The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Influence of Competency on Employee Performance at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of competency on employee performance with work motivation as an intervening variable at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method through the distribution of 51 questionnaires to employees as respondents. The research sample is determined by purposive sampling technique so that the data obtained is relevant to the research objectives. The collected data is analyzed by path analysis technique to determine the direct and indirect influence between variables. The results of the study show that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation as well as employee performance. Work motivation also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, competence has been proven to have a significant direct influence on employee performance. Thus, work motivation plays a role as an intervening variable that mediates the influence of competence on employee performance

Keywords: Competence, Work Motivation, Employee Performance

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Introduction

Every public organization, including the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office, is required to have optimal work productivity in order to provide excellent service to the community. One of the important factors that affect employee work productivity is communication. According to Robbins and Judge (2022), effective communication allows information, instructions, and feedback to flow well, so employees can work according to organizational goals. This is supported by organizational communication theory which states that open, clear, and two-way communication will increase employee engagement and minimize misunderstandings (Luthans, 2021).

However, good communication does not always directly guarantee high work productivity if it is not accompanied by adequate employee work motivation. Hasibuan (2020) explained that motivation is an internal drive that influences employee behavior to work hard and achieve. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (in Robbins & Judge, 2022), motivation arises when employee needs are met through good communication and working relationships. In other words, motivation can act as a mediating variable between communication and employee work productivity.

Some previous research has also supported this relationship. Research by Sari and Pratiwi (2021) found that communication has a positive effect on employee work motivation in government agencies. Lubis' research (2022) shows that motivation plays an important role in increasing the influence of communication on work productivity in sub-district office employees in Deli Serdang. In addition, research by Harahap and Sihombing (2023) proves that motivation is able to mediate the relationship between internal communication and employee performance in the North Sumatra local government.

However, until now there have not been many studies that specifically highlight the role of motivation as a mediating variable between communication and work productivity at the village or sub-district government level, especially in the Medan Belawan area. This is interesting to research because the work environment in the sub-district office has the characteristics of direct public services that demand effective communication across positions and between employees as well as high work motivation to support productivity. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of communication on work productivity with motivation as a mediating variable at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

Literature Review
2.1 Employee Performance

Robbins and Coulter (2016) employee performance is the level of achievement of employee work results in an organization that is measured based on predetermined standards or targets. Performance is the result of a specific job function that can be measured based on a set standard or target.

Employee Performance Indicators
According to Robbins and Coulter (2016):
1. Quality of Work Results
   Measure how good the results of employee work are, including thoroughness, neatness, and conformity with set standards.
2. Quantity of Work Results
   Describes the volume of work completed in a given period of time.
3. Timeliness
   Demonstrate the ability of employees to complete work according to schedules and deadlines.

4. Effectiveness
   Refers to the optimal use of resources in achieving the desired work results.
5. Independence at Work
   Assess the extent to which employees can complete tasks without having to rely constantly on the help of others.
6. Commitment to Work
   Demonstrate loyalty, dedication, and responsibility to the task and organization.

2.2 Work Motivation

Hasibuan (2017) work motivation is the impulse that arises in a person that causes the person to act or do something to achieve a certain goal.

Indicators of Work Motivation
Indicators of Work Motivation According to Hasibuan (2017):
1. Achievement
   The desire to complete tasks well and achieve the best results.
2. Responsibility
   Willingness to accept and carry out job duties and obligations independently.
3. Recognition
   The need to be appreciated and recognized for their work by their superiors and colleagues.
4. Self-Development (Advancement)
   Encouragement to improve skills and careers through training or promotion.
5. The work itself
   Satisfaction and pleasure in the type of work done.

2.3 Competence

Sutrisno (2020) competence is the ability and characteristics of individuals used to perform work or tasks in a certain field.

Competency Indicators
According to Sutrisno (2020) competency indicators:
1. Knowledge
   a. Understanding of the concepts, principles, and procedures required to perform tasks.
   b. Tennis knowledge related to the job or field you are engaged in.
2. Skills
   a. Ability to apply knowledge practically in daily work.
   b. Skills in using tools or technology that are relevant to the job.
3. Attitude
   a. Commitment to work and organization.
   b. Willingness to work hard and responsibility for the results of work.
   c. Ability to work in a team and communicate well.
4. Behavior
   a. Actions that demonstrate the ability to adapt in a variety of situations.
   b. Ability to manage conflicts and interact effectively with colleagues.
   c. Ability to work under pressure and complete tasks on time.
5. Social and Emotional Abilities
   a. Ability to interact with others and maintain good interpersonal relationships.
   b. Ability to manage emotions in challenging situations.
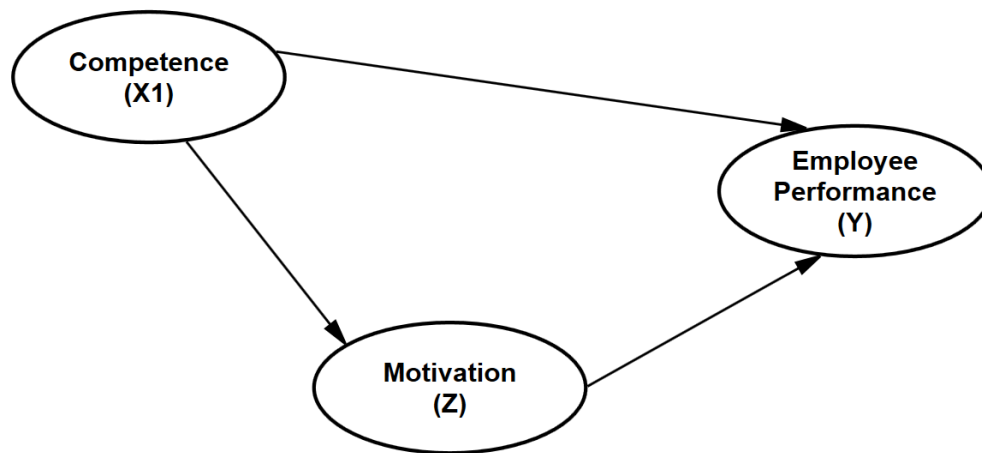
2.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.5 Research Hypothesis

H1: Competency has a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

H2: Competency has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

H3: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

H4: Competency has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

Methods
3.1 Types of Research

The type of research used is quantitative research. This type of quantitative research is carried out to make a study that aims to adjust a research and to analyze the competence of employee performance with work motivation as an intervening variable at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

3.2 Research Location and Research Time

The location of the research was conducted at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office, which is located on Jl. Cimanuk No. 3 Belawan. The research period was carried out for 3 months, from April to June 2025.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population and sample in this study are all permanent employees at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office. The number of employees at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office office is 51 employees and all of them are civil servants.

3.4 Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Result and Discussion

4.1 Outer Model *Analysis*

The *Outer Model* analysis using *the PLS Algorithm* yielded:

Validity Test

Table 1. Value of Outer Loadings

	Competence	Employee Performance	Motivation
X1.1	0,873		
X1.2	0,916		
X1.3	0,864		
X1.4	0,833		
X1.5	0,863		
Y.1		0,877	
Y.2		0,846	
Y.3		0,864	
Y.4		0,918	
Y.5		0,919	
Z.1			0,894
Z.2			0,842
Z.3			0,883
	Competence	Employee Performance	Motivation
Z.4			0,907

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, showing the results of the outer model test through the loading factor / outer loadings value, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70. This shows that each indicator is able to represent a measured construct validly and robustly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the criteria of convergent validity and can be used in subsequent analysis. For more details on the above value, you can also see the following figure.
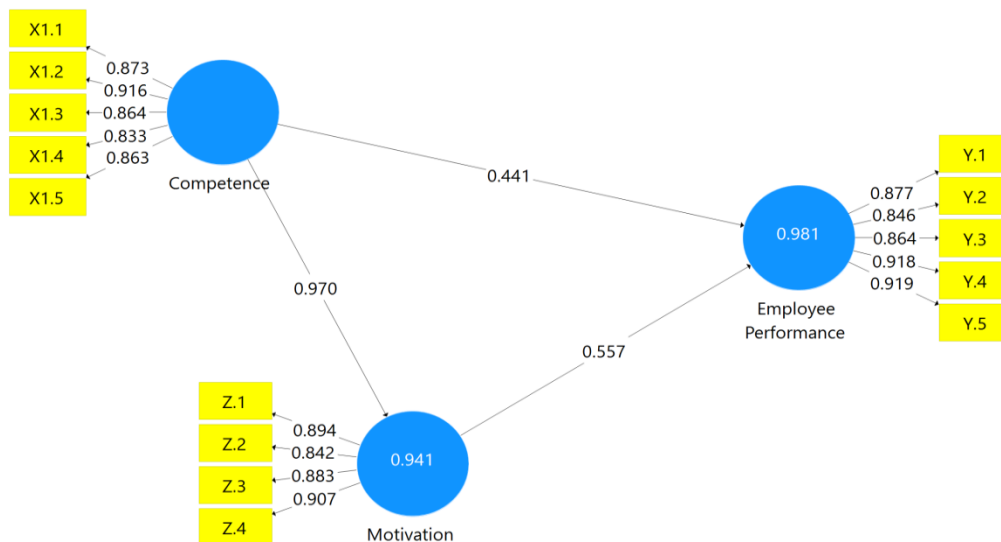

Figure 1. Outer Loudings

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competence	0,920	0,921	0,940	0,757
Employee_Performance	0,931	0,932	0,948	0,784
Motivation	0,904	0,907	0,933	0,777

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values on all constructs have values above 0.70. This shows that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is declared reliable and feasible for use in structural model testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R2)

In assessing a model with PLS it starts by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below is the result of Rsquare estimation using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee_Performance	0,981	0,981
Motivation	0,941	0,939

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 3, there is an R square value in both dependent variables for the work motivation variable, there is an R square value of 0.981, meaning that the influence of competence is 0.981 or 98.1%, the rest is in other variables outside the model. The R square value of employee performance is 0.941, meaning that the influence of competence and work motivation is 0.941 or 94.1%, the rest is on other variables outside the model.

4.2 Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Internal testing of the model or structural model is carried out to see the relationship between the construct, significance value and R-square of the research model. The structural model is evaluated by using R-square for dependent constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct influence between variables can be seen in the value *of path coefficients*. The results of the data processing show the value of direct influence can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. *Path Coefficients* (Direct Influence)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Competence -> Employee_Performance	0,441	3,045	0,002	Accepted
Competence -> Motivation	0,970	52,415	0,000	Accepted
Motivation -> Employee_Performance	0,557	3,889	0,000	Accepted

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

In the results of Table 4, there is a direct influence value which will be explained as follows:

1. Competency has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistical value of 3.045 above 1.96 and significance of 0.002 below 0.05, meaning that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with the results of previous research which stated that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT. Bara Energi Lestari Nagan Raya Regency (Zahri & Mesra, 2024).

2. Competency has a positive and significant effect on work motivation with a t-statistical value of 52.415 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in accordance with the results of previous research which stated that competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (Meidita, 2019).

3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistical value of 3.889 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in accordance with the results of previous research which stated that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Rivaldo & Ratnasari, 2020).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

The indirect influence between variables can be seen in the value *of specific indirect effects*. The results of data processing show the value of indirect influence can be seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Competence -> Motivation -> Employee Performance	0,540	4,021	0,000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 5, there is an indirect influence between variables which will be explained as follows:

Competency has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation with a t-statistical value of 2.498 and a significance value of 0.013, meaning that work motivation plays a role as an intervening variable between competence on employee performance and its effect is greater with the presence of intervening variables.

Conclusion
1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.
4. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation at the Medan Belawan Sub-district Office.

Suggestion
1. In the competency variable, it turns out that the indicator that has the lowest value is the statement "I show professional behavior in every work activity". Agencies need to encourage a comprehensive professional work culture, by providing work ethics training and examples from leaders, as well as building an appreciation system for employees who show a consistent professional attitude.
2. For the work motivation variable with the statement "I take full responsibility for the tasks I perform". Agencies need to encourage and strengthen a culture of responsibility in the work environment by clarifying the division of duties, strengthening performance evaluation systems, and rewarding well-executed responsibilities.
3. Employee performance with the statement "I am able to complete the work in the amount of work that is on target". Agencies need to maintain and improve a target-based performance management system, as well as provide adequate resource support so that employees can continue to maintain optimal work productivity.

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