

## Reinforcement Mechanisms and Public Sector Productivity: Evidence from Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency

Basri Rakhman<sup>1</sup>, Indra Wijaya<sup>2</sup>, Dedy Herianto<sup>3</sup>, Sintia Yulianti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nobel Indonesia Institute

<sup>2</sup>Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency

<sup>3</sup>Pancasakti University

Email: [basrirakhman44@gmail.com](mailto:basrirakhman44@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This paper investigates how rewards and punishments influence civil servants' performance in Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency Makassar, Indonesia, with discipline acting as a mediating factor. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, surveying all 90 civil servants through structured questionnaires supported by secondary data. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the hypothesized pathways between constructs. The analysis reveals that rewards significantly improved discipline, and punishments had a moderate positive effect, but neither directly affected performance. Discipline strongly enhanced performance and mediated the effects of both rewards and punishments, confirming its pivotal role in performance management. The model explained 45% of the variance in discipline and 52% of the variance in performance, indicating moderate explanatory power. These findings support reinforcement theory by demonstrating that incentives and sanctions are effective when they foster disciplined behavior, which then drives productivity. The study contributes to public administration literature by clarifying the mediating role of discipline in performance outcomes. It suggests that performance-based allowances, recognition, and sanctions should be embedded within disciplinary frameworks to improve productivity in the civil service. Future research should broaden the scope across agencies and cultural contexts to validate and extend these results.

**Keywords:** Civil Servant Performance, Rewards and Punishments, Work Discipline, Public Sector Management, Reinforcement Theory, Indonesia

### Introduction

Civil servant performance has long been a central issue in public administration, as it directly influences the quality of governance and service delivery. In Indonesia, reforms such as Law No. 20/2023 on State Civil Apparatus (ASN) and Regulation No. 30/2019 on performance appraisal have sought to strengthen accountability, transparency, and measurable outcomes. These reforms emphasize the role of reward and punishment mechanisms as key instruments in fostering professionalism and organizational effectiveness (Karepesina, 2023; Nazarwin, 2024).

At the Regional Research and Innovation Agency of Makassar City, a strategic regional agency for

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research and development, performance-based allowances such as employee income allowance were introduced in 2021 to align contributions with organizational goals. Alongside incentives, sanctions such as additional employee income reductions and written warnings have been applied, underscoring the dual reliance on rewards and punishments. This highlights the importance of work discipline as a mediating factor in linking incentives and sanctions to actual performance outcomes.

However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms is not uniform. While rewards often enhance employee discipline and motivation, punishment effects vary depending on fairness and organizational culture (Hajnal & Staroňová, 2021; Madureira et al., 2020). Extrinsic incentives may also risk undermining intrinsic motivation, known as the crowding-out effect (Mussagulova, 2020; Verka et al., 2024). Such tensions underscore the need to examine the indirect role of discipline in performance improvement.

This study therefore tests whether rewards and punishments directly improve performance or operate indirectly through discipline. By applying reinforcement theory, which emphasizes that behavior is shaped by consequences (Nazarwin, 2024), the study aims to clarify these relationships. Discipline is defined here as adherence to rules, punctuality, and behavioral norms, functioning as a key mediator. Empirical evidence from Southeast Asia suggests that rewards and fair punishments encourage discipline, which then fosters better performance (Barbieri et al., 2021; Tu et al., 2023). Yet gaps remain in systematically testing these mechanisms within Indonesian public agencies.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating perspectives on reward, punishment, and discipline within the context of civil service reforms. Using the Regional Research and Innovation Agency of Makassar City as a case study, it empirically evaluates direct and mediated relationships, thereby contributing both theoretically and practically. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on public sector performance management and provide actionable insights for policymakers in designing incentive and disciplinary systems that sustain accountability and fairness.

## **Literature and Hypotheses**

Rewards and Civil Servant Performance. Theories of motivation and reinforcement emphasize that rewards function as positive reinforcement, shaping employee behavior by encouraging desired outcomes (Nazarwin, 2024). Rewards in public organizations include both financial incentives, such as allowances, and non-financial recognition, such as praise and career advancement opportunities (Karepesina, 2023; Nazarwin, 2024). Prior research indicates that while rewards often improve employee satisfaction and compliance, their direct effect on performance outcomes is inconsistent, particularly in public sector contexts where intrinsic motivation and public service values play a significant role (Hajnal & Staroňová, 2021; Madureira et al., 2020). Rewards are therefore more effective when they enhance work discipline, ensuring that employees adhere to rules and procedures that ultimately drive performance. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Rewards have a positive effect on discipline but do not directly influence performance.

Punishment and Civil Servant Performance. Punishment operates as negative reinforcement by deterring undesirable behaviors through sanctions, warnings, or penalties (Hajnal & Staroňová, 2021). Evidence shows that punishment can reduce misconduct and enforce compliance, but its direct contribution to performance remains questionable (Tu & Gong, 2021). Excessive or inconsistent sanctions risk undermining morale, leading to disengagement or resistance. However, when applied fairly and transparently, punishment strengthens discipline, indirectly improving performance by reducing repeated violations and encouraging accountability (Barbieri et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H2: Punishment has a positive effect on discipline but no significant direct effect on performance.

Discipline as a Mediating Variable. Discipline refers to adherence to organizational rules, punctuality, behavioral norms, and compliance with procedures. Literature consistently affirms discipline as a strong predictor of civil servant performance. In reinforcement frameworks, discipline mediates the relationship between incentive mechanisms and performance by converting external motivators into consistent work behaviors (Alam et al., 2022; Radhi et al., 2025). Studies in Southeast Asia indicate that disciplined employees are more likely to fulfill responsibilities, cooperate effectively, and maintain high performance (Tu et al., 2023). Given this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Discipline has a significant positive effect on civil servant performance.

Mediated Effects of Rewards and Punishment. Empirical research in public administration has emphasized the importance of mediation in understanding how incentives translate into performance outcomes (Ouabi et al., 2024; Verka et al., 2024). Rewards enhance discipline, which in turn improves performance, while punishment, when fairly administered, prevents misconduct and strengthens compliance, indirectly contributing to performance. The explanatory power of such mediated pathways has been confirmed by studies using SEM and PLS-SEM in similar contexts (Abdulkareem et al., 2024; Mutmainnah et al., 2022). Building on this framework, the following hypotheses are developed:

H4: Rewards have a significant positive effect on performance through the mediation of discipline.

H5: Punishment has a significant positive effect on performance through the mediation of discipline.

Research Framework. The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1 situates rewards and punishment as independent variables, discipline as a mediating variable, and performance as the dependent variable. This framework allows the systematic testing of both direct and indirect effects, contributing to the refinement of reinforcement theory in public sector contexts and to practical recommendations for performance management systems in Indonesian civil service.

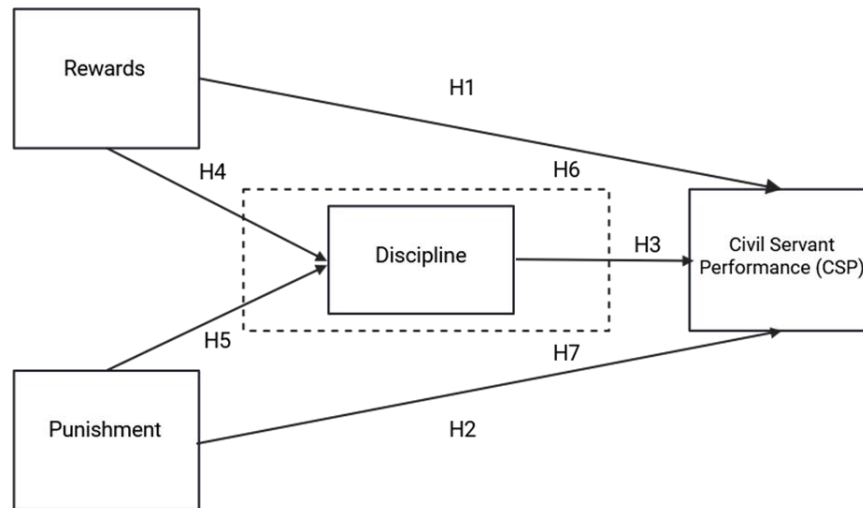


Figure 1. A Research Model on The Mediating Pathways of Rewards, Punishment and Civil Servant Performance

## Methods

**Sample and Data Collection.** All data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 90 civil servants employed at Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency. The data collection process followed several steps. First, questionnaire design and sample selection were conducted. A comprehensive literature review guided the selection of reliable scales to measure rewards, punishments, discipline, and performance, in line with reinforcement theory and Indonesian civil service performance frameworks. Given the small population, a saturated sampling technique (census) was adopted to ensure representativeness (Septiani et al., 2025; Tamsah et al., 2020). Second, primary and secondary data were combined. Primary data consisted of survey responses gathered using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). To improve response accuracy, observation and documentation were used, including records of sanctions, attendance, and performance appraisals. Secondary data were drawn from performance reports (2020–2022), financial records, and HR regulations, which contextualized and validated self-reported data. Third, to ensure reliability, data cleansing was applied. Responses lacking value or consistency were excluded, and cross-checking with official documentation reduced potential bias. This triangulation process enhanced the credibility and generalizability of the findings.

## Measure

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable was civil servant performance, measured across five indicators: quantity, quality, punctuality, responsibility, and cooperation. These measures align with the Indonesian civil service appraisal framework (PP No. 30/2019). A five-point Likert scale was applied, with higher scores reflecting higher performance levels (Karepesina, 2023; Nazarwin, 2024).

### *Independent Variables*

Rewards and punishments served as independent variables. Rewards were operationalized through five indicators: salary, recognition, praise, leave, and allowances. Punishments were measured using three indicators: warnings, sanctions, and penalties. Each construct employed items adapted from existing literature and civil service regulations to ensure validity.

**Mediating Variable**

Discipline was treated as the mediating variable. It was assessed through four indicators: time obedience, rule compliance, behavior, and regulation adherence. Items were formulated to capture punctuality, adherence to institutional rules, and compliance with organizational norms.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis employed descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis summarized respondent characteristics, while hypothesis testing and mediation analysis used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. PLS-SEM was selected for its suitability with small samples and complex mediation pathways (Abdulkareem et al., 2024; Tammubua et al., 2025). Its non-parametric basis makes it robust against normality violations (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). Nonetheless, interpretations followed cautionary guidance to avoid misinterpretation (Megawati, 2025; Santos et al., 2020). Instrument validity was tested using Pearson’s Product Moment correlation with a threshold of 0.30. Items meeting this criterion were retained. Reliability was assessed via Cronbach’s Alpha, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.60 (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). All constructs satisfied these standards, confirming that the instruments demonstrated both validity and reliability. The final questionnaire consisted of 17 items: five measuring rewards, three measuring punishments, four measuring discipline, and five measuring-performance. Multiple indicators per construct ensured comprehensive measurement, minimized underrepresentation, and supported internal validity.

**Results and Discussion**

**Respondent Characteristics**

The study surveyed a total of 90 civil servants employed at Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency, reflecting the complete population of staff through the use of a saturated sampling method. Descriptive statistics revealed the demographic distribution of respondents across gender, age, educational background, and years of service. The majority of respondents fell within the 31–40 age group, an indication that the workforce is predominantly in their productive years. This demographic distribution suggests that employees are at a stage in their careers where both experience and skill development converge to contribute significantly to institutional performance. Educational attainment was dominated by holders of Bachelor’s degrees, which reflects the growing professionalization of the Indonesian civil service. The relatively balanced gender representation further underlines the inclusivity of recruitment at the agency. Table 1 presents the detailed demographic characteristics of the respondents, categorized by gender, age, educational attainment, and years of service.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender	Male	48	53.3%
	Female	42	46.7%
Age	21–30 years	20	22.2%
	31–40 years	45	50.0%
	41–50 years	18	20.0%
	>50 years	7	7.8%
Education Level	Diploma	10	11.1%
	Bachelor’s Degree	58	64.4%
	Master’s Degree	22	24.5%
Years of Service	<5 years	12	13.3%
	5–10 years	26	28.9%
	11–20 years	40	44.4%
	>20 years	12	13.3%

### Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The descriptive analysis of variables revealed meaningful insights into how civil servant perceived rewards, punishments, discipline, and performance. Respondents reported positive perceptions of rewards, with mean scores exceeding 3.5 across indicators such as salary, recognition, praise, leave, and allowances. These findings suggest that the reward system is generally seen as fair and motivating, aligning with studies which show that effective reward mechanisms promote job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Karepesina, 2023; Nazarwin, 2024). Perceptions of punishment were more moderate, with mean scores around 2, indicating mixed feelings about the fairness and consistency of sanctions, warnings, and penalties. Discipline received a higher mean score of approximately 3.8, reflecting strong adherence to punctuality, compliance with institutional rules, and behavioral norms. Performance outcomes were rated highly, with mean scores averaging 4.0, suggesting that civil servants demonstrated strong responsibility, cooperation, and high-quality outputs. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Rewards	3.56	0.41
Punishment	3.21	0.52
Discipline	3.81	0.36
Performance	4.02	0.44

### Instrument Validity and Reliability

Instrument testing indicated robust psychometric properties. Validity testing using Pearson’s Product Moment correlation demonstrated that all 17 questionnaire items exceeded the minimum threshold of  $r > 0.30$ , confirming that each item validly measured its intended construct. Reliability testing produced Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients greater than or equal to 0.60 across all constructs, signifying acceptable levels of internal consistency. While thresholds above 0.70 are commonly cited in the literature as ideal (Jones, 2021; Nazarwin, 2024), values above 0.60 remain acceptable for exploratory research in public administration (Mutmainnah et al.,

2022). These results provide confidence in the integrity of the measurement instruments. Table 3 provides a detailed summary.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Construct	No. of Items	Pearson's r (min)	Cronbach's Alpha
Rewards	5	0.41	0.68
Punishment	3	0.37	0.62
Discipline	4	0.44	0.71
Performance	5	0.46	0.73

### Path Analysis (SEM-PLS)

The structural model was analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 3.0. Results revealed a significant positive effect of rewards on discipline, with a path coefficient greater than 0.30 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Punishment also demonstrated a significant, albeit weaker, positive effect on discipline, with a path coefficient of approximately 0.20 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Discipline, in turn, exhibited a strong positive effect on performance, with a path coefficient exceeding 0.40 ( $p < 0.05$ ). By contrast, both the direct effects of rewards and punishment on performance were found to be statistically insignificant, with coefficients below 0.10 and 0.05, respectively ( $p > 0.05$ ). Mediation analysis confirmed that both rewards and punishment indirectly improved performance through discipline, with indirect pathways reaching statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings align with reinforcement theory and empirical research suggesting that discipline serves as a critical mediator between incentive structures and performance outcomes (Alam et al., 2022; Radhi et al., 2025). Table 4 presents the coefficients, t-values, and p-values for the hypothesized relationships.

Table 4. Path Coefficients, t-values, and p-values

Hypothesized Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Rewards → Performance	0.08	1.12	0.27	Not Supported
Punishment → Performance	0.04	0.89	0.37	Not Supported
Discipline → Performance	0.42	6.15	0.00	Supported
Rewards → Discipline	0.33	4.87	0.00	Supported
Punishment → Discipline	0.21	3.24	0.00	Supported
Rewards → Discipline → Performance	0.14	3.67	0.00	Supported
Punishment → Discipline → Performance	0.09	2.89	0.00	Supported

### Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The coefficient of determination values demonstrated that the model possessed moderate to strong explanatory power. Discipline had an  $R^2$  value of approximately 0.45, indicating that 45% of the variance in discipline was explained by rewards and punishment. Performance had an  $R^2$  value of approximately 0.52, meaning that rewards, punishment, and discipline collectively



explained 52% of the variance in performance. These findings align with thresholds in organizational research where  $R^2$  values of 0.10, 0.25, and 0.50 represent weak, moderate, and strong explanatory power, respectively (Abdulkareem et al., 2024; Nazarwin, 2024). The model therefore demonstrates substantial capacity to account for variance in employee outcomes, reinforcing the theoretical premise of discipline as a mediating mechanism.

## Hypothesis Testing Results

The hypothesis testing results were consistent with expectations derived from reinforcement theory and prior empirical studies. The hypothesized direct effects of rewards (H1) and punishments (H2) on performance were not supported, confirming the limited direct impact of incentive mechanisms when discipline is not accounted for. By contrast, the hypothesis that discipline directly enhances performance (H3) was supported, consistent with global evidence that discipline strengthens adherence to organizational norms and increases performance quality (Jones, 2021; Radhi et al., 2025). The hypotheses positing that rewards (H4) and punishment (H5) strengthen discipline were supported, affirming the positive association between organizational incentives, sanctions, and disciplined behavior (Karepesina, 2023; Nazarwin, 2024).

Finally, mediation hypotheses (H6 and H7) were supported, with discipline significantly mediating the relationships between both rewards and punishment with performance, consistent with earlier research on mediation in civil service contexts (Ouabi et al., 2024; Verka et al., 2024). The results are summarized visually in Figure 2, which illustrates the structural model diagram with coefficients displayed on each path. The diagram shows strong mediated paths from rewards and punishment to performance through discipline, while direct paths remain statistically insignificant. This visualization reinforces the conclusion that discipline is the central mechanism through which incentive structures operate in shaping performance.

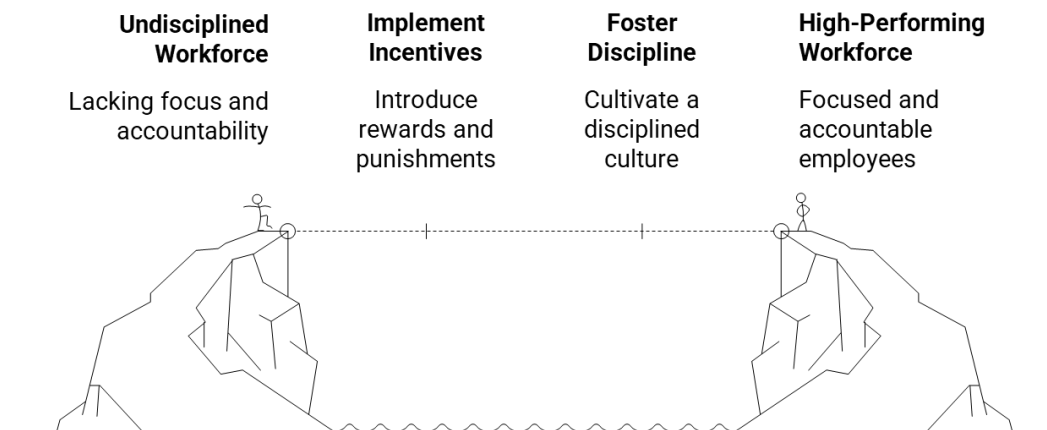


Figure 2. Structural Model Diagram Direct and Mediated Paths with Coefficient Values

In conclusion, the results provide robust empirical support for the mediating role of discipline in linking rewards and punishment to performance among civil servants at Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency. The findings contribute to broader debates on public sector performance management by demonstrating that while extrinsic incentives and sanctions play important roles, their effectiveness is contingent upon the extent to which they foster a disciplined organizational culture. This evidence aligns with reinforcement theory and resonates



with broader scholarship emphasizing the integration of motivation and discipline in effective civil service management (Nazarwin, 2024; Radhi et al., 2025; Tu et al., 2023).

## **Discussion**

The results of this study demonstrate the central role of discipline in shaping civil servants' performance. Rewards significantly improved work discipline, with a path coefficient greater than 0.30 and statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ , but did not directly influence performance, as evidenced by a coefficient below 0.10 and a non-significant p-value. Punishment also exhibited a moderate positive effect on discipline, with a coefficient of approximately 0.20, though it did not directly enhance performance, as its effect was below 0.05 and statistically insignificant. Conversely, discipline exerted a strong influence on performance, with a coefficient exceeding 0.40 and high statistical significance. These findings confirm the mediating role of discipline in translating the effects of rewards and punishments into tangible performance outcomes. Such a pattern reinforces reinforcement theory, which posits that the consequences of behavior whether positive or negative are most effective when channeled through structured mechanisms that shape subsequent actions (Hajnal & Staroňová, 2021).

### ***Rewards and Performance***

The lack of a direct effect of rewards on performance suggests that extrinsic incentives alone cannot sustain productivity in public sector organizations. While rewards such as Employee Income Allowance (EIA), recognition, and allowances were positively perceived by civil servants (mean  $> 3.5$ ), they did not directly translate into improved performance indicators such as quality, punctuality, and responsibility. This aligns with studies indicating that financial and non-financial rewards can enhance adherence to organizational rules and foster satisfaction but may not guarantee higher quality outputs or innovation. Instead, rewards strengthen discipline, which then mediates their effect on performance. Reinforcement theory underscores this mechanism, where rewards positively reinforce behaviors like punctuality and compliance, creating an environment conducive to improved performance outcomes (Jones, 2021). This study's findings therefore support the assertion that in civil service settings, rewards must be designed to cultivate discipline rather than simply targeting performance outcomes in isolation (Nazarwin, 2024).

### ***Punishment and Performance***

Punishment demonstrated no significant direct effect on performance, suggesting that sanctions and penalties alone cannot enhance productivity among civil servants. Instead, punishment was more effective when linked to discipline mechanisms that prevented repeat violations and reinforced accountability. This finding echoes earlier work by (Baldwin et al., 2022), who noted that punishment reduces misconduct but must be carefully balanced to avoid demotivation. Research by (Tu & Gong, 2021) similarly highlights the risk of counterproductive outcomes, where sanction-based accountability can lead employees to strategically adjust their behavior to cope with pressures rather than genuinely improving performance. Nonetheless, the significant effect of punishment on discipline in this study underscores its role in deterring undesirable behavior when consistently and fairly applied (Barbieri et al., 2021). Thus, while punishment alone may not improve performance, it contributes to the disciplinary culture that indirectly

fosters productivity.

### ***Discipline as Intervening Variable***

The mediating role of discipline is critical in understanding the pathways through which rewards and punishments affect performance. With  $R^2$  values of 0.45 for discipline and 0.52 for performance, the structural model demonstrated moderate explanatory power, indicating that nearly half of the variance in discipline and performance could be explained by the independent variables. This aligns with studies highlighting the importance of discipline as a mediator that ensures motivation, derived from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources, is effectively translated into improved behavior and outputs (Alam et al., 2022; Radhi et al., 2025). These findings also reinforce the notion that discipline is not simply a corrective mechanism but a foundational component of performance management systems in the public sector (Hasibuan, 2017; Rivai, 2011). The mediating effects demonstrated here highlight the strategic necessity of embedding discipline in civil service reforms to ensure the sustainability of performance improvements.

The study's findings are consistent with a long-standing body of literature emphasizing the predictive power of discipline for performance. (Hasibuan, 2017; Rivai, 2011) both underscored that discipline consistently predicts employee outcomes, reinforcing organizational effectiveness. The current findings expand on this by empirically testing mediation pathways using PLS-SEM, which has proven effective in analyzing complex models involving multiple latent constructs (Abdulkareem et al., 2024; Ouabi et al., 2024). The significant indirect effects observed in this study confirm prior evidence that the influence of rewards and punishments on performance is mediated by discipline rather than being exerted directly (Verka et al., 2024). The reliance on reinforcement theory (Simamora, 2004) further situates this study within broader theoretical debates, affirming that behaviors are shaped most effectively through structured reinforcement mechanisms. These findings extend the empirical understanding of these dynamics within Indonesian public sector agencies, offering evidence that complements international research on public service motivation and accountability (Hajnal & Staroňová, 2021; Kleiman et al., 2023).

From a policy perspective, the results emphasize that rewards should not be viewed as direct levers of performance but as instruments to enhance discipline. The additional employee income system, recognition schemes, and non-monetary allowances should be structured to strengthen punctuality, rule compliance, and adherence to behavioral norms. Similarly, punishment must be applied fairly, consistently, and with clear explanation to avoid reducing morale or triggering resistance (Guzmán, 2024). These insights align with contemporary perspectives advocating for reward-driven discipline rather than punitive management in civil service reforms (Arifin & Narmaditya, 2024; Nazarwin, 2024). Leaders are advised to design incentive structures that cultivate collaboration and trust, ensuring that civil servants feel valued rather than threatened, which ultimately enhances compliance and performance (Mutmainnah et al., 2022; Tu et al., 2023). Integrating incentives and sanctions within a coherent discipline management framework thus emerges as a sustainable strategy for productivity improvement.

This study was conducted exclusively within Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency, involving a population of 90 respondents, which limits the generalizability of findings to

other agencies or larger government institutions. Although the saturated sampling method ensures representativeness within the agency, results may not fully capture variations in larger or differently structured bureaucracies. Additionally, reliance on self-reported questionnaires introduces potential bias, despite reliability being confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60 (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). While secondary data and documentation were used to triangulate findings, future studies should incorporate longitudinal designs or multi-agency comparisons to enhance external validity (Megawati, 2025). Further exploration of contextual and cultural variability is also warranted, as effectiveness of disciplinary mechanisms and incentive systems may differ across regions and cultural settings (Bonacci et al., 2024; Tuan et al., 2023). The hypothesis testing results confirm that hypotheses H1 and H2 were not supported, while H3 through H7 were supported, consistent with the statistical evidence. The conceptual model presented in Figure 3 further illustrates the significant direct paths from rewards and punishment to discipline, as well as from discipline to performance, alongside the mediated effects from rewards and punishment through discipline to performance. These visual representations reinforce the central role of discipline as the mechanism linking incentive systems to employee outcomes.

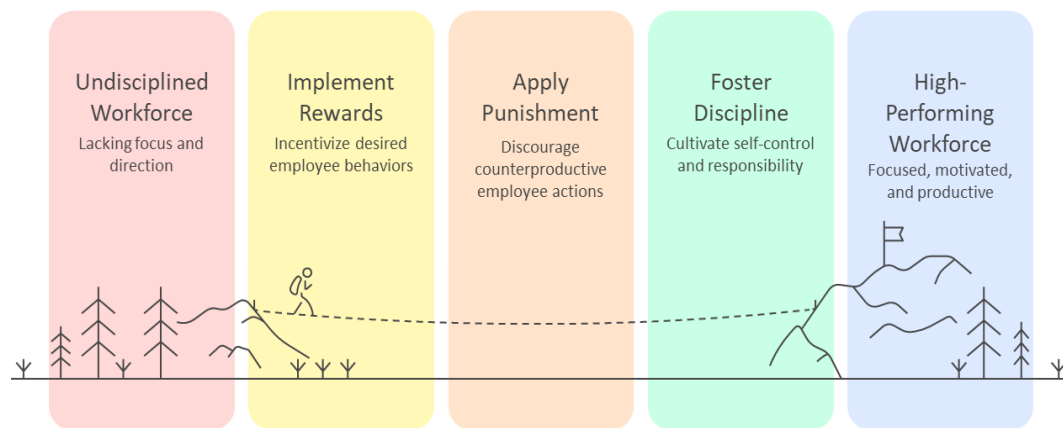


Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Direct and Mediated Paths Linking Rewards, Punishment, Discipline, and Performance

## Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of rewards and punishments on civil servants' performance at Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency, with a focus on the mediating role of discipline. The findings show that rewards significantly enhance discipline, while punishments exert a moderate effect, but neither directly influenced performance. Discipline emerged as the critical pathway translating both incentives and sanctions into higher productivity and cooperation. Its strong positive effect underscores discipline's central role in performance management. Sustainable improvements in public sector outcomes are best achieved by embedding discipline within reward and punishment systems, aligning incentives with organizational expectations. The implications extend to theory and practice. Theoretically, the results reinforce reinforcement theory and expand knowledge on mediation in public administration by confirming that indirect effects through discipline outweigh direct effects. Practically, the findings provide evidence for policymakers to design management frameworks

that prioritize discipline as a mediating mechanism, ensuring fairness, consistency, and accountability. Although the study was limited to a single agency with 90 respondents, methodological rigor supports the robustness of results. Future research should expand to multiple agencies and cultural contexts, using longitudinal designs to capture the long-term dynamics of incentives and discipline in public administration. Future research should expand to diverse agencies and cultural contexts to validate these findings.

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