THE EFFECT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH WORK MOTIVATION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT INSTITUT ABDUL HALIM HASAN BINJAI

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INFORMASI ARTIKEL	ABSTRACT
	This research investigates how career development, employee engagement, and work discipline affect employee performance, with work motivation positioned as an intervening variable at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, involving 41 employees as the sample. Using a quantitative method with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS), the study found that career development significantly and positively influenced performance, indicated by a T-statistic of 5.744 > 1.96 and a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05. Employee engagement also had a positive and significant effect (T-statistics = 3.549; P-value = 0.001). In contrast, work discipline did not show a significant impact (T-statistics = 0.839; P-value = 0.406). Work motivation had a significant yet negative effect on performance (T-statistics = 2.353; P-value = 0.023), which points to a mismatch between motivation and workload. Mediation results showed that career development had no significant indirect effect through motivation, while employee engagement demonstrated a meaningful mediating influence (T-statistics = 2.572; P-value = 0.014). Meanwhile, work discipline did not have an indirect effect. Overall, career development and employee engagement emerge as the key drivers of performance, with motivation acting only as a partial mediator.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the backbone of every organization, including educational institutions such as Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai. The success of institutional operations and the achievement of its goals depend heavily on the capacity, dedication, and performance of its workforce. Therefore, organizations must ensure that their employees are not only competent in their respective fields but also disciplined, experienced, and high-performing. Hasibuan (2012) explains that human resource management is both a science and an art focused on organizing labor relations and employee roles so that organizational goals, employee needs, and societal expectations can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

Employee performance reflects the accomplishments achieved in carrying out job functions over a specific period. One of the key factors influencing performance is career development. Ramli and Yudhistira (2018) emphasize that poorly managed career development can reduce employee commitment and increase turnover intention. More recent studies in Indonesia have also shown that career development significantly affects employee performance. In addition, employees who possess emotional attachment to their work and organization tend to demonstrate higher performance outcomes. Data from Gartner (2023) indicate that only around 31% of employees globally feel engaged, enthusiastic, and energized about their jobs, suggesting that many organizations still need to strengthen employee engagement.

In the context of higher education institutions such as Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, work discipline also plays a crucial role. Discipline includes adherence to established rules, procedures, and norms. High discipline fosters an orderly and productive work environment. Meanwhile, work motivation both internal and external serves as a driving force that ignites enthusiasm, directs behavior, and enhances employees' efforts to make their best contributions. Previous studies have shown that work motivation can act as a mediating factor between various human resource variables and employee performance.

Based on the discussion above, several concrete challenges are evident at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, including low work discipline such as frequent late arrivals limited communication among staff, weak employee engagement, unsystematic career development, and inadequate motivation. Thus, this study aims to provide a thorough examination of how career development, employee engagement, and work discipline contribute to employee performance, while also exploring the extent to which work motivation serves as a mediating factor in these relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career Development

Career development is a continuous effort to strengthen an individual's competencies, skills, and potential so they can progress to higher career levels within an organization. Hasibuan (2019) describes career development as an initiative to enhance employees' technical, theoretical, conceptual, and moral capabilities through education

and training, ensuring these improvements align with the demands of their roles or positions.

Rivai (2018) further explains that career development consists of a series of organizational activities designed to help employees achieve their desired career paths in accordance with their abilities and available opportunities.

Hasibuan (2019) identifies five main indicators of career development: education, training, job rotation, promotion, and tenure. Education and training are crucial for enhancing employees' quality and work competencies, while job rotation and promotion reflect recognition and advancement within the organization, accompanied by greater responsibilities and authority. Tenure represents the duration of an employee's contribution and experience within the organization, which can also be considered in career development planning.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to an individual's emotional and psychological commitment to their work and organization. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) define employee engagement as a positive state marked by vigor (high energy and resilience), dedication (enthusiasm and commitment to work), and absorption (complete immersion in work activities). Saks (2006) defines engagement as when employees sense a reciprocal relationship between their efforts and the rewards they receive from the firm.

Work Discipline

Work discipline refers to employees' attitudes and behaviors in following the rules, policies, and norms that apply within an organization. Hasibuan (2019) describes work discipline as an individual's awareness and willingness to obey all organizational regulations and to carry out their responsibilities properly. A high level of discipline reflects strong dedication, integrity, and professionalism in completing assigned tasks.

Work Motivation

Mulyadi (2015) defines work motivation as the internal and external drive that encourages individuals to perform tasks with enthusiasm to achieve predetermined goals. In other words, work motivation is an internal energy that can be strengthened by external factors, prompting employees to work diligently, persistently, and focus on organizational objectives.

Similarly, Suwatno and Priansa (2016) describe motivation as a driving force or energy that compels an individual to take action. Keitner and Kinicki (2011) explain that motivation is a psychological process that directs and regulates voluntary actions toward achieving specific goals. Therefore, work motivation can be understood as a psychological and social factor crucial for shaping employee behavior to contribute effectively toward an organization's vision and mission.

Employee Performance

Employee performance can be defined as the tangible results achieved by an individual while executing assigned duties. This achievement is a reflection of the

individual's inherent abilities, the level of responsibility they embrace, and how they utilize the time allocated to them.

As stated by Mangkunegara (2017), employee performance is a comprehensive snapshot encompassing both the quality and the quantity of the work produced, consistently measured against established organizational standards. Essentially, performance indicates how effectively an employee fulfills their obligations and contributes their best efforts toward achieving the overall organizational goals.

Mangkunegara (2017) identifies four key indicators of employee performance:

1. Work quality. Accuracy, neatness, and conformity of work results to established standards.
2. Work quantity. The volume or amount of output completed within a specific period.
3. Timeliness. The ability to complete tasks within the given deadlines.
4. Work commitment. Willingness and seriousness in executing tasks and loyalty to the organization.

Optimal performance is achieved when an organization manages factors such as career development, employee engagement, work discipline, and work motivation synergistically, as these elements collectively shape productive, results-oriented employee behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical overview previously presented, this study hypothesizes that career development, employee engagement, and work discipline exert both direct and indirect effects on employee performance. Crucially, work motivation is posited to function as the intervening variable (or mediating variable) in these relationships.
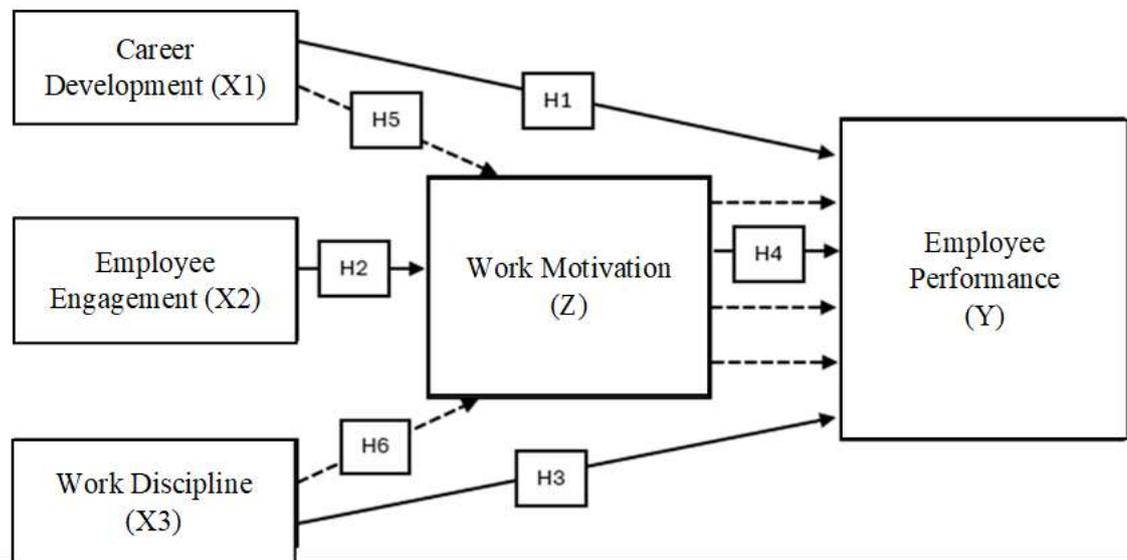
Hiphotesis

In a study, the formulation of hypotheses is based on the research problems and objectives. Hypotheses serve as directional guides that allow researchers to obtain answers to the research questions. It should be recognized that a hypothesis is a

provisional explanation intended to assist the study in conducting field investigations (Yusi, 2009).

Accordingly, based on the variables to be examined, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1 : Career development is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H2 : Employee engagement is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H3 : Work discipline is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H4 : Work motivation is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H5 : Career development is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation.

H6 : Employee engagement is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation.

H7 : Work discipline is hypothesized to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a quantitative associative design, which is used to analyze the connections between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2019). In the context of this study, the exogenous variables consist of career development, employee engagement, and work discipline. Meanwhile, employee performance is positioned as the endogenous variable, and work motivation functions as the intervening variable that links the influence of the exogenous variables to the performance outcomes. This research was conducted at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai. The study will be carried out from October to December 2025. The population consisted of all employees at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, totaling 41 individuals. Data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to employees across all divisions. For data analysis, the study applied a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, processed through SmartPLS 3.0 software.

Feasibility Testing

The testing procedures conducted in this research include:

1. Outer Model Evaluation, to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model using the outer loading, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) criteria.

2. Inner Model Evaluation (Structural Model Testing), which examines the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine how much variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. The R^2 value ranges between 0 and 1, where higher values indicate stronger explanatory power Kuncooro & Munajad, 2013).

3. Goodness-of-Fit Test, used to assess how well the empirical data fit the proposed theoretical model (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

4. Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficient and T-Statistic Test), performed to evaluate both direct and indirect relationships between variables. A relationship is considered significant when the t-statistic > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05, indicating a confidence level of 95% (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Outer Model Analysis

The outer model in this study was evaluated using the algorithm feature in SmartPLS version 3.0, which was employed to generate outer loading values that fulfill the criteria for both validity and reliability.

The Result of Convergent Validity

Convergent validity in a measurement model with reflective indicators is evaluated by looking at the correlation between each indicator and the construct it represents. An indicator is generally considered valid when its outer loading exceeds 0.7. Nonetheless, in exploratory studies or early-stage research, loading values between 0.5 and 0.6 are still acceptable and may be retained. Based on the initial outer loading analysis in this study, several indicators were found to have loading values below 0.60 and were also not statistically significant. The detailed outer loading results are presented in the following table.

Tabel 1. *Outer Loading*

Indicators	Outer Loading	Description
Creer Development (X1)		
PK_1	0,879	Meets validity criteria
PK_2	0,938	Meets validity criteria
PK_3	0,865	Meets validity criteria
PK_4	0,887	Meets validity criteria
PK_5	0,889	Meets validity criteria
Employee Engagement (X2)		
KK_1	0,895	Meets validity criteria
KK_2	0,943	Meets validity criteria
KK_3	0,921	Meets validity criteria
Work Discipline (X3)		
DK_1	0,968	Meets validity criteria
DK_2	0,945	Meets validity criteria
DK_3	0,885	Meets validity criteria
DK_4	0,939	Meets validity criteria
Work Motivation (Z)		
MTK_1	0,922	Meets validity criteria
MTK_2	0,854	Meets validity criteria
MTK_3	0,846	Meets validity criteria
MTK_4	0,865	Meets validity criteria
MTK_5	0,795	Meets validity criteria

| Indicators	*Outer Loading*	Description
MTK_6	0,860	Meets validity criteria
Employee Performance (Y)		
KPK_1	0,894	Meets validity criteria
KPK_2	0,926	Meets validity criteria
KPK_3	0,922	Meets validity criteria
KPK_4	0,941	Meets validity criteria

Source : Output Smart PLS, 2025

Based on Table 1, all indicators in this study display outer loading values exceeding 0.60, which represents the minimum benchmark for establishing indicator validity. According to Ghozali and Latan (2015), indicators with loading factors greater than 0.60 are considered valid because the construct is able to explain more than 60% of the variance in its corresponding indicators. This criterion ensures that each item meaningfully contributes to the measurement model and reflects the underlying construct with sufficient accuracy.

The Career Development variable, the outer loading values range from 0.865 to 0.938. These high values demonstrate that each item has a strong contribution to the construct, indicating that the indicators are consistent and theoretically aligned with the concept of career development. The Employee Engagement variable, loading values between 0.895 and 0.943 confirm that all indicators are statistically valid and represent employee engagement in a clear and reliable manner. Similarly, the Work Discipline variable shows excellent validity, with outer loading values from 0.885 to 0.968. These results suggested that all indicators are not only meet but exceed typical validity standards, reinforcing their robustness in measuring work discipline.

The Work Motivation variable also performs well, with loading values ranging between 0.795 and 0.922. Although slightly lower than other constructs, these values still fall well within the acceptable range, indicating that all six indicators accurately reflect aspects of employee motivation. Finally, the Employee Performance variable records loading values from 0.894 to 0.941, confirming that all items contribute strongly and consistently to the performance construct.

In summary, all indicators in this study satisfy the convergent validity criteria, as each demonstrates a loading factor above 0.60. This finding indicates that the measurement model is both sound and reliable, providing a solid foundation for further structural analysis. The comprehensive outer loading model is visually presented in the subsequent structural diagram, allowing for a clearer understanding of the relationships among the constructs
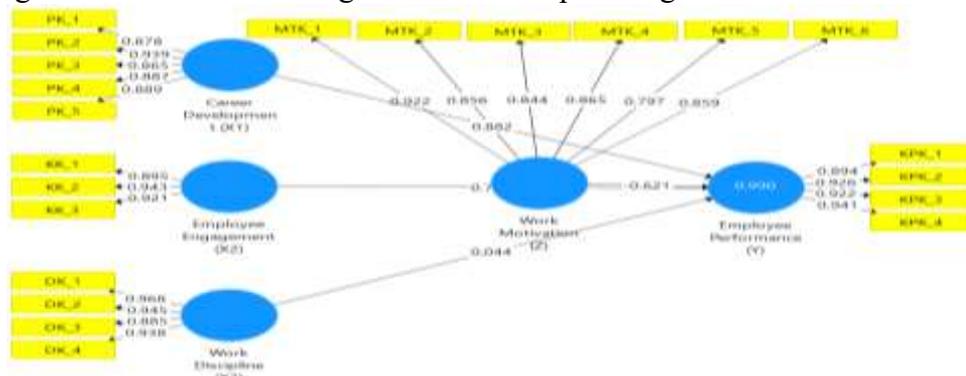
Pict 2. The Result of Outer Model Test

The Results of Discriminat Validity Testing

The next step is discriminant validity testing, which aims to determine whether a reflective indicator is a good measure of its construct based on the principle that an indicator should correlate more highly with its own construct than with other constructs. The results of the cross-loading test for discriminant validity are presented in the following table:

Table 2. The Result of Discriminant Validity Testing

Indicators	Career Development (X1)	Employee Engagement (X2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Work discipline (X3)	Work Motivation (Z)
DK_1	0,890	0,895	0,894	**0,968**	0,896
DK_2	0,840	0,890	0,882	**0,945**	0,858
DK_3	0,861	0,942	0,922	**0,885**	0,905
DK_4	0,887	0,841	0,860	**0,939**	0,865
KK_1	0,890	**0,895**	0,894	0,968	0,896
KK_2	0,834	**0,943**	0,895	0,867	0,897
KK_3	0,871	**0,921**	0,888	0,804	0,900
KPK_1	0,890	0,895	**0,894**	0,968	0,896
KPK_2	0,938	0,856	**0,926**	0,842	0,884
KPK_3	0,861	0,942	**0,922**	0,885	0,905
KPK_4	0,922	0,882	**0,941**	0,819	0,879
MTK_1	0,852	0,942	0,888	0,873	**0,922**
MTK_2	0,884	0,797	0,858	0,744	**0,854**
MTK_3	0,780	0,883	0,808	0,852	**0,846**
MTK_4	0,887	0,841	0,860	0,939	**0,865**
MTK_5	0,836	0,713	0,782	0,669	**0,795**
MTK_6	0,772	0,837	0,776	0,768	**0,860**
PK_1	**0,879**	0,944	0,916	0,892	0,931
PK_2	**0,938**	0,856	0,926	0,842	0,884
PK_3	**0,865**	0,733	0,804	0,708	0,805
PK_4	**0,887**	0,841	0,860	0,939	0,865
PK_5	**0,889**	0,806	0,858	0,761	0,852

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2025

Based on the results presented in Table 2, the cross-loading values for all indicators are higher on their respective constructs than on any other latent variables. For the Career Development, Employee Engagement, and Work Discipline variables, each indicator clearly demonstrates a stronger loading on its associated construct compared to the loadings on other variables. The same pattern is observed for the Work Motivation indicators, where each item shows a higher cross-loading value on the Work Motivation construct than on the others. Likewise, the Employee Performance indicators also exhibit higher cross-loading values on their own latent variable, confirming their strong association with the performance construct.

These findings collectively indicate that the discriminant validity of the measurement model is well established. Each indicator demonstrates a stronger and more meaningful relationship with its intended construct than with any alternative construct, confirming that the variables are conceptually distinct and properly measured within the model.

The Result of Composite reliability Test

The next step in the analysis is to assess the reliability of each construct using composite reliability, which evaluates the consistency of the indicator blocks that measure a particular variable. A construct is considered reliable when its composite reliability exceeds 0.60. Reliability can also be examined through Cronbach's alpha, which is derived from the same set of indicators. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates that the construct has strong internal consistency and is therefore reliable. The table that follows presents the loading values for each construct variable as generated through the SmartPLS analysis, providing a detailed overview of the reliability and consistency of the measurement model.

Table 3. *Construct Reliability and Validity*

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Composit	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Career Development	0,936	0,951	0,795
Employee Engagement	0,909	0,943	0,846
Work Discipline	0,951	0,965	0,873
Work Motivation	0,928	0,943	0,736
Employee Performance	0,940	0,957	0,848

Source: *Output Smart PLS,* 2024

Based on the results shown in Table 4, all variables in this study have AVE values greater than 0.50, which confirms that each construct meets the required criteria for convergent validity. This indicates that the indicators used in the model are able to explain more than half of the variance in their respective constructs. To evaluate the reliability of the constructs, composite reliability values were examined. The recommended minimum threshold for composite reliability is 0.70. Referring to this standard, all constructs in the study demonstrate composite reliability values above 0.70, meaning that each variable possesses strong internal consistency.

Overall, these findings confirm that all variables included in the analysis fulfill both the convergent validity and reliability requirements, ensuring that the measurement model is robust and suitable for further structural analysis.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model evaluation (inner model) is conducted to ensure that the constructed structural model is robust and accurate. The analysis in evaluating the structural model is carried out using several indicators, including:

Coefficient of Determination (R²) Test

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is employed to evaluate how strongly an independent latent variable contributes to explaining the variance in a dependent latent variable, as well as to

determine whether this contribution is meaningful. Using SmartPLS 3.0, the R^2 values for the relevant constructs were generated, and the results are summarized in the table presented below.

Table 4. R Square Result Testing

Variabel	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Performance	0,990	0,988
Work Motivation	0,980	0,979

Source: *Output Smart PLS,* 2025

Based on the results shown in Table 5, the adjusted R^2 value for the Work Motivation variable is 0.979, or 97.9%. This indicates that career development, employee engagement, and work discipline collectively exert a very strong influence on work motivation. In other words, improvements in these three variables are closely associated with higher levels of employee motivation. Overall, 98.0% of the variance in work motivation can be explained by these factors, while the remaining 2.0% is attributed to other influences not included in this study.

For the Employee Performance variable, the adjusted R^2 value is 0.988, or 98.8%, demonstrating that career development, employee engagement, and work discipline have a very substantial impact on employee performance. This finding suggests that strengthening these three areas can significantly enhance overall performance outcomes.

Additionally, the R^2 value for Employee Performance is 0.990, or 99.0%, meaning that nearly all variance in employee performance is accounted for by career development, employee engagement, and work discipline. The remaining 1.0% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this research. These high R^2 values collectively indicate that the model provides an excellent explanatory power for the variables under study.

The Result of Goodness of -Fit Test

The Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) test is a statistical approach used to determine how well a model or theoretical distribution corresponds to the actual data collected. Its primary purpose is to assess the degree of alignment between the observed data and the distribution or structure proposed by the model or underlying hypothesis.

Within the context of PLS-SEM, model fit can be evaluated using the Normed Fit Index (NFI). A model is considered to have a good level of fit when the NFI value is higher than the SRMR value and moves closer to 1, indicating that the model adequately represents the observed data and fits the overall structure effectively.

Table 5. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,092	0,092
d_ULS	2,143	2,143
d_G	2.264	2.264
Chi-Square	439.517	439.517
NFI	0.503	0,503

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2025

Based on Table 5, the NFI value is 0.503, which is greater than 0.092, indicating that the model in this study demonstrates a satisfactory goodness-of-fit and is suitable for testing the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Following the evaluation of the inner model, the next stage involves assessing the relationships among the latent constructs to answer the research hypotheses. In this study, hypothesis testing was carried out by examining the T-Statistics and P-Values generated from the model. A hypothesis is deemed supported when the T-Statistics exceed 1.96 and the P-Values are below 0.05. The table below presents the path coefficients that illustrate the direct effects between the variables.

Table 6. *Path Coefficients* **(Direct Effects)**

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Description
Career development -> Employee Performance	0,881	0,846	0,153	5,744	0,000	**Accepted**
Employee Engagement -> Employee Performance	0,710	0,679	0,200	3,549	0,001	**Accepted**
Work Discipline -> Employee Performance	0,042	0,035	0,050	0,839	0,406	**Rejected**
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	-0,623	-0,550	0,265	2,353	0,023	**Accepted**

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2023

Based on Table 6, the results of the *path coefficients* analysis indicate that career development has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a *T-statistics* value of 5.744 > 1.96 and a *P-value* of 0.000 < 0.05. This finding suggests that the better the career development system implemented by the organization, the higher the level of employee performance. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that *career development has a positive and significant effect on employee performance* is accepted.

Next, employee engagement also shows a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Y), with a *T-statistics* value of 3.549 > 1.96 and a *P-value* of 0.001 < 0.05. This means that the higher the level of employee engagement with their work, the better the performance outcomes achieved. Thus, the hypothesis stating that *employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance* is accepted.

In contrast, work discipline demonstrates a positive but insignificant effect on employee performance, with a *T-statistics* value of 0.839 < 1.96 and a *P-value* of 0.406 > 0.05. This indicates that the level of work discipline does not have a meaningful direct impact on improving employee performance. Hence, the hypothesis stating that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance is rejected.

Meanwhile, work motivation shows a negative yet significant effect on employee performance, with a *T-statistics* value of 2.353 > 1.96 and a *P-value* of 0.023 < 0.05. Although the direction of the effect is negative, the relationship remains statistically significant. This condition may be explained by external factors that influence the relationship between

motivation and performance such as high workload or institutional pressure that may lead to increased motivation but not necessarily result in optimal performance. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that work motivation has a significant effect on employee performance is accepted, albeit with a negative direction of influence.

Overall, these findings reveal that career development and employee engagement are the primary factors that significantly enhance employee performance. In contrast, work discipline does not exert a direct effect, while work motivation has a significant but negative influence. This implies that within the context of Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, efforts to improve employee performance would be more effective if focused on strengthening career development programs and fostering greater employee engagement with the institution.To further examine the indirect effects, specifically the mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between career development, employee engagement, work discipline, and employee performance, the results are presented in the following table.

Tabel 7. Indirect Effect (Pengaruh Tidak Langsung)

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Description
Career Development -> Work Motivation-> Employee Performance	-0,316	-0,293	0,176	1,791	0,081	**Rejected**
Employee Engagement -> Work Motivation-> Employee Performance	-0,351	-0,293	0,136	2,572	0,014	Accepted
Work Discipline -> Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0,041	0,034	0,049	0,838	0,407	Rejected

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2025

Based on the results shown in Table 7, the indirect effects of the exogenous variables on employee performance through the mediating role of work motivation vary across constructs. First, career development demonstrates an insignificant indirect influence on employee performance through work motivation, indicated by a T-statistics value of $1.791 < 1.96$ and a P-value of $0.081 > 0.05$. The negative Original Sample value of -0.316 shows a downward direction, although the effect is not statistically meaningful. This finding suggests that improvements in career development have not been strong enough to boost work motivation in a way that would enhance employee performance. Consequently, the hypothesis proposing that career development indirectly affects employee performance through work motivation is not supported.

Second, employee engagement displays a negative yet statistically significant indirect effect on employee performance through work motivation, with a T-statistics value of $2.572 > 1.96$ and a P-value of $0.014 < 0.05$. The Original Sample coefficient of -0.351 reflects a negative relationship, implying that under certain conditions such as heavy workloads or high job pressure higher employee engagement may coincide with reduced motivation, ultimately lowering performance. Despite the negative direction, the significance of the relationship indicates that work motivation functions as a mediator between employee engagement and employee performance. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that employee engagement indirectly affects performance through work motivation is accepted.

Third, work discipline exhibits an insignificant indirect effect on employee performance via work motivation, supported by a T-statistics value of 0.838 < 1.96 and a P-value of 0.407 > 0.05. The small Original Sample value of 0.041 indicates a very weak and statistically non-significant influence. This suggests that work motivation does not mediate the relationship between work discipline and employee performance. Thus, the hypothesis claiming that work discipline has an indirect effect on performance through work motivation is rejected.

Overall, the results indicate that work motivation acts as a meaningful mediator only in the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. In contrast, it does not mediate the effects of career development or work discipline. These findings highlight that, within the context of Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, employees' emotional attachment, involvement, and sense of belonging to the institution influence their motivation and performance—even though the relationship may be complex and shaped by organizational factors such as workload, leadership style, and the broader institutional culture.

Discussion

The results of the direct effect analysis presented in Table 7 indicate that the career development variable has a positive and significant influence on employee performance (β = 0.881; t = 5.744; p < 0.001). This finding is consistent with the study by Ogbuma (2025), which demonstrated that career development practices significantly enhance employee performance in Nigeria. It suggests that when organizations systematically provide education, training, rotation, promotion, and tenure recognition, employees become more capable and motivated to contribute optimally. Within the context of an organization such as Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, this result affirms that career development strategies should be regarded as a managerial priority for improving employee performance.

Furthermore, the employee engagement variable also shows a positive and significant effect on employee performance (β = 0.710; t = 3.549; p < 0.001). This indicates that the higher the employees' emotional attachment, dedication, and involvement in their work, the greater the work output produced. This finding aligns with Shellow (2022), who found that employee engagement positively affects performance through the mechanism of organizational commitment. Therefore, enhancing employee engagement through policies that promote empowerment, participation, and recognition can serve as an effective strategy for organizations.

However, an interesting finding emerges regarding the work discipline variable, which in this study does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance (β = 0.042; t = 0.839; p = 0.406). Although work discipline is often regarded in the literature as a fundamental determinant of performance (Pratamtomo et al., 2024), the current result suggests that improving discipline alone—without complementary factors such as motivation or engagement—may not be sufficient to directly enhance performance within this organization.

Moving to the mediation analysis presented in Table 8, only the employee engagement variable, when mediated by work motivation, shows a significant effect on employee performance (β = –0.351; t = 2.572; p = 0.014), albeit with a negative coefficient direction. This implies that in certain situations, a high level of engagement may not necessarily be accompanied by increased motivation and could even have an adverse impact on performance for example, when engagement leads to emotional strain or excessive responsibility (Hanafi & Safaria, 2025). Conversely, the mediating effect of work motivation between career development and work discipline on employee performance was found to be insignificant (p > 0.05). These results

indicate that work motivation acts as an effective mediating variable only in the context of employee engagement, but not in relation to career development or work discipline.

Thus, the organization should pay particular attention to how employee engagement is managed and moderated by work motivation, as this interaction plays a crucial role in driving optimal performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the structural model (inner model) analysis and the subsequent discussion, several key conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Career development has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
   The results show a T-statistic value of 5.744 > 1.96 and a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05, indicating that the hypothesis is accepted. This means that the better the career development system provided by the institution, the higher the resulting employee performance. This underscores the importance of providing opportunities for self-development, job promotion, and continuous training to enhance employee performance.

2. Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
   The T-statistic value of 3.549 > 1.96 and the P-value of 0.001 < 0.05 indicate that the second hypothesis is accepted. Employees who possess strong emotional attachment and commitment to their work tend to perform better. Such engagement is reflected in enthusiasm, loyalty, and a sense of belonging to the organization.

3. Work discipline does not have a significant effect on employee performance.
   The analysis yields a T-statistic value of 0.839 < 1.96 and a P-value of 0.406 > 0.05, meaning that work discipline does not directly influence employee performance improvement. Thus, the application of normative discipline alone may not increase productivity without the support of motivation, effective leadership, and a positive work environment.

4. Work motivation has a significant but negative effect on employee performance.
   With a T-statistic of 2.353 > 1.96 and a P-value of 0.023 < 0.05, motivation significantly influences performance; however, the direction of the effect is negative (Original Sample = –0.623). This suggests that in this context, higher work motivation does not necessarily lead to better performance, possibly due to work pressure or an imbalance between effort and reward.

5. Career development does not significantly affect employee performance through work motivation as a mediating variable.
   The indirect effect analysis shows a T-statistic of 1.791 < 1.96 and a P-value of 0.081 > 0.05, indicating that work motivation does not significantly mediate the relationship between career development and employee performance. Career development directly affects performance without requiring mediation by motivation.

6. Employee engagement significantly affects employee performance through work motivation as a mediating variable.
   With a T-statistic of 2.572 > 1.96 and a P-value of 0.014 < 0.05, employee engagement is proven to have a significant effect on performance through work motivation, despite the negative direction of the effect (Original Sample = –0.351). This suggests that

motivation still plays a role in bridging engagement and performance, although external factors such as workload and stress may influence the relationship.

7. Work discipline does not significantly affect employee performance through work motivation.

The results show a T-statistic of 0.838 < 1.96 and a P-value of 0.407 > 0.05, meaning that the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, work motivation cannot act as a mediating variable between discipline and performance. Discipline remains more regulatory than motivational in this organizational context.

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