

The Impact of Competence on Job Satisfaction and Performance: Moderating Effects of Work Environment, Motivation, and Digital Adoption

Competency in
Measuring Job
Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Enhancing employee performance within the education sector has gained significance due to rising professional expectations and the rapid pace of digital transformation. Employee skills are viewed as a crucial element in improving job satisfaction and performance; nevertheless, their influence may differ based on organizational circumstances. This research intends to explore the effect of competence on job satisfaction and employee performance while considering work environment, motivation, and digital adoption as moderating factors. The study was carried out with all personnel from public junior high schools, comprising a total population of 384 participants. Primary data were gathered via an online questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 76.6%. The analysis of the data was performed using linear regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The results show that competence greatly influences job satisfaction, both directly and as influenced by the work environment. In addition, competence greatly enhances employee performance, and this impact intensifies with increased motivation and digital adoption. This research finds that adopting digital tools in education significantly enhances staff performance and can serve as a strategy for gaining a competitive advantage

Submitted:
November 15, 2025

Revised:
January 10, 2026

Accepted:
January 30, 2026

Published Online:
January 31, 2026

Keywords: Competence, Digitalization Adoption, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Performance.

INTRODUCTION

This study adopts a self-determination theory perspective, supported by person–job fit theory, which suggests that employees are more motivated and productive when there is alignment between individual characteristics and job demands, leading to higher job satisfaction and performance (Choi et al., 2022). Person–job fit theory also emphasizes the importance of a supportive work environment and work motivation in strengthening competence and performance. In addition, the ability to adopt technology has emerged as a new essential competence in the current era (Dhir et al., 2020). Accordingly, employee job satisfaction and performance are critical for organizations to achieve their objectives.

A random pre-survey was conducted among 35 junior high school staff in the Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) to assess job satisfaction, followed by a questionnaire distributed to principals to evaluate staff performance. The results showed that the highest dissatisfaction was related to salary (73.3%), benefits (73.3%), and career opportunities (64.4%). Meanwhile, the lowest performance ratings were found in work ethic (73.3%) and work planning (71.2% and 71.1%), as presented in Figure 1.

JIMKES

Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen
Kesatuan
Vol. 14 No. 1, 2026
pp. 793-804
IBI Kesatuan
ISSN 2337 – 7860
E-ISSN 2721 – 169X
DOI: 10.37641/jimkes.v14i1.4598



Figure 1. Pre-Survey Results on Job Satisfaction and Performance

Based on Figure 1, it is crucial to examine the determinants of job satisfaction and performance. In this regard, several previous studies have revealed debatable findings. On the one hand, conclude that competence significantly contributes positively to job satisfaction (Siddiq et al., 2023; Fitriany & Mudjijah, 2024; Ginting & Rizky, 2024; Hanarita et al., 2025). On the other hand, Chang et al. (2021), findings that provide debate, where competence does not actually support employee job satisfaction. Competence also has a positive and significant impact on improving performance. Other findings suggest the opposite: performance is not supported by competence (Howard et al., 2025). A previous study by Goldan et al. (2023) has also revealed that job satisfaction can improve performance. There is debate as to whether job satisfaction is unaffected by performance.

The work environment is also seen as a crucial factor in human resource management. This factor has received relatively little attention from academics, particularly as a moderating variable in examining the relationship between competence and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, several empirical findings suggest that the work environment plays a significant role in strengthening or weakening the influence of competence on job satisfaction, making it worthy of consideration within research analytical frameworks (Taki et al., 2023; Maulana & Tanesab, 2025). Work motivation is also a crucial factor in determining the intention and determination to improve work (Karaferis et al., 2022). This is supported by several previous studies, which found that motivation strengthens the relationship between competence and performance (Awan et al., 2023; Aryandhi et al., 2024). Furthermore, the adoption of digitalization in education in the 4.0 and 5.0 eras is crucial for providing optimal institutional governance and services. This requires the role of human resources through improved performance to keep pace with the digitalization era (Putri et al., 2024). This adoption of digitalization in education has not been explored by previous researchers, making it interesting to study in depth as a new contribution to the scientific field.

Based on the various phenomena described above, the research question is formulated to examine how the relationship between competence and job satisfaction, as well as employee performance, is influenced by the moderating roles of the work environment, motivation, and digitalization adoption. Based on this formulation, digitalization adoption is introduced as a new moderating variable that has not been identified in previous studies, thereby representing a form of originality. In addition, this study refers to person-job fit theory, which has not been extensively examined by scholars and is aligned with the objectives of this research. Furthermore, previous findings that positioned the work environment as a mediating variable are re-examined by redefining it as a moderating variable. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the effect of competence on job satisfaction and employee performance by considering the work environment, motivation, and digitalization adoption as moderating factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Effect of Competence on Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

The person-job fit theory can be used to explain the effect of competence on job satisfaction and employee performance. Competence is a key aspect of this theory because employees who are highly skilled and closely matched to their job tasks tend to experience higher job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2022). Employees who are consciously satisfied are more engaged in their work, and this engagement is linked to better performance (Shah

& Ayub, 2021). Matching competence with job requirements also encourages employees to develop relevant qualifications, employability skills, and knowledge that meet high labor market demand. Therefore, high job satisfaction not only increases motivation but also contributes to better performance (Shah & Ayub, 2021; Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan, 2021).

Moreover, the person–job fit theory suggests that using technology, such as smartphones, to fulfill daily needs (need-fulfilling) also affects employee satisfaction and performance (Dhir et al., 2020). Employees who can use technology effectively are generally more satisfied and perform better. Empirical studies support this relationship, including research by Chang et al. (2021), Siddiq et al. (2023), Fitriany and Mudjijah (2024), Ginting and Rizky (2024), and Hanarita et al. (2025), which show that matching competence with job tasks and using resources effectively improve both job satisfaction and employee performance. Thus, applying the person–job fit theory provides an important basis for understanding how competence influences satisfaction and performance in modern workplaces.

H1: Competence has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

H2: Competence has a positive effect on employee performance.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Job satisfaction reflects a combination of feelings related both to the job itself and to individual circumstances. Work-related factors include compensation, work environment, career opportunities, fairness, and other job characteristics, while personal conditions such as age, education level, gender, and work experience also play a role (Bayona et al., 2020). According to the person–job fit theory, job satisfaction emerges when employees' abilities, skills, and interests align with the demands of their positions. Employees who experience high job satisfaction tend to perform better than those who feel dissatisfied, as satisfaction motivates them to work harder, apply their skills fully, and engage more deeply in their tasks (Dhir et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2022). This alignment between employee competencies and job requirements not only fosters individual growth but also enhances overall organizational performance.

Empirical studies provide strong support for this theoretical perspective. Research by Nursaid et al. (2021), Herwina (2022), Fitriany and Mudjijah (2024), and Hanarita et al. (2025) consistently shows that employees with higher job satisfaction demonstrate superior work outcomes. These findings emphasize that job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct influenced by both organizational and personal factors. Therefore, fostering a good match between employees and their roles is crucial for improving performance and productivity, while also supporting employee well-being and engagement (Bayona et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2022). Understanding and enhancing this alignment offers a valuable approach for organizations seeking sustainable performance improvements in today's competitive work environment.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance.

Moderating Effect of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction

The moderation role of the work environment in the relationship between competence and job satisfaction is also clearly explained within the framework of person–job fit theory. According to this theory, job satisfaction emerges when there is a strong compatibility or congruence between an individual employee's competencies and the demands of the job being performed. This compatibility is not only influenced by personal abilities but is also strengthened by a conducive work environment that supports employees in carrying out their tasks effectively. A work environment that provides clear opportunities for career advancement, fair evaluation systems, and strong leadership support can enhance the positive impact of competence on job satisfaction (Goetz & Wald, 2022).

When employees perceive that their competencies align with their job roles and are reinforced by a supportive work environment that encourages positive behavior, collaboration, and professional growth, their performance tends to improve significantly (Choi et al., 2022). In this context, the work environment acts as an important contextual factor that enables employees to fully utilize their competencies, thereby enhancing both satisfaction and performance outcomes. Previous empirical studies by Singgih et al. (2020) have provided strong support for the person–job fit theory, demonstrating that the work environment has a substantial influence on improving employee performance. Furthermore, other findings by Maulana and Tanesab (2025) indicate that the work environment plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between competence and job satisfaction, where competence has been shown to mediate job satisfaction through the presence of a supportive work environment.

H4: Work environment moderates the influence of competence on job satisfaction.

Moderating Effect of Motivation and Digitalization Skill on Performance

Work motivation is also considered to enhance the relationship between competence and employee performance. This is in accordance with person–job fit theory, which refers to individuals whose competencies match job requirements, thereby affecting performance improvement (Dhir et al., 2020; Goetz & Wald, 2022). Person–job fit theory further claims that, with high work motivation, the relationship between competence and performance becomes stronger (Hajiali et al., 2022).

Secondly, person–job fit theory can also help explain the phenomenon of digitalization, namely the extent to which increased digitalization has the potential to strengthen the competence–performance relationship (Yildiz et al., 2025). This argument is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which states that when employees perceive technology as useful and easy to use, their willingness to adopt technology increases and, consequently, their performance improves (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2023). In other words, employee performance improves when competencies are aligned with job demands and are further reinforced by technological support (Granic, 2024).

Previous studies have mainly focused on the work environment as a mediating variable (Maulana & Tanesab, 2025). Meanwhile, digitalization adoption has rarely been examined as either a mediating or moderating factor. In fact, a conducive work environment has been shown to directly influence superior performance (Santoso & Oktafien, 2024). Therefore, this study highlights work motivation and digitalization skills as moderating variables that strengthen the relationship between competence, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Work motivation encourages employees to utilize their competencies optimally, while digital skills enable effective use of technology to improve efficiency and work outcomes.

H5: Work motivation moderates the effect of competence on employee performance.

H6: Digitalization skills moderate the effect of competence on employee performance.

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework and research hypotheses that examine the impact of skill on employee job satisfaction and performance, accompanied by various moderating factors. Hypothesis H1 proposes that competency (X) affects job satisfaction (Y1). Hypothesis H2 asserts that competence (X) affects employee performance (Y2). Hypothesis H3 states that employee performance (Y2) is affected by job satisfaction (Y1). Besides the direct effect, this model additionally examines the influence of moderating variables. Hypothesis H4 posits that the work environment (Z1) influences the connection between competency and job satisfaction. Hypothesis H5 claims that motivation (Z2) influences the connection between competency and employee performance. Hypothesis H6 asserts that digitalization skills (Z3) influence the connection between competency and employee performance. In conclusion, this model indicates that the impact of

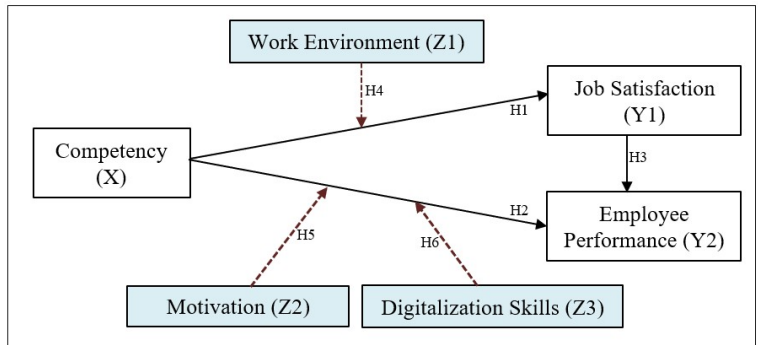


Figure 2. Indirect Effect Test Model Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an empirical quantitative approach to determine whether the formulated hypotheses are proven or rejected. The staff population of public junior high schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) consists of 305 schools, but the exact number is unknown. The main data is in the form of primary sources, which were obtained using a questionnaire instrument on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The study used a sample based on the Lemeshow formula with an alpha of 5%, and the following results were obtained:

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 \times P(1-P)}{d^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} \\
 &= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384 \text{ respondent}
 \end{aligned}$$

In this study, the research variables are defined using multiple indicators taken from earlier research. Competence (X1) is evaluated through six indicators: discipline, teamwork skills, quality of service, data and archive management abilities, software operation skills, and activity coordination capability. These metrics are modified from Nursaid et al. (2021), Siddiq et al. (2023), and Fitriany and Mudjijah (2024).

The work environment (Z1) is assessed through six indicators: the physical setting, communication, safety measures, working conditions, opportunities for growth, and work-life balance. These metrics are derived from the works of Singgih et al. (2020) and Taki et al. (2023). Additionally, work motivation (Z2) is assessed using indicators like the aspiration to enhance performance, accountability, growth intention, acknowledgment, work-related rewards, and diligence. The assessment of work motivation pertains to Mardanov (2020), Dorta-Afonso et al. (2021), and Ali and Anwar (2021).

The variable employee productivity (X2), which signifies digitalization skills, is assessed through indicators of fundamental digital competencies, digital data handling, proficient digital communication, data security knowledge, management of workplace social media, and content creation abilities. These metrics are derived from Bolli and Pusterla (2021), Dorta-Afonso et al. (2021), Bayar (2024), and Nugraha et al. (2024).

Job satisfaction (Y1) is assessed by factors such as relationships with colleagues, interactions with management, compensation, benefits, advancement opportunities, and pride in one's work. These metrics draw on the work of Mardanov (2020), Dorta-Afonso et al. (2021), Bolli and Pusterla (2021), Bayar (2024), and Nugraha et al. (2024). Ultimately, employee performance (Y2) is assessed through indicators including revenue enhancement, cost effectiveness, proficiency in creating work plans, task execution

capability, report timeliness, initiative, proactive mindset, and work ethic, as proposed by Nursaid et al. (2021), Riyanto et al. (2021), and Kitsios and Kamariotou (2021). The analysis technique uses Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA), which first carries out validity and reliability tests, with reference to the following model equation:

$$Y_1 = \beta_1 X + \beta_2 X.Z1 + e_1$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_3 X + \beta_4 Y1 + \beta_5 X.Z2 + \beta_6 X.Z3 + e_2$$

This study uses Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) as the primary analytical technique. Before testing the hypotheses, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure data quality. Furthermore, MRA analysis using SPSS was used to assess complex relationships between variables. Statistical tools and analytical techniques are explained in detail to ensure transparency, replicability, and robustness in testing the moderating effects of work motivation and digital skills on the relationship between competency, job satisfaction, and employee performance.

RESULTS

The number of respondents was 384 staff working at State Junior High Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama/SMP*) in DIY. Based on Table 1, it appears that the majority of respondents were female, dominated by those in the highly productive age group of 36-45 years (27.6%). Furthermore, this group of female respondents had a very adequate length of service, ranging from 5 to 15 years. This respondent profile thus indicates a high level of dedication in the workplace, making them highly responsive to respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Identity

Classification	Category	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Male	148	38.5%
	Female	236	61.5%
	Total	384	100 %
Age	18-35 years	33	8.6%
	36-45 years	106	27.6%
	46-55 years	164	42.7%
	56-60 years	81	21.1%
	Total	384	100%
Length of working	<5 years	74	19%
	5-15 years	222	57.8%
	16-25 years	64	16.7%
	>25 years	24	6.2%
	Total	384	100%

Based on Table 2, the average respondent gave a score of four, indicating agreement with all questions. This means that each question item for the variables of competence, job satisfaction, work environment, motivation, and digitalization adoption is crucial for improving performance. The detailed data processing results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Response Statistic

Variable	Statistics	Question Items					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Competence (X)	Mean	3.65	3.62	3.58	3.84	4.04	4.31
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5
	S.D.	0.29	0.15	0.38	0.26	0.17	0.30
		P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12
Work Environment (Z1)	Mean	4.23	4.21	3.87	3.65	3.76	4.03
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5

Variable	Statistics	Question Items					
Motivation (Z2)	S.D.	0.23	0.41	0.25	0.35	0.21	0.24
		P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18
	Mean	4.01	4.44	3.86	4.23	3.68	4.05
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5
Digitalization Skills (Z3)	S.D.	0.31	0.23	0.18	0.22	0.19	0.31
		P19	P20	P21	P22	P23	P24
	Mean	3.67	4.23	4.45	4.35	0.40	0.374
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5
Job Satisfaction (Y1)	S.D.	0.31	0.19	0.23	0.26	0.33	0.25
		P25	P26	P27	P28	P29	P30
	Mean	3.76	3.64	4.01	4.25	3.68	4.06
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5
Employee Performance (Y2)	S.D.	0.23	0.18	0.31	0.24	0.31	0.21
		P31	P32	P33	P34	P35	P36
	Mean	3.74	4.21	3.73	3.63	4.28	4.12
	Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Min.	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5
	S.D.	0.24	0.13	0.32	0.28	0.32	0.21

Table 3 presents the variable feasibility test, which is intended to further support the relevance of the model being developed. The approach uses Bartlett's test of sphericity with a 5% alpha. Table 3 shows that the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity is <0.05 .

Table 3. Variable Feasibility Test

Variable	Cut Off	Sig.	Result
Competency (Z)	0.05	0.000	Significant
Work Environment (Z1)	0.05	0.000	Significant
Motivation (Z2)	0.05	0.000	Significant
Digitalization Skills (Z3)	0.05	0.000	Significant
Job Satisfaction (Y1)	0.05	0.000	Significant
Employee Performance (Y2)	0.05	0.000	Significant

Table 4 shows that the validity test obtained a component matrix coefficient > 0.40 from all indicators, thus declaring them valid; thus, the 30 indicators are suitable to measure all variables tested. The results of the validity test also show that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is > 0.70 , meaning that all respondents' responses are reliable and thus representative to be used as data for various subsequent tests. Further tests were conducted to determine the adequacy of the sample, and the KMO coefficient > 0.50 was obtained, so this study, using the Lemeshow sampling method, obtained 384 respondents as a sample that appears statistically appropriate to represent the entire population.

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Test	Cut Off	Question Items					
Competence (X)			P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
	CM	>0.40	0.671	0.638	0.741	0.720	0.682	0.641
	AC	>0.70	0.805					
	KMO	>0.50	0.738					
Work Environment (Z1)			P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12
	CM	>0.40	0.629	0.675	0.651	0.605	0.724	0.681
	AC	>0.70	0.784					
	KMO	>0.50	0.720					
Motivation (Z2)			P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18
	CM	>0.40	0.648	0.619	0.607	0.663	0.671	0.691

Variable	Test	Cut Off	Question Items					
Digitalization Skills (Z3)	AC	>0.70	0.863					
	KMO	>0.50	0.639					
			P19	P20	P21	P22	P23	P24
	CM	>0.40	0.681	0.646	0.751	0.682	0.666	0.650
Job Satisfaction (Y1)	AC	>0.70	0.803					
	KMO	>0.50	0.671					
			P25	P26	P27	P28	P29	P30
	CM	>0.40	0.640	0.723	0.681	0.674	0.639	0.720
Employee Performance (Y2)	AC	>0.70	0.782					
	KMO	>0.50	0.725					
			P31	P32	P33	P34	P35	P36
	CM	>0.40	0.672	0.703	0.652	0.674	0.638	0.692
	AC	>0.70	0.826					
	KMO	>0.50	0.689					

Table 5 presents the model test, which shows that competency significantly explains job satisfaction (F-statistic = 3.856), amounting to 36.5% (Adjusted R^2 = 0.365). When there is elaboration between competency and job satisfaction, it becomes stronger in explaining performance (F-statistic = 7.784), amounting to 47.9% (Adjusted R^2 = 0.479). Furthermore, job satisfaction increases significantly (57.8%) due to the interaction between competency and the work environment (F-statistic = 4.458; Adjusted R^2 = 0.578). The interaction between competency and work motivation also causes a significant increase (63.3%) in performance (F-statistic = 5.739; Adjusted R^2 = 0.683). Furthermore, digitalization skills appear to further strengthen (76.8%) the influence of competency on performance (F-statistic = 7.045; Adjusted R^2 = 0.768).

Table 5. Direct Effect and Indirect Effect Hypothesis Test

Test	Hypothesis	F-statistic	Adj. R^2	t-statistics	Sig.	Result
Direct Effect	$X \rightarrow Y_1$	3.856	0.365	2.732	0.001	H ₁ Accepted
	$X \rightarrow Y_2$	7.784	0.479	3.833	0.000	H ₂ Accepted
	$Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$			4.649	0.000	H ₃ Accepted
Moderation Effect	$X.Z1 \rightarrow Y_1$	4.458	0.578	5.489	0.000	H ₄ Accepted
	$X.Z2 \rightarrow Y_2$	5.739	0.683	5.937	0.000	H ₅ Accepted
	$X.Z3 \rightarrow Y_2$	7.045	0.768	6.379	0.000	H ₆ Accepted

t table-k; α = 5% = 1.966

F table-k; k-2-1; α = 5% = 2.628

Competence has a positive and significant impact on increasing job satisfaction (t-statistic = 2.732; sig = 0.001) and the same impact on staff performance (t-statistic = 3.833; sig = 0.000). It also appears that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on performance (t-statistic = 4.649; sig = 0.000). Third, the indirect effect hypothesis test is also proven to be accepted by all. This means that the work environment strengthens the effect of competence on job satisfaction (t-statistic = 5.489; sig = 0.000). Motivation is also proven to further strengthen the impact of competence on work (t-statistic = 5.937; sig = 0.000). Furthermore, the interaction between digitalization skills and competence further strengthens performance improvements (t-statistic = 6.379; sig = 0.000).

DISCUSSION

Competence is an important factor in enhancing job satisfaction and is consistent with person-job fit theory. Respondents provided favorable evaluations when pay, benefits, and career prospects aligned with their skills, which fostered pride and job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with prior studies showing that high competence, such as discipline, teamwork, and service capability, is associated with higher job satisfaction (Chang et al., 2021; Ginting & Rizky, 2024; Hanarita et al., 2025). Competence in administrative management and coordination also contributes to psychological comfort at work. Individuals with higher competence tend to be more capable of achieving organizational objectives, which ultimately enhances job satisfaction (Siddiq et al., 2023).

Competence has a positive effect on employee performance. This finding aligns with person–job fit theory, which suggests that higher competence enables employees to work more effectively and efficiently (Hanarita et al., 2025). Knowledge and skill levels help employees better understand and complete tasks and responsibilities and shape positive work attitudes that support optimal performance (Herwina, 2022; Fitriany & Mudjijah, 2024). Employees with high competence possess advanced technical skills, strong intellectual abilities, and broad social capabilities, allowing them to achieve targets in accordance with established work standards (Nursaid et al., 2021).

Increasing job satisfaction can enhance employee performance. In line with person–job fit theory, satisfied employees tend to be more productive and demonstrate stronger commitment than those who are less satisfied (Bayona et al., 2020; Bienkowska & Tworek, 2020; Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020; Singgih et al., 2020). Job satisfaction fosters positive working relationships and better concentration at work (Goetz & Wald, 2022; Alkandi et al., 2023). Supportive relationships between leaders and employees further strengthen work ethics and performance outcomes (Riyanto et al., 2021; Taki et al., 2023; Hanarita et al., 2025).

A positive work environment strengthens the relationship between competence and job satisfaction. According to person–job fit theory, the work environment plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2022). Supportive working conditions, including adequate physical facilities and effective communication, enhance comfort and enjoyment at work (Maulana & Tanesab, 2025). When the work environment is safe and comfortable, high competence becomes more effective in increasing job satisfaction (Taki et al., 2023). Highly competent employees also tend to prefer organizations that offer opportunities for development and work–life balance (Nursaid et al., 2021). Thus, the work environment strengthens the relationship between competence and job satisfaction (Singgih et al., 2020).

Competence encourages work motivation, which subsequently improves performance (Lee et al., 2022). Prior studies confirm that work motivation amplifies the relationship between competence and performance (Nursaid et al., 2021; Maulana & Tanesab, 2025). Consistent with person–job fit theory, high motivation drives employees to fully develop their skills (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021; Fahmi et al., 2022). Motivated employees exhibit enthusiasm, trust, initiative, responsibility, and commitment, all of which contribute to improved performance (Bienkowska & Tworek, 2020; Chien et al., 2020; Riyanto et al., 2021; Mardanov, 2021; Fitriany & Mudjijah, 2024).

Digitalization integration significantly reinforces the relationship between competence and performance. Based on person–job fit theory, greater engagement in digitalization strengthens competencies and leads to higher efficiency and productivity (Nugraha et al., 2024). Digitalization also expands access to information and improves its accuracy (Bolli & Pusterla, 2022; Pan et al., 2024). Successful digital transformation requires specific technological and digital skills, enabling employees to work more efficiently, adapt to change, perform better, and generate new ideas. In the long term, these capabilities contribute to improved performance.

These findings have practical implications for organizations aiming to enhance employee performance through competence development, supportive work environments, motivation, and digitalization initiatives. They reinforce person–job fit theory by demonstrating how competence interacts with job satisfaction, motivation, work environment, and technology to drive performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that competence plays an important role in directly enhancing job satisfaction, and this effect becomes more significant when supported by a favorable work environment. In addition, competence is shown to be a positive antecedent of employee performance. The relationship between competence and performance is further strengthened when combined with high levels of work motivation

and employees' readiness to adopt digitalization. These results confirm that the work environment, motivation, and adoption of digitalization function as moderating variables that reinforce the influence of competence on job satisfaction and performance.

The practical implications of this study suggest that educational institutions should prioritize competency development alongside the creation of a supportive work environment, the enhancement of employee motivation, and readiness for digital transformation. Such efforts are essential to improve job satisfaction and employee performance in a sustainable manner. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted only within public junior high schools in a single region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may involve subjective bias from respondents. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the study to different sectors and regions. Further studies may also consider incorporating additional moderating variables or alternative research methods to deepen the understanding of factors influencing job satisfaction and employee performance.

FUNDING STATEMENT: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not - for - profit sectors.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The author declares no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT: During the preparation of this work the author(s) used ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Turnitin in order to enhance readability, check grammatical consistency, and evaluate textual similarity. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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