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Sustaining Performance Amid Structural Pressure: The Paradox of Reward and Motivation among Village Officials

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Abstract

Village officials' performance is critical to effective local governance and public service delivery. This study examines the effects of job placement, rewards, and work motivation on the performance of village officials in Jiwan District, Madiun Regency. A quantitative research design was employed, involving all 95 village officials from 14 villages through saturated sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed through multiple linear regression in SPSS after the relevant model assumptions were assessed. The results demonstrate that job placement, rewards, and work motivation each have a positive and significant effect on village officials' performance. Rewards emerged as the dominant predictor, underscoring the importance of recognising officials' contributions through financial and non-financial forms of appreciation. Collectively, the three predictors significantly explain 50.3% of the variation in performance, while the remaining 49.7% is attributable to factors outside the model. These findings extend the public-sector human resource management literature by demonstrating the combined importance of appropriate placement, equitable rewards, and sustained motivation in strengthening performance at the village-government level. The study highlights

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the need for village governments to implement integrated, transparent, and merit-based human resource policies that promote professional, responsive, and performance-oriented officials while improving the quality of public service delivery.

Keywords: Job Placement; Reward Systems; Work Motivation; Employee Performance; Village Government

INTRODUCTION

Villages hold a strategic position in public governance because they are the lowest level of government that directly interacts with citizens and implements local public policies and development programs (Hanip et al., 2025). The quality of village governance therefore depends not only on financial resources and policies but also on the capacity of village officials to manage administration, public services, development, and community empowerment (Nasir, 2025). The broader authority given to village governments also increases the responsibility of officials to perform their duties professionally, effectively, transparently, and accountably.

The responsibilities of village officials have become increasingly complex, encompassing financial management, development implementation, public services, community empowerment, and compliance with administrative requirements. Consequently, employee performance is a strategic concern because the ability of village officials to translate policies into services and development outcomes directly affects the quality of local governance. Performance should therefore be assessed not only through task completion but also through work quality, competence, responsibility, professionalism, and responsiveness to community needs (Putra, 2025).

From a human resource management perspective, employees are strategic organizational assets who must be managed through appropriate planning, placement, development, evaluation, and reward mechanisms (Nursahwal & Musdalifa, 2025). Human resource management aims to acquire, develop, evaluate, and retain employees who contribute to organizational objectives (Dessler, 2020). In village government, effective human resource management is particularly important because performance improvement cannot rely solely on additional financial resources but also requires the alignment of employee capabilities with organizational demands.

Employee performance reflects an individual's contribution to organizational objectives, including the quality and quantity of work achieved in carrying out assigned responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2020). Performance also refers to behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals, indicating that how employees perform their duties is as important as the outputs they produce (Campbell, 1990). This perspective is particularly relevant to village government, where officials are expected to demonstrate not only administrative competence but also accountability, discipline, cooperation, responsiveness, and behaviors that support effective public services and local development.

Performance is influenced by multiple and interconnected factors. Robbins & Judge (2017) argue that performance is shaped by ability, motivation, and opportunity. This perspective indicates that possessing adequate competence does not necessarily produce high performance when individuals lack motivation or opportunities to utilize their capabilities. Gibson et al. (2012) similarly explain that individual performance emerges from the interaction of individual, organizational, and psychological factors. Individual factors include ability and experience, organizational factors encompass structure, leadership, resources, and reward systems, while psychological factors include motivation, attitudes, perceptions, and job satisfaction. Consequently, understanding the performance of village officials requires an analysis that incorporates both individual characteristics and organizational management practices.

The interaction among these factors can be further understood through the Social System Theory developed by Katz & Kahn (1978), which conceptualizes organizations as open systems consisting of interdependent components. Village government can be understood as a social system involving human resources, organizational structures, financial resources, facilities, policies, and the surrounding community. A disruption in one component may affect other components and eventually reduce overall organizational effectiveness. In village government, shortages of personnel, increasing workloads, limited organizational support, and fiscal constraints may generate an imbalance between organizational demands and available resources. Performance problems among village officials should therefore be interpreted not merely as individual deficiencies but also as manifestations of broader organizational conditions.

Such circumstances are observable in village governments within Jiwan District, Madiun Regency. Administrative and fiscal performance in 2025 appears relatively strong, as

village expenditure realization reached Rp30,513,694,221, equivalent to 98.66 percent of the allocated budget of Rp30,927,552,945. The realization of Land and Building Tax revenue also reached Rp1,838,017,887, representing 93.40 percent of the established target of Rp1,986,957,903. These figures indicate a relatively strong capacity to execute village budgets and achieve fiscal administration targets. Nevertheless, administrative achievements do not necessarily translate into equally strong public service and development outcomes. The Free Health Check Program, for example, reached only 13,184 people, equivalent to 22.91 percent of its target of 57,539 people. This discrepancy suggests that strong administrative performance may coexist with limitations in delivering substantive public services.

A similar pattern can be observed in village development outcomes. Among the 14 villages in Jiwan District, eight have achieved the status of Independent Village, while six remain categorized as Advanced Villages. This distribution indicates that administrative and fiscal achievements do not automatically produce uniform development outcomes across villages. Consequently, the performance of village officials should be assessed not only through their ability to absorb budgets and complete administrative requirements but also through their capacity to generate public services and development outcomes that are meaningful to communities. From this perspective, employee performance becomes a critical variable for explaining why relatively strong administrative capacity does not necessarily correspond to equally strong development and welfare outcomes.

The situation is further complicated by a shortage of village officials in Jiwan District. Of the 126 established positions, 31 remain vacant, representing approximately 24.6 percent of the total available positions. This shortage requires the remaining personnel to undertake responsibilities that would ordinarily be distributed among a larger workforce. Such circumstances may create disproportionate workloads, reduce the time available for public service and development activities, and increase the risk of errors in administrative and operational tasks. From a systems perspective, the situation reflects an imbalance between human-resource inputs and the workload that must be processed by the organization.

This condition represents not merely a staffing problem but a structural pressure within village government, as increasing workloads must be managed by a smaller number of personnel. The resulting imbalance between organizational demands and available human resources may directly influence how village officials perform their duties.

Human-resource constraints occur simultaneously with a changing policy environment in village governance. Increasing policy requirements and mandatory programs require village officials to demonstrate greater adaptability and administrative capacity (Rizal et al., 2022). Changes in village financial management policies may also reduce the flexibility of village governments to determine development priorities according to locally identified needs (Daulima et al., 2025). Under conditions in which fiscal discretion becomes more constrained, the ability of village officials to prioritize programs, coordinate activities, complete administrative requirements, and maintain public services becomes increasingly important. These pressures become particularly difficult when they are not accompanied by sufficient staffing, competence, recognition, and motivation.

The structural pressure is further intensified by the increasing number of programs and policy requirements originating from the central government that must be implemented at the village level. Village officials are therefore required to accommodate externally determined programs while continuing to fulfill routine administrative, public service, and development responsibilities.

At the same time, declining village revenues further narrow the fiscal space available to support organizational operations and human resource management. The combination of personnel shortages, declining fiscal capacity, and expanding program demands constitutes a structural pressure that distinguishes the context of this study from conventional employee-performance research.

These circumstances suggest that village officials' performance cannot be separated from the way personnel are assigned to their positions, how their contributions are recognized, and the extent to which they are internally motivated to perform their duties. Job placement is particularly important because personnel shortages require village governments to utilize each available employee as effectively as possible. Rivai (2014) defines job placement as the process of assigning individuals to positions that correspond to their competencies, capacities, and skills. Appropriate placement enables organizations to utilize individual capabilities more effectively while reducing mismatches between job requirements and employee qualifications.

The principle of appropriate placement is consistent with the concept of placing the right person in the right position. Dessler (2020) emphasizes that organizational effectiveness is influenced by the extent to which employee capabilities correspond to job requirements.

When employees possess competencies that match their responsibilities, they are more likely to perform tasks efficiently and accurately. This principle is particularly significant in village governments facing personnel shortages because an inappropriate assignment may increase workloads, reduce task effectiveness, and ultimately compromise public service quality.

Empirical evidence supports the relationship between appropriate placement and performance. Rinata et al. (2025) found that job-placement suitability had a positive and significant effect on the performance of village officials. Their findings indicate that the greater the alignment between an employee's characteristics and job requirements, the greater the likelihood of achieving effective performance. Nevertheless, this relationship is not consistently supported across all organizational settings. Hermawan & Handayani (2025) found that job placement did not have a significant partial effect on employee performance, whereas motivation had a positive and significant effect. This divergence indicates a research gap concerning the relationship between placement and performance, particularly when examined across different organizational contexts.

The second factor considered in this study is reward. Reward systems represent an important organizational mechanism for maintaining a perceived balance between employees' contributions and the benefits they receive. Hasibuan (2016) defines rewards as forms of compensation or recognition provided by organizations in response to employees' contributions and performance. Rewards need not be exclusively financial. They may also take the form of recognition, appreciation, development opportunities, managerial acknowledgment, and other forms of nonfinancial recognition that provide psychological value to employees. In organizations facing fiscal limitations, nonfinancial rewards may become particularly relevant because they enable management to recognize employee contributions without necessarily creating substantial additional financial expenditure.

The relevance of reward can be explained through Adams (1965) Equity Theory. The theory proposes that individuals evaluate fairness by comparing their contributions to an organization with the outcomes they receive in return. When employees perceive an appropriate balance between inputs and outcomes, they are more likely to maintain positive attitudes toward their work. Conversely, perceived inequity may generate dissatisfaction and reduce willingness to contribute. This perspective is especially relevant to village governments in which officials may face increasing workloads while financial resources, staffing levels, and organizational flexibility remain constrained.

This finding is further supported by (Jetrine & Mohammed, 2025), who found that distributive justice mediates the relationship between reward and employee performance. Their findings indicate that employees' perceptions of fairness in the distribution of rewards can strengthen the positive effect of rewards on performance. In the context of village government, fair recognition of employees' contributions may therefore enhance the effectiveness of reward systems in encouraging better performance.

Previous empirical studies provide evidence regarding the contribution of reward to employee performance. Rahmah & Avriyanti (2024) found that reward had a positive effect on employee performance. Susiyami & Widarta (2025) similarly demonstrated that reward had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Ilham & Sumiaty (2025) further found that reward and work motivation positively and significantly influenced performance both partially and simultaneously. These findings indicate that reward systems may function as important mechanisms for encouraging employee performance. Nevertheless, much of the existing evidence has focused on corporations and formal government institutions, whereas village governments operating under fiscal and human-resource constraints have received comparatively less attention.

The third factor examined in this study is work motivation. Motivation represents a psychological force that determines the intensity, direction, and persistence of individual effort. Robbins & Judge (2017) identify motivation as one of the principal determinants of performance because employees who possess adequate capabilities may not necessarily demonstrate high performance when they lack the willingness to utilize those capabilities. Under constrained working conditions, motivation becomes particularly important because employees require sufficient internal drive to sustain persistence, responsibility, and initiative.

Herzberg (1959) Two-Factor Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the motivational dimension of employee behavior. The theory distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivator factors. Hygiene factors, including working conditions, organizational policies, interpersonal relationships, and compensation, primarily function to prevent dissatisfaction, whereas motivator factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth contribute to higher levels of satisfaction and motivation. This perspective is relevant to village government because employees may continue to demonstrate strong work commitment not only because of financial benefits but also

because of responsibility, social recognition, achievement, and the perceived meaning of serving local communities.

Empirical evidence also demonstrates the importance of motivation for village-official performance. Mamonto et al. (2024) found that work motivation had a positive and significant effect on the performance of village officials. Murtadho & Sari (2025) likewise identified motivation as one of the significant and dominant factors influencing village-official performance. These findings indicate that motivation plays a substantial role in explaining differences in the performance of village personnel. Furthermore, Kudaibergenov et al. (2024) found that motivating factors exerted a stronger influence on employee performance than hygiene factors. This finding reinforces the argument that recognition, responsibility, and achievement can serve as important sources of work motivation when organizations operate under resource constraints.

The broader human resource management perspective also supports the importance of these factors in village government. Diyanto et al. (2025) found that effective human resource management practices involving planning, recruitment, selection, training, and performance evaluation contributed to improved village-official performance. This finding suggests that employee performance is the outcome of a broader human resource management system rather than solely an individual characteristic. Job placement, reward, and motivation can therefore be understood as interconnected mechanisms within human resource management that potentially shape the performance of village officials.

The relevance of appropriate placement is further supported by Iwan et al. (2024), who found that job placement had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Trysantika et al. (2023) also demonstrated that person-job fit significantly affected employee performance. These findings reinforce the proposition that alignment between individual characteristics and job requirements constitutes an important mechanism through which performance can be enhanced. However, village governments differ from formal organizations with more established staffing structures and organizational resources. Therefore, the applicability of these findings requires further examination within the specific institutional context of village government.

The review of previous studies reveals several research gaps. First, empirical findings regarding the effect of job placement on employee performance remain inconsistent, with some studies reporting significant positive effects while others finding no significant

relationship. This indicates that the relationship may vary depending on organizational characteristics, job structures, and working environments. Second, a contextual gap remains, as studies on job placement, reward, and motivation have predominantly focused on corporations, financial institutions, and formal government agencies, while research examining these factors among village officials remains limited. Village governments have distinctive characteristics, including limited personnel, constrained fiscal capacity, close social relationships with communities, and increasing demands for public services. Third, an integration gap exists because previous studies have generally examined these variables separately or in combinations of two variables, whereas research integrating job placement, reward, and work motivation into a single model of village-official performance remains limited.

More importantly, previous studies have rarely positioned structural pressure as the contextual condition underlying village-official performance. This study addresses this gap by examining performance within a concrete structural context characterized by limited personnel, declining fiscal capacity, and increasing central-government program demands in Jiwan District, Madiun Regency.

Based on these gaps, the novelty of this study lies in simultaneously examining the effects of job placement, reward, and work motivation on village-official performance in Jiwan District, Madiun Regency, particularly within a context of limited human and financial resources. The study combines Human Resource Management theory, which emphasizes alignment between employee capabilities and organizational requirements (Dessler, 2020), Adams (1965) Equity Theory concerning fairness in rewards, Herzberg (1959) Two-Factor Theory concerning motivating and hygiene factors, and Katz & Kahn (1978) Social System Theory, which views employee performance as part of an interconnected organizational system.

The three variables are practically relevant to village governments operating under resource constraints. Competency-based placement can optimize personnel allocation, while fair rewards, including nonfinancial recognition and development opportunities, can strengthen employees' perceptions of organizational appreciation. Work motivation can further encourage responsibility, initiative, and sustained effort. Accordingly, this study conceptualizes village-official performance as an outcome of appropriate person-job alignment, organizational recognition, and psychological motivation.

This study therefore aims to describe job placement, reward, work motivation, and village-official performance; examine the effects of job placement, reward, and work motivation on performance; and identify the variable with the most dominant influence. Academically, the study contributes to public-sector human resource management research by examining village government as an organizational context with distinctive institutional and resource constraints. Practically, the findings are expected to support village and subdistrict governments in developing competency-based placement, fair reward systems, and strategies to strengthen employee motivation and public service performance.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was selected because the study sought to statistically measure and examine the effects of job placement, rewards, and work motivation on the performance of village officials. An explanatory design was adopted to investigate causal relationships among the variables through hypothesis testing. Singarimbun & Effendi (2011) state that explanatory research is intended to clarify relationships among variables and empirically test previously formulated hypotheses. Accordingly, the present study goes beyond describing the conditions of the variables by examining whether job placement, rewards, and work motivation significantly contribute to the performance of village officials.

The study was conducted in 14 village governments in Jiwan District, Madiun Regency, with a particular focus on human resource management among village officials. The independent variables comprised job placement (X1), rewards (X2), and work motivation (X3), while employee performance served as the dependent variable (Y). Job placement refers to the assignment of an individual to a position that corresponds to their abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, and interests (Sutrisno, 2016). Rewards refer to forms of compensation and recognition provided in response to employees' contributions and performance, including financial, nonfinancial, and intrinsic forms of recognition (Mangkunegara, 2020). Work motivation is based on the conceptualization of Robbins & Judge (2017), who describe motivation as a process involving the intensity, direction, and persistence of individual effort toward goal attainment. In this study, motivation was operationalized through physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Employee performance refers to the results achieved by individuals

in carrying out their authority and responsibilities while adhering to applicable norms, ethics, and regulations (Afandi, 2018).

The research design operationalized each construct through theoretically grounded indicators. Job placement was measured through five indicators: ability, skills, knowledge, experience, and interest. Rewards were measured through financial rewards, nonfinancial rewards, and intrinsic rewards. Work motivation consisted of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Village-official performance was measured through work achievement, expertise, behavior, and leadership. The leadership indicator does not refer to a formal structural position but to individual leadership behavior demonstrated through directing colleagues, making appropriate decisions, and providing positive examples in the workplace. The use of these indicators enabled each theoretical construct to be translated into measurable empirical statements.

The study population comprised all active village officials working in the 14 villages of Jiwan District, Madiun Regency. The total population consisted of 95 officials. Because the population was relatively small and all members could be reached, a census sampling technique was employed. Sugiyono (2017) explains that census sampling involves including all members of the population as research respondents. Consequently, all 95 village officials were included in the study. The use of the entire population was intended to provide a comprehensive representation of the conditions of village officials within the research area rather than relying on a subset of the population.

Data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire developed from the indicators of each research variable. The questionnaire contained 51 statements: 15 items measuring job placement, 9 items measuring rewards, 15 items measuring work motivation, and 12 items measuring employee performance. A five-point Likert scale was employed, ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. According to Sugiyono (2017), the Likert scale is appropriate for measuring respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions concerning social phenomena that have been operationalized as research variables.

Prior to the main analysis, the research instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing. Item validity was examined using the Pearson Product Moment correlation by correlating each item score with the total score of its respective variable at a significance level of 0.05. With 95 respondents, the degrees of freedom were 93, resulting in an r-table

value of 0.202. An item was considered valid when its significance value was below 0.05 or its calculated correlation coefficient exceeded the r-table value. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Sugiyono (2017) describes reliability as the extent to which an instrument produces consistent measurements. In this study, an Alpha coefficient greater than 0.60 was considered indicative of acceptable reliability. Arikunto (2013) emphasizes that instrument testing is necessary to establish the validity and accuracy of measurement tools and to minimize potential measurement bias.

Primary data were collected directly from the 95 respondents through questionnaire distribution. The use of primary data enabled the study to capture the perceptions and experiences of village officials concerning their placement, rewards, motivation, and performance. Sugiyono (2017) explains that primary data are obtained directly from the principal data source through data-collection procedures appropriate to the research objectives. In this study, the questionnaire was selected because it provides standardized responses that can be systematically processed and subjected to statistical analysis.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, descriptive analysis was employed to describe the distribution and general characteristics of respondents' responses for each research variable. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions, means, and modes to identify general response patterns. Second, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the effects of job placement, rewards, and work motivation on village-official performance. The regression model was specified as $Y = a + \beta1X1 + \beta2X2 + \beta3X3 + e$, where Y represents village-official performance; X1 represents job placement; X2 represents rewards; X3 represents work motivation; a denotes the constant; β represents the regression coefficient; and e represents the error term.

Before the regression analysis was conducted, the data were assessed through classical assumption tests consisting of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Following Ghozali (2018), multicollinearity was examined using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. A tolerance value above 0.10 and a VIF below 10 indicate the absence of problematic multicollinearity. Heteroscedasticity was examined using both a scatterplot and the Glejser test. The regression model was considered free from heteroscedasticity when the residual scatterplot showed no systematic pattern and the Glejser

significance value exceeded 0.05. Normality was assessed using a P-P Plot and histogram to determine whether the regression residuals approximately followed a normal distribution.

Hypothesis testing was subsequently conducted using the F-test and t-test. The F-test was used to determine whether job placement, rewards, and work motivation jointly affected village-official performance. With 95 observations and three independent variables, the degrees of freedom were df1 = 3 and df2 = 91 at a 0.05 significance level. The t-test was used to examine the partial effect of each independent variable on performance. In addition, standardized beta coefficients were examined to identify the independent variable with the strongest relative influence on performance. The variable with the highest statistically significant standardized beta coefficient was considered the most dominant predictor. All statistical data processing and hypothesis testing were conducted using SPSS.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the variables of job placement, rewards, work motivation, and performance of village officials in Jiwan District. The analysis was based on the mean scores obtained from 95 respondents. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Variable	Indicators	Number of Item	N	Mean	Category
Job Placement (X1)	Ability, skills, knowledge, experience, and interest	15	95	3.50	Good
Rewards (X2)	Financial, non-financial, and intrinsic rewards	9	95	3.92	Good
Work Motivation (X3)	Physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs	15	95	3.57	Good
Performance (Y)	Work achievement, expertise, behavior, and leadership	12	95	4.08	Very Good

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables shows that all research variables were categorized as good to very good. Job placement (X1) obtained a mean score of 3.50, indicating that the placement of village officials was generally appropriate in terms of their abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, and interests. Rewards (X2) obtained a mean score of

3.92, indicating that financial, non-financial, and intrinsic rewards were perceived positively. Work motivation (X3) obtained a mean score of 3.57, indicating that the respondents' physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs were relatively well fulfilled. Meanwhile, performance (Y) obtained the highest mean score of 4.08 and was categorized as very good, indicating that village officials demonstrated good performance in terms of work achievement, expertise, behavior, and leadership. Overall, the results indicate that job placement, rewards, and work motivation were in the good category, while performance was in the very good category.

Classical Assumption Tests

a. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test was conducted using the tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The regression model is considered free from multicollinearity if the tolerance value is greater than 0.10 and the VIF value is less than 10.

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Job Placement (X1)	0.991	1.009
Rewards (X2)	0.992	1.008
Work Motivation (X3)	0.999	1.001

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results shows that all independent variables have tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values less than 10. Therefore, the regression model is free from multicollinearity and is suitable for further analysis.

b. Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity was examined using a scatterplot and the Glejser test. A regression model is considered free from heteroscedasticity when the residuals are randomly distributed and do not form a specific pattern in the scatterplot.

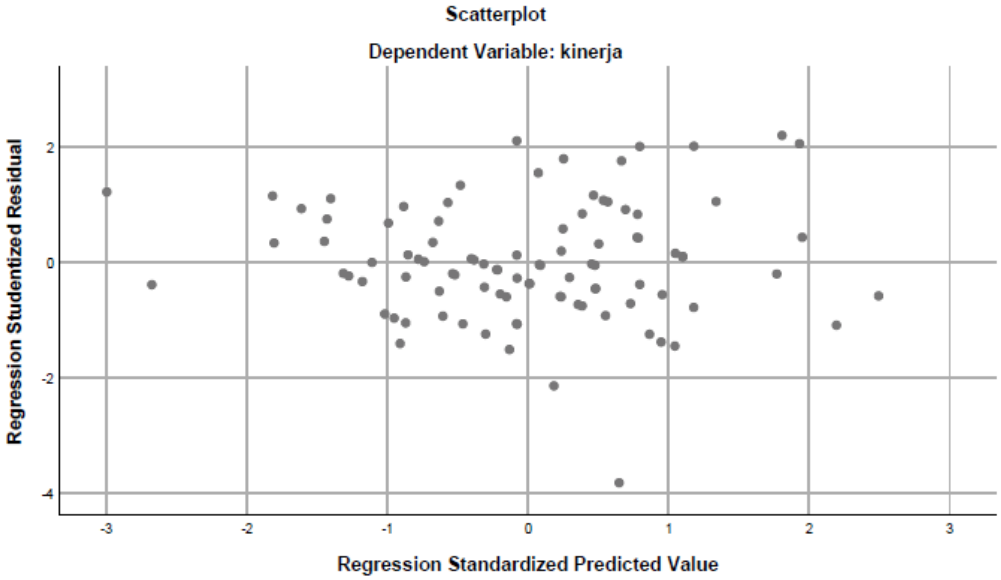


Figure 1. Scatterplot

Figure 1. Scatterplot shows that the residual points are randomly distributed around the zero line and do not form a specific pattern. This indicates that the regression model does not exhibit heteroscedasticity.

The Glejser test was subsequently conducted to provide a statistical confirmation of the heteroscedasticity test.

Table 3. Glejser Test Results

Independent Variable	Sig.
Job Placement (X1)	0.317
Rewards (X2)	0.438
Work Motivation (X3)	0.091

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 3. Glejser Test Results shows that the significance values of all independent variables are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity.

c. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the residuals of the regression model were normally distributed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used as the primary statistical test, with a significance level of 0.05. The residuals are considered normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05.

NPar Tests

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		95
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.50256652
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.085
	Positive	.085
	Negative	-.055
Test Statistic		.085
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.091[c]

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Figure 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Figure 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test shows that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.091, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the residuals are normally distributed. Thus, the normality assumption has been fulfilled and the regression model is suitable for further analysis using multiple linear regression.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Keterangan	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	t value	t table	Sig.
X_1	Job Placement	0,204	5,539	1,986	0,000
X_2	Rewards	0,589	6,884	1,986	0,000
X_3	Work Motivation	0,207	4,924	1,986	0,000
Constant		6,433			
R		0,519			
Adjusted R Square		0,503			
F-value (ANOVA)		32,699			
Sig. F		0,000			
N		95			

Dependent Variable = Performance (Y)

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results shows that job placement, rewards, and work motivation have positive and significant effects on village officials' performance, with significance values of 0.000. The regression model has an R value of 0.519

and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.503, indicating that the three independent variables explain 50.3% of the variation in performance.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 5. Partial Effect Test Results

No.	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)
1	X1 – Job Placement	Y – Village Officials' Performance	0.405
2	X2 – Rewards	Y – Village Officials' Performance	0.503
3	X3 – Work Motivation	Y – Village Officials' Performance	0.358

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 5. Partial Effect Test Results shows that job placement, rewards, and work motivation have positive and significant effects on village officials' performance. Rewards have the most dominant effect, with the highest beta coefficient of 0.503.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that job placement, rewards, and work motivation jointly exert a significant influence on the performance of village government officials in Jiwan District. This finding suggests that official performance cannot be adequately explained by a single organizational factor. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between the fit between individuals and their assigned positions, the recognition they receive for their contributions, and their internal willingness to perform their responsibilities. Although all three variables have significant effects, reward represents the most dominant determinant, with a beta coefficient of 0.503. This result indicates that recognition of employees' contributions occupies a particularly strategic position in sustaining performance, especially within village governments characterized by constrained human and financial resources.

Regarding job placement, the findings indicate that village officials generally perceive a reasonable alignment between their positions and their competencies, skills, knowledge, experience, and interests. Such alignment facilitates their understanding of responsibilities and supports the effective completion of administrative and public service tasks. This finding reinforces Dessler (2020) principle of the right man on the right place, which emphasizes that organizational effectiveness depends substantially on assigning individuals to positions that correspond to their capabilities. This principle is particularly relevant to village

government because officials simultaneously perform administrative functions and serve as frontline public service providers who interact directly with citizens.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal a substantial gap between perceived placement and the formal structural conditions of village administration. Of the 126 established village-official positions, 31 positions, equivalent to approximately 24.6%, remain vacant. Consequently, existing officials are required to perform additional responsibilities beyond their formal job descriptions. Interestingly, these additional responsibilities do not necessarily generate negative perceptions of job placement. Instead, officials tend to interpret task sharing as an expression of solidarity and collective responsibility. This finding indicates that the relationship between job placement and performance is shaped not only by formal job-position compatibility but also by employees' adaptive capacity and the social characteristics of the organizational environment. Thus, the present study extends the understanding of person-job fit by demonstrating that job compatibility within village government can develop through both formal institutional arrangements and informal mechanisms of collective adaptation.

An important area for improvement, however, concerns officials' knowledge of formal work procedures and regulations. The relatively high proportion of neutral responses regarding procedural knowledge and regulatory understanding indicates that some officials continue to rely heavily on practical experience and assistance from colleagues when performing their duties. While practical experience is valuable for addressing routine administrative demands, it cannot fully substitute for systematic knowledge of formal regulations. Accordingly, the positive effect of job placement on performance should be accompanied by continuous capacity development, particularly through technical training and structured guidance concerning official procedures and regulatory requirements.

The findings regarding job placement are consistent with Iwan et al. (2024), Rinata et al. (2025), and Trysantika et al. (2023), all of whom emphasize the importance of competency-job alignment for organizational effectiveness and employee performance. However, the present finding differs from Hermawan & Handayani (2025), who reported that job placement did not have a partial effect on employee performance. This discrepancy suggests that the magnitude of the placement-performance relationship may depend strongly on organizational context. In village government, where personnel are relatively limited while public service responsibilities remain extensive, inappropriate placement may have more

immediate consequences than in organizations characterized by greater flexibility in work allocation and task redistribution.

Reward emerges as the most prominent finding of this study. Its positive and significant effect indicates that village officials require more than financial compensation to perform effectively; they also need recognition of the contributions they make to the organization and community. Financial, nonfinancial, and intrinsic forms of reward collectively shape employees' perceptions of whether their organization values their presence and contributions. The beta coefficient of 0.503 consequently indicates that reward constitutes a particularly important managerial mechanism for strengthening village officials' performance.

This finding is particularly noteworthy because the real income of village officials declined by approximately 27% in 2026, while perceptions of financial rewards nevertheless remained relatively favorable. From a conventional economic perspective, declining income might be expected to reduce job satisfaction and work motivation. However, the findings suggest that employees evaluate rewards through a broader psychological and social framework. Adams (1965) Equity Theory provides a useful explanation, as individuals do not evaluate rewards solely according to their absolute amount but compare the relationship between their contributions and outcomes. In addition, nonfinancial rewards including appreciation, trust, recognition, and opportunities for development may generate psychological value that cannot be captured by monetary income alone.

The finding is consistent with Rahmah & Avriyanti (2024), Susiyami & Widarta (2025), and Ilham & Sumiaty (2025), who identified positive relationships between rewards and employee performance. Afrizal et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated that compensation and motivation influence the performance of village officials. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that the effectiveness of reward systems within village government should not be understood exclusively in material terms. Under conditions of fiscal constraint, nonfinancial recognition may function as a relatively low-cost but psychologically meaningful managerial instrument for maintaining employees' commitment and performance.

An important paradox emerges from the reward findings. Although the real income of village officials declined by approximately 27% in 2026, their perceptions of rewards remained relatively favorable. This condition suggests that reward is not interpreted solely

through financial compensation, but also through nonfinancial forms of appreciation, such as recognition, trust, acknowledgment, and appreciation from leaders and the community. In the context of village government, where social and familial relationships are relatively strong, such forms of recognition may provide meaningful psychological value and help sustain employee performance despite fiscal limitations. This paradox strengthens the argument that nonfinancial rewards can become an important managerial mechanism when financial incentives are constrained.

Work motivation also has a positive and significant effect on performance. Self-actualization represents the highest-rated motivational dimension, with a mean score of 3.62, while overall motivation reaches a mean of 3.57. These findings indicate that village officials are motivated not only by basic needs or material benefits but also by opportunities for personal development, meaningful contribution, and social recognition. The persistence of motivation is particularly significant because village officials operate under structural pressures, including vacant positions, increased workloads, declining income, and reduced flexibility for local innovation.

This result reinforces Herzberg (1959) Two-Factor Theory, particularly the role of motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth. Kudaibergenov et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated the importance of motivator factors in explaining employee performance relative to hygiene factors. In the present context, motivation appears to derive substantially from intrinsic and social sources rather than exclusively from economic incentives. This finding is consistent with Mamonto et al. (2024) and Murtadho & Sari (2025), who identified motivation as an important determinant of village-official performance. It is also consistent with the findings of Ilham & Sumiaty (2025) and Hermawan & Handayani (2025) concerning employees in broader organizational settings.

A second paradox emerges from the findings on work motivation. Despite increased workloads, declining income, and increasingly limited flexibility for local innovation, village officials' motivation remained relatively strong, with self-actualization emerging as the highest-rated motivational dimension. This finding indicates that village officials do not work solely for material rewards, but are also driven by a sense of responsibility, service to the community, personal development, and the meaning they attach to their work. Thus, motivation may remain resilient even when material and organizational conditions become

more constrained, particularly when employees perceive their work as providing opportunities for achievement and self-development.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the application of person-job fit, Adams' Equity Theory, and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory within the context of village government organizations experiencing structural constraints. The finding that reward is the strongest predictor suggests that employee performance cannot be sufficiently explained by competence and internal motivation alone; perceptions of organizational recognition and fairness are equally important. Two noteworthy patterns reinforce this argument: favorable perceptions of rewards persisted despite declining income, while motivation remained relatively strong despite increasing work pressures. These patterns demonstrate the relevance of nonmaterial factors in sustaining performance within public-sector organizations.

The practical implications are significant for village governments and subdistrict authorities. Job placement should be based on competencies, educational background, experience, and technical capabilities, while vacant positions should be filled through transparent and competency-based procedures. Reward systems should emphasize fairness and should incorporate not only financial compensation but also recognition, trust, professional development opportunities, and acknowledgment of achievements. Motivation can further be strengthened through supportive work environments, employee participation in decision-making, and opportunities for capacity development. Such strategies are particularly relevant under fiscal constraints because performance improvement cannot rely exclusively on additional monetary incentives.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. First, the measurement of the research variables relies primarily on respondents' perceptions, creating the possibility of response bias. Second, the study focuses on village officials in Jiwan District, meaning that the generalizability of the findings to village governments with different institutional, socioeconomic, or administrative characteristics should be approached cautiously. Third, financial rewards were assessed largely through subjective perceptions and therefore may not fully represent officials' objective income conditions. Future studies could combine perceptual measures with objective administrative data, including income records and personnel documentation, while qualitative interviews could provide deeper insight into how officials experience job placement, rewards, and motivation in their everyday work. Overall, the study demonstrates that improving village-official performance requires an integrated

human resource management approach: appropriate placement aligns individual capacity with organizational responsibilities, rewards strengthen perceptions of recognition and fairness, and motivation sustains consistent work behavior. In Jiwan District, the integration of these three dimensions represents an important foundation for developing professional village officials and improving the quality of public service delivery.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effects of job placement, rewards, and work motivation on the performance of village government officials in Jiwan District. The findings indicate that job placement, rewards, motivation, and overall performance were assessed at a good level, while the three independent variables jointly demonstrated a significant effect on village officials' performance. These findings confirm that performance in village government is shaped not only by individual capabilities, but also by the alignment between employees and their positions, the rewards they receive, and the internal motivation that sustains their work behavior. Individually, job placement, rewards, and motivation were found to have positive and significant effects on performance, with rewards emerging as the most dominant determinant.

The dominant role of rewards indicates that recognition of employees' contributions is a critical mechanism for sustaining and improving performance among village officials. Importantly, rewards should not be understood solely in financial terms. Non-financial forms of recognition, including appreciation, trust, acknowledgment of achievements, and opportunities for personal and professional development, also constitute meaningful organizational resources. This finding is particularly relevant in village governments facing fiscal constraints and limited human resources. Despite declining income and vacancies in several village government positions, officials' perceptions of rewards and their work motivation remained relatively favorable. This condition suggests that intrinsic and non-material factors can play a substantial role in maintaining performance when material resources are constrained.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on public-sector human resource management by demonstrating that effective management of village officials cannot rely exclusively on financial incentives. The importance of non-financial rewards, self-actualization, and appropriate job placement provides a broader understanding of how

performance can be sustained within village government organizations experiencing structural pressures. From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the need for an integrated human resource management approach based on competency-oriented placement, fair and transparent reward systems, and a work environment that supports motivation and self-development. Village and sub-district governments should also prioritize the filling of vacant positions and strengthen technical training, particularly regarding formal work procedures and regulatory requirements.

The findings imply that improving village officials' performance requires more than increasing financial compensation. It requires an organizational system that provides recognition, trust, opportunities for development, and a more proportional distribution of responsibilities. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and broader geographical coverage to strengthen the generalizability and temporal interpretation of the findings. Further studies are also encouraged to combine survey data with interviews or direct observation and to examine additional factors, such as leadership style, organizational culture, workload, competence, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Such approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of village government officials' performance and offer stronger evidence for developing effective human resource policies at the local government level.

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