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The Influence of Digital Leadership and Information Technology Competence on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Motivation

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A B S T R A C T
Digital transformation in judicial institutions is an important part of bureaucratic reform to realize a modern, transparent, and accountable judicial system. This study aims to examine the effect of digital leadership and mastery of information technology on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable in Class II District Courts. This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal research type. The population of this study was 388 employees from 10 Class II District Courts in West Sumatra, with a sample of 200 respondents selected using probability sampling techniques with the proportionate stratified random sampling method. Data collection was carried out using a Google Form-based questionnaire and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Square (PLS). The results of the study indicate that digital leadership has a positive and significant effect on work motivation, then, mastery of information technology has a positive and significant effect on work motivation. The results of the study also show that digital leadership does not have a significant effect on performance, but Mastery of Information Technology has an influence on Performance, while work motivation has a positive and significant effect on performance, furthermore work motivation is able to significantly mediate the relationship between mastery of information technology and performance, and work motivation is able to significantly mediate the relationship between digital leadership and performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has brought fundamental changes to governance and public sector operations across many countries. This transformation has not only affected the technical aspects of public administration but has also shifted the paradigm of government from traditional hierarchical and manual bureaucratic models toward more adaptive, transparent, and integrated technology-based systems. Since the early 1990s, the concepts of Electronic Government (e-Government) and Digital Government have emerged in response to advancements in information and communication technologies. These concepts reflect collaborative efforts between governments, particularly in Western countries, and the information technology sector to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of public services (Yang et al., 2024).

The concept of digital government emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional bureaucratic systems, which tend to be hierarchical, slow, and dependent on manual administrative processes. Globally, the transformation toward digital governance has been characterized by the utilization of information technology to support administrative processes, decision-making, and public service delivery in a faster, more transparent, and integrated manner. Within judicial institutions, digital transformation has become an essential component of bureaucratic reform aimed at establishing a modern, transparent, and accountable judicial system.

As the highest judicial institution in Indonesia, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia has continuously sought to maximize the role of technology in all aspects of judicial administration. A major strategic initiative began with the issuance of Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 3 of 2018 concerning Electronic Case Administration in Courts. Since then, various digital innovations have been developed, including e-Court, SIPP, E-Prima, E-Berpadu, SIKEP, SIWAS, SATU JARI, and LLK. These applications are intended to facilitate public access to judicial services in a manner that is fast, transparent, and cost-effective. In addition to improving service accessibility, these digital systems are designed to assist court personnel in carrying out their duties and responsibilities more effectively and efficiently. Consequently, digital judicial systems have become strategic instruments for enhancing employee performance while strengthening the quality of public service delivery.

Digital transformation in public institutions requires digital leadership capable of directing, inspiring, and empowering employees to adapt to technological changes (Muller et al., 2024). Research conducted by Turyadi et al. (2023) found that digital leadership facilitates improvements in employee performance. Similarly, Shin et al. (2023) reported that digital leadership has both direct and indirect positive effects on organizational performance. However, findings by Gunawan et al. (2023) revealed that digital leadership does not have a significant impact on performance.

Leaders seek to improve organizational performance through the utilization of advanced technologies (Obermayer et al., 2021). Digital competence has been shown to enhance work performance (Pacheco & Montecel, 2023). Employees who use technology effectively can improve

workplace collaboration, self-confidence, and job-related knowledge, which serve as foundations for work achievement (Pitafi et al., 2018). Information technology mastery refers to an individual's ability to utilize information technology to acquire, process, store, and disseminate information effectively and efficiently (Hilardi et al., 2022). Information technology mastery is a crucial competency for employees in supporting tasks performed through electronic systems. Previous studies have demonstrated that information technology mastery positively affects employee performance (Hilardi et al., 2022; Handayani et al., 2018). Nevertheless, inconsistent findings remain, with some studies reporting insignificant relationships between technology utilization and performance (Fatmah, 2020; Prodanova & Kocarev, 2021).

Employee performance is also influenced by motivation (Hutagalung, 2022). According to Gibson (as cited in Hilardi et al., 2022), motivation is the force that drives individuals to engage in specific activities. Motivation can be defined as an internal drive or stimulus that encourages action. To achieve performance targets, employees require motivating factors that encourage them to perform effectively. High levels of motivation can increase employees' enthusiasm and commitment to their work. Therefore, organizations need to foster employee motivation so that individuals recognize the importance of their work in contributing to organizational performance outcomes (Hutagalung, 2022). Septiannoor (2024) found that work motivation significantly influences employee performance. Rue and Byars (as cited in Budiyanto & Mochlas, 2020) define performance as "the degree of accomplishment," referring to the extent to which organizational objectives are achieved. Similarly, Chatab (as cited in Silaen et al., 2021) argues that performance is influenced by three key factors: ability, motivation, and organizational support.

A review of previous studies on digital leadership, information technology mastery, work motivation, and employee performance reveals several research gaps. First, studies examining these variables within the context of judicial institutions or district courts remain limited. Second, few studies have investigated work motivation as a mediating variable between digital leadership, information technology mastery, and employee performance. Third, prior research has primarily focused on traditional leadership styles, while limited attention has been given to digital leadership in the public sector. Fourth, previous studies have emphasized technological infrastructure rather than human resource factors and employee motivation. Finally, inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between information technology mastery and employee performance suggest the need for further investigation by incorporating work motivation as a mediating variable.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine the effects of digital leadership and information technology mastery on employee performance, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable, among employees of Class II District Courts in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) serves as the grand theory in this study. SDT is a contemporary motivation theory that explains how the quality of an individual's motivation is developed and how social contexts influence behavior, performance, and well-being. Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasize that human beings naturally possess an inherent tendency to grow, develop, and achieve self-actualization. However, this tendency can only flourish optimally when the social environment supports individuals' basic psychological needs.

Self-Determination Theory originates from the organismic meta-theory, which views human beings as active organisms with an intrinsic drive to learn, adapt, and integrate life experiences. Individuals are not merely reactive to external stimuli; rather, they actively interpret and shape their environments. Consequently, motivation is not viewed solely as an external force but as a process of internalization influenced by social conditions (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Ryan and Deci (2020) further argue that the key distinction in motivation lies not only in its intensity (high or low) but also in its quality. Autonomous motivation leads to higher levels of engagement, performance, and well-being compared to controlled motivation. Therefore, Self-Determination Theory not only explains why individuals work but also how and under what conditions they can perform optimally.

The higher the level of internalization, the greater the degree of motivational autonomy. Autonomous motivation is positively associated with performance, creativity, persistence, and psychological well-being. In contrast, controlled motivation tends to produce less stable performance and increases vulnerability to work-related stress. Moreover, social contexts, including leadership and organizational structures, play a crucial role in shaping the quality of motivation. Autonomy-supportive leadership has been shown to enhance autonomous motivation, job satisfaction, and individual performance. Likewise, work environments that support competence development strengthen employees' sense of self-efficacy, while harmonious interpersonal relationships foster emotional attachment to the organization (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Digital Leadership

Digital leadership is a modern form of leadership that has emerged as an adaptive response to the rapid digital transformation occurring within organizations. As described by Tigre et al. (2023), digital leadership can be understood as the integration of traditional leadership competencies with technology adoption to address the uncertainties of the digital era. Its scope includes managing virtual teams, making data-driven decisions, and communicating organizational vision through digital platforms.

Similarly, Van Wart et al. (2019) define digital leadership as the ability of leaders to effectively combine digital and conventional communication methods to mobilize organizational members, supported by adequate technological literacy. Consequently, digital leaders are expected to possess awareness of developments in Information and Communication Technology

(ICT), the ability to selectively adopt technologies that align with organizational needs, and the technical competence required to operate information and communication systems effectively.

According to Qiao et al. (2024), digital leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes leaders' ability to strategically utilize digital technologies to foster innovation, enhance organizational performance, and create a work culture that is adaptive to digital transformation. From the perspective of digital leadership theory, the primary focus lies in leaders' capacity to manage, develop, and apply information and communication technology knowledge to improve organizational performance.

Information Technology Mastery

Rusli (2009) defines information technology mastery as the ability to understand and utilize information technology tools, particularly computers. Similarly, Yani (2007) describes it as the capability to operate technological systems supported by adequate intellectual competence. Kertiasih et al. (2024) define information technology mastery as an individual's ability to utilize various technological resources, including computers, the internet, and multimedia applications, to support professional activities and innovation. Meanwhile, Serriawati and Azwar (2020) view it as the knowledge and skills required to use technology for creating, modifying, storing, communicating, and disseminating information effectively.

Work Motivation

Gibson et al. (2012) explain that motivation is a concept describing the forces originating both within and outside individuals that initiate and direct behavior, while also accounting for variations in the intensity and direction of actions. Work motivation can be understood as an internal drive influenced by expectations, rewards, and perceived values, which encourages employees to exert optimal effort in achieving expected performance outcomes (Thu & Van, 2024).

Employee Performance

Various scholars have provided more specific operational definitions of employee performance. Cascio (as cited in Silaen et al., 2021) defines performance as the extent to which employees achieve the objectives associated with their assigned tasks. A similar perspective is offered by Gibson et al. (as cited in Silaen et al., 2021), who emphasize performance as the level of success in task execution and an individual's ability to accomplish predetermined goals. Furthermore, Dessler (as cited in Silaen et al., 2021) operationalizes performance as the ratio between actual work output and established performance standards.

Robbins (as cited in Silaen et al., 2021) argues that individual performance depends on motivation, ability, and opportunity. Meanwhile, Gibson (as cited in Wicaksono & Octaviani, 2025) provides a more comprehensive classification by grouping performance determinants into three major categories: individual factors (abilities, skills, family background, experience, social factors, and

demographics), psychological factors (perceptions, roles, attitudes, personality, motivation, and job satisfaction), and organizational factors (organizational structure, job design, leadership, and reward systems).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal research design. Causal research aims to examine cause-and-effect relationships between variables and explain how one variable influence another (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all employees working in ten Class II District Courts, totaling 388 employees. A sample of 200 respondents was selected for the study. The sampling technique employed was probability sampling using the proportionate stratified random sampling method. Probability sampling is a sampling technique in which each member of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as a sample member. Proportionate stratified random sampling is used when the population consists of heterogeneous members that are proportionally distributed across different strata (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a questionnaire survey. Through this technique, respondents were responsible for reading and answering the questions provided by the researcher. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the study variables. The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms.

Operational Definitions

Table 1. Operational Definition

No.	Variable	Indicators	Source	Measurement
1	**Digital Leadership (X1)**: The ability of leaders to integrate information and communication technology into organizational managerial and strategic processes. Digital leadership focuses on leveraging technology and data to improve decision-making effectiveness,	1. Technology risk awareness 2. Technology optimization 3. Ethical use of technology 4. Reduction of technology resistance 5. Guidance in technology utilization	Qiao et al. (2024)	Likert Scale 1–5

	enhance organizational performance, foster innovation, and build an organizational culture that is responsive and adaptive to changes in the digital environment.			
2	**Information Technology Mastery (X2)**: An individual's ability to utilize information technology to acquire, store, process, transmit, interpret, organize, communicate, and use data in a meaningful, high-quality, relevant, accurate, and timely manner.	1. Intensity of information technology use 2. Availability of technical experts 3. Investment in technology 4. Ease of information exchange 5. Ease of collaborative access	Siregar (2019)	Likert Scale 1–5
3	**Work Motivation (Z)**: The internal and external forces that influence the direction, intensity, and persistence of individual work behavior, arising from needs, expectations, and desired rewards, thereby encouraging employees to strive toward organizational goals and achieve optimal performance.	1. Feeling satisfied when performing work well 2. Feeling disappointed or stressed when work is not performed well 3. Feeling proud when performing work to the best of one's ability 4. Enjoying recalling successful work experiences 5. Frequently thinking about how to perform work better 6. Willingness to work earlier or longer to complete tasks 7. Continuing to exert maximum effort despite difficulties 8. Exerting significant effort to achieve	Thu & Van (2024)	Likert Scale 1–5

		organizational goals 9. Always being enthusiastic about work		
4	**Employee Performance (Y)**: The level of achievement attained by employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities according to established standards, influenced by ability and motivation, and reflected in work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and compliance with organizational regulations to support the achievement of organizational goals.	1. Completing work according to required quantity 2. Completing work with high quality 3. Completing work on time 4. Cooperating and being willing to accept additional workloads 5. Planning work activities effectively 6. Providing consultation or additional assistance 7. Working in accordance with laws and regulations 8. Working in accordance with organizational policies and procedures	Thu & Van (2024)	Likert Scale 1–5

Source: *Adapted from Qiao et al. (2024), Siregar (2019), and Thu & Van (2024)*

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis in this study consisted of two stages. First, descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an empirical overview of the data collected. Second, inferential analysis was employed to analyze sample data and generalize the findings to the target population.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe respondents' perceptions of each research variable, namely Digital Leadership (X_1), Information Technology Mastery (X_2), Work Motivation (Z), and Employee Performance (Y). This analysis was carried out by calculating the mean score, percentage (P), and Respondent Achievement Level (RAL). Descriptive analysis aims to describe the collected data as they are, without intending to draw generalized conclusions beyond the observed sample (Sugiyono, 2013).

In this study, inferential analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method was selected because it allows the simultaneous examination of causal relationships among latent variables, including both direct and indirect effects through mediating

variables. The analysis consisted of two main stages: Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model) and Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The majority of respondents were male, accounting for 105 individuals (52.5%). Most respondents were between 25 and 35 years old, totaling 79 individuals (39.5%). In terms of educational background, the majority held a bachelor's degree (97 respondents, or 48.5%). Furthermore, most respondents worked in the court registry division, comprising 91 individuals (45.5%). Regarding tenure, 108 respondents (54.0%) had less than five years of work experience, while the majority held staff positions, totaling 124 respondents (62.0%).

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The results indicate that all indicators achieved outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than or equal to 0.50, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, each indicator exhibited the highest loading on its corresponding construct compared to other constructs. Therefore, all indicators met the criteria for discriminant validity based on the cross-loading assessment and were considered valid for further analysis (Hair et al., 2024).

In addition, all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70. According to Hair et al. (2022), these results indicate that all constructs satisfy the reliability requirements. Consequently, all variables included in this study were considered reliable.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Based on the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022), the R-square value for Employee Performance was categorized as moderate to substantial, with an R^2 value of 0.621 and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.615. This indicates that 62.1% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the predictor variables included in the model.

Meanwhile, the R-square value for Work Motivation was categorized as moderate, with an R^2 value of 0.499 and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.494. This suggests that 49.9% of the variance in work motivation can be explained by the independent variables in the model.

Therefore, the structural model demonstrates a satisfactory level of explanatory power in describing the relationships among the variables examined in this study.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the direct effects analysis among the study variables are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Description
Digital Leadership → Work	0.244	3.249	0.001	Supported

Motivation				
Information Technology Mastery → Work Motivation	0.545	7.184	0.000	Supported
Digital Leadership → Performance	0.083	1.323	0.093	Rejected
Information Technology Mastery → Performance	0.128	1.843	0.033	Supported
Work Motivation → Performance	0.645	10.514	0.000	Supported

Source: Processed data, 2026

Meanwhile, the results of the indirect influence test can be seen below:

Table 3. Results of Indirect Hypothesis Testing

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Description
Digital Leadership → Work Motivation → Performance	0.157	2.862	0.002	Supported
Information Technology Mastery → Work Motivation → Performance	0.352	6.834	0.000	Supported

Source: Processed data, 2026

The Effect of Digital Leadership on Work Motivation

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that digital leadership has a positive (β = 0.244) and significant effect (p-value 0.001 < 0.05) on work motivation. This indicates that the better the implementation of digital leadership, the higher the employees' work motivation will be. These findings are consistent with the study by Sunaryo et al. (2021), which states that digital leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation.

This result is also in line with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the important role of leadership in creating a work environment that supports the fulfillment of employees' psychological needs. Leaders who provide support, trust, and opportunities for employees to develop their competencies can enhance employees' sense of competence and autonomy in performing their work. These conditions increase employees' intrinsic motivation to work more optimally (Gagné et al., 2022). Thus, effective digital leadership can create a work environment that supports the fulfillment of employees' psychological needs, thereby increasing their work motivation.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority of respondents are aged 25–35 years, which is a productive age group that is generally more receptive to technological changes in organizations. In addition, the respondents' education level is mostly undergraduate (S1), indicating that employees have sufficient ability to understand the use of technology and digital-based work systems.

These conditions make employees more motivated when leaders are able to implement digital leadership that supports the use of technology in job implementation. Leaders who provide direction, support, and digital-based facilities create a more modern and adaptive work environment, thereby increasing employee enthusiasm.

The majority of respondents who hold staff positions also indicate that employees require leadership support in dealing with changes in digital-based work systems. Therefore, digital leadership is able to increase employee work motivation within the organization.

The Effect of Information Technology Mastery on Work Motivation

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that information technology mastery has a positive ($\beta = 0.545$) and significant effect (p-value $0.000 < 0.05$) on work motivation. This indicates that the better the employees' mastery of information technology, the higher their work motivation will be.

This finding is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (in Sangapan, 2025), where perceived usefulness and ease of use of information technology encourage positive attitudes toward work, including the motivation to use technology optimally, which in turn enhances motivation in other aspects of work.

Furthermore, according to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), information technology mastery is directly related to the enhancement of competence, as employees who possess technological skills feel more capable and confident in carrying out their tasks. Based on this theory, when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, autonomous motivation is formed. Competence refers to the need to feel capable and effective in interacting with the environment. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that individuals are motivated when they feel they have the skills and capacity to successfully complete tasks.

Employees who are able to use information technology effectively tend to feel more confident and find it easier to complete their work. Mastery of information technology also helps employees reduce work errors, speed up administrative processes, and improve work efficiency, making them feel more comfortable and motivated at work.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are of productive age and have a relatively good educational background, making it easier for them to understand the use of applications and information technology in their daily work. In addition, most respondents have less than five years of work experience, indicating that employees are relatively more open to the use of technology and changes in digital work systems. These conditions make employees feel more comfortable and capable of completing tasks using information technology, thereby increasing their work motivation.

Employees who are proficient in information technology tend to feel more confident, complete tasks more quickly, and are better prepared to face changes toward digital-based work systems within the organization.

The Effect of Digital Leadership on Performance

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that digital leadership has a positive (β = 0.083) but not significant effect (p-value 0.093 > 0.05) on performance. This indicates that the implementation of digital leadership has not been able to directly improve employee performance.

In this context, digital leadership has not been able to directly enhance employee performance at the District Court Class II in West Sumatra. These findings are not fully consistent with the theory proposed by Qiao et al. (2024), which states that digital leadership can improve organizational effectiveness and performance through the use of digital technology in work processes. However, in this research context, performance improvement is more influenced by work motivation rather than digital leadership directly.

This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Gunawan et al. (2023), which show that digital leadership does not have a significant impact on performance, as well as Wang et al. (2024), who found that digital leadership does not have a direct effect, and Zam et al. (2025), who also reported that digital leadership does not significantly influence performance.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are staff-level employees with less than five years of work experience. This condition indicates that employees are still more oriented toward completing routine tasks and following organizational standard operating procedures rather than being directly influenced by leadership style.

In addition, most respondents are of productive age with an undergraduate education level (S1), meaning that employees tend to be capable of performing their duties independently according to their assigned roles and responsibilities. This condition results in digital leadership not having a direct effect on improving employee performance.

In public sector organizations, particularly judicial institutions, work implementation is generally structured by formal procedures and regulations. Therefore, employee performance improvement is more influenced by internal motivation than by leadership style directly.

This study shows that digital leadership will be more effective in improving performance if it first enhances employees' work motivation.

The Effect of Information Technology Mastery on Performance

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that information technology mastery has a positive (β = 0.128) and significant effect (p-value 0.033 < 0.05) on performance. This indicates that information technology mastery helps employees improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their work. The use of information technology enables employees to complete tasks more quickly, accurately, and precisely. Digital competence can improve job performance (Pacheco & Montecel, 2023).

This finding is consistent with previous studies by Hilardi et al. (2022) and Handayani et al. (2018), which state that information technology mastery has a positive effect on performance. In addition, Chatab (in Silaen et al., 2021), Robbins (in Silaen et al., 2021), and Gibson (in Wicaksono & Octaviani, 2025) also emphasize that one of the factor's influencing performance is individual ability.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are of productive age and have an undergraduate education level (S1), which makes it easier for them to understand the use of information technology in their daily work. Furthermore, most respondents have less than five years of work experience, indicating that employees are relatively more adaptive to digital work systems.

However, the effect of information technology mastery on performance is not very strong because much of the work in judicial institutions is still carried out based on administrative procedures and formal regulations. Therefore, information technology skills have not yet become the main determining factor of employee performance levels.

Nevertheless, this study indicates that employees' ability to use information technology remains an important factor in supporting work implementation in the digital era.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Performance

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that work motivation has a positive (β = 0.645) and significant effect (p-value 0.000 < 0.05) on performance. This indicates that work motivation plays an important role in improving employee performance.

The results also show that work motivation is the most dominant factor in improving employee performance compared to other variables in this study. The higher the employees' work motivation, the higher their performance level. Employees with high work motivation tend to demonstrate stronger work enthusiasm, responsibility, discipline, and commitment in completing their tasks. Work motivation also encourages employees to work more effectively and strive to achieve organizational targets optimally.

This finding is consistent with Layek & Koodamara (2024), who found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have a positive and significant effect on performance. Similarly, Gunawan et al. (2019), Yang et al. (2022), and Doruker et al. (2025) also state that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on performance.

Robbins (in Silaen et al., 2021), Gibson (in Wicaksono & Octaviani, 2025), and Chatab (in Silaen et al., 2021) also argue that individual performance depends on motivation. Thus, work motivation is an important factor in improving employees' work quality and productivity.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are of productive age and have less than five years of work experience. This indicates that employees still have strong enthusiasm and motivation to develop their skills and improve work quality within the organization.

In addition, most respondents hold staff positions, meaning that job performance is highly influenced by the level of work motivation they possess. Employees with high motivation tend to be more disciplined, responsible, and committed to completing their work optimally.

The respondents' educational background, mostly undergraduate (S1), also supports their ability to understand job responsibilities. Therefore, when employees have high motivation, their work quality and effectiveness also improve.

Thus, work motivation is a crucial factor in improving employee performance at the District Court Class II in West Sumatra.

The Effect of Digital Leadership on Performance Mediated by Work Motivation

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that work motivation positively ($\beta = 0.157$) and significantly (p-value $0.002 < 0.05$) mediates the relationship between digital leadership and performance. This indicates that digital leadership is not able to directly improve employee performance, but it can enhance performance through increasing employees' work motivation. In other words, work motivation acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between digital leadership and performance.

Digital leadership implemented by leaders can create a more adaptive work environment toward technological developments, accelerate work communication, and help employees perform their tasks more effectively. These conditions are able to increase employees' enthusiasm and internal drive in carrying out organizational duties.

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, leadership plays an important role in creating a work environment that supports the fulfillment of employees' psychological needs. Leaders who provide support, trust, and opportunities for employees to develop their competencies can enhance employees' sense of competence and autonomy in their work. These conditions increase employees' intrinsic motivation to perform more optimally (Gagné et al., 2022). Thus, effective digital leadership can create a work environment that supports the fulfillment of psychological needs and thereby increases work motivation.

Furthermore, Self-Determination Theory also explains that the work context plays an important role in shaping employee motivation, as the organizational environment can either support or hinder the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. Therefore, job design, leadership, and the use of technology within organizations can influence both motivation and employee performance (Gagné et al., 2022).

In public sector organizations, particularly judicial institutions, employee performance is often not directly influenced by leadership style because work implementation is regulated by standardized operating procedures and formal rules. Therefore, the influence of digital leadership on performance occurs more through psychological factors, namely work motivation.

This study also shows that work motivation acts as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between digital leadership and employee performance. This is indicated by the previous test results, which show that the direct effect of digital leadership on performance is not significant, while the indirect effect through work motivation is significant. According to Hair et al. (2022), this condition indicates full mediation. Thus, improving employee performance through digital leadership will be more effective when accompanied by efforts to enhance work motivation.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are staff-level employees with less than five years of work experience, indicating that

employees still require support and encouragement from leaders in performing their duties. In addition, most respondents are of productive age and are relatively more open to technological innovation and digital work system changes when accompanied by motivational support from leaders. This condition makes work motivation an important factor that bridges the relationship between digital leadership and employee performance.

Therefore, the success of implementing digital leadership in improving employee performance highly depends on the leader's ability to build employees' work motivation.

The Effect of Information Technology Mastery on Performance Mediated by Work Motivation

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that work motivation positively ($\beta = 0.352$) and significantly (p-value $0.000 < 0.05$) mediates the relationship between information technology mastery and performance. This indicates that improving information technology mastery can enhance employees' work motivation, which in turn leads to improved performance.

This finding shows that information technology mastery not only helps employee's complete tasks more effectively but also increases their work motivation, which ultimately improves performance. This is consistent with Robbins (in Budiyanto & Mokhlas, 2020), who explains that performance does not stand alone but is the result of a dynamic interaction between ability and motivation.

Employees who are proficient in using information technology tend to complete tasks more easily, adapt more quickly to digital work systems, and feel more confident in performing their duties. These conditions increase comfort and enthusiasm at work, thereby enhancing work motivation.

In addition, the use of information technology within organizations helps accelerate administrative processes, reduce work errors, and improve operational efficiency. When employees perceive their work as easier and more effective, their motivation to perform optimally also increases.

This study indicates that work motivation plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between information technology mastery and employee performance. Therefore, efforts to improve information technology competence should be accompanied by strategies to enhance employees' work motivation in order to achieve optimal performance improvement.

The magnitude of the indirect effect coefficient shows that work motivation is a highly important factor in bridging the relationship between information technology mastery and employee performance. Therefore, organizations need to promote the improvement of employees' technological competence while also creating working conditions that enhance motivation.

Based on the respondents' characteristics, the majority are of productive age with an undergraduate education (S1), making it easier for them to understand the use of information technology in daily work. In addition, most respondents have less than five years of work experience, indicating that they are more adaptable to digital work systems. These conditions make the use of

information technology improve work comfort, accelerate task completion, and increase employees' enthusiasm.

Thus, information technology mastery not only supports task completion technically but also enhances work motivation, which ultimately leads to improved employee performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study show that digital leadership has a positive and significant effect on employees' work motivation. This indicates that the better the implementation of digital leadership within an organization, the higher the employees' work motivation will be.

Information technology mastery has a positive and significant effect on employees' work motivation. This finding indicates that the better employees' ability to use information technology, the higher their work motivation will be.

Digital leadership has a positive but not significant effect on employee performance. This indicates that the implementation of digital leadership has not been able to directly improve employee performance at the District Court Class II in West Sumatra.

Information technology mastery has a positive effect on employee performance, although the influence is relatively weak. This indicates that employees' ability to master information technology helps improve work effectiveness and efficiency.

Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results show that work motivation is the most dominant factor in improving employee performance.

Work motivation is able to mediate the effect of digital leadership on employee performance. This indicates that digital leadership can improve performance through increasing employees' work motivation.

Work motivation is also able to mediate the effect of information technology mastery on employee performance. This shows that employees' ability to master information technology can increase work motivation, which in turn leads to improved performance.

Overall, the findings indicate that work motivation plays a very important role in improving employee performance. Digital leadership and information technology mastery will be more effective in enhancing performance when they are able to increase employees' work motivation.

Practical Recommendations

This study provides practical implications for leaders of the District Court Class II in West Sumatra in improving employee performance through the implementation of digital leadership and strengthening information technology mastery. Organizational leaders need to enhance their digital leadership capabilities to support technology-based work processes and create a work environment that can improve employees' work motivation. In addition, the organization should improve employees' competence in using information technology so that work processes become more effective, efficient, and aligned with the development of digital work systems in judicial institutions.

Theoretical Recommendations

This study strengthens theories stating that work motivation is a key factor in improving employee performance. It also shows that digital leadership and information technology mastery do not always have a direct effect on performance but can influence it through work motivation as a mediating variable.

Furthermore, this study reinforces the concept that the success of digital transformation in organizations is not only determined by the implementation of technology and digital leadership, but also by employees' readiness and motivation in performing their work

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so it is still necessary to conduct further research on this topic.

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