

Why Discipline and Happiness Matter in Boosting Government Employee Performance

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Abstract:

This study examines the effect of work discipline and the happiness index on employee performance at the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports of Tojo Una-Una Regency. A quantitative survey method with an associative approach was used, involving 60 proportionally random-selected respondents from a population of 182 employees. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 25. The results show that both work discipline and the happiness index simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an R^2 value of 0.327. Partially, work discipline ($p = 0.025$) and the happiness index ($p = 0.003$) also have a significant effect. These findings indicate that improving employee discipline—such as compliance with working hours and task responsibilities—and enhancing psychological well-being can increase productivity and work effectiveness. The practical implication highlights the importance of human resource management strategies focused on discipline and emotional well-being to improve public sector performance.

Key Words: Work Discipline, Happiness Index, Employee Performance

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INTRODUCTION

Work discipline and employee happiness are crucial factors influencing organizational performance, especially in public sector institutions. In recent years, many local governments have implemented management systems to improve work culture and employee well-being (Awashreh & AlGhunaimi, 2024; Haricharan, 2023; Maulidi, 2025b). Integrating happiness indicators into employee management policies has become an innovative step to enhance job satisfaction and productivity (Martínez-Falcó, Sánchez-García, Marco-Lajara, & Millán-Tudela, 2024; Maulidi, 2025a; Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2025). In public administration, improving discipline and happiness is not optional but a strategic necessity (Amir et al., 2025; Lim, 2022; Princess, 2024).

Administrative modernization has reshaped competition and accountability in government institutions, requiring higher standards of employee performance (Addo, 2022; Masum et al., 2023; Romzy et al., 2025).

Regional government agencies, including education departments, are equally influenced by global governance trends (Abbott & Faude, 2022; Bokhari & Myeong, 2023; Cashore et al., 2021). Increasing public expectations for transparency and service quality, demand improved discipline and psychological well-being among employees (Abu Yasid Albustomi & Hefniy, 2024; Haricharan, 2023; Hassan et al., 2022). Therefore, the relationship between work discipline and happiness index is an important area to study, particularly in measuring its impact on employee performance (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023; Mendoza-Ocasal et al., 2022; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023).

According to performance management theory, employee performance can be viewed as the outcome of behavioral control and emotional stability (Kundi et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023; Tseng et al., 2022). Work discipline refers to adherence to organizational rules, punctuality, and consistency in task completion (Lim, 2022; Maulidah et al., 2024), while the happiness index reflects psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Al Mursyidin & A'lal Hikam, 2024; Choi et al., 2021; Raudenská, 2023). Optimal discipline and happiness are expected to lead to higher job commitment, creativity, and service quality (Martínez-Falcó, Sánchez-García, Marco-Lajara, & Millan-Tudela, 2024).

Work discipline is a fundamental determinant of organizational effectiveness. Employees who comply with regulations tend to exhibit greater reliability, responsibility, and teamwork (Haricharan, 2023; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023). Meanwhile, happiness plays a key role in shaping motivation and engagement (Li et al., 2023; Raudenská, 2023). In other words, a disciplined and happy employee is more likely to perform consistently, contribute positively, and support institutional goals (Cashore et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2021).

Improving employee performance through discipline and happiness is essential for regional governments in the digital era (Kundi et al., 2022). Despite many studies examining these variables in corporate settings, limited research has focused on government institutions, particularly in the education sector (Masum et al., 2023). Employee performance in educational departments reflects both the efficiency of service delivery and the success of public administration reforms (Awashreh & AlGhunaimi, 2024).

Empirical studies have shown that both discipline and happiness significantly influence performance outcomes. Adwan & Ahmed (2024) revealed that disciplined behavior positively affects employee productivity and accountability. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) found that a higher happiness index enhances motivation and reduces absenteeism. However, Chen et al. (2023) argued that performance is also affected by contextual factors such as leadership and workload, suggesting that these relationships require further investigation in public sector organizations.

Although many studies have analyzed the influence of discipline and happiness on performance, few have specifically examined their combined effect within government educational offices. Most research focuses on the private

sector, leaving a gap in studies related to regional public institutions. Moreover, the integration of happiness metrics in local government agencies remains underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by comprehensively examining the effect of work discipline and happiness index on employee performance at the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports of Tojo Una-Una Regency. The research addresses three main questions: (1) Does work discipline significantly affect employee performance? (2) Does the happiness index significantly affect employee performance? (3) Do work discipline and happiness index together significantly influence employee performance? Understanding these relationships provides managers with insights to enhance staff discipline, motivation, and overall institutional effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative survey method with an associative approach to determine the causal relationship between work discipline, happiness index, and employee performance (Bhangu et al., 2023; Köhler et al., 2022; Peroni et al., 2023). The research was conducted at the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports of Tojo Una-Una Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and documentation, which allowed researchers to obtain comprehensive information on employee attitudes and behavior. The population consisted of 182 employees, and based on the sampling formula proposed by Roscoe in Sugiyono (2021), a total of 60 respondents were selected as the research sample using a proportionate random sampling technique. This method was chosen because the population is relatively homogeneous in position and job function.

Quantitative research is grounded in the positivist philosophy, which aims to test hypotheses through measurable data and statistical analysis (Burns et al., 2022; Naeem et al., 2023). The data in this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to measure the magnitude of the influence of independent variables (work discipline and happiness index) on the dependent variable (employee performance). The analytical process was assisted by SPSS version 25, which included several stages of classical assumption testing and hypothesis testing.

The analytical process began with data screening and descriptive analysis to summarize respondent characteristics and variable tendencies. Subsequently, classical assumption tests were performed, including:

Normality Test

The normality test is carried out to find out whether the sample used is normally distributed or not. In conducting the data normality test, the researcher used the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality* in the SPSS 25 program. The basis for making decisions about whether the sample is normally distributed or not,

namely by looking at probability (*Asymtic Significanted*). If the probability > 0.05 then the residual data is normally distributed, on the other hand, if the probability is < 0.05 then the residual data is not normally distributed.

Table 1. Normality Test Results
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		60
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.86161701
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.088
	Positive	.088
	Negative	-.073
Test Statistic		.088
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200c,d

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the significance value obtained from the results of the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample* test is 0.200 with a significance above 0.05 ($0.061 > 0.05$). Based on these results, the researcher can conclude that based on the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample* test, the data obtained a normal distributed residual value.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test aims to find out whether the regression model finds a correlation between independent variables (*independent*). If the value *tolerance* > 0.1 and the VIF value < 5 , it can be concluded that in the multiple regression model does not occur Multicollinearity, on the other hand, if *tolerance* < 0.1 and the VIF value > 5 , it can be concluded that in the multiple regression model, multicollinearity is present (Burns et al., 2022). The results of the Multicollinearity Test in this study can be seen in the following table 2:

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

		Coefficient	
		Collinearity Statistics	
Type		Tolerance	VIVID
1	(Constant)		
	X1	.784	1.275
	X2	.784	1.275

Based on table 2 above, the researcher can conclude that each independent variable has a *tolerance* value of > 0.1 and a VIF value of < 10 so that it is said that the independent variable in this study does not occur multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test aims to test a regression model where there is

an inconsistency in the variance from the residual of one observation to another. In this study, to detect the existence of heteroscedasticity, it can be seen in the *scatterplot graph*. If there is a certain pattern such as points that form a certain pattern, heteroscedasticity occurs. Meanwhile, if there is no clear pattern and the dots spread above and below the zero in the Y submersion, then it can be concluded that heteroscedasticity does not occur. The following are the results of the heteroscedasticity test with *scatterplot* graphs using SPSS:

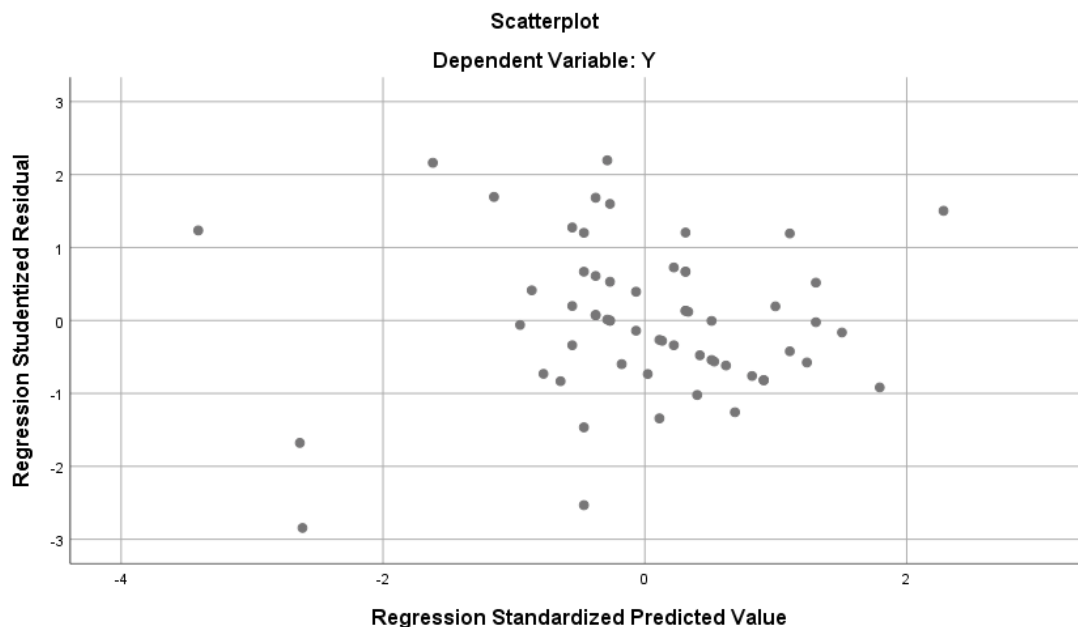


Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Based on Figure 1 above, the researcher can conclude that the free variable in this study does not occur heteroscedasticity because the dots are spread above and below zero and do not form a clear pattern.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The effect of work discipline and happiness index on employee performance at the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports (DIKPORA) of Tojo Una-Una Regency is presented in this section. The researchers provide a comprehensive presentation to give a deeper understanding of the relationships among variables and their implications for improving organizational performance in the public sector.

The Effect of Happiness Index on Employee Performance

The first hypothesis (H_1) examines the influence of work discipline on employee performance. Linear regression analysis was employed to determine the pattern of the relationship between the independent variable (X_1) and the dependent variable (Y). SPSS version 25 was used as the statistical tool. The

results for variables X_1 and Y are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

Type	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.943	11.912	.583	.562
Work Discipline	0.374	0.162	0.283	2.307
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance				

Source: SPSS Primary Data Processing, 2025

According to Table 3, the t-test was used to determine the significance of the effect of work discipline on employee performance. With a sample size of 60 respondents, the degrees of freedom (df) = 58, and the t-table value was 1.612. The t-test result was 2.307, which is higher than the t-table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. This means that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. These findings indicate that employees who consistently follow attendance schedules, adhere to regulations, and carry out their duties responsibly tend to achieve better performance. Increased discipline contributes directly to higher work effectiveness and the quality of public service at DIKPORA Tojo Una-Una.

The Effect of Happiness Index on Employee Performance

The second hypothesis (H_2) tests whether the happiness index positively influences employee performance. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variable (X_2) and the dependent variable (Y) using SPSS Statistics. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Effect of Happiness Index on Employee Performance

Type	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-4.526	4.781	-.947	.344
Happiness Index	0.258	0.083	0.382	3.112
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance				

Source: SPSS Primary Data Processing, 2025

Based on Table 4, the obtained t-value of 3.112 is greater than the t-table value of 1.612, with a significance level of $0.003 < 0.05$. This result confirms that the happiness index has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Employees who experience higher happiness levels—reflected in their well-being, workplace environment, and social relationships—tend to show greater enthusiasm and productivity in their work. This finding highlights that psychological well-being and happiness contribute to improved performance. Happy employees are more motivated, committed, and willing to go beyond their formal duties, thereby strengthening the organization's service quality.

The Joint Effect of Work Discipline and Happiness Index on Employee Performance

The third hypothesis (H₃) investigates the simultaneous influence of work discipline (X₁) and happiness index (X₂) on employee performance (Y). Multiple regression analysis was applied to assess the combined effect of these independent variables on the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The Effect of Work Discipline and Happiness Index on Employee Performance

Type	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	6.943	11.912	–	.583
Work Discipline	0.374	0.162	0.283	2.307
Happiness Index	0.258	0.083	0.382	3.112

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance
r = 0.572 r² = 0.327 adjusted r² = 0.303
Source: SPSS Primary Data Processing, 2025

As shown in Table 5, work discipline and the happiness index jointly exert a positive and significant influence on employee performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.327$) indicates that 32.7% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by these two variables, while the remaining 67.3% is influenced by other factors not included in this study. These findings provide empirical evidence that enhancing work discipline while simultaneously improving employee happiness can significantly boost overall performance. Both factors play a crucial role in shaping an efficient and harmonious work environment in public institutions. Strengthening these dimensions can thus contribute to achieving higher organizational productivity and better service outcomes.

Discussion

This study found that work discipline and happiness index had a significant effect on employee performance at the Education, Youth, and Sports Office of Tojo Una-Una Regency. The results of the analysis showed that the value of F_{cal} of 13.824 was greater than the F_{table} of 3.162 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This confirms that these two variables together contribute positively to improving employee performance. These findings support previous research by Martínez-Falcó (2024) which shows that work discipline and psychological well-being are important factors in encouraging work effectiveness in government agencies. This research expands the understanding of the importance of strengthening employee discipline and happiness as a strategy to improve the performance of state civil servants in the regions.

In addition, the results of this study confirm that work discipline is a dominant factor in shaping employee performance. The partial test showed a t-

count value of $2.307 > 1.612$ with a significance of 0.025, which means that this variable has a positive and significant effect on performance. Employees who have a high level of discipline show compliance with the rules of working hours, procedures, and responsibilities in carrying out their duties. These findings reinforce the results of a study by Awashreh & AlGhunaimi (2024) which states that discipline is the main indicator of increasing work effectiveness and organizational stability. In this context, the implementation of a consistent supervision and coaching system is an important instrument to foster awareness of discipline in government institutions.

Meanwhile, the happiness index variable has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The t-count value of $3.112 > 1.612$ with a significance of 0.003 shows that the higher the level of employee happiness, the better the performance produced. The happiness index reflects emotional conditions and psychological well-being that affect work morale, collaboration, and productivity. These results are in line with research Haricharan (2023) which shows that job happiness can increase employee effectiveness through increased emotional engagement and commitment to the organization. Thus, agencies need to pay attention to welfare aspects and a conducive work atmosphere as part of a strategy to improve employee performance.

Furthermore, the combination of work discipline and happiness index has been shown to have a stronger impact on performance improvement. The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.327 indicates that 32.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by these two variables together. These findings are in line with research Li et al. (2023) which affirms that the factors of discipline and happiness complement each other in creating a productive and stable work environment. In the context of public organizations, the integration between fostering discipline and improving job happiness is key in building an effective and sustainable work system.

This research makes an important contribution to public sector human resource management by emphasizing that strengthening work discipline and increasing employee happiness is a dual strategy to encourage optimal performance. This result also provides practical implications for regional policymakers to not only enforce personnel regulations, but also pay attention to psychological factors and the welfare of the apparatus. By integrating these two aspects, government agencies can build a work culture that is more adaptive, productive, and oriented towards quality public services.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that work discipline and happiness index partially or simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on the performance of employees of the Tojo Una-Una Regency Education, Youth and Sports Office. The findings show that improved discipline, such as adherence to working hours and

task responsibilities, contributes significantly to work effectiveness. Similarly, higher levels of employee happiness—which are reflected in psychological well-being, work environment, and social relationships—correlate with better motivation and productivity. Statistically, 32.7% of employee performance variations can be explained by these two variables. These results confirm the importance of integrated management of discipline and emotional well-being aspects in encouraging optimal performance in the public sector. This research provides an empirical basis for strengthening managerial strategies that are oriented towards fostering discipline and improving the quality of employees' work lives. The potential for further research is open to explore other factors that have not yet been revealed in this model.

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