

The Moral Disengagement to Mediate the Relationship between External Control and Production Deviance among Public Employees

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Abstract. Many public employees performed work productivity deviance openly. Discipline and supervision are considered as effective ways to overcome unproductive behavior. However, the moral aspect is essential to influence work productivity deviance. This study aims to determine the effect of external control on moral engagement work and productivity deviation as a moderator variable. The research subjects were 214 public employees in Malang city, Indonesia (aged 21-55 years old). The instruments of data collection are Marketing Jobs and Management Control, Civic Moral Disengagement Scale, and Workplace Deviance Behavior Scales. The data were analyzed using SEM analysis. The results showed that moral engagement served as a moderator variable in the relationship between external control and work productivity deviation. The role of counseling is also discussed in the study. Many public employees performed work productivity deviance openly.

Keyword: *external control, moral engagement, productivity, work productivity deviance, employee.*

INTRODUCTION

Work productivity deviations performed by employees could be found easily, both in private and public institutions. The deviation is in the form of coming late for work, returning from work early, procrastinating a task, and leaving work during working hours. Their behavior undeniably affects the productivity and efficiency of the organization. Research conducted by Caroline [1] shows that tardiness hurts the productivity of individuals and organizations.

Employees of public agencies who commit to work deviations are categorized as breaking the norms and conditions of the organization. In various studies, this behavior directly harms the work efficiency of the organization and its members [2] – [4]. Some employees are professionally required to work well, but the desire or intention to commit deviant behavior is not easily abandoned. Research conducted by Hosbay [5] on 63 bank employees in Karaman showed that production deviance (including laziness and

absenteeism) was also carried out by managers through power abuse.

Surprisingly, the phenomena of supervisors and coworkers allowing the staffs to do behavior deviations were found in many public institutions. Specifically in public institutions, the loose regulations and lack of discipline make many employees exhibit deviations and ignore the regulations. Employees who violate only get a verbal warning and soft penalties which are unlikely to change their behavior. These phenomena show that public employees have a lack of work ethic, discipline, value-added, and tend to be corruptive [6].

Deviant behavior is considered as a reasonable action by many public employees; therefore, many of them do that unfavored action. As a result, employees tend to ignore each other's responsibilities in working place. Discipline needs to be developed in an organization to control deviant behavior in the workplace. The application of the discipline should involve the organization's system as a whole and apply it to individuals as the members of the organization [7]. The discipline system usually applies culturally and is embedded in the organization on an ongoing basis.

In many organizations, especially those that do not set organizational discipline well, employees usually perform and develop deviant behavior. Production deviance can cause delays in the workplace, such as work delay, absenteeism, poor work quality, information misuse, and not informing employers when they make mistakes [8]. Robinson & Bennett [2] explained that there are four typology of workplace deviance, namely production deviance (e.g. coming to work late or leaving work early), deviance property (e.g. misusing the equipment belonging to the organization), political deviance (such as blaming other employees for their own mistakes), and personal aggression (e.g. verbal abuse or sexual abuse). These four types can develop differently, depending on the conditions of the organization.

Stewart, Bing, Davison, Woehr, & McIntyre [9] conducted a study of the typology of workplace deviance model associated with employee's behavior. The results indicate that the employee's deviant behavior is positively related to production deviance, property deviance, and personal aggression directed to coworkers or supervisors. Research by Sunday & Akikibofori [10] revealed that work deviations could

occur openly. In Nigerian universities, the most deviant behaviors were in the form of leaving work early, arriving late to work, misusing the company's property, using personal stationery, and verbal abuse.

The phenomenon of unproductive behavior among Indonesian government employees includes arriving late to work, leaving work early, using organizational facilities for personal purposes, and often leaving the office during working hours. Some public institutions begin to be aware that handling those kinds of deviant behaviors in the workplace is important because it relates to the overall cost of the organization. During this time, the organization has made improvements on the deviant behavior among the public employees. However, the results did not stand as expected. Deviations in the workplace indirectly affect the interaction among each unit of human resources, which results in organizational failure [11].

External Control and Deviant Behavior

External control in an organization such as rules, norms, disciplinary systems, and supervision are expected to minimize deviant behavior in the workplace. Workplace deviance occurs because of the loose regulations, non-strict disciplinary systems, lack of employees supervision, and friends' influence which makes employees can easily do deviations in the workplace.

Research by Muafi [12] on 101 operational staff of the manufacturing industry SIER (Surabaya Industrial Estate Rungkut) Indonesia, showed that deviant behavior in the workplace affected on individual performance, therefore managers played an important role in minimizing deviant employee behavior. Research on managers in the Malaysian Ministry provides clarity that leadership control can prevent deviant behavior in the workplace [13]).

External control is the supervision of the leader towards staffs related to performance, work environment, and norms carried out in an organization to avoid deviations from work productivity [14]. External control is carried out as an actual demand to act in a certain way and as a prime mental representation of social demands [15]. External control in an organization is expected to minimize deviant behavior in the workplace that has occurred continuously for long. An organization which implements the external control forces are expected to be able to control the behavior of its employees who are deviant, immune to regulations, and feel deviant behavior within a reasonable scope and does not harm the organization.

External control and moral engagement

Morality is the determinant of individuals to behave properly. Although external control in an organization runs well, if the employee's morale is not proper, then it will be easy to make irregularities in the workplace. Employees who are easy to let go of morality are suspected to be easy to do deviations. With proper

control, individuals could try to prevent deviant behavior and control themselves to not to do deviations which could harm the organization, members, or even both.

Moral Disengagement and Work Productivity Deviations

Bandura et al. [16] explained that the self-regulation mechanism has an important factor in explaining self-regulation emphasizes on moral reasoning, which is translated into action through self-regulatory mechanisms through moral agents implementation. If the self-regulatory mechanism runs smoothly, the condemnation (self-sanction) in the individual will be activated, and then transgressive behavior will be prevented, meaning that the self-regulation process is deactivated and then the morale release will emerge.

Government organizations bureaucratically have significant responsibility for the community in regulating the performance of public employees. If there are public employees who behave deviant, strict sanctions are supposed to be given in the form of reprimand or unilateral dismissal without specific considerations because this is related to image and moral burden that must be borne by the government. Saidon et al. [17], in their study, found that moral disengagement correlates with deviant behavior in the workplace. Furthermore, in his research, it was also explained that the mechanism of morality release, when activated, violated the self-regulation function of employees which in turn made individuals obscure subjective feelings that were uncomfortable when doing wrong actions.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective used in this study is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET is one of the most conceptual paradigms used to understand deviant behavior in the workplace. In the last ten years, SET theory has explained a lot about transactions with the potential to produce high-quality exchange relationships [18]. SET, which was initiated by Homans in 1958, explained that relationships between individuals formed by using an analysis of rewards, costs and personal benefits wherever individuals tend to repeat repetitive actions because they get rewards [19].

Social Exchange Theory assumes that the organizational environment is a place to show that employees work for the organization and in return, the organization provides employees with a form of welfare, compensation, and rewards based on the principle of reciprocity, yet in reality employees do deviant behavior [20]. The exchange within an organization begins with one party that provides benefits to the other by providing mutual benefits [21]. Visually the research model to be tested in this study is shown in Figure 1.

Objective and Hypothesis

Based on the description above, this research objective is to analyze the direct influence of external control on work productivity deviations and the indirect effect of external control on deviations in work productivity which are mediated by moral disengagement in public employees.

The hypothesis in this study are:

1. External control has a positive and significant effect on work productivity deviations.
2. External control has a positive and significant effect on moral disengagement.
3. Moral disengagement has a positive and significant effect on work productivity deviations.
4. External control has a positive and significant effect on the deviation of work productivity with moral disengagement as a mediating variable.



Figure 1. Research model

METHOD

Subject

The subjects of this research are 214 public employees of Malang City Government, Indonesia. There were 137 (64%) male respondents, 181 of whom were married (84.6%). Respondents aged over 41 years were 145 (63.3%), most of them were Bachelor (36.9%) and high school (26.6%); they were 6-10 years work period (39.6%), and most were staffs (70.2%). Table 1 is the description of the respondent's characteristics.

Table 1. Description of research respondents (N=214)

Characteristics of Subject	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	137	64
Female	77	36
Marital status		
Married	181	84.6
Single	18	8.4
Widow	11	5.1
Widower	4	1.9
Age		
21-25 years	1	5
26-30 years	13	6.1
31-35 years	30	14
36-40 years	25	11.6
41-55 years	145	63.3
Education		
Elementary School	16	7.5
Junior High School	21	9.8
Senior High School	57	26.6
Diploma	7	3.3
Bachelor	79	36.9
Mater	34	15.9
Working period		
1-5 years	19	8.8
6-10 years	85	39.6
11-15 years	31	14.5
16-20 years	23	10.7
21-30 years	41	19.1
30-35 years	15	7.3

Instrument

Marketing Jobs and Management Control (MJMC) is an instrument to measure external control [22]. MJMC consists of three aspects, namely output control (5 items), process control (4 items), and professional control (5 items). The scale is formatted in a Likert format, with five alternative answers. The output control and process control aspects consist of 5 answer choices, namely (1) never up to (5) always. While the aspect of professional control also consists of 5 choices, namely strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). An example of an item is "my immediate supervisor monitors the extent to which I achieve performance goals." Based on the research, the instruments obtained good internal consistency index; namely output control ($\alpha = 0.88$), process control ($\alpha = 0.82$), and professional control ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Civic Moral Disengagement Scale (CMDS) is an instrument to measure moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999). CMDS consist of eight aspects namely Moral Justification (MJ), Euphemistic Labeling (EL), Advantageous Comparisons (AC), Displacement of Responsibility (DISR), Diffusion of Responsibility (DIFR), Distortion of Consequences (DC), Dehumanization (DH) and Attribution of Blame (AB). CMDS consists of 24 items formatted in a Likert format with five choices, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). An example of an item is "dirty play is sometimes needed to achieve a good ending." CMDS obtained an internal consistency index $\alpha = 0.90$ [23].

Workplace Deviance Behavior Scales (WDBS) is an instrument to measure work productivity deviations variable (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). WDBS revealed four aspects, namely Leaving Early (LE), Taking Excessive Breaks (TEB), Intentionally Working Slow (IWS), and Wasting Resources (WR). WDB consists of seven items arranged in a Likert scale format consisting of five choices, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). An example of an item is "having to work overtime without the right reasons." WDB obtained an internal consistency index $\alpha = 0.63$.

Data analysis

The data analysis in this research used the Structural Equation Model (SEM). There are two reasons for using SEM as a data analysis tool, namely SEM can test complex research models simultaneously, which can estimate models simultaneously correctly in testing theories, and SEM can analyze unobserved variables and calculate measurement errors, so researchers must use some indicators or questionnaire questions [24].

There are several steps that the researcher took in completing the data analysis, which are: model specification, model identification, and model estimation. The model specification phase is the stage for expressing the concept of research problems, which is a statement or hypothesis of a problem, then categorizing exogenous and endogenous variables.

The model identification stage is a stage to estimate the unique value in a model. In this step, we need to identify the model through three kinds of identification. Namely, (1) under-identified model (identification of the model with an estimated parameter more significant than the amount of data); just-identified model (identification of the model where the estimated number of parameters is the same as the amount of data); and over-identified model (identification of models where the estimated number of parameters is smaller than the amount of data) [25]. The next step is to compile the causality relationship with the path diagram (Figure 2).

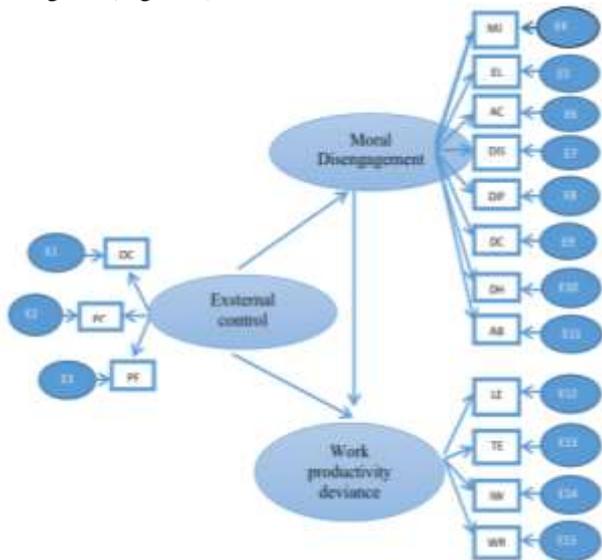


Figure 2. Research flow chart

Note:

- indicates latent variables, namely variables that are not measured directly but formed through observed indicators
- indicates variables measured or observed variables in which the data must be searched in the field
- the existence of a hypothesized relationship

The model estimation stage is the stage of using one method to estimate parameters namely Maximum Likelihood (ML). The estimation phase of the model includes the test of model compatibility and model validation.

1. The model of the goodness of fit produces five steps: (1) The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) which is a measure of the ability of a model that can explain the diversity of data, if the GFI value is > 0.9 then the model is categorized as good; (2) Root Mean Square Error (RMSR), which is the average residue between the covariance matrix (observed matrix) and estimated results, if RMSR < 0.05, it means matched; (3) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is a measure of the average difference per degree of freedom expected in the population, if RMSEA < 0.08, then it is matched; (4) Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) is the value of the suitability test approach

of a model when applied to other data (cross-validation), when the value is smaller, then it is better; and (5) Non-Centrality Parameter (NCP), which is a form of re-specification of chi-square; the test is based on the comparison with other models, when the value is smaller, then it is better.

2. Model specification is to improve the theoretical explanation (goodness of fit). If the hypothesized model has not reached a fit model, then the model is respecified using the correct theoretical approach.

RESULT

Description of Research Variables

Based on the data of research, it can be described that the condition of variable Work Productivity Deviation (KDP), Moral Disengagement (MD) and External Control (KE). As Table 2, the average scores for each variable are KDP = 16.30 (SD = 4.01), MD = 56.59 (SD = 13.9), and KE = 49.98 (SD = 9.98). The KDP variable score range is 393-626, with an average score of 498.3 and is categorized in a bad category. The MD variable score range is at 373-629, with an average score of 505.04 and is considered as a low category, while the KE variable is at 677-812, with an average score of 764 and is included as a high category.

Table 2. Descriptions and correlations among variables

	Range of Score	Mean (SD)	PPK	MD	K
PPK	393-626	16.30 (4.01)	1.00		
MD	373-629	56.59 (13.90)	.33***	1.00	
KE	677-812	49.98 (9.98)	-.28***	-.52*	1.00

Note: * p<.001

The correlation test results showed that there were positive correlation between the Working Productivity Deviation (KDP) variable and the Moral Disengagement (MD) variable ($r = .33, p = .000$), while the correlation between the Working Productivity Deviation (PPK) variable and the External Control variable (KE) shows a negative correlation ($r = -.28, p = .000$), and the correlation between the Moral Disengagement (MD) variable and the External Control variable (KE) shows a negative correlation ($r = -.52, p = .000$).

SEM Assumption Test

Test assumptions on SEM research include normality tests and multicollinearity tests. Normality test is needed to know the estimation produced is not biased and appropriate for making conclusions. The entire research variable was indicated by $p = .000$ so that it follows the normal distribution function.

The multicollinearity test is conducted to find out whether the relationship among independent variables has a multi-correlation problem. Multicorrelation is very high or very low might occur in the relationship among independent variables (Sarjono & Julianita, 2011). Multicollinearity test was conducted by looking at the Value of Tolerance and VIF (Variance Inflation

Factor). If the Tolerance Value is $> .10$, then the data have multicollinearity. By looking at the VIF value, a decision can be made; if the VIF value is < 10 , so there is no multicollinearity. The multicollinearity test results showed that the value of the tolerance variable Moral Disengagement (MD) and External Control (KE) of $.770 > .10$. Therefore it can be said that there is no multicollinearity towards the data tested. Furthermore, the VIF value of $1.299 < 10$ in each variable Moral Disengagement (MD) and External Control (KE), there is no symptom of multicollinearity among the independent variables. Thus it can be concluded that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity among independent variables.

Stages of SEM Analysis

Development of Flow Charts. The results of the SEM analysis on the development of flowcharts show the estimated results of standardized solutions. The indicators of MD7, MD8, MD11, MD13, MD22, MD24, PPK3, and PPK7 have an invalid validity value because they have to meet the requirements of the standardized loading factor $\geq .50$. Therefore the indicator is removed (Figure 3).

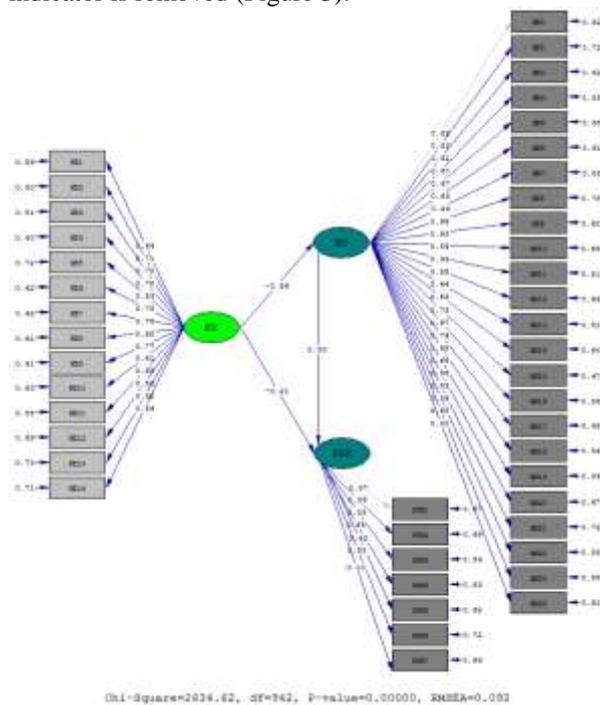


Figure 3. Research flow chart

The next step is to detect the GOF (Goodness of Fit) value with the terms of the RMSEA value ≤ 0.08 ; because the value of RMSEA is $0.092 \geq 0.080$, a modification is made to the model (Table 4)

Model Compatibility Test. The next step is to do a Goodness of Fit analysis to find out whether the resulting model is fit or not. Table 3 is the model of the suitability test; a modification is made to the model. Figure 4 is the results of data processing.

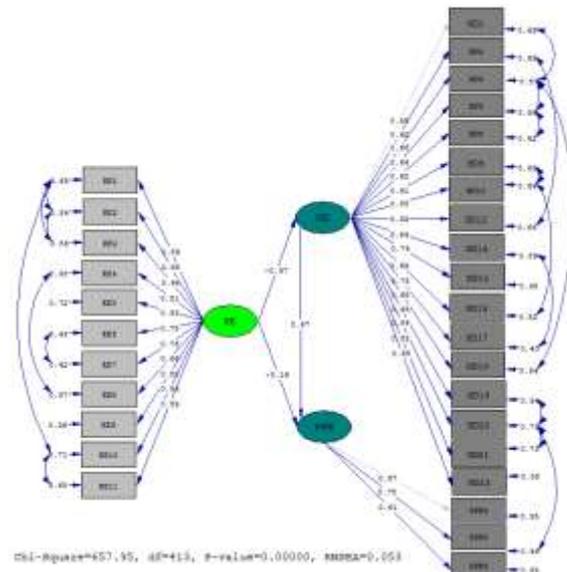


Figure 4. Modification of research flowcharts

Table 3. Test for model compatibility

Criteria	Critical Value	Result	Note
<i>Chi-Square</i>	Small	657.95	Good model
<i>ECVI</i>	Small and approaching Saturated	3.87 ECVI 4.66	Good model
<i>Probability</i>	≥ 0.05	0.00	Poor Model
<i>GFI</i>	≥ 0.90	0.83	Poor Model
<i>AGFI</i>	≥ 0.90	0.80	Poor Model
<i>NNFI</i>	≥ 0.90	0.90	Good model
<i>RMSEA</i>	≤ 0.08	0.053	Good model

Table 3 shows that out of the seven criteria of the model suitability test, four criteria met the model suitability test; thus it can be concluded that the model is fit and the hypothesis testing can be done.

Hypothesis Testing

We present the results of data processing obtained with Beta values, t-values, and R Square in Table 4.

Table 4. Result of the Hypothesis Test

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β	t	R Square (R ²)
KE	PPK	-.12	-2.05	21 %
KE	MD	-.52	-6.50	32 %
MD	PPK	.31	4.32	36 %

The first hypothesis is External Control (KE) has a significant effect on Work Productivity Deviations (PPK). The results of the data analysis taken by the KE decision did not significantly influence KDP ($t = -2.05$; $\beta = -.12$; $p > .05$). Thus the first hypothesis is rejected. The second hypothesis is External Control (KE) has a significant effect on Moral Disengagement (MD). The results of the analysis show that KE did not

significantly influence MD ($t = -6.50$; $\beta = -.52$; $p > .05$). Thus the second hypothesis is rejected. The third hypothesis is Moral Disengagement (MD) has a significant effect on Work Productivity Deviations (PPK). The results of the analysis show that MD had a significant effect on KDP ($t = 4.32$; $\beta = -.31$; $p < .05$). Thus the third hypothesis is accepted. KE contributed 36% to MD. The fourth hypothesis is External Control (KE) significantly influences Work Productivity Deviations (PPK) mediated by Moral Disengagement (MD). The results of the analysis with Sobel Test showed that MD acted as a mediator between KE to KDP ($Z = -4.78$, $p < 0.05$), thus the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The results of the current research show that external control did not directly influence employee's productivity deviations in public institutions. In companies, there were actual supervision from superiors and regulations but were not able to minimize deviant behavior among employees because of the loose regulations and power abuse in the workplace. The finding was consistent with the result of the research by Hosbay [5], which stated that deviant behavior among employees occurred because of power abuse and loose regulations in a company.

Some things caused external control of an organization did not work properly, such as the perception that it was fine for senior staffs to commit deviant and sustainable behavior. Thus, employees acknowledged that it should be no problems committing violations because the sanctions were not significantly strict, and did deviant behavior was something natural and did not harm the organization.

The results of subsequent research showed that external control did not significantly influence moral disengagement. The factor of this relation was individuals had personal interests; the sanctions were firm and tended to let go of morale smoothly. Situations and environments provide opportunities and trigger individuals to uninterested to a moral standard [26].

Regarding managing and controlling subordinates, leaders directly influence staff; therefore, personal sanctions related to moral disengagement tend to cause staff to violate [27].

Furthermore, the current study also found that moral disengagement had a significant effect on productivity deviations in the workplace. The result of the research was consistent with the research by Saidon et al. [17] that moral disengagement correlated with deviant behavior in the workplace. The same thing also explained that moral disengagement in individuals leads to deviant behavior and to gain profit [28].

Public employees who committed deviant behavior in the workplace considered that carrying out deviant behaviors could ultimately obtain personal satisfaction. Public employees who often left their jobs early, left

office during working hours, intentionally worked slowly, and postponed their jobs to get personal benefits could harm the company and other employees. Cohen et al. [29] state that moral disengagement is related to individual characteristics in cognition, emotion, and behavior. Whereas Bandura [30] asserts that moral disengagement can form irresponsible characters, deviant behavior, profit-oriented, and harm others.

Employees who committed deviant behavior assumed that they did it to get personal benefits. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) perspective assumes that an organization is a place where employees work for the organization and in return, the organization provides employees with welfare, compensation, and rewards based on the principle of reciprocity, yet in reality employees do deviant behavior [20]. The existence of exchanges within an organization begins with one party that provides benefits to the other party with mutual benefits [21]. SET theory considers that exchange behavior which carries out interactively is often done repeatedly among individuals. The existence of control, supervision from superiors, and existing regulations are expected to suppress deviant behavior by public employees in the workplace. However, due to moral disengagement among employees, employees did deviant behavior. Loose regulations in an organization also support this activity; as a consequence, employees carry out deviant behaviors which could harm the organization and other employees. Deviant behavior committed by employees in an organization can reduce effectiveness and harm the organization [3]. The negative impact of deviant behavior can affect an employee's productivity and performance [4].

In this research, moral disengagement acted as a mediator on the influence of external control on deviations in work productivity. There were several factors which caused moral disengagement to act as a mediator, namely deviant behavior carried out by the employees which had been performed for long and repeatedly. The loose supervision and regulation in the companies made it easier for employees to act deviant, supported by the organizational environment which allowed the employees to behave deviant. Therefore, discipline is essential as one aspect to suppress the occurrence of deviant behavior in the workplace. The implementation of discipline in an organization can prevent the occurrence of deviant behavior in the workplace [7]. Discipline is a form of self-control from deviant behavior in the workplace [30].

Based on the findings of the current research, the strategies which can be carried out by organizations to reduce deviant behavior among public employees is by strengthening the moral engagement. Individual counseling and group counseling focused on oral engagement can be developed and implemented for public employees to improve the employees' productivity. Unfortunately, this kind of counseling has not been implemented yet, and even many public

institutions are less aware of the importance of counseling for the employees. The result of this research indicates that counseling focused on morality engagement is important for the organization and employees.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that external control does not significantly influence the deviation of work productivity, and external control does not significantly influence moral disengagement. In this study, moral disengagement acted as a mediator of the influence of external control on work productivity deviations. The work productivity related to loose regulation and supervision, low control of co-workers, irregularities of employees, and the organizational environment which provide opportunities for employees to behave deviant.

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