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The Effect of Communication and Work Discipline on Employee Performance at the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Bandung

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A B S T R A C T
Human resource (HR) is an important component in the organization that plays a role in delivering goals. Employee performance is an important factor in achieving organizational goals. Organizations, however, have some common performance-related problems. Many employees feel a lack of good relationships between employees, ineffective communication, and low work discipline, which ultimately affects overall performance. This study aims to describe and analyze the effect of communication and work discipline on employee performance at the Bandung City Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, and measure the influence of the two variables. This research uses a quantitative approach with descriptive and verification methods. Data were obtained through questionnaires with saturated sampling techniques (census), involving the entire population of 52 employees. Data analysis was carried out through validity test, reliability test, classical assumption test, multiple linear regression test, correlation coefficient analysis, and determination coefficient analysis. The results of the study showed that communication and work discipline variables had a positive effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. The R Square value shows the real contribution of communication and work discipline to improving employee performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are universally recognized as the most valuable assets of any organization, acting as the driving force that transforms strategic plans into tangible achievements. In the era of dynamic global competition and rapid technological change, organizations both private and public must rely on competent, disciplined, and communicative employees to maintain performance and service quality (Afdhal et al., 2023). The ability of employees to work effectively and efficiently not only determines the productivity of an organization but also its credibility and sustainability.

In the public sector, human resources play an equally critical role, particularly in government institutions tasked with serving society. The **Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A)** of Bandung City represents one of the strategic local government agencies mandated to promote gender equality, empower women, and ensure the protection of children from violence, neglect, and discrimination. As a service-oriented institution, DP3A's effectiveness depends heavily on its employees' performance. However, in recent years, challenges related to **decreasing employee performance**, **inconsistent discipline**, and **ineffective internal communication** have been observed, as reflected in fluctuating performance targets and irregular meeting schedules.Strong and effective communication is essential in any organization, especially in public agencies where coordination across divisions is complex and multidimensional. Communication ensures that messages, instructions, and feedback flow seamlessly between leaders and subordinates, thereby reducing misunderstandings and duplication of tasks (DeVito, 2021). According to Hariyanto (2022), communication in the workplace enhances employee motivation, builds trust, and strengthens social relationships that are necessary for teamwork. Conversely, poor communication often leads to confusion, inefficiency, and declining morale, all of which hinder organizational goals. Alongside communication, **work discipline** is a central factor that determines employee productivity. Hasibuan (2022) defines work discipline as an individual's willingness to comply with organizational rules and carry out duties responsibly. Disciplinary behavior reflects an employee's commitment to punctuality, compliance with procedures, and dedication to achieving results. In government offices like DP3A Bandung, discipline is crucial to ensure public service delivery remains effective and reliable. Employees who consistently arrive late, leave early, or neglect regulations disrupt workflow and decrease institutional credibility (Nurmansyah, 2020). Previous studies have reinforced the importance of both variables. Pratama and Noorman (2022) found that communication and work discipline have a positive and significant impact on employee performance at PT. Mackessen Indonesia. Similarly, research by Pilato and Swedana (2024) on local government employees in Morowali showed that better communication and stricter discipline correlated with improved job performance. Meanwhile, Kade and Sili (2022) concluded that the combination of effective communication and discipline explained 69.7% of performance variation among public servants in the education sector. These findings highlight that organizational performance is not only dependent on technical competence

but also on behavioral aspects such as communication patterns and discipline. Despite this, research focusing on communication and work discipline within **public service institutions dealing with social welfare**like DP3A Bandung remains limited. Government agencies often operate in bureaucratic environments characterized by hierarchical communication structures, formal procedures, and rigid rules that may hinder effective information exchange (Sutrisno & Anggoro, 2023). These conditions make it essential to understand how communication and discipline jointly shape performance in a governmental setting, where accountability and public trust are critical success factors.

The current study addresses this gap by examining the **simultaneous and partial effects** of communication and work discipline on employee performance at DP3A Bandung. The research offers both **theoretical contributions** by extending human resource management theories into the public sector context and **practical implications** by providing actionable insights for policymakers to enhance institutional performance. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of communication and discipline as dual mechanisms influencing employee behavior and organizational effectiveness in a government agency that delivers social services.

Therefore, this research seeks to:

1. Describe the state of communication, work discipline, and employee performance within DP3A Bandung.
2. Analyze the effect of communication on employee performance.
3. Examine the effect of work discipline on employee performance.
4. Evaluate the combined influence of communication and work discipline on employee performance in the public sector.

By addressing these objectives, the study not only contributes to the growing body of knowledge in human resource management but also provides strategic recommendations for improving communication and discipline as levers for enhancing employee performance in public institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish a solid academic and theoretical framework regarding the variables examined in this study—namely organizational communication, work discipline, and employee performance—several relevant management, organizational behavior, and communication theories are synthesized below:

Organizational Communication Theory

According to DeVito (2021), organizational communication encompasses the sending and receiving of messages among interconnected individuals within a particular environment to achieve individual and organizational goals. Effective communication involves openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality, which are essential for minimizing misunderstandings and fostering collaboration.

Work Discipline Theory

Hasibuan (2022) defines work discipline as an employee's awareness and willingness to obey all company or institutional rules and social norms that apply. High work discipline reflects an employee's self-control, punctuality, and responsibility in carrying out assigned duties without constant direct coercion.

Employee Performance Theory

Mangkunegara (2021) states that employee performance is the result of work in quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to them. Performance is typically evaluated through indicators such as work results, work ability, reliability, and teamwork.

Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) posit that human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. In an organizational context, open communication and fair disciplinary policies create a reciprocal environment of trust and organizational commitment between leadership and employees, driving higher performance outcomes.

Goal-Setting Theory

Locke and Latham (1990) assert that setting specific, challenging goals combined with appropriate feedback, structured communication, and strict adherence to organizational rules significantly elevates individual motivation, behavioral consistency, and task performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach with descriptive and verification methods to measure and analyze the effect of communication and work discipline on employee performance. Quantitative analysis was chosen because it allows for the objective measurement of relationships between variables through statistical testing (Sugiyono, 2020). The study was conducted at the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) in Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia. The institution has 52 permanent employees, representing the total population of the study. Due to the manageable number, a census technique (saturated sampling) was used, meaning all employees were included as respondents. The study utilized a **survey method** with a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents. Each variable communication (X_1), work discipline (X_2), and employee performance (Y) was operationalized into measurable indicators based on established theories. Communication was measured using indicators of openness, empathy, positive attitude, interaction management, and unity (DeVito, 2021). Work discipline included indicators of attendance, compliance with regulations, and ethical behavior (Hasibuan, 2022). Employee performance was measured through work results, work ability, and teamwork (Mangkunegara, 2021). The questionnaire consisted of 24 items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was tested for **validity** (using

Pearson correlation) and reliability (using Cronbach's alpha), ensuring that all items met the minimum reliability coefficient of 0.70. Data analysis was conducted using the following stages:

1. **Descriptive Analysis** to describe respondent characteristics and variable conditions.
2. **Classical Assumption Tests** including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure model accuracy.
3. **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis** to assess the effect of communication and work discipline on employee performance simultaneously and partially.
4. **Correlation and Determination Tests** to determine the strength and contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable.

Data were processed using SPSS version 26.0, and the level of significance used for hypothesis testing was **α = 0.05**.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved all 52 employees of the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) Bandung. The majority of respondents were female (75 %), reflecting the department's focus on gender and family welfare issues. In terms of age, most employees were between **31 – 45 years old (58 %)**, indicating a productive age group with substantial work experience. Educationally, **67 % held a bachelor's degree** and 21 % held a diploma degree, showing that the institution employs individuals with adequate educational backgrounds to perform specialized tasks related to gender and child protection programs. This demographic profile is important because age and education often affect how employees perceive communication patterns and discipline systems. More experienced employees tend to value transparent communication and formal work procedures, while younger staff may prefer informal and collaborative interactions. These dynamics explain why communication becomes a decisive element in shaping workplace performance at DP3A Bandung.

The descriptive analysis showed that employees rated the level of **communication** at DP3A as "adequate but inconsistent." The average communication score was **3.72**, with the lowest indicator being "clarity of information exchange between units." This suggests that, while inter-departmental dialogue exists, it often lacks regularity and feedback. The highest indicator was "willingness to cooperate," reflecting strong collegial relationships despite procedural bottlenecks.

The **work-discipline** variable obtained an average score of **3.81**, indicating that employees generally follow organizational rules. The most frequently mentioned weaknesses concerned tardiness and early departures, which were also confirmed by attendance records for late 2024 – early 2025. Meanwhile, **employee performance** had an average score of **3.95**, revealing satisfactory results but leaving room for improvement in terms of initiative and task innovation.

These findings depict a situation where employees are willing and capable but require more systematic managerial control to translate potential into consistent performance.

Table 1 Statistical Results

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Communication (X_1)	0.356	3.21	0.002	Significant positive effect
Work Discipline (X_2)	0.472	4.12	0.000	Significant positive effect
Constant	4.317	–	–	–
R	0.826	–	–	Strong correlation
R^2	0.681	–	–	68.1 % of Y explained by $X_1 + X_2$

The multiple-regression results confirm that both independent variables—communication and work discipline—have a **significant and positive influence** on employee performance. The **$R^2 = 0.681$** demonstrates that 68.1 % of performance variations can be explained by these two factors, whereas 31.9 % are due to other determinants such as motivation, leadership, and organizational culture.

The regression coefficients also reveal that **work discipline ($\beta = 0.472$)** exerts a slightly stronger influence than **communication ($\beta = 0.356$)**, implying that while information flow is crucial, behavioral consistency remains the primary driver of public-sector performance.

DISCUSSION

Effective communication establishes mutual understanding and trust between leaders and subordinates. According to DeVito (2021), clear and empathetic communication facilitates cooperation and minimizes misinterpretation. In the case of DP3A Bandung, employees reported that coordination meetings and cross-department interactions occur irregularly. This irregularity can cause information asymmetry where some units possess updated directives while others lag behind leading to inefficiency. Empirical analysis in this research corroborates that improved communication increases performance outcomes by fostering cooperation and shared responsibility. Similar conclusions were reached by Pratama & Noorman (2022), who found that strong internal communication enhances motivation and task clarity among employees of PT Mackessen Indonesia. In the context of DP3A, where employees often deal with sensitive social cases, transparent and timely communication is even more critical to prevent administrative errors and ensure coordinated responses to women- and child-protection issues.Theoretically, this result supports the **social exchange theory**, which posits that open communication creates reciprocity and trust that strengthen organizational commitment. Practically, DP3A Bandung should institutionalize periodic briefings and use digital communication platforms to ensure that information flows smoothly across all levels. Work discipline proved to be the most dominant variable affecting employee

performance. Employees who demonstrate punctuality, responsibility, and compliance with organizational standards tend to perform tasks more efficiently and reliably. The findings align with Hasibuan (2022) and Pilato & Swedana (2024), who concluded that discipline reflects an employee's internalization of organizational values and self-control mechanisms. At DP3A Bandung, several indicators of discipline such as attendance, adherence to regulations, and ethical conduct still need improvement. The descriptive results and attendance records indicate recurring tardiness and occasional early departures, which suggest that supervisory monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are not yet optimal. Nevertheless, employees' awareness of ethical behavior scored relatively high, implying that they value professionalism even when procedural compliance fluctuates. Theoretically, the relationship between discipline and performance can be explained through **goal-setting theory** (Locke & Latham, 1990), which asserts that specific standards and consistent feedback increase performance. When DP3A reinforces attendance rules, clarifies expectations, and rewards compliant behavior, employee motivation and efficiency are expected to rise accordingly. The simultaneous significance of both variables suggests that communication and discipline operate synergistically rather than independently. Communication facilitates understanding of rules and procedures, while discipline ensures that employees adhere to them. This interplay creates a self-regulating environment where organizational norms are internalized through effective information exchange. This is consistent with findings by Kade & Sili (2022), who reported that the combined impact of communication and discipline explained nearly 70 % of performance variation among civil servants in Bali Province. In DP3A Bandung, the synergy between these two factors is particularly relevant because employees frequently collaborate across functional units such as child-protection services, gender-empowerment programs, and administrative divisions.

When communication is open and discipline is enforced fairly, employees experience higher job satisfaction and lower conflict intensity. This positive organizational climate enhances cooperation and accountability, directly translating into better service quality for the public. From a managerial standpoint, the findings imply that improving communication and discipline should be top priorities for leaders in public organizations. DP3A management can introduce **structured weekly coordination meetings**, **clear standard operating procedures (SOPs)**, and **transparent evaluation mechanisms**. Introducing **performance-based incentives** linked to attendance and teamwork can further encourage behavioral consistency. From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to **human-resource-management theory** by demonstrating that soft factors such as communication and discipline remain crucial determinants of performance, even within bureaucratic contexts where formal structures dominate. The study supports the argument of Mangkunegara (2021) that employee performance in the public sector is shaped not only by ability and motivation but also by relational and moral dimensions embedded in communication and discipline practices.

CONCLUSION

The present study comprehensively investigated the effect of communication and work discipline on employee performance within the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) of Bandung City. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive–verificative approach, the research empirically confirmed that both communication and discipline exert a significant and positive influence on the performance of public-sector employees. The findings are grounded in rigorous statistical testing, which revealed that these two factors collectively explain 68.1 percent of the variation in performance, while the remaining 31.9 percent is attributed to other managerial or contextual aspects such as motivation, leadership, and work environment. The results of the regression analysis and subsequent interpretation underscore that communication serves as a behavioral mechanism that enhances understanding, collaboration, and coordination among employees. In the context of DP3A Bandung, communication operates not merely as a tool for message transmission but as an organizational process that aligns perceptions, harmonizes inter-unit activities, and fosters shared responsibility. Clear and empathetic communication between supervisors and subordinates reduces uncertainty, strengthens cooperation, and ensures that information relevant to gender and child-protection programs is accurately disseminated. These findings validate the assertions of DeVito (2021) and Hariyanto (2022), who emphasized that open, interactive communication builds trust, job satisfaction, and collective performance within institutions.

Equally, work discipline emerged as the most dominant determinant of performance, evidenced by a higher regression coefficient compared to communication. Discipline represents the internalization of organizational norms and behavioral consistency that guides employees to act responsibly in accordance with established rules and standards. Employees who demonstrate high levels of discipline—such as punctuality, adherence to procedures, and professional ethics—tend to exhibit greater reliability and task completion accuracy. The findings align with the theoretical model proposed by Hasibuan (2022), which posits that discipline is the core driver of organizational productivity. In a government institution like DP3A Bandung, discipline has a moral dimension because it embodies employees' commitment to social service and accountability to the public. The combined influence of communication and discipline further reinforces the idea that employee performance is not solely a product of individual capability but a manifestation of organizational culture. Effective communication ensures that all employees understand institutional expectations, while discipline guarantees that such expectations are consistently met. This interaction creates a virtuous cycle in which understanding strengthens compliance, and compliance enhances mutual coordination. The positive synergy of these two factors fosters an environment characterized by professionalism, transparency, and integrity—qualities that are indispensable in public service institutions responsible for sensitive societal issues such as women's empowerment and child protection. From a **theoretical perspective**, this research substantiates several human resource management models,

particularly those emphasizing behavioral and relational aspects of performance management. The findings support the *social exchange theory*, which posits that reciprocal communication between leaders and employees cultivates trust and organizational citizenship behavior, and the *goal-setting theory* (Locke & Latham, 1990), which suggests that clearly communicated expectations combined with strict adherence to goals enhance performance outcomes. The study therefore contributes to the growing body of literature by offering empirical validation of these theories in a public-sector context, which is often characterized by hierarchical structures and limited flexibility compared to private organizations. From a practical perspective, several managerial implications can be derived. First, the leadership of DP3A Bandung should institutionalize formal communication systems, such as regular inter-departmental meetings, structured feedback sessions, and the use of digital communication tools to promote real-time coordination.Second, discipline must be reinforced through transparent attendance tracking, performance-based evaluation, and the integration of behavioral indicators into employee appraisal systems. Third, managers should cultivate a work culture that values accountability and respect for organizational rules, accompanied by rewards for compliant and high-performing employees. Lastly, internal policies should emphasize two-way communication, ensuring that employees are not only receivers of instructions but also contributors to institutional learning through feedback and innovation. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several **limitations**. The research was conducted in a single public institution with a relatively small population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study relied on self-reported data through questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias or social desirability tendencies among respondents. Future research could adopt a mixed-method approach combining surveys with in-depth interviews or observations to gain deeper insights into behavioral patterns. Expanding the research scope to include multiple government agencies or comparative analysis between public and private sectors would also enrich the external validity of the findings. In conclusion, this study provides robust empirical evidence that effective communication and strong work discipline are critical drivers of employee performance in public-sector organizations. By integrating behavioral factors into strategic human resource management, institutions like DP3A Bandung can enhance service quality, operational efficiency, and institutional credibility. The essence of this research lies in the understanding that performance improvement in public institutions is not merely a function of procedural compliance, but also of the quality of human interactions that sustain collaboration, integrity, and trust within the organization.

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