

The Effect Of Work Experience And Competence On Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction Of PDAM Surya Sembada Employees In Surabaya City

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Work Experience and Competence on Employee Performance, either directly or through the mediation variables of Job Satisfaction in PDAM Surya Sembada Kota Surabaya. The research method uses a quantitative approach with census techniques or saturated sampling of the entire employee population, as many as 93 people. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS) through SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results of the study show that Work Experience and Competence have a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, both directly and indirectly through Job Satisfaction. These findings indicate that improving employee work experience and competencies not only increases job satisfaction but also impacts overall performance improvement. Therefore, the development of competencies and work experience is an important strategy in efforts to improve organizational performance.

Keywords: Work Experience, Competence, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

A company is a system consisting of various subsystems that work synergistically to achieve organizational goals. In this system, human resources (HR) play an important role in determining the success of the company. Quality human resources are strategic assets that need to be managed properly to achieve optimal productivity and efficiency (Pradnyani & Rahyuda, 2022). Employee performance reflects how effectively individuals carry out tasks according to their responsibilities and is the main indicator of organizational success (Abdillah et al., 2024). Therefore, the quality of human resources is a reflection of the success of the organization in achieving targets and maintaining competitiveness. Employee performance focuses on work results achieved according to organizational standards, both quantitatively and qualitatively (Azhari et al., 2024). High-performing employees make a significant contribution to the company's progress, while low-performing employees can reduce organizational effectiveness. According to (Premesti and Yuniningsih, 2023), performance is the result of work carried out legally, ethically, and in accordance with the responsibilities of the position. In an increasingly competitive business context, improving employee



performance is a priority so that companies can achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their operations.

One of the important factors that affects performance is work experience. Experience provides adaptability, problem-solving, and efficiency in task completion. Employees with adequate experience tend to understand the work system better and can deal with challenges effectively. In addition, competence, which includes knowledge, skills, and work attitudes, also determines the quality of employee work results. Without competencies that are in accordance with the demands of the job, effectiveness and productivity will be difficult to achieve (Harahap, 2017; Munthe et al., 2017). However, experience and competence alone are not enough to guarantee optimal performance without job satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied with their work will show loyalty, high motivation, and a desire to contribute more. Conversely, dissatisfaction can decrease motivation and increase absenteeism, negatively impacting performance (Adam et al., 2021). Therefore, job satisfaction plays a role as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between work experience and competence on employee performance.

The Surya Sembada Regional Drinking Water Company (PDAM) Surabaya City is a public institution responsible for providing clean water for the community. In recent years (2022–2024), PDAM has faced a decline in employee performance as reflected in the non-achievement of productivity, service quality, and work discipline targets. Data shows that employee performance realization does not reach the set target, indicating problems in human resource management. This condition is allegedly influenced by stagnant work experience and competencies that have not been optimally developed through continuous training.

Performance problems at PDAM Surya Sembada are also exacerbated by low employee job satisfaction. A less supportive work environment, limited incentives, and a lack of recognition of employee achievements have the potential to reduce work motivation. In line with the findings of Sopiah (2018), work experiences built in a collaborative environment are able to improve team performance through better synergy. Therefore, improving work experience, developing competencies, and creating job satisfaction is an important strategy to improve employee performance as a whole. By paying attention to these factors, this study was conducted to analyze the influence of work experience and competence on employee performance, both directly and through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The results of the research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of human resource management science as well as a practical contribution to PDAM Surya Sembada in formulating a sustainable employee performance improvement strategy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Work Experience

Work experience in the context of human resource management is based on the Work Experience Theory developed by David Kolb, who explains that experience is the main source of learning through the process of reflection and practical application (Tarwiyah & Parma, 2022). In an organization, work experience includes an individual's interaction with his or her work environment, including the execution of duties, responsibilities, and social relationships in the workplace. Diverse work experiences, such as involvement in various projects and cross-functional work, can improve an individual's adaptability and competence (Tua & Mardhiyah, 2022). The results of the study show that work experience has a positive effect on performance because employees with longer working periods have a deep understanding of organizational

systems, policies, and procedures, which has an impact on work effectiveness (Tarigan et al., 2021; Ellis, 2023).

Conceptually, work experience reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employees gain through direct involvement in the job. According to (Sahabuddin et al., 2024; Tulhusnah, 2022), work experience is measured through four main indicators: length of time or working period, level of knowledge, skill level, and mastery of work. The higher a person's work experience, the greater his ability to complete tasks effectively and efficiently. Therefore, organizations need to provide opportunities for employees to expand their experience through training, job rotations, and career development projects to continuously improve individual performance and organizational productivity.

2.2. Competence

Competence in the context of human resource management is based on Competency Theory developed by (Richard Boyatzis, 1982). This theory emphasizes that competence is a combination of individual knowledge, skills, and attributes that allow a person to achieve superior performance in his or her job (Fadilah & Purwanto, 2022). Competence is not only limited to technical skills, but also includes interpersonal and managerial skills that affect work effectiveness (Fariyani & Pertiwi, 2021). Based on the view of human resources, competence is divided into two main categories, namely technical competence—which includes specific skills and knowledge required in the job—and behavioral competence, which is related to the ability to manage emotions, interact, and adapt in the work environment (Jannati & Suhermin, 2020; Resi & Djakaria, 2020). These two dimensions complement each other to increase organizational effectiveness and achieve strategic goals (Sutianah, 2021).

Empirically, competence has been proven to have a significant influence on employee performance. Previous research has shown that individuals with high competence are more productive, efficient, and able to adapt to organizational changes (Fajar, 2019; Widodo & Yandi, 2022). In this study, competence is defined as individual abilities and characteristics that include knowledge, skills, and self-concept that play a role in carrying out tasks professionally and effectively (Pandhita et al., 2022). Therefore, organizations need to develop employee competencies on an ongoing basis through training, work rotation, and experiential learning in order to improve individual performance while strengthening the company's competitiveness.

2.3. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an employee's emotional response to their job, which reflects the extent to which the job is able to meet their needs, expectations, and personal values. According to (Dipoatmodjo, 2024; Mangkunegara, 2018), job satisfaction is the feeling that employees support or dissupport themselves in their work activities, influenced by factors such as salary, promotion, relationships between colleagues, and working conditions. Martoyo (2000) emphasized that satisfaction arises when the compensation received is in accordance with expectations, while Sopiah (2017) added that satisfaction is an emotional response that can be positive or negative depending on the individual's perception of the results of their work. Thus, job satisfaction can be interpreted as a person's level of enjoyment in carrying out their work, which affects motivation and performance.

Various theories explain the factors that shape job satisfaction, including Balance Theory (Adams in Gibson, 1963), Difference Theory (Porter, 1961; Locke, 1969), Need Fulfillment Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Vroom's Expectation Theory. According to Luthans in Novita (2016), six main indicators affect job satisfaction, namely: (1) The work itself, the extent to which employees enjoy their duties and responsibilities; (2)

Salary or wages, as a reward deemed fair; (3) Promotion, which is an opportunity to develop in a career; (4) Supervision, which includes style and support from superiors; (5) Co-workers, who provide social support and comfort; and (6) Working conditions, including adequate work environment and facilities. The combination of these factors determines an individual's level of satisfaction and has a direct impact on employee productivity and loyalty.

2.4. Performance

Performance is the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by individuals or groups in accordance with the responsibilities given to them (Mangkunegara, 2018; Widyaningrum, 2021). Performance reflects the extent to which employees carry out their duties effectively and efficiently in accordance with organizational standards. Performance evaluation is carried out systematically through the performance appraisal process, which is a formal assessment by superiors or authorities of employee achievements, to provide feedback, determine promotions, determining salaries, and career planning (Megginson in Mangkunegara, 2018). The appraisal process includes three main stages, namely defining the job, assessing performance results based on standards, and providing feedback for employee development.

Performance indicators are used to measure the extent to which employees achieve the expected work results. According to (Burhanuddin, 2024; Sihombing, 2021), there are six main indicators in assessing employee performance, namely: (1) Work quality, seen from the quality of work results; (2) Quantity, the amount of work completed; (3) Punctuality, ability to complete work on schedule; (4) Effectiveness, the extent to which resources are used optimally; (5) Independence, the ability to work without intensive supervision; and (6) Work commitment, willingness to carry out responsibilities and loyalty to the organization. These six indicators reflect the performance of employees as a whole and are the basis for evaluating the success of the organization in achieving its strategic goals.

2.5. Influence of Work Experience on Performance

Work experience plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance, as it reflects the extent to which individuals understand tasks, workflows, and can complete work effectively and efficiently. Experienced employees tend to be more adaptive, creative, and innovative in facing work challenges, so productivity increases (Pitri, 2020). Conversely, lack of experience can reduce the quality of performance due to limited insight and problem-solving skills (Andrey R. H, 2019). Therefore, companies need to consider work experience in the recruitment, placement, and career development process to ensure optimal performance.

2.6. The Effect of Competency on Performance

Competency which includes skills, knowledge, and work attitude (Wibowo, 2014) has a positive effect on employee performance (Putra et al., 2020; Siagian, 2018). Employees with high competence can work more efficiently, reduce errors, and improve the quality of work results (Paryanti, 2020). Competence not only reflects technical ability, but also mental readiness and professionalism at work. Therefore, organizations need to develop employee competencies through training and capacity building so that productivity and work effectiveness increase.

2.7. The Influence of Work Experience on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction

Extensive work experience not only improves technical skills but also has a positive impact on job satisfaction, which ultimately encourages employee performance improvement. Experienced employees are more confident, understand the work culture, and feel comfortable in their jobs, so they are motivated to work better. Thus, job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between experience and performance. Organizations need to create a supportive work environment so that employees' work experience truly contributes to optimal performance.

2.8. The Influence of Competency on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction

Competency has a direct or indirect effect on employee performance through job satisfaction. Competent employees feel capable and valued, so they are more satisfied and motivated at work. This satisfaction strengthens commitment and work spirit which has a positive impact on performance. Conversely, competencies that are not recognized or not utilized can reduce satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, organizations need to optimize the use of employee competencies through a work system that is fair, appreciative, and oriented towards continuous performance improvement.

2.9. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Based on the review of the theoretical foundation, a framework of thought can be prepared in this study, as presented in the following figure:

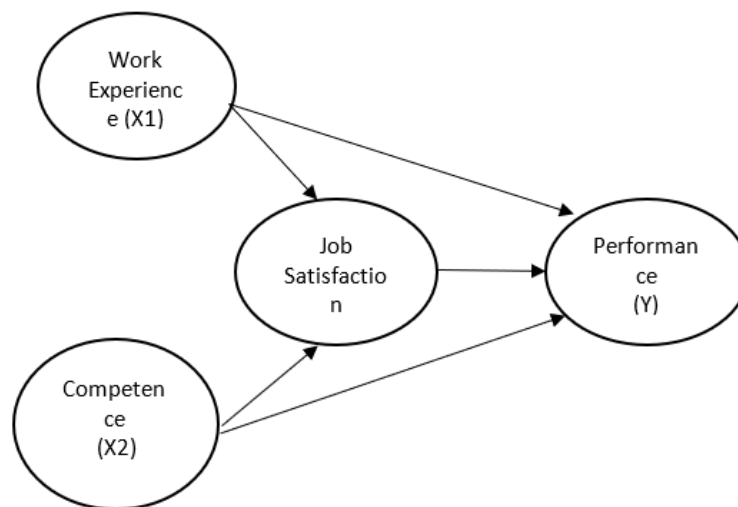


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement whose position is not as strong as a proposition. In accordance with the variables to be studied, the hypotheses that will be proposed in this study are:

- H1: Work Experience has a positive effect on employee performance.
- H2: Competency has a significant positive effect on employee performance.
- H3: Work Experience has a significant positive effect on employee performance through job satisfaction.
- H4: Competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance through job satisfaction

3. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method, where data is collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents. Based on its objectives, this research is included in the type of explanatory research, which is research that explains the relationship and influence between variables and tests hypotheses that have been formulated previously (Singarimbun, 2015). The main focus of the study is to identify the influence of work experience and competence on employee performance, either directly or through job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

The operational definition of variables includes four main variables: (1) Work experience (X1), measured through indicators of length of service, level of knowledge, skills, and mastery of work; (2) Competency (X2), measured through self-concept, knowledge, and skills (Tulhusnah, 2022); (3) Job satisfaction (X3), measured through indicators of the job itself, promotion, supervision, colleagues, and working conditions (Martoyo, 2000); and (4) Employee performance (Y), which includes work quality, quantity, punctuality, effectiveness, independence, and work commitment (Sihombing, 2021). Each indicator is measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

The population of the study was all employees of PDAM Surya Sembada Surabaya City as many as 93 people. Because the population is relatively small, the study uses a saturated sampling technique (census), where the entire population is sampled. Thus, all employees became respondents to provide a comprehensive picture of the influence of the variables being studied. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. Questionnaires are used as the primary data collection tools, while interviews and observations are used to deepen understanding of actual conditions in the field. Documentation is used to obtain secondary data from relevant agencies and supporting literature of the research.

Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method using SmartPLS 3.0. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for small samples and causality relationship models. The test was carried out through two stages, namely the outer model (validity and reliability of the construct through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests) and the inner model (R^2 and path coefficient tests). The hypothesis test used a t-statistical value of > 1.96 and a p-value of < 0.05 as significant criteria (Ghazali & Latan, 2015; Sholihin & Ratmono, 2022).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Description

The characteristics of the respondents were based on the results of the distribution of questionnaires to 93 employees of PDAM Surya Sembada in Surabaya City. This analysis includes the identity of respondents based on gender, education level, and age group. Of the 93 respondents, the majority were male as many as 54 people (58.06%), while women were 39 people (41.94%). This shows that the male workforce is more dominant, possibly because some positions in PDAM require greater physical labor, such as in the field of field operations. Most of the respondents had a D3 educational background as many as 53 people (57%), followed by S1 as many as 30 people (32%), and high school as many as 10 people (11%). This data indicates that PDAM Surya Sembada is dominated by employees with secondary to higher education, which contributes to improving work competence and professionalism. The majority of respondents aged 25–35 years were 45 (48%), followed by 41 (44%) 36–45 years

old, and 7 (8%) 46–55 years old. This shows that the majority of employees are of productive age, which supports work effectiveness and adaptability to organizational dynamics and the application of technology in PDAM public services.

4.2. Description of Research Results

Based on the results of the study on 93 respondents at PDAM Surya Sembada Surabaya City, it is known that all research variables have a good assessment level with an average score above 3.7. For the Work Experience variable (X1), there are four indicators, namely: (1) work experience helps improve understanding of work, (2) understanding the work system in the organization based on work experience, (3) having technical skills obtained from work experience, and (4) being able to carry out tasks effectively and efficiently thanks to work experience. Of the four indicators, the indicator with the highest average value was "understanding the work system in the organization based on work experience" with a mean value of 3.87 and a loading factor of 0.827, which confirms that work experience strengthens employees' understanding of organizational work systems and procedures. For the Competency variable (X2), the indicators used consisted of: (1) feeling able to convey creative ideas in a way that is easy for others to understand, (2) giving positive responses to the creative ideas of colleagues, and (3) having extensive enough knowledge to convey ideas effectively. Of the three indicators, the indicator with the highest mean value is "able to convey creative ideas in a way that is easy for others to understand" with a mean of 3.85 and a loading factor of 0.893, which shows that communication skills and creativity are the main aspects of employee competence.

Furthermore, the Job Satisfaction variable (Z) is measured using five indicators, namely: (1) doing work according to the assigned tasks and functions, (2) the existence of equal opportunities for promotion and career improvement, (3) the existence of fair supervision and sanctions from superiors, (4) having cooperative colleagues, and (5) adequate work facilities. The indicator with the highest average value was found in the aspect of "adequate work facilities for work continuity" with a mean of 3.97 and a loading factor of 0.740, which indicates that the availability of good facilities and infrastructure is the dominant factor that encourages employee job satisfaction. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance variable (Y) has three main indicators, namely: (1) feeling emotionally attached to the company, (2) feeling part of the company where they work, and (3) considering the company to be very meaningful to them. From the results of the analysis, the indicator "feeling part of the company where you work" obtained the highest mean value of 4.13 with a loading factor of 0.808, which shows that a sense of belonging and emotional loyalty to the company are the main determinants in improving employee performance.

4.3. Data Analysis

a) PLS Model and Outlier Evaluation

This research model uses the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to analyze the relationship between variables, namely Work Experience (X1), Competency (X2), Job Satisfaction (Z), and Employee Performance (Y). The loading factor value of all indicators is above 0.5, indicating that each indicator contributes strongly to the construct it represents. The outlier test was performed using the Mahalanobis distance, and the results showed a maximum value of 30.090, which is smaller than the limit value $\chi^2(0.001; 15)=37,697$, so there are no outliers in the data and all respondents (n=93) can be used in the analysis.

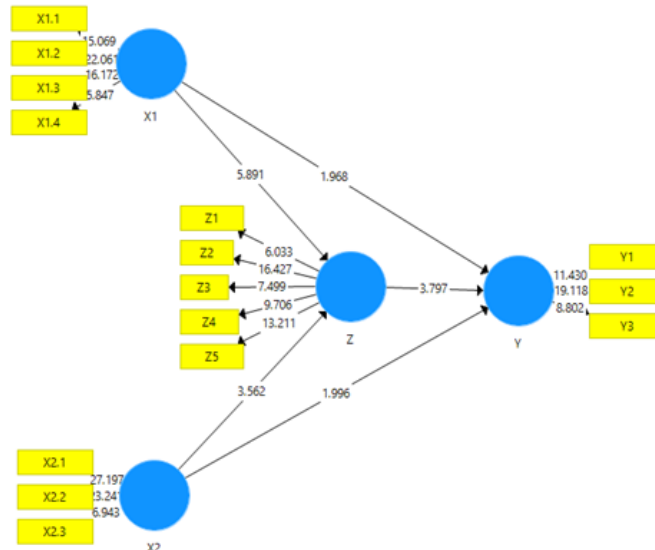


Figure 1. Model PLS

b) Validity Test (Outer Model)

The convergent validity was tested through factor loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results showed that all indicators had a loading factor value above 0.5 and a t-statistic value above 1.96, so that all indicators were declared valid. In addition, the AVE value for each construct is more than 0.5, indicating that it is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators.

Table 1. AVE Value and Construct Validity

Variable	AVE	Information
Work Experience (X1)	0,613	Valid
Competencies (X2)	0,582	Valid
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,645	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)	0,645	Valid

Source: data processed

The cross-loading test also showed that each indicator had the highest value on its original construct compared to other constructs, which means that discriminant validity was met.

c) Composite Reliability Test

The reliability test was carried out by looking at the Composite Reliability value. All variables had values above 0.7, which indicates that the entire construct meets the reliability criteria and has good internal consistency.

Table 2 Construct Reliability Test Results

Variable	Composite Reliability	Information
Work Experience (X1)	0,863	Reliable
Competencies (X2)	0,807	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,841	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0,797	Reliable

Source: data processed

d) Correlation Test and R-Square Value

The correlation test showed a positive relationship between variables, with the strongest relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance. The R-Square results show that the exogenous variable can explain most of the variation in the endogenous variable.

Table 3. R-Square Value of Endogenous Variables

Endogenous Variable	R-Square	Information
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,605	Strong
Employee Performance (Y)	0,628	Strong

Source: data processed

This means that Work Experience and Competency are able to explain 60.5% of the variation in Job Satisfaction, and the combination of all variables explains 62.8% of the variation in Employee Performance, while the rest is explained by other factors outside the model.

e) Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

The results of the path coefficient test show that all paths have positive and significant directions. Here are the results:

Table 4. Path Coefficient and Significance Test Results

Intervariable Relationships	Line Coefficient (β)	T-Statistics	p-value	Information
Work Experience (X1) → Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,453	4,876	0,000	Significant
Competency (X2) → Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,396	3,925	0,000	Significant
Work Experience (X1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,222	1,968	0,050	Significant
Competency (X2) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,210	1,996	0,046	Significant
Job Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,259	2,614	0,009	Significant

Source: data processed

In addition to direct influence, indirect influence (mediation) through Job Satisfaction was also found, with the following results:

Table 5. Indirect Influence (Mediation)

Mediation Relationship	Line Coefficient (β)	T-Statistics	p-value	Information
Work Experience (X1) → Job Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,232	3,068	0,002	Significant
Competencies (X2) → Job Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,161	2,758	0,006	Significant

Source: data processed

The results of the analysis show that Work Experience and Competence have a direct or indirect influence on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction. Work experience plays a role in improving the understanding of the work system, technical skills, and task efficiency, which ultimately improves satisfaction and performance. Good competence encourages employees' ability to come up with creative ideas, adapt, and contribute to work productivity. Job satisfaction is an important psychological factor that strengthens these relationships, where employees who feel satisfied with facilities, career opportunities, and a cooperative work environment tend to show more optimal performance.

4.4. Discussion

4.4.1. The Influence of Work Experience on Employee Performance

The results of the study show that work experience has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, so the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the higher a person's work experience, the better the performance results. Work experience includes length of employment, level of knowledge, skills, and job mastery that contribute to work effectiveness and efficiency. Experienced employees tend to understand organizational systems and can complete tasks more quickly and accurately. These findings are in line with the theory of Human Capital, which states that experience is a part of human capital that can increase productivity (Becker, 1993). These results also support the research of (Wibowo, 2017; Susanti and Firmansyah, 2020) which shows that work experience has a positive effect on employee performance through proactive work behavior, problem-solving skills, and high levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations such as PDAM Surya Sembada Kota Surabaya need to pay attention to work experience in recruitment and provide continuous training programs to improve employee performance.

4.4.2. The Influence of Competency on Employee Performance

This study found that competence has a positive and significant influence on employee performance, so the hypothesis is accepted. Competence not only reflects technical ability, but also the ability to think creatively, adaptively, and innovatively in solving work problems. Employees with high competence adapt faster to change, can make effective decisions, and create innovative solutions that increase organizational productivity. Competency has also been proven to increase efficiency, continuous innovation, and job satisfaction because employees feel valued and recognized for their abilities. These results are consistent with the view that competence is a strategic asset in human resource management. In addition, organizational support and transformational leadership styles play an important role in fostering employee competencies (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). By creating a work culture that supports the exploration of ideas and innovation, organizations can improve individual performance as well as long-term competitive advantage.

4.4.3. The Influence of Work Experience on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction

The results of the study show that work experience has an indirect effect on employee performance through job satisfaction. This means that in addition to having a direct impact on performance, work experience also increases job satisfaction, which ultimately encourages performance improvement. Employees who have extensive experience tend to be more confident, competent, and comfortable at work, so they feel satisfied with the environment and the tasks they carry out. Job satisfaction acts as a psychological mediator that bridges the relationship between experience and performance. This is in line with (Herzberg's, 1959) Two-Factor theory, which asserts that motivating factors such as achievement and responsibility increase job satisfaction. These findings are also supported by research by (Sari and Nugroho 2020; Fadilah and Prasetyo, 2019), which show that job satisfaction is able to mediate the relationship between experience and performance significantly. Therefore, PDAM management is advised to pay attention to the psychological welfare of employees so that the potential of work experience can be optimized in supporting organizational performance.

4.4.4. The Influence of Competency on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction

This research reveals that competence has a direct and indirect effect on employee performance through job satisfaction. Employees who feel competent and have the space to express their creative ideas will be more satisfied with their work, which ultimately improves work performance. Competencies provide confidence and control over work, strengthen intrinsic motivation, and create a more positive and productive work environment. In addition to improving work quality, competence also has an impact on the psychological well-being of employees, creating a more harmonious and collaborative work atmosphere. This strengthens the relationship between employees and overall team performance. Organizational support, ongoing training, and participatory leadership are key in fostering competence and job satisfaction. Thus, competence is not only a tool for improving efficiency but also a strategic mechanism in creating a positive cycle between job satisfaction and performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis using the PLS method, this study concludes that work experience and competence have a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees of PDAM Surya Sembada Surabaya City, both directly and through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Employees with high experience and competence tend to have a better understanding of the work system, can adapt to changes, and produce more effective and innovative performance. In addition, experience and competence also increase job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens employee motivation and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, companies need to optimize the use of employee work experience through proper placement, continuous training, and clear career development, as well as foster a work culture that is supportive, open, and appreciative of creative ideas. This step needs to be accompanied by welfare programs and togetherness activities such as employee days or family gatherings to increase employee emotional attachment. Further research is suggested to add other variables such as compensation, motivation, work culture, and organizational commitment in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect employee performance.

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