The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Effect of Competence on Promotion at the National Narcotics Agency North Sumatra Province

Ari Sujarno, Elfitra Desy Surya, Hernawaty

Abstract

Promotion is an important indicator in human resource management that reflects the organization's recognition of employee competence and contribution. This study aims to analyze the role of work motivation as a mediator in the relationship between competence and job promotion among employees of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in North Sumatra Province. This study used a quantitative research design with a survey approach. The study population consisted of 84 permanent employees of the BNN in North Sumatra Province, who were selected as the study sample. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results showed that competence had a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($t = 4.623$; $p < 0.05$) and job promotion ($t = 3.656$; $p < 0.05$). Work motivation also has a positive and significant effect on promotion ($t = 8.026$; $p < 0.05$) and is proven to mediate the effect of competence on promotion ($t = 3.835$; $p < 0.05$). These findings confirm that improving employee competence can encourage higher work motivation, thereby increasing the chances of promotion. The practical implication of this study is that the North Sumatra Provincial Narcotics Agency needs to strengthen employee competence and work motivation through training, rewards, leadership support, and the establishment of clear authority and responsibilities for promoted employees. This study contributes theoretically to the development of human resource management in government organizations.

Keywords: Competency, Work Motivation, Promotion

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Introduction

Promotion is an important aspect of human resource management that reflects the organization's recognition of employees' abilities, achievements, and contributions. In the context of government organizations, including the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency (BNN), promotion not only affects employee welfare but also has an impact on the overall performance of the organization. A fair and transparent promotion process can increase employee work motivation, loyalty, and productivity, while an inappropriate process can lead to demotivation and decreased performance.

Employee competence, which includes knowledge, skills, experience, and professional attitude, is one of the main factors that influences promotion opportunities. Employees with high competence tend to be better able to meet the demands of higher and more complex positions. However, competence alone does not guarantee promotion; employee work motivation also plays an important role in this process. Work motivation can encourage employees to behave proactively, improve performance, and participate maximally in organizational tasks, thereby increasing their chances of promotion.

Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between competence and promotion, but the role of work motivation as a mediator in this relationship still needs to be studied specifically, especially in the North Sumatra Provincial Narcotics Agency (BNN), which has unique job characteristics and high demands related to law enforcement and drug rehabilitation. By understanding the role of work motivation as a mediator, organizations can design more effective HR development strategies, such as training, career coaching, and providing appropriate incentives, thereby increasing promotion opportunities for competent employees while improving organizational performance.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of competence on job promotion among employees of the North Sumatra Provincial Narcotics Agency. The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of human resource management and provide practical implications for the formulation of employee promotion and career development policies within the Narcotics Agency.

Literature Review
Job Promotion
Definition of Promotion

According to Wibowo (2022) in his book Performance Management, job promotion is the process of upgrading an employee's position within an organization, accompanied by an increase in responsibilities, authority, and rewards as a form of recognition for the employee's performance, competence, and contribution.

Factors Influencing Job Promotion

In his book Performance Management, Wibowo (2022) explains that job promotion is influenced by several factors related to performance, competence, work behavior, and individual potential.

1) Performance

    Performance is the main basis for promotion, because promotion is a form of reward and recognition for an employee's work results.

2) Competence

    Competence is the main requirement for an employee to be able to perform duties in a higher position.

3) Potential

    Promotion not only rewards performance, but also considers the future potential of employees, such as:

4) Work Behavior

Work behavior encompasses work ethic, integrity, professionalism, and discipline, all of which are basic requirements for promotion.

5) Loyalty and Work Commitment
Loyalty as a form of commitment to the organization is a factor in career development, including promotion.

6) Seniority and Length of Service (Supporting Factor, Not the Main Factor)
Seniority is not a primary factor, but it remains a supporting consideration in certain organizations.

7) Education and Training (Learning & Development)
Capacity building through education and training prepares employees for higher positions.

Job Promotion Indicators according to Wibowo (2022)

The following are indicators in the study referring to Wibowo (2022):

1) Promotion
Promotion of employees to higher and more strategic structural or functional positions.

2) Increased Responsibility
Employees receive additional tasks, greater responsibilities, and more complex roles within the organization.

3) Increased Authority
Employees have greater power in decision-making, resource management, or supervision of work units or teams.

4) Increased Income and Benefits
Promotions are generally accompanied by increased compensation, whether in the form of base salary, position allowances, or benefits.

5) Career Development Opportunities
Promoted employees have broader opportunities for competency improvement and access to training, coaching, and the next career path.

Work Motivation

Understanding Work Motivation

According to Robbins & Judge (2021), work motivation is the internal and external drive that determines how hard a person works, what they focus their efforts on, and how long they can maintain those efforts to achieve organizational goals.

Indicators of Work Motivation

Robbins & Judge (2021) explain that motivation encompasses intensity, direction, and persistence. From these three core components, the indicators used in the study can be described as follows:

1) Intensity
Intensity refers to the amount of effort or energy expended by employees in completing tasks. The higher the intensity, the greater the employee's drive to work hard.

2) Direction
Direction is the focus and orientation of employees' efforts toward organizational goals. High effort must be directed toward relevant work, not misdirected effort.

3) Persistence
Persistence is the ability to maintain consistent effort over time, even when faced with obstacles.

4) Work Commitment
Motivated employees will demonstrate strong commitment to their tasks and the organization, including a willingness to go the extra mile.

5) Goal-Oriented Behavior
High motivation is reflected in tangible efforts to achieve the work targets set by the organization.

Competence
Definition of Competence
Sutrisno (2020) defines competency as the abilities and characteristics of individuals that are used to perform work or tasks in a particular field.

Competency Indicators
Sutrisno (2020) explains several indicators of competency, namely:
1) Knowledge
   Employees' understanding of narcotics regulations, eradication procedures, BNNP authority, rehabilitation mechanisms, and inter-agency cooperation.
2) Skills
   Employees' technical abilities in performing their duties: for example, narcotics intelligence analysis, data collection, report preparation, communication with the community/agencies, and use of the BNN information system.
3) Attitude
   Employees' professional attitudes: integrity, enforcement ethics, proactivity, responsibility, teamwork, adaptation to policy changes.
4) Values
   Internalization of BNN organizational values: humanity, justice, transparency, commitment to narcotics eradication.
5) Motivation
   Internal motivation: desire to eradicate drug trafficking, enthusiasm for public service, motivation to perform extra duties, innovation in prevention.
6) Self-concept
   Employees' self-confidence in carrying out BNNP duties: feeling capable, feeling contributing, awareness of their roles and responsibilities.
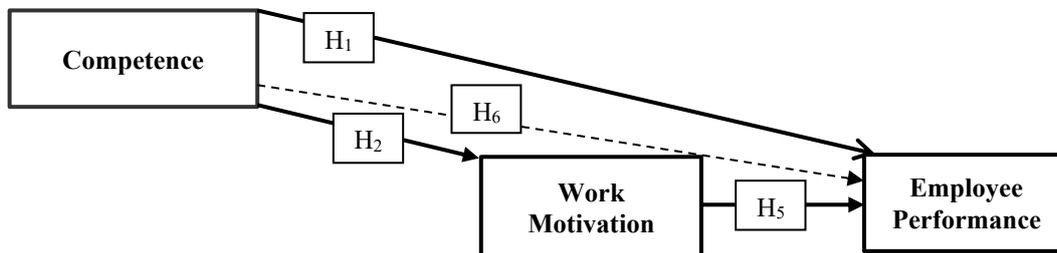
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis
H_1 : Competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.
H_2 Competence has a positive and significant effect on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.
H_3 Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.
H_4 : Work motivation mediates the effect of competence on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.

Research Methodology
Type of Research
    The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. This type of quantitative research is conducted to create a study that aims to adjust a study and to analyze competence and work discipline on job promotion with work motivation as an intervening variable at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency, located at Jl. Balai Pom No.1 Blok A, Medan Estate, Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2017) defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. The population and sample in this study were all permanent employees of the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency. The number of employees at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency was 84, with details as follows: 53 civil servants, 8 PPPK employees, and 23 honorary employees. In this study, the sample consisted of all 84 employees.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results

Outer Model Analysis

The Outer Model Analysis using the PLS Algorithm yielded the following results:

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Competence	Job Motivation	Job Promotion
X1.1	0.802		
X1.2	0.774		
X1.3	0.876		
X1.4	0.828		
X1.5	0.791		
X1.6	0.795		
Y.1			0.824
Y.2			0.825
Y.3			0.770
Y.4			0.873
Y.5			0.795
Z.1		0.739	
Z.2		0.753	
Z.3		0.887	
Z.4		0.890	
Z.5		0.904	

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, which show the results of outer model testing through loading factor/outer loadings values, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.
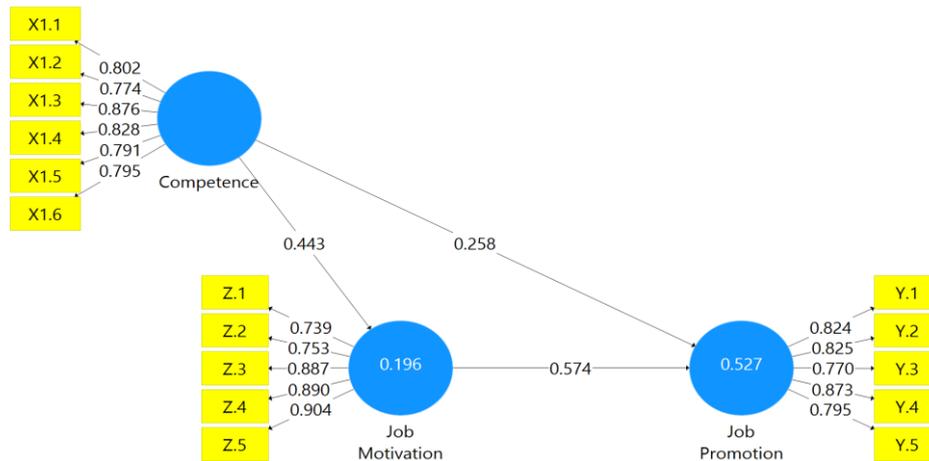
Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competence	0.897	0.903	0.921	0.659
Job Motivation	0.892	0.905	0.921	0.702
Job Promotion	0.876	0.879	0.910	0.669

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

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

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In assessing the model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the Rsquare estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Job Motivation	0.196	0.186
Job Promotion	0.527	0.515

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R-square values for both dependent variables. For the work motivation variable, the R-square value is 0.196, meaning that the influence of competency is 0.196 or 19.6%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for job promotion is 0.527, meaning that competency and work motivation account for 0.527 or 52.7%, with the remainder attributed to other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct effect between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data analysis results show the direct effect values in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Competence -> Job Promotion	0.258	3.656	0.000	Accepted
Competence -> Job Motivation	0.443	4.623	0	Accepted
Job Motivation -> Job Promotion	0.574	8,026	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

The results in Table 4 show the following direct influence values:

1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on job promotion with a t-statistic value of 3.656 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence has a real effect on job promotion because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, which found that competency has a positive and significant effect on job promotion (Ferine & Surya, 2025).

2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation with a t-statistic value of 4.623 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence has a real effect on work motivation because the significance value is below 0.05 . The results of this study are in line with previous research findings, namely that competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (Fauzi & Indrawan, 2023).

3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job promotion with a t-statistic value of 8.026 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation has a significant effect on job promotion because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous research findings, namely that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job promotion (Mesra et al., 2025).

Indirect Effects Between Variables

The indirect effect between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects value. The data analysis results show the indirect effect value in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Competence -> Job Motivation -> Job Promotion	0.254	3.835	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: competence has a positive and significant effect on promotion through work motivation with a t-statistic value of 3.835 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation acts as an intervening variable between competence and promotion.

Conclusion

1. Competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the North Sumatra Provincial Narcotics Agency.

2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.

3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency.

4. Work motivation mediates the effect of competence on job promotion at the North Sumatra Provincial Narcotics Agency.

Recommendations

1. The lowest-rated statement regarding job promotion is "Job promotion provides greater authority in work decision-making." Therefore, the recommendation is that the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency ensure that job promotions are accompanied by the granting of clear authority and responsibility in work decision-making, so that promoted employees can perform their roles optimally and feel appreciated for their promotion.

2. Work motivation with the lowest value statement being "I work with high enthusiasm and energy in carrying out my duties." The North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency is advised to increase employee work motivation by providing rewards for

performance, strengthening leadership support, and creating a conducive work environment so that employees work with higher enthusiasm and energy in carrying out their duties.

3. Competence with the lowest score statement: "I have the skills necessary to complete my work effectively and professionally." The North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency is advised to improve employee competence through technical training and continuous work skill development so that employees are able to carry out their duties effectively and professionally as a basis for consideration for promotion.

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