

WORK MOTIVATION AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE IN THE EFFECT OF COMPETENCE AND SUPERVISORY SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WITH WORK AGREEMENT (PPPK) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MATARAM

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Abstract

The mass transition of honorary administrative staff to Government Employees with Work Agreement (PPPK) status in Indonesian public universities has created a contract-based workforce in a bureaucratic yet non-permanent framework. However, the psychological mechanisms driving employee engagement in this context remain underexamined. This study investigates the influence of competence and supervisory support on employee engagement, mediated by work motivation, among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram. A quantitative associative design used PLS-SEM with 126 respondents systematically sampled from 695 PPPK staff via a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. Results show that competence positively affects engagement both directly and, more strongly, indirectly through work motivation (complementary partial mediation). Supervisory support has no direct effect; its influence is fully mediated by work motivation (indirect-only mediation). Work motivation is the strongest predictor of engagement, serving as the psychological conduit translating personal and job resources into engagement. The model explains substantial variance in engagement. University management should prioritize competence development and design supervisory practices to cultivate work motivation, as support mechanisms alone do not enhance engagement. The study extends JD-R and OST theories by revealing differential mediation pathways in contract-based public higher education.

Keywords: Competence, Supervisory Support, Work Motivation, Employee Engagement, PPPK

INTRODUCTION

The reform of the State Civil Apparatus through Law Number 20 of 2023 has driven the appointment of Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK) as a national strategy to fulfill human resource needs in the public sector (Anggreni et al., 2024). Amid this employment transition, employee engagement has become a critical issue determining organizational success. Employee engagement is defined as a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work (Kular et al., 2008), which has been proven to enhance productivity, commitment, and reduce employee turnover (Kaaviyapriya & Xavier, 2020).

Universitas Mataram presents a unique and strategic context. Of 1,222 administrative staff, only 312 (25.53%) hold permanent civil servant (PNS) status, leading to the appointment of 695 non-permanent employees as PPPK on October 1, 2025, in accordance with Minister of PANRB Regulation Number 6 of 2024. Despite a significant welfare improvement average monthly income rising from Rp1,800,000 to Rp3,200,000, this transitional period has generated considerable challenges, including limited competence development programs, uncertainty in career progression, and disparities in rights between PPPK and PNS, all of which potentially suppress employee engagement levels.

From the perspective of Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R Theory), competence serves as a personal resource while Perceived Supervisor Support functions as a job resource, both regarded as critical antecedents of employee engagement operating through the mediating mechanism of work motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Herzberg et al., 1959). Prior empirical studies have revealed inconsistent findings, particularly regarding the direct effect of Perceived Supervisor Support on employee engagement some studies confirm its significance (Jin & McDonald, 2016; Breevaart et al., 2013), while others report non-significant results (Nelson, 2021). Furthermore, no study has specifically examined the mediating role of work motivation between competence, Perceived Supervisor Support, and employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff within state universities, representing a significant empirical gap that warrants investigation.

Grounded in these gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of competence and Perceived Supervisor Support on employee engagement with work motivation as a mediating variable among Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK) at Universitas Mataram. This research contributes to the advancement of JD-R Theory within the context of public sector employment policy transitions while providing strategic recommendations for human resource management in state universities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is fundamentally conceptualized by Kahn (1990) as a positive psychological state reflecting full physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement in work roles, and operationalized through three core dimensions vigor, dedication, and absorption by Schaufeli and Bakker (2010). Within the JD-R framework, engagement emerges as a motivational outcome shaped by the interplay between personal resources and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For PPPK administrative staff at Universitas Mataram operating under contract-based employment with structurally limited career advancement,

sustaining engagement is particularly urgent given the ongoing decline in permanent civil servant numbers and the absence of formal promotion pathways.

Competence

Competence, defined as an underlying characteristic integrating knowledge, skills, and behavioral attitudes causally related to superior job performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Armstrong & Taylor, 2017), functions as a *personal resource* that strengthens employees' psychological confidence and capacity to meet job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Operationalized through knowledge, skill, and attitude dimensions (Putra & Gupron, 2020), competence is empirically established as a central driver of both employee engagement (Montales, 2023; Nasrul et al., 2020; Prayogi et al., 2023) and work motivation (Rahman et al., 2024; Haluk et al., 2016).

Perceived Supervisor Support

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) reflects employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Grounded in *Organizational Support Theory* (OST), supervisors are viewed as organizational agents whose support shapes employees' perceived organizational value (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Within the JD-R framework, PSS further constitutes a critical *job resource* that buffers job demands and stimulates motivational processes essential for sustaining employee engagement (Jin & McDonald, 2016; Breevaart et al., 2013).

Work Motivation

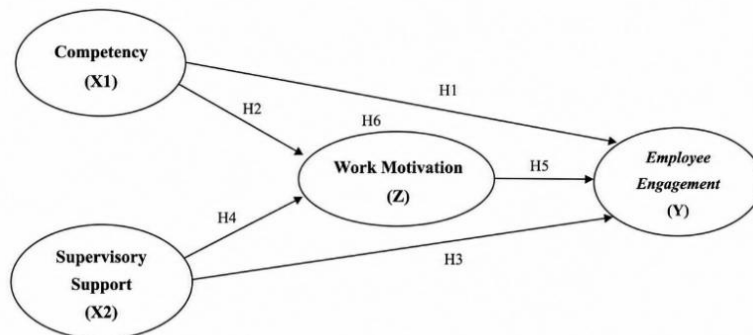
Work motivation, grounded in Herzberg et al.'s (1959) *Two-Factor Theory*, operates through intrinsic motivators achievement, recognition, and responsibility and extrinsic hygiene factors including interpersonal relations, organizational policy, and job security. As a mediating mechanism, work motivation translates the combined effects of competence and Perceived Supervisor Support into meaningful psychological commitment toward employee engagement, supported theoretically by *Self-Determination Theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the JD-R motivational process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a causal quantitative design to examine directional and mediation relationships among latent variables (Sugiyono, 2019; Creswell, 2014). Primary data were collected via structured electronic questionnaires (Google Forms, five-point Likert scale) preceded by a 30-respondent pilot test. The population comprised 695 PPPK administrative staff at Universitas Mataram, from which 126 respondents were selected through systematic random sampling (7×18 indicators = 126; Hair et al., 2017). Four constructs were measured: competence (9 items; Putra & Gupron, 2020), Perceived Supervisor Support (15 items; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), work motivation (17 retained items; Herzberg et al., 1959), and employee engagement (11 retained items; Kahn, 1990). Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM via SmartPLS 4.0, evaluating outer model convergent validity (outer loadings ≥ 0.70 ; AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity, and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70), and inner model fit through R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2 . Hypothesis testing employed bootstrapping (5,000 resamples; $t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$), with mediation type classified following Baron and Kenny (1986).

Research Hypothesis

This study aims to analyze the influence of competence and supervisory support on employee engagement, with work motivation acting as a mediating variable among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram. Based on the review of literature and previous research, the hypotheses proposed are as follows:



- H1: Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H2: Competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H3: Supervisory support has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H4: Supervisory support has a positive and significant effect on work motivation among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H5: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H6: Work motivation mediates the effect of competence on employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram.
- H7: Work motivation mediates the effect of supervisory support on employee engagement among PPPK administrative staff at the University of Mataram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following presents the complete research findings obtained through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. The analysis encompasses descriptive statistics (respondent profile and variable means), measurement model evaluation (convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability), structural model evaluation (R-squared, Q-squared, and effect size), hypothesis testing, and theoretical discussion of each finding within the PPPK administrative staff context at the University of Mataram.

Descriptive Statistics

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 126 PPPK administrative staff from the University of Mataram participated in this study. The demographic profiles of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics

Category	Classification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	46.83
	Female	67	53.17
	Total	126	100.00
Age	20–30 years	26	20.63
	31–40 years	65	51.59
	41–50 years	34	26.98
	> 50 years	1	0.79
	Total	126	100.00
Education Level	Senior High School (SMA)	12	9.52
	Diploma III	8	6.35
	Bachelor (S1)	95	75.40
	Master (S2)	11	8.73
	Total	126	100.00
Position Grade	Grade V – Operations	17	13.49
	Grade VII – Administration	9	7.14
	Grade IX – Service Management	100	79.37
	Total	126	100.00
Work Experience	< 5 years	23	18.25
	5–10 years	45	35.71
	11–15 years	31	24.60
	> 15 years	27	21.43
	Total	126	100.00

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are female (53.17%, n = 67) and aged 31–40 years (51.59%, n = 65), placing them at the career establishment and consolidation stage (Super, 1990). In terms of education, 75.40% (n = 95) hold a bachelor's degree (S1), reflecting a highly qualified workforce. Position grade distribution reveals that 79.37% (n = 100) are classified under Grade IX Service Management, the highest administrative PPPK grade, indicating that most respondents bear complex operational responsibilities. Work experience data shows that 81.74% (n = 103) have served five years or more prior to formal PPPK appointment (effective 1 October 2025), confirming the extensive accumulated

organizational competence within this cohort. These demographic characteristics shape the substantive context for interpreting the structural relationships tested in subsequent analyses.

Variable Descriptive Statistics

Each research variable was assessed using a five-point Likert scale and categorized based on interval criteria: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 3.41–4.20 (High/Strong), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). Mean scores and categories for each variable and its dimensions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Indicator / Sub-Indicator	Mean	Category
Knowledge	4.394	Very High
Skills	4.251	Very High
Attitude	4.428	Very High
Competence (X1)	4.358	Very High
Transparent Communication	4.206	Strong
Constructive Feedback	4.230	Very Strong
Recognition	4.052	Strong
Development Opportunity	4.074	Strong
Fair Problem Resolution	4.092	Strong
Supervisory Support (X2)	4.131	Strong
Achievement	4.428	Very High
Recognition	3.907	High
Responsibility	4.428	Very High
Interpersonal Relations	4.272	Very High
Administrative Policy	4.216	Very High
Job Security	4.253	Very High
Work Motivation	4.234	Very High
Psychological	4.410	Very High
Org. Relationship & Support	4.211	Very High
Career & Work Development	4.233	Very High
Work Environment	4.277	Very High
Employee Engagement (Y)	4.282	Very High

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on Table 2, Competence (X1) recorded the highest overall mean (4.358, Very High), with Attitude as the leading dimension (4.428), followed by Knowledge (4.394) and

Skills (4.251) all in the Very High category. Supervisory Support (X2) obtained the lowest overall mean among all variables (4.131, Strong); the Recognition dimension recorded the lowest score (4.052), indicating a gap in formal acknowledgment mechanisms within the organization. Work Motivation (Z) achieved a very high mean (4.234), with Achievement and Responsibility tied as the highest dimensions (4.428 each), while Recognition remained the only dimension below 4.000 (3.907, High) confirming that intrinsic motivational forces dominate, though institutional appreciation remains underperforming. Employee Engagement (Y) recorded a very high mean (4.282), with the Psychological dimension scoring highest (4.410) and Organizational Relationship & Support the lowest (4.211). These convergent patterns across all four variables form the substantive context for the structural model analysis that follows.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure that each latent construct is validly and reliably measured by its indicators. Convergent validity was assessed using the criteria of outer loadings ≥ 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50 , while internal consistency reliability was examined through Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2020).

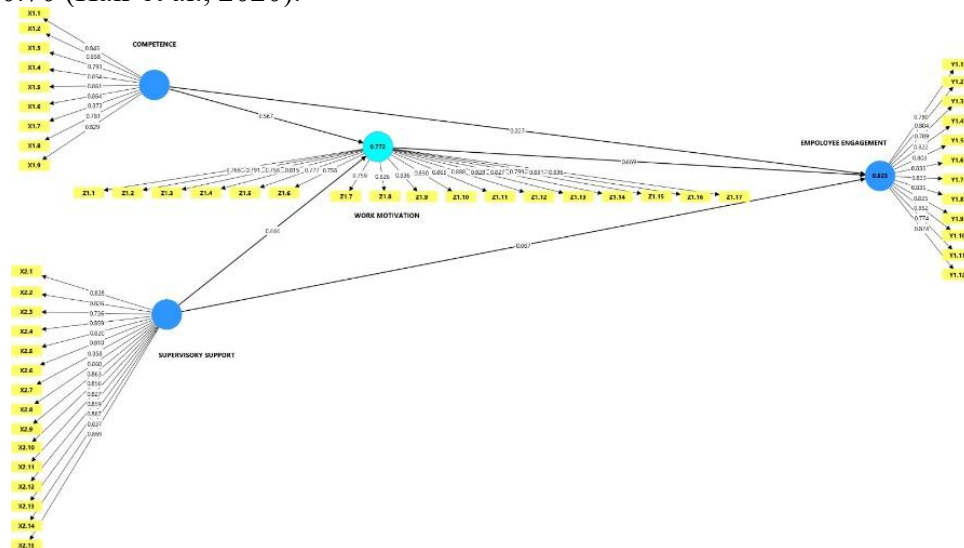


Figure 1.
Measurement Model Evaluation
Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Table 3 presents a summary of convergent validity and internal consistency reliability results for all four research constructs. The criteria applied follow Hair et al. (2020): outer loading ≥ 0.70 , AVE ≥ 0.50 , Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 , and Composite Reliability > 0.70 .

Table 3.

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Construct	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability
Competence (X1)	0.706	0.948	0.956

Supervisory Support (X2)	0.706	0.970	0.973
Work Motivation (Z)	0.664	0.948	0.971
Employee Engagement (Y)	0.672	0.955	0.961

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, data processed 2026.

Based on Table 3, all four constructs meet the convergent validity and reliability criteria. All outer loadings of retained indicators exceed 0.70 (range: 0.736–0.888). AVE values for all constructs exceed 0.50: Competence and Supervisory Support share the highest AVE (0.706), followed by Employee Engagement (0.672) and Work Motivation (0.664). Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0.948 (Competence and Work Motivation) to 0.970 (Supervisory Support), while Composite Reliability ranges from 0.956 (Competence) to 0.973 (Supervisory Support), all substantially above the 0.70 threshold, indicating very high internal consistency. These results confirm that all measurement instruments are valid and reliable for hypothesis testing in the structural model.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loading criterion, whereby each indicator's outer loading on its target construct must exceed its loadings on all other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2020). Table 4 presents the average cross-loading matrix across all four constructs

Table 4.
Average Cross-Loadings for Discriminant Validity

Variable	Competence	Supervisory Support	Work Motivation	Employee Engagement
Competence	0.840	0.422	0.697	0.666
Supervisory Support	0.431	0.840	0.522	0.584
Work Motivation	0.644	0.592	0.814	0.730
Employee Engagement	0.654	0.543	0.732	0.819

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, data processed 2026.

The results in Table 4 show that the diagonal values (average loadings on each construct's own indicators) consistently and substantially exceed the average loadings on all other constructs. For example, Competence indicators average a loading of 0.840 on their own construct, compared to 0.422 on Supervisory Support, 0.697 on Work Motivation, and 0.666 on Employee Engagement. A similar discriminant pattern is observed for all remaining constructs, confirming that no problematic conceptual overlap exists among constructs and that discriminant validity is fully established across the measurement model.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

After establishing the measurement model as valid and reliable, the structural model evaluation examined the predictive power and predictive relevance of variable relationships. Three primary criteria were assessed: coefficient of determination (R-squared), predictive relevance (Q-squared), and effect size (f-squared).

Model Fit: R-Square and Q-Square

R-squared measures the proportion of variance explained by exogenous variables, while Q-squared assesses the predictive relevance of the model (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 5.
Model Fit: R-Square and Q-Square

Endogenous Variable	R-squared	Q-squared	Interpretation
Work Motivation	0.772	0.703	R-squared Strong Q-squared Good
Employee Engagement	0.823	0.758	R-squared Very Strong Q-squared Good

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, data processed 2026.

The R-squared value for Employee Engagement is 0.823 (very strong), indicating that Competence, Supervisory Support, and Work Motivation collectively explain 82.3% of the variance in employee engagement. Meanwhile, the R-squared for Work Motivation is 0.772 (strong), meaning that 77.2% of motivational variance is explained by Competence and Supervisory Support. Both Q-squared values are above zero ($Y = 0.758$; $Z = 0.703$), confirming that the model has good predictive relevance and is capable of accurately predicting observed data.

Effect Size (f-squared)

The effect size (f-squared) measures the relative contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variable. Cohen's (1988) criteria classify f-squared ≥ 0.35 as large, 0.15-0.34 as medium, 0.02-0.14 as small, and < 0.02 as very small

Table 6.
Effect Size (f-squared)

Relationship	f-squared	Effect Size Category
Competence -> Work Motivation	1.054	Large
Competence -> Employee Engagement	0.106	Small
Supervisory Support -> Work Motivation	0.647	Large
Supervisory Support -> Employee Engagement	0.011	Very Small
Work Motivation -> Employee Engagement	0.576	Large

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, data processed 2026.

The results in Table 6 reveal a clear structural pattern. Competence exerts a very large effect on Work Motivation ($f^2 = 1.054$), substantially exceeding the large threshold (≥ 0.35), while Supervisory Support also demonstrates a large effect on Work Motivation ($f^2 = 0.647$). Work Motivation, in turn, has a large effect on Employee Engagement ($f^2 = 0.576$). In contrast, the direct effects of Competence ($f^2 = 0.106$, Small) and Supervisory Support ($f^2 = 0.011$, Very Small) on Employee Engagement are negligible by comparison. This pattern empirically confirms that Work Motivation functions as the primary structural conduit through which both personal resources (Competence) and job resources (Supervisory Support) are converted into Employee Engagement a finding with critical implications for the mediation hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing and Model Fit

Hypothesis testing was performed through the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4.0 with 5,000 resamples, generating path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis is accepted when the t-statistic > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.050 for a two-tailed test (Hair et al., 2020). Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.
Hypothesis Testing Results (Bootstrapping)

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Values	P-Values	Decision
Direct Effect				
H1: Competence (X1) → Employee Engagement (Y)	0.227	2.873	0.004	Accepted
H2: Competence (X1) → Work Motivation (Z)	0.567	9.905	0.000	Accepted
H3: Supervisory Support (X2) → Employee Engagement (Y)	0.067	0.800	0.424	Rejected
H4: Supervisory Support (X2) → Work Motivation (Z)	0.444	7.694	0.000	Accepted
H5: Work Motivation (Z) → Employee Engagement (Y)	0.669	5.937	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effect (Mediation)				
H6: Competence (X1) → Work Motivation (Z) → Employee Engagement (Y)	0.379	4.719	0.000	Accepted
H7: Supervisory Support (X2) → Work Motivation (Z) → Employee Engagement (Y)	0.297	4.590	0.000	Accepted

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, data processed 2026.

Based on Table 7, six of the seven hypotheses are accepted at the 5% significance level. Competence positively and significantly affects both Employee Engagement (H1: $\beta = 0.227$, $t = 2.873$, $p = 0.004$) and Work Motivation (H2: $\beta = 0.567$, $t = 9.905$, $p = 0.000$). Supervisory Support has no significant direct effect on Employee Engagement (H3: $\beta = 0.067$, $t = 0.800$, $p = 0.424$, Rejected), but exerts a significant positive effect on Work Motivation (H4: $\beta = 0.444$, $t = 7.694$, $p = 0.000$). Work Motivation is the strongest direct predictor of Employee Engagement (H5: $\beta = 0.669$, $t = 5.937$, $p = 0.000$). Regarding mediation, Work Motivation partially mediates the Competence–Engagement relationship (H6: $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.379$, $t = 4.719$, $p = 0.000$) through complementary mediation, as both the direct ($\beta = 0.227$, $p = 0.004$) and indirect paths are significant. Work Motivation fully mediates the Supervisory Support–Engagement relationship (H7: $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.297$, $t = 4.590$, $p = 0.000$) through indirect-only mediation, as only the indirect path is significant (direct path: $\beta = 0.067$, $p = 0.424$). These findings confirm that Work Motivation is the essential psychological conduit translating both personal and organizational resources into Employee Engagement.

Discussion

The structural model evaluation demonstrated excellent predictive capability: the R^2 for employee engagement was 0.823, and the R^2 for work motivation was 0.772, with predictive relevance Q^2 values of 0.703 and 0.758, respectively (both > 0). Of the seven

hypotheses tested using the SmartPLS 4.0 bootstrapping procedure ($n = 126$), six were supported, and one was rejected. The discussion of each hypothesis is presented below.

Competence Has a Significant Positive Effect on Employee Engagement (Supported)

Competence had a significant positive effect on employee engagement (original sample = 0.227; $t = 2.873$; $p = 0.004$), thus H1 was supported. This finding indicates that PPPK (government contract-based) education staff who possess strong knowledge, skills, and work attitudes, reflected in a descriptive mean of 4.358 (very high) tend to exhibit greater work engagement. The moderate path coefficient reflects that competence influences engagement through a dual mechanism, both directly and indirectly through work motivation (as confirmed in H6).

This result is consistent with Kahn's (1990) Needs-Satisfaction Framework, which posits that psychological availability, a key precondition for engagement, is strengthened when employees feel competent and capable. The JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) supports this notion, as competence functions as a personal resource that sustains work energy. Empirically, this finding aligns with Utari et al. (2023) and Montales (2023), who found a significant positive effect of competence on employee engagement within public-sector organizations.

Competence Has a Significant Positive Effect on Work Motivation (Supported)

Competence was the strongest predictor of work motivation in this model (original sample = 0.567; $t = 9.905$; $p = 0.000$; $f^2 = 1.054$, a large effect), thus H2 was supported. PPPK employees with adequate work capacity develop high self-efficacy, which fosters intrinsic motivation toward achievement and responsibility. This finding is consistent with Suyanto (2018), Rahman et al. (2024), and Parashakti et al. (2020) who confirmed competence as a dominant predictor of work motivation among public-sector employees. In the context of PPPK staff at Universitas Mataram, the competence accumulated during their prior status as honorary (non-permanent) staff proved to be a solid motivational foundation following the transition in employment status.

Supervisory Support Has No Direct Effect on Employee Engagement (Rejected)

Contrary to initial expectations, supervisory support was not found to have a significant direct effect on employee engagement (original sample = 0.067; $t = 0.800$; $p = 0.424$; $f^2 = 0.011$, a very small effect), thus H3 was rejected. The positive direction of the coefficient suggests a theoretical tendency, but it was not statistically meaningful.

This finding can be explained through Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986): supervisory support requires a process of psychological internalization manifested as feelings of being valued and motivationally activated before it can shape engagement. In bureaucratic organizational contexts such as public universities, supportive leadership behavior is often perceived as a procedural obligation rather than a personally meaningful gesture, thereby weakening its direct impact on work engagement. This result is consistent with Nelson (2021) and Zhang et al. (2025), who found similar patterns in public organizations across Indonesia and Asia.

Supervisory Support Has a Significant Positive Effect on Work Motivation (Supported)

Supervisory support had a significant positive effect on work motivation (original sample = 0.444; $t = 7.694$; $p = 0.000$; $f^2 = 0.647$, a large effect), thus H4 was supported. Transparent communication, constructive feedback, recognition of achievement, development opportunities, and fairness in problem-handling collectively reinforced

employees' intrinsic and extrinsic drive. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Homans et al., 1976), employees reciprocate supervisory attention through increased motivational commitment. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) reinforces this argument, as autonomy-supportive leadership behavior fulfills basic psychological needs, thereby energizing autonomous motivation. This result is consistent with Slemph et al. (2018) and Wu and Parker (2014). They also corroborate the findings of Nururly et al. (2024), who demonstrated that adaptive and supportive leadership significantly enhanced entrepreneurial motivation among creative economy actors in Lombok. Although conducted in a different organizational setting, their study reinforces the proposition that supervisory support functions as a robust external resource for strengthening employees' motivation. The present study extends this evidence to the context of Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK) in Indonesian public universities.

Work Motivation Has a Significant Positive Effect on Employee Engagement (Supported)

Work motivation was the strongest predictor of employee engagement among all direct paths in the model (original sample = 0.669; $t = 5.937$; $p = 0.000$; $f^2 = 0.576$, a large effect), thus H5 was supported. PPPK employees with a high drive for achievement, a strong sense of responsibility, harmonious interpersonal relationships, supportive organizational policies, and job security reflected in a work motivation mean of 4.234 (very high) demonstrated significantly greater emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in their work. This is consistent with the JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, and is further confirmed by Ramadhan et al. (2022) and Goel and Rashmi (2023) within the context of public organizations.

Work Motivation Mediates Competence → Employee Engagement: Complementary Mediation (Supported)

Work motivation was found to significantly mediate the effect of competence on employee engagement (indirect effect = 0.379; $t = 4.719$; $p = 0.000$). Given that the direct effect of competence on engagement remained significant ($\beta = 0.227$; $p = 0.004$) after the mediator was included, the mediation observed is categorized as complementary mediation (partial mediation), thus H6 was supported. Competence influences employee engagement through two simultaneous pathways: directly, through cognitive readiness and role clarity, and indirectly, by first strengthening work motivation.

This dual-pathway pattern confirms that investment in competence development yields dual benefits for PPPK education staff: a direct increase in engagement alongside a strengthened motivational architecture that sustains work engagement over time. This finding is consistent with Preacher and Hayes (2008), who argued that complementary mediation reflects a richer causal structure than full mediation, and is further confirmed by Haluk et al. (2016), Ramadhan et al. (2021), and Fetriah and Herminingsih (2023) within Asian public-sector contexts.

Work Motivation Mediates Supervisory Support → Employee Engagement: Indirect-Only Mediation (Supported)

Work motivation was found to fully mediate the effect of supervisory support on employee engagement (indirect effect = 0.297; $t = 4.590$; $p = 0.000$), while the direct effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.067$; $p = 0.424$). This mediation is categorized as indirect-only mediation (full mediation), thus H7 was supported. This implies that supervisory support can only enhance engagement once it successfully builds and strengthens employees' work motivation.

This finding carries important phenomenological meaning: PPPK staff at Universitas Mataram do not automatically become more engaged simply by perceiving supervisory support. The effect is conditional, depending on the capacity of supervisory support to be internalized as a motivational stimulus encompassing increased achievement orientation, a strengthened sense of responsibility, and psychological stability regarding the continuity of their employment contract. Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) explains that the perceived value of support depends on its capacity to fulfill fundamental motivational needs. This finding is confirmed by Jin and McDonald (2016), Slemp et al. (2018), and Chen and Cuervo (2025), all of whom found full mediation through motivation in bureaucratically structured public organizations. The implication for the management of Universitas Mataram is that enhancing employee engagement cannot be achieved solely through the normative strengthening of supervisory support, but must be accompanied by concrete and sustained efforts to build the work motivation of PPPK education staff.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that competence and supervisory support enhance employee engagement primarily through work motivation, with competence exerting both direct and motivation-mediated effects, while supervisory support influences engagement only indirectly. These findings reinforce the JD-R Model and Organizational Support Theory by showing that motivational internalization, rather than support itself, determines engagement outcomes in bureaucratic public institutions. Theoretically, the study enriches mediation literature by distinguishing complementary and indirect-only mechanisms within a single model. Practically, university management should pair competence development and leadership support programs with deliberate motivational reinforcement for PPPK staff. Future research should examine additional mediators or moderators, adopt longitudinal designs, and test the model across diverse public-sector institutions.

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