

# The Role of Leadership and Work Loyalty in Improving Work Assessment at the North Sumatra Provincial Cooperatives and SMEs Office UPT. PLUT

Original Article

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## Abstract

Employee performance assessment is a fundamental aspect in human resource management that determines the effectiveness of government organizations. North Sumatra Province Cooperatives and SMEs Office UPT. PLUT as an agency that plays a role in community economic empowerment faces challenges in optimizing employee performance. Effective leadership and high job loyalty are suspected to be determinant factors in improving employee work assessment. This paper seeks to identify the influence of leadership and occupational allegiance in augmenting performance evaluations within the UPT PLUT Office of Cooperatives and SMEs, North Sumatra Province, while simultaneously delineating the causal interplay among leadership, work loyalty, and employee performance metrics. The investigation adopts a quantitative methodological framework, encompassing the entire personnel population of 57 individuals at the UPT PLUT Office of Cooperatives and SMEs, North Sumatra Province. The sampling framework employed a census (saturated sampling) technique, ensuring comprehensive representativeness. The instrumentation apparatus consisted of a Likert-scaled questionnaire, meticulously constructed to gauge perceptual tendencies across relevant dimensions. Data processing and inferential analytics were executed through multiple regression modeling utilizing SPSS software version 29. Empirical revelations elucidate that leadership exerts a favorable and statistically consequential impact upon employee performance indices. Meanwhile, occupational fealty was substantiated to impart a constructive and substantively meaningful influence on performance outcomes. Collectively, leadership and professional dedication were observed to synergistically contribute a salient effect on employee efficacy, with an  $R^2$  coefficient of 0.311 (31.1%), signifying that these two determinants collectively accounted for 72.3% of the observed variance in performance appraisals.

**Keywords:** Employee Performance, Government Organizations, Human Resource Management, Job Appraisals, Job Loyalty, Leadership.

## 1. Introduction

The Technical Implementation Unit of the Integrated Business Service Center (UPT. PLUT) as an extension of the North Sumatra Provincial Cooperatives and SMEs Office has a vital function in providing direct services to the business community. UPT. PLUT is tasked with providing facilitation, technical guidance, and assistance to cooperatives and SMEs in various aspects of business development, ranging from licensing, access to capital, marketing, to increasing the capacity of human resources. The success of UPT. PLUT in carrying out its functions is highly dependent on the quality of human resources owned. Rahmawati et al.



(2021) argue that to achieve strategic goals and maintain a company's competitive advantage, employees must have high performance.

Sedarmayanti (2017) delineates employee performance as the resultant output generated by an individual or collective within an organization, executed in alignment with their respective authority and responsibilities to fulfill organizational objectives, conducted lawfully and in concordance with moral and ethical precepts. Rizky et al. (2022) articulate that performance denotes the outcomes attained by an employee, discernible through the qualitative and quantitative completion of assigned duties within the enterprise. Employees exhibiting superior performance consequently produce advantageous outcomes for the organization, thereby facilitating the attainment of optimal corporate objectives.

Fundamentally, performance appraisal serves as a systematic mechanism to evaluate the magnitude of an individual's contribution to the organization. The significance of such evaluation lies in determining the extent to which an employee's efforts are acknowledged and valued in the execution of their responsibilities (Indrastuti et al., 2018). Mathis and Jackson (2011) posit that the determinants influencing employee performance encompass an individual's aptitude for the position, the degree of exerted effort, and the institutional support rendered. Within the purview of managerial operations, human resource management frameworks must be strategically conceived, continually assessed, and adaptively refined to ensure their efficacy in augmenting both organizational competitiveness and individual workplace performance.

In carrying out the development of an organizational wheel, it is not only determined from the expertise in managing finances, the technological superiority, facilities and infrastructure owned by the machine is also determined from the success of managing human resources. Of course, it is inseparable from the leadership role it enforces (Mukhlisin, 2023). Leadership is a component that must be possessed by an institution because its role is very strategic in advancing the institution (Rosmita et al., 2023). The definition of leadership is in line with that stated by Sutrisno (2016) in research (Nasution & Rizky, 2024) which states that leadership is an activity that moves others to achieve expected results by leading, guiding, and influencing others.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in inspiring and enhancing employee performance to achieve organizational objectives while fostering confidence and developing the necessary competencies to attain those goals (Susanto et al., 2023). An appropriate leadership style can cultivate a positive work atmosphere, strengthen employee engagement, and stimulate innovation (Rahman et al., 2023). The type of leadership implemented exerts a substantial influence on employee morale, discipline, and sense of responsibility in carrying out public service duties, particularly in advancing the development of cooperatives and MSMEs within the region.

Job loyalty, on the other hand, is a quality that is often challenging for organizations to cultivate (Astuti, 2024). Fostering loyalty represents an essential component of human resource management improvement, serving as a key determinant in enhancing employee performance (Sidik & Fajri, 2025). Work loyalty is reflected in employees' willingness to devote their full capabilities, intellect, and expertise toward achieving organizational objectives, demonstrated through responsibility, discipline, honesty, and the safeguarding of company confidentiality (Gustara & Adiwati, 2021). High loyalty typically emerges from job satisfaction, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and trust in leadership. According to Wibowo et al. (2022), employees exhibiting low loyalty can impede company performance, hindering the attainment of targets. Diminished loyalty may further lead to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and decreased compliance with leadership directives.

Previous empirical studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between leadership and work loyalty with employee performance. Research conducted by Gustara and Adiwati (2021), Indrastuti et al. (2018), Sidik and Fajri (2025), Wibowo et al. (2022) revealed that leadership exerts a significant positive influence on employee performance. However, contrasting findings were reported by Nugroho (2018) and Nugroho et al. (2024), who found that leadership had no measurable effect on employee performance. Similarly, several studies, including those by Gustara and Adiwati (2021), Sidik and Fajri (2025), and Wibowo et al. (2022), have confirmed the positive relationship between work loyalty and employee performance. Conversely, Indrastuti et al. (2018) found no significant impact of job loyalty on employee performance, suggesting that contextual and organizational factors may moderate this relationship.

The object of this research is Non-ASN at the North Sumatra Provincial Cooperatives and SMEs Office at UPT. PLUT. Referring to Presidential Regulation No. 38 of 2020 concerning Types of Positions and Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning ASN which provides opportunities for the appointment of qualified honorary personnel to become ASN through a special selection route. Non-ASN performance assessment is crucial because it can be an objective basis for identifying competent workers who are worthy of being appointed as ASN, as well as fulfilling the mandate of bureaucratic reform in creating professional apparatus. Grounded in the preceding background, this research aims to identify the impact of leadership and occupational allegiance on performance evaluations, while delineating the causal relationships among leadership, work loyalty, and employee performance metrics at the UPT PLUT Office.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Leadership

The concept of leadership aligns with Sutrisno (2016), who defines it as an activity that mobilizes others to achieve desired outcomes through directing, guiding, and influencing their actions. Rizky et al. (2022) describe leadership as an effort to realize organizational objectives by harmonizing the needs of followers, thereby fostering their growth in alignment with organizational goals. An appropriate leadership style can cultivate a positive work atmosphere, enhance employee engagement, and stimulate innovation (Rahman et al., 2023). Similarly, Fahmi (2017) characterizes leadership as a discipline that comprehensively studies the processes of directing, influencing, and supervising individuals to perform tasks in accordance with established plans.

### 2.2. Job Loyalty

Hasibuan (2017) defines employee work loyalty as the extent to which individuals dedicate their thoughts, time, and efforts to fulfill organizational objectives through the diverse roles they undertake. Similarly, Rahman (2020) explains that employee loyalty is reflected in their commitment to the company, which can be shaped by various factors originating from both the organization and the individual. According to Nahak and Ellitan (2022), organizational commitment refers to an employee's identification with the organization, its goals, and their desire to remain a part of it. In other words, loyalty toward the company fosters a strong sense of responsibility among employees, ultimately cultivating a shared sense of belonging within the organization (Rizky et al., 2022). Hence, employee loyalty can be seen from one of the elements, namely loyalty to their jobs and positions (Hasibuan, 2017).

### 2.3. Employee Performance

Employee performance may be conceptualized as the manifestation of outcomes produced by personnel in the execution of their designated duties and obligations within a predetermined temporal scope. Optimal performance denotes the attainment of work results that correspond with organizational benchmarks and advance the realization of corporate objectives (Rizky et al., 2022). As articulated by Mangkunegara (2013), performance constitutes the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of work accomplishments achieved by an employee in carrying out tasks consistent with their prescribed responsibilities. In a congruent perspective, Afandi (2018) defines performance as the aggregate of work outputs realized by an individual or collective within an organization, aligned with their scope of authority and accountability, and directed toward the fulfillment of institutional aims. In general, performance denotes the accomplishments or outcomes of an individual, group, or organization in meeting predetermined goals. When it comes to employee performance, it is meant by individual achievements and contributions to the organization in the workplace (Rahman et al., 2023).

## 3. Methods

This study adopts a quantitative methodology with a descriptive research design. As outlined by Sugiyono (2017), quantitative descriptive research concentrates on real-world issues and ongoing phenomena, presenting results in the form of meaningful numerical data corresponding to the research variables. Sugiyono (2017) defines a population as a general domain composed of objects or subjects that possess specific attributes and characteristics established by the researcher for observation and inference. The population in this study comprises 57 Non-ASN employees at the Cooperatives and SMEs Office of North Sumatra Province, UPT. PLUT.

In line with Sugiyono's (2017) explanation, a sample is a subset of the population that represents its defining characteristics. This study applies a saturated sampling technique, wherein the entire population is included as the research sample due to its relatively small size, allowing for a comprehensive investigation of all members. Consequently, the total sample consisted of 57 respondents. The research instrument employed a Likert-type scale, while data analysis was performed through multiple linear regression using SPSS statistical software version 29. The regression equations are as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

Note:

- Y : Performance
- a : Constant
- b<sub>1</sub>, b<sub>2</sub> : Cohesion regression
- X<sub>1</sub> : Leadership
- X<sub>2</sub> : Loyalty
- e : error

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Research Results

#### 4.1.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistical Analysis is a method of describing or summarizing data in the form of tables, graphs, or statistical measures such as means, medians, and standard deviations. The goal is to provide an overview of the characteristics of the data being studied. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

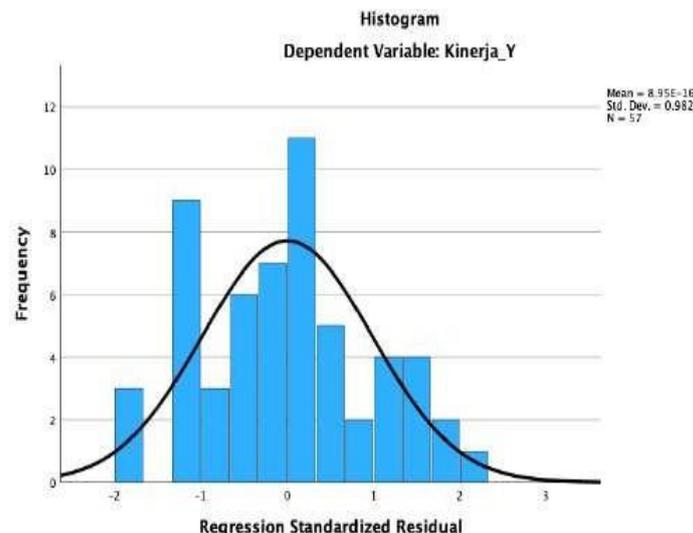
| N                  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |       |
|--------------------|---------|---------|------|----------------|-------|
| Performance_Y      | 57      | 22      | 41   | 31.84          | 4.590 |
| Leadership_X1      | 57      | 22      | 39   | 30.42          | 3.854 |
| Loyalty_X2         | 57      | 11      | 40   | 32.33          | 4.580 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 57      |         |      |                |       |

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis of 57 respondents, the employee performance variable recorded an average score of 31.84 with a standard deviation of 4.590, indicating a tendency toward fairly good performance. The leadership variable obtained an average score of 30.42 with a standard deviation of 3.854, reflecting a positive perception of leadership. Meanwhile, job loyalty demonstrated the highest average score of 32.33 with a standard deviation of 4.580.

#### 4.1.2. Classic Assumption Test

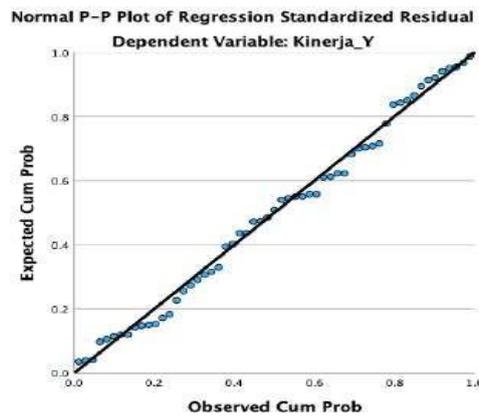
##### 1) Normality Test



**Figure 1. Normality Test Results – Histogram**

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

Based on Figure 1, the histogram shows that the standardized residual distribution is close to the normal curve shape. This indicates that the data has met the assumption of normality.



**Figure 2. Normality Test Results – P-Plot Diagram**

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

Based on the Normal P-P Plot graph in Figure 2, the data is distributed normally because the blue dots follow a straight line well. This means that the regression model has met the requirements for data normality.

**Table 2. Normality Test Results - Kolmogorov-Smirnov One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

|  |                         |             |                   |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| N  |                         |             | 57                |
| Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>         | Mean                    | .0000000    |                   |
|  | Std. Deviation          | 3.81085544  |                   |
| Most Extreme Differences                 | Absolute                | .067        |                   |
|  | Positive                | .067        |                   |
|  | Negative                | -.051       |                   |
| Test Statistic                           |                         |             | .067              |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) <sup>c</sup>      |                         |             | .200 <sup>d</sup> |
| Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) <sup>e</sup> | Sig.                    | .760        |                   |
|  | 99% Confidence Interval | Lower Bound | .749              |
|  |                         | Upper Bound | .771              |

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
- e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method showed a significance value of 0.200 (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) in Table 2, which is greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the residual data is normally distributed and meets the assumption of normality in the regression analysis.

#### 4.1.3. Multicollinearity Test

**Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |               | Collinearity Statistics |       |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------|-------|
|       |               | Tolerance               | VIF   |
| 1     | Leadership_X1 | .850                    | 1.177 |
|       | Loyalty_X2    | .850                    | 1.177 |

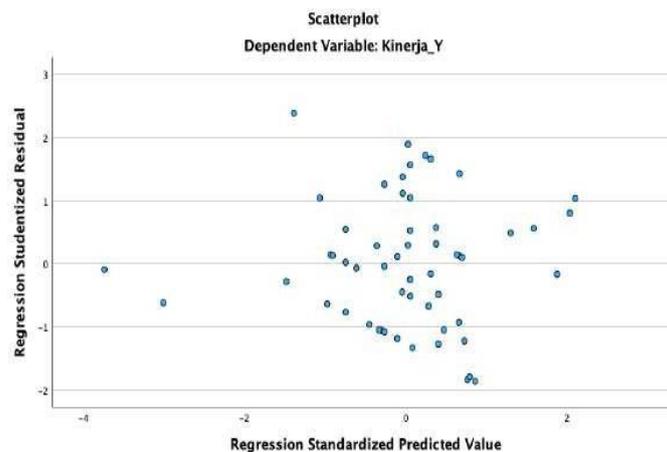
a. Dependent Variable: Performance\_Y

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in Table 3, the Tolerance values for the Leadership (X1) and Work Loyalty (X2) variables were both 0.850, while the VIF values were 1.177. Since the Tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and the VIF values are less than 10, it can be concluded that no multicollinearity symptoms exist between the independent variables in the regression model.

**4.1.4. Heteroscedasticity Test**

Based on Figure 3, the scatterplot illustrates that no heteroscedasticity is present, as the residual points are randomly and evenly dispersed around the zero line without forming any discernible pattern. This indicates that the residual variance is homogeneous (homoscedasticity), thereby fulfilling the assumptions of the regression test.



**Figure 3. Test Scatterplot**  
Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

**4.1.5. Hypothesis Testing**

1) Partial Test (t)

To see the partial effect of each variable, refer to the t-test results presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Partial test (t-test)**

| Model            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|                  | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| (Constant)       | 8.851                       | 4.700      |                           | 1.883 | .065 |
| 1 Leadership_ X1 | .410                        | .146       | .345                      | 2.811 | .007 |
| Loyalty_ X2      | .325                        | .123       | .324                      | 2.647 | .011 |

a. Dependent Variable: Performance\_Y

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

The t-table value of 2.00488 was derived from the t-distribution with degrees of freedom (df) = n - k = 57 - 3 = 54 at a significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed). Based on the partial test (t-test) results, the Leadership variable (X1) obtained a t-value of 2.811 > t-table 2.00488 and a significance level of 0.007 < 0.05, indicating that Ho is rejected and X1 has a significant effect on Performance (Y). Similarly, the Work Loyalty variable (X2) recorded a t-value of 2.647 > t-table 2.00488 with a significance level of 0.011 < 0.05, leading to the rejection of Ho and confirming that X2 significantly affects Performance (Y). Therefore, it can be concluded that both independent variables partially exert a significant influence on employee performance.

2) Simultaneous Test (F)

The results of simultaneous testing can be seen in the F test listed in Table 5. The F-table value of 3.17 was determined based on the degrees of freedom (df), where  $df_1 = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$  and  $df_2 = n - k = 57 - 3 = 54$ , at a significance level of 0.05. The results of the simultaneous test (F-test) show that the F-value of 12.161 > F-table 3.17 with a significance level of  $< 0.001 < 0.05$ , leading to the rejection of  $H_0$ . This indicates that the Leadership (X1) and Work Loyalty (X2) variables jointly have a significant influence on Employee Performance (Y) at the Cooperatives and SMEs Office of North Sumatra Province UPT. PLUT.

**Table 5. Simultaneous Test Results (F test)**

|   | Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig.               |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 366.312        | 2  | 183.156     | 12.161 | <.001 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual   | 813.267        | 54 | 15.060      |        |                    |
|   | Total      | 1179.579       | 56 |             |        |                    |

a. Dependent Variable: Performance\_Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), Loyalty\_X2, Leadership\_X1

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

**4.1.6. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

**Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .557 <sup>a</sup> | .311     | .285              | 3.881                      |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Loyalty\_X2, Leadership\_X1  
 b. Dependent Variable: Performance\_Y

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2025

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test in Table 6, the R Square value of 0.311 indicates that the Leadership (X1) and Job Loyalty (X2) variables collectively explain 31.1% of the variation in the Employee Performance variable (Y), while the remaining 68.9% is influenced by other factors beyond this research model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.285, which accounts for the number of independent variables in the model, further confirms that both variables contribute significantly to employee performance.

**4.2. Discussion**

**4.2.1. The Influence of Leadership on Employee Performance**

Drawing upon the outcomes of the partial regression analysis (t-test), the Leadership variable (X1) exhibits a statistically significant effect on Employee Performance (Y), as evidenced by a t-value of 2.811, surpassing the t-table threshold of 2.00488, alongside a significance probability of  $0.007 < 0.05$ . This empirical inference denotes that enhanced leadership conduct engenders elevated employee performance. An efficacious leadership paradigm functions as a catalyst by articulating clear directives, instilling motivational drive, and nurturing an enabling organizational milieu, thereby stimulating employees to optimize their professional output.

These results reaffirm the crucial role of leadership in enhancing productivity and achieving organizational objectives, particularly within the North Sumatra Province Cooperatives and SMEs Office UPT. PLUT. Leadership is one of the spearheads in improving performance. If leaders are competent in achieving results and goals, employees will automatically improve their performance. If leaders are not competent, employees will feel bored and ultimately do not improve their performance (Gustara & Adiwati, 2021). The

leadership must always provide updated ideas such as the implementation of open management in the company, conflict resolution is also carried out by evaluating both parties who are in conflict, so that the distribution of resources is carried out correctly, the company does it transparently so that every employee also participates in monitoring the distribution, negotiations with external parties can also be carried out properly if the company leadership is involved in immediately during price negotiations, due to the factor of external trust in the leadership (Hariyanti et al., 2023). This research is in line with research conducted by (Indrastuti et al., 2018; Sidik & Fajri, 2025; Wibowo et al., 2022) which states that leadership affects employee performance.

#### **4.2.2. The Influence of Loyalty on Employee Performance**

Findings derived from the partial regression analysis (t-test) reveal that the Work Loyalty variable (X<sub>2</sub>) exerts a statistically significant influence on Employee Performance (Y), as demonstrated by a t-value of 2.647, which surpasses the t-table value of 2.00488, accompanied by a significance probability of  $0.011 < 0.05$ . These findings suggest that the greater the employees' loyalty to the organization, the better their performance. High loyalty reflects employees' commitment, sense of responsibility, and willingness to contribute to achieving organizational objectives. This implies that increased employee loyalty leads to improved performance (Nugroho, 2018). The results of this study are consistent with those of Darwanis and Saputra (2014), Gustara and Adiwati (2021), Sidik and Fajri (2023), Wibowo et al. (2022), and Nugroho (2018), who also found that loyalty positively influences employee performance.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that both leadership and work loyalty significantly influence employee performance at the North Sumatra Province Cooperatives and SMEs Office UPT. PLUT, both individually and collectively. Effective leadership and strong employee loyalty play a crucial role in enhancing overall performance. Therefore, it is recommended that management continue to foster a participatory and communicative leadership style while creating a supportive work environment that strengthens employee loyalty, through initiatives such as transparent reward systems, recognition programs, and opportunities for career advancement.

The findings of this research imply that improvement in employee performance can be achieved more optimally if the organization focuses on strengthening leadership quality as well as consistency in building work loyalty. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders continuously develop leadership capacity oriented toward employee empowerment, including through managerial training, coaching, and effective two-way communication mechanisms. In addition, the institution needs to strengthen policies that support emotional bonds and employee commitment to the organization, such as implementation of performance-based reward systems, provision of clear career paths, and creation of a collaborative work culture. The implementation of this strategy not only has the potential to improve individual performance, but also provides a positive impact on the operational effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

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