accuracy, thoroughness, and high levels of responsibility. Furthermore, open communication and democratic discussions create an environment that fosters continuous individual capacity development.

In addition to providing clear direction, a democratic leadership style also encourages employee emotional and professional involvement in every work process. Leadership's openness to input and the adoption of deliberation as a work culture create a sense of security for employees to express ideas and develop initiatives without pressure. This is closely related to competency indicators, such as the ability to make decisions independently, assist colleagues without being told, and be polite in professional interactions.

3. The Influence of Motivation on Competence

Research results show that motivation has a constructive and meaningful impact on competence. This finding aligns with findings by (Siti Faridzah et al., 2021), (Kuruway, 2021), (Rulianti, 2023), and (Alyusri & Nasution, 2020), which suggest that motivation meaningfully impacts competence.

The impact of motivation on employee competence is evident in their high work ethic in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Employees who feel motivated by promotions, bonuses, incentives, or career development will be more driven to continuously improve their capacity. This motivation leads employees to demonstrate a high level of commitment to their work and complete responsibilities thoroughly and on time. Strongly motivated employees are more adaptable, willing to learn new things, and demonstrate moral responsibility in their work, all of which reflect high competence.

Motivation stemming from a supportive work environment, particularly from superiors and a reward system, also influences the growth of employee competence. When employees feel appreciated for their performance, they are more motivated to demonstrate their best skills in every task. Bonuses awarded for achieving targets encourage employees to work more effectively and efficiently. This results in improved technical skills in completing tasks and skills in providing targeted service. Strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation also makes employees more focused, confident, and committed to applying their knowledge in their daily work. Employees work not only out of obligation, but also out of a sense of responsibility and passion to provide the best service to the public. This attitude strengthens competency aspects such as job knowledge, problem-solving skills, and awareness of professional standards.

4. The Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Public Service Quality

The results of this study indicate that the relationship between democratic leadership style and the quality of public service has a constructive and meaningful effect. These results align with research conducted by (Anggraini & Ermawati, 2024), which found that a democratic leadership style has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services.

A democratic leadership style meaningfully impacts the quality of public services because leaders who employ this style tend to involve employees in the decision-making and problem-solving processes. This involvement fosters a strong sense of responsibility among employees for the work and services they provide to the public. Leaders discuss issues through deliberation and provide clear direction, enabling employees to better understand their tasks. This results in more orderly, focused, and procedural work. Employees become more aware of the importance of carrying out their duties responsibly, arriving on time, and adhering to service standard operating procedures (SOPs). When employees feel heard and

valued by their leaders, they will demonstrate the same attitude toward service users, providing friendly, fair, and professional service.

In addition to enhancing task understanding, a democratic leadership style also creates a conducive and open work environment, which directly encourages employees to provide the best service. When leaders are able to control their emotions, act professionally, and are open to feedback, they set a constructive example for employees in interacting with the public. This healthy and dialogical communication culture strengthens employees' interpersonal competencies, such as the use of polite language, the ability to provide solutions to service problems, and maintaining a neutral and non-discriminatory attitude in providing service. The questionnaire also revealed that employees do not show favoritism, always provide information transparently, and refrain from extortion. This leadership style, which supports the values of integrity and accountability, is highly relevant in ensuring high-quality, accountable, and responsive public services to user needs.

5. The Influence of Motivation on Public Service Quality

The results of this study indicate that the relationship between motivation and the variable has a constructive and meaningful impact on public service quality. This finding aligns with research conducted by (Wilis, 2022), (Maulana, 2016), and (Anggraini & Ermawati, 2024), which found that motivation meaningfully impacts public service quality.

Motivation meaningfully impacts public service quality because motivated employees tend to have high work ethic, a strong sense of responsibility, and a strong commitment to carrying out their duties. Employees feel motivated by various factors such as promotions, incentives, bonuses, and career development. This motivation drives them to complete their tasks optimally and with full awareness of their role as public servants. They arrive on time, adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs), and carry out their duties professionally. The sense of responsibility that arises from strong motivation encourages employees to work not only out of obligation but also out of an awareness of the importance of providing quality service to the public. This enthusiasm creates faster, more accurate, and more satisfying service, a direct reflection of high-quality public service.

In addition to boosting work enthusiasm, motivation also shapes attitudes and behaviors in service delivery that are more humane and oriented toward the needs of service users. In carrying out their duties, employees are polite, friendly, and non-discriminatory in providing service, and always provide transparent information. Motivated employees demonstrate enthusiasm in interactions, are willing to help patiently, and are able to address service issues in a solution-oriented manner. When employees feel appreciated for their performance, whether through incentives or recognition, they are encouraged to maintain consistent work quality. This creates a constructive service experience for the public, strengthens trust in the institution, and minimizes the risk of complaints or dissatisfaction. Therefore, high motivation directly improves the quality of interactions between employees and service users, which is the core of good public service.

6. The Influence of Competence on the Quality of Public Services

The results of this study indicate that the competency variable has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services. This finding aligns with research conducted by Maulana (2016), which found that competency has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services. Similarly, research conducted by Furima et al. (2024) and Lufitasari et al. (2023) also found that competency has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services.

Employee competency meaningfully impacts the quality of public services because it encompasses the knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes required to carry out service

duties. In the questionnaire, employees demonstrated honesty, responsibility, and the ability to identify tasks effectively, all indicators of high competency. When employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, they can work efficiently and provide services that meet operational standards. Services are more orderly, timely, and accurate, minimizing errors and increasing user satisfaction. Clarity of roles and a deep understanding of tasks also encourage employees to carry out their work conscientiously, not simply carrying out routine tasks but rather ensuring optimal service delivery.

Beyond technical knowledge, competence also encompasses interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities, which are essential components of public service. In carrying out their duties, employees are able to assist colleagues without being asked, are polite, and possess the skills to resolve problems appropriately. This is crucial because public service issues often arise, requiring a quick and appropriate response from employees. Competent employees can provide solutions without delay, clearly explain the service process, and maintain professional interactions with service users. A friendly and non-discriminatory attitude, along with the ability to control emotions under pressure, makes users feel valued and well-served. Service quality also improves because employees are able to maintain high-quality interactions while completing work efficiently.

7. The Influence of a Democratic Leadership Style on Public Service Quality Through Competence

A democratic leadership style influences public service quality by improving employee competence because this leadership style creates a participatory and open work climate. Leaders who adopt a democratic style involve employees in decision-making, provide space for discussion, and provide clear direction. In exercising their authority, leaders frequently engage in deliberation with subordinates, provide consistent direction, and are able to control their emotions when facing obstacles. This communication pattern builds trust and encourages employees to better understand their tasks and foster a sense of responsibility. When employees feel heard and appreciated, they are encouraged to continue learning and developing themselves. This strengthens their competence, particularly in terms of work initiative, technical skills, and problem-solving abilities. Increased competence directly supports higher-quality service, as employees are able to provide professional and targeted services.

8. The Influence of Motivation on Public Service Quality Through Competence

Motivation influences the quality of public services through improving employee competency because it encourages employees to actively develop their abilities. In carrying out their duties, employees are motivated by various factors such as promotions, incentives, bonuses, and career development opportunities. This motivation fosters a constructive work attitude, such as a passion for learning, a commitment to responsibility, and a desire to achieve targets. This internal drive encourages employees not only to carry out routine tasks but also to deepen their understanding of their field of work, participate in training, and improve their skills and knowledge. This competency development is crucial because it forms the primary foundation for providing quality, timely, procedurally sound, and satisfactory services to service users. Thus, motivation creates conditions that enable employees to grow professionally, ultimately impacting the quality of public services.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Descriptively, the democratic leadership style is implemented effectively. Employee motivation in carrying out their work is considered high. Employee competence is categorized as high. Likewise, the quality of public services provided to the community is categorized as high.
2. On competence, the democratic leadership style has a favorable and noteworthy effect. Accordingly, competency will rise as the democratic leadership style advances.
3. Motivation has a constructive and meaningful impact on competence. This means that as motivation increases, competence increases.
4. Public service quality is constructively and meaningfully impacted by democratic leadership. Thus, the quality of public services rises in tandem with the democratic leadership style.
5. Motivation has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services. This means that as motivation increases, the quality of public services increases.
6. Competence has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services. This means that as competence increases, the quality of public services increases.
7. A democratic leadership style has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services through competence. This means that as democratic leadership style increases, competence and the quality of public services increase.
8. Motivation has a constructive and meaningful impact on the quality of public services through competence. This means that as motivation increases, competence and the quality of public services increase.

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