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The Influence of Work Discipline, Work Motivation, Work Ethic, and Work Environment on Employee Performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang

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Abstract: This study is entitled "The Effect of Work Discipline, Work Motivation, Work Ethic, and Work Environment on Employee Performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang" with all employees at the institution as the research object. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, and work environment on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. The study uses a quantitative method with a survey approach, and data are analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) model through the SmartPLS application. The results of the study indicate that work discipline, work motivation, and work ethic have a positive but insignificant influence on employee performance, while the work environment is proven to have a positive and significant influence on performance. These findings indicate that the work environment has an important role in improving performance, while other variables need to be strengthened through integrated managerial strategies, such as improving the provided system, leadership training, and developing a work culture that is in accordance with organizational values. These results are expected to be a basis for management in designing policies to improve employee performance continuously to achieve more optimal work effectiveness and productivity.

Keywords: Work Discipline, Work Motivation, Work Ethic, Work Environment, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the most crucial component in any organization, including higher education institutions like the Open University. The role of human resources extends beyond simply carrying out tasks, but also serves as the driving force that determines the direction in which organizational goals are achieved. Dessler (2020) emphasizes that an organization's success is largely determined by the quality of its employees, as other resources, such as technology and capital, cannot operate without competent staff. In the face of global competition, the quality of human resources is a key differentiator in determining whether an

organization will survive or be left behind. Therefore, human resource management must be systematic, sustainable, and based on the organization's strategic needs.

Human resource performance is a crucial indicator in assessing organizational effectiveness. Mathis and Jackson (2019) state that performance is the results achieved by an individual based on established work standards, both in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness. Human resource performance impacts not only internal outcomes but also the quality of educational services and student satisfaction. Without optimal human resource performance, various aspects of service, from administration to academics, risk declining quality, thus harming the institution's reputation.

Employee performance is influenced by various internal and external factors. Gibson et al. (2012) revealed that factors such as ability, motivation, role perception, and the work environment simultaneously contribute to shaping productive work behavior. This aligns with Robbins and Judge (2021), who explain that performance is the result of the interaction between ability, motivation, and role perception. Therefore, employee performance is determined not only by professional competence but also by variables such as work discipline, work ethic, motivation, and a supportive work environment.

In the context of the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang, employee performance has direct implications for the quality of distance education services. Employees are not only responsible for administrative duties but also for academic and technical services to students. Ulrich (2017) highlighted that the ability of human resources to adapt to customer needs and changes in the external environment is key to the success of modern organizations, including open educational institutions. Continuous improvement of the factors influencing performance is an urgent need for the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang to enhance the quality of its services.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, and work environment on employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, and work environment each significantly influence employee performance. Through empirical testing of these four variables, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the factors that determine the quality of employee performance and provide a foundation for management in formulating more effective and sustainable strategies for improving human resource performance.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on performance determinants, particularly in the context of open higher education institutions such as the Open University. It also serves as a basis for further research involving other variables, such as organizational culture or leadership. Practically, the results of this study can be used by management to develop data-driven performance improvement strategies, such as improving incentive systems, job training, or evaluating the work environment. It can also serve as a performance management model that can be applied to other Open University Service Centers in Indonesia.

METHODS

Types of Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method that aims to test and explain the causal relationship between independent variables such as work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, and work environment on employee performance. According to Creswell (2014), explanatory research is very appropriate when researchers want to systematically understand the causal relationship between variables through hypothesis testing. This method not only provides an overview of the influence between variables but also helps organizations in data-based decision-making. This explanatory research contributes to

strengthening academic studies and serves as a basis for formulating policies to improve employee performance.

Information Source

The population and sample were carefully selected to obtain representative data. All 50 employees of the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang were used as both the population and the sample using census techniques, as recommended by Sugiyono (2022) when the population is relatively small. This technique ensures that all individuals have an equal opportunity to be respondents without any sorting based on certain characteristics, so that the data obtained is considered accurate, minimizes bias, and reflects the actual conditions occurring in the organization

Research Instrument

Research instruments play a crucial role in collecting valid and reliable data, as emphasized by Sukmawati et al. (2023) and Kusnendi (2020). In this study, the primary instrument used was a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire systematically designed to measure five variables: work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, work environment, and employee performance. Each variable consists of five indicators compiled based on theoretical studies and previous research. This questionnaire included demographic data and statements about the research variables, with the aim of encouraging respondents to provide objective answers that are easily analyzed quantitatively

Data Collection Procedures

Researchers distributed questionnaires and recorded the process and field conditions in a journal to ensure data accuracy. The collected data was then verified using a double-checking procedure, ensuring completeness and consistency before further processing. Throughout the process, researchers maintained objectivity without influencing respondents' answers and established professional communication to build trust, in accordance with quantitative research ethics. Evaluation and reflection were conducted at the end to document challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for similar research, ensuring that all procedures produced valid, reliable data that represented the actual conditions of employees.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was conducted quantitatively using SmartPLS software, starting from data preparation by ensuring completeness and coding of Likert scales in CSV format. After that, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe the characteristics of respondents and research variables, followed by evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the construct through convergent validity tests (outer loading ≥ 0.70), Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50). Discriminant validity was assessed through Cross Loading, Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT < 0.90). Next, the structural model (inner model) was analyzed to test the relationship between latent variables through the path coefficient significance test.

Hypothesis

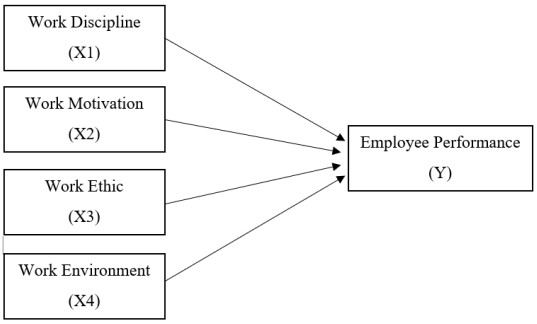

Figure 1. Framework of thinking
Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

The four hypotheses in this study focus on the influence of internal and external factors on employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. First, H1 states that work discipline has a positive effect on employee performance, assuming that discipline reflects compliance and responsibility that encourage work efficiency and productivity. Second, H2 states that work motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is the main driver for employees to achieve optimal performance with enthusiasm. Third, H3 states that a work ethic that includes hard work, responsibility, and integrity will have a positive impact on the quality of work results. Fourth, H4 states that a comfortable, safe work environment supported by good social relationships will increase employee motivation and productivity. Overall, these four hypotheses confirm that the success of employee performance is influenced by a combination of personal and situational factors within the organization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Object



Figure 2. Kartini Open University Service Center Object Rembang
Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Universitas Terbuka (Open University) is a state university that has implemented an Open and Distance Learning System since 1984 with the aim of providing access to higher education for all levels of society without restrictions on age, location, or educational background. Through technological support and a network of Open University Service Centers spread across various regions, Universitas Terbuka facilitates the registration process, learning, and examinations flexibly and independently. One of these service units is the Open University Kartini Rembang Service Center, which was inaugurated on March 25, 2021, after developing from a study group since 2011 and continues to serve hundreds of active students. Located on Jl. Raya Rembang–Pamotan Km 04, Tireman Village RT 005 RW 001, Rembang Regency, Central Java, the Open University Kartini Rembang Service Center has unique characteristics with a work system that demands efficiency and professionalism, making it relevant to examine

factors such as discipline, motivation, work ethic, and the work environment that influence employee performance. This study uses a survey method on employees from various job functions to obtain a comprehensive picture of work dynamics and provide recommendations for improving human resource performance within the Open University environment.

Respondent

Respondents in this study provided a general overview of the profiles of 50 employees of the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang who participated in the study. Respondents consisted of 6 administrative staff (12%) and 44 field staff (88%), reflecting the dominance of field staff in service operations. In terms of gender, there were 18 male respondents (36%) and 32 female respondents (64%), indicating that the majority of the workforce in this unit is female. Meanwhile, based on age group, 40 respondents (80%) were in the youth age range of 18–25 years and 10 respondents (20%) were in the adult category aged 26–45 years. This composition illustrates that most employees are young workers who are in the early stages of their careers, thus having great potential in terms of energy, motivation, and adaptation to the work environment, which is relevant to the analysis of factors that influence employee performance in this study.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode
Work Discipline	4,54	4,6	5
Work Motivation	4,46	4,6	5
Work Ethic	4,572	4,8	5
Work Environment	4,436	4,5	5
Employee Performance	4,38	4,4	4

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, the average (mean) value of the variables ranges from 4.38 to 4.57, indicating that respondents tend to have a positive perception of all variables studied. The median value ranging from 4.4 to 4.8 indicates that more than half of the respondents gave a high rating to each variable, while the mode value of 5 for most variables indicates that the majority of respondents strongly agree with the statements in the questionnaire, except for the employee performance variable which has a mode of 4 (agree). Overall, these descriptive results reflect that employees of the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang have a good level of discipline, motivation, work ethic, and perception of the work environment, which contributes to their performance which is also classified as positive, and becomes the basis for further analysis in testing the research hypothesis.

Validity Test

Table 2. Outer Loadings

Matrix	Work Discipline	Work Ethic	Employee Performance	Work Environment	Work Motivation
DK1	0,586				
DK2	0,809				
DK3	0,840				
DK4	0,831				
DK5	0,793				
EK1		0,728			
EK2		0,831			
EK3		0,888			

EK4	0,849			
EK5	0,839			
KY1		0,885		
KY2		0,843		
KY3		0,858		
KY4		0,858		
KY5		0,837		
LK1			0,690	
LK2			0,837	
LK3			0,837	
LK4			0,842	
LK5			0,745	
MK1				0,860
MK2				0,834
MK3				0,715
MK4				0,783
MK5				0,781

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of the outer loading analysis, most indicators in this study have values above 0.70, so it can be said that these indicators are consistently able to represent the constructs being measured. Although there are several indicators with loading values slightly below 0.70, this is still acceptable because the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs remains above 0.50. This finding confirms that the research model has met the requirements for convergent validity, which means that the latent variables are able to explain most of the variation in their indicators well and the research instrument can be trusted for use in the next stage of analysis

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

Matrik	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Work Discipline	0,832	0,850	0,883	0,605
Work Ethic	0,886	0,904	0,916	0,687
Employee Performance	0,909	0,910	0,932	0,734
Work Environment	0,850	0,857	0,894	0,628
Work Motivation	0,857	0,877	0,896	0,634

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of the construct reliability analysis, this research instrument has met the criteria for good reliability and validity, as indicated by composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values that are above the minimum standard, as well as the majority of indicators with outer loadings above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. This confirms that the research constructs have adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. Subsequently, discriminant validity tests were conducted using the Fornell-Larcker, Cross Loading, and HTMT methods to ensure that each indicator only represents its own construct without overlapping with other constructs. The results indicate that the measurement model has good quality and can be clearly distinguished between variables, so the research model is declared feasible before hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Matrix	Work Discipline	Work Ethic	Employee Performance	Work Environment	Work Motivation
Work Discipline	0,778				

Work Ethic	0,756	0,829			
Employee Performance	0,715	0,596	0,856		
Work Environment	0,701	0,575	0,801	0,793	
Work Motivation	0,701	0,581	0,690	0,718	0,796

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the table above, all variables show higher values when explaining their own constructs compared to correlations with other constructs, as seen in the employee performance variable with a value of 0.856 and work discipline with a value of 0.778. This proves that each construct in the research model can be clearly distinguished, thus meeting the criteria of discriminant validity. This validity is also supported by the fact that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each construct is higher than the correlation value between constructs, which means each construct is more capable of explaining the variance of its own indicator. Thus, the measurement model is declared to have good discriminant validity and is suitable for use in this study.

Table 5. Cross Loadings

Matrik	Work Discipline	Work Ethic	Employee Performance	Work Environment	Work Motivation
DK1	0,586	0,368	0,493	0,441	0,596
DK2	0,809	0,684	0,546	0,494	0,550
DK3	0,840	0,668	0,547	0,559	0,518
DK4	0,831	0,611	0,696	0,663	0,605
DK5	0,793	0,581	0,430	0,522	0,422
EK1	0,456	0,728	0,325	0,336	0,358
EK2	0,609	0,831	0,573	0,457	0,485
EK3	0,695	0,888	0,517	0,537	0,419
EK4	0,668	0,849	0,548	0,569	0,605
EK5	0,669	0,839	0,439	0,438	0,508
KY1	0,599	0,467	0,885	0,699	0,660
KY2	0,558	0,474	0,843	0,642	0,599
KY3	0,623	0,462	0,858	0,734	0,597
KY4	0,627	0,540	0,858	0,662	0,566
KY5	0,654	0,609	0,837	0,686	0,535
LK1	0,607	0,645	0,587	0,690	0,579
LK2	0,632	0,454	0,740	0,837	0,500
LK3	0,531	0,352	0,620	0,837	0,579
LK4	0,502	0,363	0,622	0,842	0,616
LK5	0,493	0,480	0,583	0,745	0,588
MK1	0,644	0,580	0,681	0,622	0,860
MK2	0,478	0,255	0,477	0,510	0,834
MK3	0,420	0,262	0,365	0,471	0,715
MK4	0,594	0,547	0,555	0,562	0,783
MK5	0,595	0,557	0,584	0,654	0,781

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of the cross-loading analysis, most indicators showed the highest loading values on the constructs they were supposed to represent, indicating that each indicator was able to represent its variable well without being strongly correlated with other constructs. This finding confirms that the measurement model in this study has adequate discriminant validity, as each construct can be clearly distinguished from one another. Thus, the instrument used proved to be accurate and consistent in measuring the variables studied.

Table 6. HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

Matrix	Work Discipline	Work Ethic	Employee Performance	Work Environment	Work Motivation
Work Discipline					
Work Ethic	0,867				
Employee Performance	0,806	0,646			
Work Environment	0,823	0,657	0,906		
Work Motivation	0,807	0,624	0,757	0,837	

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) test, all values between constructs are below the threshold of 0.90, which confirms that each construct in this study can be clearly distinguished without any overlap. According to the HTMT criteria, values exceeding 0.90 indicate conceptual similarities between different constructs, thus damaging the validity of the model. Therefore, this finding indicates that the measurement model used has met discriminant validity well, where each construct actually measures a different concept in accordance with the research objectives. This result also strengthens the quality of the overall analysis, so it can be trusted and considered accurate in explaining the variables studied.

Reliability Test

Table 7. Reliability Test Construct Reliability and Validity

Matrix	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Work Discipline	0,832	0,850	0,883	0,605
Work Ethic	0,886	0,904	0,916	0,687
Employee Performance	0,909	0,910	0,932	0,734
Work Environment	0,850	0,857	0,894	0,628
Work Motivation	0,857	0,877	0,896	0,634

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the table above, all constructs in this study meet the criteria for good reliability, with Composite Reliability values above 0,6 and Cronbach's Alpha above 0,8. This indicates that the indicators used are consistent in reflecting the latent constructs, as seen in the employee performance construct which has a Composite Reliability value of 0,932 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0,909. Other constructs, such as work ethic, work motivation, work environment, and work discipline, also show high values, so the research instrument is considered reliable and suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. Path Coefficients Hypothesis Test

Matrix	Original	Sample	Standart	T Statistic	P Values
Work Discipline	0,212	0,210	0,172	1,234	0,218
Work Ethic	0,056	0,071	0,167	0,338	0,735
Work Environment	0,524	0,526	0,183	2,870	0,004
Work Motivation	0,133	0,130	0,132	1,004	0,316

Source: Data Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on the results of the hypothesis test through Path Coefficients analysis, not all variables in this study have a significant influence on employee performance. The variables of work discipline, work motivation, and work ethic show a positive relationship, but each has a significance value above 0.05, so it does not have a significant effect on performance. Work discipline has a coefficient of 0.212 (P = 0.218), work motivation 0.133 (P = 0.316), and work ethic 0.056 (P = 0.735). This shows that although the three variables contribute positively, their influence is not strong enough or stable in improving employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. Other factors may play a more dominant role in shaping employee performance, so that hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are not supported by the research data.

In contrast, the work environment variable showed different results with a coefficient value of 0.524 and a P-Value of 0.004, which means it has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. These results indicate that a conducive work environment is proven to be able to significantly increase employee productivity and work quality. A comfortable, safe, and supportive environment has a positive impact on employee morale and performance. Thus, only hypothesis H4 is supported by the research data, confirming that the work environment is a key factor in improving performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis using the SmartPLS method, a discussion was conducted to explore the relationship between the independent variables of work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, and work environment with the dependent variable, namely employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. This analysis provides a clearer picture of the influence of each variable, both directly and indirectly, on improving employee performance. The research findings were then compared with previous research to strengthen theoretical understanding and provide practical recommendations for developing human resource management at this distance learning institution.

Work discipline has a positive relationship with employee performance, but the effect is not statistically significant. This indicates that while discipline can contribute to orderliness and punctuality in work, this factor is not able to directly improve employee performance. This finding differs from Herawati's (2024) study at the East Sumba District Attorney's Office, where work discipline was shown to have a significant effect on employee productivity. This difference can be explained by the different organizational characteristics, where legal institutions tend to have a stricter and more structured work culture than educational institutions like the Kartini Open University Service Center.

Work motivation also showed a positive relationship with performance, but did not yet have a significant impact. This may occur because employee motivation is still situational or not supported by an adequate reward system and work environment. Comparisons with studies by Christianadi et al. (2024) and Rohman & Hendarti (2025) indicate that motivation has a stronger influence in sectors that emphasize work targets and financial incentives, such as manufacturing and banking. Therefore, it is important for the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang to combine efforts to increase motivation with other strategies such as career development and inspirational leadership.

Work ethic has been shown to have a positive but not yet significant influence on employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. This finding indicates that although values such as dedication, integrity, responsibility, and commitment have motivated employees to perform better, their contribution to performance achievement is not yet strong enough when viewed statistically. Other factors, such as the reward system, job satisfaction, or organizational structure, are likely still more dominant in influencing

performance. This finding is consistent with the results of research by Putri & Kartika (2024), which states that although work ethic is important in improving quality and productivity, its impact is often indirect and requires support from organizational culture and appropriate management policies. Therefore, efforts to improve work ethic need to be combined with other employee development strategies to be able to produce more significant results in improving performance.

Meanwhile, the work environment has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. A comfortable, harmonious work environment supported by adequate physical and non-physical facilities can encourage employees to work more effectively and productively. This finding is in line with research by Ismandra (2025) which confirms that the work environment is a major factor influencing the performance of Civil Servants at the Palembang City Social Service. Therefore, investing in improving the work environment is an important strategy for the management of the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang to continuously improve performance quality.

Data Deepening

As an in-depth analysis of the quantitative analysis, interviews were conducted with two senior employees at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang, one male and one female who had worked for more than seven years. This study aimed to obtain an empirical overview of aspects of work discipline, work motivation, work ethic, work environment, and employee performance. The interview results showed that work discipline has become an organizational culture, reflected in employee commitment to punctuality and task completion. Work motivation stems from intrinsic satisfaction in serving students, although appreciation from leaders also plays an important role. A work ethic that emphasizes cooperation, professional service, and a sense of responsibility for the institution's image is a characteristic of their work environment. A conducive and family-like work atmosphere supports productivity, although the development of technology-based facilities and systems is still needed to improve service efficiency. These findings strengthen the quantitative results that these four variables have a positive effect on employee performance.

The Essence of the Field of Management Science

The research entitled "The Influence of Work Discipline, Work Motivation, Work Ethic, and Work Environment on Employee Performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang" has a strategic contribution in the development of human resource management science, because it examines in depth the relationship between personal factors such as discipline, motivation, and work ethic with environmental factors such as culture and work atmosphere in influencing individual performance. The results of this study indicate that employee performance is not only determined by technical abilities, but is also influenced by the dynamic interaction between psychological and structural factors in the work environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis using SmartPLS, it can be concluded that not all independent variables in this study significantly influence employee performance at the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang. While work discipline, work motivation, and work ethic do show a positive relationship with performance, none of them have a statistically significant effect. This indicates that while these three variables are important in creating committed and dedicated employees, other factors are more dominant in determining performance levels, such as management policies, organizational culture, or the structure of the reward system.

Conversely, the work environment variable demonstrated a positive and significant influence on employee performance. This demonstrates that a conducive environment, both physical and non-physical, can create a more productive work atmosphere and motivate employees to deliver optimal results. Therefore, management needs to pay greater attention to creating and maintaining a supportive work environment, as it has been shown to play a significant role in improving performance. These findings not only enrich theoretical studies related to human resource management but also provide practical recommendations for the Kartini Open University Service Center in Rembang to improve overall organizational effectiveness.

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