



Factors Influencing Employee Performance Post-COVID-19: Evidence from Service Industry Employees in Indonesia

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Abstract

Ongoing research on employee performance provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance productivity and employee development. Understanding employee performance factors can enable companies to adopt effective strategies and best practices to achieve continuous improvement and optimize organizational success. This study aims to analyze the factors that might influence employee performance in the service industry. Random sampling was used, and 122 respondents were collected using Google Forms. Results were analyzed using partial least square through SmartPLS. Discipline has a positive significant effect on employee performance. Motivation has a positive significant effect on discipline. Motivation has a negative significant effect on employee performance. Career development has a positive significant effect on discipline. Career development does not affect employee performance. Discipline partially and competitively mediated the relationship between motivation and employee performance. Discipline fully mediated the relationship between career development and employee performance. This study provides implications towards company policies related to increasing employee performance.

Keywords: career development, discipline, motivation, employee performance





1. INTRODUCTION

Studies related to employee performance are still being conducted. Such research can provide helpful information for organizations to increase productivity and develop employees. Analyzing employee performance is essential for sustainability (Omar et al., 2020). To achieve organizational goals, a company depends on the performance of its employees (Vo et al., 2022). Good employee performance can increase the company's productivity, efficiency, and profitability (Giorgi et al., 2023). Other studies also state that employee performance is a critical aspect of organizational success and requires joint efforts from employees and companies to achieve continuous improvement and optimization (Al-Saffar & Obeidat, 2020). By understanding the factors affecting employee performance, organizations can adopt best practices and develop strategies to improve them.

Research on factors that affect employee performance is often associated with work discipline. A disciplined employee will follow work schedule, respect deadlines, and focus on the tasks that must be completed. They tend to avoid distractions and manage their time efficiently. Thus, disciplined employees can work more effectively and reduce the risk of delays in completing their work. Organizations that encourage work discipline in their work culture tend to achieve higher performance levels and achieve goals more effectively. This statement is supported by previous research, stating that work discipline is vital in maintaining sustainability and achieving organizational goals (Uloli et al., 2019). Another study also stated that in an effort to improve employee performance, organizations must pay attention to their work discipline (Aufderheide & Nare, 2020).

Another factor that can affect employee performance is work motivation. Encouraging strong work motivation can be a critical factor in achieving high performance and organizational success. Motivated employees tend to take initiative, work harder, and complete tasks more efficiently. High work motivation also encourages employees to work with passion and enthusiasm. This statement aligns with previous research, which stated that motivation is a powerful tool in strengthening and triggering employees' desire to work (Papp et al., 2018). Another study also suggested that if companies can understand employee motivation problems, companies will have employees who can work optimally and by the standards set by the company (Retnowati et al., 2022).

Career development is also another factor that influences employee performance. Career development provides opportunities for employees to acquire new skills, broader knowledge, and a deeper understanding of their field of work. Employee career development can bring long-term benefits to individuals and organizations and create a dynamic and





thriving work environment. Previous research has suggested that career development is a strategy that can simultaneously improve the quality of employees and organizations (Kim & Kim, 2022). Another study also stated that career development would give employees a higher position and thus improve their performance (Mohd et al., 2020).

The service industry is one of the sectors significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The post-pandemic period becomes a stage of recovery and growth for the industry. Employee performance in the service industry has become increasingly important after the COVID-19 pandemic due to changes and new challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed customer preferences and expectations in the service industry. Employees who adapt quickly to these changes, offer innovative solutions, and provide services that suit customers' new needs will gain a competitive advantage. Optimal employee performance will play an essential role in meeting customer expectations. Employees who are able to optimize their performance can help accelerate industry recovery by providing superior service. Thus, it will help companies maintain and improve their competitiveness. Based on these statements and paragraphs above, this study aims to analyze factors affecting employee performance in the service industry, such as work discipline, motivation and career development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Employee Performance

Employee performance is defined as the end result of individual efforts in achieving set work goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). In this context, employee performance involves an assessment of the extent to which individuals achieve targets, standards, or expected results in their work. Locke & Latham (1990) argue that clear and challenging goals can be a powerful source of employee motivation. When employees have goals that are specific, measurable, and present challenges, they tend to perform better because they have a clear direction to work on and get feedback on achieving those goals. Campbell & Wiernik (2015) further support this notion by defining job performance as individual actions contributing to the organization's goals. This study concludes that the statements above underscore the significance of goal-setting and actual actions in defining and evaluating employee performance.

2.2. Work Motivation

Motivation is the intrinsic urge that drives individuals to take action, achieve goals, and feel satisfied with themselves (Pink, 2011). Pink (2011) argues that true motivation





comes from factors within individuals, such as a sense of autonomy (a desire to control their own lives), a sense of competence (a desire to develop and succeed at what they do), and a sense of social connection (a desire to connect with others and make contributions). Autonomy, competence, and social connections are vital in understanding and motivating individuals. By providing space for employees to feel autonomy in their work, enabling the development of their competencies, and creating an environment that facilitates social connections, organizations can increase employees' intrinsic motivation and achieve better overall performance. This statement aligns with the theory of motivation proposed by McGregor (1960). McGregor (1960) states that work motivation can arise through empowering employees, providing autonomy, providing responsibility, and providing growth opportunities. Work motivation can increase if management provides employees autonomy, responsibility, and development opportunities.

The impact of motivation on work discipline and employee performance has been discussed in various studies. Vila et al. (2022), as well as Muh & Munawar (2020), state that work motivation positively affects work discipline. Ahmad & Hariasih (2023) and Rijanti et al. (2020) also found that work motivation positively affected employee performance. Nevertheless, some other studies still find different results. Suryosukmono et al. (2022) prove that motivation does not affect employee performance, while Hutabarat et al. (2023) found that motivation negatively affects employee performance. Based on the above explanation, this study proposes hypotheses as follows:

H₁: motivation positively affects employee performance.

H₂: motivation positively affects work discipline.

2.3. Career Development

Super & Hall (1978) defines career development as the set of stages and changes that individuals go through throughout their lives in carrying out work roles and personal lives. Career development involves a series of interrelated processes, including self-understanding, exploring career options, and developing relevant skills (Reardon et al., 2000). Reardon et al. (2000) emphasize the significance of self-reflection, understanding individual interests, values, and goals in building a fulfilling career. He also emphasizes the importance of career management, including identifying and capitalizing on opportunities, building networks and professional relationships, and developing strategies to achieve career goals. Ibarra (2004) also adds that individuals must break out of conventional mindsets and roles and take risks to achieve more significant professional development. By





expanding boundaries and adopting innovative approaches, individuals can achieve greater success and satisfaction in their career development.

Previous studies have mentioned the influence of career development towards work discipline and employee performance. Ilah et al. (2020) confirm the positive impact of career development toward work discipline. Ilah et al. (2020) and Marbun et al., (2022) also confirm that career development positively influences employee performance. Contrary to previous findings, a recent study still finds no influence of career development on employee performance (Pratama & Indriyaningrum, 2022). Thus, hypotheses were proposed as follows:

H3: career development positively affects work discipline.

H4: career development positively affects employee performance.

2.4. Work Discipline

Discipline is described as an integral part of effective habits and personal success. Work discipline involves controlling behavior and acting under established values, principles, and goals. Discipline means honoring commitments and taking the necessary actions to achieve the desired results (Covey, 1991). Covey (1991) emphasizes that discipline extends beyond routine tasks and encompasses the development of supportive habits. Work discipline is essential in achieving high efficiency and productivity in organizations (Taylor, 2004). Taylor (2004) suggests that workplace discipline should be enforced, and working conditions should be regulated so that employees can carry out their duties with precision and efficiency. It can be concluded that employee discipline is vital in order to achieve high efficiency and productivity in organizations.

Several previous literatures have proven the influence of work discipline on employee performance in Indonesia. Hermina & Yosepha (2019), as well as Tanjung et al. (2022), stated that work discipline positively affects employee performance. However, Mairia et al. (2021) and Mahardika & Suryawirawan (2023) found no influence of work discipline on employee performance. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: work discipline positively affects employee performance.



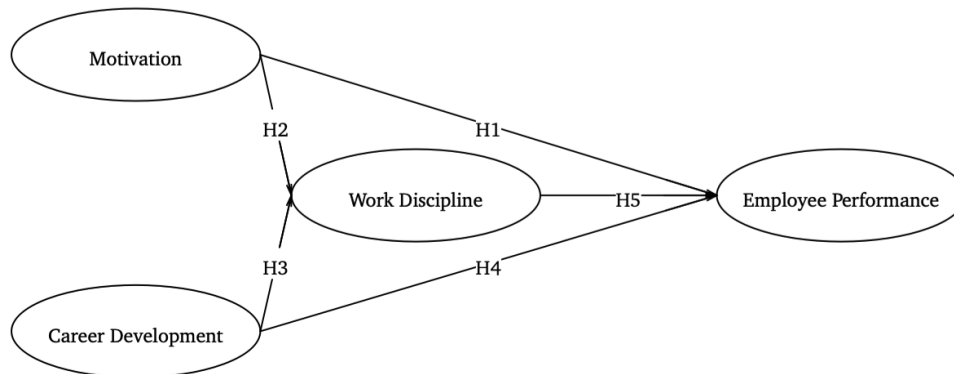


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative method was used to measure the independent variables' effect on the dependent variables in this study. This study used the Likert Scale of 1 to 5. In determining the sample, this study used sample size recommendation table (Hair et al., 2014). According to the table, to achieve a statistical power of 80% at the level of significance 0.05, number of samples ranging from 30-124 can be used. This study used simple random sampling towards employees in several service companies in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. Data was collected until it reached the amount recommended by the Hair table in the previous section. A total of 135 respondents were obtained based on the distribution of questionnaires through Google Forms for two weeks. Of the 135 respondents, this study eliminated questionnaires that had incomplete answers or allegedly contained central tendency. After the screening, a total of 122 samples were obtained. Those amounts of data were deemed sufficient to fit the sample number requirement. Data were analyzed using partial least square (PLS) through Smartpls 3.0 software. In PLS, goodness of fit is determined by evaluating the outer and inner models. In evaluating the outer model, the loading factor for all indicators must be above 0.40. To ensure validity and reliability \sqrt{AVE} must exceed latent variable correlation and composite reliability must exceed 0.70. To express a significant effect, the resulting t-statistic must exceed 1.645 (one-tailed) with a p-value of ≤ 0.05 . Variables were measured using questionnaire items that were adopted from various studies (Fadillah et al., 2013; Hasibuan, 2017; Judge & Robbins, 2017; Siagian, 2012).

4. RESULT

Among the 122 participants involved in this study, 78 were males and 44 were females. Regarding age, 28 participants were below 25 years old, 59 participants ranged between 25 to 35 years old, and the remaining 37 participants were 36 years old and above.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit

Indicators	Loading*)	Loading**)	Loading***)	AVE	√AVE	Composite Reliability	R ²
CD1	0.626	0.599	0.599	0.508	0.713	0.804	
CD2	0.749	0.725	0.725				
CD3	0.744	0.719	0.720				
CD4	0.755	0.794	0.793				
D1****)	0.298			0.540	0.735	0.777	0.241
D2	0.836	0.840	0.827				
D3	0.613	0.689	0.711				
D4	0.634	0.655	0.657				
EP1****)	0.080			0.684	0.827	0.866	0.337
EP2	0.840	0.844	0.845				
EP3	0.799	0.819	0.819				
EP4	0.817	0.818	0.817				
EP5****)	0.059						
M1	0.471	0.840	0.885	0.707	0.841	0.828	
M2****)	0.256						
M3****)	0.226						
M4	0.782	0.783	0.794				
M5****)	0.769	0.389					
*: Before elimination of loading <0.40							
**: After elimination of loading <0.40							
***: After the second elimination of loading <0.40							
****: indicators with loading <0.40							
Source: SmartPLS Output (2023)							

From the results shown in Table 1, several indicators have loading values <0.40. Those indicators were D1, EP1, EP5, M2, M3 and M5. Therefore, these indicators were not included in the analysis. After eliminating the previous indicators, it can be concluded that

all indicators have a loading value of >0.40 and are deemed valid or fulfill the convergent validity test.

Table 2. Fomell-Larcker Criterion

	Career Development	Employee Performance	Work Discipline	Work Motivation
Career Development	0.713			
Employee Performance	0.203	0.827		
Work Discipline	0.221	0.540	0.735	
Work Motivation	0.136	0.083	0.464	0.841

Source: SmartPLS (2023)

Based on both Tables 1 and 2, it could be seen that the smallest number of \sqrt{AVE} was 0.713, while the highest number of correlations was 0.540. It was concluded that all the \sqrt{AVE} were above the correlations between variables and had a good discriminant validity. The composite reliability of all indicators is above 0.70. It indicates that all variables in this study are reliable and have good internal consistency. It was found that the value of R^2 on discipline was 0.241, while the value of R^2 on employee performance was 0.337. Thus, career development and work motivation could explain discipline by 24.1%, while career development, work motivation, and discipline could explain employee performance by 33,7%. Although according to Hair et al. (2014), the R^2 value above were within the weak category, there may be an explanation for this result. Variables that were not included in the model can be the cause of the low R^2 . This explanation is acceptable considering that so many other variables are confirmed to affect work discipline and employee performance, such as attitudes, leadership styles, organizational culture and work environment, and many more.

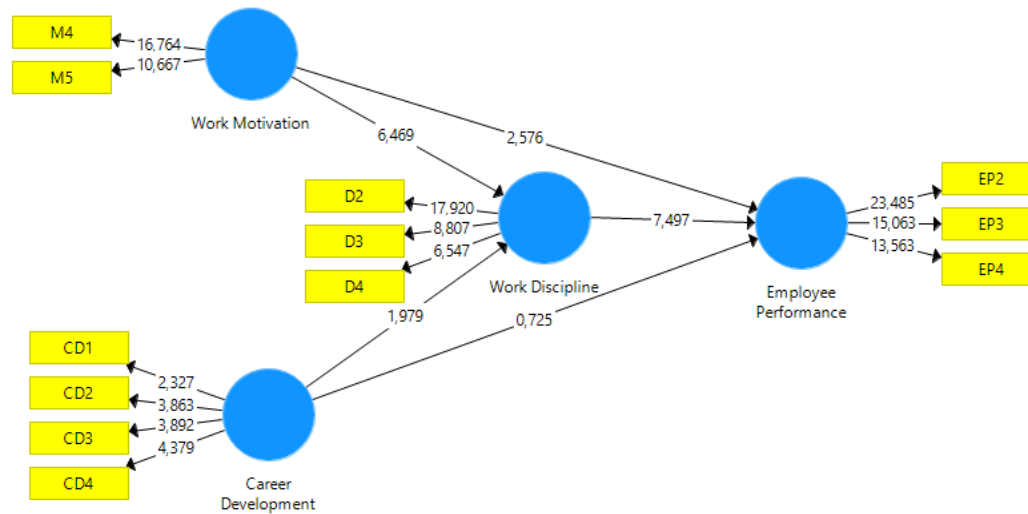


Figure 2. Path Diagram

Table 3. Path Coefficient

	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values
Career Development -> Employee Performance	0.096	0.725	0.235
Career Development -> Work Discipline*)	0.161	1.979	0.024
Work Discipline -> Employee Performance*)	0.620	7.497	0.000
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance*)	-0.219	2.576	0.005
Work Motivation -> Work Discipline*)	0.443	6.469	0.000

*: Significant results

Source: SmartPLS (2023)

The findings in this study were concluded based on Table 3 and Figure 2. It was shown that motivation was found to have a negative effect on employee performance with a path coefficient value of -0.219, and the effect is significant with a T Statistic value of 2.576 (>1.645) and a P Value of 0.005 (<0.05). H₁ in this study was declared rejected. Motivation has a positive effect on work discipline with a path coefficient value of 0.443, and its effect is proven to be significant with a T Statistic of 6.469 and a P Value of 0.000. It can be concluded that H₂ in this study was accepted. Career development has a positive effect on work discipline with a path coefficient value of 0.161, and it was deemed significant with a T Statistic value of 1.979 and P Value of 0.024. Thus, H₃ in this study was accepted. Career

development is proven to have no effect on employee performance with a T Statistic of 0.725 and a P Value of 0.235. Therefore, H₄ in this study was rejected. Finally, work discipline variable has a positive effect on employee performance with a path coefficient value of 0.620, and it has a significant effect with a T Statistic of 7.497 and P Value of 0.000. It can be concluded that H₅ in this study was considered accepted.

Table 4. Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
Career Development -> Employee Performance*)	0.100	1.898	0.029
Career Development -> Work Discipline			
Work Discipline -> Employee Performance			
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance*)	0.275	5.492	0.000
Work Motivation -> Work Discipline			

*: Significant results

Source: SmartPLS (2023)

Although this study does not formulate hypotheses related to mediation between variables, statistical results showed the existence of mediation regardless. Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that discipline mediated the effect of career development on employee performance with a T Statistic value of 1.898 and P Value of 0.029. This study also found the mediation of discipline on the effect of motivation towards employee performance with a T Statistic of 5.492 and a P Value of 0.000.

5. DISCUSSION

The study finds that discipline affects employee performance. This finding aligns with a series of studies that have found a significant impact of work discipline on employee performance (Hermina & Yosepha, 2019; Tanjung et al., 2022). It can be concluded based on this finding that the higher the work discipline of employees, the better their performance will be. Disciplined employees usually work more efficiently, consistently and can honor deadlines in carrying out their duties. They also tend to be responsible, adhere to company procedures and policies, and are more diligent in dealing with challenges. All these factors can contribute to increased productivity and overall quality of work.

Based on the findings, motivation negatively affects employee performance. These results contradict the research conducted by Ahmad & Hariasih (2023) and Rijanti et al.



(2020), who found that motivation positively affects employee performance. These results also contradict previous theories that explained the positive influence of motivation on employee performance (McGregor, 1960; Pink, 2011). Several reasons can be the cause of this phenomenon. First, it could be that employees who participated in this study do have low motivation, which ultimately makes the influence on their performance negative, or they actually feel they have high motivation but feel their performance is not optimal. Another possibility is that highly motivated employees may be too ambitious or eager to achieve set targets or goals. As a result, they can feel overburdened by those targets and become stressed, which ultimately affects their performance. Employees may also be too focused on incentives commonly found in service industries, so they neglect their actual duties or the quality of their work. As a result, they may rush to complete tasks to achieve rewards, which can decrease performance quality. Excessive motivation can also cause employees to overwork and neglect adequate rest. This can lead to stress and burnout, which in turn can decrease overall performance. Apart from the explanation in the previous section, another study found a negative impact of motivation on employee performance (Suryosukmono et al., 2022). This could lead to future possibilities of further exploration related to the effect of motivation on service industry employee performance.

Motivation has been found to affect discipline positively. This finding aligns with previous research that stated the positive influence of motivation on discipline (Muh & Munawar, 2020; Vila et al., 2022). It can be concluded based on these findings that the higher the motivation of employees to work, the higher their work discipline. This study also found the mediation of discipline on the influence of motivation toward employee performance. The mediation was partial because the direct effect of motivation on employee performance was also found to be significant. However, there is another phenomenon that occurs in this finding. When the study tested the direct effect of motivation towards employee performance, the direction of the effect was found to be negative. However, the influence of motivation on employee performance when mediated by work discipline has a positive direction. The phenomenon that happens in this finding is stated as competitive mediation. Competitive mediation occurs when direct effects and indirect effects have a different direction (Memon et al., 2018). It can be concluded based on these findings that the negative influence of motivation toward the performance of service company employees can occur due to several previously described factors. However, their performance may increase if their motivation is accompanied by work discipline.

The study found that career development has a positive effect on work discipline. The finding is in line with a previous study that found a positive impact of career development





on work discipline (Ilah et al., 2020). It can be concluded that employees who have good career development will be more disciplined at work. However, the study found that career development did not affect employee performance. These results do not align with previous research that found that career development positively affects employee performance (Ilah et al., 2020; Marbun et al., 2022). It can be concluded that the career development that employees of service companies currently have cannot improve their performance. Several things can cause the occurrence of this phenomenon. Implemented career development programs may not be appropriate or less effective in improving employee skills, knowledge, or motivation. Programs that are inadequate or irrelevant to job demands or individual needs can result in a lack of influence on employee performance. Every employee is unique and has different needs and responses to career development. Therefore, some employees may be more affected by career development programs than others, and this can lead to discrepancies in findings. In addition to the findings discussed in the previous section, this study also found that there is a mediation of discipline on the effect of career development towards employee performance. The mediation was full because the direct effect of career development on employee performance was not significant. It can be concluded that career development will only affect employee performance when accompanied by discipline. Strong discipline can help employees stay focused, consistent, and proactive in taking advantage of the career development opportunities provided. Discipline can help employees allocate time wisely to study and practice, adhere to deadlines set in the program, and ensure that they are truly optimizing the benefits of the development program.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examines factors that could influence employee performance in the service industry. Based on the findings, discipline has proven to affect employee performance. Motivation was found to affect discipline positively but affect employee performance negatively. Career development was found to affect discipline but not employee performance. Discipline was also found to affect employee performance significantly and positively. Although the mediating relationship was not included within the hypothesis, this study finds that discipline partially and competitively mediated the relationship between motivation and employee performance. This study also finds that discipline fully mediated the relationship between career development and employee performance.

This study contributes theoretically and practically. In theory, there has not been much research that examines the influence of career development on work discipline. Future research on the influence of career development toward discipline may further confirm the





relationship between the two variables. The findings which state that career development has no effect on employee performance and motivation negatively affects employee performance can be a reference for further study related to the relationship between these variables. The mediation of discipline on the influence of career development and motivation on employee performance contributes toward additional reference related to mediating effect among variables used, especially related to this research topic. This research also enriches the phenomenon of competitive mediation, especially related to mediation on the influence of motivation toward employee performance. In practice, to improve employee performance, organizations should invest in work discipline programs. These programs can include training on time management, task prioritization, and adherence to company policies and procedures. Encouraging employees to maintain consistency, punctuality, and responsibility in their work can lead to increased efficiency and productivity. While motivation is essential, excessive pressure to achieve rewards may lead to stress and reduced performance quality. Providing non-monetary incentives, such as recognition and growth opportunities, can effectively maintain motivation without overwhelming employees. Organizations should tailor these initiatives to meet individual needs and career goals because employees respond differently to career development programs. Offering personalized development plans and mentoring can foster a sense of ownership and engagement in career growth.

This study has several limitations. This study only looked at employees working in the service sector, further research could include employees working in other sectors. But on the other hand, this study examines employees who work in various service companies, further research can examine employees in one specific company so that variables such as motivation and career development can be examined against one policy of one company. This study only examines the variables of motivation and career development. Further research can include various other variables that can affect employee performance, such as attitudes, leadership styles, organizational culture and work environment.

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