

The Influence of Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance with Work Discipline as an Intervening Variable among Civil Servants at Ministry X

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance, with work discipline serving as an intervening variable among civil servants at Ministry X. Using a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 91 ASN employees from a technical unit under the Directorate General at Ministry X. The research instrument was based on validated indicators from previous literature and used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method via SmartPLS 4.0 software. The analysis consisted of two stages: evaluating the measurement model (outer model) to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability; and evaluating the structural model (inner model) through path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. The results indicate that work motivation and job satisfaction positively and significantly affect work discipline. Furthermore, both work motivation and work discipline significantly influence employee performance, while job satisfaction does not have a significant direct effect. However, job satisfaction indirectly influences employee performance through work discipline. These findings highlight the critical role of discipline as a mediating factor and reinforce the importance of enhancing employee motivation to improve overall performance within the civil service sector.

Keywords: work motivation, job satisfaction, work discipline, employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the ongoing wave of bureaucratic reform and increasing public demand for improved public services, the performance of civil servants (ASN) has emerged as a critical determinant of institutional effectiveness. Bureaucratic reform is no longer limited to administrative restructuring; it requires a deeper transformation in work culture and mindset from merely executing tasks to acting as agents of change who deliver tangible and meaningful results for society. A recent study by (Nasution et al., 2024) emphasizes that the success of bureaucratic reform largely hinges on the quality of human resources, especially in terms of professionalism, integrity, and discipline. Civil servants today are expected to go beyond administrative duties and contribute actively to the strategic objectives of their organizations. In this context, one Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) under a Directorate General of a national ministry (hereafter anonymized to preserve institutional integrity) plays a crucial operational role in translating policy into practice. However, challenges such as high absenteeism, fluctuating motivation, and weak adherence to standard operating procedures have raised concerns about human resource management effectiveness in this unit.

Tabel 1.1 Summary of Employee Absenteeism, January – December 2024

Type of Absence	Number of Cases	Average Cases per Employee	Remarks
Unexplained Absences	485	5,33%	Highest, indicates weak supervision
Sick	309	3,40%	Fluctuating but relatively high
Official Leave	389	4,27%	High but administratively recorded
Total	1.183	One employee absent 13 times/year on average	

Source: Human Resource Information System, 2024

Based on attendance records from January to December 2024, 91 employees accumulated 1,183 absence cases, with unexplained absences being the highest (485 cases), followed by official leave (389 cases), and sick leave (309 cases). This pattern suggests deeper issues of supervision, motivation, and work discipline. Uncontrolled absenteeism in public service institutions not only hampers productivity but also undermines service delivery and organizational performance. From a managerial standpoint, such trends signal dysfunctions in planning, implementation, and oversight of human resources. High absenteeism often correlates with low motivation and job dissatisfaction two psychological dimensions that significantly shape employee behavior and output. Robbins and Judge describe motivation as an internal force driving individuals to achieve specific goals, while job satisfaction is a personal evaluation of one’s work conditions (Robbins, S. P., & Judge, 2023). When both are lacking, employee engagement and discipline tend to decline, affecting the institution's ability to achieve its mission. This study aims to analyze the influence of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance, with work discipline positioned as a mediating variable. Work discipline in this research is not viewed merely as compliance with rules, but as an embodiment of professional values and organizational commitment. Prior studies (Mangkunegara, 2017; Susanty & Miradipta, 2013) support the notion that discipline can act as a behavioral bridge between internal motivations and actual performance. To strengthen this analysis, the researcher conducted a preliminary survey involving 32 employees within the UPT.

Tabel 2. Summary of Employee Responses to Key Performance Factors (N = 32)

No	Variable	Number of Respondents
1	Work Motivation	21
2	Work Environment	6
3	Work Discipline	28
4	Emotional Intelligence	10
5	Compensation	4
6	Job Satisfaction	18
7	Work Stress	7
8	Leadership Style	13
9	Organizational Commitment	6
10	Self-Efficacy	5

Source: Preliminary survey by the researcher, 2024

Results showed that work discipline was identified by (28) respondents as the most influential factor affecting performance, followed by work motivation (21) and job satisfaction (18). Employees reported that poor discipline stemmed from weak supervision and inconsistent rule enforcement.

Low motivation was linked to a lack of incentives and recognition, while dissatisfaction stemmed from limited career development and compensation issues. These findings indicate that improving employee performance in public institutions demands more than technical fixes it requires attention to human-centered factors. Motivation, satisfaction, and discipline are interrelated elements that must be addressed systematically to enhance organizational capacity and performance outcomes. By constructing an empirical model through quantitative methods and path analysis, this research contributes to understanding the psychological and behavioral determinants of performance in public sector work units facing operational challenges.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Drawing from the theoretical framework and a comprehensive review of previous empirical studies, the relationships among work motivation, job satisfaction, work discipline, and employee performance are recognized as complex, multifaceted, and interdependent. Based on these studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Work motivation is a key driver in enhancing employee performance. According to studies by (Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Rustandi et al., 2024; G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024), employees with high motivation are more likely to demonstrate improved productivity, stronger goal orientation, and greater drive to achieve organizational objectives. This is supported by additional evidence from (Anggraini, 2024; Purwanto et al., 2024; Rachman & Saluy, 2024), indicating that motivation directly influences performance by encouraging higher effort and focus.

H2: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on work discipline.

Motivated employees are generally more disciplined in their work, adhering to rules and showing commitment to their tasks. Research by (Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Hastuti, 2023; Y. Wahyudi et al., 2024), supports this, showing that work motivation fosters greater punctuality, consistency, and responsibility in carrying out job duties. Similar findings by (Rachman & Saluy, 2024; G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024), reinforce the idea that increased motivation encourages behaviors aligned with organizational standards.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Job satisfaction has long been associated with improved employee performance. Studies such as those by (Astuti et al., 2020; Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Y. Wahyudi et al., 2024), indicate that satisfied employees due to supportive work environments, fair rewards, and positive interpersonal relationships tend to be more productive and committed. This positive emotional state promotes better engagement and output, as also shown by (G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024).

H4: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on work discipline.

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to exhibit better work discipline. Research by (Fauziah, 2024; Hastuti, 2023; G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024), highlights that satisfaction improves adherence to organizational norms and policies.

(Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Y. Wahyudi et al., 2024), also show that when employees feel valued and content, they are more punctual, diligent, and rule-abiding in their behavior.

H5: Work motivation positively and significantly affects employee performance, mediated by work discipline.

Discipline acts as a vital mediator between work motivation and performance. This is evidenced by studies such as (Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Hastuti, 2023; Rachman & Saluy, 2024), which found that motivated employees who maintain strong discipline can convert internal drive into consistent performance. The mediating role of discipline in translating motivation into results is further supported by (Rustandi et al., 2024; G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024).

H6: Job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance, mediated by work discipline.

Work discipline serves as a significant intermediary between job satisfaction and performance outcomes. Studies by (Fauziah, 2024; Hastuti, 2023; G. Wahyudi & Suryani, 2024), demonstrate that job satisfaction fosters greater discipline, which in turn leads to better performance. (Budiarkah, Widodo Sunaryo, 2023; Rachman & Saluy, 2024), further confirm that employees who are both satisfied and disciplined contribute more effectively to achieving organizational goals.

H7: Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Work discipline plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance. Multiple studies, including those by (Efendi, 2021; Rachman & Saluy, 2024; Y. Wahyudi et al., 2024), show that employees who maintain high discipline are more efficient, productive, and aligned with performance expectations. Additional support from (Fauziah, 2024; Purwanto et al., 2024; Rustandi et al., 2024), illustrates how punctuality, adherence to procedures, and consistency contribute significantly to improved outcomes.

Based on the hypotheses outlined above, the researcher has developed the research model presented in Figure 1.

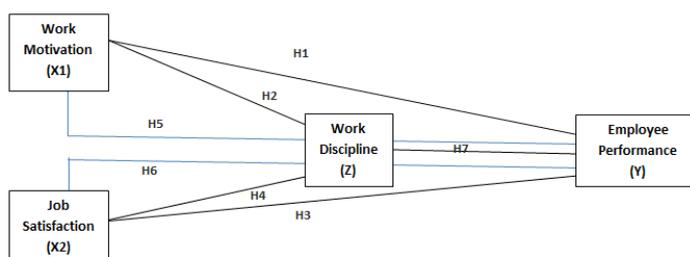


Figure 1. Research Model

This model integrates the key variables work motivation, job satisfaction, work discipline, and employee performance and illustrates their proposed relationships. The model serves as a conceptual framework for understanding the interconnections between these variables and provides a basis for testing the hypotheses in the context of the current study.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative method with an associative approach, aiming to examine the influence of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance, with work discipline serving as an intervening variable. The study is categorized as explanatory research, which seeks to explain causal relationships among variables through hypothesis testing. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to 91 civil servants (ASN) working at one of the Technical Implementation Units (UPT) under a Directorate General within Ministry X. The research instrument was developed using a likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), based on indicators drawn from prior studies. The total number of items was adjusted to meet the minimum recommended sample size, which is at least five times the number of indicators, in accordance with SEM sampling theory. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The model testing was conducted in two stages: the first was the assessment of the measurement model (outer model), which evaluated convergent validity, discriminant validity (through AVE, cross-loadings, and the Fornell–Larcker criterion), and reliability (using Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability). The second stage was the structural model (inner model) evaluation, which included assessing the coefficient of determination (R²), multicollinearity (VIF), and testing the significance of relationships through t-statistics and path coefficients. Hypotheses were accepted if the t-statistic value exceeded 1.96 and the path coefficient was greater than 0.1 (Ghozali, Iman, 2020).

Tabel 3. Respondent Demographic Data

Demographic			
Category	Sub Category	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender	1. Male	64	70,3%
	2. Female	27	29,7%
	TOTAL	91	100%
2. Age	1. 21-25 years	23	25,3%
	2. 26-30 years	25	27,5%
	3. 31-35 years	24	26,4%
	4. >36 years	19	20,8%
	TOTAL	91	100%
3. Education	1. High School	19	20,9%
	2. Diploma (D1/DII/DIII)	32	35,2%
	3. Bachelor (DIV/S1)	37	40,7%
	4. Master’s (S2)	3	3,3%
	TOTAL	91	100%
4. Years of Service	1. 1-5 years	42	46,2%
	2. 5-10 years	24	26,4%
	3. 10-15 years	19	20,9%
	4. 15-20 years	1	1,1%
	5. >20 years	5	5,4 %
	TOTAL	91	100%

DISCUSSION

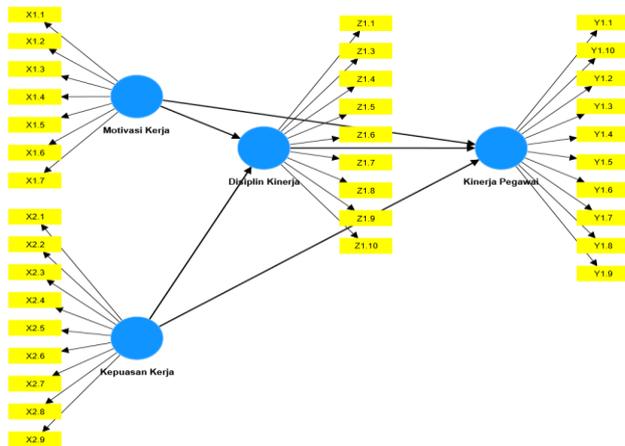


Figure 2. Stuctural Model

Convergent validity refers to the principle that indicators (manifest variables) of a construct should correlate strongly with one another. This validity is assessed based on the loading factor and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to the commonly used rule of thumb, convergent validity is achieved when the loading factor exceeds 0.7 and the AVE is greater than 0.5 (Ghozali, 2014). The results of the loading factor evaluation are presented

Tabel 4. Loading Factors of the Research Model

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Loading Factor</i>
Work Motivation	X1.1	0.810
	X1.2	0.821
	X1.3	0.709
	X1.4	0.767
	X1.5	0.809
	X1.6	0.747
	X1.7	0.772
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Loading Factor</i>
Job Satisfaction	X2.1	0.775
	X2.2	0.839
	X2.3	0.732
	X2.4	0.791
	X2.5	0.887
	X2.6	0.869
	X2.7	0.849

	X2.8	0.774
	X2.9	0.785
	X2.10	0.698
Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor
Employee Performance	Y.1	0.840
	Y.2	0.871
	Y.3	0.872
	Y.4	0.829
	Y.5	0.853
	Y.6	0.786
	Y.7	0.774
	Y.8	0.834
	Y.9	0.737
	Y.10	0.734
Work Discipline	Z.1	0.732
	Z.2	0.611
	Z.3	0.866
	Z.4	0.813
	Z.5	0.750
	Z.6	0.724
	Z.7	0.853
	Z.8	0.791
	Z.9	0.866
	Z.10	0.834

Based on Table 4, indicators X2.10 (Job Satisfaction) and Z.2 (Work Discipline) were found to be invalid due to their loading factors falling below 0.7. Additionally, a review of the AVE values revealed that some constructs did not meet the threshold of 0.5. To address this, a number of indicators were removed to ensure that both AVE values and the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity met the required standards. The revised AVE values for each latent variable are shown in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Work Discipline	0.650
Job Satisfaction	0.667
Employee Performance	0.664
Work Motivation	0.604

As seen in Table 5, all latent variables meet the AVE threshold of 0.5. The lowest AVE was observed for Work Motivation (0.604), while the highest was for Job Satisfaction (0.667).

Reliability Evaluation

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. According to (GHOZALI, 2012), a latent variable is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability above 0.7. The results are shown in Table 6.

Tabel 6. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Work Discipline	0.932	0.936
Job Satisfaction	0.937	0.941
Employee Performance	0.943	0.945
Work Motivation	0.890	0.891

All variables demonstrated high reliability, with the lowest reliability shown by Work Motivation (Cronbach's alpha = 0.890; CR = 0.891), and the highest by Employee Performance (Cronbach's alpha = 0.943; CR = 0.945). After evaluating the measurement model, the structural model was assessed to determine whether the proposed hypotheses were supported. A hypothesis is considered accepted if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the path coefficient is above 0.1 (Ghozali, Iman, 2020). The hypotheses tested are grouped into direct and indirect effects, as presented in Tables 7 and 8.

Direct Effect Hypotheses Testing

Tabel 7. Direct Effect Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.426	3.966	0.000	(+)
H2	Work Motivation → Work Discipline	0.474	3.701	0.000	(+)
H3	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	-0.008	0.070	0.472	(-)
H4	Job Satisfaction → Work Discipline	0.407	3.277	0.001	(+)
H7	Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.524	6.020	0.000	(+)

H1: Work Motivation also significantly affects Employee Performance (path coefficient = 0.426; $t = 3.966$; $p = 0.000$), indicating a 42.6% positive contribution.

H2: Work Motivation significantly affects Work Discipline (path coefficient = 0.474; $t = 3.701$; $p = 0.000$), supporting the hypothesis.

H3: Job Satisfaction does not have a significant effect on Employee Performance (path coefficient = -0.008; $t = 0.070$; $p = 0.472$), thus the hypothesis is rejected.

H4: Job Satisfaction positively and significantly affects Work Discipline (path coefficient = 0.407; $t = 3.277$; $p = 0.001$), supporting the hypothesis.

H7: Work Discipline has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance (path coefficient = 0.524; $t = 6.020$; $p < 0.000$). This supports the hypothesis that improved discipline enhances performance by 52.4%.

Indirect Effect Hypotheses Testing

Tabel 8. Indirect Effect Hypotheses Testing

Hypot hesis	Path	Path Coefficient	<i>t-statistics</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Conclu sion
H5	Work Motivation → Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.248	2.931	0.002	(+)
H6	Job Satisfaction → Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.213	3.007	0.001	(+)

H5: Work Motivation also shows a significant positive indirect effect on Employee Performance through Work Discipline (path coefficient = 0.248; $t = 2.931$; $p = 0.002$), confirming the mediating role of discipline.

H6: Job Satisfaction has a significant positive indirect effect on Employee Performance through Work Discipline (path coefficient = 0.213; $t = 3.007$; $p = 0.001$). This suggests discipline partially mediates this relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of work motivation, job satisfaction, and work discipline on employee performance within a public-sector organizational setting. The results provide robust empirical evidence that both work motivation and work discipline have direct and significant positive effects on employee performance. Moreover, job satisfaction significantly influences work discipline, which in turn serves as a mediating variable that channels the effect of job satisfaction and work motivation on employee performance. While job satisfaction does not exhibit a direct significant relationship with performance, its indirect effect through work discipline underscores the importance of fostering a disciplined work culture as a conduit for translating employee satisfaction into tangible performance outcomes. The findings also highlight that motivation is both a direct driver of performance and an indirect one via discipline, emphasizing its dual role. Overall, the results of this research suggest that improving employee performance in the public sector requires a comprehensive approach one that enhances motivational factors and job satisfaction while simultaneously reinforcing work discipline. These insights can

inform human resource policies aiming to strengthen organizational performance through well-structured behavioral and attitudinal development programs.

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