

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF WORK MOTIVATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF PERSON-JOB FIT AT THE MALANG REGENCY EDUCATION OFFICE

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of person-job fit on employee performance with work motivation as a mediator in the Malang Regency Education Office. The research method is quantitative, involving 65 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed with SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The data analysis results indicate that person-job fit significantly influences work motivation, work motivation significantly impacts employee performance, but person-job fit itself does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance. The mediation analysis shows that work motivation plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between person-job fit and employee performance. Based on the findings, the implications of this study are that the management of the Malang Regency Education Office needs to pay attention not only to the aspect of placing employees according to their competencies, but also to strategies for increasing work motivation as a strengthening factor. Efforts such as giving awards, opportunities for self-development, continuous training, and creating a supportive work environment will strengthen the effect of person-job fit on performance through increased motivation.

**Keywords:** Work Motivation, Person-job fit, Employee Performance, Malang Regency Education Office

## INTRODUCTION

Improvements in government agency performance depend on human resource development, including recruitment, training, and employee management. Appropriate selection, which creates compatibility between individuals and the work environment, affects organisational performance (Rachman et al., 2024). Training and career development contribute significantly to productivity and commitment, which in turn improve agency performance (Khalil & Rindaningsih, 2023; Sutono & Hidayat, 2023; Trisna & Guridno, 2021). Employee performance, which reflects their achievements, is highly dependent on their skills, experience, and a supportive work environment (Harahap & Tirtayasa, 2020; Perkasa et al., 2023). Research shows that employee motivation and competence have a significant impact on performance, with employees who are supported by a positive work environment tending to perform better (Laksono, 2023; Perkasa et al., 2023; Maryati & Astuti, 2022). Therefore, analysing factors such as training, motivation, and cultural fit is important for effective HR development strategies (Laksono, 2023; Wijayanti & Sari, 2023; Sabuhari et al., 2020).

The performance of the Malang Regency Government based on data on work achievements in 2023 regarding The Education Index in 2023 saw an increase of 0.814, compared to 2022, which was 0.62, with a 2023 achievement of 0.63. This improvement is attributed to a rise in the expected years of schooling (HLS) for the population aged 7 years, which increased by 0.1 years from the previous year, from 13.38 years to 13.48 years, or 0.749. Meanwhile, the average years of schooling (RLS) for the population aged 25 and over increased by 0.07 years, from 7.68 years to 7.75 years, or 0.517 years in 2023. However, the 2023 achievement of 0.63 has not met the target of 0.68, due to several factors, including internal issues related to parents and school-age children, such as school dropouts and some children only completing education up to junior high school (SMP/MTS). Secondly, there is the issue of equitable access to education for all communities. Regarding education equity, the shortage of both the quantity and quality of teachers in rural areas who can educate the community and students on the importance of education remains a challenge, which contributes to the school dropout rate. The solution for implementing the priority strategy for improving the education index is through the allocation of local government spending in the education sector, which includes activities such as: 1) Equalizing the Quantity of Educators, 2) Scholarships for Low-Income Communities, and 3) Rehabilitation of Classrooms. With this implementation, the general policy for quality human resources will focus on addressing issues related to basic public services in Malang Regency, such as education, health, and the economy. The main focus is on education management programs and youth competitiveness capacity development programs, which are realized through improving the quality of education and character development

Based on the above phenomenon, the Malang Regency Education Office continues to strive to improve the quality and quantity of employee performance to realise good education and community welfare. Employee work motivation is the main focus, because work motivation refers to internal and external drives to achieve specific work goals (Aliazas et al., 2023). Employees with high motivation tend to work harder and focus on their tasks, which has the potential to improve their performance (Mosquera et al., 2020). Motivation also encourages greater commitment, produces higher output, and demonstrates stronger dedication to the organisation (Ahlenius & Kågström, 2023). According to (Hsu et al., 2024)

and Abdullah & Azzahra, (2021), motivated employees tend to be more satisfied, which has an impact on improving performance. Conversely, a lack of motivation can decrease performance. Therefore, the greater the work motivation, the better the performance that can be achieved (Nurdiansyah et al., 2020; Omar et al., 2021). Additionally, the person-job fit factor also plays an important role in work motivation and employee performance.

Person-job fit is one of the key factors that can influence employee performance. At the Malang Regency Education Office, the compatibility between employees' abilities, personal values, interests, and characteristics with job demands and organisational culture is very important to support the achievement of maximum public service in the field of education. This alignment is vital as it directly relates to the effectiveness of policy formulation, the implementation of educational programmes, and the quality of educational administrative services provided to the public (Nielsen et al., 2021; Riant & Krisnandi, 2023). In the context of the Malang Regency Education Office, compatibility can be achieved by assigning tasks that match employee competencies, emphasising public service values in the education sector, and adapting to the individual needs of employees (Jin & Hahm, 2019). With this compatibility, it is hoped that employees can work more optimally, contribute maximally, and support the improvement of education service quality in the regency.

Based on previous research, there are several gaps related to person-job fit, work motivation, and employee performance. (W. D. Wulandari, 2021) found that person-job fit has a positive effect on work motivation, but involves other factors such as person-organisation fit. Nugraha & Ramdansyah, (2022) highlighted the relationship between person-job fit and employee satisfaction without testing the direct effect on work motivation. This gap indicates the need for research that focuses on the direct influence of person-job fit on work motivation. Research by Chou et al., (2022) and Lee et al., (2022) shows the influence of person-job fit on employee performance with different mediators, such as job involvement, while Fatchurrozy & Frianto, (2025) and Nadiaswari & Adnyani, (2024) found that job satisfaction mediates this relationship. This study aims to fill the gap by examining the direct influence of person-job fit on performance without external mediators. Wilasari & Liana, (2025) and Wulandari, (2021) confirm the influence of work motivation on employee performance, but emphasise the role of job satisfaction as a mediator. Additionally, Wulandari, (2022) assessed work motivation as a mediator in the relationship between person-job fit and performance, while Riant & Krisnandi, (2023) viewed it as a moderator. This gap indicates the need for clearer research on the role of work motivation as a mediator in this relationship. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the direct relationship between person-job fit, work motivation, and employee performance. Based on this research gap, this study provides a new perspective (novelty) by examining the role of work motivation as a mediating variable between person-job fit (the compatibility between individuals and their jobs) and employee performance in the context of the Malang Regency Education Office.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Resource Based View (RBV)**

Attention to corporate resources, as articulated by Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, began with Penrose in 1959. Penrose's research focused on the impact of internal management processes on corporate growth, emphasising the strategic use of a combination

of corporate resources. In the context of employee performance, RBV theory provides the view that employees are one of the strategic resources that play an important role in achieving organisational goals. Employees with high competence, strong motivation, and a good fit between their abilities and their work can be valuable assets that support organisational excellence. Human resources with unique characteristics that are difficult for other organisations to replicate will become a competitive advantage that directly impacts individual and organisational performance. Thus, the application of RBV in employee management encourages organisations to view employees not only as a factor of production, but as a strategic resource that must be empowered, developed, and maintained in order to contribute optimally to improving performance.

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is a vital aspect in achieving organisational goals, which is generally defined as the results of an individual's work in accordance with their duties and responsibilities (Bahrumsyah, 2023). This reflects the individual's effectiveness in completing their work and the quality of the results achieved. Employee performance can be influenced by many factors, such as motivation, discipline at work, and a conducive working environment (Rohendi et al., 2023). Motivation, in particular, plays an important role because it can encourage employees to strive harder to achieve the goals set by the organisation (Ulyanah et al., 2021). According to Persada & Nabella, (2023), the indicators of employee performance are 1) The amount of work, 2) Quantity of work, 3) Timeliness, 4) Attendance, 5) Ability to cooperate.

### **Work Motivation**

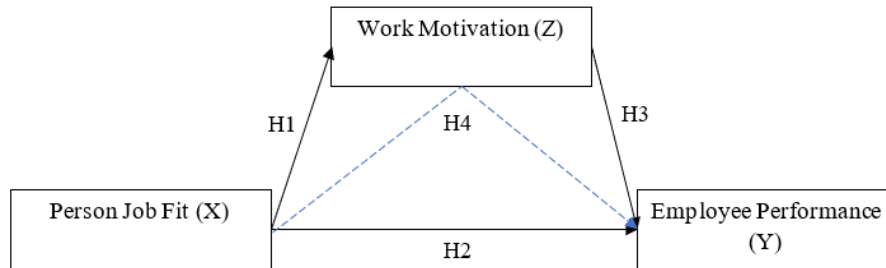
Work motivation is a factor that triggers enthusiasm or drive to work. According to Nurasniar, (2021), motivation is the main drive that motivates a person to act and do something according to their heart's desire. Motivation can be understood as a process that aims to influence individuals or groups being led so that tasks are carried out in accordance with predetermined objectives. Chien, (2020) define motivation as a detailed description of the intensity, direction, and effort of a person in achieving success. In addition, we can see the impact that shows differences in motivation levels between individuals. Motivation also influences the type, direction, intensity, and duration of work-related behaviour. This type of behaviour refers to the activities chosen by an employee when carrying out their work. The indicators of work motivation based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in Nurasniar, (2022) are: 1) Physical Needs, 2) Safety and Security Needs, 3) Social Needs, 4) Appreciation Needs, 5) Self-Actualisation Needs.

### **Person Job-Fit**

Person-job fit (P-J fit) is a crucial element in human resource management, emphasising the alignment between individuals and their jobs (Ybema et al., 2020). When employees have the skills and traits that match the job requirements, they tend to feel more satisfied and motivated, which leads to improved performance (Inoue et al., 2021). (Sameer & Priyadarshi, 2023; Wahyudi, 2024) show that this compatibility can prevent work stress, increase employee commitment to the organisation, and reduce the risk of burnout. Conversely, a mismatch between an individual's abilities and job demands can cause stress, decreased motivation, and even decreased performance (Ju et al., 2021). In addition, differences between abilities and job demands can also cause negative perceptions that lead

to the intention to leave the job (Kakar et al., 2023). Therefore, creating a good P-J fit is very important in strengthening the relationship between individuals and the work they do (Luksyte et al., 2022). According to Ananda et al., (2022), the indicators of person-job fit are: 1) Social Skills, 2) Knowledge, 3) Values, 4) Interest, 5) Skill, 6) Personal Needs, 7) Abilities, 8) Personal Traits.

**Hypotheses**



**Figure 2.**  
**Model Hypothesis**

- H1: Person-job fit has a positive effect on work motivation.**
- H2: Person-job fit has a positive effect on employee performance.**
- H3: Work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance.**
- H4: Work motivation mediates person-job fit on employee performance.**

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study utilised a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method. The research population consisted of all research subjects, namely all employees of the Malang Regency Education Office, who were used as data sources and samples. The population was based on the sampling method (Ghozali & Latan, 2017). The population and sample in this study consisted of 65 civil servants (PNS) working at the Malang Regency Education Office. Data was collected using a questionnaire distributed via Google Form. Quantitative data underwent validation testing, reliability testing, R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) testing, and hypothesis testing processed using SEM with Smart PLS software (Ghozali & Latan, 2017).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Respondent Description**

**Table 1.**  
**Respondent Description**

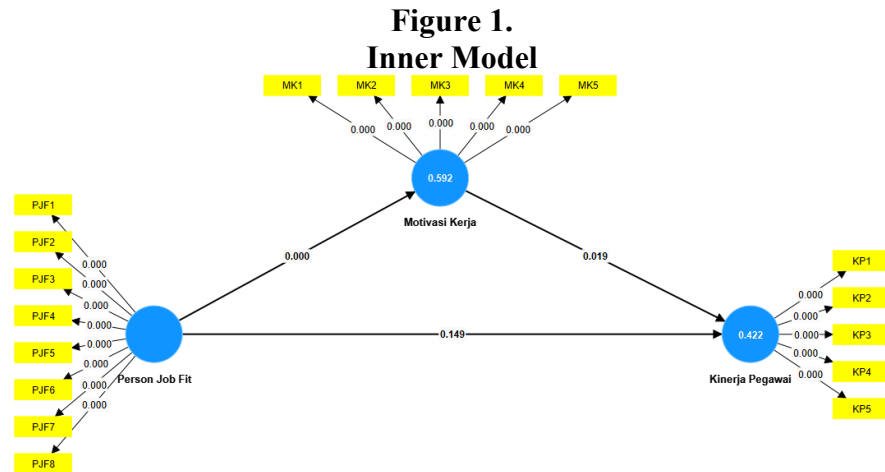
Category	Subcategory	Quantity	Percentage
Gender	Female	27	41.5%
	Male	38	58.5%
Age	< 25 Years	0	0%
	26 - 30 Years	9	14%
	31 - 35 Years	10	15%
	36 - 40 Years	17	26%

	> 41 Years	29	45%
<b>Education</b>	Diploma	11	16.9%
	Bachelor's (S1)	50	76.9%
	Master's (S2)	4	6.2%
	Doctorate (S3)	0	0%
<b>Years of Employment</b>	< 1 Year	1	1.5%
	2 - 5 Years	8	12.3%
	6 - 10 Years	13	20%
	> 10 Years	43	66.2%
<b>Total</b>		65	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Based on the available data, out of a total of 65 respondents, there were 27 women (41.5%) and 38 men (58.5%). In terms of age group, the majority of respondents were over 41 years old, with 29 people (45%), followed by 17 people (26%) aged 36-40, 10 people (15%) aged 31-35, 9 people (14%) aged 26-30, and no respondents under the age of 25. In terms of education, most respondents had a bachelor's degree, namely 50 people (76.9%), followed by 11 people (16.9%) with a diploma, and 4 people (6.2%) with a master's degree. None of the respondents had a doctoral degree. Regarding length of employment, the majority of respondents had been working for more than 10 years, numbering 43 people (66.2%), followed by those who had been working for 6-10 years, numbering 13 people (20%), 2-5 years, numbering 8 people (12.3%), and only 1 person (1.5%) who had been working for less than 1 year.

**Research Results**



Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

**Validity Test**

The outer loading values and average variance extracted (AVE) values are utilized to assess convergent validity. According to Ghazali & Latan, (2017), an indicator is considered valid if its outer loading value exceeds 0.7 and the AVE value is at least 0.5. The table below presents the outer loading and AVE values for this study.

**Table 2.**  
**Outer Loading**

	<b>Employee Performance</b>	<b>Work Motivation</b>	<b>Person-job fit</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>KP1</b>	0,860			Valid
<b>KP2</b>	0,790			Valid
<b>KP3</b>	0,778			Valid
<b>KP4</b>	0,803			Valid
<b>KP5</b>	0,755			Valid
<b>MK1</b>		0,774		Valid
<b>MK2</b>		0,792		Valid
<b>MK3</b>		0,778		Valid
<b>MK4</b>		0,799		Valid
<b>MK5</b>		0,757		Valid
<b>PJF1</b>			0,706	Valid
<b>PJF2</b>			0,733	Valid
<b>PJF3</b>			0,772	Valid
<b>PJF4</b>			0,710	Valid
<b>PJF5</b>			0,756	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

The table shows that all dimensions of the research variables have outer loading values greater than 0.7, indicating that convergent validity has been achieved and all indicators are valid.

**Reliability Test**

Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are used to assess the reliability of indicators in measuring latent variables. As stated by Ghazali & Latan, (2017), both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability should be equal to or greater than 0.7. The table below displays the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for this study.

**Table 3.**  
**Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha**

	<b>Composite reliability (<math>\rho_a</math>)</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
<b>Employee Performance</b>	0,862	0,857
<b>Work Motivation</b>	0,841	0,840
<b>Person-job fit</b>	0,893	0,886

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

From the table above, the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.7, indicating that all variables are highly reliable.

### R-Square Test

The following is the R-Square value in this study:

**Table 4.**  
**R-Square**

Variable	R-square
Employee Performance	0,422
Work Motivation	0,592

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Based on the data from Table 4, the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) for the work motivation variable is 0.592, showing that person-job fit influences or explains 59.2% of employee performance variables. The R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) value obtained for the employee performance variable is 0.422. This value indicates that 42.2% of the variation in the employee performance variable can be explained by person-job fit and work motivation.

### Hypothesis Test

**Table 5.**  
**Hyphotesis Value**

Relationships Between Variables	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Description
Person-job fit -> Work Motivation	18,054	0,000	Significant
Person-job fit -> Employee Performance	1,442	0,149	Not Significant
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	2,348	0,019	Significant
Person-job fit -> Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	2,242	0,025	Significant

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

#### **Person-job fit has a significant effect on work motivation.**

The hypothesis testing results show that person-job fit has a significant positive effect on work motivation, with a t-statistic of 18.054 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that a higher person-job fit leads to higher work motivation. The findings align with previous research by Mumcu, (2021) and Riant & Krisnandi, (2023), which confirm that a good person-job fit enhances motivation. In the context of the Malang Regency Education Office, employees with aligned competencies and job demands show higher motivation, suggesting that proper person-job fit improves both individual and organizational outcomes. Additionally, the study supports the Resource-Based View (RBV), which considers human resources as a strategic asset contributing to organizational performance. When employees' competencies match their job requirements, it not only boosts motivation but also strengthens the organization's competitive position. Therefore, the findings emphasize the importance of maintaining a high person-job fit to sustain and increase employee motivation, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance.

#### **Person-job fit does not have a significant effect on employee performance.**

The hypothesis testing results show that person-job fit Has no significant impact on employee performance, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 1.442 and a p-value of 0.149. This suggests that person-job fit does not have a notable effect on employee performance, and

therefore, hypothesis two (H2) is rejected. Despite the high level of person-job fit, it does not directly lead to improved employee performance. The results indicate that the alignment of employee skills and characteristics with job demands is not necessarily the main factor determining performance levels. Descriptive analysis shows that while person-job fit is high, some employees still feel that their knowledge does not fully align with job demands, and the lowest performance indicator is meeting quality work standards, indicating that knowledge and competence alignment alone do not necessarily improve work quality.

Theoretically, person-job fit is expected to influence performance by matching individual abilities, values, and interests with job demands, promoting productivity and work quality (Nielsen et al., 2021; Riant & Krisnandi, 2023). However, this study suggests that the effect may not always be direct, as other variables may act as mediators, affecting the relationship between person-job fit and performance. This is corroborated by earlier research, including studies such as those by Nugraha & Wardhani, (2022) and Nugraha & Ramdanyah, (2022), which found no significant effect of person-job fit on performance. The Person-Environment Fit theory suggests that individuals who fit well with their jobs should perform better (Juari & Sulastri, 2023; Liao, 2021), but in this case, organizational characteristics, such as strict regulations and structured work systems in the public sector, may be more influential than person-job fit alone. Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV), human resources must be optimally configured and managed to improve performance (Barney, 1991), which suggests that person-job fit alone is insufficient without supporting factors such as motivation, rewards systems, and effective leadership. Therefore, management at the Malang Regency Education Office should focus on strengthening other factors, such as quality-based performance evaluations, training, and motivation, to fully translate person-job fit into optimal performance.

### **Work motivation has a significant effect on employee performance**

The hypothesis testing results show that Work motivation has a significant impact on employee performance, with a t-statistic of 2.348 and a p-value of 0.019. This suggests a substantial positive correlation between work motivation and employee performance, thus supporting hypothesis three (H3). The positive path coefficient suggests that higher work motivation leads to better employee performance. The findings confirm that both internal and external motivators are key factors in enhancing work quality, quantity, and discipline. Descriptive analysis shows that work motivation has a very high average score, with the highest indicator being the opportunity for employees to develop their potential, signaling that employees view their jobs as offering room for professional growth. In contrast, the lowest performance indicator is related to meeting work quality standards, suggesting that while high motivation contributes to discipline and responsibility, it does not directly guarantee higher work quality.

Theoretically, work motivation is the internal and external drive that pushes employees to achieve specific work goals (Aliazas et al., 2023). Highly motivated employees tend to be more focused, work harder, and demonstrate greater commitment (Ahlenius & Kågström, 2023; Mosquera et al., 2020). Studies by Abdullah & Azzahra, (2021) and Hsu et al., (2024) also confirm that high motivation leads to increased job satisfaction, which in turn impacts performance. This research aligns with expert views that higher work motivation correlates with higher employee performance (Nurdiansyah et al., 2020; Omar et al., 2021). From the Resource-Based View (RBV), work motivation is seen as a strategic intangible

capability that, when managed well, provides competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Motivated employees are valuable resources that contribute uniquely to organizational performance, especially in public service. In the context of the Malang Regency Education Office, this finding is particularly relevant as high motivation drives employees to deliver optimal service and meet deadlines, thereby improving overall performance. The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of the Education Office's management to maintain and enhance employee motivation through performance-based rewards, career development opportunities, ongoing training, and a supportive work environment, which will ultimately enhance employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

### **Work motivation mediates person-job fit on employee performance**

The hypothesis testing results show that work motivation mediates the effect of person-job fit on employee performance, with a t-statistic of 2.242 and a p-value of 0.025. This indicates a significant mediation effect, and thus, hypothesis four (H4) is accepted. The results suggest that while person-job fit does not directly affect performance, the alignment between the individual and their job still impacts performance through increased work motivation. This highlights the importance of work motivation as a key mechanism bridging the relationship between job fit and employee performance. Descriptive analysis shows that person-job fit has a very high average score, with the highest indicator reflecting that the job provides significant benefits to employees' lives. On the work motivation side, the highest indicator shows that the job offers opportunities for personal development. Regarding employee performance, the highest indicator is time discipline, while the lowest is meeting quality work standards, suggesting that job fit boosts motivation, which in turn reflects in positive work behaviors such as discipline and responsibility, ultimately enhancing performance.

Theoretically, person-job fit (P-J fit) pertains to the match between an individual's abilities, skills, and values with the requirements of the job (Riant & Krisnandi, 2023). Employees who experience this alignment tend to have higher motivation and greater dedication to achieving organizational goals (Kaur & Kaur, 2023). Studies by Bao et al., (2022) and Wang et al., (2025) also show that higher P-J fit positively relates to work motivation, which then improves performance. Thus, work motivation plays an intervening role, explaining how job fit can translate into better work outcomes (Berisha & Lajçi, 2020; Krishnan et al., 2023; Lee & Kim, 2020). From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), human resources are a strategic asset that provides competitive advantage when effectively managed (Barney, 1991). Person-job fit reflects proper placement and utilization of human resources, while work motivation is an internal capability that enhances the value of these resources. RBV emphasizes that valuable resources must be properly configured to produce superior performance. In this case, the alignment between employees and their jobs enhances motivation, thereby driving sustainable organizational performance. For the Malang Regency Education Office, this finding indicates that while job fit does not directly enhance performance, it improves motivation, leading to better performance. Employees who find their jobs aligned with their abilities and meaningful in their lives tend to be more disciplined, responsible, and result-oriented. This is crucial for improving the quality of education services. The implication of these results is that the management of the Malang Regency Education Office should focus not only on appropriate employee placement but also

on strengthening work motivation. Strategies such as performance-based rewards, personal development opportunities, ongoing training, and creating a supportive work environment will strengthen the effect of person-job fit on performance through increased motivation. With an integrated approach that aligns job fit and enhances motivation, the organization can achieve optimal and sustainable employee performance.

## CONCLUSION

This study discovered that person-job fit has a positive and significant impact on work motivation, indicating that as the alignment between the individual and their job improves, work motivation increases. However, person-job fit does not have a direct significant effect on employee performance. Although there is a strong alignment between employees and their jobs, it was not sufficient to directly affect performance. In contrast, work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, suggesting that increased motivation leads to improved job performance. Furthermore, work motivation serves as an important mediator in the relationship between person-job fit and employee performance. The study indicates that while person-job fit alone does not directly impact performance, it enhances work motivation, which in turn improves performance. These findings suggest several important implications for organizations. To improve employee performance, it is crucial for the Malang Regency Education Office to focus on enhancing person-job fit by conducting a more thorough assessment of employees' skills, interests, and values to ensure job alignment. Furthermore, increasing work motivation is essential. The Education Office should implement programs that recognize achievements, provide opportunities for personal development, and foster a supportive work environment. Regular training, mentoring, and opportunities for skill development will help boost motivation and, consequently, improve performance. Finally, as motivation mediates the impact of person-job fit on performance, it is important to regularly assess and support employee motivation to ensure optimal performance outcomes. By focusing on these strategies, the organization can create a more conducive work environment that supports employees in achieving their best performance.

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