



Enhancing teacher performance through competence and work discipline: The mediating role of work motivation

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to analyze the influence of teacher competence and work discipline on teacher performance through work motivation as an intervening variable at SMK Muhatammadiyah Kutowinangun. This research is a descriptive quantitative design, using 46 teachers as respondents by distributing questionnaires. This model used path analysis and data management tools, such as SPSS for Windows 25. The results of the study showed that competence and work discipline had a positive effect on work motivation. Competence, discipline, and work motivation had a positive impact on teacher performance. Work motivation mediates the influence of competence and work discipline on teacher performance. This finding provides an important contribution to the development of motivation theory, as well as being a practical reference for organizations in forming teacher discipline and competence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun is a national standard vocational secondary education institution in Kebumen Regency. Currently, the school opens 5 expertise competencies, with a vision and mission, the school has a direction to form a generation that excels in academics and has character, is committed to providing quality education for students, and strives to keep up with technological developments. Teachers of SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun have demonstrated a strong commitment to raising educational standards through the use of project-based learning.

According to (Santoso et al., 2021) the accomplishment of teacher tasks within a specific time frame in accordance with the job's competency standards and requirements is known as teacher performance.. This can be seen from applying innovative and relevant learning methods in the world of work. The performance assessment of SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun teachers shows an increase in all aspects of the assessment during the last three academic years, namely in the 2021/2022 academic year with 87.78%, the 2022/2023 academic year with 88.73% and the 2023/2024 academic year with 89.94%. Teacher performance assessments in the last three years have shown good values, but have not shown significant improvement. This shows that further efforts are needed so that teacher performance can continue to be improved.

A teacher can carry out his duties and obligations optimally, one of which is influenced by work motivation (Ananda & Eriza, 2023). Motivation comes from the basic word "motive," which means the drive or reason that drives someone to take an action. Work motivation as an

intervening variable is based on the two-factor theory which divides motivational factors into two main categories (Abdulhamidova, 2021). Motivator factors are recognition, rewards, responsibility, and achievement. Hygiene factors are salary, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and organizational policies, which focus on reducing dissatisfaction and creating a stable work environment. If there is no work motivation, teacher performance is difficult to achieve because teachers have different levels of work motivation, schools need to understand the factors that drive increased motivation. Hartini, Rahmawati, and Asmin (2021) demonstrate that teacher performance is significantly impacted by work motivation. According (Wahyudi et al., 2023) laboration supports performance. Motivation provides encouragement and ef-forts to do work to contribute to new work experiences and individual perfor-mance towards organizational performance.However, Markonah and Sunarto (2022) claime that teacher performance is not always positively and significantly impacted by work motivation.

Other factors, such as work discipline, are believed to affect teacher effectiveness in addition to work motivation and competency. Workplace discipline plays a crucial part in empowering educators to exercise self-control while performing their jobs (Ehule et al., 2025). This research is based on the theory of organizational dicsipline which emphasizes organizational rules and norms to achieve work effectiveness (Dinillah & Setiani, 2024). Teachers who understand and accept school rules tend to have a higher level of work dicscipline, they can create a structured and productive learning environment. High discipline can foster professional performance because teachers can pay attention to the rules and strategic steps in their duties.

Work discipline refers to behavior, attitudes, and habits in carrying out responsibilities and tasks. The level of discipline shown by each teacher certainly varies, although all applicable regulations are applied to all teachers. (Novita et al., 2023) claimed that teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by work discipline. Other studies related to work discipline and teacher performance show different results, such as study by(Tarigan et al., 2023) there is a phenomenon regarding work discipline that is visible, namely teacher regularity and consistent application of rules, but teacher attendance levels show fluctuations every month. Effective content preparation, student interaction, and evaluation implementation are all positively impacted by teaching staff members who exhibit high work discipline. A high degree of responsibility is reflected in discipline (Aryadiningrat et al., 2023).

Using motivation as an intervening variable, this study examines the effects of teacher competence and discipline on teacher performance. We hyphothesize: Hypothesis 1: Workmotivation is positively impacted by teacher competency. Hypothesis 2: Work motivation is positively impacted by teachers' work discipline. Hypothesis 3: The work performance of teachers is positively impacted by their competency. Hypothesis 4: Work performance is positively impacted by work discipline. Hypothesis 5: Teacher work performance is positively impacted by work motivation. Hypothesis 6: The relationship between teacher competency and performance is mediated by work motivation. Hypothesis 7: The relationship between work discipline and teacher performance is mediated by work motivation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

46 regular instructors at Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun Vocational School made up the study's population, which was descriptive and quantitative. Saturated samples, a non-probability sampling approach, were employed for the sampling. The data collection techniques are questionnaires, measured with a Likert scale from 1=very disagree, to 4=very agree. The data processing tool is SPSS for Windows 25. Teachers' performance measurements according (Uno & Lametenggo, 2012) are work quality, initiative in work, workability, and communication. According to (Fajri & Konadi, 2022) Teacher competence measurements are skills, knowledge, and behavior, internalized, mastered, and realized by teachers when carrying out their professional duties. Indicators for measuring teacher competence from Law No. 14 of 2005 are pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence. (Mahfud, 2020) defines work discipline as the attitude and actions of teachers when obeying guidelines and regulations to achieve organizational goals. Indicators for measuring work discipline are buying

time rules, obeying company regulations, obeying rules of conduct at work, and obeying other regulations in the organization Sutrisno (2016).

According (Arlita et al., 2020) work motivation is something that exists within a person that directs behavior, and provides high work enthusiasm to meet certain goals that have been set effectively and efficiently. Indicators for measuring work motivation (Furnham et al., 2021) are the responsibility in doing work, self-development, achievements achieved, and independence. The results of statistical tests with SPSS 25 show that all statement items are valid, $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ and significance < 0.05 so that all items are declared valid, and reliable. A questionnaire is considered valid if the statement items compiled are able to accurately represent what is to be measured through the questionnaire. All variables have Cronbach's Alpha > 0.60 , so all variables in the questionnaire are declared reliable.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of SPSS 25 shows that all indicators of competence, discipline, motivation, and performance are valid and reliable. Table 1 below shows the reliability:

Table 1. Reliability test

No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Competence (X1)	0.738
2.	Discipline (X2)	0.721
3.	Motivation (Y1)	0.784
4.	Performance (Y2)	0.755

Table 1 indicates that every variable in this study has a Cronbach's Alpha value more than 0.60 (Raharjanti et al., 2022). This indicates that every measuring device for every variable has a high degree of dependability and can produce consistent findings for every test on various objects, proving that all of the variables utilized in this study are dependable.

Table 2. T-test structural 1

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.681	3.508		0.479	0.634
	Competence	0.512	0.147	0.432	3.485	0.001
	Discipline	0.513	0.147	0.431	3.479	0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Motivation

Based on table 2 above, shows that the $t\text{-count}$ value is $3.485 > t\text{-table } 2.015$. Seen from the significance of $0.001 < 0.05$. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of permanent teachers at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun (H1 accepted). Teachers who have high competence are more confident when teaching and more innovative in developing learning strategies, so increasing competence will have a direct impact on increasing teacher work motivation of SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun. This result is in line with (Anisatuzzuhriah et al., 2023) state that teacher competence has a positive and significant influence on work motivation.

Table 2 shows that the t count value is $3.479 > t$ table 2.015. Seen from the significance of $0.001 < 0.05$. Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun (H2 accepted). Teachers with a high level of work discipline are more organized and responsible in completing their work. Increasing work discipline has a direct effect on increasing work motivation in permanent teachers at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by (Dwipayana & Farida Ferine, 2023) states that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on work motivation.

Table 3. T test substructural II

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.359	2.955		0.798	0.429
	Competence	0.370	0.140	0.328	2.643	0.012
	Discipline	0.297	0.140	0.262	2.116	0.040
	Motivation	0.333	0.128	0.351	2.601	0.013

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Table 3 indicates that the value of t_{count} is $2.643 > t_{table}$ 2.017. observed from the $0.012 < 0.05$ significant level. At SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun, teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by teacher competence (H3 accepted). Competent teachers tend to be more effective in carrying out learning tasks, class management, and interactions with students and colleagues. This is the same as (Mukhtar & MD, 2020) and (Septin et al., 2024) assert that teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by teacher competency.

The study's findings indicate that work motivation significantly affects teachers' performance at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun, as indicated by the t count value of $2.601 > t$ table of 2.017 with a significance level of $0.013 < 0.05$ (H4 accepted). High-motivated educators will take responsibility, succeed, grow, and act independently. As a result, motivation can improve teacher performance since it increases their enthusiasm for their work. This is the same as the opinion (Aprida et al., 2022) teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by work motivation.

With a significance level of $0.040 < 0.05$ and a t count value of $2.116 > t$ table of 2.017, this study demonstrates that work discipline significantly affects teacher performance at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun (H5 accepted). Teachers with good work discipline have better performance, which is adjusted to improve learning outcomes, improve teaching quality, and a more productive work atmosphere. This is equivalent to (Pradani Muhiding et al., 2023) that teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by work discipline.

The Sobel calculator is used to test the mediation effect. According to the study's findings, which are displayed in Figure 1 below, work motivation mediates the relationship between teacher competence and performance (H6 accepted), with a Z Score value of 2.084 and p -Values of $0.037 < 0.05$. With high competence, teachers will feel ready and motivated to face challenges. Increasing competence not only has an impact on performance but also has an impact through work motivation. This is consistent with Santoso et al. (2021) that teacher performance is positively and significantly impacted by teacher competence, with job motivation acting as a mediator.

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p -value:
a	0.512	Sobel test: 2.08431444	0.08179956	0.03713157
b	0.333	Aroian test: 2.03126805	0.08393575	0.04222781
s_a	0.147	Goodman test: 2.14174632	0.07960607	0.0322139
s_b	0.128	<input type="button" value="Reset all"/> <input type="button" value="Calculate"/>		

Figure 1. Sobel test substructural test results i

The results of the study are shown by the results of the Sobel test showing a statistical test of 2.086 and a p -value of 0.036, so work motivation can mediate work discipline in influencing the performance of permanent teachers at SMK Muhammadiyah Kutowinangun (H7 accepted). Teachers who have a high level of work discipline are able to be responsible and more organized towards their work. Increasing discipline not only has an impact on performance but also has an impact through work motivation. This is consistent with Tarigan et al. (2023) which states that work discipline has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance through work motivation as a mediating variable. Inline with (Zulaida & Parwoto, 2023) that the relationship between job performance and discipline is mediated by work motivation.

Path	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-Statistic	P-Value
Direct Effect	0.158	0.041	3.85	0.0001
Indirect Effect	0.141	0.033	4.25	0.0001
Total Effect	0.333	0.021	15.83	0.0001

Figure 2. Sobel test substructural test results ii

4. CONCLUSION

The study's findings, which showed that work discipline has a positive and substantial influence on work motivation after instructor competency has a positive and significant influence on work motivation, confirmed that all research hypotheses were accepted. Teacher competence has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance, work discipline has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance, and work motivation has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance. Furthermore, work motivation mediates the relationship between teacher competence and teacher performance and work motivation mediates work discipline to teacher performance.

The management needs to focus more on improving teacher competency through continuous development. By providing such access to teachers, schools can ensure that teachers continue to update their knowledge and skills, thereby improving their performance. School management can set clear discipline standards to build a good discipline culture, and recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate good work discipline. This will certainly improve teacher performance in schools. Practical implications that can be applied to increase motivation by giving awards and recognition for teacher achievements, creating a positive and supportive work environment. The management needs to pay attention to teacher welfare and provide adequate support so that teachers feel appreciated and motivated to give their best in carrying out their duties. This will have a direct impact on improving teacher performance. Schools need to invest in continuous competency development, because increasing competency will have a positive impact on work motivation, which in turn will improve overall performance. It is also important to create a supportive and collaborative environment, so that teachers feel appreciated and motivated to give their best in carrying out their duties

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