

The influence of leadership and work motivation on the work spirit of non-educational personnel at Universitas Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin Solok

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Article Info

Article history:

Received May 12, 2026

Revised May 18, 2026

Accepted May 19, 2026

Keywords:

Leadership

Work motivation

Work morale

Work spirit

Non-Educational personnel

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of leadership and work motivation on the morale of non-academic staff at Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin University, Solok. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilized a total sampling technique involving 52 respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that, when examined individually, leadership does not exert a significant effect on staff morale, whereas work motivation demonstrates a significant positive impact. However, when considered simultaneously, both leadership and work motivation collectively show a significant influence on morale. These results highlight the importance of fostering motivation while recognizing that leadership alone may not directly enhance morale, but in combination with motivation, it contributes meaningfully to the overall well-being and performance of non-academic staff.

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1. Introduction

Human resources are a very important factor in an organization [1], because they are the main drivers in achieving organizational goals [2]. In higher education, non-educational personnel play a strategic role in supporting the smooth operation and delivery of academic services. The morale of non-educational personnel is an important indicator of organizational performance [3]. High morale will encourage productivity, improve service quality, and accelerate the achievement of organizational goals [4], [5], [6], [7]. On the other hand, low morale can lead to declining performance and service quality [8], [9].

Work morale is influenced by various factors, including leadership and work motivation. Good leadership provides direction, inspiration, and creates a conducive work atmosphere

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52465/josre.v4i2.4>

[10], [11], [12]. Meanwhile, work motivation is an internal and external drive that affects a person's work behavior [13], [14]. The phenomenon that occurred at Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin Solok University shows that the work spirit of non-educational personnel remains varied. This is allegedly influenced by the leadership style applied and the level of employee work motivation. Previous studies have examined the relationship between leadership, work motivation, and employee morale in various organizational contexts. However, studies focusing specifically on non-academic personnel in higher education institutions are still limited, particularly in regional private universities in Indonesia. In addition, previous findings regarding the influence of leadership on employee morale remain inconsistent. Therefore, this study aims to provide additional empirical evidence regarding the influence of leadership and work motivation on employee morale among non-academic staff at Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin University, Solok. Based on this description, this study was conducted to determine the influence of leadership and work motivation on the work spirit of non-education personnel.

Literature Review

Leadership is a person's ability to influence others to achieve organizational goals [15], [16]. Leadership is not only about power but also about communication skills, decision-making, and the ability to build interpersonal relationships [17], [18]. Effective leaders can create a conducive work environment and boost employee morale [11], [19]. Characteristics of effective leadership include integrity, confidence, strong communication skills, and the ability to motivate subordinates [20]. Work motivation is an impulse, internal or external, that influences work behavior [14]. Work motivation can be in the form of intrinsic motivations such as job satisfaction and responsibility, as well as extrinsic motivations such as salary, rewards, and work environment [21].

Work motivation plays an important role in boosting morale, as motivated individuals work harder, are more disciplined, and take greater responsibility [22], [23]. Work spirit is a person's psychological condition characterized by enthusiasm, passion, and the desire to work optimally [24], [25]. Morale is influenced by internal and external factors, including leadership and work motivation [14]. Indicators of work morale include productivity, attendance, cooperation, and the ability to deal with work pressure [26], [27]. The relationship between leadership and morale shows that a leader has a strategic role in creating a conducive work environment [19]. Good leadership provides direction, support, and motivation to employees, thereby increasing morale [10].

Meanwhile, work motivation is an internal factor that encourages a person to work harder [28], [29]. Employees with high motivation tend to perform better and have higher work morale [30]. Thus, leadership and work motivation together influence employees' work spirit in an organization.

2. Method

This research applied a quantitative approach with a descriptive design to analyze the effect of leadership and work motivation on employee morale among non-academic staff at Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin University, Solok. The study involved 52 respondents selected through a total sampling technique, in which the entire population was included as the research sample.

The primary data were obtained through a questionnaire distributed to respondents. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale consisting of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire items were constructed based on indicators representing the variables of leadership, work motivation and work morale.

To ensure the quality of the instrument, validity and reliability testing were conducted prior to hypothesis testing. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis to identify the influence of leadership and work motivation on employee morale. Furthermore, the t-test was utilized to examine the partial effect of each independent variable, while the F-test was used to assess the simultaneous effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software. Figure 1 show the research flow used in this study.

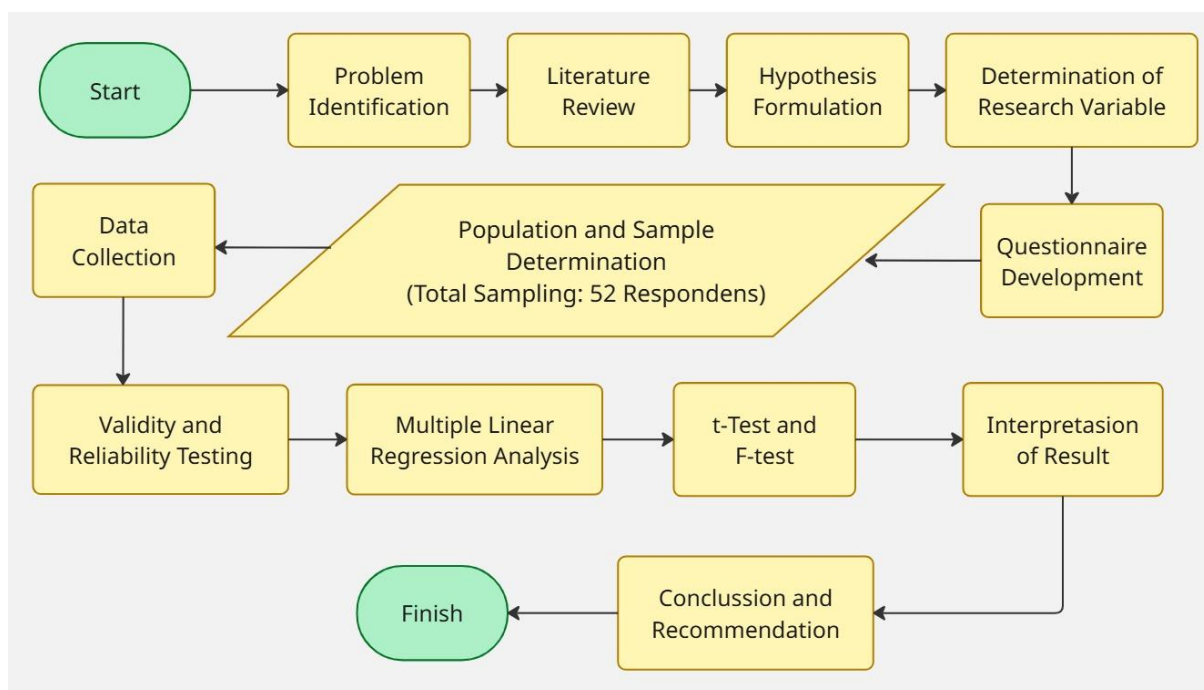


Figure 1. Research flow

3. Results and Discussion

The regression equation obtained is $Y = 8.822 + 0.018X_1 + 0.696X_2 + e$. The regression coefficient of leadership was positive (0.018), indicating that leadership tends to increase employee morale. However, the effect was not statistically significant, suggesting that leadership alone was not a dominant factor affecting employee morale among non-

academic staff. Meanwhile, work motivation showed a positive regression coefficient (0.696), indicating that higher work motivation contributes to increased employee morale. These findings indicate that work motivation has a stronger contribution to employee morale compared to leadership. Employees who possess higher motivation are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment in carrying out their responsibilities.

The results of the t-test showed that Leadership did not have a significant effect, whereas Work Motivation did. The results of the F test indicate that leadership and work motivation have a significant effect on each other. Simultaneously, the two variables have a significant effect. The results of the study show that leadership does not have a significant effect on the work morale of non-educational personnel. This can be caused by several factors, such as a leadership style that does not fully align with employees' needs or a lack of direct interaction between leaders and non-educational personnel. This finding differs from several previous studies that reported a significant relationship between leadership and employee morale. The difference may be influenced by organizational conditions, communication patterns, or the specific characteristics of non-academic staff within the university environment. Nonetheless, leadership still has an important role in the organization, as leaders are responsible for determining policy direction and motivating employees. In contrast to leadership, work motivation has been shown to significantly influence work morale. This shows that internal employee factors are more dominant in determining work morale. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted by Syarifuddin [22] and Affainie & Qutieshat [23], which emphasized that motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher productivity, responsibility, and work enthusiasm in the workplace.

Highly motivated employees tend to be more responsible, disciplined, and eager to achieve optimal work results. Therefore, organizations need to increase employee motivation through awards, comfortable work environments, and opportunities for self-development. Simultaneously, leadership and work motivation significantly affect work morale. This shows that the combination of internal and external factors is crucial for increasing employee morale. Overall, the findings suggest that improving employee morale requires not only supportive leadership but also strong employee motivation. Therefore, organizations should pay greater attention to motivational strategies while maintaining effective leadership practices to improve organizational performance.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of leadership and work motivation on the work morale of non-academic staff at Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin University, Solok. The findings revealed that leadership did not have a significant partial effect on employee morale, while work motivation showed a significant positive effect on employee morale. However, when tested simultaneously, leadership and work motivation together significantly influenced employee morale. These results indicate that work motivation plays a more dominant role in improving employee morale, as motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater enthusiasm, responsibility, and commitment in carrying out their duties. Although

leadership was not found to directly affect employee morale, it still contributes to creating a supportive organizational environment. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to continuously improve employee motivation while maintaining effective leadership practices to support employee morale and organizational performance. However, this study was limited to non-academic staff at a single private university and only examined leadership and work motivation as variables affecting employee morale. Future studies are recommended to involve broader research objects and additional variables such as work environment, organizational culture, or job satisfaction to provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee morale.

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