

# Work Motivation and Work Discipline as Predictors of Employee Performance: The Intervening Role of Job Satisfaction at PT Taspen (Persero) KCU Semarang

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## Abstract

Employee performance is an important factor in achieving organizational goals. This study examines the effects of work motivation and work discipline on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at PT Taspen (Persero) KCU Semarang. A quantitative approach was employed using saturated sampling, involving 60 employees. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, instrument testing, classical assumption testing, multiple regression analysis, coefficient of determination, hypothesis testing, and the Sobel test with SPSS version 26. The results indicate that work motivation and work discipline positively and significantly affect job satisfaction. Furthermore, work motivation, work discipline, and job satisfaction have positive and significant effects on employee performance, with job satisfaction showing the strongest direct influence. Job satisfaction also partially mediates the relationships between work motivation and employee performance, as well as between work discipline and employee performance. Both work motivation and work discipline retain significant direct effects on employee performance, indicating that their influences extend beyond the mediating role of job satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening employee motivation and discipline while prioritizing job satisfaction to improve performance. This study provides practical insights for human resource management in state-owned pension fund institutions, emphasizing the integration of satisfaction-oriented initiatives with motivational and disciplinary strategies to support employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Work motivation; Work discipline; Employee performance; Job satisfaction; PT Taspen

**JEL Code:** M12; M54; J28

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## INTRODUCTION

Employee performance constitutes the fundamental determinant of organizational sustainability, particularly within state-owned enterprises

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entrusted with managing public funds and delivering long-term financial security to citizens (Fauziah et al., 2024). PT Taspen (Persero) functions as Indonesia's state pension and social security fund manager for civil servants, a mandate that places exceptionally high demands on employee integrity, service orientation, and operational precision given the sensitivity of managing retirement funds for millions of beneficiaries. Internal performance appraisal data from PT Taspen (Persero) KCU Semarang coverin the data of satisfaction described on Table 1:

**Table 1**  
*The Data of satisfactioin and attachment*

| Indicator                          | 2022   | 2023   |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Employee Satisfactioin Index (ESI) | 97,43% | 89,91% |
| Employee Engagement Index (EEI)    | 97,71% | 90,79% |

Sources : PT TASPEN (Persero). (2024). *Laporan Keberlanjutan 2023: Realizing Commitment to Deliver Sustainable Values* [Sustainability Report]. PT TASPEN (Persero).

Table 1 shows that both employee satisfaction and employee engagement at PT TASPEN (Persero) declined from 2022 to 2023. The Employee Satisfaction Index (ESI) decreased from 97.43% to 89.91%, while the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) decreased from 97.71% to 90.79%. Although both indicators remained relatively high, the decline indicates a decrease in employees' satisfaction and engagement, which may signal the need for management to strengthen employee well-being and engagement to support organizational performance.

Work motivation and work discipline represent two of the most extensively examined antecedents of employee performance within human resource management literature. Motivation drives the intensity and persistence of employee effort toward organizational goals, while discipline governs adherence to established rules, procedures, and behavioral standards within the workplace. Empirical evidence from the regional secretariat of Bogor City demonstrated that work motivation and work discipline jointly and significantly influence employee performance, establishing both variables as consistent predictors across Indonesian public sector settings(Maryani et al., 2021) A study conducted at a private banking institution in Semarang similarly found that motivation, work environment, work discipline, and compensation collectively shape employee performance outcomes, reinforcing the relevance of these constructs within financial sector organizations operating in the same regional context as the present study (Alsafadi et al., 2023) These findings position work motivation and work discipline as theoretically and empirically justified predictors for examining the performance decline observed at PT Taspen (Persero) KCU Semarang.

Job satisfaction has increasingly been positioned as an intervening mechanism that explains how motivation and discipline translate into performance outcomes, rather than functioning merely as a parallel predictor. A study examining employees with an intervening job satisfaction variable found that motivation and discipline exert significant effects on performance both directly and indirectly through the satisfaction pathway, confirming job satisfaction as a meaningful transmission mechanism rather than a redundant construct (Priambodho et al., 2023). Comparable evidence from a study on organizational commitment and work discipline demonstrated that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between these antecedents and employee performance, with the indirect pathway proving at least as influential as the direct effects (Rahmawati & Trisninawati, 2024). Work motivation and job satisfaction significantly affect employee performance, with employee engagement serving as an additional mediating mechanism that strengthens the overall explanatory power of the model (Riyanto et al., 2021). Based on the relevant study spanning multiple organizational settings similarly confirmed that motivation, leadership, and organizational culture significantly shape job satisfaction, which in turn drives employee performance (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Additional relevant research evidence demonstrated that job satisfaction meaningfully explains the relationship between human resource management practices and employee performance across emerging-market organizational contexts (Alsafadi et al., 2023).

The mediating role attributed to job satisfaction nonetheless remains inconsistent across recent empirical findings, revealing a meaningful gap in the current state of knowledge. In line with that the study of nursing performance in Indonesia found that work discipline, work motivation, and organizational commitment though job satisfaction-mediated mechanism does not operate uniformly across predictor variables (Ingsih et al., 2021). Another relevant study instead positioned work discipline itself as the mediating variable between motivation, stress management, and performance, rather than treating discipline as an antecedent that operates through job satisfaction (Suryanto & Wijaya, 2025). This divergence in how job satisfaction, work discipline, and work motivation are alternately treated as predictors or mediators across studies indicates that the mechanism connecting these constructs remains empirically unsettled, particularly outside the manufacturing, banking, hospital, and public administration contexts that dominate the existing literature.

A further gap concerns the limited empirical attention given to state-owned pension and social security institutions specifically. The majority of studies examining motivation, discipline, satisfaction, and performance have been conducted within regional government secretariats, hospitals,

banking institutions, and manufacturing firms, while state-owned pension fund managers such as PT Taspen remain comparatively underexamined despite operating under a distinct regulatory and public-trust environment that differs meaningfully from conventional commercial enterprises. This gap is compounded by the absence of any prior study situating the motivation-discipline-satisfaction-performance model within PT Taspen (Persero) KCU Semarang specifically, despite the organization's documented and measurable performance decline across 2023 in Table 1.

The present study offers a specific contribution by testing job satisfaction as an intervening variable within the relationship between work motivation, work discipline, and employee performance in the distinct institutional context of a state-owned pension fund branch office, a setting characterized by high public accountability demands that differ from the commercial and administrative settings examined in prior research. The novelty of this study lies primarily in its organizational and institutional context, focusing on employees of PT TASPEN (Persero) KCU Semarang, a state-owned institution providing pension and social security services. Rather than claiming novelty in the theoretical configuration of the variables, this study contributes empirical evidence on the relationships between work motivation, work discipline, job satisfaction, and employee performance within this specific institutional setting. This combination of an underexamined state-owned pension sector context and a demonstrably real performance decline addresses both the sectoral and empirical gaps identified in the reviewed literature, offering findings that carry direct managerial relevance for PT Taspen's human resource policy while contributing theoretically to the unresolved debate on job satisfaction's mediating strength within the motivation-discipline-performance relationship.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains that relationships between individuals and organizations develop through reciprocal exchanges, in which employees respond to the treatment, resources, and support they receive from their organization through corresponding attitudes and behaviors. The theory was developed from the foundational work of Homans and Blau, with Blau in (Alamanos, 2026) emphasizing that social exchange involves voluntary actions that generate obligations to reciprocate. In the employment context, when employees perceive that the organization provides fair treatment, supportive working conditions, recognition, and opportunities to contribute, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work and respond through greater motivation, commitment, and performance. Conversely, unfavorable workplace experiences may weaken employees'

positive responses toward the organization. From this perspective, work motivation and work discipline can be understood as behavioral responses that are shaped within the employee–organization exchange relationship, while job satisfaction represents an important attitudinal outcome of employees' workplace experiences that can subsequently influence their performance. Thus, SET provides a theoretical basis for explaining how work motivation and work discipline may contribute to employee performance directly and indirectly through job satisfaction.

#### **Influence of work motivation on Employee Performance**

Work motivation refers to the psychological forces that encourage employees to initiate, direct, and sustain effort toward the accomplishment of work-related goals. Motivation influences the intensity and persistence of employee effort, particularly when employees perceive that their work can produce meaningful outcomes. Recent research has continued to identify work motivation as an important determinant of employee performance and job satisfaction. (Laily, 2024) found that work motivation contributes to employee outcomes through job satisfaction, while (Nadhilah, 2024) demonstrated that work motivation is associated with job satisfaction within an organizational setting where employee performance is also examined. Work motivation is expected to influence employee performance because motivated employees are more likely to exert greater effort, maintain persistence, and remain committed to completing their responsibilities. When employees have strong motivation, they tend to direct their efforts toward achieving work goals and maintaining productive behavior, which can improve the quality and quantity of their performance. Based on the explanation, the hypothesis that produced was :

H<sup>1</sup> : Work motivation has positive influence towards employee performance

#### **Influence of Work Discipline on Employee Performance**

Work discipline represents employees' willingness to comply with organizational rules, procedures, schedules, and standards of behavior. Discipline provides a behavioral structure that enables employees to perform their responsibilities consistently and reduces deviations that may interfere with organizational activities. Recent research has identified work discipline as an important factor associated with employee performance. (Azis et al., 2024) found that work discipline had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, while (Dharma et al., 2024) identified work discipline as an important factor in explaining employee performance through its relationship with job satisfaction. Employees with strong work discipline are more likely to follow established procedures, manage their work effectively, minimize errors, and complete tasks according to organizational expectations. Consistent discipline can therefore create reliable work behavior that supports

the achievement of individual and organizational performance targets. The hypothesis that produced was:

H<sup>2</sup> : Work Discipline has positive influence towards employee performance

#### **Influence of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction**

Work motivation can shape employees' evaluation of their work because motivated employees are more likely to experience meaning, involvement, and positive psychological responses in carrying out their responsibilities. Motivation can create a stronger sense of purpose and encourage employees to perceive their work as valuable, which may contribute to higher job satisfaction. Recent research supports this relationship. (Mangkunegara et al., 2015) examined work motivation and job satisfaction as factors associated with employee performance, while (Dewi, 2026) found that work motivation contributed to job satisfaction in their empirical model. Job satisfaction can consequently represent an important psychological response to employees' motivational conditions. Employees who receive sufficient internal and external motivation may develop more favorable attitudes toward their work, which can strengthen their overall satisfaction. Research examining motivation and performance through job satisfaction provides empirical support for positioning job satisfaction as a potential mechanism linking motivation with subsequent performance outcomes.

H<sup>3</sup>: Work motivation has a positive influence on job satisfaction.

#### **Influence of Work Discipline on Job Satisfaction**

Work discipline can influence job satisfaction by creating consistency and predictability in employees' daily work experiences. Clear work procedures, consistent application of organizational rules, and orderly work practices can reduce uncertainty and support a more stable working environment. Recent empirical evidence indicates that work discipline is associated with job satisfaction. Dharma et al. (2023) found that work discipline significantly influenced job satisfaction within a model that also examined employee performance, while (Widiyanto, 2021) reported that work discipline positively and significantly affected job satisfaction in their mediation model. Employees may develop more positive evaluations of their jobs when organizational expectations are clear and workplace practices are implemented consistently. The resulting satisfaction can become an important psychological pathway through which disciplined work behavior contributes to employee performance. Research on work discipline, job satisfaction, and performance supports the relevance of examining this indirect relationship in organizational settings.

H<sup>4</sup>: Work discipline has a positive influence on job satisfaction.

#### **Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance**

Job satisfaction can influence employee performance because employees who evaluate their work positively may demonstrate stronger involvement and greater willingness to fulfill organizational responsibilities. Satisfaction can encourage employees to maintain positive work behavior, which can contribute to higher levels of productivity and task accomplishment. Recent empirical research consistently identifies job satisfaction as an important predictor of employee performance. (Yulianti & Sary, 2025) found a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, while Azis et al. also reported that job satisfaction positively contributes to employee performance. Job satisfaction also provides a theoretically meaningful explanation for the indirect relationships between work-related antecedents and performance. Recent mediation research has demonstrated that job satisfaction can transmit the effects of work motivation and work discipline to employee performance.

H<sup>5</sup>: Job satisfaction has a positive influence on employee performance

**The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the influence of Work motivation on employee performance**

Work motivation drives employees to exert effort toward organizational goals, while employee performance reflects the resulting quality and quantity of work, and job satisfaction functions as the psychological bridge between the two, since motivated employees tend to evaluate their job conditions more positively, which in turn improves performance. (Yundardi, 2023) found that motivation significantly influenced job satisfaction and that job satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between motivation and employee performance, a result that justifies treating job satisfaction as a mediator because it shows motivation working through employees' felt satisfaction rather than affecting performance directly alone. (Kurniawan, 2023) found that job satisfaction mediated the influence of work motivation on employee performance, strengthening the theoretical justification of the hypothesis since the study's variable structure and analytical method directly mirror the proposed research model. (Pasaribu, 2024) reported that including job satisfaction reduced the direct path coefficient between motivation and job performance while the relationship remained statistically significant, indicating partial mediation and supporting the argument that job satisfaction absorbs part of the effect motivation exerts on performance. The hypothesis was:

H<sup>6</sup>: Job Satisfaction mediates the influence of work motivation on employee performance

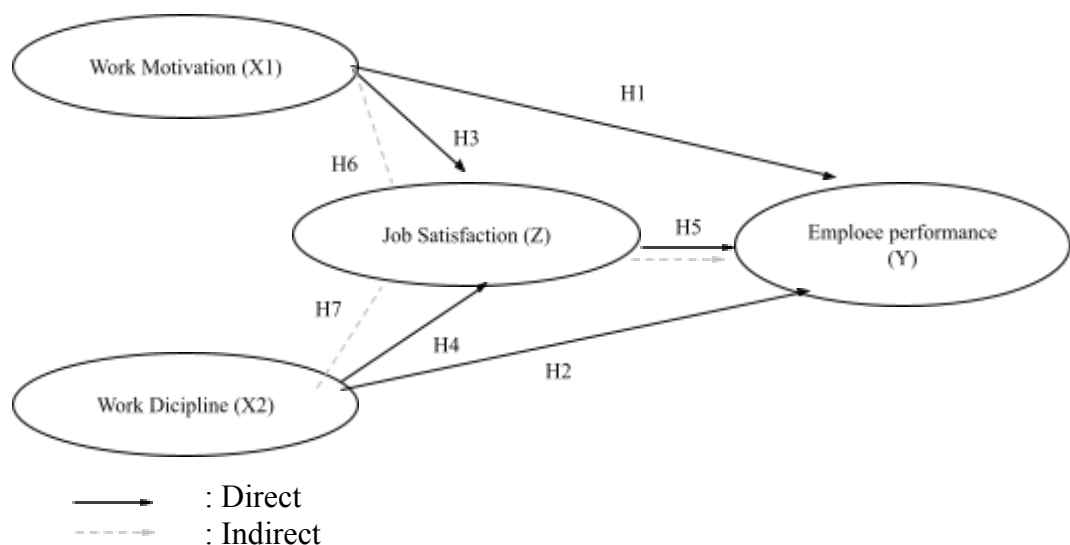
**The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the influence of Work Discipline on Employee Performance**

Work discipline, expressed through employees' adherence to rules, punctuality, and consistency in carrying out assigned tasks, is widely regarded

as a key determinant of employee performance, yet its influence does not always translate directly into better output since the way employees feel about their jobs often shapes how disciplined behavior actually pays off; this is where job satisfaction steps in as a mediating mechanism, absorbing part of the effect discipline has on performance and channeling it through employees' emotional and evaluative response to their work conditions. (Mulyono & Farhan, 2024) tested this pathway among employees exposed to varying levels of organizational climate and found that work discipline on its own had a negative and insignificant direct effect on performance, yet it significantly increased job satisfaction, which in turn partially mediated the relationship between discipline and performance, suggesting that discipline mainly improves performance by first making employees feel more satisfied with their jobs rather than by direct enforcement alone. (Ngurah et al., 2024) examined the same mechanism in a public-sector welfare division and reported that job satisfaction significantly affected employee performance and partially mediated the effect of work motivation on performance, while for work discipline specifically the mediating pathway was weaker, a nuance that still supports the broader argument that satisfaction is the channel through which behavioral and motivational inputs are converted into performance gains. The hypothesis was:

H<sup>7</sup>: Job Satisfaction mediates the influence of work discipline on employee performance

**Figure 1**  
*Frame of thinking*



Source:

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationships among work motivation, work discipline, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The population consisted of 60 employees of PT TASPEN. Since the population was relatively small and all members were accessible, the study used total sampling, meaning that all 60 employees were included as research respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing statements related to work motivation, work discipline, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was adopted from relevant research described on Table 2:

**Table 2**  
*Scale of Questionnaire*

| <b>Work Motivation (X1) (Susanto, 2019)</b>      |                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| X1.1                                             | Employees have opportunities to participate in education and training programs to support their performance and increase their work motivation |
| X1.2                                             | Employees who demonstrate high work performance are given opportunities for career development                                                 |
| X1.3                                             | Employees have. Good relationships with their colleagues and support one another                                                               |
| X1.4                                             | In completing their work, employees have their own methods and sufficient authority to carry out their responsibilities accountably            |
| <b>Work Discipline (X2) (Susanto, 2019)</b>      |                                                                                                                                                |
| X2.1                                             | Employees arrive at and leave work at the scheduled times                                                                                      |
| X2.2                                             | Tasks assigned by supervisors become employees responsibilities and are completed optimally and accountably                                    |
| X2.3                                             | Every employee is responsible for helping maintain the security and equipment in the office                                                    |
| X2.4                                             | Employee complete their work on time                                                                                                           |
| <b>Employee Performance (Y) (Megawati, 2017)</b> |                                                                                                                                                |
| Y1                                               | Employees should produce good work results to achieve the desired organizational goals                                                         |
| Y2                                               | Improving work quality. Is a shared responsibility                                                                                             |
| Y3                                               | The work performed by employees consistently meets the predetermined targets                                                                   |
| Y4                                               | Employees are required to perform at their best to achieve the goals established by organization                                               |
| <b>Job Satisfaction (Z) (Husein, 2005)</b>       |                                                                                                                                                |
| Z1                                               | The job provides security for employees future retirement                                                                                      |
| Z2                                               | The company policy regarding permanent employee status is clear                                                                                |
| Z3                                               | Employees are assigned to work groups that match their skills                                                                                  |
| Z4                                               | The work environment, equipment, and working atmosphere are good and adequate                                                                  |

Source:

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Multiple linear regression analysis was used to

examine the effects of work motivation and work discipline on employee performance and job satisfaction in accordance with the proposed research model. The t-test was used to determine the partial effect and statistical significance of each independent variable, with a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The Sobel test was applied to examine the indirect effect.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

**Table 3.**  
*Characteristic of Respondent*

|                | Gender      | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Man            |             | 31            | 52.0           |
|                | Woman       | 29            | 48.0           |
|                | Total       | 60            | 100            |
| Age            |             |               |                |
|                | 20-30 years | 20            | 33.0           |
|                | 31-45 years | 33            | 55.0           |
|                | 46-56 years | 7             | 12.0           |
|                | Total       | 60            | 100            |
| Education      |             |               |                |
|                | D3          | 14            | 23             |
|                | S1          | 43            | 72             |
|                | S2          | 3             | 5              |
|                | Total       | 60            | 100            |
| Working period |             |               |                |
|                | 0-10 years  | 20            | 33             |
|                | 11-20 years | 33            | 55             |
|                | 21-32 years | 7             | 12             |
|                | Total       | 60            | 100            |

Source: Author(s) work

Table 3 presents the characteristics of the 60 respondents involved in the study. Based on gender, 31 respondents (52.0%) were men, while 29 respondents (48.0%) were women, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents was aged 31–45 years, comprising 33 respondents (55.0%), followed by those aged 20–30 years with 20 respondents (33.0%), and those aged 46–56 years with 7 respondents (12.0%). Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (S1), accounting for 43 respondents (72.0%), followed by diploma (D3) holders with 14 respondents (23.0%) and master's degree (S2) holders with 3 respondents (5.0%). Based on working period, 33 respondents (55.0%) had worked for 11–20 years, 20 respondents (33.0%) had worked for 0–10 years, and 7 respondents (12.0%) had worked for 21–32 years. Overall, the respondent profile indicates that the study participants were predominantly employees aged 31–45 years, had a bachelor's degree, and had 11–20 years of work experience.

### The Result of Validity and Reliability Test

The researcher was conducted the validity and reliability test showed on Table 4 :

The validity and reliability test results presented in Table 4 show that all indicators for work motivation (X1), work discipline (X2), employee performance (Y), and job satisfaction (Z) are valid because their calculated r-values are higher than the r-table value of 0.198. The calculated r-values for work motivation range from 0.870 to 0.947, while those for work discipline range from 0.860 to 0.945. Meanwhile, employee performance indicators have calculated r-values ranging from 0.906 to 0.966, and job satisfaction indicators range from 0.904 to 0.941. The reliability test also indicates that all variables are reliable, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.931 for work motivation, 0.937 for work discipline, 0.960 for employee performance, and 0.942 for job satisfaction. Since all reliability coefficients exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, the instruments demonstrate good internal consistency and are suitable for use in further analysis.

**Table 4.**  
*The Result of Validity and Reliability Test*

| Variables                      | Indicator | r-calcula<br>te | r-tabl<br>e | Description | Reliability | Description |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Work<br>motivation<br>(X1)     | X1.1      | 0,947           | 0.198       | Valid       | 0,931       | Reliable    |
|                                | X1.2      | 0,943           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | X1.3      | 0,870           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | X1.4      | 0,884           |             | Valid       |             |             |
| Work<br>Dicipline<br>(X2)      | X2.1      | 0,860           |             | Valid       | 0,937       | Reliable    |
|                                | X2.2      | 0,935           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | X2.3      | 0,945           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | X2.4      | 0,938           |             | Valid       |             |             |
| Employee<br>Performance<br>(Y) | Y.1       | 0,965           |             | Valid       | 0,960       | Reliable    |
|                                | Y.2       | 0,954           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | Y.3       | 0,966           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | Y.4       | 0,906           |             | Valid       |             |             |
| Job<br>Satisfaction<br>(Z)     | Z.1       | 0,909           |             | Valid       | 0,942       | Reliable    |
|                                | Z.2       | 0,941           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | Z.3       | 0,938           |             | Valid       |             |             |
|                                | Z.4       | 0,904           |             | Valid       |             |             |

Source: Author(s) work

### The Result of classical assumption test

Classical assumption tests serve as a prerequisite for hypothesis testing; the tests conducted for each model are tests for normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity as follows:

Table 5 presents the results of the classical assumption tests for Model 1 and Model 2. The normality test for both models shows a significance value greater than 0.05, indicating that the residuals are normally distributed. The multicollinearity test also shows that the tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and the VIF values are less than 10, indicating that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables in either model. Furthermore, the heteroscedasticity test produces significance values greater than 0.05 for both models, indicating that there is no heteroscedasticity. Therefore, the results demonstrate that both regression models satisfy the classical assumption requirements and are appropriate for further regression analysis.

**Table 5.**  
*The Result of Classical Assumption test*

| Model   | Classical assumption | Result                        | Description                    |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Model 1 | Normality            | Sig. > 0.05                   | Normal                         |
|         | Multikolonierity     | Tolerance > 0.10 dan VIF < 10 | There is no multikolonierity   |
|         | Heteroskedastisity   | Sig. > 0.05                   | There is no heteroskedastisity |
| Model 2 | Normality            | Sig. > 0.05                   | Normal                         |
|         | Multikolinierity     | Tolerance > 0.10 dan VIF < 10 | There is no multikolonierity   |
|         | Heteroskedastisity   | Sig. > 0.05                   | There is no heteroskedastisity |

Source: Author(s) work

### Multiple Regression Analysis

**Table 6.**  
*The Result of hypothesis test for Direct Effect*

| Model 1: DV = Job Satisfaction (Z)      |         |            |       |        |       |             |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|------------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
|                                         | B       | Std. Error | Beta  | t      | Sig.  | Description |
| (Constant)                              | 29.374  | 10.657     | -     | 2.756  | 0.008 |             |
| Work Motivation (X1)                    | 0.372   | 0.097      | 0.428 | 3.849  | 0.000 | H1 Accepted |
| Work Discipline (X2)                    | 0.267   | 0.098      | 0.302 | 2.713  | 0.009 | H2 Accepted |
| (Constant)                              | -31.272 | 11.346     | -     | -2.756 | 0.008 |             |
| Model 2 : DV = Employee Performance (Y) |         |            |       |        |       |             |
| Work Motivation (X1)                    | 0.389   | 0.108      | 0.327 | 3.586  | 0.001 | H3 Accepted |
| Work Discipline (X2)                    | 0.342   | 0.104      | 0.283 | 3.278  | 0.002 | H4 Accepted |
| Job Satisfaction (Z)                    | 0.617   | 0.132      | 0.450 | 4.658  | 0.000 | H5 Accepted |

Source: Author(s) work

Table 6 shows that work motivation and work discipline have positive and significant effects on job satisfaction, with significance values of 0.000 and 0.009, respectively, so H1 and H2 are accepted. Work motivation and

work discipline also have positive and significant effects on employee performance, with significance values of 0.001 and 0.002, respectively, supporting H3 and H4. Furthermore, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Sig. = 0.000), so H5 is accepted. The result of sobel test described on Table 7:

**Table 7.**  
*The Result of hypothesis indirect effect*

| (Sobel)      | a     | b     | Z-value | p-value | Kesimpulan  |
|--------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-------------|
| X1 -> Z -> Y | 0.372 | 0.617 | 2.965   | 0.00303 | H6 Accepted |
| X2 -> Z -> Y | 0.267 | 0.617 | 2.354   | 0.01858 | H7 Accepted |

Source: Author(s) work

Table 7 presents the results of the indirect effect analysis using the Sobel test. The results show that work motivation has a significant indirect effect on employee performance through job satisfaction, with a Z-value of 2.965 and a p-value of 0.00303 ( $< 0.05$ ), so H6 is accepted. Similarly, work discipline has a significant indirect effect on employee performance through job satisfaction, with a Z-value of 2.354 and a p-value of 0.01858 ( $< 0.05$ ), so H7 is accepted. Thus, job satisfaction significantly mediates the effects of both work motivation and work discipline on employee performance. The result of coefficient determination showed on Table 8:

**Table 8.**  
*The Result of coefficient Determination*

| Model   | R     | R-Square | Adjusted R-Square | Std. Error if the Estimate |
|---------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| X1,X2,Y | .797a | 0.635    | 0.615             | 8.726                      |
| X1,X2,Z | .550a | 0.303    | 0.278             | 8.725                      |

Source: Author(s) work

The coefficient of determination results show that Model 1 (X1, X2, and Y) has an R-square value of 0.635, indicating that work motivation and work discipline jointly explain 63.5% of the variation in employee performance, while the remaining 36.5% is explained by other factors outside the model. Meanwhile, Model 2 (X1, X2, and Z) has an R-square value of 0.303, indicating that work motivation and work discipline explain 30.3% of the variation in job satisfaction, while the remaining 69.7% is influenced by other factors. The adjusted R-square values are 0.615 for Model 1 and 0.278 for Model 2, indicating that the models retain explanatory power after adjustment for the number of predictors. The path analysis showed on Figure 2:

**Figure 2.**  
*Path Analysis*



Source: Author(s) work

### **The Effect of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction (H1)**

Employees at PT Taspen KCU Semarang who exhibit clearer behavioral direction, sustained persistence, and stronger responsibility toward their tasks appear to translate that internal drive into a more favorable evaluation of their work overall, a pattern consistent with the psychological premise that motivated employees derive greater intrinsic meaning from goal achievement. This finding corresponds closely with a Scopus-indexed study demonstrating that motivation functions as a significant antecedent of job satisfaction across multiple organizational settings, reinforcing motivation's role as a genuine driver of affective work evaluation rather than a mere behavioral output (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). A more recent Sinta-indexed study conducted at a regional civil service agency similarly confirmed that work motivation significantly shapes job satisfaction among public sector employees, a context that closely parallels the state-owned institutional setting examined in the present study (Pane et al., 2023). The consistency of this relationship across a private multi-sector study and a public sector agency suggests the motivation-satisfaction link operates independently of ownership structure, indicating that PT Taspen's employees respond to motivational conditions in a manner comparable to both private and public sector counterparts rather than exhibiting institution-specific deviation.

### **The Effect of Work Discipline on Job Satisfaction (H2)**

Discipline appears to shape job satisfaction through a mechanism distinct from motivation, operating primarily by establishing predictability and fairness within daily work routines rather than by generating intrinsic achievement. A Scopus-indexed study among nursing professionals in Indonesia found work discipline to significantly influence job satisfaction, attributing this relationship to the reduced ambiguity and role clarity that consistent rule enforcement provides within highly regulated institutional

environments (Ingsih et al., 2021). The present finding aligns with this explanation, given that PT Taspen operates under strict regulatory and fiduciary obligations comparable to the healthcare setting examined by Ingsih et al. (2021), where adherence to procedure directly affects service reliability. It is worth noting, however, that the standardized beta coefficient for work discipline (0.302) remains smaller than that of work motivation (0.428) in shaping satisfaction, suggesting discipline functions as a necessary but comparatively weaker contributor to affective work evaluation than motivation within this specific institutional context, a nuance that studies reporting discipline as the dominant satisfaction predictor in other sectors do not uniformly replicate (Pane et al., 2023).

### **The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance (H3)**

Work motivation's direct effect on employee performance, independent of its effect through satisfaction, points to a dual pathway through which motivated behavior generates organizational value: partly through improved affective states and partly through unmediated behavioral effort. A Sinta-indexed study conducted at a regional civil service agency in South Sulawesi found work motivation to significantly and directly affect employee performance even after accounting for remuneration and discipline, supporting the interpretation that motivated effort produces measurable output independent of satisfaction level (Pane et al., 2023). This direct pathway finding carries a degree of theoretical tension worth acknowledging rather than glossing over, since a study on public service motivation among Vietnamese civil servants found the direct effect of motivation on performance to be considerably weaker once job satisfaction and person-organization fit were introduced into the model, implying that in some public sector contexts motivation operates almost entirely through mediating psychological states rather than directly (Nguyen & Phinaitrup, 2023). The persistence of a significant direct effect in the present study, despite the simultaneous presence of a significant indirect pathway, suggests that PT Taspen employees' performance responds to motivational stimuli through both immediate behavioral channels and satisfaction-dependent channels concurrently, rather than the relationship being fully absorbed by the satisfaction mechanism.

### **The Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance (H4)**

Discipline's direct contribution to performance is most plausibly explained through its function in minimizing workflow disruption and non-compliance rather than through any motivational or affective mechanism, distinguishing it conceptually from the motivation-performance pathway discussed above. A study conducted on family business employees in

Indonesia identified structured behavioral compliance as a significant determinant of sustainable performance outcomes, reasoning that consistent rule-following reduces operational variance and error rates over time (Tseng et al., 2025). This reasoning fits the present result, particularly given that PT Taspen's core operations involve processing pension disbursements where procedural deviation carries direct financial and reputational consequences, making discipline's contribution to performance plausibly tied to error reduction and procedural reliability rather than to any psychological engagement effect. The comparatively smaller beta coefficient of discipline relative to motivation on performance (0.283 versus 0.327) further suggests discipline functions as a performance floor-setting mechanism, preventing underperformance, rather than a driver of performance excellence, a distinction that later research treating discipline purely as a performance enhancer tends to understate (Suryanto & Wijaya, 2025).

#### **The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance (H5)**

Job satisfaction emerges as the strongest direct predictor of performance among the three variables tested, a result that warrants closer scrutiny rather than straightforward acceptance at face value. A Scopus-indexed study among reference librarians in Pakistan similarly found job satisfaction to exert the most substantial direct effect on job performance among the variables tested, attributing this to satisfaction's role as a proximal psychological state that more immediately precedes behavioral output than distal antecedents such as motivation or professional development (Shahzad & Khan, 2023). This proximity argument offers a coherent explanation for why satisfaction outperforms motivation and discipline as a direct predictor in the present model, since satisfaction represents an accumulated evaluative state shaped by both motivation and discipline, placing it causally and temporally closer to the performance outcome itself. This interpretation nonetheless invites a degree of caution, as a study examining work-life balance alongside motivation found satisfaction's dominant effect to diminish once work-life balance was introduced as a competing predictor, indicating that satisfaction's apparent strength may partly reflect the absence of other proximal variables in the present model rather than an intrinsically superior causal status (Nadhilah et al., 2024).

#### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction between Work Motivation and Employee Performance (H6)**

The significant indirect pathway from motivation to performance through satisfaction indicates that a meaningful portion of motivation's total effect on performance operates by first improving how employees feel about their work, rather than manifesting exclusively through unmediated effort. A Scopus-indexed study confirmed employee engagement, a construct

conceptually adjacent to satisfaction, as a significant mediator between motivation and performance, lending cross-construct support to the notion that affective and attitudinal states serve as genuine transmission mechanisms rather than statistical artifacts (Riyanto et al., 2021). The coexistence of both a significant direct effect (H3) and a significant indirect effect (H6) for motivation indicates partial rather than full mediation, a pattern also reported in a study on remuneration and motivation at a regional civil service agency, where satisfaction was found to channel a substantial but incomplete share of motivation's total influence on performance (Pane et al., 2023). This partial mediation pattern carries a practical implication worth stating plainly: interventions aimed solely at improving satisfaction would capture only part of motivation's potential performance benefit, since a nontrivial direct pathway remains unaccounted for by the satisfaction mechanism.

#### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction between Work Discipline and Employee Performance (H7)**

Discipline's indirect effect through satisfaction, though statistically significant, carries a smaller Z-value than motivation's indirect pathway (2.354 versus 2.965), suggesting the mediating mechanism operates with comparatively less strength for discipline than for motivation within this sample. This weaker indirect pathway is plausible given that discipline, as discussed under H2, appears to influence satisfaction primarily through procedural predictability rather than intrinsic psychological reward, a comparatively modest affective trigger relative to the achievement-oriented mechanisms associated with motivation. A study on organizational commitment and discipline found a broadly comparable pattern, in which discipline's indirect effect through satisfaction remained significant but consistently smaller in magnitude than motivation-driven pathways examined within the same model (Rahmawati & Trisninawati, 2024). Considered together with the direct effect confirmed under H4, this indicates that discipline's contribution to performance at PT Taspen is more evenly distributed between direct behavioral compliance and satisfaction-mediated channels, in contrast to motivation, whose relatively larger indirect coefficient suggests a somewhat greater reliance on the satisfaction pathway to reach its full performance effect.

#### **Integrative Reflection on Explanatory Power**

The model explaining employee performance accounts for a considerably larger share of variance than the model explaining job satisfaction, a disparity that itself carries interpretive weight rather than serving merely as a statistical footnote. This asymmetry suggests that employee performance at PT Taspen KCU Semarang is more fully captured by motivation, discipline, and satisfaction combined than job satisfaction itself is captured by motivation and discipline alone, implying that

satisfaction is shaped by a broader set of antecedents beyond the two examined here, plausibly including compensation structure, supervisory relationships, or organizational culture, none of which were incorporated into the present model. A study modeling job satisfaction within a public sector context reported a comparably modest explanatory share for motivation and related variables, attributing the remainder to organizational and interpersonal factors outside the immediate scope of motivational and disciplinary constructs (Nguyen & Phinaitrup, 2023). Rather than treating this unexplained variance as a limitation to be minimized rhetorically, it more accurately signals that job satisfaction at a state-owned pension institution is a construct shaped by structural and relational conditions that extend beyond the individual-level behavioral variables emphasized in the present study.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study finds that job satisfaction exerts the strongest direct influence on employee performance among the three variables examined, followed by work motivation and then work discipline, while work motivation itself stands as the dominant driver of job satisfaction relative to discipline, indicating that employees' internal drive and sense of responsibility shape their work experience and outcomes more powerfully than procedural compliance alone. Both motivation and discipline retain significant direct effects on performance alongside their indirect effects through satisfaction, confirming job satisfaction as a partial rather than full mediator within this state-owned pension institution. These findings imply that PT Taspen KCU Semarang management should prioritize satisfaction-enhancing and motivational interventions as the primary levers for performance improvement, while maintaining work discipline as a necessary supporting mechanism that safeguards procedural reliability rather than the central driver of performance gains.

## **LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH**

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, single organizational setting, and reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, which may limit the generalizability of the findings and the ability to establish changes over time. Further research should examine employees in different organizations or sectors using longitudinal or mixed-method approaches and consider additional variables, such as leadership style, organizational commitment, work environment, employee engagement, workload, and organizational support, to provide a broader explanation of employee performance.

## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION**

**Author:** Conceptualisation and Research Design, Data Collection, Methodology, Supervision, Writing Entire Paper, Conceptualisation, Data Collection and Analysis, Editing and Layouting. All Authors have read the final version of the paper.

#### **Declaration of interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the anonymous referees for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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