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THE ROLE OF WORK DISCIPLINE AND COMMUNICATION ON PUBLIC SERVICE QUALITY

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Abstract

Public agencies delivering employment services often face the challenge of translating internal workplace conditions into consistent service quality for the community. This study examines how work discipline and communication affect public service quality at the Lubuklinggau City Department of Manpower. Using a quantitative approach with a total sampling technique involving all 38 employees of the agency, data were analyzed using regression analysis with partial t-tests. Both work discipline and communication were found to have a statistically significant partial effect on service quality, with work discipline showing the stronger explanatory power (R^2 = .566) compared with communication (R^2 = .292). These findings suggest that service quality in this public sector setting depends on how consistently employees comply with organizational rules and standards and on how clear and consistent internal communication is. The study's practical implication is that agency leadership should reinforce disciplinary standards and improve communication channels as complementary efforts to strengthen public service quality.

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INTRODUCTION

The Manpower Office is one of the governmental bodies operating within the service domain, primarily focusing on delivering public-oriented services. In pursuit of this mission, its personnel must possess a solid understanding of effective public service to ensure community satisfaction, since service is vital in this sector and cannot be taken lightly (Iddrisu & Mohammed, 2024). Unlike private firms, public service organisations are expected to deliver services that serve societal interests and sustain citizen satisfaction rather than primarily financial results (Shahaab et al., 2023), and systematic reviews of citizen satisfaction research confirm that satisfaction with public services has become a core performance concern in public administration (Kim et al., 2024). Public trust and loyalty are maintained when citizens' expectations regarding service quality are consistently met, and competent human resources, individuals capable of strategic thinking, planning, and demonstrating technical expertise, are essential to realize a government institution's objectives (Siraj & Hágen, 2023). Recent studies likewise link service quality with citizens' trust in government and with their satisfaction and loyalty toward government services (Alkraiji & Ameen, 2021; Alsarraf et al., 2022; Hartanti et al., 2021). This dynamic is consistent with the expectancy-disconfirmation model of citizen satisfaction, which shows across a large body of public-

service research that satisfaction with government services is driven primarily by whether service delivery meets or falls short of citizens' prior expectations, rather than by service quality in isolation (Zhang et al., 2022). Gaps between objective and subjective measures of public-service performance have likewise been shown to matter for citizen satisfaction (Lee & Kim, 2023), which makes the consistency of everyday service delivery an important concern for public agencies. These capabilities are fundamental for ensuring that development initiatives have a long-term, positive impact on society, and the enduring success of such institutions relies heavily on employees who dedicate their time, intellect, and abilities to the effective functioning of the organization. Key aspects that require close attention include the level of discipline among staff, the quality of communication with the public, and the overall standard of service delivery; these elements are critical in promoting public satisfaction, especially for individuals seeking employment through the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office. Public service quality is itself multidimensional, with multiple determinants identified in recent factor-analytic work (Carvalho Filho et al., 2025), and citizen feedback is increasingly used to assess the quality of digital government services (Ye et al., 2023). Research has highlighted employee discipline's influence on public service effectiveness (Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021), with discipline in the workplace described as a managerial tool for guiding employees to modify behaviour in accordance with organisational expectations and prevailing social norms, fostering awareness and commitment to comply with rules and uphold professional standards.

Beyond these conceptual linkages, the empirical starting point for this study is a concrete efficiency problem in the Job Seeker's Identification Card (AK-1) service at the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office. Public employment services in other countries likewise face organisational gaps between policy design and frontline delivery, for example in the integration and tailoring of support for jobseekers (McGauran, 2021) and in managerial rationalisation that reshapes frontline advisers' work (Delpierre et al., 2023), and the way administrative responsibilities are grouped has been linked to equality in public service provision (Junge, 2021). This service gap is the empirical basis for examining work discipline and communication as explanatory factors of public service quality.

The AK-1 (Job Seeker's Identification Card) service at the Manpower Office, also known as the Yellow Card, is an essential service for job seekers: it helps job seekers register and facilitates their job search, and it also functions as an administrative requirement for job applications at various companies. The Manpower Office needs to increase public awareness about the importance of AK-1 and how to obtain it, especially for those who have recently graduated from school or college, and the AK-1 issuance process needs to be simplified and expedited; utilizing information technology, such as online systems or mobile applications, can help speed up the process and reduce queues. Digital government research indicates that online channels are a feasible service-delivery strategy for local governments (Tangi et al., 2021) and can support citizen satisfaction (Chatterjee et al., 2022), although integrating digital services across organisations remains demanding (Wouters et al., 2023), front-line service centres delivering e-government services face operational challenges of their own (Sharma et al., 2021), and the adoption of new technologies in public administration raises implementation tensions (Madan & Ashok, 2023). In addition to preparing AK-1s, the Manpower Office can also provide training and guidance to job seekers on how to write job applications, prepare for job interviews, and pursue personal development. The

Manpower Office also needs to establish close cooperation with companies in its area to facilitate job placement for AK-1 holders, and comfortable waiting rooms, adequate facilities (such as toilets and breastfeeding rooms), and an orderly queue system can further improve the quality of service.

From this perspective, discipline signifies a person's readiness to adhere to established regulations while adapting behaviour as needed in their professional duties. A disciplined approach reflects responsibility and contributes to better outcomes, ultimately leading to satisfaction on multiple levels, personal, organisational, and societal. More specifically, employee discipline is the internal drive that encourages individuals to voluntarily adhere to established rules, organisational standards, and ethical work behaviour; employees with strong discipline tend to exhibit a heightened sense of accountability in fulfilling their assigned responsibilities, and this discipline nurtures enthusiasm and commitment toward their work, supporting achievement of the institution's objectives. Leadership within the City Manpower Office is pivotal in shaping employee discipline, as effective leaders can inspire, direct, and influence the attitudes and actions of their teams, guiding them toward the successful attainment of government targets. Evidence from public administration indicates that compliance with rules and ethical standards depends on leadership and accountability: perceived selective enforcement of ethical codes against senior leaders undermines the credibility of ethical frameworks (Stedman, 2024), and superiors' conduct as role models shapes public servants' ethical awareness and intentions (Schuster et al., 2024). Leadership orientation likewise shapes public servants' everyday work experiences (Franken et al., 2024).

Moreover, internal communication among staff members is another crucial factor shaping public interaction quality (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020). Communication is the process of exchanging information from one person to another with the goal of achieving a common understanding (Qalati et al., 2022), and it is contact between and among humans, both individuals and groups, in everyday life (Grego-Planer, 2019); clear, consistent, and respectful communication enhances service performance, making it a key driver of success in public service delivery. Empirical studies show that symmetrical internal communication is associated with employees' job engagement (Lee et al., 2021), that satisfaction with internal communication predicts employee engagement and perceptions of the organisation (Špoljarić & Tkalac Verčić, 2021), and that the quality of communication, including during crises, shapes employees' perceptions of leadership and relational outcomes (Kim et al., 2023). In public organisations, an involved communication climate within the human-resources environment has also been associated with employees' organisational identification and well-being (Hameed et al., 2021). More specifically, communication is transferring messages that carry meaning, such as ideas, emotions, beliefs, information, and guidance, from one individual to another through direct conversation or mediated channels, with the primary goal of influencing the attitudes, perspectives, or behaviors of others. Within an organizational context, communication serves four essential functions: regulation, encouragement, emotional sharing, and the transmission of information; these functions enable sound decision-making by ensuring that individuals and teams receive the necessary data to evaluate options and make informed choices, making communication a cornerstone of organizational effectiveness (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Whether frequent or infrequent, effective communication remains essential in determining the success of group efforts, as it entails sharing, discussing, and

exchanging thoughts or information with others, which helps foster collaboration and strengthen interpersonal relationships within the workplace. Beyond its instrumental function, workplace communication also shapes the relational climate of an organization, functioning as either a facilitator or an obstructor of an inclusive, trust-based work environment depending on how consistently and transparently it is practiced (Wolfgruber et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a purely quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire as its data collection instrument. Quantitative methods focus on gathering numerical data that can be statistically analyzed, allowing for interpretation through charts, graphs, tables, and hypothesis testing. The participants in this research consisted of all 38 staff members working at the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office, selected using a total sampling technique because the population size is below 100, a threshold commonly used to justify surveying an entire population rather than drawing a sample from it (Hair et al., 2019). A sample of this size is small for regression-based hypothesis testing and yields limited statistical power and less precise effect-size estimates (Toffalini et al., 2021), so the results reported in this study should be interpreted with this constraint in mind.

Data validity and reliability were assessed prior to hypothesis testing, and the classical assumption tests required for linear regression, normality (residuals normally distributed, typically evaluated via the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, $p > 0.05$) and multicollinearity (tolerance > 0.1 and VIF < 10), were conducted to confirm the regression model's suitability. Because formal normality tests have limited power in small samples (Shatz, 2023; Zygmont, 2023), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov result is interpreted with caution; methodological work recommends evaluating normality on regression residuals rather than on raw variables (Midway & White, 2025) and shows that ordinary least squares regression is reasonably robust to moderate departures from normality (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021).

This study uses regression analysis to test the effect of work discipline (X1) and communication (X2) on service quality (Y), following the general regression equations: $Y = a + b1X1 + e$ (Model 1) and $Y = a + b2X2 + e$ (Model 2), where a is the constant, b1 and b2 are regression coefficients, and e is the error term. The significance of each predictor was assessed using the partial t-test at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

The research data sources were obtained directly from respondents (primary data) through a structured questionnaire distributed to all 38 employees, supplemented by secondary data from institutional documents, including organizational structure, vision and mission, employee records, and other sources related to the research problem. Because all study variables were measured through self-reports from the same respondents, the potential for common-method bias is acknowledged and is discussed in the Limitations section (Podsakoff et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study used regression analysis to evaluate the relationships among the variables studied. This statistical approach measures how Work Discipline (X1) and Communication (X2) affect Service Quality (Y). Table 1 presents the combined partial (t-test) results for both independent variables, and Table 2 presents the correlation and coefficient of determination (R^2) of each model.

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Table 1. Combined Partial Test Results (t-Test)

Model	Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
1 (DV: Service Quality)	(Constant)	45.125	4.579	9.854	.000
	Work Discipline (X1)	.404	.059	6.856	.000
2 (DV: Service Quality)	(Constant)	42.579	8.806	4.835	.000
	Communication (X2)	.667	.173	3.850	.000

Note: Beta (standardized coefficient) for Work Discipline = .753; for Communication = .540. Critical t-table value = 2.042 (df = 36, n = 38, α = 0.05).

The t-test results in Table 1 show that both work discipline (t = 6.856, p = .000) and communication (t = 3.850, p = .000) have a statistically significant partial effect on service quality, as both t-values exceed the critical t-table value of 2.042 and both significance values are below 0.05. The null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted for both paths: H1 and H2 are supported.

Table 2. Correlation and Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R	R^2
Work Discipline (X1)	.753	.566
Communication (X2)	.540	.292

As shown in Table 2, work discipline explains 56.6% of the variance in service quality (R = .753; R^2 = .566), whereas communication explains 29.2% (R = .540; R^2 = .292). Both predictors therefore contribute to service quality, with work discipline showing the stronger explanatory power.

DISCUSSION

Work Discipline and Communication Shape Service Quality

Service remains a central focus for public organizations in carrying out their operational activities; through service, public organizations build reputational trust oriented toward public satisfaction. The Manpower Office plays a strategic role in supporting equitable employment development, and its services extend beyond administrative processing to workforce competency development and protection of workers' rights (Khan et al., 2020). Because citizens form expectations about public services (Bellè et al., 2023) and judge them partly by the equity of delivery (Song et al., 2024), consistent day-to-day service at the AK-1 counter matters for public satisfaction.

Consistent with H1 and H2, both work discipline and communication have a statistically significant partial effect on service quality at the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office, and work discipline shows the stronger explanatory power (R^2 = .566 versus .292 for communication). For agency leadership, this suggests that efforts to improve public service quality should reinforce disciplinary standards while also improving communication channels, so that rules, procedures, and service information are consistently understood and applied by staff in the AK-1 service. That discipline explains a large but incomplete share of the variance is unsurprising, because public service quality has several determinants (Carvalho Filho et al., 2025) and is in turn related to the wider performance of public organisations (Chikazhe et al., 2023).

Work Discipline Has a Significant Effect on Service Quality

The partial t-test results confirm that work discipline (X1) significantly affects service quality at the Manpower Office (t = 6.856, p = .000; Ho rejected, Ha accepted; H1 supported). Work discipline can be understood as an internal force within employees that enables them to willingly conform to organisational policies, procedures, and behavioural standards (Brancourt et al., 2022). When employees exhibit strong

discipline, they tend to take full responsibility for their duties, which fosters enthusiasm and dedication and ultimately helps the organisation reach its goals. Leadership within the City Manpower Office is central to fostering such discipline; effective leaders can inspire, guide, mobilise, and influence employees' attitudes and behaviours toward a more disciplined, goal-oriented work environment (Meirinhos et al., 2023). The stronger explanatory power of discipline is consistent with evidence that consistent enforcement of rules, together with the accountability of senior leaders, underpins compliance in public organisations (Stedman, 2024), and that employees' ethical conduct responds to the example set by their superiors (Schuster et al., 2024). Discipline also appears to be sustained by performance management that employees perceive as fair and developmental (Harrington & McCaskill, 2021; Vidè et al., 2022), whereas the way organisations handle poor performers affects their coworkers' turnover intentions (Kim, 2025). Conversely, burdensome procedures, or red tape, have been associated with procrastination among public employees (Huang et al., 2022), which, in a service such as AK-1 issuance, could lengthen processing times. Trust in leadership and procedural justice are likewise associated with employees' perceptions of organisational performance (Kang & Bichelmeyer, 2022), and engaged public employees tend to perform better (Chiwawa, 2022).

Communication Has a Significant Effect on Service Quality

The partial t-test results confirm that communication (X2) significantly affects service quality at the Manpower Office ($t = 3.850$, $p = .000$; Ho rejected, Ha accepted; H2 supported). Communication can be defined as transmitting messages using meaningful symbols, ideas, emotions, information, beliefs, intentions, or instructions, from one individual to another, either through direct interpersonal interaction or mediated channels, to shape attitudes, perspectives, or behaviour (Zhang, 2023). Within an organisational setting, communication serves four essential functions: regulating behaviour, encouraging employees, enabling emotional expression, and facilitating the flow of information, supporting decision-making by ensuring individuals and groups can access the data needed to evaluate options and make informed choices. The significant effect of communication is consistent with evidence that internal communication is associated with employee performance (Imam et al., 2022) and mediates the relationship between strategic human resource management and perceived performance in public as well as private organisations (Suh & Battaglio, 2021). Its smaller explanatory power relative to discipline may indicate that communication works partly through employees' engagement (Lee et al., 2021) and through leaders' communicative behaviour, for instance the listening and open communication that help build trust in local government (Awasthi & Walumbwa, 2022). Studies of public-sector communication also show that organisations often rely on one-way information distribution rather than dialogue, as in German police communication on social media (Jungblut & Jungblut, 2022), which suggests that the quality, and not merely the volume, of communication with job seekers deserves attention.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that both work discipline (H1) and communication (H2) have a statistically significant partial effect on service quality at the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office. Work discipline shows the stronger explanatory power ($R^2 = .566$) compared with communication ($R^2 = .292$), indicating that compliance with

organizational rules and standards, together with clear and consistent communication, is associated with better public service quality.

For agency leadership, these findings imply that policies aimed at improving public service quality should address both work discipline and communication. Consistently enforcing disciplinary standards and improving communication channels, both internally and with the public, is likely to yield an improvement in AK-1 service quality.

Future research should replicate this study across multiple public agencies to test generalizability, consider additional variables that may influence service quality, and use a longitudinal design to observe how the relationships among work discipline, communication, and service quality develop over time.

Limitations

This study has several methodological limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the sample was limited to the 38 employees of a single local agency (the Lubuklinggau City Manpower Office), which restricts the generalizability of the results to other public agencies or regions with different organizational cultures. Second, a sample size of 38 is small for regression-based hypothesis testing and yields limited statistical power and imprecise effect-size estimates (Toffalini et al., 2021), so the results should be interpreted with caution. This limitation is consistent with broader methodological guidance cautioning that cross-sectional, self-reported survey designs constrain causal inference and are particularly susceptible to common-method bias in organizational research (Maier et al., 2023; Podsakoff et al., 2024). Third, this study used cross-sectional data collected at a single point in time, which does not allow for observing how the relationships among work discipline, communication, and service quality may change over time. Finally, the variables were measured using a self-report structured questionnaire, which may be subject to social desirability bias or common-method variance.

Recommendations

Work discipline and communication significantly influence service quality at the Manpower Office. Therefore, Manpower Office management needs to develop policies that enforce regulations and strengthen communication, both internally and with the public, in order to maintain and improve service quality.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence.

The author acknowledges the use of Grammarly AI as a language editing aid during the preparation of this manuscript, used to support grammar checking and sentence clarity. All ideas, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this study remain entirely the author's responsibility.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, Author1; methodology, Author1 and Author2; data collection, Author1; data validation, Author2; formal analysis, Author1 and Author2; writing, original draft preparation, Author1; writing, review and editing, Author1 and Author2. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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