

## ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION AND PUNISHMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE WITH WORK DISCIPLINE AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT PT PLN (PERSERO) UP3 PEMATANGSIANTAR

Ahmad Taufik<sup>1</sup>, Mesra B<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Isa Indrawan<sup>3</sup>, Kiki Farida Ferine<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mahasiswa Magister Manajemen Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi

<sup>2,3,4</sup>Magister Manajemen Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi

Correspondence Author: [mesrab@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id](mailto:mesrab@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id)

Received : 10 July 2025  
Revised : 25 July 2025  
Accepted : 10 August 2025

Published : 31 August 2025  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/morfai.v5i3.3952>  
Link Publish : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/MORFAI/article/view/3952>

### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of communication and punishment on employee performance with work discipline as an intervening variable at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar. The research method used is quantitative with the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The study population was all 117 permanent employees of PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar who also served as research samples. The results showed that communication had a positive and significant effect on employee performance and work discipline. Punishment also had a positive and significant effect on employee performance and work discipline. In addition, work discipline was proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Other findings showed that work discipline played a role as an intervening variable in the relationship between communication and performance, as well as the relationship between punishment and employee performance. The R-square value of work discipline was 0.844 and employee performance was 0.863, which means that this research model has strong explanatory power. The practical implications of this research are the need for company management to clarify superior instructions, socialize punishment rules, especially those related to layoffs, in a transparent manner, improve work discipline development, and provide more training and trust to employees so that they are able to work independently.

**Keywords:** *communication, punishment, work discipline, employee performance*

### INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a crucial factor in determining the success of an organization, particularly a public service provider like PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar. According to Mathis & Jackson (2020), performance is the work results achieved by an individual or group within an organization within their authority and responsibility to achieve goals legally, ethically, and morally. Therefore, improving employee performance is significantly influenced by effective human resource management. One influential factor is organizational communication. Effective communication serves as a means of conveying information, coordinating, and establishing shared understanding. Robbins & Judge (2022) emphasized that good communication within an organization can minimize misunderstandings, strengthen coordination, and increase employee motivation in completing their work. Furthermore, research by Rahman & Putri (2021) found that effective organizational communication significantly impacts employee performance because clear messages help employees understand company targets and expectations. Besides communication, punishment or sanctions are also important variables in influencing performance. According to Sutrisno (2020), punishment is an effort to impose negative consequences for violations of organizational rules with the aim of creating a deterrent effect and fostering discipline. Recent research by Harahap & Nasution (2022) shows that consistent and fair implementation of punishment can increase employee compliance with company rules, thus positively impacting their performance. However, if punishment is disproportionate, it can reduce work motivation and even lead to conflict. In this context, work discipline plays a highly strategic role. Discipline is defined as an

employee's willingness and obedience to comply with organizational rules, whether voluntarily or unwillingly (Hasibuan, 2021). According to research by Sari & Wahyudi (2023), work discipline acts as a mediating variable, bridging the influence of managerial factors (communication, leadership, and punishment) on employee performance. The stronger an employee's work discipline, the more optimal the achievement of company targets. Thus, it can be understood that effective communication and appropriate punishment not only directly influence employee performance but also through improving work discipline. Therefore, this study entitled "Analysis of Communication and Punishment on Employee Performance with Work Discipline as an Intervening Variable at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar" was conducted to provide empirical evidence as well as practical contributions in efforts to improve the quality of employee performance in the public service sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Employee performance**

#### **Understanding Employee Performance**

Mathis & Jackson (2020) define employee performance as "the work results achieved by an individual or group within an organization, in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities, in order to achieve organizational goals legally, legally, and in accordance with morals and ethics." This means that performance reflects the level of achievement of an employee in carrying out their duties, not only in terms of the final result, but also the work process undertaken in accordance with applicable rules and norms.

#### **Employee Performance Indicators**

Mathis & Jackson (2020) mention several main indicators of employee performance, namely:

- 1) Quantity of Work  
How much work an employee can complete in a given period.
- 2) Quality of Work  
The extent to which the work results meet standards, precision, neatness and accuracy.
- 3) Punctuality  
The ability of employees to complete work within the specified time limit, as well as the effectiveness in using working time.
- 4) Cooperation  
The ability to work together with colleagues, leaders, and cross-unit teams to achieve common goals.
- 5) Reliability/Resilience  
The level of responsibility, independence, and consistency of employees in completing tasks without the need for intensive supervision.

### **Work Discipline**

#### **Understanding Work Discipline**

Hasibuan (2021) defines work discipline as an individual's awareness and willingness to comply with all organizational regulations and applicable social norms. Awareness refers to a person's voluntary adherence to all rules and awareness of their responsibilities. Willingness refers to a person's attitudes, behaviors, and actions that demonstrate compliance with both written and unwritten regulations. Therefore, work discipline reflects the extent to which an employee demonstrates compliance, obedience, and consistency in implementing the provisions set by the organization.

#### **Work Discipline Indicators**

According to Hasibuan (2021), work discipline indicators can be seen from the following aspects:

1. Attendance (Absenteeism)  
The level of regularity and punctuality in attending work.
2. Compliance with Work Rules  
Compliance with company regulations, both written and unwritten.
3. Compliance with Work Standards  
The extent to which employees follow applicable work procedures and standards.
4. Alert Level  
The seriousness of employees in working, caution, and a cautious attitude so as not to harm the company.

5. Work Ethics

Work behavior that reflects responsibility, honesty, and a professional attitude in carrying out tasks.

**Punishment**

**Definition of Punishment**

According to Sutrisno (2020), "Punishment is a threat or action given to employees who violate the rules, with the aim of improving behavior, maintaining discipline, and preventing the recurrence of violations in the future." In other words, punishment is a management tool to control employee behavior so that it remains in accordance with the standards, procedures, and norms that apply within the organization

**Punishment Indicator**

According to Sutrisno (2020) in his book Human Resource Management, punishment is a management effort to correct and discipline employees who commit violations. Sutrisno explains that the form of punishment can be used as an indicator for measuring work discipline, namely:

1. Verbal Warning  
A light punishment is a direct verbal warning to employees who violate the rules.
2. Written Warning  
Issuing an official warning letter as a form of stricter punishment.
3. Delay of Employee Rights  
For example, postponing salary increases, job promotions, or temporarily suspending certain benefits.
4. Demotion  
A form of punishment by demoting an employee's position or responsibility due to serious violations.
5. Termination of Employment (PHK)  
The most severe punishment is given if an employee commits a very serious or repeated violation.

**Definition of Communication**

According to Robbins & Judge (2022) in their book Organizational Behavior, "Communication is the transfer and understanding of meaning." This means that communication is not just about conveying a message, but also ensuring that the message is understood by the recipient as intended by the sender. In organizations, effective communication serves as a means of coordination, conveying instructions, making decisions, and building relationships between individuals.

**Communication Indicators According to Robbins & Judge (2022)**

Robbins & Judge (2022) stated that the effectiveness of communication in an organization can be seen from several indicators, namely:

1. Clarity of Message  
The message conveyed is easy to understand, does not give rise to multiple interpretations.
2. Completeness of Information  
The information provided includes everything the recipient needs to act.
3. Timeliness of Delivery  
Information is delivered at the right time, not too late, so that it is relevant for decision making.
4. Accuracy of Information  
The information provided is correct, reliable, and factual.
5. Feedback  
The presence of a response or feedback from the message recipient that indicates the message is understood or needs clarification.

### Conceptual Framework

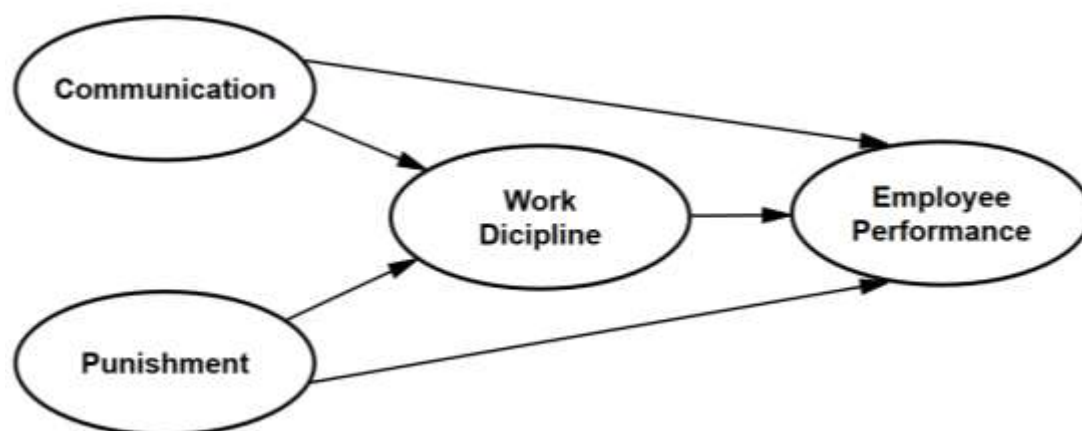


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Research Hypothesis:

- H1 : Communication has a positive and significant influence on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H2: Communication has a positive and significant influence on work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H3 : Punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H4 :Punishment has a positive and significant effect on work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H5 : Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H6 : Communication has a positive and significant influence on performance through work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
- H7 :Punishment has a positive and significant effect on performance through work discipline at PT PLN UP3 Pematangsiantar.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Types of research

The type of research used by the researcher was quantitative. This type of quantitative research was conducted to conduct a study aimed at tailoring research and analyzing communication and punishment on employee performance, with work discipline as an intervening variable at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.

### Research Location and Research Time

The research location was at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar, located at Jalan Kapten MH Sitorus No. 1, Proklamasi, West Siantar District, Pematangsiantar City, North Sumatra. The research period was carried out for 3 months, from May to August 2025.

### Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2017) states that population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn. The population and sample in this study were all permanent employees at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar, totaling 117 people.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis musePLS Algorithm, produce:

### Validity Test

Table 1. ValuesOuter Loadings

	Communication	Employee Performance	Punishment	Work Discipline
X1.1	0.885			
X1.2	0.901			
X1.3	0.921			
X1.4	0.930			
X1.5	0.939			
X1.6	0.915			
X2.1			0.921	
X2.2			0.916	
X2.3			0.921	
X2.4			0.923	
X2.5			0.869	
X2.6			0.896	
Y.1		0.896		
Y.2		0.934		
Y.3		0.919		
Y.4		0.915		
Y.5		0.865		
Z.1				0.854
Z.2				0.821
Z.3				0.875
Z.4				0.900
Z.5				0.889

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, it shows the results of testing the outer model through the loading factor value /Outer loadings: All indicators for each variable have loading values  $\geq 0.70$ . This indicates that each indicator measured is valid and robust. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire meet the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

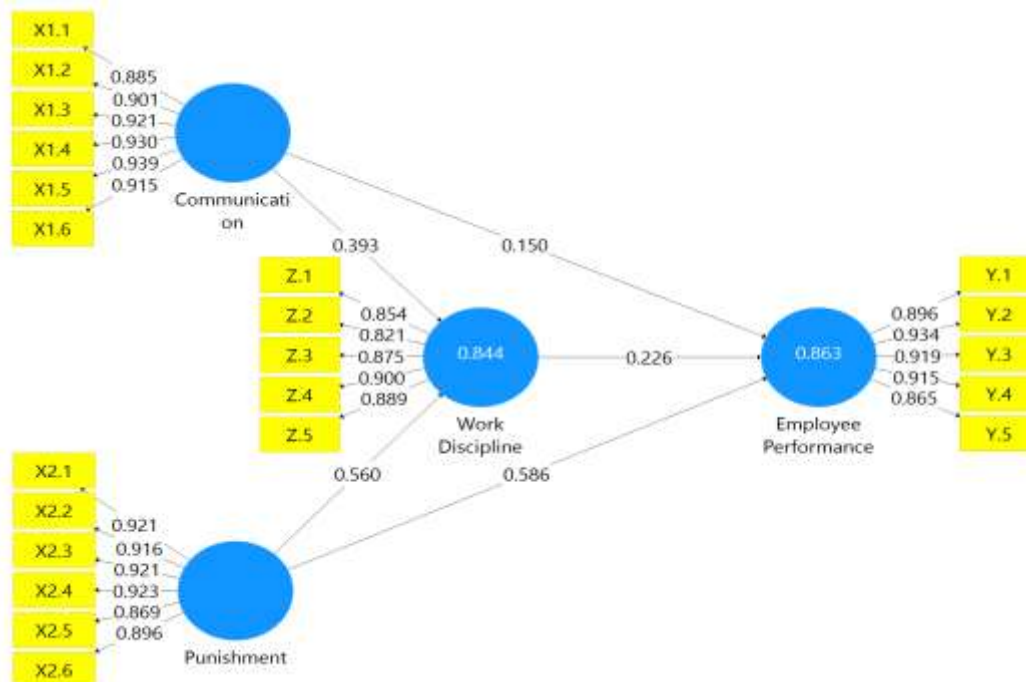


Figure 1. Outer Loading

In this study there is an equation and the equation consists of two substructures for substructure 1:

$$Z = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e_1$$

$$Z = 0.393 X_1 + 0.560 X_2 + e_1$$

For substructure 2:

$$Y = \beta_3 X_1 + \beta_4 X_2 + \beta_5 Z + e_2$$

$$Y = 0.150 X_1 + 0.586 X_2 + 0.226 Z + e_2$$

### Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Communication	0.961	0.962	0.969	0.838
Punishment	0.957	0.958	0.966	0.824
Work Discipline	0.918	0.921	0.939	0.754
Employee Performance	0.945	0.947	0.958	0.821

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 2 above shows that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and can be relied upon to measure their respective constructs. Therefore, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in testing the structural model.

### Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

Evaluating a model with PLS begins by examining the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the results of R-square estimation using SmartPLS.



Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Work Discipline	0.844	0.843
Employee Performance	0.863	0.862

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 3, there is an R square value for both dependent variables for the work discipline variable, there is an R square value of 0.844, meaning that the influence of communication and punishment is 0.844 or 84.4%, the remainder is on other variables outside the model. The R square value of employee performance is 0.863, meaning that communication, punishment, and work discipline are 0.863 or 86.3%, the remainder is on other variables outside the model.

### Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

#### Hypothesis Testing

#### Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct influence between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data processing results show the direct influence values, as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Communication -> Employee Performance	0.150	2,087	0.037	Accepted
Communication -> Work Discipline	0.393	5,629	0,000	Accepted
Punishment -> Employee Performance	0.586	7,462	0,000	Accepted
Punishment -> Work Discipline	0.560	8,179	0,000	Accepted
Work Discipline -> Employee Performance	0.226	3,252	0.001	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

In the results of Table 4, there are direct influence values as follows:

1. Communication has a positive and significant influence on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 2.087, above 1.96, and a significance level of 0.037, below 0.05, indicate that communication has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding aligns with previous research, indicating that communication has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Sugiono & Tobing, 2021).
2. Communication has a positive and significant influence on work discipline with a t-statistic value of 5.629 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05 means that communication has a positive and significant effect on work discipline because the significance value is below 0.05. This study is in line with research stating that communication has a positive and significant effect on employee work discipline (Gresida & Utama, 2019).
3. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 7.462 above 1.96 and a significance level of 0.000 below 0.05, indicating that punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are consistent with previous research, indicating that punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT. Bintang Toedjoe Cikarang (Gunawan et al., 2023).
4. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on work discipline with a t-statistic value of 8.179, above 1.96, and a significance level of 0.000 below 0.05, indicating that punishment has a positive and significant effect on work

discipline, as the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study align with previous research, indicating that punishment has a positive and significant effect on work discipline (Purnomo, 2021).

5. Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-statistic value of 3.252A value above 1.96 and a significance level of 0.001, below 0.05, indicates that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding aligns with previous research, indicating that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Ariesni & Asnur, 2021).

### **Indirect Influence Between Variables**

The indirect influence between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects values. The data processing results show the indirect effect values, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Communication -> Work Discipline -> Employee Performance	0.089	2,615	0.009	Accepted
Punishment -> Work Discipline -> Employee Performance	0.127	3,149	0.002	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 5 there is an indirect influence between variables which will be explained as follows:

1. Communication has a positive and significant influence on employee performance through work discipline with a t-statistic value of 2.615 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.009 below 0.05 means that work discipline plays a role as an intervening variable between communication and employee performance.
2. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work discipline with a t-statistic value of 3.149 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.002 below 0.05 means that work discipline acts as an intervening variable between punishment and employee performance.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Communication has a positive and significant influence on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
2. Communication has a positive and significant influence on work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
3. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
4. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
5. Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
6. Communication has a positive and significant influence on performance through work discipline at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Pematangsiantar.
7. Punishment has a positive and significant effect on performance through work discipline at PT PLN UP3 Pematangsiantar.

### **SUGGESTION**

1. In the communication variable, the statement with the lowest score was "I clearly understand the instructions given by my superior." Therefore, the suggestion that can be given is that superiors must provide instructions as clearly as possible to their subordinates so that the instructions are clear and easy to implement.
2. For the punishment variable, the statement with the lowest score was "I know that the company can lay off employees who commit serious violations." The advice that can be given to employees is that the company needs to socialize the layoff rules transparently so that employees understand that layoffs are only applied for serious or repeated violations.



3. In the work discipline variable, the statement with the lowest score was "I always comply with the work regulations that apply in the company, both written and unwritten." Therefore, the suggestion that can be given is that the company needs to increase supervision and guidance consistently so that employees are more compliant with the applicable work regulations.
4. In the employee performance variable, the statement with the lowest score was "I can complete tasks responsibly without needing intensive supervision from superiors." Therefore, the suggestion that can be given is that companies need to provide more training and trust to employees so that they are accustomed to working independently and consistently completing tasks without constant supervision.

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