

The Influence of Managerial Competence and Employee Discipline on Public Service Quality at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the influence of managerial competence and employee discipline on public service quality at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency. The study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The population comprised 167 employees, and 118 respondents were selected using the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error and proportionally allocated across seven divisions or work units. Data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires, documentation, and guided observation. The managerial competence, employee discipline, and public service quality instruments obtained Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.946, 0.969, and 0.975, respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, t-tests, an F-test, and the coefficient of determination with SPSS version 26. The results showed that managerial competence had a positive and significant influence on public service quality ($B = 0.308$; $t = 2.585$; $p = 0.011$). Employee discipline had a positive direction of influence but was not partially significant ($B = 0.079$; $t = 0.713$; $p = 0.477$). Simultaneously, managerial competence and employee discipline significantly influenced public service quality ($F = 3.825$; $p = 0.025$), with an R^2 of 0.062. These findings indicate that improving public service quality requires prioritizing stronger managerial competence while maintaining work discipline within a more integrated service system.

Keywords: Managerial Competence; Employee Discipline; Public Service Quality; Education Office

INTRODUCTION

Public service quality is a key indicator of successful local governance because it reflects the bureaucracy's ability to meet community needs promptly, accurately, transparently, and accountably. In the education sector, service quality concerns not only routine administration but also personnel services, teacher certification, student admissions, the distribution of educational facilities, complaint handling,

and the provision of information accessible to schools and the public. Slow services, complicated procedures, and unclear information may reduce public trust in government education institutions. The shift in governmental work patterns toward digital services requires public employees to possess stronger managerial competence. Employees must not only understand technical duties but also be able to plan work, make decisions, organize resources, lead teams, and develop service innovations. These competencies are increasingly important at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency, which serves a geographically extensive area with diverse school needs.

Managerial competence helps the organization establish priorities, accelerate coordination across divisions, and ensure that service policies are translated into consistent action. In addition to managerial competence, employee discipline is an important factor in public service delivery. Discipline is reflected in punctuality, compliance with regulations, adherence to procedures, work consistency, and responsibility for work outcomes. Disciplined employees tend to be more reliable in meeting service time standards and completing administrative tasks. Conversely, indiscipline may cause delays, uncertainty, documentation errors, and work backlogs that ultimately affect citizens' experiences as service users. Field conditions indicate that the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency continues to face service challenges, including delays in completing some personnel administration, responses to complaints about school facilities, and the need for greater transparency in several educational services. These challenges reveal a gap between operational service standards and users' experiences. At the same time, changes in education policy and bureaucratic digitalization require employees to work with data, coordinate across divisions, and provide more adaptive responses.

Previous studies have produced relatively consistent evidence that employee competence and work discipline are associated with public service quality. Indarwati (2020) found that competence and discipline influenced service quality at a district office. Zain et al. (2023) showed that employee competence and work discipline positively influenced public service quality. Setyadi et al. (2024) also found that work discipline affected administrative service quality. However, research integrating managerial competence and employee discipline in district-level education organizations remains limited, particularly in the context of the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency. The novelty of this study lies in examining employee managerial competence as the capacity to manage service processes and employee discipline as the consistency of work behavior within a single empirical model. The study analyzed the influence of managerial competence on public service quality, the influence of employee discipline on public service quality, and the simultaneous influence of both variables. The results are expected to provide an empirical basis for human resource development and improved service governance at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Indarwati (2020) found that employee competence and work discipline influenced service quality at the East Denpasar District Office. This finding indicates that public employees' capabilities and compliance with work procedures are two important foundations for delivering consistent services. Zain et al. (2023) reported that work discipline and employee competence had positive and significant effects on public service quality. Their results confirm that improving service quality requires a combination of employee capacity and work behavior aligned with organizational standards. Setyadi et al. (2024) found that work discipline significantly affected public service quality at the Population and Civil Registration Office of Palembang City. Meanwhile, Marsanda et al. (2025) showed that employee competence and work discipline jointly influenced service quality in an integrated service unit.

Supawanhar et al. (2024) positioned managerial competence as an important component of the New Public Management perspective because the ability to manage resources, set standards, and control processes is related to service efficiency. Using the SERVQUAL approach, Widiyanto and Zunaidi (2024) likewise demonstrated that public employees' competence and discipline influenced service reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. Unlike previous studies, this research focuses on the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency, which combines administrative services with technical educational services. Integrating the two variables enables an analysis of whether the capacity to manage work and compliance with work procedures jointly explain public service quality in a regional education organization.

Managerial Competence

Managerial competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that enables employees to manage organizational work and resources effectively. In public organizations, managerial competence includes the ability to plan programs, make decisions, organize resources, lead, coordinate, and develop service innovations. Paz and Odelius (2021) emphasize that managerial competence in public organizations is not merely individual but is also related to contributions to organizational strategy, team management, and service delivery. Work planning helps employees establish objectives, priorities, and implementation steps. Decision-making allows service problems to be resolved promptly and in accordance with regulations. Organizing ensures appropriate task allocation and resource utilization, while leadership promotes team coordination and motivation. Service innovation is required to improve procedures, use technology, and adapt services to community needs. In this study, managerial competence was measured through five indicators work planning, decision-making, coordination and organizing, leadership, and service innovation. The stronger employees' managerial

competence, the more likely the organization is to provide structured, responsive, and user-oriented services.

Employee Discipline

Employee discipline refers to public employees' awareness of and willingness to comply with organizational regulations, procedures, and work standards. Hasibuan (2019) defines discipline as an individual's awareness and willingness to obey organizational rules and applicable norms. In public service, discipline concerns not only attendance but also timely task completion, procedural compliance, consistency in work quality, and responsibility for service outcomes. Discipline can be developed through exemplary leadership, organizational culture, supervision, rewards, and the consistent application of sanctions. Reinforcement theory explains that disciplined behavior tends to be maintained when an organization provides fair and clear consequences. Social learning theory also suggests that employees learn disciplined behavior by observing supervisors and colleagues. This study measured employee discipline through punctuality, compliance with regulations, adherence to work procedures, work consistency, and responsibility. These five indicators represent employees' capacity to maintain orderly service processes and meet organizational standards continuously.

Public Service Quality

Public service quality is the degree of alignment between services provided by a government organization and the needs or expectations of the community. Law Number 25 of 2009 states that public service comprises a series of activities intended to meet citizens' needs for goods, services, and administrative services. Service quality reflects employee professionalism, organizational accountability, ease of access, process accuracy, and responsiveness to user needs. The SERVQUAL model explains service quality through five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles include facilities and supporting infrastructure; reliability refers to the ability to provide services according to standards; responsiveness concerns readiness to assist users; assurance reflects competence and trust; and empathy indicates attention to the community's specific needs. From a Good Governance perspective, high-quality services must be transparent, accountable, responsive, effective, and participatory. New Public Management emphasizes efficiency and results orientation, whereas New Public Service positions the community as citizens who must be served and involved. Based on this framework, managerial competence and employee discipline are expected to contribute to the quality of public service processes and experiences.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to test the influence of managerial competence and employee discipline on public service quality. The study was conducted at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency from December 2025 to May 2026. The population comprised 167 employees from the Personnel Division, Finance Division, Planning Division, Junior Secondary School Development Division, Primary School Development Division, Early Childhood Education and Nonformal Education Development Division, and Culture Division. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error, resulting in 118 respondents. The sample was proportionally allocated according to the number of employees in each division or unit and selected through probability sampling.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire, documentation, and guided observation. The initial instrument consisted of 90 statements, with 30 items each for managerial competence, employee discipline, and public service quality. Managerial competence was measured through work planning, decision-making, coordination and organizing, leadership, and service innovation. Employee discipline was measured through punctuality, compliance with regulations, adherence to procedures, work consistency, and responsibility. Public service quality was measured using the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The instrument was piloted with 20 respondents who had characteristics similar to those of the study population. The validity test identified 25 valid items for managerial competence, 28 valid items for employee discipline, and 27 valid items for public service quality. Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.946 for managerial competence, 0.969 for employee discipline, and 0.975 for public service quality indicated that all three instruments had very high internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, a residual normality test, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests, multiple linear regression, t-tests, an F-test, and the coefficient of determination with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05. The statistical normality tests indicated a departure from normality; however, the histogram and Normal Q-Q Plot showed an approximately normal residual pattern, so the regression analysis was continued. Multicollinearity was evaluated using tolerance and VIF values, while heteroscedasticity was assessed using the Glejser test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistical Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Category
Managerial competence (X ₁)	118	123	150	133.18	9.98	Good
Employee discipline (X ₂)	118	119	150	131.55	10.79	Good
Public service quality (Y)	118	109	150	130.38	13.11	Good

Table 1 shows that managerial competence obtained a mean score of 133.18 with a standard deviation of 9.98. These results indicate that employees generally perceived their work planning, decision-making, organizing, leadership, and service innovation abilities to be in the good category. The standard deviation, which was much smaller than the mean, indicates relatively consistent perceptions among respondents. Employee discipline obtained a mean score of 131.55 with a standard deviation of 10.79. This finding indicates that punctuality, compliance with regulations, adherence to procedures, work consistency, and responsibility were rated as good. Nevertheless, the variation in responses suggests that discipline levels were not entirely uniform across all work units. Public service quality obtained a mean score of 130.38 with a standard deviation of 13.11 and was categorized as good. The larger standard deviation relative to those of the independent variables indicates a wider variation in service experiences. This means that several service aspects were rated positively, but improvement remains necessary, particularly in reliability, response speed, procedural integration, and consistency across divisions.

Results of the Prerequisite Tests

Table 2. Summary of the Prerequisite Tests

Type of test	Indicator	Value	Criterion	Decision
Residual normality	K-S / Shapiro-Wilk	0.000 / 0.003	Statistical and graphical evaluation	Statistically non-normal; visually close to normal
Multicollinearity X ₁	Tolerance / VIF	0.989 / 1.011	Tolerance > 0.10; VIF < 10	No multicollinearity
Multicollinearity X ₂	Tolerance / VIF	0.989 / 1.011	Tolerance > 0.10; VIF < 10	No multicollinearity

Type of test	Indicator	Value	Criterion	Decision
Heteroscedasticity X_1	Glejser Sig.	0.460	> 0.05	No heteroscedasticity
Heteroscedasticity X_2	Glejser Sig.	0.501	> 0.05	No heteroscedasticity

The statistical normality tests produced significance values below 0.05, indicating that the residuals did not fully follow a normal distribution according to formal testing. However, the residual histogram and Normal Q-Q Plot displayed a pattern close to the normal curve, with points generally following the diagonal line. Given the sample of 118 respondents, the model was retained for analysis while this limitation was acknowledged. Tolerance values of 0.989 and VIF values of 1.011 for both variables indicated the absence of multicollinearity. The Glejser test also produced significance values of 0.460 for managerial competence and 0.501 for employee discipline, indicating no heteroscedasticity. Thus, the model met the assumptions of independence among the predictors and homogeneity of residual variance.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 3. Summary of the Regression Results

Test	Coefficient B	t/F	Sig.	R ²	Decision
Managerial competence → service quality	0.308	t = 2.585	0.011	—	Positive and significant
Employee discipline → service quality	0.079	t = 0.713	0.477	—	Positive, not significant
X_1 and X_2 → service quality	$X_1 = 0.308$; $X_2 = 0.079$	F = 3.825	0.025	0.062	Simultaneously significant

The partial test showed that managerial competence had a positive and significant influence on public service quality. The regression coefficient of 0.308 indicates that stronger managerial competence was followed by higher service quality, while the t-value of 2.585 and significance value of 0.011 supported the first hypothesis. Employee discipline had a positive coefficient of 0.079, but its t-value of 0.713 and significance value of 0.477 showed that the partial influence was not significant. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not supported. This finding does not mean that discipline is unimportant; rather, it indicates that variation in respondents' discipline was insufficient to explain differences in service quality after managerial competence was taken into account. The F-test produced a value of 3.825 with a significance value of 0.025. Thus, managerial competence and employee discipline jointly had a significant influence on public service quality. The R² value of 0.062

indicates that the two variables explained 6.2% of the variation in service quality, whereas the remaining 93.8% was influenced by factors outside the model.

The Influence of Managerial Competence on Public Service Quality

The positive and significant influence of managerial competence indicates that employees' ability to plan, organize, make decisions, lead, and innovate plays a substantive role in improving service quality. Employees who can establish priorities and coordinate resources can reduce delays, prevent overlapping duties, and respond more appropriately to the needs of schools and the community. This finding is consistent with Paz and Odelius (2021), who position managerial competence as a strategic capability in public service management and team management. The results also support Supawanhar et al. (2024), who emphasize that managerial competence improves service effectiveness by integrating operational and strategic functions. At the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency, strengthening managerial competence is particularly important because services are distributed across multiple divisions with diverse user characteristics. The implication is that employee development should focus on training in data-based planning, decision-making, conflict management, cross-divisional coordination, service communication, and digital innovation. Such development should be connected to real service problems so that increased competence has a direct effect on service speed, accuracy, and certainty.

The Influence of Employee Discipline on Public Service Quality

The nonsignificant partial influence of employee discipline differs from several previous studies that found positive and significant relationships. One possible explanation is that respondents' discipline levels were relatively high and homogeneous; therefore, the variation was insufficient to explain differences in service quality. This condition is known as a restricted range, in which variable scores are concentrated within a narrow interval and statistical relationships become weaker. Another possibility is that service quality is more directly influenced by systemic factors such as the availability of technology, clarity of standard operating procedures, workload, cross-divisional coordination, technical competence, leadership, organizational culture, and public access. Employees may arrive on time and comply with regulations, yet services may remain slow when procedures are not integrated or information must pass through multiple bureaucratic stages. This finding does not diminish the importance of discipline as a prerequisite for organizational order. Discipline should be maintained through exemplary leadership, consistent supervision, performance-based assessment, fair rewards, and task completion based on time targets. However, disciplinary policies must be accompanied by improvements in work systems and competence so that compliance produces a more tangible impact on service quality.

The Simultaneous Influence of Managerial Competence and Employee Discipline

The significant simultaneous influence indicates that managerial competence and employee discipline remain complementary in public service delivery. Competence reflects public employees' ability to manage processes, whereas discipline reflects consistency in implementing decisions and procedures. Competence without discipline may produce plans that are not implemented, while discipline without competence may result in compliant routines that are insufficiently adaptive. The R^2 value of 6.2% indicates that the model had relatively low explanatory power. This finding is important because public service quality is multidimensional and influenced by numerous factors. Leadership, motivation, organizational culture, work environment, workload, technological integration, service facilities, job satisfaction, communication, and the quality of standard operating procedures may make larger contributions. Therefore, service improvement cannot rely solely on interventions involving these two variables.

In practical terms, the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency needs to develop an integrated service quality improvement program. Such a program may include competency mapping, managerial training, procedural simplification, digitalization of service flows, service time standards, complaint monitoring, user satisfaction evaluation, and stronger cross-divisional coordination. Through a systemic approach, competence and discipline can function as components of a more effective service ecosystem. This study has several limitations. The primary data were based on employees' perceptions and may therefore be affected by self-assessment bias. The statistical normality tests indicated a departure from normality, although the graphical evaluation was approximately normal. The coefficient of determination was also low, meaning that the model did not explain most of the variation in service quality. Future research should involve service users as respondents, employ a mixed-methods design, and include variables such as leadership, organizational culture, service technology, workload, technical competence, and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Managerial competence had a positive and significant influence on public service quality at the Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency. This result indicates that work planning, decision-making, organizing, leadership, and service innovation are important factors in improving service processes and outcomes. Employee discipline had a positive direction of influence but was not partially significant in relation to public service quality. Discipline remains a prerequisite for organizational order but was not the principal factor differentiating service quality in this research model. Simultaneously, managerial competence and employee discipline significantly influenced public service quality but explained only 6.2% of its variation. The Education and Culture Office of Banyuasin Regency is

therefore advised to prioritize managerial competence development, maintain performance-based discipline, and improve systemic factors such as technological integration, standard operating procedures, coordination, facilities, and mechanisms for evaluating user satisfaction.

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