

# THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE AND COMPETENCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH DISCIPLINE AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY SERVICE OF NORTH SUMATERA PROVINCE

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership style and competence on employee performance through discipline at the Environment and Forestry Service of North Sumatra Province. The study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. The study population was 628 employees with a sample of 86 respondents determined using the Slovin formula with a simple random sampling technique. Data analysis was carried out using partial tests (t), simultaneous tests (F), and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The results showed that leadership style had a significant effect on employee performance by 51.9% and competence by 63.8% with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Simultaneously, leadership style and competence had an effect on employee performance by 71.8%, and on discipline by 69.9%. Together, leadership style, competence, and discipline had a significant effect on employee performance by 94.8%. These results indicate that discipline plays a mediating variable in improving employee performance. The better the leadership style and employee competency, the higher the level of employee discipline and performance at the North Sumatra Provincial Environment and Forestry Service.

**Keywords:** Competence, Discipline, Employee Performance, Leadership Style.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a crucial indicator in assessing an agency's success in implementing established programs and policies. It reflects not only the extent to which organizational targets are achieved, but also the quality, efficiency, and accountability of public service delivery. In the context of public administration, performance becomes a measurable outcome of how well human resources are managed and aligned with institutional goals. This perspective is consistent with Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, which emphasizes that civil servant performance assessment must be based on structured performance planning, measurable work results, and observable employee behavior in carrying out their duties.

Furthermore, employee performance is not a standalone construct but is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors within the organization. Among the most

influential factors are leadership style, employee competence, and work discipline, all of which interact dynamically. Leadership, in particular, plays a central role in setting direction, establishing expectations, and ensuring that organizational objectives are clearly communicated. A leader who is able to inspire, guide, and support employees will significantly contribute to improved performance outcomes.

In addition, competence is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving high levels of employee performance. Competence encompasses not only technical knowledge and skills but also problem-solving ability, adaptability, and professional attitudes. Employees with strong competence are better equipped to handle complex tasks, respond to organizational challenges, and deliver services effectively. Without adequate competence, even well-designed policies and programs may fail to achieve their intended outcomes due to weak implementation at the operational level.

Meanwhile, work discipline functions as a reinforcing factor that strengthens the relationship between leadership style and competence in shaping employee performance. Discipline ensures that employees adhere to organizational rules, maintain consistency in task execution, and demonstrate responsibility in their roles. A high level of discipline contributes to organizational stability and reliability, which are essential for sustained performance improvement. Therefore, the integration of effective leadership, strong competence, and disciplined work behavior becomes a critical foundation for enhancing employee performance in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

However, observations at the North Sumatra Provincial Environment and Forestry Service indicate several issues, such as suboptimal employee competence, and the persistence of employees who are late and do not adhere to work hours. Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze the influence of leadership style and competence on employee performance through discipline at the North Sumatra Provincial Environment and Forestry Service.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Leadership Style**

According to Sutrisno in (Sumiati, & Sumitra 2023), leadership is a style or attitude possessed by a leader that can influence subordinates to achieve common goals in an organization or group, as well as realize the organization's vision and mission through the implementation of established programs and traditions. Leadership is the process of influencing subordinates through appropriate communication and programs to achieve common goals and realize the vision, mission, and a productive work environment. According to Kartono (2020), indicators of leadership style include the following:

1. A leader's character greatly influences their leadership style, determining their success as a leader, and is determined by the leader's personal abilities.
2. Habits play a major role in leadership style, determining a leader's behavioral movements, reflecting all actions taken as a good leader.
3. Temperament is a leader's behavioral style and their distinctive way of responding and interacting with others. Some leaders are active, while others are calm.
4. A leader's subjective character can be a determinant of their superiority in influencing confidence (determination), persistence, endurance, and courage.
5. A leader's personality determines their success, which is determined by their personality traits/characteristics.

### **Competence**

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According to Alwi et al. (Wanda Azisa et al., 2024), competence can be defined as an individual's ability to complete specific tasks, supported by a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A person's ability to complete various tasks and responsibilities assigned to them is called competence. Indicators of work competence (Khaeruman et al., 2021) include:

1. Knowledge is the knowledge an employee possesses to carry out their duties and responsibilities according to their field or division.
2. Skills are the abilities every employee must possess to optimally carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned by the company.
3. Behavior (attitude) is the employee's behavioral patterns in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with company regulations.

### **Employee Performance**

According to Mangkunegara (in Ari Irsyad Perdana et al., 2023), performance is the quality and quantity of work results achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with their assigned responsibilities. This performance achievement is measured through various indicators such as timeliness, effective use of resources, and the ability to achieve specified targets. According to Robert L. Mathis and John H. Jackson (in Khaeruman et al., 2021), employee performance indicators are as follows:

1. Quantity is the amount produced, expressed in terms such as the number of activity cycles completed. Quantity is measured by employees in terms of the amount of work completed.
2. Quality is adherence to procedures, discipline, and dedication. The degree to which work results meet the expected objectives of an activity. Work quality is measured by employees in terms of the quality of work produced and the level of perfection of the work completion, reflecting the employee's skills and abilities.
3. Cooperation is the ability of an employee to work together with other employees to complete assigned work to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Discipline**

According to Maskur et al. (2022), work discipline is the employee's awareness and willingness to comply with all organizational/company regulations and applicable social norms. With work discipline, an individual is required to comply with all existing regulations within the company, which in turn supports the achievement of company goals. According to Siswanto (in Shohilin A, 2024), indicators of discipline include:

1. Attendance frequency is one measure of employee discipline. The higher the attendance frequency or the lower the absenteeism rate, the higher the employee's work discipline.
2. Employee Alertness Level: Employees must always be calculating and meticulous in carrying out their duties, demonstrating a high level of vigilance toward themselves and their work.
3. Compliance with Work Standards: In carrying out their work, employees are required to adhere to all established work standards, in accordance with work regulations and guidelines, to prevent or avoid workplace accidents.
4. Compliance with Work Regulations is intended to ensure a comfortable and smooth work environment. Work Ethics are required by every employee in carrying out their work to create a harmonious atmosphere and mutual respect among fellow employees.

5. Work Ethics are required by every employee in carrying out their work to create a harmonious atmosphere and mutual respect among fellow employees.

### C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach, namely a research method that utilizes numerical data to analyze phenomena and draw conclusions objectively. According to Sugiyono (2019:12), a research method is a scientific way to obtain data with specific objectives and uses that are empirical, objective, measurable, rational, and systematic. This study aims to determine the effect of Leadership Style (X1) and Competence (X2) on Employee Performance (Y) through Discipline (Z) as an intervening variable at the Environmental and Forestry Service of North Sumatra Province. The population in this study were all employees at the Environmental and Forestry Service of North Sumatra Province, totaling 628 people. Referring to Sugiyono (2019), a population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain characteristics to be studied and then conclusions drawn. The research sample was determined using the Slovin formula, which is used to determine sample size based on a certain error rate (Sugiyono, 2017). With a 10% error rate and a population of 628 people, the calculation result is  $n = 628 / (1 + 628 \times 0.01) = 86.2$  which is then rounded to 86 respondents. Thus, the number of samples in this study was determined at 86 people with a sampling technique using simple random sampling.

The analytical model used in this study is path analysis, which aims to determine the direct and indirect relationship between the independent variables, namely Leadership Style and Competence, to the dependent variable, namely Employee Performance through the intervening variable, Discipline. Before conducting the path analysis, the data were first tested for validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy of the research instrument. Next, classical assumption tests were carried out, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Testing the relationship between variables was carried out through multiple linear regression analysis, t-test for partial testing, f-test for simultaneous testing, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to determine the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variables in explaining the dependent variable.

### D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data processing on 86 respondents at the Environment and Forestry Service of North Sumatra Province, the demographic composition reveals a clear dominance of male respondents, totaling 50 individuals (58.1%), compared to 36 female respondents (41.9%). In terms of age distribution, the sample is largely concentrated within the productive age range, particularly the 36–45 year group, which accounts for 40 respondents (46.5%). This is followed by those aged 46–60 years with 26 respondents (30.2%), and the 25–35 year group with 20 respondents (23.3%). This distribution suggests that the workforce is largely composed of individuals in their prime working years, indicating a potentially stable and experienced organizational structure that may positively influence performance and institutional capacity

From an educational perspective, the majority of respondents hold a bachelor's degree, totaling 44 individuals (51.2%), followed by those with a master's degree at 19 individuals (22.1%). Meanwhile, 11 respondents (12.8%) have a high school background, and both junior

high school and diploma graduates account for 6 individuals each (7.0%). In terms of work experience, most respondents have between 6–10 years of experience (43 individuals or 50.0%), followed by 36 respondents (41.9%) with 11–15 years of experience, and a smaller portion of 7 respondents (8.1%) with 1–5 years of experience. Overall, this composition reflects a workforce characterized by relatively high educational attainment and substantial work experience, suggesting a mature human resource profile that is likely to support organizational effectiveness and service performance.

## Validity Test

Table 1.1 Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	R Hitung (Pearson Correlation)	R Table	Information
Leadership Style (X1)	X1.1	0,497	0,212	Valid
	X1.2	0,440	0,212	Valid
	X1.3	0,482	0,212	Valid
	X1.4	0,390	0,212	Valid
	X1.5	0,525	0,212	Valid
	X1.6	0,430	0,212	Valid
	X1.7	0,457	0,212	Valid
	X1.8	0,543	0,212	Valid
	X1.9	0,491	0,212	Valid
	X1.10	0,316	0,212	Valid
	X1.11	0,494	0,212	Valid
	X1.12	0,272	0,212	Valid
	X1.13	0,474	0,212	Valid
	X1.14	0,308	0,212	Valid
	X1.15	0,275	0,212	Valid
	X1.16	0,375	0,212	Valid
	X1.17	0,353	0,212	Valid
	X1.18	0,222	0,212	Valid
	X1.19	0,454	0,212	Valid
	X1.20	0,376	0,212	Valid
Leadership Style (X2)	X2.1	0,464	0,212	Valid
	X2.2	0,572	0,212	Valid
	X2.3	0,514	0,212	Valid
	X2.4	0,505	0,212	Valid
	X2.5	0,462	0,212	Valid
	X2.6	0,411	0,212	Valid
	X2.7	0,619	0,212	Valid
	X2.8	0,446	0,212	Valid
	X2.9	0,663	0,212	Valid

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Competence (X2)	X2.10	0,232	0,212	Valid	
	X2.11	0,370	0,212	Valid	
	X2.12	0,339	0,212	Valid	
	X2.13	0,273	0,212	Valid	
	X2.14	0,518	0,212	Valid	
	X2.15	0,271	0,212	Valid	
	X2.16	0,770	0,212	Valid	
	X2.17	0,433	0,212	Valid	
	X2.18	0,228	0,212	Valid	
	X2.19	0,478	0,212	Valid	
	X2.20	0,217	0,212	Valid	
	Employee Performance (Y)	Y.1	0,472	0,212	Valid
		Y.2	0,502	0,212	Valid
		Y.3	0,556	0,212	Valid
		Y.4	0,241	0,212	Valid
		Y.5	0,688	0,212	Valid
		Y.6	0,513	0,212	Valid
		Y.7	0,537	0,212	Valid
		Y.8	0,515	0,212	Valid
		Y.9	0,363	0,212	Valid
Y.10		0,240	0,212	Valid	
Y.11		0,230	0,212	Valid	
Y.12		0,240	0,212	Valid	
Y.13		0,535	0,212	Valid	
Y.14		0,474	0,212	Valid	
Y.15		0,649	0,212	Valid	
Y.16		0,621	0,212	Valid	
Y.17		0,648	0,212	Valid	
Y.18		0,454	0,212	Valid	
Y.19		0,346	0,212	Valid	
Y.20		0,478	0,212	Valid	
Discipline (Z)	Z.1	0,684	0,212	Valid	
	Z.2	0,635	0,212	Valid	
	Z.3	0,436	0,212	Valid	
	Z.4	0,539	0,212	Valid	
	Z.5	0,512	0,212	Valid	
	Z.6	0,557	0,212	Valid	
	Z.7	0,548	0,212	Valid	
	Z.8	0,472	0,212	Valid	
	Z.9	0,607	0,212	Valid	
	Z.10	0,425	0,212	Valid	
	Z.11	0,430	0,212	Valid	
	Z.12	0,432	0,212	Valid	

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Z.13	0,545	0,212	Valid
Z.14	0,443	0,212	Valid
Z.15	0,395	0,212	Valid
Z.16	0,456	0,212	Valid
Z.17	0,454	0,212	Valid
Z.18	0,366	0,212	Valid
Z.19	0,261	0,212	Valid
Z.20	0,335	0,212	Valid

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

The results of the data validity test using IBM SPSS Statistics 25, obtained that all statement items on the Leadership Style variable (X1), starting from X1.1 to X1.20; Competence variable (X2), starting from X2.1 to X2.20; Employee Performance variable (Y), starting from Y.1 to Y.20; Discipline variable (Z), starting from Z.1 to Z.15 were declared valid because all calculated r values were greater than r table (0.212). This shows that each statement item has met the eligibility requirements as a measuring tool in this study.

### Reliability Test

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Leadership Style (X1)	0,703	20
Competence (X2)	0,769	20
Employee Performance (Y)	0,790	20
Discipline (Z)	0,803	20

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the reliability test, it shows that all variables in this study are reliable because Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.60, so the results of this study indicate that the measurement tool in this study has met the reliability test or the data produced is reliable.

### Normality Test

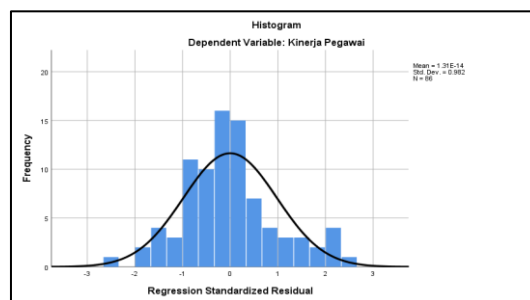


Figure 1. Histogram

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the image above, the data is normally distributed because the histogram bars follow a normal curve (bell curve). The distribution shows a symmetrical pattern without skewing to the left or right, with a peak in the middle and a frequency that decreases evenly to both sides.

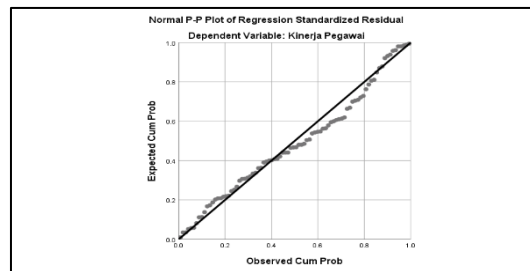


Figure 2. Normal P-P Plot

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed. This is evident from the data points being very close together and consistently following the diagonal line from the bottom left to the top right, making the regression model suitable for further analysis.

Table 3. Results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		86
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.88764643
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.067
	Positive	.067
	Negative	-.045
Test Statistic		.067
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal. b. Calculated from data. c. Lilliefors Significance Correction. d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test on 86 samples, the Asymp. Sig. value was 0.200 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that the data were normally distributed. This is supported by a Test Statistic of 0.067, a mean of 0.0000000, and a standard deviation of 2.88764643, thus meeting the normality assumption and allowing further analysis.

### Multicollinearity Test

Table 4 Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					Collinearity Statistics Tolerance VIF
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			

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1	(Constant)	-1.002	2.430			-.412	.681
	Leadership Style	.154	.033	.160	4.712	.000	.549 1.823
	Competence	-.015	.042	-.015	-.345	.731	.318 3.143
	Discipline	.870	.046	.875	19.080	.000	.301 3.322

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

The results of the multicollinearity test indicate that all variables are free from multicollinearity. Leadership Style (tolerance 0.549; VIF 1.823), Competence (0.318; 3.143), and Discipline (0.301; 3.322) meet the criteria ( $>0.10$  and  $<10$ ), so it can be concluded that the regression model is free from multicollinearity problems and is suitable for further statistical analysis.

**Heteroscedasticity Test**

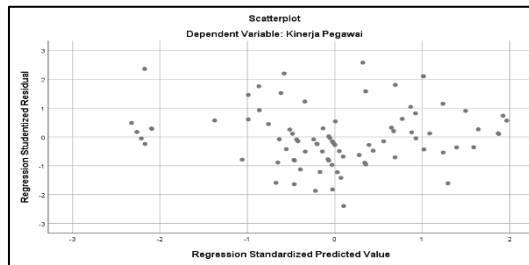


Figure 3. Scatterplot

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variabel	Sig	Keterangan
Leadership Style	0,519	There is no heteroscedasticity
Competence	0,564	There is no heteroscedasticity
Discipline	0,396	There is no heteroscedasticity

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

The Glejser test results indicate that all variables are free from heteroscedasticity. Leadership Style (0.519), Competence (0.564), and Discipline (0.396) have a significance  $>0.05$ , so the residual variance is constant and the model meets the regression assumptions and is reliable for further statistical analysis.

**Test t (Parsial)**

Table 6 Results of T-Test Hypothesis 1

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			
		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	t Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	29.678	6.279		4.726 .000
	Leadership Style	.693	.073	.720	9.520 .000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the t-test, the calculated t-value of Leadership Style was  $9.520 > t\text{-table } 1.989$  with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that Leadership Style has a significant effect on Employee Performance, so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

Table 7 Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 2

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.718	5.649		3.667	.000
	Competence	.756	.062	.799	12.169	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the t-test, the calculated t-value for the Competence variable was  $12.169 > t\text{-table } 1.989$  with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that the Competence variable has a significant effect on Employee Performance, so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

Table 8. Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 3

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.202	5.467		1.866	.066
	Leadership Style	.349	.072	.362	4.845	.000
	Competence	.541	.071	.572	7.649	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the t-test, the Leadership Style variable has a calculated t of  $4.845 > t\text{ table } 1.989$  with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , and the Competence variable has a calculated t of  $7.649 > t\text{ table } 1.989$  with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Both independent variables are proven to have a significant effect on Employee Performance partially, so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

### Test F (Simultan)

Table 9. Results of the F-Test for Hypothesis 4

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1645.611	2	822.806	96.354	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	708.773	83	8.539		
	Total	2354.384	85			

a. Dependent Variable: Dicipline

b. Predictors: (Constant), Competence, Leadership Style

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the F test, the calculated F value was  $96.354 > F\text{ table}$  with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that the variables of Leadership Style and

Competence simultaneously have a significant effect on Discipline, so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

Table 10. Results of the F-Test for Hypothesis 5

		ANOVA <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2206.503	3	735.501	499.604	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	120.718	82	1.472		
	Total	2327.221	85			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Discipline, Leadership Style, Competence

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

Based on the results of the F test, the calculated F value was  $499.604 > F$  table with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that the variables of Leadership Style, Competence, and Discipline simultaneously have a significant effect on Employee Performance, so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

### Coefficient of Determination Test $R^2$

The  $R^2$  value of 0.699 shows that Leadership Style and Competence simultaneously influence Discipline by 69.9%, while 30.1% is influenced by other variables outside the research.

### Path Analysis Test (*Path Analysis*)

Table 11 Results of Path Analysis Test Coefficients

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.002	2.430		-.412	.681
	Leadership Style	.154	.033	.160	4.712	.000
	Competence	-.015	.042	-.015	-.345	.731
	Discipline	.870	.046	.875	19.080	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25 Year 2025

As seen in the table above, the beta value for the leadership style variable is 0.160, the competency variable is 0.015, and the discipline variable is 0.875. The EL value can be calculated using the following formula:

$$el = \sqrt{1 - R \text{ Square}} = \sqrt{1 - 0,948} = 0,228$$

$$Z = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 Z + \varepsilon_2$$

$$Z = 0,265 + 0,373 + 0,228 + 0,948$$

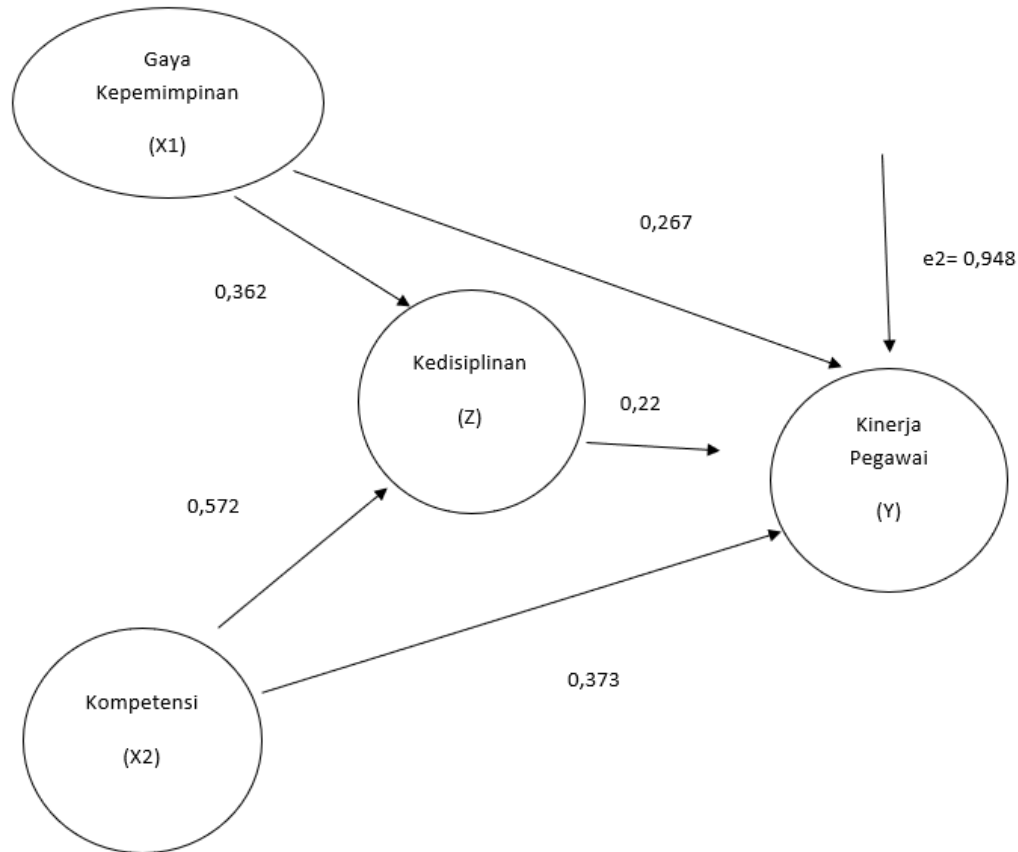


Figure 4. Equation Diagram

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results Version 25, 2025

## E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, leadership style has an influence of 0.519 (51.9%) on employee performance in the medium category. This indicates that more than half of the variation in employee performance can be explained by leadership factors, especially those related to the nature, habits, temperament, character, and personality of the leader. The better the quality of leadership demonstrated, the higher the resulting employee performance. In addition, competence has an influence of 0.638 (63.8%) on employee performance in the strong category, which indicates that knowledge, skills, and work abilities are dominant factors in determining work results. Increasing employee competence will directly impact the improvement of more optimal performance quality.

Simultaneously, leadership style and competence have a 0.718 (71.8%) influence on employee performance in the strong category. This finding indicates that the combination of effective leadership and adequate competence can create significant performance improvements. In addition, these two variables also have a 0.699 (69.9%) influence on employee discipline, which means that leadership quality and competence level also determine the level of employee compliance, responsibility, and consistency in carrying out their duties.

This confirms that work discipline is not only formed by organizational rules, but is also influenced by leadership factors and individual abilities.

Furthermore, the influence of leadership style and competence on employee performance through discipline reached a value of 0.948 (94.8%) in the very strong category. This figure indicates that almost all variations in employee performance can be explained by the integration of these three variables. In other words, effective leadership, high competence, and good work discipline are a key combination in optimizing employee performance. This finding emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to human resource management, where performance improvement does not depend solely on a single factor, but on the synergy between leadership, competence, and discipline in a sustainable manner.

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