

(Research Article)

Analysis of the Application of Punishment to Employee Performance on the UTM Faculty of Medicine Construction Project

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation of punishment on employee performance in the construction project of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Trunojoyo Madura (UTM). In the context of human resource management, punishment is applied as a means of controlling deviant work behavior to achieve optimal discipline and productivity. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews and direct observation. The results indicate that the implementation of punishment executed in stages, fairly, and transparently, from verbal warnings to dismissal can encourage positive behavioral changes, increase employee responsibility, and strengthen adherence to safety standards. Thus, when applied in an educational and humane manner, punishment plays a crucial role in improving employee performance..

Keywords: Discipline, Employee Performance, HR Management, Punishment

1. BACKGROUND

In today's competitive globalization era, human resources (HR) are the main determinant of an organization's success. Not just carrying out operational functions, HR acts as the main driver in every business process and institutional development. According to Hasibuan (2016), without good quality human resources, all other forms of resources such as capital, technology, and materials will not be able to provide optimal results. Therefore, strategic and integrated HR management is needed to achieve organizational goals.

One important aspect of HR management is maintaining employee discipline and performance. In practice, companies often face challenges in the form of behavior that can hinder work productivity. To overcome this, management can implement a punishment system as a tool to enforce rules. According to Busro (2018), punishment is a punishment given to employees who violate work rules with the aim of correcting deviant behavior.

The form of punishment applied must be in accordance with the level of offense committed and pay attention to aspects of justice. This is important so that punishment does not have a negative impact on the motivation and morale of other employees. Hartawan and Welta (2017) in their research stated that the application of fair and structured punishment can improve employee discipline, which in turn has a positive impact on individual and team performance.

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Research by Dwiyanti, Ramadania, and Dafi (2024) also confirms that a punishment system implemented with the right procedures can increase employee awareness and responsibility for the assigned tasks. This also encourages the creation of a more orderly and organized work climate. Thus, punishment not only functions as a corrective tool, but also as a preventive mechanism against repeated work violations.

In the context of the construction project of the Faculty of Medicine, Trunojoyo University of Madura (UTM), the importance of the punishment system becomes very relevant. Construction projects require coordination and timely execution, where any delays or technical errors can have a major impact on the success of the project. Therefore, work discipline must be maintained consistently. In this case, punishment can be used as an effective work behavior control strategy (Zamachsari, 2024).

However, it is important to note that punishment is not the only tool to improve performance. In the modern management approach, punishment should be applied as a last resort after coaching, training, and reward approaches have been pursued. As explained by Maslow (1943) in the hierarchy of needs theory, employees tend to perform better when their needs for security, appreciation, and self-actualization are met. Therefore, punishment that is applied disproportionately can actually hinder performance.

Furthermore, in practice, the application of punishment must be adjusted to the culture of the organization and pay attention to the values of fairness and transparency. When punishment is understood as a form of coaching, there will be a sense of responsibility and a drive to improve from within the individual employee himself. Mentang (2021) states that employees who are aware of the consequences of their actions are more encouraged to improve behavior and improve performance voluntarily.

By paying attention to these principles, this study aims to examine in depth how the application of punishment affects employee performance in the UTM Faculty of Medicine construction project. It is hoped that through the results of this study, companies or other institutions can adopt punishment policies that are more effective, humane, and have a positive impact on achieving overall organizational goals.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

The term punishment in the context of human resource management (HRM) refers to corrective actions given to employees as a result of behavior or performance that is not in accordance with the standards or rules that apply in the organization. Busro (2018) states that punishment is a penalty imposed by superiors on subordinates for violating work discipline or not achieving predetermined performance targets. The purpose of giving this punishment is not merely to punish, but to correct and direct employee behavior so that it is in accordance with organizational values and culture.

According to Rulianti et al. (2024), punishment in HRM can be defined as a formal procedure or action given to individuals or groups for mistakes or violations committed, either intentionally or unintentionally. This concept aims to create a deterrent effect and provide lessons so that similar mistakes are not repeated. In a professional work environment, punishment is used as a managerial tool to enforce rules and improve overall employee work discipline.

In organizational behavior theory, punishment is classified as a form of negative reinforcement, where the presence of unpleasant consequences after a behavior aims to reduce or stop the behavior. This theory is in line with Skinner's principle of behaviorism, which states that individual behavior can be shaped and controlled through reward or punishment (Skinner, 1953). Therefore, the use of punishment must be based on objective observation and evaluation of inappropriate behavior for the results to be effective.

The form of punishment in the work environment can vary, ranging from verbal reprimands, written warnings, demotion, to termination of employment. According to Hartawan and Welta (2017), punishment given fairly and proportionally can increase employee compliance with company regulations, which in turn has a positive impact on organizational productivity and efficiency. However, if the punishment is done unilaterally or unfairly, this can actually reduce work motivation and cause internal conflict between employees.

Punishment must also be applied in a transparent and structured manner. Sugianingrat & Sarmawa (2024) emphasized that the effectiveness of punishment is strongly influenced by the

clarity of procedures and consistency in its implementation. When employees understand that there is a fair sanction system, they tend to be more vigilant and careful in their actions. This creates a more disciplined work environment and minimal violations. Procedural justice in punishment also affects the perception of trust in the leader (Dwiyanti et al., 2024).

Apart from being a corrective tool, punishment can also function as a learning tool in developing employee character and integrity. In a psychological perspective, punishment given with an educational approach can encourage individuals to reflect on mistakes and take responsibility for their actions (Mentang, 2021). Thus, punishment not only shapes behavior, but also plays a role in shaping individual morals and work ethics.

By considering the definition and function of punishment from various perspectives, it can be concluded that punishment has a strategic role in supporting the creation of a productive and harmonious work environment. However, the implementation of punishment must be carried out carefully by paying attention to the principles of fairness, transparency, and in accordance with organizational policies. The right use of punishment will have a positive impact, while the wrong application risks creating resistance and reducing overall employee performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to deeply understand how the application of punishment affects employee performance in the context of construction projects in a higher education environment. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore social phenomena naturally and in detail, without manipulative interference with existing variables (Sugiyono, 2017). The main focus in this approach is not on the generalization of data, but on the interpretation of the meaning of individual actions, behaviors, and responses to punishment policies in the workplace.

The use of qualitative methods is very appropriate for this topic because the effect of punishment on employee performance is a complex phenomenon and is influenced by many factors such as perceptions of justice, organizational culture, and psychological conditions of employees. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain that qualitative methods are effective in capturing deep social meaning, especially in the context of human interaction in organizations. In this context, the research not only observes the form of punishment, but also the employee's response to the policy.

The subjects of this study were employees who were directly involved in the construction project of the Faculty of Medicine, Trunojoyo University of Madura (UTM). The subjects were selected purposively, by selecting individuals who were considered to have knowledge and experience related to the application of punishment in the project. The purposive sampling technique is in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative methods because it focuses on relevant informants to answer research objectives (Moleong, 2019). One of the main informants is the project foreman who has an important role in the implementation and supervision of field work.

Data collection was conducted through two main techniques, namely in-depth interviews and direct observation. Interviews were used to obtain subjective data on informants' experiences, perceptions, and views on punishments given in the work environment. Observation was conducted to strengthen the interview data by observing the real behavior of employees at the project site. According to Creswell (2014), the combination of these two techniques allows researchers to obtain richer and triangulative data.

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting out relevant data from the results of interviews and observations, then compiled in the form of thematic narratives. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of in-depth descriptions that connect the concept of punishment and its impact on performance. Conclusions were drawn inductively, based on patterns found in the field data (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

By using this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how punishment is applied in development projects and the extent to which the policy affects employee work behavior. The results of this study are also expected to be an evaluation

material for project management in formulating more effective and humane human resource policies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of research on the application of punishment to employee performance in the construction project of the Faculty of Medicine, Trunojoyo University of Madura (UTM) show that punishment that is applied fairly and structured has a positive impact on work discipline. In an interview conducted with Mr. Rahmat as the project foreman, it is known that punishment is applied as a form of control over violations of work rules, such as tardiness, unexcused absences, and violations of work safety procedures. The application of punishment is recognized as being able to create awareness for employees to be more responsible in carrying out their duties.

The form of punishment given is carried out in stages. The first step is to give verbal warnings to employees who commit minor offenses. If the violation is repeated, the employee will be given a lower task as a form of learning. Finally, for repeated serious offenses, dismissal is the option used. This procedure is in line with Sugianingrat and Sarmawa's (2024) view that a graduated punishment system provides an opportunity for employees to improve themselves before drastic action is taken.

Interestingly, from the interview results, it was found that during the project there was no dismissal of employees. This shows that punishments at an early stage, such as reprimands and task rotations, have been quite effective in suppressing deviant behavior. This proves that punishment does not always have to be repressive, but can be an educative tool if done properly (Dwiyanti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the interviewees stated that the punishment applied had an impact on other employees. Although there is a positive impact in the form of increased discipline in general, there is also a psychological impact in the form of anxiety among employees. When seeing coworkers get punished, other employees tend to be more careful in their behavior. However, if the punishment is perceived as unfair, this risks lowering morale. Therefore, it is important for management to maintain procedural fairness in sanctioning (Hartawan & Welta, 2017).

The application of punishment is also proven to be able to encourage increased productivity. In direct observation in the field, employees who were previously less active in work showed a change in behavior after their colleagues received a warning. This is in accordance with Skinner's (1953) negative reinforcement theory, that the provision of an unpleasant stimulus will reduce the likelihood of recurrence of negative behavior. Employees who realize the consequences of violations become more disciplined and focused on their work.

Punishment in the context of construction projects also serves as a reminder for employees about the importance of complying with work safety standards. This is very crucial considering that construction projects have a high risk of work accidents. By applying punishment for violations of safety procedures, the company demonstrates its commitment to the protection of occupational safety and health. In accordance with Law No. 1 Year 1970 on Occupational Safety, disciplinary action for OHS violations is a legal measure that must be implemented by the employer.

Another impact of punishment is an increased sense of responsibility. In the interview, the interviewee mentioned that employees who have been reprimanded or reassigned tend to show greater loyalty and earnestness at work. This shows that punishment given humanely does not damage the working relationship, but rather encourages employees to prove themselves better. Pradnyani et al. (2020) stated that punishment can increase work motivation if given with a two-way communication approach and transparency.

It can be concluded that punishment plays an important role in shaping positive work behavior during the implementation of the UTM Faculty of Medicine construction project. However, the successful implementation of punishment is strongly influenced by the clarity of procedures, consistency of implementation, and good communication between superiors and subordinates. Therefore, in order for punishment not to become a tool that damages the work climate, it needs to be accompanied by a fair and educative approach.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of research on the application of punishment to employee performance in the construction project of the Faculty of Medicine, Trunojoyo University of Madura (UTM), it can be concluded that punishment that is applied fairly, gradually, and structured has a positive impact on improving employee discipline, responsibility, and productivity. The punishment procedure, which starts from verbal warnings to strict actions such as termination of employment, is able to encourage employees to improve their behavior and perform their duties more optimally. In addition, the application of punishment also strengthens a work culture that obeys the rules and supports the effective achievement of project targets. However, it is important to ensure that punishment is implemented with a humane, transparent approach, as well as considering psychological aspects so as not to reduce the motivation and morale of other employees.

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