

**DEDICATION AND WORKING ITSELF: A NEW WAY TO IMPROVE
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A DYNAMIC ERA**

**DEDIKASI DAN KERJA KERAS: CARA BARU UNTUK MENINGKATKAN
KINERJA KARYAWAN DI ERA YANG DINAMIS**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of dedication on employee performance with work itself as a mediating variable at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang. The background of the study is based on the phenomenon of declining employee performance indicated by low discipline, responsibility, and suboptimal work completion. Dedication is seen as an important factor that can encourage employee enthusiasm, responsibility, and commitment to work, while work itself reflects employee perceptions of work that is meaningful, challenging, and provides opportunities for self-development. This study uses a verification method with a quantitative approach. The study population amounted to 120 employees and all were sampled using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation studies, then analyzed using path analysis with the help of statistical software. The results showed that dedication significantly influenced work itself and employee performance, while work itself also significantly influenced performance. In addition, work itself was proven to mediate the relationship between dedication and performance, although the direct effect of dedication on performance was stronger than the indirect effect through work itself. These findings underscore the importance of human resource management strategies that focus not only on increasing dedication, but also on creating meaningful, challenging work quality and providing development opportunities to support continuous improvement in employee performance.

Keywords: Dedication, Work Itself, Employee Performance

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh dedikasi terhadap kinerja karyawan dengan work itself sebagai variabel mediasi pada PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang. Latar belakang penelitian didasarkan pada fenomena penurunan kinerja karyawan yang ditunjukkan melalui rendahnya kedisiplinan, tanggung jawab, serta belum optimalnya penyelesaian pekerjaan. Dedikasi dipandang sebagai faktor penting yang dapat mendorong semangat, tanggung jawab, serta komitmen karyawan dalam bekerja, sedangkan work itself mencerminkan persepsi karyawan terhadap pekerjaan yang bermakna, menantang, dan memberikan kesempatan pengembangan diri. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode verifikatif dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 120 karyawan dan seluruhnya dijadikan sampel dengan teknik sampel jenuh. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, wawancara, serta studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis jalur dengan bantuan perangkat lunak statistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dedikasi berpengaruh signifikan terhadap work itself dan kinerja karyawan, sementara work itself juga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja. Selain itu, work itself terbukti memediasi hubungan antara dedikasi dan kinerja, meskipun pengaruh langsung dedikasi terhadap kinerja lebih kuat dibandingkan pengaruh tidak langsung melalui work itself. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya strategi pengelolaan sumber daya manusia yang tidak hanya berfokus pada peningkatan dedikasi, tetapi juga pada penciptaan kualitas pekerjaan yang bermakna, menantang, dan memberikan peluang pengembangan untuk mendukung peningkatan kinerja karyawan secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Dedikasi, Work Itself, Kinerja Karyawan

INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are the most important asset in an organization because they are the primary driving force in achieving goals. While

facilities, infrastructure, and funding play a crucial role, without quality HR, an organization struggles to function optimally (Wulandari & Kuswinarno, 2024). Therefore, continuous employee development is a key factor in

improving individual and organizational performance, especially amidst increasingly fierce global competition. Superior HR quality will help organizations be more adaptive in the face of dynamic change (Kalangi, 2015). HR quality is determined not only by technical skills but also by adaptability, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Adiwinata, Hidayat, & Sinaga, 2024). Organizations that neglect HR development risk losing their competitive edge, even if they possess adequate technology and infrastructure (Darroudi et al., 2021). Therefore, HR management should not only focus on administrative aspects but also encompass training, competency development, and job skills enhancement relevant to current industry needs (Kanya et al., 2025).

Employee performance is defined as the work results achieved, both in quality and quantity, according to responsibilities within a specific period (Simamora, 2022). Performance is influenced by a combination of individual motivation and ability (Sidabutar et al., 2023), and is related to attitudes toward work, work situations, and collaboration between employees (As'ad, 2013). With good performance, companies can produce sustainable products or services according to consumer needs while simultaneously

achieving organizational targets (Shafri & Hubeis, 2013; Veithzal, 2020). Employee dedication also has a significant impact on performance. Highly dedicated employees tend to be more meticulous, responsible, and detail-oriented (Robbins, 2008; Akbar, 2017). Research shows that dedication has a positive effect on performance (Dewanti & Mayasari, 2022; Mirawati, 2021), although some results indicate an insignificant effect (Kujayanti, 2017). In this regard, the work itself plays a crucial role. Meaningful, challenging, and skill-appropriate work has been shown to significantly improve HR performance (Mansyur, 2023).

PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang is one of the state-owned enterprises engaged in the electricity sector. PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang is located at Jalan Pemuda No. 93, Sekayu, Central Semarang, Semarang City, Central Java. PT PLN (Persero) has the motto "Electricity for a Better Life". The purpose and objective of this Company is to organize the business of providing electricity for the public interest in adequate quantity and quality as well as fostering profits and carrying out Government assignments in the electricity sector in order to support development by implementing the principles of a Limited Liability Company.

Table 1. Average Employee Performance Assessments for 2023-2024

| Work behaviour | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|------------------|--------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|----------|
| | Weight | Work value | Score (%) | Weight | Work value | Skor (%) |
| Discipline | 10,0 | 75,0 | 7,5 | 10,0 | 60,0 | 6,0 |
| Responsibility | 10,0 | 70,0 | 7,0 | 10,0 | 65,0 | 6,5 |
| Cooperation | 10,0 | 75,0 | 7,5 | 10,0 | 65,0 | 6,5 |
| Leadership | 10,0 | 80,0 | 8,0 | 10,0 | 70,0 | 7,0 |
| Quality of work | 20,0 | 75,0 | 15,0 | 20,0 | 70,0 | 14,0 |
| Quantity of work | 20,0 | 75,0 | 15,0 | 20,0 | 70,0 | 14,0 |
| Work skills | 20,0 | 80,0 | 16,0 | 20,0 | 75,0 | 15,0 |
| Number of | 100,0 | | 76,0 | 100,0 | | 69,0 |

The table above shows a decline in the performance of PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang employees in 2023, reaching 76% and 69% in 2024. This is certainly far from the agency's expectation of 100% employee performance. This indicates that employee performance within the company is suboptimal. A pre-survey conducted with HRD revealed that low employee dedication and low employee responsibility, with employees not completing their work promptly, hampered the work of other employees. Employee dedication plays a crucial role in determining how they perceive work itself. Employees with high levels of dedication tend to view their work as meaningful, challenging, and aligned with their personal values, fostering stronger intrinsic motivation and work engagement (Robbins, 2008; Akbar, 2017). Previous research has shown that dedication can improve performance through a positive attitude toward work (Dewanti & Mayasari, 2022; Mirawati, 2021), although there are conflicting findings regarding its insignificant effect (Kujayanti, 2017). In this context, work itself serves as a reinforcing factor because when employees perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with their skills, dedication can be channeled optimally and result in better performance (Mansyur, 2023; Jaya & Ariyanto, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a verification study to test the effect of employee dedication (X) on employee performance (Y) with work itself (M) as a mediating variable at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang. The operational variables are: (1) Dedication—positive energy, willingness to sacrifice, and encouragement to give one's best; (2)

Work itself—task variety, job significance, autonomy, and learning opportunities; (3) Performance—quality, quantity, trust, cooperation, and availability. All indicators are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Data sources include primary (questionnaires, interviews, employee observations) and secondary (performance documents, work regulations, and related references). The study population was 120 employees and used a saturated sample (the entire population was sampled). Data analysis included descriptive (frequency distribution, average/category scores) and verification with path analysis to estimate the direct, indirect, and total influences between variables. The prerequisite/model accuracy test was supplemented with the Coefficient of Determination. Hypothesis testing was conducted partially (t-test) and simultaneously (F-test) at a 5% significance level. The mediation effect of work itself was tested using the Sobel test with a-b path standard error calculation and a t-statistic to assess the significance of the indirect effect. Data processing was supported by statistical software (SPSS) and an initial summary using a spreadsheet for tabulating scores and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The respondent profile shows a predominance in the productive age group of 25–35, followed by those under 25, 36–45, 46–55, and a small proportion over 55. This composition reflects a relatively young and adaptable workforce, in line with the needs of modern organizations that demand rapid learning, innovation, and resilience in the face of dynamic work environments. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male, with a smaller

proportion of females. This reflects the characteristics of the electricity industry, which requires a high level of technical and field personnel, although women continue to contribute to the workforce. In terms of education, the majority of respondents had diplomas, followed by high school/vocational high school (SMA/SMK) graduates, while others had bachelor's, postgraduate, or other educational levels. This demonstrates a primary strength in vocational competencies relevant to technical operational needs, as well as the existence of academic layers that support managerial and organizational development aspects. In terms of length of service, the majority of respondents had between five and ten years of experience, followed by those with eleven to fifteen years of service. The rest are new employees and seniors who have worked for more than two decades, thus creating a balance between workforce regeneration and continuity of experience.

In terms of dedication, employees demonstrate positive attitudes in the form of a willingness to make sacrifices, a readiness to work whenever needed, a willingness to express their best ideas, and a commitment to devoting their energy and abilities to completing work. However, weaknesses persist in terms of pride in their maximum contributions and the drive to exceed institutional expectations. This indicates the need for improvements in appreciation mechanisms and reward systems so that existing dedication can develop into superior work behavior. Employee perceptions of work, or work itself, also tend to be positive. Work is perceived as meaningful, varied, challenging creativity, and encouraging continuous learning. Employees feel their work contributes to organizational goals and provides a strong sense of

engagement. However, challenges remain, such as limited opportunities to learn new knowledge and a lack of confidence in managing work independently. This highlights the need for increased access to competency development programs and greater autonomy in carrying out tasks.

Employee performance is reflected in their ability to maintain quality work results, complete tasks effectively and efficiently, achieve set targets, and collaborate well within a team. Employees also demonstrate a high level of readiness to meet the company's operational needs. However, challenges exist, including limited technical expertise among some employees and weak trust among coworkers. This situation underscores the importance of capacity building through training and the development of a more open and supportive work culture. In terms of demographic characteristics, the dominant productive age group is associated with high energy, readiness to work, and engagement. However, this group also requires recognition to maintain their motivation. The dominance of male workers in technical fields aligns with the strengths of team cohesion and operational readiness, although interpersonal trust still needs to be strengthened. The predominantly vocational education level supports the effectiveness of technical work but also explains why some employees feel they lack the opportunity to learn new skills. The majority of mid-range work experience indicates a readiness to accept greater responsibility, but limited authority can hinder this potential. Therefore, increasing appreciation, developing competencies, providing autonomy, and strengthening interpersonal relationships are strategic steps to optimize dedication, enrich

work experience, and ultimately improve overall employee performance.

Verifiable Analysis Results

The results of the first stage path analysis indicate that employee dedication has a significant influence on work itself. The significance value obtained is 0.000 (<0.05) indicating a strong relationship, with a regression

coefficient of 1.066. The R Square value of 0.840 indicates that employee dedication contributes 84.0% to the variation in work itself. Thus, it can be concluded that a high level of dedication directly increases employees' positive perceptions of the quality of their work, including the sense of meaning, variety, and learning opportunities that exist in the work.

Table 2. Coefficient Values with First Stage Path Analysis

| Model | Coefficients ^a | | | | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|--------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 4.456 | 2.198 | | | 2.028 | .045 | | |
| DEDICATION | 1.066 | .043 | | .917 | 24.894 | .000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

In accordance with the discussion of the first stage of path

analysis, the following is the R Square value:

Table 3. First Stage Summary Model

| Model Summary ^b | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | |
| 1 | .917 ^a | .840 | .839 | 2.63562 | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), DEDICATION

b. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

In the second stage, path analysis showed that both employee dedication and work itself significantly influence employee performance. The dedication variable has a regression coefficient of 0.743 with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), while work itself has a regression coefficient of 0.363 with the same significance value,

namely 0.000 (<0.05). This confirms that both variables play an important role in improving performance. Dedication fosters enthusiasm, perseverance, and responsibility, while work itself provides meaning, challenges, and learning opportunities that strengthen employee engagement.

Table 4. Coefficient Values with Second Stage Path Analysis

| Model | Coefficients ^a | | | | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|------|-------|--------|-------------------------|------------|
| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| | Std. | B | Error | Beta | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.859 | 1.631 | | 3.592 | .000 | | |
| | DEDICATION | .743 | .045 | | .639 | 16.374 | .000 | .487 2.054 |
| | WORKITSELF | .363 | .037 | | .388 | 9.944 | .000 | .487 2.054 |

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

In accordance with the discussion of the second stage of path

analysis, the following is the R Square value:

Table 5. Second Stage Summary Model
Model Summary^b

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .956 ^a | .913 | .912 | 1.94860 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), WORKITSELF, DEDICATION
b. Dependent Variable: Performance

The R Square value in the second stage of 0.913 indicates that the combination of dedication and work itself is able to explain 91.3% of the variation in employee performance, with an error of 0.294. This finding shows that the performance of PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang employees is highly dependent on individual dedication and their perception of the work itself. With this high figure, it can be emphasized that an HR management strategy that focuses on strengthening dedication and work quality will have a significant impact on achieving company performance.

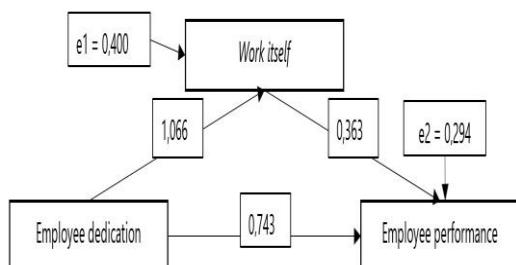
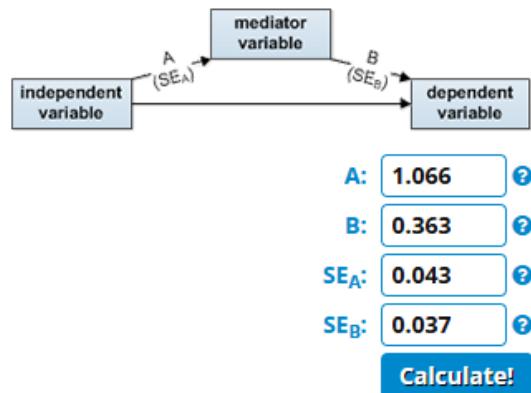


Figure 1. Research Model with Path Analysis

Further analysis shows a comparison of direct and indirect influences. The direct effect of dedication on performance has a coefficient value of 0.743, while the indirect effect through work itself is the result of the multiplication of the coefficient of dedication on work itself (1.066) and the coefficient of work itself on performance (0.363), which is 0.386. This comparison shows that the direct effect is greater, but the indirect effect is also significant so that work itself functions as a mediator that

strengthens the effect of dedication on performance.



Sobel test statistic: 9.12243047

One-tailed probability: 0.0

Two-tailed probability: 0.0

The results of the Sobel test further confirm these findings. With a calculated t-value of $0.000 < t\text{-table } 1.665$ and a probability value of $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that work itself acts as a significant mediating variable. This means that employee dedication not only improves performance directly but also through positive perceptions of the work they do. Therefore, management needs to strengthen the appreciation system, provide space for autonomy, and provide development opportunities so that employee dedication can be fully converted into sustainable performance improvements.

Discussion

The research results show that employee dedication has a significant impact on work itself. This demonstrates that employees' energy, commitment, and willingness to sacrifice can enhance their perception of

work, including its meaning, variety, and opportunities for growth. Strong dedication makes work more valuable and meaningful, thus increasing employee motivation in carrying out their responsibilities. Furthermore, dedication has been shown to have a direct impact on employee performance, as has work itself, which plays a role in improving the quality and quantity of work output. These findings confirm that both variables contribute significantly to performance achievement. Further analysis indicates that work itself acts as a mediator in the relationship between dedication and performance. This means that high dedication not only directly boosts performance but also through employees' positive perceptions of their work. Meaningful, challenging, and skill-aligned work makes dedication more focused and productive, resulting in optimal work results. However, this mediating role is partial, meaning dedication still has a direct impact on performance, although its effect is stronger when combined with work itself.

These verification results align with descriptive findings, which indicate a high level of commitment, readiness, and teamwork, although challenges remain in areas such as pride, autonomy, learning opportunities, and trust among coworkers. This situation indicates that, although dedication is already quite good, the quality of work experience still needs to be improved so that dedication can fully translate into superior performance. Efforts such as providing appreciation, opportunities for competency development, increasing autonomy, and strengthening a collaborative work culture will strengthen the function of work itself as a link between dedication and performance. This research

provides novelty by confirming that work itself plays a key mediator in the relationship between dedication and performance in the context of state-owned electricity companies. Unlike previous research that emphasized engagement or other organizational factors as intermediaries, this study highlights the quality of work directly perceived by employees as a key link. These findings offer practical implications: in work environments with high levels of dedication, performance improvement strategies should focus on job enrichment, providing autonomy, and providing continuous learning opportunities so that the energy of dedication can be fully channeled into productive work behavior.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that employee dedication significantly influences both work itself and employee performance. Employees with high levels of dedication tend to view their work as meaningful, challenging, and aligned with their skills, thus being more motivated to make their best contribution. Dedication has also been shown to directly contribute to improved performance, both in terms of quality, quantity, and readiness to carry out tasks. Furthermore, work itself plays a crucial role in strengthening employee engagement, enabling optimal performance improvement when employees perceive their work as meaningful, providing learning opportunities, and providing space for creativity. This study also confirms that work itself functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between dedication and employee performance. This means that while dedication has a direct influence on performance, positive perceptions of work strengthen

and channel the energy of dedication into productive work behavior. Therefore, employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Semarang can be sustainably improved through a combination of strategies that encourage dedication while enriching the quality of work experiences, such as providing appreciation, opportunities for competency development, and increasing autonomy in completing tasks.

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