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Performance improvement model in a manufacturing company: job satisfaction as mediator

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ABSTRACT

This study's goal is to determine the effect of work placement and work discipline on performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable among a manufacturing company during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study design is causal-comparative with a quantitative approach with 100 respondents. The study's findings indicated that work placement had a direct impact on performance, work discipline had a direct impact on performance, job satisfaction had a direct impact on performance, work discipline had a direct impact on job satisfaction, and work placement had a direct impact on job satisfaction. Work discipline did not significantly have an indirect effect on performance.



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Introduction

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic perceived by employees affect their performance in general (Olariu et al., 2022). During the Covid-19 pandemic, most companies experienced changes in the work system, especially regarding the regulation of working hours, work equipment, the number of workers allowed to work, occupational safety, and health (Circular Letter of the Minister of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2021 Concerning Amendments to Circular Letter of the Minister of Industry Number 3 of 2021 Concerning Operations and Mobility of Industrial Activities During the Covid-19, 2021). Government regulations related to the Community Activity Restrictions Enforcement (PPKM) also affect employee performance.

Another study examined how the epidemic affected the functioning of private enterprises in 37 different nations. In almost all of the nations studied, the COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental influence on firm performance, but companies in developing countries were particularly affected. Finance is the performance that is most impacted (Olczyk & Kuc-czarnecka, 2021). Previous studies showed that work stress had an impact on employee performance during a pandemic (Saleem et al., 2021), job satisfaction, work environment, and work-life balance (Kumar et al., 2021; Tran & Idodo, 2022). Cahyaningati et al., (2022) carried out a study to decide and investigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on business performance. It is discovered that performance is simultaneously highly impacted by the variables such as COVID-19, sales increase, leverage, and firm size.

Work discipline is the ability of employees to work according to the regulations that apply in the company shows the quality of employee discipline (Sinungan, 2008). Discipline includes obedience to state regulations and norms that applicable in the workplace so that they will be able to achieve maximum work productivity

(Baskoro, 2014). Meanwhile according to (Mangkunegara, 2005), there are various types of work discipline from employees in the company, namely preventive work discipline, corrective work discipline. Preventive work discipline includes the company's efforts to be able to encourage employees to comply with applicable rules, while corrective work discipline is a way of disciplining employees by giving punishment to those who have committed violations. Good discipline can also reflect an individual's great sense of obligation for the jobs set to him. This boosts work passion, morale, the realization of a goal for the company and employees. Sudiarditha & Kartini, (2019) in research conducted at PT XD Sakti Indonesia found a constructive and notable correlation between work discipline and job satisfaction. Next (Duha, 2019) in his research on lecturers at STKIP Nias Selatan also found a favourable impact between work discipline and job satisfaction.

Ngebu et al., (2018) in their research on employees at the Ngada District Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Office (PKPO) found that work placement affects performance through job satisfaction. Performance, according to (Colquitt et al., 2011), is "the set of employee behaviors that assist to the attainment of organizational goals." Performance as it relates to a task is made up of explicit job behaviors, including those that are prescribed as part of a job description. The primary factors that simplify task performance are task knowledge (the technical expertise or fundamentals requisited to make sure job performance and the capability to manage multiple tasks), task skill (the usage of technical knowledge to complete tasks effectively without much supervision), and task habits (an authentic capability to acknowledge to specified jobs that either alleviate or obstruct the performance). Task completion needs more cognitive, Conway (1999) in (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

Coelho Jr., (2009) in (Fogaça et al., 2018) mentioned that there are certain variables that influence performance, taking into account that performance measurement should take into account more than just an individual's personality (e.g., motivation and job happiness). Performance at the individual level can be influenced by task characteristics (the level of knowledge and expertise required of people for the task) and the work environment. Soegihartono, (2012) defines performance is representing the success that has been achieved by employees at work, seen from the results of work. Employee performance is reflected in the actions and efforts made by employees for the tasks given by the company (Hidayat et al., 2018; Mangkunegara, 2005). Furthermore (Tuffaha, 2020) states that management of knowledge, information, and communication technologies, empowering of the employee, novelty and creativity, and company culture all affect employee performance.

According to (Hariandja & Sembiring, 2014), work placement is the process of allocating employees to a certain workload, a new position, as well as a different structural position, or filling positions or reassigning them to open positions. Meanwhile (Mathis & Jackson, 2011) states that work placement refers to placing a person in the appropriate employment position; the quantity and caliber of employees will depend on how well a worker fits the position. Next (Mangkuprawira, 2014) illustrates that the determination of employee positions is determined by the condition of the company, organizational development, restructuring, and economic conditions. Vietzal & Sagala (2005) mentioned that the types of work placements can be grouped into several sections, namely promotions, demotions, and transfers. Referring to (Bernardin & Russel, 2013), employee work placement is determined by the competency possessed by the employee, the knowledge possessed, attitudes, and behavior, besides that it is also seen from the educational background and skills possessed by the employee.

Next according to Suwatno (2013) in (Laima et al., 2019) in addition to determining employee job placement, it is determined by the level of education, length of work related to work skills, mastery of knowledge about work and duties, also related to behavior, as well as skills related to mental skills and physical skills. Furthermore, several previous studies have specified that there is a correlation between work placement and employee performance (Ngebu et al., 2018; Sari & Setyaningrum, 2022; Sjahruddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, according to (Sinungan, 2008), the capability of employees to work according to the regulations that apply in the company shows the quality of employee discipline. Discipline includes obedience to state rules and norms that apply in the workplace so that they will be able to achieve maximum work productivity (Baskoro, 2014). Jaka et al. (2013) in (Ong & Winata, 2021) state that discipline is a crucial component in controlling how organization members behave and operate.

Job satisfaction was defined by (Robbins & Molan, 2008) as a combination of attitudes that a person has about their work. It has been noted that job satisfaction affects the degrees of job disappointment, absenteeism, complaint expression, retardation, low morale, high turnover, quality upgrade, and contribution to decision-making. Locke (1970) interpreted job satisfaction as "a happy or favorable emotional condition," while assessing one's employment or work experiences. Refer to (Mullins, 2010), job satisfaction is something that cannot stand alone but is a mixture of feelings that are felt for work achievements that have been achieved while doing work both in quantity and quality. Zhu (2013) has reviewed some studies on job satisfaction and came to the conclusion that more or less, they define job happiness in terms of personal affection. Employee attitudes about their jobs will be deemed to be satisfactory if they are good and enjoyable. Otherwise, if employees are

experiencing unpleasant or bad feelings at work, their attitudes toward the work would be considered unsatisfactory.

Previous research stated that job placement affects employee performance through job satisfaction (Ngebu et al., 2018). Job satisfaction is influenced by organizational culture (Hariandja & Sembiring, 2014; Lie et al., 2021). Job satisfaction is also influenced by motivation and education (Nurhidayati et al., 2022), work environment, salary, career opportunities, and social relations at work (Ong & Winata, 2021). Based on the previous study, we can see the importance of this study. It is no study on the correlation between performance and job satisfaction with work placement and work discipline as predictors at a crop protection company during COVID-19 pandemic period. Herzberg's motivation two-factor theory is underlying this study. According to Frederick Herzberg, there are two dimensions of employee satisfaction: hygiene and motivation. Hygiene issues (dissatisfiers) consist of company and administrative policies, salary, working conditions, supervision, and interpersonal relations. Motivators (satisfiers) consist of achievement, work itself, advancement, recognition, and responsibility. Enhancing the motivators can help workers feel more satisfied at work. While decreasing job unhappiness, hygienic improvements are made.

Work placement is the process of assigning individuals to specific tasks based on their abilities and capabilities. Employees with appropriate work placements will be able to optimize work results and performance. This is consistent with the research's findings, (Owan et al., 2022; Suswati, 2021) which state that work placement has a favorable and notable effect on performance. H1: Work placement affects performance.

Maintaining work discipline aids in accomplishing organizational goals. Workplace discipline serves to ensure that employees abide by all business rules and guidelines. The performance will increase in organizations with highly disciplined workforces. This is according to research (Hidayati et al., 2019; Ingsih et al., 2021). H2: Work discipline affects performance. Ngebu et al., (2018) state that employees will work professionally and optimally if they are placed in accordance with their competence, skills, work experience, and interests, and are supported by organizational policies. The study's findings also demonstrate that job placement has a favorable and notable influence on job satisfaction. H3: Work placement affects job satisfaction.

Work discipline refers to a person's attitude of awareness and obedience in adhering to agreed rules or organizational values. Completing work in a disciplined and timely manner will provide job satisfaction for employees and superiors. This is consistent with findings from studies by (Ingsih et al., 2021; Yadewani & Wijaya, 2019). H4: Work discipline affects job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an individual's emotional state of pleasure and loves towards his/her work. This behavior is shown in work morale, discipline, and work performance. Satisfied employees will have a sense of belonging to the company so that their performance increases. This is consistence with research by (Nurhidayati et al., 2022). H5: Job satisfaction affects performance.

There are several variables that indirectly affect performance. The following is research from (Sudiarditha, Dianta, et al., 2019) which argues that work discipline and performance have a considerable indirect relationship through job satisfaction. H6: Work discipline affects performance through job satisfaction. One factor that affects performance is job satisfaction. While there are several variables that have a direct effect on job satisfaction. One of them is work placement. This is according to research (Suswati, 2021). H7: Work placement affects performance through job satisfaction.

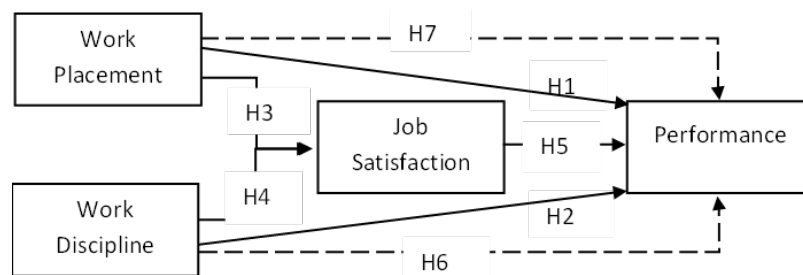


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Method

The research was carried-out at the multinational manufacturing company PT NI in Merak with the address Jl. Raya Salira Pulo Ampel Merak Banten. The research subjects are work placement, work discipline, job

satisfaction, and employee performance at PT NI. The selected respondents give their perceptions of the research subject which is mentioned above by filling out the questionnaire in accordance with the indicators of the variables in the form of statement items. Filling in is done by company employees both permanent and contract who have worked for more than one year. The questionnaires are arranged based on the theoretical frameworks.

Calculation data processing was done with computer aids, using the SmartPLS 4 data processing software. A multivariate statistical method known as partial least squares (PLS) may simultaneously handle a large number of explanatory and response variables. Because the multiple regression and main component regression analysis approaches are more reliable, this study is a good substitute. The data does not have to be multivariate and regularly distributed for this strategy to be advantageous. It is possible to use indicators using category, ordinal, interval, and ratio data scales. Another benefit is that a small sample size is sufficient (Geladi dan Kowalski, 1986; Ramzan dan Khan, 2010; Wold, 1982).

Results and Discussions

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The test result of the measurement model (outer model) in Figure 2 shows all indicators that have outer loading above 0.7. This implies that the pertinent indicators are reliable for gauging the construct (Hair et al., 2014).

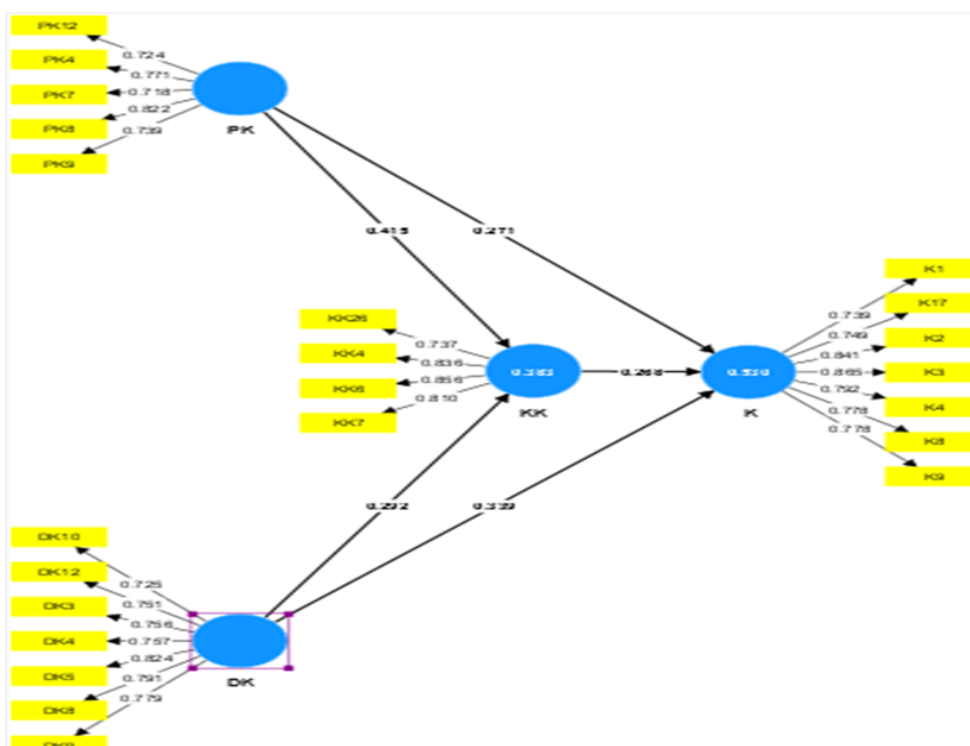


Figure 2. Path Analysis

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Evaluation
DK (Work Discipline)	0.885	0.910	0.592	Reliable
K (Performance)	0.901	0.922	0.628	Reliable
KK (Job Satisfaction)	0.825	0.885	0.658	Reliable
PK (Work Placement)	0.812	0.869	0.571	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data (2022)

Table 1 shows all research variables have a composite reliability value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. That is, all research variables are reliable.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

In order to see the relationship between construct variables is following the theory, we conduct the inner model evaluation as follows:

Table 2. R² Tests

	R-square	R-square adjusted
K (Performance)	0.530	0.515
KK (Job Satisfaction)	0.383	0.370

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data (2022)

The result of R² test means that the magnitude of variability of performance which can be clarified by work placement, work discipline, and job satisfaction variables on performance is 51.5%. This is considered moderate (Chin, 1998).

Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis testing was carried out to find the impact of work placement and work discipline on performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The hypothesis testing method used is bootstrapping.

Table 3. Summary of Hypothesis Tests

H	Construct Variables			Direct	Indirect	P
	Independent	Mediation	Dependent			
1	Work Placement		Performance	0.383		0.000
2	Work Discipline		Performance	0.417		0.000
3	Work Placement		Job Satisfaction	0.415		0.000
4	Work Discipline		Job Satisfaction	0.292		0.003
5	Job Satisfaction		Performance	0.268		0.013
6	Work Discipline	Job Satisfaction	Performance		0.078	0.099
7	Work Placement	Job Satisfaction	Performance		0.111	0.014

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data (2022)

The analysis shows that the work placement latent variable is significantly affect the performance positively. Better job placement will improve employee performance. Work placement of employees in accordance with their skills and expertise will make these employees perform optimally. On the company side, they must conduct a gap analysis between employee skills and job requirements and also create a training matrix to fill the gap. Thus, the placement of work will succeed in increasing employee performance. This is consistent with study result performed (Sari & Setyaningrum, 2022) at PT Shin Heung Indonesia. The same result is obtained (Sjahrudin et al., 2022) on research in the blow molding industry. Suswati, (2021) in his research on regionally owned banks in Kediri also concluded that employee performance and work placement are significantly correlated. This study confirmed that work discipline has a favourable and notable influence on employee performance. Vietzal & Sagala, (2005) states that employee performance increases with better work discipline. The high performance of employees will facilitate the fulfillment of company objectives which will ultimately improve the well-being of its employees.

This is consistent with the findings of earlier studies by (Hidayati et al., 2019) at Rumah Sakit Umum Pusat Dr. Mohammad Hoesin Palembang, (Hermanto, 2018) at the Pejarakan Probolinggo District office and (Sarwani, 2016) at PT Ardian Putra Mandiri Sidoarjo. In the analysis of the impact of work placement latent variables on job satisfaction, it was found that the latent variable of work placement has a positive effect and has a notable impact on job satisfaction. Work placement is the process of appointing and assigning employees to fields of work that are suitable to their educational competencies, skills, and expertise as well as experience and interests. In this study, the hypothesis of the effect of job placement and job satisfaction is accepted. This is according to the opinion (Mathis & Jackson, 2011) which states that the correct job placement is an important factor in arousing employee passion. Human resource management errors in employee placement will affect a variety of factors, including work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and exit motivation. The outcomes of this study are in conformity with those (Kusuma & Ardana, 2014; Ngebu et al., 2018; Sudiarditha, Dianta, et al., 2019)(Kusuma & Ardana, 2014; Sudiarditha, Dianta, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the analysis of the effect of work discipline latent variables on job satisfaction shows that that work discipline has a notable impact on job satisfaction, with a favourable effect. Disciplined behavior will direct employees to act regularly, neatly, and try to do things according to applicable rules and intend to help the organization attain its goals. That way, employee discipline will have an impact on him, to have a sense of belonging to the organization. This will increase the level of job satisfaction. The hypothesis that there is an impact of work discipline on job satisfaction is accepted. This study found a favorable and notable relationship

regarding the relationship between the two. PT NI employees in Merak have a record of low absenteeism, arriving on time and completing work on time. This finding is consistent with research by (Duha, 2019; Ingsih et al., 2021; Ong & Winata, 2021; Yadewani & Wijaya, 2019). The investigation also demonstrated that the intervening variable of job satisfaction influences performance in a favorable and significant manner. Employees tend to do better when they are happy with their jobs and are committed to the company (Andreani & Petrik, 2016). They are also happy to help their colleagues beyond company expectations (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Satisfied employees tend to perform better than those who are dissatisfied (Nurhidayati et al., 2022).

The study found that the indirect effect of work discipline on performance is not meaningful (no mediation). The conclusion is that job satisfaction cannot intervene with the impact of work discipline on performance. The study's findings demonstrate that performance is unaffected significantly by work discipline through job satisfaction. This indicates that, even though job satisfaction has a direct impact on both performance and job satisfaction, it turns out that job satisfaction does not mediate the correlation between work discipline and performance. This result contradicts the findings (Sudiarditha, Susita, et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the indirect effect of work placement on performance is significant (there is mediation). The conclusion is that job satisfaction can intervene the impact of job placement on performance. Research shows that job placement through job satisfaction has a notable impact on performance. This means that the right job placement will increase job satisfaction and will ultimately improve employee performance. This is in compliance with a study from (Sudiarditha, Dianta, et al., 2019) at the Ministry of Social Affairs' Education, Research and Socialization (BP3S) Agency.

Conclusions

Some conclusions can be summarized; work placement directly and significantly improves employee performance, work discipline directly and significantly improves performance, Job satisfaction is significantly and directly impacted by work placement, work discipline has an effect directly positively and significantly on job satisfaction, performance is directly and significantly impacted by job satisfaction, work discipline does not significantly influence performance through the mediation of job satisfaction, work placement has a favorable and notable effect on performance by mediating job satisfaction. It is suggested that companies must maintain employee work discipline, the right job placement process in compliance with employee competencies and interests and organizational needs, and increase attention, infrastructure, and employee welfare to further improve employee performance which will ultimately improve company performance. Although the fit value of this research model is 51.5% which means moderate (Chin, 1998), it is advisable to conduct further research using other predictor variables to obtain a more comprehensive model. Another limitation is the sample size which is only 100 respondents. To test the suitability of the model, research should also be carried out in industries other than agriculture, such as food, garment, and other industries.

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