

The Influence of Talent Retention, Work Motivation, and Leadership Support on Civil Servants' Performance in the Madiun City Government

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Abstract

Improving civil servant performance is important for effective local government administration. This study examined the individual and joint associations of talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support with employee performance in the Madiun City Government and identified the strongest predictor among these variables. A quantitative survey approach was employed. The eligible population comprised 1,341 civil servants, and a sample size of 93 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire administered using Google Forms and analyzed using multiple linear regression in IBM SPSS. Work motivation showed a positive, statistically significant association with employee performance, whereas talent retention and leadership support showed no statistically significant independent associations. The overall regression model was statistically significant, with work motivation emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings highlight the relevance of work motivation to civil servant performance and provide context-specific evidence to inform human resource management in local government. The study suggests prioritizing strategies that strengthen work motivation as part of efforts to improve employee performance and support effective public administration.

Keywords: Talent Retention; Work Motivation; Leadership Support; Employee Performance; Civil Servants

INTRODUCTION

Civil servant performance is a strategic component of effective, accountable, and public-oriented governance. Civil servants are responsible not only for implementing government policies but also for contributing to service quality and the achievement of organizational objectives (Ghozi & Jafar Shodiq, 2025). Accordingly, public-sector human resource management needs to emphasize employee competence, productivity, and accountability in performing assigned duties (Dessler, 2020). Employee performance reflects the extent to which individuals accomplish their responsibilities in accordance with organizational standards and objectives, including work quality, quantity, timeliness, and accountability (Dalila et al., 2025). At the local government level, civil servant performance is particularly important because it is closely associated with administrative effectiveness and the quality of services delivered to the public.

Improving civil servant performance has become an important component of bureaucratic reform through professional and merit-based personnel management (Utama et al., 2025). Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus emphasizes the importance of managing civil servants according to qualifications, competencies, and performance in a fair and proportionate manner (Sari et al., 2025). Talent management provides a strategic approach to this agenda by identifying, developing, and retaining employees with strong potential and performance (Mujibi & Azmy, 2024). This approach recognizes human resources as strategic organizational assets whose capabilities must be developed and maintained to support long-term institutional objectives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Nevertheless, talent management implementation in government institutions continues to face challenges, including resource constraints, administrative-oriented personnel practices, and the suboptimal utilization of employee potential. These conditions indicate a gap between the formal objectives of civil servant management policies and their implementation within government institutions (Badan Kepegawaian Negara, 2018).

Talent retention represents an important component of talent management. It should not be understood solely as an organization's ability to keep employees employed, but also as its capacity to sustain their commitment, engagement, and meaningful contributions (Musfirah & Syukri, 2025). Retention strategies seek to preserve employees with valuable competencies and potential, thereby preventing organizations from losing strategically important human resources (Mathis & Jackson, 2011). In the public sector, retention has

distinctive characteristics because continued employment does not necessarily indicate sustained engagement or productivity. Employees may remain in their positions while experiencing declining motivation, initiative, or contributions (Raharjo et al., 2025). Consequently, retention practices need to consider career development opportunities, performance recognition, and continuous competency development (Yustika & Efrianti, 2026). Although retention is theoretically associated with sustained organizational performance, its actual influence requires empirical examination within local government institutions.

Work motivation is another important individual factor that may influence civil servant performance. Motivation concerns the direction, intensity, and persistence of the effort individuals devote to achieving particular objectives (Zin et al., 2023). Employees with strong work motivation are more likely to demonstrate commitment to their responsibilities and maintain efforts toward organizational targets (Shafira et al., 2025). Motivation theory also highlights the importance of job characteristics, opportunities for achievement, and recognition of accomplishments in encouraging productive behavior (Sanjaya et al., 2025). In local government institutions, nonfinancial factors deserve particular attention because flexibility in compensation and reward systems may be limited (Purwanto et al., 2022). Strengthening work motivation should therefore form part of civil servant management strategies, particularly through work environments that encourage achievement, responsibility, and sustained professional engagement.

Leadership support may also influence employee performance through guidance, coaching, feedback, and attention to employees' needs (Syailendra et al., 2025). Such support can create working conditions that help employees understand their responsibilities, address obstacles, and perform their duties more effectively (Siagian, 1995). Organizational behavior perspectives indicate that performance is shaped not only by individual capabilities but also by motivation and the support available within the work environment (Risman, 2023). Within talent management, leaders play a strategic role in ensuring that employees' competencies and potential are utilized through appropriate assignments and professional development. However, leadership support should not automatically be assumed to improve performance in every organizational setting, as its effectiveness may depend on institutional conditions and employee characteristics.

The research gap addressed in this study concerns the limited empirical examination of talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support within an integrated analytical model of civil servant performance at the local government level, particularly in the Madiun City Government. The thesis materials provide conceptual explanations of the relationships between individual variables and performance, but detailed empirical evidence integrating all three factors in this specific context has not been established in the reviewed discussion. A further gap concerns the conceptualization of talent retention, which may be inadequately represented when measured solely through continued employment rather than sustained engagement and contribution. Moreover, the potentially different effects of the three variables require empirical testing to determine which factor contributes most strongly to explaining civil servant performance.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support as independent variables influencing civil servant performance in the Madiun City Government. Each variable is examined through its partial effect and its combined contribution, rather than through a mediation framework. The performance framework draws on work quality, quantity, timeliness, and accountability as its principal dimensions (Mangkunegara, 2017). Talent retention is considered in terms of employees' willingness to remain, organizational loyalty, career development, and work engagement (Mathis & Jackson, 2011). Work motivation is examined through work enthusiasm, responsibility, achievement orientation, and involvement in assigned duties (Merani et al., 2025). Leadership support is assessed through managerial attention, feedback, recognition of achievement, and career guidance (Siagian, 1995). This integrated framework enables the study to examine the relative contributions of individual and organizational factors within a specific local government context.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe talent retention, work motivation, leadership support, and civil servant performance in the Madiun City Government; examine the partial and simultaneous effects of the three independent variables on employee performance; and identify the most dominant influencing variable. The findings are expected to contribute empirical insights to public-sector human resource management research and provide practical considerations for local government policymakers. In particular, the results may inform the evaluation of talent retention strategies, initiatives to strengthen work motivation, and efforts to optimize leadership support. Ultimately, this study seeks to support more

performance-oriented civil servant management and the sustainable improvement of public-sector organizational effectiveness.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effects of talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support on civil servant performance, both individually and jointly. Explanatory research seeks to clarify relationships among variables and test formulated hypotheses (Singarimbun & Effendi, 2011). The research focused on civil servants employed by the Madiun City Government, with the Madiun City Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM) serving as the research location.

The research model comprised three independent variables: talent retention (X_1), work motivation (X_2), and leadership support (X_3), with civil servant performance (Y) as the dependent variable. Talent retention was measured through career-path clarity, competency development opportunities, performance recognition, and willingness to remain in the organization, drawing on the concept of employee retention (Tariana, 2024). Work motivation was assessed through work enthusiasm, task responsibility, achievement orientation, and work engagement, based on the motivation framework. Leadership support was measured through managerial attention to employees, feedback, recognition of achievements, and career guidance and development. Civil servant performance was assessed through work quality, work quantity, timeliness, and responsibility for assigned tasks (Nugraha et al., 2020).

The eligible population comprised 1,341 civil servants holding permanent civil service status, selected from 4,845 civil servants employed by the Madiun City Government. Eligibility criteria included permanent civil servant status; appointment to an implementing position, supervisory structural position, or technical or healthcare functional position; exclusion from the teacher functional position category; and a minimum of five years of service. A sample of 93 respondents was calculated using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error. Proportionate stratified random sampling was applied to ensure proportional representation of employees across local government departments.

Primary data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The instrument measured respondents' perceptions of the four research variables using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation. Items were considered valid when the calculated correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value of 0.2039 or the significance level was below 0.05. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients above 0.60 considered acceptable (Januwariska et al., 2025). Secondary data were obtained from personnel documents, relevant regulations, books, academic journals, and previous studies.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and modes, were used to summarize respondents' answers. Multiple linear regression was subsequently applied to assess the relationships between the independent variables and civil servant performance. Classical assumption tests included the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and inspection of histograms and P–P plots for normality, Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for multicollinearity, and the Glejser test for heteroscedasticity. Hypotheses were evaluated using the F-test for simultaneous effects and the t-test for partial effects. Standardized beta coefficients were compared to identify the most dominant variable. The primary significance threshold was 5%, while 10% was considered an additional interpretive threshold.

RESULTS

Classical Assumption Tests

Before conducting multiple linear regression analysis, the research model was examined through several classical assumption tests. These tests covered residual normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. The results were used to describe the characteristics of the residuals and the relationships among the independent variables before hypothesis testing.

a. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to examine the distribution of residuals in the regression model. The test employed the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test and a visual examination using the Normal Probability Plot (P–P Plot).

Table 1. Results of the Normality Test

Description	Value
Number of Respondents (N)	93
Test Statistic	0,183
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 1. Results of the Normality Tests shows that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This result indicates that, based on the statistical test, the regression residuals are not normally distributed.

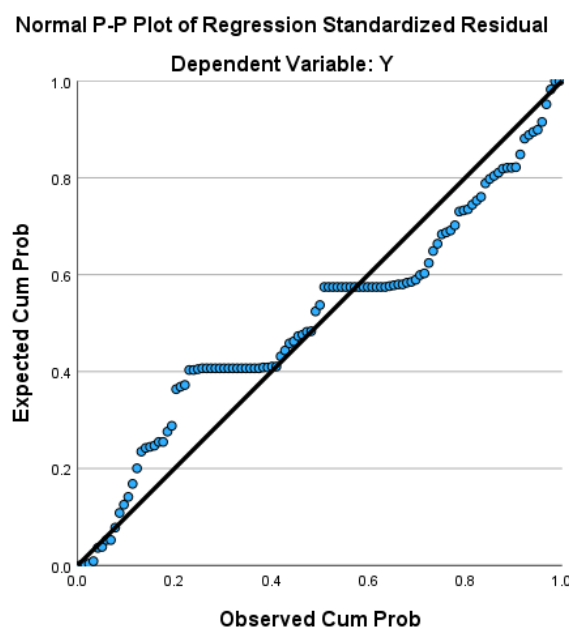


Figure 1. Normal P-P Plot

Figure 1. Normal P-P Plot shows that the residual points lie around the diagonal line, although not all points follow the line perfectly. Thus, the normality test indicates a deviation from normality based on the statistical test, while the graphical examination shows a pattern that relatively approximates a normal distribution. This condition is recorded as a characteristic of the data in this study and should be considered when interpreting the regression results.

b. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether high correlations existed among the independent variables in the regression model. The test examined the

Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. A model is considered free from multicollinearity when Tolerance is greater than 0.10 and VIF is below 10.

Table 2. Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Talent Retention (X1)	0,461	2,170	No multicollinearity detected
Work Motivation (X2)	0,426	2,347	No multicollinearity detected
Leadership Support (X3)	0,426	2,347	No multicollinearity detected

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 2. Results of the Multicollinearity Test shows that all independent variables have Tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values below 10. Therefore, no indication of multicollinearity was found among Talent Retention, Work Motivation, and Leadership Support. These three variables could subsequently be included simultaneously in the regression model.

c. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether the residual variance differed across observations. This study employed the Glejser method by examining the significance values of each independent variable.

Table 3. Results of the Glejser Heteroscedasticity Test

Variable	Sig.	Interpretation
Talent Retention (X1)	0,179	No heteroscedasticity detected
Work Motivation (X2)	0,752	No heteroscedasticity detected
Leadership Support (X3)	0,145	No heteroscedasticity detected

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 3. Results of the Glejser Heteroscedasticity Test shows that the significance values for Talent Retention, Work Motivation, and Leadership Support are 0.179, 0.752, and 0.145, respectively. All values exceed 0.05. Therefore, the Glejser test indicates no evidence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. This result is supported by the Scatterplot examination, which shows residual points distributed around the zero axis without forming a particular pattern.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationships of Talent Retention (X1), Work Motivation (X2), and Leadership Support (X3) with Civil Servant Performance (Y). The analysis produced regression coefficients indicating the direction and magnitude of changes in Civil Servant Performance associated with changes in each independent variable in the research model.

Table 4. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3,851	1,938	-	1,988	0,050
Talent Retention (X1)	-0,009	0,073	-0,009	-0,125	0,901
Work Motivation (X2)	0,778	0,078	0,774	9,935	0,000
Leadership Support (X3)	0,129	0,068	0,147	1,887	0,062

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 4. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis shows that Talent Retention has a regression coefficient of -0.009 with a significance value of 0.901. Work Motivation has a coefficient of 0.778 with a significance value of 0.000, while Leadership Support has a coefficient of 0.129 with a significance value of 0.062.

Based on the regression analysis, the following equation was obtained:

$$Y = 3.851 - 0.009X1 + 0.778X2 + 0.129X3$$

The equation indicates that the constant is 3.851. Talent Retention has a negative coefficient of -0.009 but is not statistically significant ($p = 0.901$). Work Motivation has a positive and significant coefficient of 0.778 ($p = 0.000$), with the largest Standardized Beta value (0.774). Leadership Support has a positive coefficient of 0.129 but is not significant at the 5% level ($p = 0.062$), although it receives limited support at the 10% level.

Table 5. Results of the Coefficient of Determination

Description	Value
R	0,877
R Square	0,770
Adjusted R Square	0,762
Std. Error of Estimate	2,073

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 5. Results of the Coefficient of Determination shows that the R Square value of 0.770 indicates that the model explains 77.0% of the variation in Civil Servant Performance. After adjusting for the number of independent variables and sample size, the Adjusted R Square of 0.762 indicates that 76.2% of the variation is explained by the model, while the remaining 23.8% is associated with factors outside the model. This represents explanatory power, not proof of causation.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing included the simultaneous F-test, partial t-tests, and dominant-variable analysis. The 5% significance level was the primary criterion, while 10% was used as an additional consideration.

a. Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Table 6. Results of the Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Description	Value
Calculated F	99,256
Sig.	0,000

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 6. Results of the Simultaneous Test (F-Test) shows a significance value of 0.000, below both 0.05 and 0.10. Therefore, H1 is supported: Talent Retention, Work Motivation, and Leadership Support are jointly significantly associated with Civil Servant Performance in the Madiun City Government.

b. Partial Test (t-Test)

Table 7. Results of the Partial Test (t-Test)

Variable	B	Calculated t	Sig.	Decision at $\alpha=5\%$	Decision at $\alpha=10\%$
Talent Retention (X1)	-0,009	-0,125	0,901	H ₂ not supported	H ₂ not supported
Work Motivation (X2)	0,778	9,935	0,000	H ₃ supported	H ₃ supported
Leadership Support (X3)	0,129	1,887	0,062	H ₄ not supported	H ₄ receives limited support

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 7. Results of the Partial Test (t-Test) shows that Talent Retention has a negative, insignificant relationship with Civil Servant Performance ($p = 0.901$), so H₂ is not supported at either significance level. Work Motivation has a positive and significant relationship ($p = 0.000$), supporting H₃ at both levels. Leadership Support has a positive coefficient but is not significant at 5% ($p = 0.062$); therefore, H₄ is not supported at 5% but receives limited support at 10%.

These results indicate that Work Motivation is the only independent variable with a positive and statistically significant relationship with Civil Servant Performance at the primary 5% significance level.

c. Dominant-Variable Analysis

Table 8. Results of the Dominant-Variable Analysis

Variable	Standardized Beta	Rank
Talent Retention (X1)	-0,009	3
Work Motivation (X2)	0,774	1
Leadership Support (X3)	0,147	2

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 8. Results of the Dominant-Variable Analysis shows that Work Motivation has the largest absolute Standardized Beta value (0.774), followed by Leadership Support (0.147) and Talent Retention (−0.009). Therefore, H5, which proposes Talent Retention as the dominant variable, is not supported. Work Motivation has the strongest relative relationship with Civil Servant Performance in the model.

Table 9. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Variabel Relationship	Coefficient	Sig.	Results at $\alpha = 5\%$	Result at $\alpha = 10\%$
H1	Three variables jointly associated with performance	-	0,000	Supported	Supported
H2	Talent Retention and performance	-0,009	0,901	Not supported	Not supported
H3	Work Motivation and performance	0,778	0,000	Supported	Supported
H4	Leadership Support and performance	0,129	0,062	Not supported	Limited support
H5	Talent Retention as the dominant variable	-0,009	-	Not supported	Not supported

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 9. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results summarizes the hypothesis-testing results. H1 and H3 are supported at both significance levels, H2 and H5 are not supported, and H4 receives limited support only at the 10% level. Overall, Work Motivation is the most consistently supported variable and has the strongest relative relationship with Civil Servant Performance in the research model.

DISCUSSION

The descriptive findings indicate that talent retention, work motivation, leadership support, and civil servant performance were perceived to be at good levels within the Madiun City Government. These results suggest that respondents viewed the organization's retention practices, their own work motivation, the support provided by supervisors, and their work performance positively. Nevertheless, favorable descriptive assessments do not necessarily imply that each factor has a statistically significant direct relationship with performance. The hypothesis tests revealed that work motivation had a positive and significant effect on civil servant performance, whereas talent retention was not statistically significant. Leadership support had a positive relationship with performance, but the evidence did not meet the primary 5% significance threshold. When examined simultaneously, the three predictors formed a statistically significant model, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.762. This

indicates that the model explained 76.2% of the variation in performance within the study sample, while the remaining variation was associated with factors outside the model.

The non-significant effect of talent retention suggests that positive perceptions of career pathways, competency development opportunities, performance recognition, and employees' willingness to remain in the organization do not necessarily translate into higher performance directly. Conceptually, talent retention involves organizational strategies for retaining employees whose competencies and potential are valuable to long-term organizational effectiveness (Bashori, 2012). However, retaining employees and maximizing their contributions are distinct organizational outcomes. Civil servants may remain in public organizations because of employment status, job stability, or the characteristics of the bureaucratic system, without these conditions automatically increasing their work effort or output (Sunaryanta, 2025). The findings therefore suggest that retention should be understood as a foundation for workforce continuity rather than a sufficient condition for improved performance. Its contribution may depend on how retention practices are connected to competency development, appropriate placement, recognition, motivation, and performance management.

Work motivation, by contrast, emerged as the strongest predictor in the model, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.774 and a reported significance value of 0.000. This finding highlights the relevance of work enthusiasm, responsibility, achievement orientation, and engagement in explaining civil servant performance. Robbins & Judge (2017) conceptualize motivation as a process that influences the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's efforts toward goal attainment. This perspective helps explain why motivation may be closely associated with performance: employees' competencies and experience do not necessarily produce optimal outcomes unless they are willing to apply them consistently. The result is also compatible with Herzberg (1959) emphasis on achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth as factors that can encourage work-related effort. The dominance of motivation does not mean that organizational conditions are unimportant. Rather, it indicates that employees' willingness to mobilize their abilities was the most prominent predictor among the variables examined in this study.

Leadership support showed a positive relationship with performance, but its significance value of 0.062 did not satisfy the primary 5% threshold. Consequently, the result

does not provide sufficient evidence of a statistically significant effect at the main significance level, although it may be interpreted as a positive indication under a more permissive 10% threshold. Theoretically, managerial guidance, communication, coaching, feedback, and recognition can help employees understand their responsibilities and address work-related obstacles (Gibson et al., 2012). However, these forms of support may not always translate into a direct and statistically detectable performance effect, particularly when employees have substantial experience, understand established procedures, and can perform many tasks independently. This interpretation is plausible but was not directly tested by the research design. The finding underscores the importance of distinguishing employees' positive perceptions of supervisory support from statistical evidence that such support independently predicts performance.

The significant simultaneous test indicates that the three variables remain relevant when considered within the same analytical model. This result does not contradict the partial tests because the overall test evaluates the predictors jointly, whereas the partial tests examine each predictor's contribution while accounting for the others. The findings are consistent with an integrated human resource management perspective, in which talent continuity, individual motivation, and the leadership environment should be considered together (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). The study's contribution lies in demonstrating that these factors differ in their empirical strength within a local government setting. Work motivation was the strongest predictor, while talent retention and leadership support did not provide sufficient evidence of individual effects at the 5% level. Thus, a factor may be perceived positively by employees without necessarily functioning as a statistically significant independent predictor of performance.

In practical terms, the Madiun City Government should prioritize initiatives that sustain work motivation, including fair recognition, meaningful responsibilities, competency development opportunities, and clearly communicated performance targets. Talent retention should extend beyond keeping employees within the organization and be integrated with career planning, capacity development, appropriate placement, and performance evaluation. Leadership practices should also emphasize effective communication, constructive feedback, coaching, and support tailored to the needs of different work units. These measures are consistent with an understanding of performance as work outcomes involving quality, quantity, and responsibility (Mangkunegara, 2017). Methodologically, the study contributes quantitative evidence on the relationships among three organizational and individual factors

within a single model, while its findings should be interpreted within the boundaries of its design and sample.

Several limitations warrant consideration. First, data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The measures therefore relied on respondents' perceptions and may have been affected by social desirability or a tendency to provide favorable assessments. Second, the sample comprised 93 civil servants drawn from a target population of 1,341, using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error. Although this approach provided a basis for selecting respondents, the sample size may limit the precision of conclusions about particular occupational groups or local government departments. Third, the study focused exclusively on the Madiun City Government; its findings should not be generalized directly to all public institutions. Finally, the quantitative design identifies statistical relationships but cannot establish causal mechanisms or fully explain why talent retention and leadership support were not significant in the partial tests. Future research could include a wider range of government institutions, combine surveys with interviews, and examine additional factors associated with performance. Such approaches would provide a more detailed understanding of how talent retention and leadership support interact with motivation to shape civil servant performance.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support on civil servant performance within the Madiun City Government. Based on data from 93 respondents, all four study variables were descriptively assessed as good. However, the regression results revealed differences in their individual contributions to performance. Collectively, talent retention, work motivation, and leadership support significantly explained civil servant performance. At the individual level, work motivation had a positive and significant effect and emerged as the strongest predictor. Talent retention showed no statistically significant effect, while leadership support had a positive relationship with performance but did not reach significance at the 5% level, although it was significant at the 10% level.

These findings indicate that favorable perceptions of employee retention practices and supervisory support do not necessarily translate into measurable improvements in performance. Work motivation appears more directly associated with employees' willingness

to apply their abilities, fulfill responsibilities, and sustain their efforts toward organizational goals. The study contributes to human resource management research by examining these three factors within a single analytical model in a local government setting and demonstrating their differing levels of empirical relevance to civil servant performance.

Practically, the Madiun City Government should prioritize initiatives that strengthen work motivation through fair recognition, competency development opportunities, meaningful responsibilities, and a supportive working environment. Talent retention strategies should be integrated with career development and performance management, while leaders should improve communication, employee coaching, and constructive feedback. Future research should involve a broader range of public institutions, combine survey data with qualitative interviews, and examine additional predictors, including competence, job satisfaction, and organizational culture. These directions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of civil servant performance and support the development of human resource policies that are better aligned with the needs of public organizations.

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