

Improving Employee Performance Through Work Discipline and Work Motivation

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to empirically examine and test the influence of work discipline and work motivation on employee performance. This research is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of human resource management strategies, particularly to improve productivity and the quality of organizational performance.

Design/Methods/Approach: This study used a quantitative, associative approach. The study population comprised all employees of the M Regency Makassar Hotel, with a sample of 46 respondents selected using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with SmartPLS software. This included validity, reliability, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing.

Findings: The results indicate that work discipline and work motivation have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Work discipline has a more dominant influence than work motivation. These findings suggest that compliance with work rules and employee internal motivation are important factors in improving performance.

Originality/Value: This research makes an empirical contribution to the study of human resource management, particularly in the hospitality sector, which remains relatively under-researched. Furthermore, the use of the SEM-PLS method provides a more comprehensive analytical approach for examining relationships among variables.

Practical/Policy Implications: The results of this study imply that hotel management should improve work discipline by implementing strict rules and increasing employee motivation through rewards, career development, and a supportive work environment to achieve optimal employee performance.

Keywords: *Work discipline, work motivation, employee performance, hospitality industry*

JEL Classification: M42, M48 [author should add 1-3 JEL classification number, information guide for the Journal of Economics Literature (JEL) can be found at <https://www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php>]

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Introduction

The hospitality industry is a highly competitive service sector that relies heavily on the quality of human resources to create a competitive advantage (Harefa et al., 2022; Syafrimansyah, 2023). In contrast to the manufacturing industry, which emphasizes physical output, the hospitality industry focuses more on customer experience and satisfaction. Therefore, the success of hotel operations is largely determined by the quality of interactions between employees and customers throughout every service process (Ali et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2020), from welcoming guests to providing services during their stay and at check-out. Employee performance is a key indicator of a hotel organization's success. Optimal employee performance will drive increased customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, guest loyalty, and company reputation (Sistiana, 2025). Conversely, when employee performance is low, it can result in decreased service quality, increased customer complaints, and reduced company competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

Hotel M Regency Makassar, as an accommodation service company in Makassar, faces the challenge of maintaining service quality amidst increasing competition in the hospitality industry. As a hotel focused on customer satisfaction, the company must ensure that every employee provides professional, responsive, and consistent service in accordance with established standards. Common problems include high levels of lateness, uncontrolled absenteeism, poor adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), low work initiative, weak individual accountability, and decreased work morale due to high work pressure. In a hotel environment, these conditions can cause serious disruptions because service operations demand speed, accuracy, friendliness, and consistent service around the clock. Therefore, companies need to understand the factors that can improve employee performance.

One factor that theoretically influences employee performance is work discipline. Work discipline reflects an employee's willingness and awareness to comply with all organizational regulations, adhere to working hours, carry out tasks according to procedures, and be responsible for assigned work (Ariyanti et al., 2024; Noviyanti & Asmalah, 2023). In the hospitality industry, work discipline is crucial because work units are integrated, so delays or negligence in one area can affect overall service quality. Disciplined employees tend to work more structurally, maintain service standards, and minimize errors.

In addition to work discipline, work motivation is also a crucial variable influencing employee performance. Work motivation refers to the internal and external drives that drive individuals to exert their best effort to achieve organizational goals (Akerele, 2023). Highly motivated employees typically demonstrate enthusiasm for their work, loyalty, and a willingness to provide excellent customer service (Singh et al., 2023). In the hotel industry, work motivation becomes even more important because employees face emotional demands, rotating work schedules, and intense service pressure.

Although the relationship between work discipline, work motivation, and employee performance has been extensively studied, previous research has yielded inconsistent findings. Several studies have concluded that work discipline has a positive and significant impact on employee performance (Agustriani et al., 2022; Anggraini et al., 2024), as compliance with work rules promotes efficiency and effectiveness in task completion. However, other studies have found that work discipline has no significant impact on performance (Muna & Isnowati, 2022; Tannady et al., 2022), particularly when discipline is applied solely administratively, without a supportive work culture and effective leadership. These differences in results indicate that the influence of work discipline can be context-dependent, depending on the organization's characteristics and the management system implemented.

Different findings were also found for the work motivation variable. Some studies suggest that work motivation influences employee performance improvement (Muliadi, 2025; Widita & Ristianawati, 2025), particularly through rewards and career development opportunities. However, other studies indicate that work motivation does not always significantly impact performance (Putra, 2021; Syafitri & Hidayat, 2023) when the organization faces structural issues such as excessive workload, unfair compensation systems, or lack of managerial support. The inconsistency of these research findings suggests the need for re-examination across different organizational contexts, particularly in the hospitality sector of developing regions.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the hospitality industry in Makassar City, which is currently struggling to maintain consistent employee performance amid increasing demands for high-quality customer service. This research is also relatively limited in the empirical literature. Most previous

studies have focused on the manufacturing sector, government agencies, or public companies, leaving the characteristics of the hospitality sector largely unexplored. Furthermore, this study utilizes the SmartPLS analysis method. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the influence of work discipline and work motivation on employee performance at the M Regency Hotel in Makassar. The research results are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management studies, as well as practical contributions to hotel management by formulating performance improvement strategies that strengthen work discipline and optimize employee motivation.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Work Discipline

Work discipline is a crucial factor in increasing employee effectiveness and productivity within an organization. Work discipline reflects an employee's compliance with company regulations, procedures, and work standards. According to (Mangkunegara, 2020), work discipline is implementation of management to strengthen organizational guidelines. Employees with high work discipline tend to complete tasks on time, minimize errors, and assume responsibility for assigned work. Without employee discipline, it is difficult for a company to achieve its goals (Ernest, 2021). Several previous studies have shown that work discipline has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Research conducted (Tasya et al., 2024) found that greater work discipline can improve task execution and employee productivity. Similarly, (Dehotman, 2023) showed that employees with high levels of discipline tend to perform better at work than those with lower levels of discipline. High levels of work discipline will encourage efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity, thus optimally achieving organizational goals (Malik et al., 2025; Mbate'e, 2020).

Work Motivation

Work motivation is an internal and external drive that influences a person's enthusiasm, direction, and intensity of behavior toward achieving specific goals. Work motivation is a crucial factor in determining employee performance because motivated individuals exhibit greater commitment and enthusiasm in their work. According to (Sutrisno, 2019), motivation is a stimulant and driving force for a person's desire to work, as each motivation has a specific goal to be achieved. (Hasibuan, 2020) classifies work motivation into five needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Highly motivated employees tend to be more enthusiastic, creative, responsible, and capable of achieving work targets optimally (Liu & Ren, 2022; Riyanto et al., 2021). Several previous studies have shown that work motivation positively influences employee performance. Research (Zia et al., 2020) found that motivational factors such as recognition, achievement, and self-development can increase employee satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, (Chien et al., 2020) research found that the higher an employee's work motivation, the higher their performance.

Employee Performance

Performance is the work results achieved by an individual or group of employees in carrying out assigned tasks and responsibilities in accordance with the standards, goals, and timeframes established by the organization (Andreas, 2022; Saleh et al., 2024). Performance reflects an individual's level of success in carrying out their work, as measured by work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and responsibility in completing tasks (Rambulangi et al., 2024; Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). High performance indicates that employees can work optimally and productively and make a positive contribution to achieving company goals. Conversely, low performance can hinder operational processes and reduce organizational competitiveness. (Mangkunegara, 2019), Performance is influenced by employees' abilities and motivation, while other factors such as work discipline, work environment, and leadership also determine a person's level of work achievement.

Hypotheses Development

Based on the theoretical review and research background, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Work discipline positively affects employee performance
- H2: Work motivation positively affects employee performance.

Method

This study uses a quantitative, associative research design to analyze the influence of work discipline and work motivation on employee performance at Hotel M Regency Makassar. The population in this study was all employees of Hotel M Regency Makassar. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling, that is, all members of the population were sampled, so the number of respondents in this study was 46. Data collection was conducted by distributing Likert-scale questionnaires to respondents. The data obtained were then analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with SmartPLS software, following the stages of validity testing, reliability testing, coefficient of determination (R^2) testing, and hypothesis testing to determine the influence among the research variables. SEM-PLS was selected because it is suitable for exploratory studies and small sample sizes.

Result and Discussion

The results of this study were obtained through processing questionnaire data from 46 respondents using the SmartPLS application. Analysis was conducted to test the quality of the research instrument through validity and reliability tests, and to examine the relationships between variables using a structural model. The variables analyzed included work discipline, work motivation, and employee performance. The results of the research data testing are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Outer loading results

Indicators	Work Discipline	Work Motivation	Performance
X1.1	0.874		
X1.2	0.859		
X1.3	0.873		
X1.4	0.896		
X1.5	0.823		
X1.6	0.767		
X2.1		0.879	
X2.2		0.929	
X2.3		0.874	
X2.4		0.832	
Y1			0.790
Y2			0.888
Y3			0.890
Y4			0.837
Y5			0.818

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS

Table 2. Results of construct validity and reliability tests

Variable	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Work Discipline	0.722	0.933	0.923	Valid and Reliable
Work Motivation	0.773	0.904	0.902	Valid and Reliable
Employee Performance	0.715	0.903	0.900	Valid and Reliable

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS

Based on Table 1, all variables have AVE values > 0.50 and Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70, indicating that all constructs are valid and reliable.

Table 3. Results of the coefficient of determination (R-Square) test

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Employee Performance	0.511	0.488

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS

The R-square value of 0.511 indicates that work discipline and work motivation can explain 51.1% of employee performance, while the remaining 48.9% is explained by other variables outside the study. This indicates that work discipline and work motivation have a moderate influence on employee performance.

Table 4. Total effects results

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Work Discipline -> Performance	0.568	0.572	0.131	4.339	0.000
Work Motivation -> Performance	0.311	0.320	0.113	2.761	0.006

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS

Based on the test results in Table 4, work discipline and work motivation have a positive and significant influence on employee performance. This finding indicates that these two variables are important determinants in improving performance, with work discipline playing a more dominant role than work motivation. Conceptually, work discipline reflects an individual's level of compliance with regulations, operational standards, and applicable norms within the organization, which ultimately encourages the creation of structured and efficient work processes. Meanwhile, work motivation serves as a driving force, originating from within and outside the individual, to achieve specific goals. The combination of strong discipline and high motivation will result in optimal performance.

Furthermore, the significant influence of work discipline on performance indicates that organizational success is largely determined by the extent to which employees comply with regulations and perform tasks consistently. Strong work discipline creates order, reduces error rates, and increases the effectiveness of work execution (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020). This condition ultimately has implications for increased productivity and the quality of work results. This finding aligns with the findings of (Abrori et al., 2023; Paulus, 2022) that work discipline is a crucial function in human resource management that improves performance. Furthermore, research (Agustriani et al., 2022; Dehotman, 2023; Sitopu et al., 2021) shows that work discipline has a significant impact on performance, reflecting an individual's willingness to comply with organizational regulations. Therefore, the results of this study strengthen the empirical evidence that work discipline is a key factor in achieving high performance.

Furthermore, the influence of work motivation on performance showed positive, significant results, indicating that the higher an employee's motivation, the greater their drive to perform optimally. Work motivation not only increases work enthusiasm but also encourages individuals to be more proactive, creative, and responsible in completing their tasks. This indicates that motivation is a psychological element that plays a crucial role in determining employee work behavior. This finding aligns with the theory proposed (Altymurat, 2021), which explains that individuals are motivated to perform better when their needs are met. Organizations need to focus on motivation to continuously improve employee performance. This research finding is also supported (Abbas et al., 2023; Muliadi, 2025), who emphasized that motivational factors, such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility, play a crucial role in improving individual performance. Highly motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater commitment to their work and are better able to face various work challenges. The results of this study indicate that work discipline and work motivation complement each other in influencing employee performance, so organizations need to manage both simultaneously to achieve optimal, sustainable performance.

Conclusion and future direction

This study concludes that work discipline and work motivation have a positive and significant influence on employee performance, with work discipline being the more dominant factor. This suggests that greater regulatory compliance and higher work motivation are key to achieving optimal performance. Future research is recommended to develop a more comprehensive model by adding variables such as leadership, organizational culture, and job satisfaction to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing performance. Furthermore, research is needed across sectors or regions to increase the generalizability of the results.

Implication

Theoretically, this research strengthens human resource management studies by proving that work discipline and work motivation significantly influence employee performance. Work discipline was found to have a more dominant influence than work motivation. This finding confirms that employee performance is influenced by the integration of behavioral and psychological factors. This research also adds to the empirical evidence in the hospitality industry.

From a managerial perspective, Hotel M Regency Makassar needs to improve work discipline through consistent policies and an effective monitoring system. Implementing fair rewards and punishments is crucial to maintaining employee compliance. Work motivation can be enhanced through compensation, career development, and a supportive work environment. This approach is expected to improve the company's performance and service quality.

Conflict of Interest (compulsory)

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article. All stages of the research, from data collection and analysis to the interpretation of the results, were conducted objectively and independently, without any financial or non-financial intervention from any party.

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