

The Mediating Role of Locus of Control: The Effect of Work Discipline and Competence on Employee Performance



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ABSTRACT: Using employees' sense of agency as a moderator, this research will look at how job competency and discipline affect productivity. Although competence and work discipline are both critical components of employee performance, this study found no evidence that work discipline had a substantial impact on performance. Contrarily, competence has a favorable and substantial effect on productivity in the workplace. The association between work discipline and employee performance was found to be significantly moderated by locus of control, which describes individuals' ideas about control over their work outcomes. As the data shows, workers who place their sense of agency inside themselves are more likely to take the initiative to enforce rules and regulations in the workplace that will boost productivity. But since locus of control isn't a mediator in the connection between competence and performance, it follows that competence has sufficient influence on performance to warrant its own mediation. A quantitative descriptive methodology based on a path analysis technique is employed in this work. 150 employees from different departments were chosen at random to make up the sample. The results offer light on the need for management to place a greater emphasis on providing employees with appropriate training and education to build their capabilities and on fostering an environment where workers feel they have some say in the results of their job. In terms of enhancing employee performance, competence was the most important component. Work discipline was also crucial, but it needed psychological variables like locus of control to really make a difference.

KEYWORDS: work discipline, competence, locus of control, employee performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Human resource effectiveness is critical to a company's success (Simamora, 2015). The elements that impact employee performance are subjects that persist in attracting interest from both academics and practitioners in today's highly competitive workplace. A person's performance is defined by the quality and quantity of their work as they carry out their assigned obligations (Mangkunegara, 2017). Amri et al. (2021), Latunreng et al. (2023), and Wardhani et al. (2023) all agree that in today's cutthroat business climate, companies must do all they can to make the most of their human resources. Specifically, they note that employee performance is crucial to the success of organizations in reaching their goals.

Work discipline is one of the most critical things. Basem et al. (2022) state that managers utilize work discipline as a means of communicating with employees to promote compliance with corporate standards and social conventions, as well as to encourage behavioral changes. According to Anwar & Abrar (2023), firms should prioritize maintaining discipline since it establishes rules that employees are expected to follow. A disciplined work environment is one in which employees are motivated to follow the established policies and procedures of the business.

Competence on the part of employees is just as crucial as discipline when it comes to deciding the quality of output. Competence, as defined by Sedarmayanti (2017), is "the capacity to apply one's knowledge, skills, and experience to a task in a way that produces the desired outcome," be it the performance of employees, leaders, or officials. According to Agusria et al. (2022) and Prasetyaningtiyas et al. (2022), competence encompasses an individual's attitude, knowledge, and talents that are pertinent to their job responsibilities. Competent workers are more likely to take pride in their job and go above and beyond to

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help the company succeed (Rachmawati & Daryanto, 2013). Training, education, and extensive work experience can all help one develop these competencies further.

Conversely, the relationship between work discipline, compensation, and performance is moderated by an essential psychological characteristic known as locus of control. According to Frost & Strauss (2016) and Prasetyaningtiyas et al. (2022), people who have an internal locus of control believe that their achievements are dependent on their own skills and determination. As a result, they take a more active role in finishing duties and overcoming obstacles at work. Those whose sense of agency is more externally focused, on the other hand, are prone to letting chance and other outside forces determine their level of success (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2014).

The business unit of PT Kimia Farma Diagnostika Bali, which is struggling to boost staff productivity, was the site of this study. High absenteeism rates and task accomplishments that don't match predetermined targets are among the issues that have been found based on pre-observations. This phenomenon highlights the importance of delving further into the topic to learn how to optimize elements like work discipline, remuneration, and locus of control in order to boost performance. Little is known about the connection between competence, work discipline, and employee performance, and what little is known has produced findings that contradict or contradict with current theories and concepts. There is a strong positive correlation between capabilities and worker productivity, according to studies by Prasetyaningtiyas et al. (2022), Agusria et al. (2022), Maizar et al. (2023), Tajudin et al. (2023), and Setyawan et al. (2024). There was no correlation between competence and performance in the workplace, according to studies by Nyoman et al. (2023) and Pratama et al. (2023).

Consequently, the purpose of this research is to examine the connection between competence and work discipline as well as worker productivity, with the addition of locus of control as a moderating variable. In addition to offering practical suggestions for how businesses might boost performance among staff members, this study is anticipated to theoretically contribute to the advancement of human resource management.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In social cognitive theory, the belief in one's own abilities to complete a task successfully is fundamental. Social learning theory, which Bandura (1994) developed earlier, serves as the theoretical basis for social cognitive theory. Work environment, employee thoughts and actions, and the interplay and mutual influence of these three factors are the three pillars upon which Bandura's (1994) theory of motivation rests. The capacity to self-regulate and respond appropriately to environmental stimuli is central to social cognitive theory, as stated by Sobirin et al. (2021). Employees' self-confidence, competence, locus of control, and performance are all impacted by the interplay between their psychological characteristics (such self-efficacy) and their work environment, as explained in Social Cognitive Theory. Improved performance is a direct result of employees' self-efficacy in behavior management, competency leveraging, and adaptive response to environmental stimuli, according to the notion.

Regardless of Siagian (2015), a well-disciplined workforce can maximize individual potential by establishing a controlled and efficient work environment. When subordinates break the rules or procedures, the mechanism to correct or punish them is called discipline (Simamora, 2015). An individual's level of discipline can be defined as their knowledge of and compliance with all relevant societal standards and business policies (Hasibuan, 2017). Timeliness, correct use of office equipment, great responsibility, and compliance with office regulations are all components of discipline (Soejono, 2015). Staff members with a strong work ethic not only get things done on time every time, but they also inspire their colleagues to do the same.

Competence is defined by Wibowo (2016) as the capacity to perform a job so that one's knowledge, abilities, and attitude towards work are all in line with what is required of the job. According to Sedarmayanti (2017), one of the most essential factors in determining an employee's capacity to do a good job is their level of competence. Technical proficiency is just one component of competence; the ability to work well with others and adjust to changing circumstances on the job are also essential. Beliefs and values, knowledge, experience, personality traits, capacity for growth, emotional intelligence, intellectual capacity, and company culture are the markers of competence outlined by Wibowo (2016).

A person's locus of control can be defined as their belief in their ability to influence the outcomes they experience (Rotter, 1966). People who have an internal locus of control tend to think that their own skills and efforts are the most important factors in determining the outcomes of their work, whereas those who have an external locus of control are more prone to credit chance or the actions of others for their achievements (Amalia, 2018). The satisfaction level of individuals with different loci of control influences their reactions. Specifically, those with an internal locus of control tend to prefer participatory styles, whereas those with an external locus of control tend to prefer directive styles (Ivancevich et al., 2017). There are two kinds of locus of control indicators, as described by Robbins (2015): internal and external.

Conforming to Mangkunegara (2017), performance is the result that workers get from doing their jobs according to the rules and regulations that their employer has established. According to Simanjuntak (2015), performance can be defined as the actions

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or inactions of employees. The ability to use performance as a basis for decision-making is crucial, according to Robbins (2015). Work quantity, work quality, and timeliness are indicators utilized to quantify performance (Simamora, 2015).

The Effect of work discipline on employee performance

The performance of workers is positively impacted by work discipline because it establishes a framework for ordered and efficient work. Employees that are self-disciplined are more likely to follow all of the company's policies and procedures, which leads to better output. Discipline in the workplace is essential for the efficient and standardized completion of operational responsibilities. Previous research by Hardati (2021), Basem et al. (2022), Kurniawan et al. (2023), Aryata & Marendra (2023), and Lestari et al. (2024) all came to the same conclusion: enhancing work discipline is crucial to boost employee performance. A hypothesis can be developed using the information gathered from the literature review and the study findings:

Hypothesis 1: Employee performance is positively impacted by work discipline

The Effect of Competence on employee performance

One measure of an staff member's competence is the quality of their work. Skilled workers know what they're supposed to do, have the right knowledge for the job, and can solve difficulties effectively. The performance of workers is heavily dependent on their competency set, which should include both technical and interpersonal abilities. The results of earlier research by Prasetyaningtiyas et al. (2022), Agusria et al. (2022), Maizar et al. (2023), Tajudin et al. (2023), and Setyawan et al. (2024) all point to a strong correlation between competency and employee performance. A working hypothesis can be developed from the reviewed literature and the findings of the research:

Hypothesis 2: Employee performance is positively impacted by competence

The Effect of Locus of control on employee performance

How people react to problems at work is affected by their locus of control. People who put their faith in themselves are more likely to take the initiative to get things done and overcome obstacles at work because they have an internal center of control. People whose sense of agency is more strongly influenced by factors outside of themselves may be less motivated to take initiative on the job. Ahmad Soleh et al. (2020), Tistianingtyas & Parwoto (2021), Nasution et al. (2021), Rusilawati et al. (2023), & Syah & Safrida (2024) have demonstrated a strong correlation between locus of control and performance. A hypothesis can be developed using the information gathered from the literature review and the study findings:

Hypothesis 3: Employee performance is positively affected by locus of control

The mediating role of Locus of control on the effect of work discipline on employee performance

Locus of control enhances the impact of work discipline on performance by assisting individuals in utilizing discipline to realize their full potential. People who have an internal locus of control are more likely to employ their work discipline to achieve high performance because they believe that the results of their work are dependent on their own efforts. To successfully manage one's job discipline, one needs an internal locus of control. Individuals are more likely to consistently exhibit disciplinary behavior when they have faith that it will lead to positive outcomes. In response to studies conducted by Talaohu et al. (2024), an individual's locus of control amplifies the impact of work discipline on one's performance. Individuals that have an internal locus of control tend to be more proactive when it comes to enforcing business discipline policies. One may develop a hypothesis by analyzing the existing literature and the outcomes of the research:

Hypothesis 4: The link between work discipline and employee performance is mediated by locus of control

The mediating role of Locus of control on the effect of competence on employee performance

In addition to mediating the connection between competences and performance, locus of control affects how people put their competencies to use. Workers who place their sense of agency inside themselves are more invested in making the most of their skills and knowledge because they have faith in their own talents to bring about the results they seek. Contrarily, workers who place their locus of control outside of themselves often doubt their own abilities to make good use of their skills. People with an internal locus of control are more likely to view their competencies as a means to an end—a means to success. When workers have faith in themselves, they are more likely to take the initiative and look for creative solutions. An employee's internal locus of control amplifies the impact of competence on performance, according to research by Heri Kusumah et al. (2024). When workers have an internal locus of control, they are more likely to rely on their technical skills to provide superior customer service. A hypothesis can be developed using the information gathered from the literature review and the study findings:

Hypothesis 5: The link between competence and performance in the workplace is mediated by locus of control

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III. RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative methodology utilizing descriptive and explanatory methodologies is employed in this research. The study used a saturation sampling strategy to collect data from 40 permanent staff at the PT Kimia Farma Diagnostika Bali Business Unit. The performance of employees is the dependent variable in this study, with job competence and discipline serving as the independent variables and locus of control mediating the relationship between the two. The data was gathered through the use of a validated and reliable questionnaire that utilized Likert scales.

Finding both direct and indirect correlations between variables is the goal of this study's model. Path analysis with the PLS technique, run by SmartPLS version 4.0.9.9, was used to test the hypothesis and acquire the research results. Following the data testing phase, the analysis was carried out and the findings were interpreted by drawing on relevant theoretical and empirical research. In addition, we offer some suggestions for future research and draw some conclusions based on our considerations. By taking this tack, the study hopes to shed light on how these elements complement one another to boost productivity at work.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSION

Goodness of Fit (R^2) Test Results

In this study, two concepts are examined: performance of workers and locus of control. In accordance with Ghazali & Latan (2012), a model is considered strong when the R^2 value is 0.67, moderate when the R^2 value is 0.33, and weak when the R^2 value is 0.19. Below in Table 1 you can see the R^2 value for the variable build.

Table 1. R-Square (R^2) Value

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
EP	0.871	0.860
LOC	0.374	0.341

Source: Data Processed, 2024

Performance of staff members (EP) meets the strong model criteria with an R-Square score of 0.871, indicating that the model accounts for the impact of work discipline and competence. A moderate model of the influence of work discipline and competence is indicated by the locus of control (LOC), which has an R-Square index value of 0.374.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2) Test Results

Model strength and weakness are determined by the Q^2 score; according to Ghazali & Latan (2012), a score of 0.35 indicates a strong model, a score of 0.15 indicates a moderate model, and a score of 0.02 indicates a weak model. It is possible to view the Q^2 value for these variable constructs in Table 2.

Table 2. Q-Square Predictive Relevance (Q^2) Value

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
WD	160.000	160.000	
CMP	320.000	320.000	
LOC	80.000	53.361	0.333
EP	120.000	30.088	0.749

Source: Data Processed, 2024

This model seems to be rather good at making predictions, since the locus of control variable has a Q^2 score of 0.333. At the same time, the variable pertaining to staff performance had a Q^2 of 0.749, which is a very good predictor. These numbers place both variables squarely in the strong model category.

Direct Effect Test

Testing the inter-variable relationships is the next stage. This test is designed to look at the connections between the important aspects like competence, discipline, and the performance of workers, without taking any mediators into account. Finding out if and to what degree these variables affect each other directly is what the results are all about. Table 3, which summarizes the results and degrees of significance for the direct impacts, is shown below.

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Table 3. Direct Effect Test Results

Construct	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
WD -> EP	0.030	0.049	0.179	0.169	0.433
CMP -> EP	0.730	0.717	0.168	4.345	0.000
LOC -> EP	0.264	0.256	0.083	3.169	0.001

Source: Data Processed, 2024

In Table 3, we can see the results of the direct impact test. The work discipline (WD) variable does not significantly affect employee performance (EP) with an influence coefficient of 0.030, a T-Statistics value of 0.169 (<1.96), and a P-Value of 0.433 (>0.05). With a T-Statistics value of 4.345 (>1.96), a P-Value of 0.000 (<0.05), and an influence coefficient of 0.730, the competence variable (CMP) stands out as having a strong and substantial impact on employee performance. As an additional factor, the locus of control (LOC) variable significantly impacts employee performance, as evidenced by an influence coefficient of 0.264, a T-Statistics value of 3.169 (>1.96), and a P-Value of 0.001 (<0.05). Performance among staff members is highly impacted by competence and locus of control, but work discipline does not show a significant effect, according to these studies.

Indirect Effect Test

The indirect influence between construct factors is examined further through testing. The purpose of this research is to identify the mediating function of locus of control between competence and work discipline as they pertain to employee productivity. Coefficient value of 0.128, T-Statistics of 1.645, and P-Value of 0.050 are the test results shown in Table 4, which demonstrate that work discipline (WD) affects employee performance (EP) through locus of control (LOC). This demonstrates that, in the connection between workplace discipline and performance, locus of control mediates at a marginally significant level. On the other hand, with a coefficient value of 0.037, T-Statistics 0.513, and P-Value 0.304 (>0.05), the influence of competence (CMP) on worker performance through locus of control is not significant. Locus of control is thus only demonstrated to mediate the influence of work discipline on employee performance; however, it is not proven to mediate the relationship between competence and performance among workers.

Table 4. Indirect Effect Test Results

Construct	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
WD -> LOC -> EP	0.128	0.117	0.078	1.645	0.050
CMP -> LOC -> EP	0.037	0.046	0.071	0.513	0.304

Source: Data Processed, 2024

Analyzing the parameter coefficients and the significance value of t-statistics allows one to ascertain the importance of the postulated influence. Figure 1 below shows the framework of this study model.

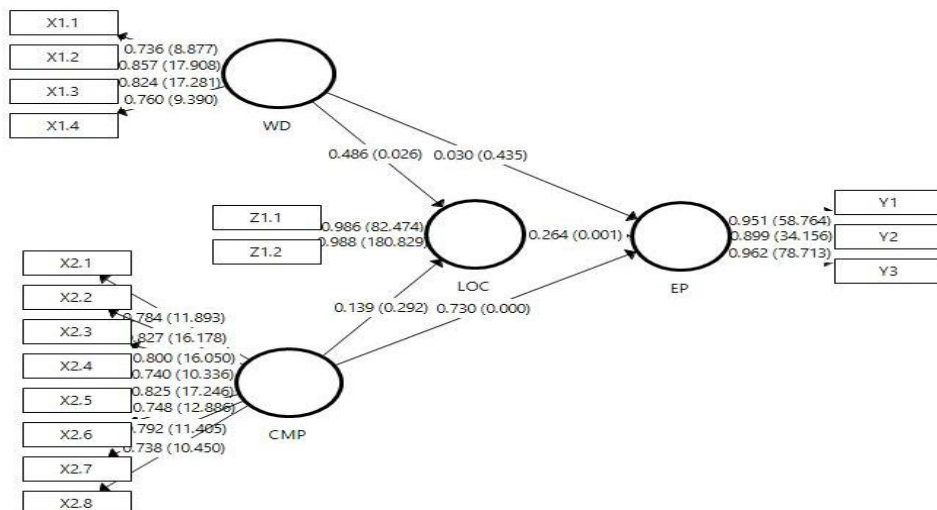


Figure 1. PLS Path Model

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Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

With a coefficient of 0.030, T-Statistics of 0.169 (<1.96), and P-Value of 0.433 (>0.05), the analysis demonstrates that work discipline does not have a substantial influence on performance among workers. This is the conclusion that can be drawn from the findings. This suggests that the level of work discipline exhibited by employees at the PT Kimia Farma Diagnostika Bali Business Unit does not have a substantial direct impact on the performance of those individuals. It is possible that this is related to the fact that work discipline is more concerned with adhering to rules and processes, which, albeit being essential, is not necessarily sufficient to directly drive performance improvement. It is possible that high levels of work discipline, in the absence of additional elements such as motivation or competence, may not produce the best possible results in terms of employee performance in some circumstances. Given the findings of the tests that were carried out, it is clear that the hypothesis that was created cannot be accepted. According to the findings of Prasetiyaningtiyas et al. (2022), Agusria et al. (2022), Maizar et al. (2023), Tajudin et al. (2023), and Setyawan et al. (2024), which concluded that enhancing work discipline is very important to improve employee performance, these test results do not correlate with the findings of these other researchers.

Effect of Competence on Employee Performance

The coefficient of competence is 0.730, the T-statistic is 4.345 (> 1.96), and the P-Value is 0.000 (<0.05). This indicates that competence has a significant and positive influence on employee performance. The evidence presented here demonstrates that the competences of employees, which encompass their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards their work, play a substantial impact in dramatically boosting their performance. Not only does competence determine how well individuals are able to do tasks, but it also impacts how fast they are able to adjust to changes in the manner in which they perform their jobs. When personnel possess the necessary competences, they are better able to carry out their duties in a manner that is both efficient and effective. Employees are able to overcome problems on the work, create creative solutions, and reach organizational targets (all of which directly contribute to their performance) when they possess appropriate levels of competence. The results of the tests that were carried out demonstrate that the hypothesis that has been developed is valid and lend support to the findings that were obtained by Prasetiyaningtiyas et al. (2022), Agusria et al. (2022), Maizar et al. (2023), Tajudin et al. (2023), and Setyawan et al. (2024), who came to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between competence and employee productivity.

The Effect of Locus of Control on Employee Performance

The examination reveals that locus of control exerts a considerable impact on employee performance, evidenced by a coefficient of 0.264, T-Statistics of 3.169 (>1.96), and a P-Value of 0.001 (<0.05). The findings suggest that the perception of self-control among employees, whether internal or external, plays a crucial role in enhancing their performance. Individuals possessing an internal locus of control often perceive themselves as the architects of their own success, which in turn fosters a greater motivation to exert effort. Conversely, those who exhibit an external locus of control may require additional support to reach their fullest potential. Within this framework, the conviction that employees hold regarding their own competencies plays a crucial role in enhancing performance. The results of the test indicate that the developed hypothesis is valid and corroborates the findings of Ahmad Soleh et al. (2020), Tistianingtyas & Parwoto (2021), Nasution et al. (2021), Rusilawati et al. (2023), and Syah & Safrida (2024), which demonstrate a significant relationship between locus of control and individual performance.

The Mediating Role of Locus of Control on the Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

The findings from the path analysis indicate that locus of control plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between work discipline and employee performance, evidenced by a coefficient of 0.128, T-Statistics of 1.645 (marginally significant), and a P-Value of 0.050. This suggests that the locus of control enhances the connection between work discipline and employee performance, even though work discipline itself does not exert a significant direct influence on performance. When employees exhibit strong work discipline while simultaneously perceiving that they possess control over their work outcomes, the beneficial effects on performance become significantly more evident. The locus of control serves as a cognitive structure through which employees can perceive work discipline as an instrument that facilitates the attainment of superior outcomes. The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Talaohu et al. (2024), which demonstrated that locus of control enhances the impact of work discipline on individual performance.

The Mediating Role of Locus of Control on the Effect of Competence on Employee Performance

The analysis results indicate that locus of control does not play a significant mediating role in the relationship between competence and worker efficiency, evidenced by a coefficient of 0.037, T-Statistics of 0.513 (<1.96), and a P-Value of 0.304 (> 0.05). This indicates that while competence has a direct influence on performance, this influence is independent of the mediating function of locus of control. This indicates that employee competence, encompassing both technical and non-technical skills, is sufficiently robust to directly influence performance, independent of any mediation by perceived self-control. Capable employees

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often depend on their expertise and understanding to accomplish tasks, rendering the impact of locus of control in this dynamic less significant. The findings presented here do not align with the research conducted by Heri Kusumah et al. (2024), which indicates that an internal locus of control enhances the impact of competence on performance among employees.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

In accordance to this study's findings, work discipline does not significantly impact employee performance, but competence and locus of control do. A person's sense of agency, however, can mediate the connection between self-control at work and productivity. In light of these considerations, the leadership of the PT Kimia Farma Diagnostika Bali Business Unit must make investing in their employees' professional growth a top priority. Building strong beliefs of an internal locus of control also requires deliberate action, such as instituting policies that make workers feel that their efforts matter and that they can influence the outcomes. A combination of employee empowerment, open communication, and recognition programs for individual accomplishments can accomplish this.

While work discipline did not have a substantial direct influence on boosting worker effectiveness, competency was found to be the most significant element. Although locus of control does not mediate the relationship between competence and performance, it does play a significant role in improving the association between work discipline and employee performance. The findings emphasize the significance of competence in enhancing productivity among workers and the role of locus of control as a psychological component in effectively enforcing work discipline.

SUGGESTION

Discoveries from this study shed light on the interplay between employees' performance, competence, locus of control, and work discipline. The breadth of the variables considered is one area where this study falls short, though. Thus, it is advised that future studies take into account additional factors including intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational culture. These factors could potentially impact the correlation between competence, work discipline, and employee performance. The results can be made more applicable and credible by expanding the scope of the study to different industries or departments. To further investigate the mental processes underlying locus of control and its effect on productivity in the workplace, a quantitative and qualitative mixed-method approach could be employed. Human resource management can benefit from future studies that broaden their scope and use more practical methodologies to paint a more complete and accurate picture.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To everyone who has helped get this study done, and particularly to those who have given the author with the data and information they needed, the author is eternally grateful.

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