

Research Article

The Role of Performance Appraisal and Punishment Systems in Enhancing Hotel Employee Performance in Semarang Region

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of performance appraisal and punishment on employee performance in starred hotels in Semarang, Indonesia. In the hospitality industry, where service quality heavily depends on human capital, performance evaluation and behavioral control systems play a critical role in sustaining productivity. This research employs a quantitative approach with a survey method involving 70 respondents from three- to five-star hotels. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS. The results indicate that both performance appraisal and punishment significantly influence employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. Performance appraisal demonstrates a more dominant effect than punishment in enhancing motivation and work productivity. The effectiveness of these systems is influenced by consistent implementation, open communication between management and employees, and alignment with organizational goals. This study offers practical recommendations for hotel managers in designing fair and effective performance management systems. Theoretically, it contributes to the human resource management literature in the service sector, particularly in hospitality management.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Hospitality Industry, Human Resource Management, Performance Appraisal, Punishment.

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors and plays a vital role in both national and global economies. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council [1]2023, the hospitality and tourism sector contributes over 9% to global GDP and supports more than 330 million jobs worldwide. As a labor-intensive and service-oriented industry, the success of hotels heavily relies on the quality of their human resources. Hotel employees are expected to deliver professional and responsive service that meets guests' expectations, ensuring satisfaction and operational excellence.

Despite this growth, hospitality organizations continue to face persistent human resource challenges, particularly in maintaining and improving employee performance. Poor performance among employees is widely recognized as a key barrier to achieving organizational effectiveness and service quality. Performance is generally defined as the degree to which employees fulfill job standards and responsibilities. [1] highlights that performance indicators include task accomplishment and the extent to which employees meet organizational goals. Employee performance is influenced by both internal factors—such as motivation, job satisfaction, and self-discipline—and external variables like leadership style,

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organizational culture, compensation, and work environment [2]. When managed properly, employees' intrinsic motivation and energy can significantly enhance organizational outcomes [3].

To address these challenges, many organizations implement structured performance appraisal systems. Performance appraisal is a systematic process used to evaluate employee work outcomes, provide developmental feedback, and support managerial decisions regarding promotions, demotions, or disciplinary actions. According to Mangkuprawira, an effective [4] system aligns individual efforts with organizational strategies, helps identify areas for improvement, and fosters greater accountability among employees.

In addition to performance appraisals, disciplinary measures or punishments are often employed to maintain order and enforce workplace standards. If applied fairly and consistently, punishment can deter undesirable behaviors, reinforce organizational norms, and promote discipline [5], [6]. In the hospitality context, these disciplinary mechanisms must not only penalize but also serve an educational and motivational purpose—encouraging behavioral correction and long-term performance improvement.

In Indonesia, and specifically in the city of Semarang, many hotels have adopted both performance appraisal and punishment systems as part of their broader human resource strategies. However, the extent to which these mechanisms effectively influence employee performance has not been fully explored through empirical research. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of performance appraisal and punishment on employee performance in starred hotels in Semarang. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical contributions to the field of human resource management and practical implications for hotel managers seeking to optimize workforce productivity in the increasingly competitive hospitality industry. Specifically, this study seeks to (1) examine the individual effects of performance appraisal and punishment on employee performance, and (2) analyze the simultaneous influence of both mechanisms within the hotel industry context.

2. Literature Review

Human Resource Management in the Hospitality Industry

[8] Human resource management (HRM) is a critical aspect of organizational success, particularly in the hospitality industry where service quality is highly dependent on employee performance. The hospitality sector requires employees to be adaptable, emotionally intelligent, and service-oriented to meet customer expectations [7]. Effective HRM practices help hotels retain talented employees, enhance service delivery, and achieve strategic goals [8]. These practices include performance appraisal systems, employee development programs, and disciplinary mechanisms tailored to the high-demand nature of hotel operations.

Human resource management represents a vital factor in company management and plays a central role in all organizational activities. This relates to how companies maintain employee performance to optimize their ability to execute assigned tasks and responsibilities. Employee performance, measured in terms of both quality and quantity based on company-established standards, constitutes essential capital for companies in achieving their objectives. Consequently, employee performance must be carefully considered and enhanced by company leadership [9], [10].

Particularly for the hospitality industry, performance appraisal is crucial in hotels as it allows employees to feel more appreciated, facilitating smoother execution of their responsibilities without feeling undervalued. The implementation of performance appraisal systems can foster diligence and promote positive work attitudes among hotel staff.

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is defined as a formal and systematic evaluation of employee performance over a specific period, aiming to improve work outcomes through feedback, goal setting, and performance metrics [4]. In the hospitality context, appraisal systems are essential for aligning employee behaviors with service standards, especially given the high turnover and performance pressure inherent in the sector.

An effective appraisal system not only serves as a basis for promotion and reward but also improves employee motivation and role clarity [11]. According to Gunawan and Ramadhani [12], hotels that implement transparent and consistent performance evaluations report higher levels of job satisfaction and employee retention. However, appraisal processes must be designed to avoid bias, ensure objectivity, and maintain fairness to be fully effective.

Abdullah (2014) defines performance appraisal as a formal system prepared by an organization to evaluate individual performance quality [13]. The importance of performance appraisal lies in its ability to enhance the performance of individuals, teams, and all organizational units [14]. Performance appraisal activities represent organizational programs that benefit both employees and organizational development. A key challenge in performance appraisal involves conducting evaluations correctly, objectively, and without being influenced by personal feelings or judgment. Therefore, an effective performance appraisal system is essential [15].

According to Al Doghan et al. [16], performance assessment helps companies review individual performance levels. Within human resource functions, performance appraisal constitutes a primary component. Management uses these evaluations to assess employee performance and as a means for employees to self-evaluate their work in achieving company targets or objectives. Through this assessment process, employees receive criticism and suggestions from management [17].

Punishment and Disciplinary Systems

Punishment in organizational settings refers to corrective actions aimed at discouraging undesirable behavior and reinforcing adherence to rules and standards [18]. In hotels, disciplinary actions are commonly implemented to address violations of standard operating procedures, including absenteeism, poor work ethics, or misconduct. When applied appropriately, punishment can function as a behavioral correction tool that motivates employees to align with organizational values [19].

However, research by Rizki et al. (2023) suggests that excessive or inconsistent disciplinary measures may harm employee morale and psychological well-being. Therefore, punishment should be accompanied by constructive feedback, clear communication, and educational intent to ensure its effectiveness as a performance management tool.

Punishment represents action taken against an individual for negative behavior they have exhibited. In the workplace, punishment functions as a form of negative reinforcement that can motivate individuals when properly managed [20]. Through punishment, employees are expected to correct violations they have committed within a short timeframe [21]. Wiyani [5] argues that punishment serves to prevent violators from repeating undesirable actions, educate individuals regarding right and wrong behaviors, and provide motivation to avoid negative behaviors inconsistent with social norms. According to Purwanto [6], punishment types can be distinguished by function: preventive punishment and repressive punishment.

The implementation of punishment for employees who have violated company regulations or deviated from standard operating procedures aims to prevent recurring infractions and ensure violations are not repeated, as it creates a deterrent effect for staff/employees. According to Nargis & Basri [18] states that punishment represents a threat of sanction intended to improve the performance of rule-breaking employees, maintain applicable regulations, and provide lessons to violators. By implementing these threats or punishments, employees are expected to become more disciplined in adhering to established

rules, thereby continuously improving employee performance. The administration of punishment supports the implementation of performance appraisal systems for employees in Semarang hotels..

Employee Performance

Employee performance is typically measured by the quality, quantity, and timeliness of work completed in accordance with organizational goals [22]. In the hospitality industry, employee performance directly affects guest satisfaction, customer loyalty, and hotel reputation. Factors such as motivation, leadership, and organizational support are significantly correlated with performance outcomes [23].

Studies show that performance appraisal and disciplinary actions can influence employee behavior both positively and negatively depending on how they are implemented [12]. High-performing hotels often create a balanced system where performance expectations are clearly communicated, and both rewards and consequences are perceived as fair by employees.

Employees in the hospitality industry face specific challenges that can affect their performance, such as high expectations from guests demanding excellent service at all times. These challenges can lead to fatigue, stress, and even decreased motivation if not properly managed [24]. Employees represent a key success factor in business operations. Performance improvement is pursued through effective human resource management [25].

Employee performance can be measured by attendance or absenteeism levels. Employee absence impacts productivity, while good attendance or low absenteeism rates tend to enhance employee performance. Employee performance refers to work results achieved by an individual or group in accordance with their respective authority and responsibility during a specific period. Companies need to conduct performance assessments of their employees.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the principles of reinforcement theory and goal-setting theory. Reinforcement theory suggests that behavior can be shaped through rewards and punishments, while goal-setting theory posits that clearly defined and challenging goals improve employee performance. Recent empirical studies support the integration of these frameworks in hospitality HR practices to drive performance and accountability.

3. Proposed Method

This research employed a quantitative approach to investigate the influence of performance appraisal and punishment systems on employee performance in hotels across Semarang, Indonesia. A quantitative method was selected as the study aimed to examine relationships between variables that could be statistically measured and analyzed.

The study utilized a correlational research design to determine the relationships between performance appraisal (X1) and punishment (X2) as independent variables, and employee performance (Y) as the dependent variable. This design allowed for examination of both individual (partial) and combined (simultaneous) effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

The population comprised all hotel employees working in Semarang and surrounding districts. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria: permanent hotel employees or apprentices with a minimum employment tenure of one year, and currently employed at 3-5 star hotels in Semarang. Based on these criteria, 70 respondents were selected to participate in the study.

Multiple data collection methods were utilized to ensure comprehensive information gathering. A structured questionnaire was administered using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure the research variables. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents both physically and electronically, depending on accessibility. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to obtain supplementary information and contextual insights regarding performance appraisal practices, punishment systems, and performance metrics within their respective hotels.

Additionally, secondary data was collected from participating hotels, including performance appraisal forms, employee handbooks outlining disciplinary procedures, and relevant HR policies to enhance understanding of the formal systems in place.

The operationalization of variables focused on three key constructs. Performance Appraisal (X1) was defined as a systematic performance evaluation conducted to assess employee work achievements. Its indicators encompassed fairness of assessment, clarity of performance standards, feedback quality, evaluator competence, evaluation frequency, and development orientation. Punishment (X2) was defined as sanctions imposed for violations of work policies or procedures, with indicators including consistency of implementation, clarity of violation criteria, proportionality of sanctions, objectivity in application, and timeliness of enforcement. Employee Performance (Y) was defined as the quality and quantity of work accomplished by employees in fulfilling their responsibilities, measured through indicators of work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, independence, and commitment to organizational goals.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. The analytical techniques began with instrument testing through validity testing using Pearson product-moment correlation with significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a minimum acceptable value of 0.7. Prior to hypothesis testing, several classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality testing using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, multicollinearity testing using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), heteroscedasticity testing using Glejser test, and linearity testing using deviation from linearity.

For hypothesis testing, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the relationship between variables, represented by the equation: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$, where Y represents Employee Performance, α is the constant, β_1 and β_2 are regression coefficients, X_1 represents Performance Appraisal, X_2 represents Punishment, and ε is the error term. The t-test was used to examine partial effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable (H_1 and H_2), while the F-test was utilized to examine the simultaneous effect of both independent variables on the dependent variable (H_3). Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to measure the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. All statistical tests were conducted with a significance level of 0.05, corresponding to a 95% confidence interval.

4. Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

The demographic profile of respondents provides important context for understanding the research findings. The distribution of respondents by age, gender, and work experience is presented in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. Respondent Distribution by Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17-25 years	55	78.6
26-35 years	8	11.4
36-45 years	4	5.7
> 45 years	3	4.3
Total	70	100

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Table 2. Respondent Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	28	40
Female	42	60
Total	70	100

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Table 3. Respondent Distribution by Work Experience

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3-6 Months	27	38.6
1 Year	23	32.9
2 Years	20	28.6
Total	70	100

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

As shown in the tables, the sample is dominated by young employees between 17-25 years old (78.6%), with female employees constituting the majority (60%). Regarding work experience, most respondents (38.6%) have been employed for only 3-6 months. This demographic composition, dominated by young female employees with relatively short tenure, provides valuable insight into the staffing profile of Semarang's hotel industry.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Prior to hypothesis testing, we conducted validity and reliability analyses to ensure the robustness of our measurement instruments. The summary of these tests is presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Summary of Validity Test Results

Variable	Item Range	Correlation Coefficient Range	Significance	Status
Performance Appraisal (X1)	X1.1 - X1.12	0.233 - 0.754	$p < 0.05$	Valid
Punishment (X2)	X2.1 - X2.7	0.270 - 0.716	$p < 0.05$	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)	Y.1 - Y.15	0.199 - 0.845	$p < 0.05$	Valid

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Table 5. Summary of Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Status
Performance Appraisal (X1)	0.892	12	Reliable
Punishment (X2)	0.834	7	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0.918	15	Reliable

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

The validity test using Person product-moment correlation showed that all items measuring the three variables demonstrated significant positive correlations, with most values exceeding the 0.3 threshold, establishing their validity. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha revealed coefficients exceeding the minimum acceptable value of 0.7 for all variables, thus confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instruments.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	12.482	4.629		2.697	0.009
Performance Appraisal (X1)	0.467	0.110	0.439	4.238	0.000
Punishment (X2)	0.581	0.147	0.408	3.952	0.000

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Table 7. Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.804	0.647	0.636	5.221

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Table 8. ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3348.639	2	1674.320	61.424	0.000
Residual	1827.361	67	27.275		
Total	5176.000	69			

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Based on the multiple regression analysis, the regression equation derived is:

$$Y = 12.482 + 0.467X_1 + 0.581X_2$$

Where Y represents Employee Performance, X_1 represents Performance Appraisal, and X_2 represents Punishment.

The coefficient of determination adjusted (R^2) was 0.636, indicating that 63.6% of the variance in Employee Performance can be explained by Performance Appraisal and Punishment, while the remaining 36.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis 1: Performance Appraisal influences Employee Performance

The t-test for the first hypothesis yielded a t-value of 4.238 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.439. This result supports Hypothesis 1, confirming that Performance Appraisal has a significant positive influence on Employee Performance. The positive Beta value indicates that improvements in performance appraisal practices are associated with enhanced employee performance outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: Punishment influences Employee Performance

For the second hypothesis, the t-test produced a t-value of 3.952 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.408. This finding supports Hypothesis 2, establishing that Punishment has a significant positive influence on Employee Performance. The positive Beta value suggests that appropriately implemented punishment systems are associated with better employee performance.

Hypothesis 3: Performance Appraisal and Punishment simultaneously influence Employee Performance

The F-test for the third hypothesis resulted in an F-value of 61.424 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This result supports Hypothesis 3, confirming that Performance Appraisal and Punishment simultaneously have a significant positive influence on Employee Performance. The high F-value indicates a strong joint effect of both variables on employee performance outcomes.

Table 9. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Test Value	Significance	Status	Conclusion
H1: Performance Appraisal → Employee Performance	t = 4.238	0.000	Supported	Performance Appraisal has a significant positive influence on Employee Performance
H2: Punishment → Employee Performance	t = 3.952	0.000	Supported	Punishment has a significant positive influence on Employee Performance
H3: Performance Appraisal and Punishment → Employee Performance	F = 61.424	0.000	Supported	Performance Appraisal and Punishment simultaneously have a significant positive influence on Employee Performance

Source : Output SPSS (2025)

Discussion of Findings

Influence of Performance Appraisal on Employee Performance

The significant positive relationship between Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance aligns with theoretical expectations and previous research in human resource management. This finding suggests that when hotels in Semarang implement effective performance appraisal systems characterized by fair assessment, clear standards, quality feedback, and development orientation, employees demonstrate improved work performance. Several mechanisms may explain this relationship. First, performance appraisals provide employees with clear expectations and feedback about their work, reducing role ambiguity and enhancing role clarity. Second, regular appraisals identify specific areas for improvement, enabling targeted training and development. Third, fair appraisals foster perceptions of organizational justice, potentially enhancing employee commitment and motivation.

Our findings are consistent with previous studies by Sumarsid & Rasipan (2022) and Ni Made et al. (2024), who similarly found positive correlations between performance appraisal practices and employee performance in service industries. Particularly noteworthy is the strong influence of performance appraisal despite the relatively young workforce with limited tenure in our sample. This suggests that younger employees in the hotel industry may be especially responsive to formal feedback and evaluation systems, possibly due to their career stage and developmental needs.

Influence of Punishment on Employee Performance

The significant positive relationship between Punishment and Employee Performance provides empirical support for the disciplinary role of punishment systems in organizational settings. This finding indicates that when hotels implement well-designed punishment mechanisms characterized by consistency, clarity, proportionality, and objectivity, employee performance tends to improve. This relationship can be understood through several theoretical lenses. From a behaviorist perspective, appropriate punishment discourages

undesirable behaviors that detract from performance. From an equity theory perspective, punishment systems ensure that poor performers face consequences, maintaining perceptions of fairness among high performers.

These results align with research by Olivia et al. (2022) and Muchsinati & Jeanny (2021), who found that punishment can serve as an effective motivational tool when implemented properly. However, our findings add nuance to this understanding by highlighting the importance of how punishment is implemented. The positive relationship suggests that in the Semarang hotel context, punishment is perceived as a corrective rather than punitive measure, likely due to its implementation characteristics (consistency, clarity, proportionality). This distinction is crucial for practitioners, as poorly implemented punishment systems could potentially yield negative outcomes.

Simultaneous Influence of Performance Appraisal and Punishment on Employee Performance

The significant simultaneous effect of Performance Appraisal and Punishment on Employee Performance, explaining 64.7% of its variance, underscores the complementary nature of these management practices. This finding suggests that hotels in Semarang achieve optimal employee performance when they integrate both constructive feedback mechanisms (performance appraisal) and clear behavioral boundaries (punishment). The complementarity may arise from addressing different aspects of performance management - performance appraisal primarily focuses on developing capabilities and recognizing achievement, while punishment establishes consequences for underperformance or rule violations.

This integrated approach creates a comprehensive performance management framework that balances positive reinforcement with accountability measures. The strong explanatory power of these variables together ($R^2 = 0.647$) suggests that hotel managers should consider these practices as interconnected components of a holistic human resource management strategy rather than isolated interventions. This finding extends previous research by demonstrating not just the individual but the combined impact of these practices in the hospitality context.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the human resource management literature by empirically validating the relationships between performance management practices and employee outcomes in the hospitality sector. The findings support and extend existing theories on performance management by demonstrating how different aspects of performance management (development-oriented appraisal and disciplinary systems) work together to influence employee performance.

From a practical standpoint, several implications emerge for hotel managers and human resource practitioners in Semarang and similar contexts. First, hotels should invest in developing comprehensive performance appraisal systems that emphasize fairness, clarity, and development orientation. Second, punishment systems should be designed with emphasis on consistency, clarity, and proportionality to ensure they function as constructive rather than destructive management tools. Third, these systems should be implemented in tandem, as their combined effect substantially exceeds their individual contributions to employee performance.

For the predominantly young workforce identified in this study, particular attention should be paid to communication aspects of both systems. Clear explanations of performance expectations and consequences for violations are likely especially important for employees with limited work experience. Additionally, the gender composition of the workforce (60% female) may warrant consideration of potential gender differences in responses to different management practices, although this was beyond the scope of the current analysis.

5. Conclusions

This research investigated the influence of performance appraisal and punishment systems on employee performance in hotels across Semarang, Indonesia. Based on a comprehensive analysis of data collected from 70 hotel employees, several significant conclusions can be drawn.

First, performance appraisal has a significant positive influence on employee performance in the hotel industry. With a t-value of 4.238 ($p < 0.05$) and a standardized coefficient of 0.439, the results clearly indicate that when hotels implement effective performance appraisal systems characterized by fairness, clarity, quality feedback, and development orientation, employees demonstrate enhanced work performance. This finding highlights the critical role of structured feedback and evaluation mechanisms in guiding employee development and improving service delivery in the hospitality context.

Second, punishment systems also significantly influence employee performance, as evidenced by a t-value of 3.952 ($p < 0.05$) and a standardized coefficient of 0.408. This result suggests that well-designed punishment mechanisms, when implemented with consistency, clarity, proportionality, and objectivity, serve as effective corrective measures that ultimately contribute to improved employee performance. Rather than undermining employee morale, appropriately structured punishment systems establish clear behavioral boundaries that guide employee conduct in the service-oriented environment of hotels.

Third, performance appraisal and punishment systems together exert a substantial combined influence on employee performance, explaining 64.7% of its variance. The F-value of 61.424 ($p < 0.05$) demonstrates the strong simultaneous effect of these complementary management practices. This finding underscores the importance of implementing these systems as integrated components of a comprehensive human resource management strategy rather than as isolated interventions.

The demographic profile of the study participants, predominantly young female employees with relatively short tenure, suggests that these findings are particularly relevant for managing the emerging workforce in the hospitality sector. The receptiveness of younger employees to formal feedback mechanisms and clear performance guidelines highlights the value of structured performance management systems in hotels employing this demographic.

These conclusions contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in human resource management within the hospitality industry. From a theoretical perspective, the study validates and extends existing performance management frameworks by demonstrating the complementary roles of developmental and disciplinary approaches. From a practical standpoint, the findings provide hotel managers with evidence-based guidance for designing and implementing effective performance management systems that balance positive reinforcement with accountability measures.

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