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ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK COMPETENCE ON EMPLOYEE WORK PRODUCTIVITY, MEDIATED BY WORK MOTIVATION

Parlin Swantono Panjaitan¹, Fajar Rezeki Ananda Lubis², Salman Faris³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Prima Indonesia, Indonesia

Email : parlin.tarutung@gmail.com¹, fajarrezekiananda@gmail.com²,

salmanfaris@unprimdn.ac.id³

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the influence of Motivation as a mediating variable in the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Job Competence on Work Productivity among permanent employees of PT. Jatim Jaya Perkasa. Given a population of 1,071 people, this study used purposive sampling to select 95 respondents as the sample. Data were collected through questionnaires and secondary documentation studies, which were then processed quantitatively using SPSS version 28 through a series of tests: t-test, Sobel test, and path analysis. The research findings reveal that all hypotheses were empirically proven. Job satisfaction and competence were proven to have a positive and significant impact on both motivation and productivity. Furthermore, the discussion of the results of the analysis conducted by the researcher can be concluded that the Motivation variable has such an effective influence that it functions as a mediator connecting satisfaction and competence in an effort to increase employee productivity at PT. Jatim Jaya Perkasa.

Keywords : *Job Satisfaction, Job Competency, Work Productivity, and Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

The palm oil industry is one of the main drivers of Indonesia's economy due to its contribution to non-oil-and-gas exports, foreign-exchange earnings, and employment absorption (Nasution & Hermawan, 2024). Data from the Ministry of Agriculture show that in 2022 Indonesia's oil palm plantation area reached approximately 16.83 million hectares with production of around 46.82 million tons, reaffirming Indonesia's position as the world's largest palm oil producer (Simamora et al, 2025). The distribution of this area is concentrated in several provinces, with Riau consistently among the regions with the largest oil palm plantation area according to Statistics Indonesia (BPS) publications (Yamin & Nur Fadilah, 2024).

At the firm level, plantation operational success is determined by the organization's ability to manage a highly labor-intensive chain of work processes, ranging from crop maintenance to the harvest of Fresh Fruit Bunches (TBS) (Emon et al, 2024). In the context of PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa, which

manages large-scale plantation areas, field-employee productivity is a prerequisite for maintaining production realization against targets, cost efficiency, and the continuity of harvest quality. Therefore, productivity is not merely an agronomic technical issue, but also a behavioral and human resource management (HRM) issue that encompasses job satisfaction, work competence, and work motivation (Setiani et al, 2025).

Theoretically, job satisfaction is viewed as employees' affective-cognitive evaluation of various aspects of their work (e.g., compensation, supervision, working conditions, and development opportunities) (Nafisah, Sumastuti, & Indriasari, 2024). The organizational behavior literature has long discussed the linkage between satisfaction and performance (Mailisa Irhamna & Rahmawati, 2023). An influential quantitative review indicates that the relationship between job satisfaction and performance is generally positive with a moderate magnitude (Natsir et al, 2025), although its variation is shaped by organizational context and job characteristics (Wildatur Nurrahmah et al, 2024). In the plantation context, inadequate job satisfaction may give rise to behavioral consequences such as lower work enthusiasm (Here et al, 2024), absenteeism, and turnover intention, which ultimately can reduce productive output (Yuan Badrianto et al, 2023).

In addition to job satisfaction, work competence is an important determinant of productivity because competence represents an individual's capacity to display effective work behaviors (Here et al, 2024). Zenda et al, (2025) define competence as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job. In plantation work that demands procedural accuracy (Lanjar Titi Sumarni & Ernawati, 2023), occupational safety, and operational discipline, competence (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) affects employees' ability to implement work standards (Wildatur Nurrahmah et al., 2024), minimize errors, and maintain consistent output quality (Asmy et al, 2025). Accordingly, competence is expected to contribute to productivity both directly and indirectly through certain psychological mechanisms (Kouser Khan et al, 2025).

A relevant psychological mechanism for explaining how satisfaction and competence translate into productivity is work motivation (Priscilla & Joven, 2024). In contemporary motivation theory, motivation is understood not only as the intensity of drive, but also as the quality of regulation (Priscilla & Joven, 2024) (e.g., autonomous motivation) that affects persistence and performance quality (Asraf et al, 2025). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains that the fulfillment of basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) tends to increase more autonomous forms of motivation and lead to more adaptive work outcomes (Lathif et al, 2025). From another perspective, Expectancy Theory emphasizes that employees will be more motivated when they believe that effort produces performance and performance produces valued outcomes (Walajro, 2024).

Given motivation's role in driving the choice to exert effort, effort intensity, and persistence (Nafisah et al., 2024), motivation can function as a

mediating variable that bridges the effects of job satisfaction and competence on productivity (Sentani & Onaning, 2025). Methodologically, the concept of mediation emphasizes testing causal pathways through an intervening variable, as distinguished from moderation within the framework of Rahmadiani (2025) Emon et al., (2024). In this study, work motivation is positioned as a mediator that can clarify whether job satisfaction and competence increase productivity primarily because both strengthen employees' work drive (Suppu et al, 2024).

Empirically, prior findings on the relationships among job satisfaction, competence, motivation, and productivity remain mixed (Purnamasari, 2024), particularly when work contexts differ in their characteristics (e.g., the predominance of field work, safety risks, production-target pressure, and limited supporting facilities) (Rahmi & Suryatni, 2025). Therefore, empirical testing in the oil palm plantation context is needed so that managerial recommendations are more precise and relevant. A case study at PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa is important for assessing productivity determinants among employees working within a large-scale plantation operating system in the Riau region.

Based on the foregoing, this study aims to analyze the effects of job satisfaction and work competence on employee work productivity and to test the mediating role of work motivation. Practically, the results are expected to serve as a basis for designing targeted HR interventions, such as improving compensation design and work facilities, strengthening competency-based training, and enhancing motivation through stronger supervisory support, clearer targets, and performance recognition. Theoretically, this study contributes by enriching empirical evidence on the motivation-mediation model in the context of the oil palm plantation industry.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative (explanatory) design to examine the direction and magnitude of the effects of job satisfaction (X1) and work competence (X2) on employee work productivity (Y), as well as to test the role of work motivation (Z) as a mediating variable.

Research Site and Period

The research was conducted at PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa, an oil palm plantation company located in Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province. The research activities (preparation, data collection, and data processing) were carried out over eight months, from May 2025 to December 2025.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all employees of PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa involved in operational and non-operational activities, totaling 1,071 employees. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) permanent employees, (2) a minimum tenure of 2 years, and (3) directly involved in operational and/or non-operational work. Based on these criteria, the sample size was set at 95 respondents.

Types, Sources, and Data Collection Techniques

The data comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire completed by respondents (Yusuf & Elsandra, 2023). Secondary data were obtained from company documentation and other relevant supporting sources (e.g., company profiles, production reports, and human resource policy documents) (Ahmad Rida & Ovalia Rukmana, 2025).

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

The study involved four main constructs: job satisfaction (X1), work competence (X2), work motivation (Z), and work productivity (Y). Measurements used a 1-5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Indicators were compiled into composite variables (total scores) for each construct.

A summary of the operationalization of variables is presented in Table 1.

Variable	Code	Role	Number of indicators	Scale
Job Satisfaction	X1	Independent	5	Likert 1-5
Work Competence	X2	Independent	3	Likert 1-5
Work Motivation	Z	Mediating	5	Likert 1-5
Work Productivity	Y	Dependent	6	Likert 1-5

Research Instrument Testing

Instrument testing was conducted through validity and reliability tests. Item validity was assessed using item-total correlation; an item was considered valid if the correlation coefficient (r-calculated) exceeded r-table (r-table = 0.202) and the significance value was < 0.05. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha; the instrument was considered reliable if alpha > 0.70. Instrument testing was processed using SPSS version 28.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in stages: (1) descriptive analysis to describe respondent characteristics and the distribution of responses; (2) classical assumption tests for the regression model (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity); and (3) hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression and path analysis through two structural equations: (a) Sub-model I: $Z = a_0 + a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + e_1$; and (b) Sub-model II: $Y = c_0 + c_1X_1 + c_2X_2 + bZ + e_2$. Partial effects were tested using the t-test at a 5% significance level.

Mediation effects were tested by estimating the indirect effects $a_1 \times b$ ($X_1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$) and $a_2 \times b$ ($X_2 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$). In line with common practice in mediation research, the significance of indirect effects can be tested using the Sobel test and/or a bootstrap approach to obtain confidence intervals for indirect effects. With a relatively moderate sample size, bootstrapping is often recommended because it does not require the indirect effect to be normally distributed (Legona & Effendi, 2024).

Analytical Tools

All data processing was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28. Mediation analysis can be performed using the Sobel test calculation and/or the

PROCESS macro (Model 4) if needed as a robustness check for estimating indirect effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 95 respondents (permanent employees) who met the sampling criteria. A summary of respondent profiles is presented in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age

No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	20-30 years	50	52.63%
2	31-40 years	30	31.57%
3	41-50 years	15	15.78%
Total		95	100%

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	60	63.15%
2	Female	35	36.84%
Total		95	100%

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Education Level

No.	Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	Senior/Vocational School (equivalent)	89	93.68%
2	Diploma (D1/D2/D3)	1	1.05%
3	Bachelor's (S1)	5	5.26%
Total		95	100%

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Length of Service

No.	Length of Service	Frequency	Percentage
1	< 5 Years	30	31.57%
2	5-10 Years	50	52.63%
3	> 10 Years	15	15.78%
Total	Total	95	100%

Instrument Testing

The validity test shows that all statement items have an item-total correlation greater than the r-table value (0.202) and a significance value < 0.05; therefore, all indicators are declared valid and suitable for further analysis.

The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha indicates good internal consistency for all constructs (alpha > 0.70). A reliability summary is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability Test Summary (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Number of Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Work	6	0.895	Reliable

Productivity (Y)				
Job Satisfaction (X1)	5		0.864	Reliable
Work Competence (X2)	3		0.782	Reliable
Work Motivation (Z)	5		0.841	Reliable

Classical Assumption Tests

The residual normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov produced a statistic of 0.124 with a significance value of 0.100 ($p > 0.05$) for Sub-Model I and 0.200 ($p > 0.05$) for Sub-Model II; therefore, the model residuals are normally distributed.

The multicollinearity test shows that all Tolerance values are > 0.10 and all VIF values are < 10 ; therefore, there is no multicollinearity problem (see Table 6).

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Summary (Productivity Model)

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Job Satisfaction (X1)	0.622	1.609
Work Competence (X2)	0.453	2.208
Work Motivation (Z)	0.438	2.281

The heteroskedasticity test using the Glejser method shows that all coefficient significance values are > 0.05 ; therefore, the model meets the homoskedasticity assumption (see Table 7).

Table 7. Glejser Test Summary (AbsRes)

Variable	Sig.
Job Satisfaction (X1)	0.878
Work Competence (X2)	0.094
Work Motivation (Z)	0.950

Hypothesis Testing Results and Path Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression (productivity model) and mediation testing using the Sobel test. A summary of coefficient estimates for the productivity model is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Regression Results (Productivity as the Dependent Variable)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Job Satisfaction (X1)	0.106	0.082	0.108	1.300	0.197
Work Competence (X2)	0.683	0.197	0.338	3.468	0.082
Work Motivation (Z)	0.527	0.123	0.425	4.286	0.003

The model explains 0.608 (60,8%) of the variation in work productivity ($R = 0.780$; Adjusted R-square = 0.595; SEE = 1.999). At the 5% significance level, work motivation (Z) has a positive and significant effect on work productivity ($B = 0,527$; $p = 0,003$). Work competence (X2) has a positive effect but is not significant at the 5% level ($B = 0,683$; $p = 0,082$) and shows a tendency at the 10% level, whereas job satisfaction (X1) is not significant ($B = 0,106$; $p = 0,197$). The (unstandardized) regression equation for the productivity model is:

$$Y = 6,246 + 0,106 X1 + 0,683 X2 + 0,527 Z$$

Mediation Testing (Sobel Test)

The role of work motivation as a mediating variable was tested using the Sobel test. The results show that the indirect effects of job satisfaction and work competence on productivity through motivation are significant (Table 9).

Table 9. Sobel Test Results (Indirect Effects)

Path	a	SE(a)	b	SE(b)	p (Sobel)
X1 -> Z -> Y	0.295	0.068	0.522	0.135	0.004
X2 -> Z -> Y	0.891	0.133	0.522	0.135	0.001

These findings indicate that work motivation is a psychological mechanism that mediates the effects of job satisfaction and work competence on work productivity. Thus, the mediation hypotheses (H6 and H7) are supported.

Discussion

The findings show that work motivation makes the strongest contribution to explaining variation in work productivity (beta = 0.425), followed by work competence (beta = 0.338). Conceptually, this is consistent with organizational behavior literature that positions motivation as a primary driver of effort and persistence, which ultimately affects performance/productivity (Loudoe et al, 2023). Methodological support for testing indirect effects is also consistent with recommendations to use modern mediation approaches, including an emphasis on the significance of the indirect effect (Agustin et al, 2023).

Job satisfaction does not show a significant direct effect on productivity when motivation and competence are controlled (p = 0.197). Empirically, the satisfaction-performance relationship is consistently positive at the aggregate level, but the magnitude of the effect varies and is influenced by context, job characteristics, and psychological mechanisms operating within the organization (Pangestu & Masman, 2023). In the context of PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa, the Sobel test indicates that job satisfaction remains relevant through an indirect pathway: satisfaction increases motivation, and motivation increases productivity. In other words, job satisfaction functions as a psychological prerequisite that strengthens work drive rather than acting as a direct driver of productivity.

Work competence shows a positive direction of influence on productivity; however, in the model with the mediator, the direct effect is not significant at the 5% level (p = 0.082) and only shows a tendency at the 10% level. This indicates that most of the effect of competence on productivity operates through increased work motivation.

Conceptually, this pattern is consistent with the “indirect-only” (full mediation) type, where the indirect effect is significant while the direct effect is not significant when the mediator is included (Loudoe et al, 2023).

Managerially, these findings suggest prioritizing interventions in two areas: strengthening work motivation through a fair and transparent reward system, performance feedback (Pangestu & Masman, 2023), and improvements

in safety and work comfort; and developing competence through job-needs-based training, on-the-job coaching, and standardization of work procedures (Novilasari et al, 2024). Strategies to improve job satisfaction remain necessary (Nasution & Hermawan, 2024), but their impact is expected to be more optimal when directed toward building and sustaining work motivation (Lanjar Titi Sumarni & Ernawati, 2023). From a methodological perspective, the literature also emphasizes that the significance of the indirect effect is more important than requiring a significant direct effect; therefore, mediation interpretation should focus on the indirect effect (Legona & Effendi, 2024).

The limitations of this study include the cross-sectional design, which cannot establish causal direction with strong certainty, and perception-based measurement, which may introduce common method bias (Ahmad Rida & Ovalia Rukmana, 2025). Future research is recommended to use a bootstrap approach for confidence intervals of indirect effects (e.g., via PROCESS Model 4) to obtain more robust mediation estimates (Purnamasari, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there is an influence relationship between the independent variables job satisfaction (X1) and work competence (X2) and the dependent variable, employee work productivity (Y), either directly or through the mediating variable of work motivation (Z) among employees of PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa. The test results indicate that job satisfaction does not affect employees' work motivation at PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa, whereas work competence affects employees' work motivation. Furthermore, job satisfaction does not affect employee work productivity, and work competence also does not affect employee work productivity. However, work motivation is proven to affect employee work productivity at PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa. In addition, work motivation functions as an intervening variable, because job satisfaction affects work productivity through work motivation, and work competence also affects work productivity through work motivation as an intervening variable.

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