

# RELEVANCE

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### The Efficacy of Workplace Spirituality and Work Discipline on Employee Performance: Understanding the Mediating Role of Work Motivation

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to test and analyze the effect of workplace spirituality and work discipline on employee performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable. This study uses quantitative methods involving a population of all Tulungagung Regency Environmental Service employees. The survey was conducted using the Non-Probability Sampling method for 98 employees. The data were processed using SmartPLS version 4.0 with validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing. The results showed that workplace spirituality did not significantly affect employee performance, and work discipline did not considerably affect employee performance. Furthermore, work motivation affects employee performance. Work Motivation can also mediate the relationship between Employee Performance and Workplace Spirituality. In addition, Work motivation can also mediate the effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance on employees of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. This research implies that focusing on Spirituality in the workplace can improve employees' emotional and psychological well-being, which can increase job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.

## Introduction

The main objective of Human resource management is to improve employee performance so that the company's performance remains optimal. Good performance can significantly improve employee and company careers (Lee & Lee, 2018). Mangkunegara (2017) suggests that employee performance compares the results obtained by involving an organized workforce to maximize performance. Several factors can affect how well employees perform when doing their jobs to achieve optimal performance. Motivating staff members and maintaining work discipline are essential factors affecting performance (Adiguzel & Cakir, 2022). Discipline is considered as the willingness of employees to comply with regulations, while motivation is regarded as an effort to increase employee morale. In addition, there is also one factor that can empirically affect employee performance, namely workplace spirituality. Milliman et al. (2003) and Rahman et al. (2019) state that the value of Spirituality positively impacts performance and personal well-being.

Meanwhile, according to Gani et al. (2013), work spirituality significantly influences employee performance because an excellent spiritual environment will improve one's performance. Work discipline is critical in human resource management (Hasibuan, 2012) because employee discipline is proportional to their success in doing work in the workplace. The amount of responsibility given to employees and the work they must complete shows the success rate of work discipline. If the Company provides strong motivation to its employees, it will affect their performance and make them try harder to complete their tasks. Conversely, if the Company motivates its employees, they will maintain their morale, give up quickly, and face difficulties completing their tasks (Mahirah & Setiani, 2022).

The results of research conducted by Sani & Ekowati (2020), Belwalkar et al. (2018), and Jena (2022) state that workplace spirituality has a significant effect on employee performance. Naga et al. (2012) expressed different results and said there was no direct relationship between workplace spirituality and employee performance. The results of other study also shows that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Iptian et al, 2020). However, Sugiono and Vitaloka (2019) suggest that work discipline does not significantly or positively affect employee performance. This finding is supported by Kurniawan & Heryanto (2019), who said that work discipline has no significant effect on employee performance. These results indicate that an employee's discipline level only sometimes allows them to provide optimal performance results for the Company. According to Garaika's research (2020), work motivation positively and significantly influences employee performance. In addition, Al-Musadieq et al. (2018) and Rita et al. (2018) noted that employee performance is positively and significantly influenced by motivation. Contrasting findings in the study of Razak et al. (2018), which states that motivation does not influence employee performance much. Rosyidah et al (2023) views motivation as an intervening component that affect the relationship between work discipline and compensation to employee performance.

One of the phenomena that still occurs in the Tulungagung Regency Environmental Service is the presence of employees who are late for work. Although this level of delay has been reduced, employee discipline still needs to be improved. Employee work discipline is essential to maintain operational efficiency, reduce errors, and increase productivity. Organizations that successfully instill work discipline usually have more structured and focused employees completing tasks.

Based on the description of phenomena and previous research findings that show differences and inconsistencies in research findings, this is the reason and encouragement for researchers to investigate and analyze the effect of work spirituality, work discipline, and motivation as mediating variables on employee performance at the Tulungagung Regency Environmental Service (DLH). This study resolves this gap in the previous literature by exploring the role of work motivation as a mediator linking workplace spirituality and work discipline to employee performance. Although a number of studies have shown a direct relationship between workplace spirituality, work discipline and performance, inconsistent findings, such as those recorded in the Tulungagung Environmental Agency (DLH), suggest that these factors do not always have a direct impact on optimal performance. Through this approach, this study introduces the concept of work motivation as a mediating variable that can explain how spirituality and work discipline, while important, can be more effective in improving employee performance when driven by strong motivation. For example, in the global technology industry such as Google or Microsoft, where spirituality and employee well-being are highly regarded, it is noted that employees who feel connected to the organization's values and are given space to develop personally, tend to be more motivated and productive. This research seeks to bridge the gap by emphasizing that seemingly separate factors, such as work motivation and spirituality, should be viewed as part of a larger ecosystem to achieve optimal employee performance.

The novelty of this research is that using work motivation as a mediating variable provides a deeper understanding of how workplace spirituality and work discipline affect employee performance. This adds a more complex layer of analysis than research that only looks at direct effects. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of workplace spirituality, which is often overlooked in traditional management research. It provides a new perspective that spiritual aspects can significantly impact employee performance and well-being.

### **Review of Literature**

The Grand Theory in this study is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Workplace spirituality can help employees meet higher-level needs in Maslow's hierarchy, such as self-actualization and esteem, which can increase motivation and performance. In addition, organizational justice theory states that workplace spirituality can strengthen perceptions of justice by creating a supportive environment, while work discipline can influence procedural and distributive justice.

### ***Employee Performance***

According to Rivai (2009), performance is defined as the willingness of a person or group of people to carry out an activity and complete it according to their responsibilities with the results as expected. Employee well-being pertains to optimal mental and physical health, which is influenced by organizational dynamics and occasionally extends to factors beyond the workplace (Al Nahyan et al., 2024). Enhancing employee well-being is a primary task for many global employers and leaders because it directly impacts individual and organizational performance (Johari et al., 2019). Usman (2017) further emphasizes that an employee's mental state is critical to job performance.

### ***Workplace Spirituality on Employee Performance***

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the

context of community. According to Robbins (2008), workplace spirituality is a type of human consciousness with an inner life fostered by important work in a community context. Workplace spirituality's importance emanates from its potential contribution to employee well-being (Pawar, 2008; Sheep, 2006). Prabhu and Modem (2023) have also revealed that employees perceive workplace spirituality experiences distinctly. Therefore, experiences of meaning in life vary across individuals and teams because the "self" concepts are individual-specific. Jena (2022) found a positive and significant relationship and influence of workplace spirituality on employee performance. Employees who have a spiritual connection to their work tend to be more cooperative and willing to work together to achieve common goals which can improve productivity and the overall quality of teamwork. In addition, employees who have a spiritual connection to their work tend to be more mentally and emotionally present at their workplace. They may be more engaged with the vision and goals of the organization. So the hypothesis proposed for this study is:

H1: Workplace Spirituality has a significant effect on employee performance

### ***Work Discipline on Employee Performance***

According to Hamali (2018), work discipline is a force that develops in the body of employees that can make them voluntarily adjust to the rules and values of work and high behavior. Discipline is the ability to control oneself, for example, by avoiding inappropriate actions and supporting the rules that have been made. According to Iptian et al (2020), Kurniawan and Heryanto (2019) found that work discipline affects employee performance. Increased discipline towards employees will have a positive influence on employee performance. Disciplined employees tend to have higher levels of productivity, because they are able to manage their time efficiently and focus on the tasks assigned. Disciplined employees also tend to be more thorough and careful in carrying out their tasks. They will ensure that the work they do meets the set quality standards. In addition, disciplined employees will demonstrate a good corporate culture and leave a good impression on coworkers, clients, and business partners. This can increase the company's external trust. The hypothesis proposed is:

H2: Work Discipline has a significant effect on Employee Performance

### ***Work Motivation on Employee Performance***

Robbins and Judge (2013) state that motivation is a calculation of a person's persistence, purpose, and intensity in their efforts to achieve their goals. Intensity shows how hard a person's effort or goal is a benefit that can affect the organization. Sitopu et al (2021) and Nurcahyani and Andyani (2016) state that work motivation has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Strong motivation can encourage employees to strive to achieve high quality standards in their work. They are more likely to do work conscientiously and carefully, feel more satisfied with their work, and have lower stress levels. In addition, employees who feel valued and motivated are more likely to have a greater commitment to their employer. They are also more likely to have a stronger relationship with the company. This can help create a more peaceful work environment and reduce conflict between employees. The proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Work Motivation has a significant effect on employee performance

### **The Effect of Work Motivation in Mediating the Relationship of Workplace Spirituality to Employee Performance**

Research by Garg (2017) found that work motivation can influence workplace spirituality on employee performance. Workplace spirituality can help employees become more motivated, namely motivation that comes from within themselves, not from things that come from outside, such as salary. When employees feel connected to the greater purpose and deep values of their workplace, then they will tend to be more motivated to do their best in their work. Proposed hypothesis:

H4: Work Motivation can mediate the relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Employee Performance

### **The Effect of Work Motivation in Mediating the Relationship between Work Discipline and Employee Performance**

The results of research conducted by Kurniawan & Heryanto (2019) show that motivation can significantly mediate the relationship between work discipline and employee performance. It is very important to remember that work motivation can serve as a link between work discipline and employee performance. In other words, employees who have a high level of work motivation tend to perform tasks with more discipline which in turn can result in better performance. The proposed hypothesis is:

H5: Work Motivation can mediate the relationship between Work Discipline and Employee Performance

### **Hypotheses Development**

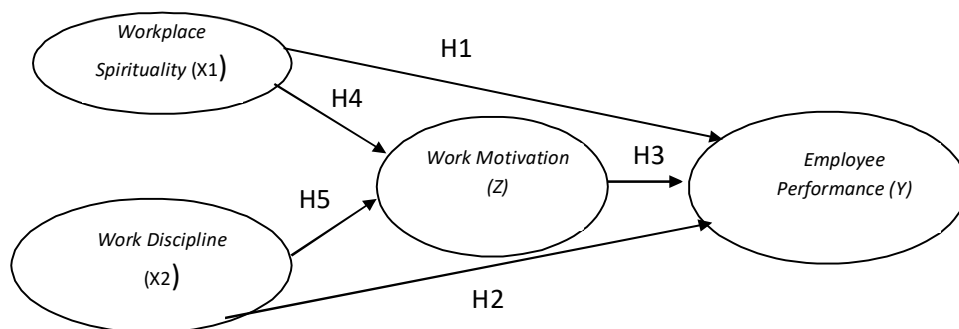


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

### **Research Method**

The type of research used is quantitative research. The population used in this study was 130 Tulungagung Regency Environmental Service employees. The sample to be studied amounted to 98 people after calculating the Slovin formula. The sampling technique used in this research is Non Probability Sampling because this technique is suitable for use in this study. Where there are limited time, budget, or resources. In this

study, there is certainly a bias in sample selection, because population elements do not have the same opportunity to be selected, there is a risk that the sample is not representative of the population. Therefore, researchers used a sample of 98 people from each department or section. The primary data of this study were taken from questionnaire data given to research samples with a Likert point measurement scale of one to five. The indicators used for each variable are: performance indicators is quality of work, promptness, initiative, capability, and communication (Sedarmayanti, 2017).

According to Milliman et al. (2003), the indicators of workplace spirituality are: (a) Meaningful Work is a feeling of meaning at work and creating the meaning of work so that it can make the best contribution to the organization. Moreover, the value or purpose of work is assessed based on individual standards or ideals; (b) Sense of Community is an emotional bond among community members that allows them to share and fulfill their needs. This Sense of Community refers to the feelings that associate each person in a collective group with feelings of togetherness, dependence, and commitment between one another (Wibowo et al., 2017); (c) Alignment with Organizational Value is defined as someone who has a feeling that the values of the organization are by their principles and beliefs. It is like he feels that the organization cares about the people who are in trouble and oppressed and thinks that the organization pays attention to all employees.

According to Robbins and Judge (2008) indicators of work discipline, namely: (a) Time Discipline, one of the definitions of time discipline is an attitude or behavior that shows adherence to a work schedule which includes employees' attendance and adherence to their schedules, as well as timely execution of tasks; (b) Regulatory Discipline, employees' awareness to obey every regulation given by the Company; (c) Responsibility Discipline, one of the responsibilities of employees is the best use and maintenance of equipment to ensure office or production activities run smoothly. They must also have the courage to do the work that is their responsibility.

According to Maslow in Busro (2017), everyone has a hierarchy of needs from highest to lowest. If the lowest need can be met, it will increase and encourage to meet the next level of needs. Indicators of motivation based on Maslow's needs include physiological, security, social needs, appreciation, and self-actualization. The tool used to analyze this research data is Partial Least Square (PLS). The test tools used are validity tests, reliability tests, and hypothesis testing.

## **Results**

### ***Validity and Reliability Test***

The results showed that each item was declared valid because the value was more than 0.7 (Table 1). The reliability test results are shown in Table 2, where all variables are declared reliable because the value is above 0.8. Hypothesis testing is shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, which states that work spirituality on performance is not significant because the p-value of 0.058 is greater than the significance value of 0.05. Work discipline on performance is insignificant because the p-value of 0.837 is greater than the significance value of 0.05. Motivation affects performance with a p-value of 0.000, less than the significance value of 0.05. While motivation can mediate the relationship between work spirituality and performance with a p-value of 0.000, motivation can mediate the relationship between work discipline and performance with a p-value of 0.000.

Table 1. Validity Test

Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading
X1.1	0.705	X2.1	0.868	Z.1	0.930	Y.1	0.855
X1.2	0.713	X2.2	0.847	Z.2	0.780	Y.2	0.837
X1.3	0.745	X2.3	0.705	Z.3	0.756	Y.3	0.757
X1.4	0.718	X2.4	0.855	Z.4	0.947	Y.4	0.773
X1.5	0.810	X2.5	0.910	Z.5	0.901	Y.5	0.770
X1.6	0.760	X2.6	0.741	Z.6	0.856	Y.6	0.751
X1.7	0.871	X2.7	0.865	Z.7	0.773	Y.7	0.767
X1.8	0.869	X2.8	0.909	Z.8	0.887	Y.8	0.851
X1.9	0.748			Z.9	0.902	Y.9	0.740
X1.10	0.710					Y.10	0.800
X1.11	0.742						

Source: Data processed 2024

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Test	Description
Work Spirituality (WS)	0.930	Reliable
Work Discipline (WD)	0.940	Reliable
Work Motivation (WM)	0.956	Reliable
Employee Performance (EP)	0.933	Reliable

Source: Data processed 2024

The results of Table 3 and Figure 2 show that workplace spirituality does not significantly impact the employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value of 0.058 is more significant than 0.05. Work discipline does not significantly affect employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value is 0.837, which is greater than 0.05. The work motivation variable affects the employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value is 0.000 < 0.05. Work motivation can mediate the effect of workplace spirituality on employee performance. This can be seen from the p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. Work motivation can mediate the effect of work discipline on employee performance. This can be seen from the p-value of 0.000 < 0.05.

Table 3. Uji Hipotesis

Variable	Original Sample (O)	p-value	f square	T statistic	Description
WS → EP	0.161	0.058	0.040	1.896	Not significant
WD → EP	0.019	0.837	0.001	0.206	Not significant
WM → EP	0.767	0.000	1.083	10.797	Significant
WS > WM > EP	0.342	0.000	0.197	4.585	Significant
WD > WM > EP	0.333	0.000	0.186	4.404	Significant

Source: Data processed 2024

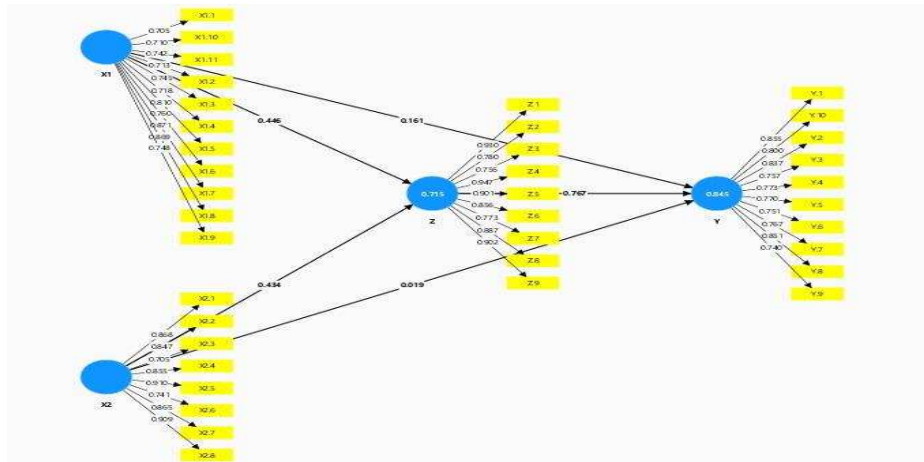


Figure 2: Model PLS

Source: Data processed 2024

## Discussion

### *The Effect of Workplace Spirituality on Employee Performance*

The results of Figure 2 show that workplace spirituality does not significantly impact the employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value of 0.058 is more significant than 0.05. Therefore, the performance of DLH Tulungagung employees will not be affected by changes in the workplace spirituality variable. The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Pratama (2014) and Umam and Auliya (2018), which state that workplace spirituality does not affect employee performance. So, the first hypothesis (H1) is rejected. At DLH Tulungagung, workplace spirituality is characterized by a sense of comfort at work, feeling that what is done is related to social good, and that the work done is related to essential things from life.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) discuss Spirituality in the workplace from two perspectives: personal experience and the organizational environment. They said that Spirituality in the workplace arises because people can express themselves to help the Company by doing work that is meaningful to the Company. In this context, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) divide workplace spirituality into three dimensions, namely work meaning, feelings associated with work, and feelings associated with value alignment. The deep feelings a person has about the meaning and purpose of their work are shown in the meaning of the work dimension. The dimension of being part of the community at work means that employees have become part of the community in their workplace. Then, the value alignment dimension is a strong feeling that a person has about how their values match the goals and mission of the organization.

### *The Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance*

The results of data processing with SmartPLS version 4.0 show that work discipline does not significantly affect employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value is 0.837, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service will not be affected by changes in the work discipline variable. This study's results align with research conducted



by Sugiono and Vitaloka (2019), which states that work discipline has no positive or significant effect on employee performance. However, the results of this study are inversely proportional to the research results (Hersona & Sidharta, 2017), which state that work discipline has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Therefore, H2 in this study is rejected. At DLH Tulungagung, work discipline is characterized by employees being able to complete work to the maximum, orderly in maintaining the facilities provided by the office, and employees are responsible for their work.

The insignificant effect of work discipline on employee performance at the Tulungagung Environmental Agency (DLH) can be caused by several factors. One of them is the possibility that work discipline has become the basic standard expected in the organization, so it no longer makes a significant additional contribution to improving performance. If work discipline is strictly enforced but not supported by an empowering work environment or adequate rewards, employees may simply fulfill obligations without being encouraged to achieve optimal performance. This emphasizes the need for organizations to not only focus on discipline but also on other factors that enhance employee engagement and productivity. According to Fajar and Setiani (2023), work discipline is a condition where employees respect company rules and regulations.

#### ***The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance***

The results of data processing with SmartPLS version 4.0 show that the work motivation variable affects the employee performance of the Tulungagung Environmental Service. The resulting p-value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ . So, from these results, the hypothesis (H3) is accepted. This study's results align with research conducted by (Hidayat, 2020), which states that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. DLH Tulungagung motivates its employees by providing workplace comfort and safety facilities and has work safety procedures. In addition, DLH Tulungagung also rewards and praises employees who excel or do a good job and provides promotions for the best employees. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that work motivation is fulfilled so that employees can achieve the best level of performance.

#### ***Effect of Workplace Spirituality on Employee Performance through Work Motivation as a mediating variable***

The data processing results that have been carried out using SmartPLS version 4.0 show that work motivation can mediate the effect of workplace spirituality on employee performance. This can be seen from the p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . A study conducted by Rosyidah et al (2024) found that work motivation can mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee performance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4) in this study is accepted. This means that work spirituality must be accompanied by work motivation to increase employee performance. The ability of work motivation to mediate the effect of workplace spirituality on employee performance suggests that spirituality in the workplace does not directly improve performance, but does so through increased employee motivation. Workplace spirituality, which includes elements such as meaning in work, a sense of community, and alignment of values with the organization, creates an environment that supports and empowers employees emotionally and psychologically. When employees feel their work is meaningful and aligned with their personal values, they are more motivated to contribute their best. This motivation then drives higher performance, as motivated employees tend to be more focused, dedicated and results-oriented. Thus, organizations that promote spirituality in the workplace can improve

performance indirectly through increased employee motivation.

***Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance through Work Motivation as a mediating variable***

The data processing results that have been carried out using SmartPLS version 4.0 show that work motivation can mediate the effect of work discipline on employee performance. This can be seen from the p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and is in line with the research of Zulpa & Setiawan (2024), who said that work motivation can mediate the relationship between work discipline and employee performance. Therefore, it was found that the fifth hypothesis (H5) in this study was accepted. This means that work discipline must be accompanied by work motivation to increase employee performance. The ability of work motivation to mediate the effect of work discipline on employee performance shows that work discipline applied in organizations does not necessarily improve performance without a motivational drive from within employees. Work discipline, such as punctuality, adherence to rules, and consistency in completing tasks, provides a supportive structure and framework. However, for employees to go beyond fulfilling basic obligations, work motivation is needed as a key driver. Work motivation, both intrinsic such as pride in work and extrinsic such as rewards or incentives, transforms discipline into more productive and creative efforts, thus having a significant impact on performance. This confirms that organizations need to combine discipline management with motivation strategies to ensure optimal employee performance.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study is that performance can be influenced by motivation. Motivation also mediates the relationship between work spirituality, work discipline, and performance. It is essential to continue improving work motivation at DLH Tulungagung through incentives, recognition, and rewards to strengthen the positive effects of workplace spirituality and work discipline on employee performance. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation must be considered to ensure employees remain motivated. In addition, DLH Tulungagung can also develop a work culture that pays attention to aspects of Spirituality, such as providing space for personal reflection, meaningful social activities, and employee welfare programs. This can increase employees' engagement and give more meaning to their work. The findings of this study help develop a more comprehensive theoretical model of the relationship between workplace spirituality, work discipline, work motivation, and employee performance.

The practical implications of the study for managers are to involve employees in decision-making relevant to their work and provide feedback that shows how their contributions affect the success of the organization. Use training programs to develop time management skills and focus on tasks to make employees more disciplined. To keep employees motivated, provide non-material recognition, such as verbal awards, certificates, or promotions based on performance. By implementing these steps, organizations can expect to achieve improved performance, as employees who are more motivated and find their work meaningful tend to work harder and be more productive. In addition, it gains employee satisfaction and retention, and a positive work culture. A workplace that focuses on spirituality, motivation, and discipline encourages collaboration and innovation. This model can serve as a basis for further research in the same area. Suggestions for future researchers include expanding the sample or other industry contexts, using different methods, and exploring other variables.

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