

## The Effect of Work Competence and Work Discipline on Employee Performance with Work Motivation as a Mediating Variable

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### ABSTRACT

The Effect of Work Competency and Work Discipline on Employee Performance with Work Motivation as a Mediation Variable (Study on PDAM Tirta Jati, Cirebon Regency). This study aims to: (1) find out the influence of work competence on employee performance at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (2) find out the influence of work discipline on employee performance at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (3) find out the influence of work competence on work motivation at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (4) find out the influence of work discipline on work motivation at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (5) to find out the influence of work motivation on employee performance at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (6) to find out the influence of work competence on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency, (7) to know the influence of work discipline on employee performance with work motivation as a mediating variable at PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency. Data analysis was carried out through descriptive analysis and *Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS). The results of the study showed: (1) work competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, (2) work discipline is not significant on employee performance, (3) work competence has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation, (4) work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation, (5) work motivation is not significant on employee performance, (6) work motivation does not mediate the influence of work competence on employee performance. employee performance, (7) work motivation does not mediate the influence of work discipline on employee performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are one of the important elements in the success of organizations, including in public service organizations such as the Regional Drinking Water Company (PDAM). The success of an organization is determined not only by the availability of work facilities, systems, and procedures, but also by the quality of the employees who carry out the work. Employees are parties who play a direct role in carrying out tasks, maintaining smooth service, and ensuring that organizational goals can be achieved. Therefore, human resource management needs attention because the quality of human resources will affect the overall performance of the organization (Amelia et al., 2022; Sugijono, 2015; Utari & Zusmawati, 2024).

In the context of BUMD Water Drinking, the role of human resources is increasingly important because this organization is directly related to the fulfillment of basic needs of the community, namely clean water services. Based on the National Report on the Performance Assessment of Drinking Water BUMDs for the 2023 Fiscal Year/2024 Assessment, of the 394 Drinking Water BUMDs that can be assessed, as many as 258 BUMDs or 65.48% are in the healthy category, while the rest are still in the unhealthy and sick category. In addition, *the national Non-Revenue Water (NRW)* water leakage rate still reaches 33.51%. In the performance assessment system of BUMD Water Drinking, the human resource aspect is also one of the assessment components with a weight of 15%. This condition shows that the success of the Drinking Water BUMD is not only determined by financial, service, and operational aspects, but also by the quality of human resources as the main implementers of services to the community.

This condition is relevant to see the management of human resources at PDAM at the regional level. PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency is a Regionally Owned Enterprise that is responsible for managing and providing clean water services for the people of Cirebon Regency. As a public service organization, PDAM Tirta Jati is not only required to meet administrative targets, but must also be able to provide fast, precise, and sustainable services to customers. These demands make employee performance an important aspect that needs to be considered.

Employee performance is the quality and quantity of work achieved by employees in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities given (Hermina & Yosepha, 2019). Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) also explain that employee performance is an overall individual achievement in a certain period when carrying out tasks. Thus, employee performance becomes an overview of the extent to which employees are able to complete work, meet organizational standards, and contribute to the company's services. Good employee performance will support organizational productivity, maintain service continuity, and help companies respond to increasingly complex societal needs.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory**

This study uses the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory as the grand theory, which explains that the performance of individuals and organizations will be more optimal when employees have adequate abilities, motivation, and opportunities or support to apply their abilities and motivations in work (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Jiang et al., 2012). Blumberg and Pringle (1982) also explain that performance is the result of an individual's capacity, willingness to work, and opportunities available in an organization.

In this study, work competencies are positioned as part of ability because they include knowledge, skills, communication skills, cooperative skills, adaptability, and work ethics. Work motivation is positioned as part of motivation because it describes internal and external motivations that make employees willing to put in the effort, persevere in the face of obstacles, and oriented towards achieving organizational goals. Meanwhile, the element of opportunity is not tested as a separate variable, but is understood as the context of the PDAM organization which includes work procedures, inter-sectional coordination, support of work facilities, service systems, and opportunities for employees to apply their competencies and motivation in carrying out their duties.

The AMO theory is relevant in this study because the performance of PDAM employees is not only determined by technical ability, but also by work motivation and working conditions that enable employees to carry out their duties effectively. Competent but unmotivated employees do not necessarily produce optimal performance. Conversely, employees who are motivated but lack competence or lack of opportunities to apply their abilities may also experience obstacles in producing good performance. Thus, AMO theory provides a comprehensive conceptual framework to explain the relationship between work competencies, work motivation, and employee performance.

### **Self-Regulation Theory**

To strengthen the explanation of work discipline, this study uses Self-Regulation Theory as a supporting theory. The use of supporting theories is necessary because AMO theory provides a general framework regarding performance formation, while Self-Regulation Theory provides a more specific explanation of how individuals control their work behavior to conform to organizational standards. Thus, these two theories complement each other in explaining the research model.

Self-Regulation Theory explains that individuals have the ability to regulate, direct, and control their behavior based on certain goals or standards (Bandura, 1991). In the context of work, self-regulation is related to the ability of employees to monitor work behavior, compare this behavior with applicable standards, and make adjustments if there are deviations from work rules or objectives. Lord et al. (2010) explain that self-regulation in an organization is a process of self-control that helps individuals reduce the gap between actual behavior and expected standards.

Based on this understanding, Self-Regulation Theory is relevant to explain work discipline. Work discipline is not only related to compliance with

formal rules, but also with the ability of employees to control themselves to continue working according to working hours, SOPs, instructions, and organizational responsibilities. Employees who have high work discipline are able to regulate their behavior so that they do not deviate from work standards. Therefore, work discipline can be understood as a form of self-regulation in the organizational environment.

The use of Self-Regulation Theory also helps to distinguish work discipline from work motivation and employee performance. Work motivation describes the drive that makes employees willing to work and put in the effort. Work discipline describes the ability of employees to control behavior in order to remain in accordance with work rules and standards. Meanwhile, employee performance describes work behaviors that contribute to organizational goals. This separation of concepts is important so that each variable in the study has a clear conceptual boundary and does not cause overlapping meanings.

## METHODOLOGY

Data analysis techniques are a method or a way to process data into information in such a way that the characteristics of the data become easy to understand and also useful for finding solutions to problems, especially problems in research. In this study, the data analysis technique used used the Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) structural equation modeling. SEM-PLS is a statistical technique used to test relationships between latent variables in complex structural models. There are two main evaluations in the SEM-PLS data analysis technique, namely the outer model and the inner model.

### Measurement Model (Outer Model)

In the SEM-PLS outer model is an important step to evaluate the quality of the indicators used to measure latent variables that aim to measure validity (accuracy) and reliability (reliability). Latent variables are variables that are measured using indicators that are influenced by the latent variable. The outer model test includes several steps to ensure that the indicators used can measure latent variables properly. The outer model analysis was carried out through convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha.

- 1) Convergent Validity The convergent validity test is a concept in measurement used to measure the correlation between indicators and latent variables that are assessed based on the value of outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where an indicator is declared valid if it has an outer loading value of  $\geq 0.7$  and the construct is declared to meet convergent validity if the AVE value is  $\geq 0.5$ . This criterion refers to the guidelines put forward by Hair et al. (2021), which states that the value indicates that the indicator is able to adequately and consistently represent latent constructs.
- 2) Discriminant Validity The discriminating validity test is a measure that shows the extent to which different constructs in a measurement model can be distinguished from each other, namely the extent to which the supposed different constructs do not overlap each other or have a high

correlation. There are 3 approaches to determine discriminant validity, namely by looking at the value of:

- a) Fornell and Larcker Criterion, where according to the criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981), a construct is declared to meet discriminant validity if the square root of the AVE value of the construct meets the construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs.
  - b) Cross Loading. Hair et al. (2021), stated that each of the indicators must show a greater outer loading value in the construct where the indicator should be located, compared to the loading in the other construct. In other words, the loading on the parent construct must be higher than the loading on the different construct.
  - c) Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Henseler et al. (2015), stated in HTM testing the recommended value threshold  $<0.90$ . If the HTMT value exceeds this limit, the discriminatory validity can be considered unfulfilled.
- 3) Composite Reliability Composite Reliability is a test used to test the level of reliability of an indicator in a variable. When the composite reliability value of a variable is more than 0.7, the variable is considered to meet the composite reliability criteria. When the results show a composite reliability value of more than 0.7, the construct of each variable in the study has indicators that provide a very consistent measurement of the latent variable and have met the requirements of composite reliability.
  - 4) Cronbach's Alpha Cronbach's Alpha is a test used for tests that strengthen reliability tests. A variable is declared to meet the criteria if the value of Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.7. When Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.7, it is concluded that each construct confirms that each research variable used has adequate and decent consistency.

#### **Structural Model Test (Inner Model)**

Structural model tests are tests that are carried out after the outer measurements of the model have been evaluated and accepted. The structural model test stage is to assess the structural model, namely the relationship between latent variables in the model. Some of the steps taken at this stage are:

- 1) Coefficient of Determination Test (R-square ( $R^2$ )) The first step in the assessment of the model with PLS is to measure the R-square for each dependent latent variable. This measurement illustrates how much influence independent variables have on dependent variables. R-square is used to measure the total contribution of independent variables to dependent variables simultaneously. The R-square value of 0.75 indicates a strong model, 0.50 indicates a model with moderate influence, and 0.25 indicates a weak model (Hair et al., 2021).
- 2) The Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ ) test is used to measure how well the model is producing observation values and parameter estimates. According to Hair et al. (2017), the  $Q^2$  value helps assess the level of prediction accuracy in the path model on PLS. The  $Q^2$  value indicates how much predictive relevance a model is, with the criteria of  $> 0$  considered small,  $> 0.25$

considered moderate, and  $> 0.50$  indicating a large predictive relevance. Thus,  $Q^2$  becomes an important indicator to ensure that the model is not only statistically accurate, but also predictively relevant.

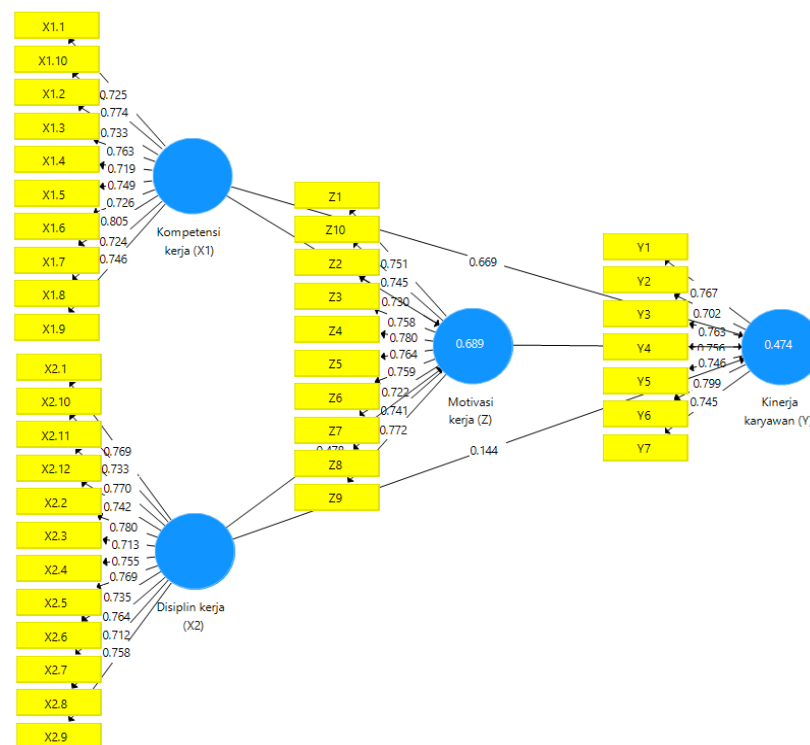
- 3) P-Value P-Value is a test that functions to see or assess the significance of path relationships in structural models obtained through bootstrapping. In the inner model, the relationship is considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 with a significance level of 5%.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### A. Outer Model

An outer model *technique* is a technique that aims to measure the validity and reliability of a model. Validity test is a test used to measure the validity or not of a questionnaire and is used to find out whether the questionnaire can measure the ability of each question item to identify research variables. Reliability test is a test used to measure the extent to which results and measurements are reliable. In the *Smart PLS 3.0 outer model* used, it was analyzed using four criteria, namely: *convergent validity*, *discriminant validity*, *composite reliability*, and *average variance extracted*.

Image 1. Key Research Data Algorithms



Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

### A. Convergent validity

When *convergent validity* is used to determine the extent of the indicator of the latent variable it represents. Convergent *validity testing* is seen by paying attention to the *loading factor* on each construct indicator. If the *loading factor value* exceeds 0.7, the indicator is declared valid. This result is in accordance with the criteria of Hair et al., (2021) which states that the indicator is considered to have

*adequate convergent validity* if the *outer loading* value is in the range of  $\geq 0.7$ . The results of *the convergent validity* test can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. *Outer Loading* Key Research Data

| Variable                 | Indicator | Factor Loading | Remarks |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| Work Competencies (X1)   | X1.1      | 0,725          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.10     | 0,774          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.2      | 0,733          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.3      | 0,763          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.4      | 0,719          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.5      | 0,749          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.6      | 0,726          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.7      | 0,805          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.8      | 0,724          | Valid   |
|                          | X1.9      | 0,746          | Valid   |
| Work Discipline (X2)     | X2.1      | 0,769          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.10     | 0,733          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.11     | 0,770          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.12     | 0,742          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.2      | 0,780          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.3      | 0,713          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.4      | 0,755          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.5      | 0,769          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.6      | 0,735          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.7      | 0,764          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.8      | 0,712          | Valid   |
|                          | X2.9      | 0,758          | Valid   |
| Employee Performance (Y) | Y1        | 0,767          | Valid   |
|                          | Y2        | 0,702          | Valid   |
|                          | Y3        | 0,763          | Valid   |
|                          | Y4        | 0,756          | Valid   |
|                          | Y5        | 0,746          | Valid   |
|                          | Y6        | 0,799          | Valid   |
|                          | Y7        | 0,745          | Valid   |
| Work Motivation (Z)      | Z1        | 0,751          | Valid   |
|                          | Z10       | 0,745          | Valid   |
|                          | Z2        | 0,730          | Valid   |
|                          | Z3        | 0,758          | Valid   |
|                          | Z4        | 0,780          | Valid   |
|                          | Z5        | 0,764          | Valid   |
|                          | Z6        | 0,759          | Valid   |
|                          | Z7        | 0,722          | Valid   |
|                          | Z8        | 0,741          | Valid   |
|                          | Z9        | 0,772          | Valid   |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on the results of the convergent validity test, all indicators in the four research variables have an *outer loading value* above 0.7, so that they can be declared valid according to the criteria of Hair et al.,

(2021) which states that the indicator is considered to have adequate convergent validity if the *outer loading* value is in the range of  $\geq 0.7$  or more.

B. *Discriminant validity*

The discriminatory validity test aims to ensure that each variable in this study is completely different from each other and does not overlap with each other. This test is done to ensure that each indicator used to measure a variable only represents that variable, not another variable. The validity of the discriminant was tested using three methods, namely *the Fornell-Larcker Criterion*, *Cross Loading*, and *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT). These three methods are used to strengthen the accuracy of the measurement model (*outer model*).

Table 2. *Fornell-Larcker Criterion* Main Research

| Variable                 | Work Discipline (X2) | Employee performance (Y) | Work competencies (X1) | Work motivation (Z) |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Work Discipline (X2)     | 0,750                |                          |                        |                     |
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,459                | 0,755                    |                        |                     |
| Work competencies (X1)   | 0,577                | 0,682                    | 0,747                  |                     |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,741                | 0,501                    | 0,732                  | 0,752               |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on the *Fornell-Larcker Criterion* test in the table above, it is known that the square root value of AVE of each variable is greater than the correlation value with the other variable. This shows that each variable has a better ability to explain its own indicators compared to indicators from other variables. In particular, the variable Work discipline (X2) had a  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  value of 0.750, which is higher than its correlation with employee performance (0.459), work competence (0.577), and work motivation (0.741). Similarly, the variables Employee performance, Work competence, and Work motivation each showed a greater  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  value than the cross-construct correlation. This shows that all variables in the study have met the discriminating criteria based on *the Fornell-Larcker Criterion* (1981).

Table 3. *Cross Loading* Main Research

| Indicator | Work Discipline (X2) | Employee performance (Y) | Work competencies (X1) | Work motivation (Z) |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| X1.1      | 0,473                | 0,537                    | <b>0,725</b>           | 0,552               |
| X1.10     | 0,424                | 0,533                    | <b>0,774</b>           | 0,529               |
| X1.2      | 0,468                | 0,509                    | <b>0,733</b>           | 0,553               |
| X1.3      | 0,405                | 0,504                    | <b>0,763</b>           | 0,574               |
| X1.4      | 0,389                | 0,489                    | <b>0,719</b>           | 0,498               |
| X1.5      | 0,394                | 0,489                    | <b>0,749</b>           | 0,559               |

| Indicator | Work Discipline (X2) | Employee performance (Y) | Work competencies (X1) | Work motivation (Z) |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| X1.6      | 0,477                | 0,464                    | <b>0,726</b>           | 0,615               |
| X1.7      | 0,434                | 0,469                    | <b>0,805</b>           | 0,583               |
| X1.8      | 0,410                | 0,513                    | <b>0,724</b>           | 0,505               |
| X1.9      | 0,426                | 0,582                    | <b>0,746</b>           | 0,492               |
| X2.1      | <b>0,769</b>         | 0,321                    | 0,366                  | 0,514               |
| X2.10     | <b>0,733</b>         | 0,466                    | 0,543                  | 0,581               |
| X2.11     | <b>0,770</b>         | 0,369                    | 0,463                  | 0,589               |
| X2.12     | <b>0,742</b>         | 0,434                    | 0,610                  | 0,617               |
| X2.2      | <b>0,780</b>         | 0,365                    | 0,409                  | 0,542               |
| X2.3      | <b>0,713</b>         | 0,252                    | 0,371                  | 0,510               |
| X2.4      | <b>0,755</b>         | 0,252                    | 0,370                  | 0,462               |
| X2.5      | <b>0,769</b>         | 0,232                    | 0,360                  | 0,440               |
| X2.6      | <b>0,735</b>         | 0,344                    | 0,430                  | 0,608               |
| X2.7      | <b>0,764</b>         | 0,358                    | 0,481                  | 0,646               |
| X2.8      | <b>0,712</b>         | 0,226                    | 0,323                  | 0,462               |
| X2.9      | <b>0,758</b>         | 0,390                    | 0,358                  | 0,595               |
| Y1        | 0,279                | <b>0,767</b>             | 0,489                  | 0,370               |
| Y2        | 0,274                | <b>0,702</b>             | 0,493                  | 0,370               |
| Y3        | 0,453                | <b>0,763</b>             | 0,491                  | 0,379               |
| Y4        | 0,328                | <b>0,756</b>             | 0,511                  | 0,410               |
| Y5        | 0,356                | <b>0,746</b>             | 0,498                  | 0,317               |
| Y6        | 0,421                | <b>0,799</b>             | 0,613                  | 0,464               |
| Y7        | 0,289                | <b>0,745</b>             | 0,488                  | 0,318               |
| Z1        | 0,561                | 0,302                    | 0,474                  | <b>0,751</b>        |
| Z10       | 0,519                | 0,379                    | 0,595                  | <b>0,745</b>        |
| Z2        | 0,526                | 0,452                    | 0,510                  | <b>0,730</b>        |
| Z3        | 0,615                | 0,460                    | 0,546                  | <b>0,758</b>        |
| Z4        | 0,571                | 0,244                    | 0,506                  | <b>0,780</b>        |
| Z5        | 0,618                | 0,375                    | 0,528                  | <b>0,764</b>        |
| Z6        | 0,513                | 0,325                    | 0,537                  | <b>0,759</b>        |
| Z7        | 0,440                | 0,429                    | 0,611                  | <b>0,722</b>        |
| Z8        | 0,526                | 0,318                    | 0,561                  | <b>0,741</b>        |
| Z9        | 0,661                | 0,437                    | 0,620                  | <b>0,772</b>        |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on table above, it can be seen that each indicator has the highest loading value in the construct it measures compared to other constructs. Therefore, this proves that the indicators used are able to clearly distinguish between different constructs or the discriminant validity is met. Thus, the results of this *cross loading* prove that each indicator is able to represent the construct it measures compared to other constructs, so that the validity of the discriminant is fulfilled and the model can be continued at the next stage of analysis.

Table 4. *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)* Main Research

| Variable                 | Work Discipline (X2) | Employee performance (Y) | Work competencies (X1) | Work motivation (Z) |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Work Discipline (X2)     |                      |                          |                        |                     |
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,489                |                          |                        |                     |
| Work competencies (X1)   | 0,612                | 0,760                    |                        |                     |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,768                | 0,550                    | 0,798                  |                     |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

The *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) test on table above, aims to assess the extent to which a latent construct is completely different from other latent constructs. All HTMT values between variables are below the limit of 0.90. The HTMT value between work discipline and employee performance is 0.489, with work competence is 0.612, and with work motivation is 0.768. Furthermore, the HTMT value between employee performance and work competence is 0.760, with work motivation is 0.550, and the HTMT value between work competence and work motivation is 0.798.

All HTMT values are below the threshold value of 0.90 as recommended by Hair et al. (2021), so it can be concluded that all constructs in this study have met the criteria for discriminant validity. This shows that each latent variable has an adequate degree of difference and is able to measure conceptually different constructs.

C. *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

*Average Variance Extracted* or AVE is defined as the average square root of the loading value of the indicator associated with a construct. The AVE value must be  $> 0.5$ , so that the value can be declared to meet the criteria. The AVE value of each indicator can be seen in the table below.

Table 5. *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* Main Research

| Variable                 | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | Criteria | Remarks |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Work Discipline (X2)     | 0,563                            | $> 0.5$  | Valid   |
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,569                            | $> 0.5$  | Valid   |
| Work competencies (X1)   | 0,558                            | $> 0.5$  | Valid   |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,566                            | $> 0.5$  | Valid   |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on table above, it can be seen that each construct used in the study has met the valid criteria because each construct has an AVE value of more than 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that the AVE value obtained by each construct proves that the entire construct has

a good ability to explain the variance of the indicators and is considered valid so that the research model can be used for the next stage of analysis.

D. *Composite Reliability*

*Composite Reliability* is used to test the level of reliability of an indicator in a variable. When the *composite reliability* value of a variable is more than 0.7, the variable is considered to meet the *composite reliability* criteria. The *composite reliability* value for each variable in this study can be seen in the table below.

Table 6. *Composite Reliability* Main Research

| Variable                 | <i>Composite Reliability</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Work Discipline (X2)     | 0,939                        |
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,902                        |
| Work competencies (X1)   | 0,927                        |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,929                        |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on table above, it can be seen that all constructs have a *composite reliability* value greater than 0.7. The work discipline variable (X2) has a *composite reliability* value of 0.939, the employee performance variable (Y) has a *composite reliability* value of 0.902, the work competency variable (X1) has a *composite reliability* value of 0.927, and the work motivation variable (Z) has a *composite reliability* value of 0.929.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the construct of each variable in the study has indicators that provide very consistent measurements of the latent variable and have met the requirements of composite reliability and can be continued in the next analysis.

E. *Cronbach's Alpha*

Cronbach's *alpha value* can be used as a test that strengthens the reliability test. A variable is declared to meet the criteria if the value of *Cronbach's alpha* is more than 0.7. The *Cronbach's alpha* value of each variable in this study can be seen in the table below.

Table 7. *Cronbach's Alpha* Main Research

| Variable                 | <i>Cronbach's Alpha</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Work Discipline (X2)     | 0,930                   |
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,874                   |
| Work competencies (X1)   | 0,912                   |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,915                   |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on table 26 above, it can be seen that *Cronbach's alpha* value of each variable is more than 0.7. *Cronbach's alpha* value of work discipline variable (X2) is 0.930, *Cronbach's alpha* value of employee performance variable (Y) is 0.874, *Cronbach's alpha* value of work competence (X1) is 0.912, and *Cronbach's alpha* value of work motivation variable (Z) is 0.915. So it can be concluded that each construct confirms that each research variable used has adequate consistency and is suitable for further analysis.

### B. Inner Model

The results of the inner model analysis aim to test a relationship between latent constructs.

#### 1. Result of Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The results of the  $R^2$  test in this study can be seen in the table below.

Table 8. Determination Coefficient Results ( $R^2$ )

| Variable                 | R Square | Criteria |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,474    | Weak     |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,689    | Medium   |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on the results of the table above, it can be seen that the employee performance construct (Y) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.474 which is categorized as a weak criterion. Construct Work motivation (Z) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.689 which is categorized as a medium criterion. The categorization is in accordance with the opinion of Hair et al. (2021), namely the  $R^2$  value of 0.75 including the strong criteria, the  $R^2$  value of 0.50 including the medium criterion, and the  $R^2$  value of 0.25 including the weak criteria.

The employee performance construct (Y) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.474, which means that 47.4% of employee performance variability can be explained by work competence, work discipline, and work motivation, while the remaining 52.6% is explained by other factors outside the research model. This value is relatively weak.

The work motivation construct (Z) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.689, which means that 68.9% of the work motivation variables can be explained by work competence and work discipline, while the remaining 31.1% are explained by other factors in the research model. This value is moderate. Thus, the  $R^2$  value indicates the clear power of the model in the weak/medium category according to the criteria used.

#### 2. Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ ) Results

In addition to R-Square ( $R^2$ ), the evaluation of the inner model was also carried out using the Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ) value obtained through the *blindfolding procedure*. The  $Q^2$  value is used to assess the predictive ability of the model, which is the extent to which the model is able to predict observational data. The model is said to have predictive relevance if the value of  $Q^2$  is greater than zero. The results of the  $Q^2$  test in this study can be seen in the table below.

Table 9. Results Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )

| Variable                 | Q Square | Criteria |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Employee performance (Y) | 0,243    | Weak     |
| Work motivation (Z)      | 0,373    | Medium   |

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2026

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the employee performance construct (Y) has a  $Q^2$  value of 0.243 which is categorized as a weak criterion. Construct Work motivation (Z) has a  $Q^2$  value of

0.373 which is categorized as a medium criterion. The categorization is in accordance with the opinion of Hair et al., (2021), namely that the  $Q^2$  value of  $>0$  is considered weak,  $>0.25$  is considered moderate, and  $>0.50$  is considered strong.

The Employee Performance Variable (Y) has a  $Q^2$  value of 0.243 which is categorized as a weak criterion. This shows that the predictive variables in the research model have a weak ability to predict employee performance. Therefore, the built model can predict these variables with a weak accuracy rate. The Work Motivation variable (Z) has a  $Q^2$  value of 0.373 which is categorized as a medium criterion. This shows that the predictive variables in the research model have a moderate ability to predict work motivation. Therefore, the built model can predict these variables with a moderate degree of accuracy. Thus, because all  $Q$  square values have met the minimum requirements, it is feasible to use for hypothesis testing.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the analysis carried out, seven conclusions were obtained, namely:

1. Work competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This means that the better the work competencies that an employee has, the better the employee performance will be.
2. Work discipline is not significant to employee performance. This means that work discipline has not been proven to be a direct factor that is strong enough to improve employee performance in real terms.
3. Work competence has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation. This means that the more employees who have better competencies, the more likely they are to have a higher work drive.
4. Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation. This means that regularity of work behavior, compliance with rules, and employee self-control are related to increased work motivation.
5. Work motivation is not significant to employee performance. This means that the work motivation in this study has not been able to make a real contribution to improving employee performance.
6. Work motivation does not mediate the influence of work competence on employee performance. This means that work competence is stronger explaining employee performance through direct influence.
7. Work motivation does not mediate the influence of work discipline on employee performance. This means that work discipline has not been proven to improve employee performance through work motivation as a mediating variable.

## SUGGESTIONS

### Further Research Suggestions

- A. Further research is expected to add other variables that have the potential to affect employee performance such as leadership, work

environment, compensation, job satisfaction, organizational culture, or workload.

- B. The next research is expected to further research the most suitable form of work motivation for employees of PDAM Tirta Jati Cirebon Regency. This is because the results of the study show that work motivation is not significant to employee performance, both direct and indirect influences. It is hoped that by conducting research on work motivation at PDAM Tirta Jati, Cirebon Regency, it can be found out what motivational factors are really able to encourage a significant improvement in employee performance.
- C. Further research if you use instruments that have been tested and have been used in previous research, there is no need to conduct a *pilot study*. Validity testing with PLS should be carried out using the entire research data so that the results of the analysis are more representative.

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