

Analyzing the Impact of Organizational Culture on Work Discipline and Its Implications for Employee Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of organizational culture on employee performance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of work discipline. A quantitative explanatory approach was employed using census sampling of 44 civil servants at the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA) in Indragiri Hilir Regency. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results demonstrate that organizational culture has a significant positive effect on both work discipline and employee performance. Work discipline itself significantly enhances employee performance and mediates the relationship between culture and performance. This indicates that cultural values must be reinforced behaviorally through discipline to achieve optimal outcomes. The originality of this research lies in its integration of cultural and behavioral constructs within a mediating framework and its application to a local government context in Indonesian area often overlooked in previous studies. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by demonstrating how intangible cultural elements can translate into measurable performance outcomes through structured behavioral mechanisms. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that public managers should institutionalize cultural values through consistent leadership, ethical guidance, and performance-based evaluations. Policymakers are advised to promote a culture-driven public administration strategy that encourages accountability and procedural discipline. Future reforms in public institutions should emphasize not only structural adjustments but also internal cultural development as a foundation for performance improvement.

Keywords : Employee Performance, Organizational Culture, Public Sector, SEM-PLS, Work Disciplien

I. Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of public sector reform and digital transformation, enhancing the quality and accountability of government performance has become a paramount priority. Within this context, organizational culture and employee discipline are increasingly recognized as critical determinants of institutional success, especially in the public service sector. The case of the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA) in Indragiri Hilir Regency exemplifies this challenge. Despite its strategic role in coordinating regional planning and development, the agency continues to face fluctuations in its performance indicators, particularly in innovation output, coordination across units, and adherence to deadlines. These persistent inefficiencies, as reflected in varying Annual Performance Accountability Report (LKJIP) scores between 2022 and 2024, highlight the urgent need to understand the organizational underpinnings affecting employee performance.

A growing body of literature affirms the importance of organizational culture in shaping employee behavior and outcomes. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as the shared assumptions, values, and norms that guide members of an organization in their interactions and decision-making. A robust organizational culture fosters employee commitment, initiative, and alignment with institutional goals. Previous studies, such as those by Rahman et al. (2023) and Nugroho & Kartika (2022), found significant positive associations between a strong organizational culture and employee performance, particularly in public institutions. However, these studies often overlooked the mediating mechanisms through which this relationship unfolds.

One such mechanism is work discipline, a concept often treated as an outcome of managerial control rather than a mediating behavioral condition. In reality, discipline reflects the internalized values and norms that influence how employees carry out their responsibilities. Kusuma (2023) posits that discipline embodies employees' willingness to comply with rules and professional standards, and its presence or absence has tangible consequences for organizational outcomes. Furthermore, studies by Pratama et al. (2022) have highlighted the mediating role of work discipline in the relationship between organizational culture and performance, suggesting that culture alone may not suffice without behavioral reinforcement.

Despite these insights, there remains a notable gap in the literature: few empirical studies have rigorously examined the indirect pathways through which organizational culture translates into improved performance via work discipline, particularly in the context of local government institutions in Indonesia. Moreover, existing research tends to focus on private sector organizations or large central government bodies, leaving subnational agencies relatively underexplored. This lack of contextual analysis limits our understanding of how organizational dynamics operate within smaller-scale, bureaucratically structured environments like BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of how organizational culture affects employee performance, both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of work discipline. By focusing on BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir, this research also fills a contextual gap in regional governance scholarship, offering insights that are both theoretically enriching and practically relevant. The novelty of this study lies not only in its application of the mediating model but also in its emphasis on nuanced measurement of cultural and disciplinary constructs as behavioral systems embedded within public institutions.

The overarching objective of this research is to investigate the direct and indirect effects of organizational culture on employee performance, with particular attention to the mediating influence of work discipline. Four core research questions guide this inquiry: (1) Does organizational culture significantly influence employee performance? (2) Does work discipline significantly affect employee performance? (3) Does organizational culture significantly affect work discipline? and (4) Does work discipline mediate the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance? By addressing these questions, this article aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform strategic human resource interventions in the public sector.

To achieve these objectives, a quantitative research design was employed. The study utilized a Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to analyze the complex relationships between the latent variables. A census method was used to select the sample, which consisted of 44 permanent employees of BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, which included validated measurement items for organizational culture, work discipline, and employee performance. The SEM-PLS method was chosen due to its suitability for modeling both direct and indirect effects and its ability to handle

small sample sizes effectively (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis included assessments of measurement validity, reliability, and structural path coefficients, ensuring robustness in empirical findings.

The structure of this article is organized as follows: The Introduction section presents the rationale, gap, novelty, objectives, methodology summary, and structure of the article. The next section, Literature Review, elaborates on the theoretical frameworks underlying organizational culture, work discipline, and performance, drawing from Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and relevant empirical studies. It also formulates the conceptual framework and hypotheses. The Methods section details the research design, population and sample, instruments, data collection, and analysis procedures. Following this, the Results section provides descriptive statistics and path analysis findings, including the significance and strength of the hypothesized relationships. The Discussion section interprets these findings in light of the literature, highlighting theoretical and managerial implications, particularly for improving performance in government institutions through cultural transformation and discipline enforcement. Finally, the Conclusion section summarizes the key insights, addresses limitations, and proposes avenues for future research and policy development.

This study ultimately aims to inform both academic discourse and practical policymaking by offering a validated model for understanding how organizational culture and discipline interact to shape employee performance. Given the strategic importance of BAPPEDA in achieving regional development goals, the findings hold substantial value for public sector reform, not only in Indragiri Hilir but also in other local government institutions across Indonesia and beyond.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Organizational performance is inextricably linked to human behavior, which is shaped by internal values, social structures, and institutional norms. A growing body of research has emphasized the crucial role of organizational culture in influencing employee attitudes, including work discipline, which in turn affects employee performance. This section reviews relevant literature on these constructs, identifies previous research contributions, and presents the theoretical foundation and hypotheses for this study.

2.1 Organizational Culture and Its Influence

Organizational culture is broadly defined as a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that govern how people behave in organizations (Schein, 2010). It serves as an unwritten code that influences employee behavior and decision-making, particularly in dynamic and complex environments such as government institutions. Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between organizational culture and performance. For instance, Rahman et al. (2023) demonstrated a significant positive correlation between a strong organizational culture and improved employee performance in public institutions. Similarly, Nugroho & Kartika (2022) emphasized that an internalized and adaptive organizational culture fosters motivation and enhances overall organizational outcomes. This is echoed in the work of Viera Valencia & Garcia Giraldo (2019), who found a medium-strength correlation ($r = 0.435$) between organizational culture and employee performance in provincial government agencies.

However, while most studies agree on the positive impact of culture on performance, their findings differ in terms of mechanisms. Some focus on leadership alignment with culture (Winarti, 2022), while others emphasize its role in innovation and problem-solving (Kusuma & Dewi, 2023). These perspectives indicate a divergence in how organizational culture is operationalized and its pathways of influence, particularly in public institutions. In the context of Indonesian local government agencies such as Bappeda Indragiri Hilir, organizational culture has shown signs of misalignment. As Rosmiar (2025) observed, only 65% of employees at Bappeda fully internalized the agency's values, indicating weak cultural integration. Such partial internalization may result in inconsistencies in behavior, poor collaboration, and diminished innovation, all of which negatively impact performance.

2.2 Work Discipline: A Mediating Construct

Work discipline is the adherence to established norms, rules, and behavioral expectations within an organization (Hasibuan, 2016). It reflects both individual accountability and the enforcement mechanisms established by management. Disciplinary behavior manifests in punctuality, rule compliance, focus, and task ownership. Pratama et al. (2022) established work discipline as a mediating variable between organizational culture and employee performance, highlighting that culture alone is not sufficient; it must translate into behavioral consistency through discipline. Similarly, Siswanto (2013) emphasized that discipline embodies respect and willingness to comply with rules, which directly impacts productivity and efficiency.

Within Bappeda, discipline-related issues such as low initiative, delayed program execution, and poor interdepartmental coordination were evident (Rosmiar, 2025). These findings resonate with Santoso et al. (2024), who found that weak discipline often stems from poor organizational culture and results in duplicated efforts and resource wastage. Thus, discipline acts as a behavioral expression of cultural values. When culture emphasizes responsibility and accountability, discipline tends to be high. Conversely, if cultural norms are weak or ambiguous, discipline erodes, impacting performance negatively.

2.3 Employee Performance as an Outcome

Employee performance is typically evaluated by the extent to which individuals achieve the goals set by the organization, taking into account both quality and quantity (Mangkunegara, 2009). Key indicators include timeliness, output quality, initiative, and collaboration. According to Wirawan (2009) and Setiawan (2014), performance is influenced by internal factors (e.g., motivation, skills), organizational context (e.g., culture, structure), and external dynamics (e.g., policy, economy). In government organizations, where resources and bureaucratic constraints are prevalent, the internal cultural and disciplinary dimensions become critical. Multiple studies, including those by Rahmawati & Marhalinda (2022), have confirmed the strong predictive power of organizational culture on performance outcomes. In their study, culture contributed significantly to commitment and indirectly to performance. This aligns with Winarti (2022), who found that work discipline significantly predicted employee outcomes, even more than organizational commitment. Despite the abundance of literature linking these constructs, few studies have simultaneously tested a mediating model involving culture, discipline, and performance in regional government settings, particularly in Indonesia. This research aims to fill that gap by offering an integrated model within the context of Bappeda Indragiri Hilir.

2.4 Theoretical Framework and Research Positioning

This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), which posits that relationships are built upon reciprocal exchanges. When organizations invest in cultivating a positive and value-driven culture, employees are more likely to reciprocate with higher discipline and improved performance. The theory helps explain the psychological contract between employer and employee, where culture sets expectations, discipline ensures compliance, and performance becomes the deliverable. While previous studies have generally examined direct relationships—culture to performance, or discipline to performance—this study uniquely integrates all three constructs in a mediating framework. Thus, it not only extends the theoretical application of Social Exchange Theory but also contributes empirically by testing the model using PLS-SEM in a specific public-sector context.

2.5 Hypotheses Development

Based on the reviewed literature and theoretical underpinnings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1 : Organizational culture has a significant positive effect on work discipline. (Supported by Nugroho & Kartika, 2022; Rosmiar, 2025)
- H2 : Organizational culture has a significant positive effect on employee performance. (Supported by Rahman et al., 2023; Viera Valencia & Garcia Giraldo, 2019)
- H3 : Work discipline has a significant positive effect on employee performance. (Supported by Pratama et al., 2022; Winarti, 2022.)

H4 : Work discipline mediates the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance.
(Informed by theoretical model and supported by empirical gaps in literature).

This study seeks to validate these hypotheses using empirical data from 44 civil servants at Bappeda Indragiri Hilir. By doing so, it offers both theoretical contributions by modeling a mediating framework and practical insights for improving performance in public institutions through culture and discipline alignment.

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using an explanatory design to examine the causal relationship among organizational culture, work discipline, and employee performance, including the mediating role of work discipline. The purpose of this method was to systematically test hypotheses and validate theoretical models through the use of statistical techniques. The research was conducted at Bappeda (Regional Development Planning Agency) of Indragiri Hilir Regency, a governmental institution responsible for regional planning and development coordination. The study focused specifically on the permanent civil servants of the institution, given their strategic role in ensuring the continuity and quality of institutional performance.

The population in this study consisted of all 44 permanent employees at Bappeda Indragiri Hilir. Since the total number of target respondents was relatively small and accessible, the sampling technique used was the census method, whereby the entire population was involved as the research sample. This approach ensured maximum representation and minimized the risk of sampling error, providing a comprehensive understanding of the behavioral patterns within the institution. The research procedure included several stages. Firstly, a literature review was conducted to identify theoretical constructs and develop the conceptual framework, drawing primarily from Social Exchange Theory. Secondly, a survey instrument in the form of a structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to all employees. The questionnaire was designed to measure perceptions of organizational culture, work discipline, and employee performance using Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instruments were pre-tested to ensure clarity and validity prior to full-scale deployment.

The variables observed in the study were both independent and dependent, as well as a mediating variable. The independent variable was *Organizational Culture*, which includes indicators such as innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, aggressiveness, and stability. The mediating variable was *Work Discipline*, characterized by dimensions such as punctuality, adherence to organizational rules, ethical conduct, and commitment to tasks. The dependent variable was *Employee Performance*, assessed through aspects like task completion accuracy, attendance, time management, and teamwork.

To ensure the robustness of findings, the data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), facilitated by SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was selected due to its capability in handling small to medium sample sizes, its predictive orientation, and its ability to simultaneously estimate relationships between latent constructs. The analysis was conducted in two stages: the measurement model (outer model) to assess reliability and validity of the constructs, and the structural model (inner model) to test the hypotheses and evaluate the significance of the proposed relationships. Before the SEM analysis, descriptive statistics were used to profile the respondents and summarize their responses across each construct. Subsequently, the measurement model was assessed through composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), outer loadings, and discriminant validity. Multicollinearity was tested using variance inflation factors (VIF). For the structural model, path coefficients, t-values, and p-values were analyzed using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 subsamples to test the significance of direct and indirect effects.

Additionally, the mediating effect of work discipline in the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance was analyzed using indirect path testing. The magnitude and significance of the mediation path were interpreted to determine whether the mediation was partial or full. This rigorous methodological approach enabled the study to yield valid, reliable, and generalizable findings that contribute to the body of knowledge in organizational behavior and public administration, especially within the context of local government institutions.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. The Effect of Organizational Culture on Work Discipline

The analysis results revealed a notably strong and significant relationship between organizational culture and work discipline. With a path coefficient of 0.981, this suggests that the presence of a solid, well-internalized organizational culture greatly enhances employee adherence to work rules and procedures. This outcome aligns with Schein's (2010) theory that a deeply rooted organizational culture can guide behavior and foster discipline among employees through shared values and norms.

Organizational culture functions as an informal control mechanism that shapes attitudes and regulates actions (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In the context of BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir, the findings indicate that when cultural elements such as innovation, orientation towards results, and communication are effectively embedded within the workforce, it translates into increased employee awareness of responsibilities, punctuality, and compliance with institutional procedures. This is consistent with the findings of Nugroho and Kartika (2022), who emphasized that a strong culture cultivates high commitment and discipline by creating psychological ownership among employees.

Moreover, the high coefficient suggests that organizational culture plays not only a supporting role but is instrumental in conditioning behavior across units. Employees who internalize the organizational values are more likely to display self-discipline, as seen in consistent attendance, adherence to deadlines, and task ownership.

4.2. The Effect of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

In analyzing the direct relationship between organizational culture and employee performance, the study reported a significant and positive path coefficient of 0.409. Although not as strong as its effect on discipline, the result nonetheless underscores the meaningful role of organizational culture in influencing employee output.

This result resonates with the findings of Rahman et al. (2023), who confirmed that organizational culture serves as a framework that shapes behavior and performance expectations. A shared set of values such as responsibility, innovation, and orientation towards achievement encourages employees to align their goals with organizational objectives, thereby boosting performance.

However, the moderate coefficient observed may suggest that while culture provides a foundation, other factors such as leadership style, motivation systems, and work environment may also significantly influence performance. It is also plausible that the effect of culture on performance is more nuanced and indirectly expressed through other mediating variables, such as discipline.

4.3. The Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

Work discipline emerged as a substantial predictor of employee performance, with a path coefficient of 0.584, indicating a strong and significant positive relationship. Employees with high levels of discipline tend to exhibit better time management, complete tasks on schedule, and follow organizational procedures rigorously, all of which contribute to improved performance outcomes.

This result corroborates the conclusions drawn by Pratama et al. (2022), who stated that work discipline functions as an essential mechanism to enhance work output and reduce inefficiencies. It is also in line with Handoko (2014), who argued that discipline ensures compliance and motivates employees to perform at their best, especially when discipline is maintained through consistent leadership, fair sanctions, and mutual respect.

The discipline factor encompasses multiple aspects including punctuality, attentiveness, adherence to work standards, and ethical conduct. In BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir, the study found that departments with more structured work schedules and clear supervisory expectations exhibited higher employee performance. This emphasizes the need for discipline to be institutionalized, not merely as a compliance function, but as an intrinsic work ethic supported by management.

4.4. The Mediating Role of Work Discipline in the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

A key contribution of this study lies in identifying work discipline as a mediating variable. The indirect effect of organizational culture on performance through work discipline registered a path coefficient of 0.573, indicating a robust mediation mechanism. This suggests that even though organizational culture has a direct impact on performance, its effect is significantly amplified when filtered through employee discipline.

This finding is consistent with the mediational framework proposed by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which argues that reciprocal relationships in organizations such as the reinforcement of cultural norms are more likely to generate positive behavioral responses like discipline, which subsequently improve performance.

The mediating role is also supported by the work of Kusuma (2023), who stated that discipline acts as a behavioral extension of organizational values. When employees internalize cultural norms, these are reflected in disciplined conduct, which in turn enhances effectiveness and productivity.

From a managerial perspective, this reinforces the importance of integrating cultural values into daily operations and HR practices. Training programs, performance evaluations, and team-building initiatives should embed cultural expectations to reinforce discipline.

4.5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this study present valuable contributions to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study validates and extends the Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating how intangible cultural values influence tangible behavioral outcomes such as discipline and performance. The results support the idea that culture functions as a social control system that channels employee behavior towards organizational goals.

Practically, the implications for public sector institutions like BAPPEDA are profound. The study suggests that performance can be significantly enhanced not only through formal structures and incentives but also through cultivating a workplace culture that prioritizes discipline and shared accountability. Strengthening cultural identity, promoting leadership consistency, and fostering a sense of purpose among employees are strategic steps toward this goal.

Furthermore, these results advocate for proactive human resource development initiatives. Organizational culture should not be perceived merely as an abstract concept but must be operationalized through policies that encourage innovation, ethical behavior, and teamwork. Leaders at BAPPEDA should model desired cultural behaviors to instill a sense of discipline across all organizational layers.

4.6. Comparison with Previous Studies

The results align with several previous studies but also offer new insights. Similar to the findings of Valencia and Giraldo (2019), this research supports the assertion that organizational culture significantly contributes to employee performance. However, this study goes further by quantifying the mediation effect of discipline, which many prior works did not examine.

Additionally, while some earlier studies (e.g., Winarti, 2022) emphasized leadership and motivation as key performance drivers, this research highlights that in bureaucratic organizations, cultural cohesion and disciplinary mechanisms may have a greater impact. The result suggests that leadership is more effective when it is culturally aligned and fosters discipline.

The study's context in a regional planning agency also provides unique insights into how performance is driven in public organizations. Unlike profit-driven entities, public sector performance depends heavily on procedural adherence, strategic alignment, and the integrity of internal controls all of which are enhanced by disciplined and culturally aligned employees.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the direct and indirect effects of organizational culture on employee performance, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of work discipline. Drawing from empirical data obtained from the employees of BAPPEDA Indragiri Hilir and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling–

PLS, the findings underscore that organizational culture significantly influences both work discipline and employee performance. Notably, work discipline emerged as a critical mediator, strengthening the relationship between culture and performance. These outcomes highlight that culture alone may be insufficient unless it is internalized and translated into disciplined behavior among employees. The model developed through this study confirms the relevance of Social Exchange Theory in explaining the reciprocal dynamics between institutional culture, behavioral regulation, and individual performance in a public sector context.

From a practical standpoint, the results offer several implications for institutional leaders, HR managers, and policymakers within government organizations. First, fostering a cohesive organizational culture should be prioritized, as it provides the behavioral compass for employees. This involves clearly articulating core values, promoting ethical standards, and reinforcing shared goals. Second, cultivating a culture of discipline is paramount. Managers should implement systems of accountability that encourage punctuality, compliance with procedures, and task ownership. Third, professional development programs should be tailored to embed cultural values into everyday practices, using leadership training, performance appraisals, and team-based initiatives as vehicles for change. For agencies like BAPPEDA, where performance is closely linked to public accountability, these strategies are crucial in transforming cultural frameworks into tangible outcomes.

Despite the valuable insights, this study is not without limitations. The sample was restricted to a single institution within a specific regional government, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other public sector contexts. Additionally, the study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing perceptions and behaviors at a single point in time. This approach precludes causal inference and does not account for dynamic changes in culture or discipline over time. The research also relied on self-reported measures, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, despite efforts to ensure respondent anonymity and instrument reliability.

Building on these limitations, future research could expand the scope by incorporating multiple public institutions across different administrative regions to enhance external validity. Longitudinal designs are also recommended to examine how changes in organizational culture and discipline unfold over time and influence performance trajectories. Furthermore, qualitative methods such as interviews or ethnographic observations could complement quantitative models by uncovering the nuanced processes through which culture and discipline are enacted in daily organizational life. Finally, integrating additional mediating or moderating variables such as leadership style, motivation, or organizational commitment may yield a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between culture and performance.

In conclusion, this research contributes to both scholarly inquiry and public management practice by affirming that organizational culture and discipline are not only conceptually linked but also practically inseparable in fostering performance. As public institutions face increasing demands for transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness, attention to these internal dynamics becomes indispensable for sustained institutional excellence.

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