RESEARCH ARTICLE

The influence of competence on work engagement through the mediation of self-efficacy (A study on Muslim teachers)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of competency on work engagement, with self-efficacy serving as a mediating variable, among Muslim teachers in Tanjung Morawa. The study's population comprised 230 teachers. A total sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample size of 230 individuals. The research adopted a quantitative methodology, utilizing the Competency Scale, Work Engagement Scale, and Self-Efficacy Mediation Scale as measurement instruments. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression tests. The findings of this study indicate that self-efficacy (Z) significantly mediates the relationship between competency and work engagement. These results underscore the importance of competency and self-efficacy in enhancing teachers' work engagement. Therefore, efforts to improve teachers' competency and self-efficacy can be considered effective strategies for increasing work engagement. The implications of this study also provide training programs and interventions that are more focused on enhancing competency and self-efficacy in the workplace context.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources that are superior, resilient, and of good quality both physically and mentally will positively impact the nation's competitiveness and self-reliance and support national development. Schools, as organizations, must be able to inspire and provide opportunities for teachers to apply their abilities optimally to their work. Schools require teachers who have work engagement with their jobs. Many studies have been conducted on work engagement, but there still needs to be a consistent and universal definition of work engagement to date. Researchers also vary; some use terms like job involvement or employee engagement in operationalizing and measuring it differently.

Work engagement relates to positively active work, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor refers to a high level of energy and mental resilience while working. In contrast, dedication pertains to someone highly involved in their work experiencing a sense of significance,

enthusiasm, and challenge. Absorption is marked by being fully concentrated and happy at work, where time passes quickly (Pranitasari et al., 2019). Human resource factors have a significant influence on achieving work engagement. If teachers' work engagement is optimal, it will substantially contribute to the school.

Teachers play a crucial role in the educational process. The first role of a teacher is to serve as a good example both within and outside the educational institution. Secondly, teachers in educational institutions function as organizational assets and the primary foundation of the organization. Therefore, the work engagement of a teacher becomes a significant concern in an educational institution. An educational institution that aims to endure and compete with its counterparts must have competent and high-quality teachers. A quality foundation will naturally earn high trust from stakeholders.

Teachers must possess knowledge in educating their students. Teachers should also demonstrate competencies, including knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that enable their students to fulfill their roles and responsibilities (Sedarmayanti, 2017). Satria and Aprini (2023) discovered that teacher work engagement still needs to be improved. Saimar, et al. (2022) also identified numerous errors in work and suboptimal employee work engagement. Subsequently, Sururama (2019) explained the insufficiency of educational qualifications and the discrepancies in lecturer status that do not align with competency standards, thereby affecting lecturer performance.

Engaged teachers will find their work meaningful. They will demonstrate improved performance, positively evaluate their functions or tasks, and experience increased satisfaction levels (Orgambídez et al., 2017). Tanurezal and Tumanggor (2020) affirm that work engagement is a force that motivates employees to enhance their performance. This force is reflected in their pride in their work, commitment to the company or organization, dedication to their tasks, and increased efforts such as time, enthusiasm, and involvement.

Bakker (2016) identifies self-efficacy as a contributing factor to work engagement. Personal resources entail a positive self-evaluation relating to an individual's resilience and capacity to exert control while benefiting their environment positively. Higher personal resources lead individuals to value themselves more and strive to achieve self-set goals (self-concordance) (Bakker, 2016).

One of the influencing factors in work engagement is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to how individuals estimate their abilities to perform tasks or activities required to achieve a certain outcome. This belief in one's abilities includes confidence, adaptability, cognitive capacity, intelligence, and the ability to act in high-pressure situations. Self-efficacy is accurately recognizing, accepting, and being accountable for all potential skills or expertise.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to complete their work. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy determines how individuals perceive themselves and motivate their behaviors and thoughts. Self-efficacy is closely related to employee performance. Teachers with high self-efficacy do their best and avoid work frustration, which can lead to decreased productivity. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to face challenges at work confidently, seeing them as opportunities.

Furthermore, in a school environment, each teacher has varying levels of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is characterized by three dimensions: level, an individual's belief regarding their ability, and difficulty and challenges in a task. An individual's belief in succeeding in a task can typically be measured through the task demands representing varying difficulty levels and challenges or obstacles that can hinder success. If there are no obstacles in a task, it will be easy to accomplish, resulting in high levels of self-efficacy among individuals. Consequently, as tasks become more difficult, an individual's self-

efficacy level tends to decrease according to the task's difficulty level. The second dimension, (b) generality, is the individual's confidence in performing various tasks of varied nature. The third dimension, (c) strength, is the individual's belief in their ability to carry out tasks.

Tyas and Nurhasanah (2020) suggest that work engagement is influenced by competence. Highly competent Employees are likely to fully engage cognitively and emotionally (Irmawati & Wulandari, 2017). According to Sajuthi et al. (2020), work engagement or job involvement is a state of positive and satisfying work-related thoughts characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Employees with this competence are anticipated to trigger an increase in work engagement and contribute to the company's success. Utami and Sukmawati (2018) studied employees with competence and skills, enhancing work engagement. Furthermore, it is explained that having personal resources helps employees effectively avoid negative behaviors due to work demands.

Teachers lacking competence and experience can affect their beliefs in their abilities, often called self-efficacy. Some teachers still need to feel more confident about their abilities despite receiving training and seminars. Some teachers with low self-efficacy doubt their capability to teach in their designated field.

Previous research indicates a connection between work engagement and self-efficacy. This is elucidated in a study by Tanurezal and Tumanggor (cited in Simbula et al., 2020) examining the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement with Italian teachers as subjects. This article aims to test the influence of competence on work engagement mediated by self-efficacy.

METHOD

The research type employed a survey approach, with the research variables comprising the dependent variable being Self-Efficacy Mediation (Z), while the independent variables were Competence (X) and Work Engagement (Y). The operational definition of the research variables, research subjects, data collection methods, validity and reliability of measurement instruments, and data analysis methods were identified. Population refers to the number of objects or subjects possessing specific characteristics and qualities determined by the researcher for investigation and subsequent inference drawing (Sugiyono, 2017). This study selected a sample size of 230 using a total sampling technique.

The data collection method employed instruments such as scales. According to Azwar (2015), a psychological scale is a measurement tool used to assess aspects or attributes of psychological samples through behavioral indicators translated into item questions or statements. Data required for this research was obtained through three scale instruments: Teacher Competence, Work Engagement, and Self-Efficacy Mediation. The teacher competence scale was developed according to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16/2007, concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competence, indicating four teacher competence indicators: professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, and personality competence. Rahmadani (2020) developed the work engagement scale based on aspects outlined by Schaufeli and Bakker (2016): vigor, dedication, and absorption. Meanwhile, the self-efficacy scale refers to an instrument developed by Aslamiyah (2019) based on Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy aspects, including task difficulty level, breadth of tasks or behaviors (generality), and the strength level or stability of someone's beliefs. All three scales utilize a five-alternative answer format with a scoring range from 1 to 5, ranging from NS (Not Suitable at All) to VS (Very Suitable).

Data analysis techniques included validity and reliability tests, descriptive analysis, and inferential analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) or a structural equation model with the assistance of the PLS 3.29 program.

RESULT

The testing instrument is a crucial component of research. Research findings will likely be valid and trustworthy because valid and reliable instruments are used to collect data. The absolute necessity of producing valid and reliable research will thus be determined by instruments evaluated for validity and reliability.

Convergent validity is a part of the measurement model in Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), typically called the outer model. In contrast, covariance-based SEM is known as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). There are two criteria for assessing whether the outer model meets the requirements of convergent validity for reflective constructs, namely (1) loadings should be above 0.7 and (2) the p-value should be significant (<0.05) (Hair et al. cited in Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). However, in some cases, the criterion of loadings above 0.7 is often unmet, especially for newly developed questionnaires. Therefore, loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should still be considered for retention (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). Indicators with loadings below 0.40 should be removed from the model. However, for indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70, it is advisable to analyze the impact of removing them on Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability. Indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 can be removed if they can improve AVE and composite reliability above the thresholds (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). The threshold values are 0.50 for AVE and 0.7 for composite reliability. Another consideration when removing indicators is their impact on the content validity of the construct. Indicators with low loadings may sometimes be retained because they contribute to the content validity of the construct (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013).

Table 1. Validity test based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

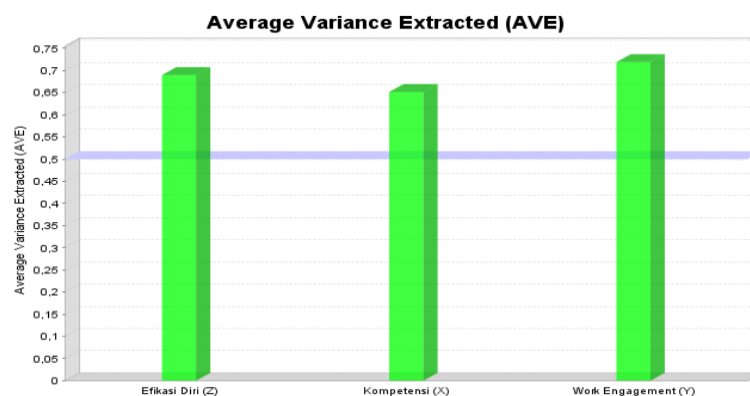|	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Self-efficacy (Z)	0.690
Competence (X)	0.651
Work engagement (Y)	0.719

Figure 1. Validity test based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The recommended AVE value is above 0.5 (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). It is known that all AVE values are greater than 0.5, indicating that they meet the validity requirement based on AVE. Subsequently, reliability testing is conducted based on the composite reliability (CR) values.

Table 2. Reliability test based on Composite Reliability (CR)

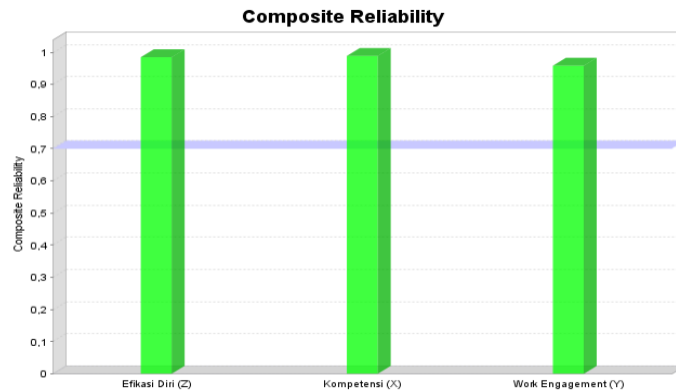|	Composite Reliability
Self-efficacy (Z)	0.985
Competence (X)	0.988
Work engagement (Y)	0.958

Figure 2. Reliability test based on Composite Reliability (CR)

The recommended CR value is above 0.7 (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). It is known that all CR values exceed 0.7, which indicates that they meet the reliability requirement based on CR. Further reliability testing is conducted based on Cronbach's alpha (CA) values.

Table 3. Reliability test based on Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

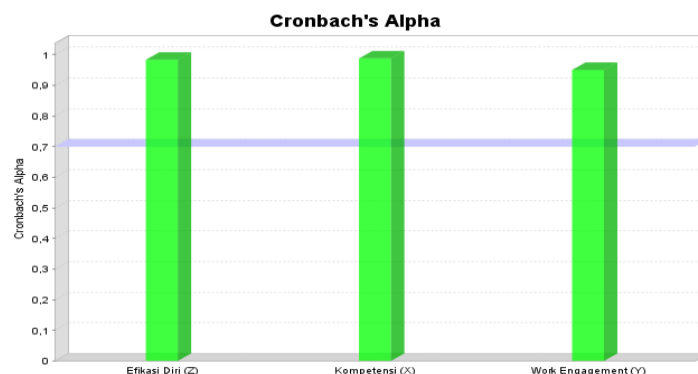|	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy (Z)	0.984
Competence (X)	0.988
Work engagement (Y)	0.951

Figure 3. Reliability test based on Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

The recommended cut-off value for Cronbach's alpha is above 0.7 (Mahfud & Ratmono, 2013). It is noted that all Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7, indicating satisfaction with reliability criteria

based on Cronbach's alpha. Subsequently, discriminant validity testing is carried out using the Fornell-Larcker approach. The results of the discriminant validity testing are presented in a table.

Table 4. Discriminant validity test: Fornell dan Larcker

	Self-efficacy (Z)	Competence (X)	Work engagement (Y)
Self-efficacy (Z)	(0.830)		
Competence (X)	0.633	(0.807)	
Work engagement (Y)	0.739	0.697	(0.848)

In the discriminant validity testing, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of a latent variable is compared to the correlation value between that latent variable and another latent variable. The square root of the AVE value for each latent variable is observed to be greater than the correlation value between that latent variable and another latent variable. Therefore, it is concluded that the criteria for discriminant validity have been met.

Table 5. Discriminant validity testing: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

	Self-efficacy (Z)	Competence (X)	Work engagement (Y)
Self-efficacy (Z)			
Competence (X)	0.635		
Work engagement (Y)	0.758	0.716	

Based on the discriminant validity testing results using the HTMT approach, it is found that all values are < 0.9, indicating that it can be concluded that the discriminant validity criteria have been met based on the HTMT approach.

Table 6. Path coefficient test and significance of direct influence

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Self-efficacy (Z) -> Work engagement (Y)	0.496	0.489	0.108	4.601	< 0.01
Competence (X)-> Self-efficacy (Z)	0.633	0.629	0.072	8.808	< 0.01
Competence (X) -> Work engagement (Y)	0.384	0.392	0.102	3.769	< 0.01

Based on the results presented in Table 6, it is evident that self-efficacy (Z) has a positive effect on work engagement (Y), as indicated by a path coefficient (Original Sample column) of 0.496, which is significant with T-Statistics of 4.601 > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.001. Competence (X) positively influences self-efficacy (Z), with a path coefficient (Original Sample column) of 0.633, and is significant with T-Statistics of 8.808 > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.001. Moreover, competence (X) positively affects work engagement (Y), with a path coefficient (Original Sample column) of 0.384 and significant T-Statistics of 3.769 > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.001.

Table 7. R-Square

	R Square
Self-efficacy (Z)	0.400
Work engagement (Y)	0.634

Table 8. Goodness of Fit Model test

	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.060

It is known that the R-Square value for self-efficacy (Z) is 0.400, indicating that competence (X) can explain or influence self-efficacy (Z) by 40%. The R-Square value for work engagement (Y) is 0.634, suggesting that competence (X) and self-efficacy (Z) can explain or influence work engagement (Y) by 63.4%. Based on the goodness of fit test results, specifically the SRMR, where the SRMR value is 0.060, which is less than 0.1, it can be concluded that the model is a good fit.

Table 9. Mediation test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	p
Competence (X) -> Self-efficacy (Z) -> *Work engagement* (Y)	0.314	0.304	0.063	5,013	< 0.01

Based on the results of the mediation testing presented in the table above, Self-Efficacy (Z) significantly mediates the relationship between competency (X) and work engagement (Y), with P-Values < 0.01.

Table 10. Mean and standard deviation of work engagement

	Hypothetical	Empirical
Mean	31.5	30.03478261
SD	4.5	4.413022481

Table 11. Competence score based on raters

	Rater					
	Principal		Teacher themselves		Students	
	Hypothetical	Empirical	Hypothetical	Empirical	Hypothetical	Empirical
Mean	162	155.5	159.5	154.0391304	100	100.1434783
SD	15	17.88384404	16.83333333	19.26154708	6.666666667	8.239924433

Table 12. Categorization of work engagement score *(n = 230)*

Level	n (%)
Low	46 (20.0%)
Average	164 (71.3%)
High	20 (8.7%)

Based on the categorization of work engagement, it was found that there were 46 respondents (20%) with low work engagement, 164 respondents (71.30%) with moderate work engagement, and 20 respondents (8.7%) with high work engagement.

Table 13. Categorization of competence score based on raters *(n = 230)*

Level	Rater	
	Principal	Teacher themselves
Low	74 (32.17%)	85 (36.96%)
Average	129 (56.09%)	116 (50.43%)
High	27 (11.74%)	29 (12.61%)

Based on the categorization of principal competencies, it was found that 74 respondents (32.17%) demonstrated low competency levels, 129 respondents (56.09%) exhibited moderate competency levels, and 27 respondents (11.74%) displayed high competency levels. Competent principals consistently exhibit orderly thought processes and behaviors, enabling them to make sound judgments in the school's management.

Based on the categorization of teachers' competencies, it was found that 85 teachers (36.96%) have low competency, 116 teachers (50.43%) have medium competency, and 29 teachers (12.61%) have high competency. These teachers possess knowledge in educating their students and also exhibit competencies such as knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that enable their students to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. Teachers instruct according to the appropriate competencies and standards, which helps prevent them from experiencing difficulties or feeling overwhelmed and allows them to use their time efficiently by teaching subjects aligned with their expertise. This alignment fosters enthusiasm and accountability among teachers in their educational roles.

Table 14. Categorization of self-efficacy *(n = 230)*

Level	n (%)
Low	51 (22.17%)
Average	124 (53.91%)
High	55 (23.91%)

Based on the categorization of self-efficacy, it was found that 51 individuals (22.17%) exhibited low self-efficacy, 124 individuals (53.91%) exhibited moderate self-efficacy, and 55 individuals (23.91%) exhibited high self-efficacy.

Teachers who are competent and exhibit high quality in their work within the foundation are highly regarded by stakeholders. This behavior reflects that teachers who possess the necessary competencies in performing their duties as individuals have confidence in their ability to work effectively. The teachers within the foundation are confident in their abilities and have received training and attended seminars. Teachers with high self-efficacy are confident in teaching the designated subjects.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the influence of competence on work engagement, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The findings indicate a direct and positive effect of competence on work engagement. These results are supported by the study conducted by Wardani and Fatimah (2020), which found a positive relationship between intellectual competence and work engagement. Their research demonstrated that intellectual competence is significantly associated with work engagement, suggesting that workers with high intellectual abilities exhibit greater enthusiasm and pride in their work. Additionally, this study is substantiated by the findings of Saimar et al. (2022), who identified a positive and significant effect of competence on work engagement and further highlighted that competence, workload, and job stress collectively impact employee engagement (Idawani et al., 2018).

According to previous research by Anggraini et al. (2020), which identified a positive effect of high competence levels—including intellectual, individual, and social competencies—on self-efficacy, it was observed that individuals with higher competence tend to have enhanced analytical thinking, self-control, self-confidence, and commitment to their tasks, leading to increased self-efficacy. This conclusion is further supported by the research of Nurmalia and Setiyaningsih (2020), whose findings indicate that competence directly influences self-efficacy.

The findings of the influence of self-efficacy on work engagement through self-efficacy are corroborated by the study conducted by Xanthopoulou et al. (2013), which found that individuals with high self-efficacy engage in various necessary efforts to achieve work goals and are persistent in facing difficulties. Consequently, high job self-efficacy enhances work engagement and facilitates the

attainment of goals. This aligns with research conducted by Ardi, et al. (2017), which demonstrated a significant influence of self-efficacy on work engagement. Further studies by Safariningsih et al. (2022) also indicated that self-efficacy positively and significantly affects work engagement.

Based on the current findings and previous research, it can be concluded that good self-efficacy is characterized by confidence in one's ability to overcome obstacles encountered in tasks of varying complexity, utilizing life experiences as steps toward achieving success. Moreover, a strong personal commitment to completing tasks effectively is facilitated by robust self-efficacy. This strong self-efficacy in tasks and responsibilities leads to enhanced work engagement.

The findings regarding the influence of teacher competence on work engagement through self-efficacy are supported by the study conducted by Wardani and Fatimah (2020), which identified a positive correlation between intellectual competence and work engagement. Their research demonstrated that intellectual competence is related to work engagement, indicating that workers with high intellectual ability exhibit greater enthusiasm and pride in their work. This research is further reinforced by Saimar et al. (2022), who found that competence positively and significantly influences work engagement. Additionally, competence, workload, and work stress were found to impact employee engagement, according to Idawani et al. (2018).

Research conducted by Wardani and Fatimah (2020) aligns with previous studies and highlights that intellectual competence has the most significant relationship with work engagement, particularly in the dimension of vigor. The correlation between intellectual competence and vigor demonstrates that employees with high intellectual capabilities exhibit higher vigor. This is characterized by a strong willingness to strive, high energy levels, resilience, persistence, and determination in dealing with challenges.

Subsequent research by Safariningsih et al. (2022) indicates that self-efficacy positively influences work engagement. Building on this, the study by Tyas and Nurhasanah (2020) shows the impact of employee competence (X2) on employee engagement (Y) through self-efficacy (Z). The development of strong self-efficacy as a mediator enhances competence, which in turn positively affects work engagement. Therefore, good competence will increase work engagement, with self-efficacy acting simultaneously as a significant mediating variable.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that competence positively influences work engagement and self-efficacy. Additionally, it was found that self-efficacy positively impacts work engagement and significantly mediates the relationship between competence and work engagement. Consequently, these findings affirm the importance of competence in enhancing work engagement through the mediating role of self-efficacy. However, this study has certain limitations, such as a sample size that may not fully represent the entire population and measurement methods that might not capture all aspects of the variables studied. The implications of these findings for the field of psychology include advancing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing work engagement, supporting the development of training programs that emphasize enhancing competence and self-efficacy, and providing a foundation for further research to explore other variables that may holistically affect work engagement.

DECLARATION

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