

# Work Discipline Mediation: The Role of Employee Training and Competence in Improving Performance at BKPSDM Jember Regency

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of employee training and competence on performance, both directly and indirectly through work discipline as a mediating variable. This study is motivated by the problem of employee performance not meeting expected targets, characterized by a lack of work discipline and low task efficiency. A total of 56 respondents participated in this study, which employed a quantitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with the WarpPLS program. The results showed that training significantly influenced both employee work discipline and performance. Similarly, employee competence had a positive effect on employee work discipline and performance. As a mediating variable, work discipline showed an indirect effect on performance, though its contribution was smaller compared to the direct effects of employee training and competence. The total effect of training on performance was 0.745, whereas the total effect of competence was 0.372. These findings highlight the importance of organizations in enhancing relevant and continuous training while developing structured employee competence programs. Additionally, strengthening work discipline through policies that encourage an organized work culture, such as incentives and effective supervision can further improve employee performance. Implementing these strategies is expected to optimize organizational target achievement and overall productivity.

*Keywords:* continuous training; employee competence; work discipline; structured program; employee performance

Received: 4 November 2024

Revised: 13 December 2024

Accepted: 21 December 2024

## 1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a crucial aspect in the management of modern organizations. According to (Suwatno and Priansa 2022), HRM includes the process of planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the activities of procuring, developing, compensating, integrating, maintaining, and disposing of human resources in order to achieve various individual, organizational, and societal goals. HRM plays an important role in ensuring that organizations achieve competitive advantage through the development of their employees' capabilities (Qomariah 2020). Furthermore, (Mangkunegara 2020), suggested that effective HRM practices can improve overall organizational performance through increased productivity, service quality, and innovation. The Jember Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency, in accordance with Jember Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2021, is tasked with assisting the Regent in carrying out government affairs in the fields of personnel, education, and training to improve the human resources of government officials. However, this agency faces several problems in carrying out its duties and functions, which have been identified and mapped for further handling. The mapping of service problems can be seen in Table 1.

Based on Table 1, The employees of BKPSDM Jember Regency are not are not performing their duties and functions optimally. This can be seen in the mapping of service problems where there are still several problems with the realization of programs that have not reached the set targets. In the context of the organization, each employee must

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provide the best performance for the institution where they are located. In an effort to provide services to the community, every organization, both private and government, must always pay attention to performance.

**Table 1.** Performance Mapping Between Target and Realization

No.	Main Issues	Root of the Problem	Target	Realization		
				2021	2022	2023
1.	Low level of understanding of merit system	Lack of socialization about the merit system	100%	10%	45%	60%
2.	Lack of understanding regarding ASN performance assessment indicators	Lack of socialization regarding performance assessment	100%	19,21%	22,77%	24,13%
3.	Suboptimal IT equipment	A system that is always being updated	100%	40%	40%	46%
4.	Suitability of Educational Qualifications to the Field of Work	Employee's educational qualifications do not match their field of work	100%	19%	19,97%	19,97%
5.	Employee competency is inadequate	Lack of employee interest in developing competencies	100%	10,23%	12,38%	28,64%
6.	Employee discipline level	Discipline is only seen from the arrival and departure times of ASN	100%	4,25%	4,98%	5%

Source: IPASN BKPSDM Jember Regency (2024).

By considering work discipline, competence, and training, BKPSDM Jember Regency can develop a comprehensive strategy to improve employee performance. This effort will not only have an impact to increase organizational productivity and efficiency, but also support the broader achievement of regional development goals. Therefore, further research on the influence of these three factors on employee performance at BKPSDM Jember Regency is both relevant and important.

## 2. Literature Review

Performance is a key focus in human resource management and organizational development. According to (Mangkunegara 2020), performance refers to the work outcomes, both in quality and quantity, achieved by an employee in fulfilling their responsibilities. Similarly, Handoko (2015), defines performance as the results of work and work behavior demonstrated in completing assigned tasks and responsibilities within a specific period. Additionally, Mathis et al. (2019) describe employee performance as the actions employees take or fail to take that affects their overall contribution to the organization. Work discipline can be interpreted as individual's awareness and willingness to obey with all organizational or government regulations and prevailing social norms (Hasibuan, 2016). According to Wahyudi (2021), work discipline serves as a managerial tool to communicate expectations to employees, encouraging behavioral change and fostering compliance with organizational or government regulations (Wahyudi 2021). Similarly, Anam and Winarko (2023) describe discipline as an individual's willingness and readiness to understand and adhere to the norms and regulations within their environment.

Employee competence plays a crucial role in organizational success, especially in an era of intense global competition. According to Spencer and Spencer (2020), competence refers as the underlying characteristics of an individual that contribute to effective job performance. Similarly, Wibowo (2021) defines competence as the ability to perform tasks based on skills and knowledge, supported by the necessary work attitude.

Training as defined by Gala et al. (2017), is a structured learning process designed to enhanced employees' job performance. This process involves four key aspects: the training process, training participants, performance, and work. Sumiaty (2020) emphasizes that training aims to develop job-related skills and ensuring employees can

effectively operate work equipment.

According to Mathis et al. (2019), employee performance as a result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him. Colquitt (2015) emphasizes that optimal employee performance can encourage the achievement of organizational goals efficiently and effectively. Meanwhile, Robbins and Judge (2014) revealed that employee performance is influenced by various factors such as training, competence, and discipline.

One of the factors that is thought to be able to provide increased performance is training. Effective training also provides an opportunity for employees to develop the skills and knowledge needed to complete tasks efficiently. With increased skills, employees can feel more confident and able to overcome challenges in the workplace, which can contribute to increased work discipline. According to Mondy and Noe (2005), training is a planned effort by the organization to facilitate employee learning related to job-related competencies. In line with that, Dessler (2017) added that investment in employee training can have a positive impact on both individual and overall organizational performance. Training has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on employee performance (Mustikawati & Qomariah, 2020; Sumiaty, 2020). Several other studies have also indicated that training plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance (Wiguna, 2015; Trijanuar, 2016; Julianry, Syarief, & Affandi 2017; Sulisty et al., 2016; Slameto et al., 2017; Rahmadani et al., 2020; Sukowidodo et al., 2022; Galih et al., 2023; Nursaid et al. 2023).

Another factor that affects employee performance is competence. Spencer and Spencer, 2020) highlights that competence as a characteristic that underlies a person and is related to the effectiveness of individual performance in his/her work. Furthermore, (Wibowo 2017) emphasizes that adequate employee competence can increase efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out tasks. (Hutapea 2008) instead stated that employee competency development should be a priority in efforts to continuously improve organizational performance. The statement about the definition of competency is supported by research conducted by (Mujiraharjo et al. 2024) revealed that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore several other studies revealed that competence has a significant effect on employee performance (Mustikasari et al., 2024; Darmanto & Supriyadi, 2022; Hapsari et al., 2022; Askany et al., 2024; Setiawan, et al. 2022). This is different from research by Kurniawan et al. (2021), Chandra et al. (2020) and Utomo et al. (2019), found that competence did not have a significant influence on employee performance.

One of the main issues that needs attention related to performance is the work discipline possessed by employees. According to Jufrizen (2021), work discipline refers to an individual's willingness and readiness to adhere to established norms and regulations. Similarly Mangkunegara (2021), states that low work discipline can negatively affect an organization's productivity and efficiency. Similarly, Hasibuan (2019) highlights the importance of enforcing work discipline to foster a conducive work environment and improve overall employee performance. Research by Insih et al. (2021) found that work discipline significantly and positively influences employee performance. Likewise, a study by Fathurahman and Ahman (2020) concludes that work discipline has a substantial impact on employee performance. Several other studies (Azis, 2021; Sanjaya, 2021; Darmadi, 2020; Rosalina & Wati, 2020; Titisari et al., 2021; Wiryawan et al., 2020) support this finding, emphasizing the significant effect of work discipline on performance. Employee competence can also influence work discipline. Individuals with expertise in their field are more likely to perform effectively, contributing to the achievement of performance targets. Research conducted by Appah et al. (2023), Doko et al. (2022), Lutfi et al. (2024), and Putra (2021) suggests that employee competence enhances work discipline. However, other studies indicate that competence does not significantly impact employee work discipline (Arafat et al. 2025). Training is a planned effort by organizations to support employee learning and enhance job-related competencies. Acquiring skills through training enables employees to perform their tasks efficiently, ultimately improving overall work completion within the organization. Research conducted by Sulaefi (2017), Fathurahman and Ahman (2020), Wahyudi (2021), Anam and Winarko (2023), Hadiwinata (2022), and Nabilah and Ardyanfitri (2024) indicates that training plays a significant role in enhancing work discipline.

### 3. Methods

This research employs a quantitative descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono (2023), quantitative descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive depiction of a phenomena by detailing its characteristics based on factual data. The study's population consists of all 56 employees of the Jember Regency Human Resources Development and Personnel Agency, with the entire population serving as the sample, making this a saturated sample study. Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire, necessitating validity and reliability test. To determine the

influence of independent variables on both intervening and dependent variables, hypothesis testing was carried out using Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. The operational definitions and variable indicators used in this study are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Variables, Operasional Definitions, Indicator Research

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicator
Training (X1) (Mangkunegara, 2018)	Employee training is an organization's effort to provide certain skills and knowledge, so that employees can work according to the tasks given.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Type of Training</li> <li>2. Training objectives</li> <li>3. Materials</li> <li>4. Methods used</li> <li>5. Participant qualifications</li> <li>6. Trainer qualifications</li> <li>7. Time</li> </ol>
Employee Competence (X2) (Wibowo 2017)	Competence of an employee can be interpreted as the employee's ability to carry out the work assigned by the organization.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beliefs and Values</li> <li>2. Skills</li> <li>3. Experience</li> <li>4. Personality Characteristics</li> <li>5. Intellectual Abilities</li> <li>6. Organizational Culture</li> </ol>
Performance (Y) (Mangkunegara, 2018)	Performance of an employee can be interpreted as the work results achieved by a person, both in quantity and quality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service orientation</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> <li>3. Commitment</li> <li>4. Discipline</li> <li>5. Cooperation</li> <li>6. Leadership</li> </ol>
Work Disclipine (Z) (Hasibuan, 2016)	Work discipline of an employee can be interpreted as a person's awareness and willingness to carry out tasks in a timely and accountable manner.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comply with all regulations</li> <li>2. Effective use of time</li> <li>3. Responsibility</li> <li>4. Absenteeism rate</li> </ol>

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2024

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. Respondent Characteristics

The study results indicate that, based on gender, out of 56 respondents, 57.1% (32 individuals) were male and 42.9% (24 individuals) were female, showing a higher proportion of male respondents. Regarding age distribution, 5.4% (3 respondents) were aged  $\leq 30$  years, 48.2% (27 respondents) were between 31 - 40 years, 37.5% (21 respondents) were between 41-50 years, and 8.9% (5 respondents) were between 51 - 60 years. These findings highlight that the majority of respondents fall within the 31-40 age group, indicating that employees are generally in their product with adequate work experience. In terms of educational background, most employees holds a Bachelor's degree with 27 individuals possessing this qualification.

#### 4.1.2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

The validity tests for all indicators in this study, the results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.5. Based on this findings, it can be concluded that the instrument used meets the validity criteria of a construct. Additionally, reliability tests were conducted to determine whether the training (X1), competence (X2), work discipline (Z) and performance (Y) variables met the reliability criteria. The analysis results indicated that the composite reliability coefficients and Cronbach's alpha values for all variables were above 0.7. Thus, it can be concluded that the questionnaire in this study satisfies the reliability test requirements.

#### 4.1.3. Hypothesis Test Results

This study employs training (X1) and competence (X2) as independent variables with work discipline (Z) serving as the intervening variable and performance (Y) as the independent variable. The hypothesis test aims to determine

whether the independent variables influence both the dependent and intervening variables. Additionally, the hypothesis test will reveal the path coefficient value and p values, which indicate the strength and significance of these relationships. The results of the hypothesis test analysis are presented in Table 3.

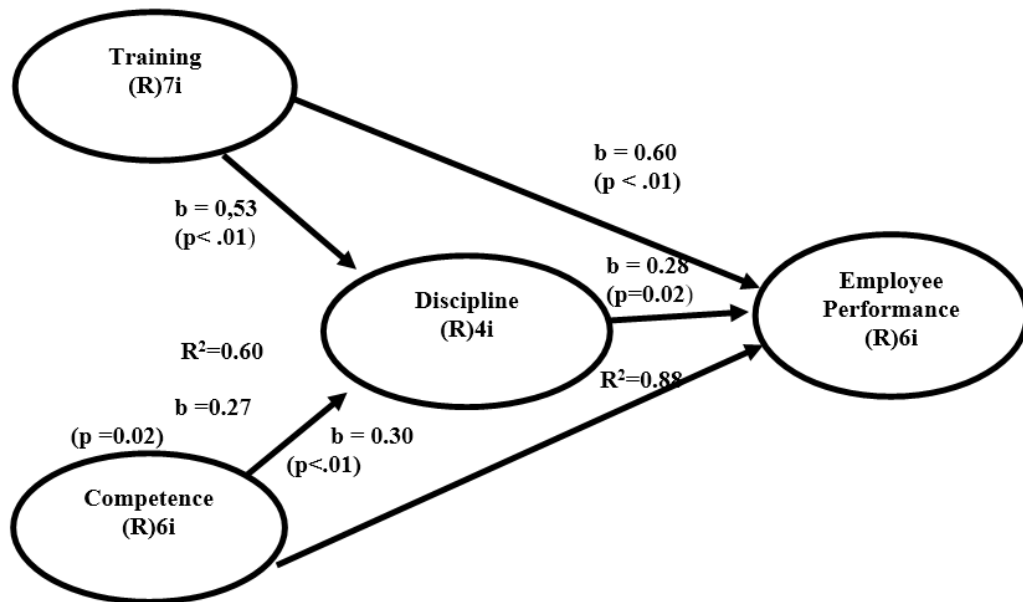
**Table 3.** Hypothesis Test Summary

No	Hypothesis	Path coefficients	P values	Results
1	Training → Work Discipline	0.530	0.001	H1 Accepted
2	Competence → Work Discipline	0.268	0.018	H2 Accepted
3	Training → Employee Performance	0.599	0.001	H3 Accepted
4	Competence → Employee Performance	0.298	0.008	H4 Accepted
5	Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.276	0.016	H5 Accepted
6	Training → Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.146	0.033	H6 Accepted
7	Competence → Work Discipline → Employee Performance	0.074	0.041	H7 Accepted

Source: Data processed by researchers (2024).

4.1.4. Research Hypothesis Model

Hypothesis testing is conducted based on the results of the SEM PLS model analysis, which includes all supporting variables for the hypothesis test. The PLS model, incorporating work discipline as a mediating variable, demonstrates that the inclusion of this variable provides additional contributions in explaining employee performance.



**Figure 1.** Hypothesis Test Analysis

4.2. Discussions

4.2.1. The Influence of Training on Work Discipline

The result of the first hypothesis test confirm that training has a significant influence on employees’ work discipline. Specifically, the analysis shows that the training variable (X1) has a path coefficient value of 0.530 and a  $\rho$ -value of 0.001. Since the  $\rho$ -value is smaller than the significance level ( $0.001 < 0.05$ ), H0 is rejected, indicating a significant

effect of training (X1) on work discipline (Z). This finding aligns with existing theoretical framework and is consistent with previous research conducted by Anam and Winarko (2023), Hadiwinata (2022), Nabilah and Ardyanfitri (2024) and Wahyudi (2021), which also concluded that training enhances work discipline.

#### 4.2.2. *The Influence of Employee Competence on Work Discipline*

The second hypothesis test confirms that employee competence has a significant influence on work discipline. The results indicate that the employees with high competence tend to be more disciplined in performing their duties. This is supported by the analysis, which shows that results obtained can be seen for testing the employee competence variable (X2) has a path coefficient value of 0.268 and a  $\rho$ -value of 0.018. Since the  $\rho$ -value is smaller than the significant level ( $0.018 < 0.05$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected, confirming a significant effect of employee competence (X2) on work discipline (Z). These findings align with established theories and are consistent with previous research conducted by Appah et al. (2023), Doko et al. (2022), Putra (2021) and Lutfi et al. (2024), which also concluded that employee competence contributes to improve work discipline.

#### 4.2.3. *The Influence of Training on Employee Performance*

The third hypothesis test confirms that training has a significant influence on employee performance. The findings indicate that well-designed trainings enhanced employees' knowledge, skills, and work attitudes, ultimately contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. The analysis results show that the training variable (X1) has a path coefficient value of 0.599 with a  $\rho$ -value of 0.001. Since the  $\rho$ -value is smaller than the significance level ( $0.001 < 0.05$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected, confirming a significant effect of training (X1) on employee performance (Y). These results align with established theoretical framework and are consistent with previous studies conducted by Wiguna (2015), Trijanuar (2016), Julianry, Syarief, and Affandi (2017), Sulistyo et al. (2016), Slameto et al. (2017), Rahmadani et al. (2020), Sukowidodo et al. (2022), Galih et al. (2023), Nursaid et al. (2023), Reza and Yani (2021), Geraldin et al. (2020), Putra et al. (2020), Soebyakto et al. (2019), Sukowidodo et al. (2022), Wahyudi et al. (2021), and Maimunah et al. (2024), which all support the conclusion that employee training positively impacts performance.

#### 4.2.4. *The Influence of Employee Competence on Employee Performance*

The fourth hypothesis test confirms that employee competence has a significant effect on employee performance. The analysis results show that the employee competence variables (X2) has a path coefficient value of 0.298 and a  $\rho$ -value of 0.001. Since the  $\rho$ -value is smaller than the significance level ( $0.008 < 0.05$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected, indicating a significant effect of employee competence (X2) on employee performance (Y).

These findings align with established theoretical frameworks and are consistent with previous research conducted by Galih et al. (2023), Nursaid et al. (2023), Prahastyo et al. ((2024), Puspitasari et al. (2024), Rahmadani et al. (2020), Setiawan et al. (2023), Untari et al. (2024), Qomariah et al. (2023), Puspitasari et al. (2024), Wahyudi et al. (2022), Askany et al. (2024), Nursaid et al. (2023), Setiawan et al. (2023), Hapsari et al. (2022), Qomariah and Utamy (2023), Prahastyo et al. (2024), Irawan et al. (2024), Rusmayanti et al. (2022), Prajudy et al. (2024), Mujiraharjo et al. (2024), Galih et al. (2023), and Setiawan et al. (2022), which support the conclusion that employee competence positively influences employee performance. However, contrasting findings were reported by Utomo et al. (2019), Kurniawan et al. (2021), and Chandra et al. (2020), which suggest that employee competence does not significantly impact performance.

#### 4.2.5. *The Influence of Work Discipline on Employee Performance*

The fifth hypothesis test confirms that work discipline has a significant influence on employee performance. The analysis results indicate that employees with a high level of work discipline tend to demonstrate better performance. This is supported by the test results, which show that the work discipline variable (Z) has a path coefficient value of 0.276 and a  $\rho$ -value of 0.016. Since the  $\rho$ -value is smaller than the significance level ( $0.016 < 0.05$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected, confirming a significant influence of work discipline (Z) on employee performance (Y). These findings align with established theoretical perspectives and are consistent with previous research conducted by Ulantini et al. (2022), Mu'ah et al. (2023), Ekasari et al. (2022), Saputri et al. (2023), and Sariyono et al. (2024), which also concluded that work discipline has a significant positive impact on employee performance.

#### 4.2.6. *The Influence of Training on Employee Performance Through Work Discipline*

The sixth hypothesis test confirms that training influences employee performance through work discipline. The analysis results indicate that work discipline serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between training and employee performance, leading to the acceptance of  $H_6$ . The indirect effect of training (X1 $\rightarrow$ ) on employee

performance variables (Y) through work discipline (Z) was found to be 0.146, which is smaller than the direct effect of the training variable (X1) on employee performance (Y), which was 0.599. These findings suggest that while work discipline plays a role in enhancing employee performance, the direct impact of training remains more substantial. These results align with the findings of Nabilah and Ardyanfitri (2024), who also concluded that training influences employee performance through work discipline.

#### 4.2.7. *The Influence of Employee Competence on Employee Performance Through Work Discipline*

The seventh hypothesis test confirms that employee competence effects employee performance through work discipline. The analysis results indicate that the work discipline serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between employee competence and employee performance, leading to the acceptance of H7. The indirect effect of employee competence (X2) on employee performance (Y) through work discipline (Z) was found to be 0.074, which is smaller than the direct effect of the employee competence (X2) on employee performance variable (Y), which was 0.298. These findings suggest that while work discipline plays a role in enhancing employee performance, the direct impact of employee competence remains more significant. These results align with the findings of Doko et al. (2022), who concluded that employee competence influences performance through work discipline.

## 5. Conclusion

The study's findings indicate that employee training and competence significantly impact both work discipline and employee performance. Effective training enhances employees' level of work discipline, which in turn positively affects their performance. Additionally, employee competence, which reflects their skills and abilities, contributes substantially to improving both work discipline and overall job performance.

Work discipline itself has been identified as a critical factor influencing employee performance, with high disciplined employees demonstrating better work outcomes. Moreover, this study reveals that training and competence indirectly influence employee performance through work discipline as a mediating variable. However, the indirect effect is smaller than the direct impact of training and competence on performance. These reinforce existing empirical evidence on the importance of training, competence, and work discipline in enhancing employee performance. They also provide valuable insights for organizations, emphasizing the need to systematically develop training programs and improve employee competence to achieve optimal work results.

The Jember Regency Human Resources Development and Personnel Agency should implement continuous training programs tailored to employee work needs. These programs should include real-life task simulations and hands-on practice to enhance technical competence and work discipline. Additionally, conducting regular post-training evaluations will help assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement, ensuring ongoing development and performance optimization.

Employee competence can be enhanced through courses, certified training, and relevant skills development programs. The Jember Regency Human Resources Development and Personnel Agency should also provide support through mentoring and employee empowerment initiatives to ensure that acquired competencies are effectively applied in daily tasks. Additionally, fostering a disciplined work culture requires strong supervision and recognition for employees who consistently demonstrate high levels of discipline.

The Jember Regency Human Resources Development and Personnel Agency should integrate work discipline as a key indicator in assessing employee performance. Additionally, implementing policies that promote a culture of work discipline, such as transparency and incentive programs, can serve as motivation for employees to improve their performance. These initiatives are expected to foster a more productive and harmonious work environment.

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