

Employee discipline and employee performance at Mitooma District Local Government. A cross-sectional study.

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Abstract Background

The study aimed to examine the influence of Employee discipline on employee performance at Mitooma District Local Government.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional mixed-methods design involving quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study population comprised 126 employees of Mitooma District Local Government, from whom the study selected 114 respondents using purposive and simple random sampling. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and interviews with key informants. Instrument validity was established through expert review, yielding an average Content Validity Index of 0.8125, while reliability testing produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.823. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed.

Results

Of the 114 targeted respondents, 85 participated, yielding a 74.6% response rate. The interviewed key informants were aged 43–50 years, reflecting experienced perspectives on workplace discipline and performance. Employee discipline received consistently high ratings, with mean scores ranging from 4.12 to 4.32 and standard deviations from 0.552 to 0.809. The highest rating concerned discipline instilling responsibility, self-control, and ownership of duties ($M=4.32$, $SD=0.711$), while ethical, rule-compliant decision-making had the lowest rating ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.714$). Key informants emphasized staff induction, adherence to codes of conduct and standing orders, continuous supervision, appraisal, rewards, sanctions, refresher training, and integrity as important themes for strengthening discipline and performance. They also identified understaffing, inadequate funding, transport limitations, and insufficient wage allocations as performance constraints. Employee discipline was moderately and positively related to employee performance ($r=0.512$, $p<0.001$, $n=85$), confirming a statistically significant association.

Conclusion

Discipline strongly and positively influences performance, promoting accountability, reducing conflict, and strengthening organizational reputation when consistently enforced.

Recommendation

Management should strengthen employee discipline through continuous induction, supervision, fair sanctions, regular appraisals, and recognition of compliant employees.

Keywords: Employee discipline, Employee performance, Organizational accountability, Ethical conduct, Workplace supervision, Performance management

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Background of the study

Employee discipline is an important determinant of employee performance because it promotes adherence to organizational rules, accountability, responsibility, and effective execution of assigned duties. Globally, disciplinary practices are used to regulate employee behaviour, improve compliance, and promote productivity. The effectiveness of discipline is influenced by fairness, organizational justice, leadership, and the consistency with which rules are applied. Research indicates that perceptions

of organizational justice are associated with employee performance, satisfaction, and absenteeism, demonstrating the importance of fair and transparent disciplinary procedures (Lam et al., 2002; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010). Similarly, effective organizational systems that promote accountability and appropriate employee conduct can reduce counterproductive behaviours and improve task performance (Edmondson, 2018; Robbins & Judge, 2020). In Africa, employee discipline is increasingly associated with ethical conduct, accountability, professionalism, and

organizational performance. Effective disciplinary systems provide employees with clear expectations concerning workplace behaviour and consequences for non-compliance. However, weak enforcement, inadequate supervision, favouritism, and limited institutional capacity may undermine disciplinary effectiveness. Across East Africa, organizations have increasingly emphasized codes of conduct, supervision, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms to improve employee compliance and service delivery (Robbins & Judge, 2020; Senge, 2006). Evidence also suggests that fair organizational practices are important in shaping employee attitudes and performance outcomes (Lam et al., 2002).

In Uganda, employee discipline is particularly important within local governments because employee conduct directly affects the efficiency and quality of public service delivery. Clear procedures, supportive supervision, accountability, and consistent enforcement of organizational standards can encourage employees to perform their responsibilities effectively. Evidence from Ugandan local-government research indicates that strengthening standards, procedures, supervision, and teamwork can contribute to improved employee performance (Akiteng, 2019; Gasengayire, 2023). In Southwestern Uganda, however, local government institutions may face staffing, resource, supervision, and administrative challenges that can affect employee discipline and performance.

The study aimed to examine the influence of Employee discipline on employee performance at Mitooma District Local Government.

Methodology

Research design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design. A cross-sectional design is a type of observational study design where the investigator assesses the effect on the outcome without an interruption of the subjects over a specified short

period of time. A cross-sectional design was adopted because it allowed an in-depth investigation of the problem and also enabled a one-time study (Sekaran, 2003).

Research approach

The study adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study. In the context of the study, the quantitative approach was one that made use of coded data from the questionnaire, which was then captured using figures, and the same was analyzed using inferential statistics. The approach was quite needful since it allowed the researcher to objectively explore the research objectives and address the research study questions.

The qualitative study, on the other hand, utilized the interview guide to generate in-depth information from key informants. This helped in providing meaning to the quantitative findings.

Study population

The population for this study consisted of employees of Mitooma District Local Government, all totaling 126 in number (Human Resource Manual, 2024). It included all employees at the District.

Sample size and sampling techniques

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, a total of 114 participants were selected from the different categories of the target population. The study employed two complementary sampling techniques: simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was used to enhance representativeness by ensuring that all eligible members of the population were first listed in a sampling frame, assigned unique identification numbers, and then selected purely by chance using methods such as lottery, random number tables, or computer-generated randomization.

Table 1: Study Population and Sampling

Category	Included Units	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique	
A. Top Management	PAS, CAO, DCAO, DEO, DCO, SCO, PP, SS, SEO, DPO	10	10	Purposive sampling	
B. Administrative Leadership	CO, DNRO, District Planner, DAO, District Engineer, Superintendent of Works, District Fisheries Officer, Agricultural Engineering Officer, Water Officer, Economists, CDO, SHR	15	14	Simple sampling	random
C. Technical & Professional Officers	IS, PHRO (2), HR, ME, Water Mobiliser, Senior Lands Officer, PIA, SIA, Auditor, DIS, SIS, EO, DHO Maternal, ADHO Health, ADHO Health Inspection, Education Officer, Senior Procurement Officer, Procurement Officer, Stores Officer, Senior Probation Officer, Senior CDO, DCDO, Senior Labour Officer	25	24	Simple sampling	random
D. Finance & Accounting Staff	CFO, FO, Senior Accountant, Senior Assistant Accountants	15	14	Simple sampling	random
E. Administrative Support Staff	Pool Stenographers/Secretaries, Office Attendants, Drivers, Porters, Gatemen	61	52	Simple sampling	Random
		126	114		

Source: Mitoma District Registry, 2025

Inclusion criteria for study participants

The following individuals were included in the study:
Employees aged 18 to 60 years.
Permanent and contract staff.
Administrators and supervisors.

Exclusion criteria for study participants

The following individuals were excluded from the study:
Persons who were below 18 years.
Temporary workers, interns, or volunteers.

Data collection methods

Questionnaire method

Using the questionnaire survey, the researcher developed a questionnaire that included the specific objectives of the study for respondents to complete in writing. The questionnaire had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questions covered various components of work ethics, including employee discipline, employee commitment, and work attitude. These were compared against employee performance. The items in the questionnaire were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire also contained demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, qualification, and years in service. This method was used to capture data from the operational staff. The questionnaire method was preferred because it allowed respondents freedom in answering the

questions, and the questions could be answered at the respondents' convenience.

Interview method

The interview method was used to collect data from key informants who comprised top officials (heads of departments) at the district level. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. The interview method was used because it enabled the researcher to gather in-depth information around the topic to meet specific needs. Through the use of this method, the researcher was able to clarify unclear issues in the questionnaire to the respondents. The data collected through this method helped the researcher clarify data collected by the structured questionnaires since it involved a face-to-face interface and also provided a whole range of views.

Data collection instruments

Questionnaire

The self-administered questionnaire was developed and delivered by the researcher to the respective staff of Mitooma District Local Government (excluding heads of departments). The questionnaire contained questions seeking answers regarding work ethics and employee performance. Respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaires, and the researcher collected them after they had been fully completed. The questionnaire was used because it allowed greater uniformity in the way questions were asked, ensuring greater compatibility in the responses

(Cooper and Schindler, 2006). The structured questions were anchored on a five-point Likert scale, where respondents were required to indicate their views on a scale of 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

Interview guide

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The interview guide was designed and used to obtain information from key respondents (heads of departments). Face-to-face discussions were conducted in English with top officials of Mitooma District Local Government. A structured interview guide was developed to aid in obtaining data by seeking clarity on the structured questions in the questionnaires.

Data collection sources

Primary data

A primary data source was an original data source, that is, one in which the data were collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research purpose or project. Primary data included data from respondents in the field. Primary data were obtained from face-to-face interviews. Primary data were used because they helped the researcher directly interact with the source of information and obtain data that were original and not analyzed to suit specific premises.

Secondary data

A secondary source was a source that provided non-original or secondhand data or information. To obtain secondary data, a systematic literature review, which involved undertaking a comprehensive search for all the relevant works on a subject matter, was undertaken. Thereafter, secondary data were obtained through the review of documents such as human resource manuals, annual reports, and other already existing literature on the subject under study. Secondary data sources were used because they were cost-effective and best suited for use where a network of data archives in which survey data files were collected was readily available.

Data collection procedure

The researcher obtained a clearance letter from the BSU Research Ethics Committee and Directorate of Graduate Studies introducing her to the respondents at Mitooma DLG headquarters for permission to collect data for the study. The letter was addressed to the Chief Administrative Officer of Mitooma District Local Government, who in turn requested staff to cooperate with the researcher during the study. Individual consent was sought by the researcher from participants. Tools for data collection were then administered.

Validity

Validity was the ability of a research instrument to collect data that was justifiable; that is, being able to measure what

it was intended to measure (Odiya, 2009). The researcher gave the instruments to two research experts who commented on the relevance of the items in the instruments. A detailed discussion was held with them regarding the purpose of the study, content, and language used in the research instruments. The researcher then modified the research instruments by removing unclear questions and retaining only those relevant to the study objectives. Content Validity Index (CVI) was also determined using the formula:

CVI = $\frac{\text{Number of items rated right}}{\text{Total number of items in the tool}}$

Judge 1:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{CVI} & = & \\ \text{Judge 2:} & & \begin{array}{r} 40 \\ 32 \end{array} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{rcl} & & = \\ & & 0.85 \end{array}$$

$$\frac{34}{\text{CVI}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = 0.775$$

Therefore, the average content validity index was

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{CVI} & & 1.625 \\ & = & 0.8125 \\ \hline & = & 2 \end{array}$$

The obtained CVI was 0.81 greater than 0.7, thus accepted as valid for the study as suggested by Odiya (2009).

Reliability

Reliability was the degree to which a study produced consistent results if conducted repeatedly following the same procedure (Yin, 2009). To measure reliability, the researcher's instruments were piloted with 10 people other than those of Mitooma District Local Government headquarters, using a questionnaire with each question having a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree, to establish consistency in responses. The sample of 10 was selected based on characteristics similar to those of the final targeted respondents. The questionnaire was later modified by considering the responses from the pilot respondents. This helped the researcher obtain improved responses from the final targeted respondents. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was also calculated, where the responses were entered into SPSS, and analysis was performed as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.821	.823	40

Source: Primary Data (2025)

From Table 2, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.823 was obtained, which was greater than 0.7; thus, it was deemed reliable as suggested by Mugenda & Mugenda (2007).

Data analysis

Analysis of quantitative data

Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages on background information, whereas mean and standard deviation were used to analyze respondents' opinions about the subject under investigation. Data were presented using tables.

Analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative data were classified into broad themes and categories and closely examined and compared for similarities and differences, from which narratives were included from interviews to emphasize certain basic facts during the process of presenting quantitative data.

Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations, which were the acceptable best approaches in the course of conducting research studies, were all followed so as to ensure that the results generated were generally worth considering for policy and practical application. The following ethical considerations were taken seriously:

REC clearance

The researcher sought clearance from the BSU Research Ethics Committee before proceeding with data collection.

Voluntary participation

All respondents were allowed the liberty to participate freely in the study, and none of them was coerced to participate in the study. It was anticipated that if a respondent did not participate in their own capacity and free mind, they could provide responses that were not essential for the good of the study. For this reason, all respondents were allowed the liberty to participate freely in the research study, and a compensation package was prepared for those who participated for their time spent of Shs 10,000.

Anonymity of the respondents

The anonymity of the respondents was respected and, in the course of conducting the research study, respondents were not required to provide their names and physical addresses of their places of residence. As a result, the names and identities of the respondents were not presented during the research study.

Plagiarism avoidance

Plagiarism was avoided in this study, and all secondary sources that were used were duly cited. No single source was used without acknowledgment in the study. All the references that were used were presented in the references section of the study.

Results

Response rate

Table 3: showing the response rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	104	100.0
Questionnaires returned	85	81.7
Questionnaires not returned	19	18.3

A total of 104 questionnaires were distributed to employees of Mitooma District Local Government. Of these, 85

questionnaires were fully completed and returned, giving a response rate of 81.7%. The remaining 19 questionnaires

(18.3%) were not returned. In addition, 10 key informants were interviewed using an interview guide. This response rate is considered adequate for analysis. Amin (2005) recommends a minimum response rate of 70% for social science research.

Bio data of respondents

This section presents demographic characteristics of participants to contextualize their views on work ethics and performance at Mitooma District Local Government. The demographics include gender, highest level of education, and length of service.

Gender distribution

Figure 1: gender distribution of respondents

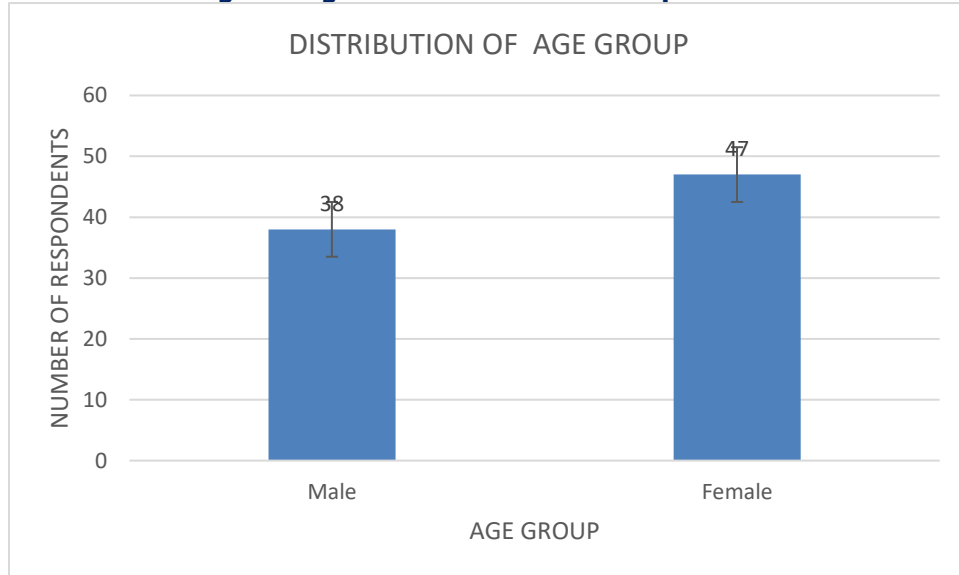


Figure 1 illustrates that female respondents constituted the majority of the sample at 55.3%, while male respondents accounted for 43.5%. This distribution reflects a relatively equitable gender representation among the workforce at Mitooma District Local Government, ensuring that the findings incorporate balanced perspectives from both genders. Gender was included in the study because it is an important demographic characteristic that can influence

employees' experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and levels of satisfaction within the workplace. Examining gender composition helps determine whether the views collected represent both male and female employees adequately and enables the researcher to assess whether gender-related differences may affect the study variables. Therefore, the inclusion of gender enhances the comprehensiveness, representativeness, and reliability of the study findings.

Highest Level of Education

Figure 2: Highest level of education of respondents

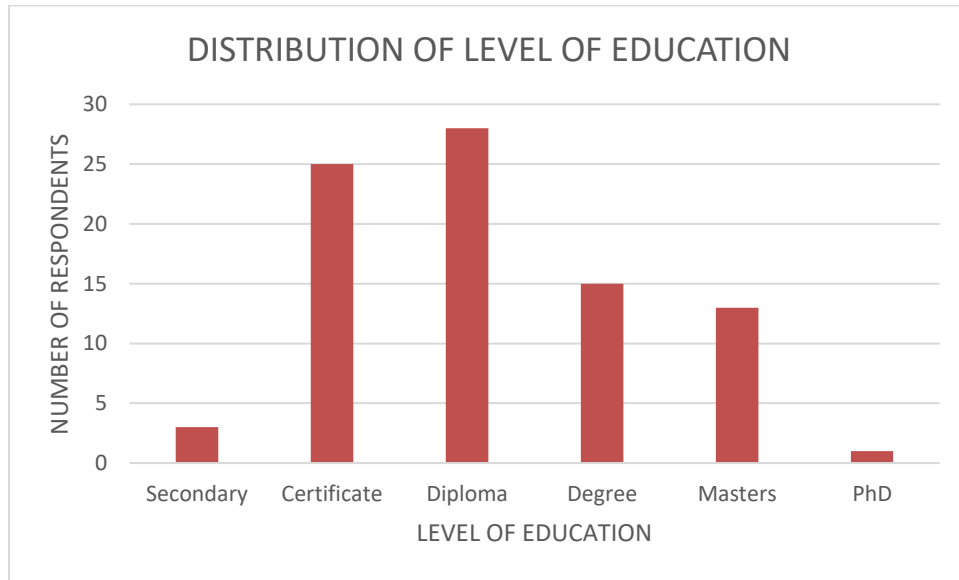


Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents held Diploma qualifications at 32.9%, followed by Certificate holders at 29.4%. Degree holders were 17.6% and Masters Holders 15.3%. Only 3.5% had secondary education as their highest level, while 1.2% had a PhD. This shows that most employees have post-secondary qualifications, which is important for understanding policy, ethics, and performance

expectations. It was included in the study because it is an important demographic characteristic that can influence employees' understanding, interpretation, and implementation of organizational policies and procedures. Educational attainment may also affect employees' awareness of ethical practices, decision-making abilities, communication skills, and overall job performance.

Length of Service at Mitooma District Local Government

Figure 3: Length of service of respondents

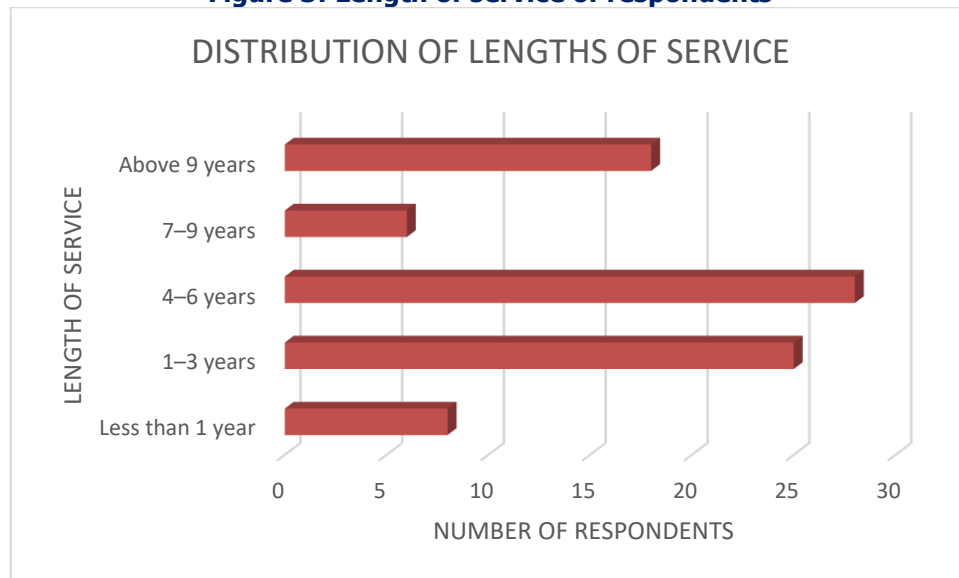


Figure 3 indicates that 32.9% of respondents had served for 4-6 years, followed by 29.4% with 1-3 years of service. Employees with more than 9 years of service constituted 21.2%, while only 9.4% had served for less than one year.

This suggests that the majority of respondents possessed adequate institutional experience and familiarity with the operations, policies, and work environment of Mitooma District Local Government. Their experience enabled them

to provide informed and reliable views regarding work ethics and employee performance. It was included in the study because employees' tenure influences their understanding of organizational ethical standards, workplace practices, and performance expectations. Employees who have served longer are more likely to have observed changes in organizational behavior and performance over time, making their contributions valuable in assessing the relationship between work ethics and employee performance.

Employee Discipline and Employee Performance

This objective examined how employee discipline influences performance. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not Sure, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for employee discipline

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Strengthens trust and accountability by encouraging employees to adhere to organizational rules, standards, and procedures	85	4.19	0.809
Enhances the organization's reputation through consistent enforcement of discipline and ethical conduct	85	4.20	0.552
Promotes ethical behavior by guiding employees to make responsible and rule-compliant decisions	85	4.12	0.714
A disciplined workplace experiences fewer conflicts and misunderstandings due to clear expectations and consistent consequences	85	4.29	0.553
Employee discipline instills a strong sense of responsibility, self-control, and ownership of assigned duties	85	4.32	0.711
Discipline aligns employees' personal conduct with organizational values and policies, fostering commitment and dedication	85	4.20	0.594
Leaders who uphold and fairly enforce discipline set a strong example that influences employee behavior beyond formal authority	85	4.28	0.590
A disciplined work environment promotes fairness and respect, which positively impacts employee morale and cooperation	85	4.27	0.643
Effective discipline serves as a preventive mechanism against misconduct, corruption, fraud, and misuse of organizational resources	85	4.19	0.748
Employee discipline provides a stable foundation for sustained organizational performance, growth, and long-term resilience	85	4.25	0.653

Table 4 shows strong agreement among respondents that employee discipline positively influences organizational performance and effectiveness across various dimensions. The highest-rated statement was that "Employee discipline instills a strong sense of responsibility, self-control, and ownership of assigned duties" with a mean score of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.711, indicating that respondents strongly believe discipline enhances employee accountability and commitment to assigned responsibilities.

This was closely followed by the statement that "A disciplined workplace experiences fewer conflicts and misunderstandings due to clear expectations and consistent consequences" with a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.553, suggesting that discipline contributes to harmony and reduced workplace disputes. Similarly, respondents agreed that "Leaders who uphold and fairly enforce discipline set a strong example that influences employee behavior beyond formal authority" with a mean of 4.28 and

a standard deviation of 0.590, emphasizing the importance of leadership in modeling disciplined conduct. In addition, “A disciplined work environment promotes fairness and respect, which positively impacts employee morale and cooperation” recorded a mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.643, while “Employee discipline provides a stable foundation for sustained organizational performance, growth, and long-term resilience” had a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.653, further demonstrating that discipline is perceived as essential for long-term organizational success. Other highly rated statements included “Enhances the organization’s reputation through consistent enforcement of discipline and ethical conduct” and “Discipline aligns employees’ personal conduct with organizational values and policies, fostering commitment and dedication,” both with mean scores of 4.20, as well as “Strengthens trust and accountability by encouraging employees to adhere to organizational rules, standards, and procedures” and “Effective discipline serves as a preventive mechanism against misconduct, corruption, fraud, and misuse of organizational resources,” both with means of 4.19. The lowest mean score was 4.12 for the statement that discipline “Promotes ethical behavior by guiding employees to make responsible and rule-compliant decisions,” although this still falls within the “Agree” category, indicating positive perceptions overall. The relatively low standard deviations ranging from 0.552 to 0.809 show limited variation in responses, suggesting a strong level of consensus among respondents regarding the significant role of employee discipline in improving organizational performance, ethical conduct, accountability, cooperation, and workplace stability.

According to Key Informant E, a female aged 43 pointed out that;

“Respondent E explained that maintaining staff discipline and performance requires a strong code of conduct supported by continuous staff induction and supervision. According to the respondent, newly recruited employees should be guided on the dos and don’ts of the organization through induction programs. Continuous supervision, annual staff appraisal for confirmed staff, staff meetings, and one-on-one engagements are important strategies for monitoring employee conduct and improving accountability. The respondent further noted that organizations should motivate employees through promotions, verbal appreciation, and end-of-year parties while also sanctioning errant staff to maintain discipline. The respondent emphasized that there can be no meaningful performance without integrity because integrity enables employees to use organizational resources properly and achieve intended results, which in turn improves the organization’s reputation. The respondent rated the relationship between integrity and performance as high and strongly agreed that integrity directly influences performance. Additionally, teamwork was described as very important because employees depend on one another, share

knowledge, and learn new ideas through collaboration. However, the respondent observed that the institution’s level of performance is only above average due to challenges such as inadequate staffing, insufficient government funding, and limited wage allocations”.

According to Key Informant D, male, aged 45, pointed out that;

“Respondent D stated that staff induction, standing orders, adherence to the code of conduct, monitoring, and supervision are important mechanisms for ensuring proper employee behavior and organizational effectiveness. The respondent explained that rewarding staff through promotion recommendations, end-of-year parties, and reward and sanctions committees motivates employees to perform better. Integrity was described as very important in realizing organizational performance because it ensures that staff use available resources appropriately and remain committed to achieving organizational objectives. According to the respondent, lack of integrity leads to failure to meet deadlines, poor performance, poor duty scheduling, and lack of concentration at work. The respondent rated the influence of integrity on performance as strong and strongly agreed that integrity and performance are closely related. Teamwork was also emphasized as essential because no individual can work alone effectively, and teamwork allows employees to discover new knowledge and improve cooperation. Despite this, the respondent noted that the institution performs above average but faces challenges such as inadequate departmental funding, lack of transport facilities, and insufficient wage provisions for recruiting additional staff.” According to Key Informant C, a female aged 50 pointed out that;

“Respondent C highlighted the importance of inducting staff and ensuring that employees understand the organization’s code of conduct and standing orders. The respondent noted that organizations should motivate workers through recommending promotions, organizing end-of-year parties, and using disciplinary committees to address misconduct. According to the respondent, integrity directly affects performance because employees with integrity are more likely to behave responsibly and perform their duties effectively. The respondent explained that a lack of integrity contributes to failure to meet deadlines and failure to achieve intended objectives. To strengthen integrity and performance, the respondent recommended continuous supervision, induction of newly recruited staff, and refresher training. The respondent rated the relationship between integrity and performance as high and strongly believed that working together in teams improves productivity and cooperation among employees. However, the respondent pointed out that organizational performance remains only above average due to challenges such as understaffing, lack of transport, and insufficient wages to recruit more staff.

Pearson correlation: employee discipline & employee performance

Table 5 Pearson correlation coefficient of employee discipline & employee performance

	Employee Discipline	Employee Performance
Employee Discipline Pearson Correlation	1	.512**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	85	85
Employee Performance Pearson Correlation	.512**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	85	85

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between employee discipline and employee performance among 85 respondents. The findings reveal a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.512$, indicating a moderate positive relationship between employee discipline and employee performance. This implies that improvements in employee discipline, such as adherence to organizational rules, punctuality, accountability, and commitment to work responsibilities, are associated with higher levels of employee performance. The relationship was found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$), suggesting that the observed association is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, the study concludes that employee discipline has a significant positive influence on employee performance within the organization.

Discussion

The findings revealed that employee discipline makes a significant contribution to employee performance in Mitooma District Local Government. Respondents strongly agreed that discipline promotes responsibility, self-control, and ownership of assigned duties ($M = 4.32$), implying that disciplined employees are more committed to achieving organizational goals. This finding agrees with the global perspective of Paulus and Nijstad (2019), who noted that employee discipline creates clear standards of behavior and accountability that improve productivity and effectiveness at work. Similarly, Amy Edmondson (2018) argued that organizations with strong disciplinary cultures experience better task execution, fewer workplace errors, and greater employee commitment. The implication is that disciplined employees clearly understand their responsibilities and therefore perform their duties more effectively, leading to improved organizational performance.

The study further found that a disciplined work environment experiences fewer conflicts and misunderstandings because employees understand organizational expectations and the consequences of misconduct ($M = 4.29$). This finding supports the views of Ikujiro Nonaka and colleagues (2011), who established that discipline encourages transparency, accountability, and professionalism, which improve

cooperation and performance among employees. Likewise, Peter Senge (2006) observed that disciplined organizations develop shared values and collective responsibility that minimize interpersonal conflicts and strengthen teamwork. Therefore, the high level of agreement among respondents indicates that discipline creates a harmonious environment that allows employees to focus on organizational goals rather than conflicts and counterproductive behaviors.

The findings also indicated that leadership plays an important role in strengthening discipline and shaping employee behavior, as respondents agreed that leaders who enforce discipline fairly serve as positive examples ($M = 4.28$). This finding concurs with the arguments of Stephen Robbins and Timothy Judge (2020), who stated that discipline becomes more effective when managers apply rules consistently and demonstrate ethical behavior. Their work emphasizes that fair and transparent disciplinary practices encourage employees to comply with organizational standards and improve their performance. Similarly, Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2020) observed that employees become more motivated and productive when disciplinary systems are implemented fairly and supported by positive leadership practices. This suggests that leaders in Mitooma District Local Government should consistently demonstrate fairness and integrity in enforcing disciplinary measures to improve employee performance.

The study further established that employee discipline promotes fairness, respect, morale, and cooperation among employees ($M = 4.27$). These findings are consistent with those of Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2017), who found that disciplined work environments increase employee engagement, motivation, and psychological well-being, all of which contribute to improved performance. Similarly, Hackman (2011) observed that organizations with clear behavioral expectations and accountability mechanisms create supportive environments where employees are encouraged to perform effectively. Discipline therefore not only reduces misconduct but also creates a positive organizational climate characterized by trust, collaboration, and commitment.

Additionally, respondents agreed that employee discipline provides a stable foundation for long-term organizational growth, resilience, and performance ($M = 4.25$). This finding is supported by West (2012), who argued that discipline promotes operational efficiency by ensuring that employees consistently comply with procedures, deadlines, and organizational policies. Likewise, London et al. (2006) emphasized that effective disciplinary systems strengthen accountability and performance management by ensuring that employees understand performance expectations and receive proper feedback. These scholars suggest that organizations investing in strong disciplinary frameworks are better positioned to achieve long-term success because disciplined employees contribute positively to organizational effectiveness and service delivery outcomes. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict employee performance based on employee discipline. The model summary showed that employee discipline explained 50.7% of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.507$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.503$). The ANOVA results confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1,213) = 219.34$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that discipline is a reliable predictor of employee performance. The regression coefficient further showed that a one-unit increase in employee discipline resulted in a 0.689-unit increase in employee performance ($B = 0.689$, $t = 14.81$, $p < 0.001$).

The qualitative findings reinforced the quantitative results. Respondent 1 emphasized that meaningful performance cannot be achieved without integrity because integrity ensures the proper use of organizational resources, while Respondent 2 associated discipline with timely completion of tasks and efficient resource utilization. These views are consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which suggests that discipline, fairness, supervision, and ethical conduct act as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction and create conditions necessary for high performance. The findings also support Edmondson (2018), who argued that integrity strengthens discipline by promoting honesty, accountability, and adherence to organizational values. Consequently, the study demonstrates that employee discipline, when supported by integrity, supervision, induction, and recognition systems, significantly improves employee performance. Therefore, Mitooma District Local Government should strengthen disciplinary mechanisms through continuous supervision, employee induction programmes, fair rule enforcement, and performance-based recognition systems to improve employee effectiveness and service delivery.

Conclusion

Discipline is strongly and positively linked to performance at Mitooma District Local Government, with a significant Pearson correlation of $r=0.712$, $p<0.001$, and as a predictor accounting for 50.7% of the variance in performance. It fosters accountability, reduces conflict, and sustains organizational reputation. However, its

effectiveness depends on consistent enforcement, induction, and pairing with rewards. Integrity was universally cited as the foundation of performance, meaning that without ethical conduct, technical competence alone cannot deliver results.

Recommendation

Strengthen Employee Discipline through Developmental Approaches

While discipline is rated highly, respondents stressed the need for induction, supervision, and rewards alongside sanctions. Management should institutionalize continuous staff induction on the code of conduct and standing orders, conduct regular appraisals, and recognize compliance through promotions and verbal appreciation. Establishing functional rewards and sanctions committees, as suggested by Respondent 2, will enhance procedural justice and ensure discipline is perceived as fair rather than punitive.

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List of abbreviations

BSU – Bishop Stuart University
 CAO – Chief Administrative Officer
 CVI – Content Validity Index
 DLG – District Local Government
 HR – Human Resources
 SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
 REC – Research Ethics Committee
 DCAO – Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
 DEO – District Education Officer
 DCO – District Commercial Officer
 SCO – Senior Community Officer
 PP – Principal Personnel Officer
 SS – Senior Secretary
 SEO – Senior Education Officer
 DPO – District Procurement Officer
 CO – Community Officer
 DNRO – District Natural Resources Officer
 DAO – District Agricultural Officer
 CDO – Community Development Officer
 SHR – Senior Human Resource
 IS – Internal Secretary
 PHRO – Public Health Records Officer
 ME – Municipal Engineer
 PIA – Principal Internal Auditor
 SIA – Senior Internal Auditor
 DIS – District Inspector of Schools
 SIS – Senior Inspector of Schools
 EO – Education Officer

DHO – District Health Officer
 ADHO – Assistant District Health Officer
 CFO – Chief Finance Officer
 FO – Finance Officer

Source of funding

The study received no external funding.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Data availability

Data are available upon request from the authors

Author contributions

PK: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing original draft.

JA: data curation, validation, supervision.

JK: supervision, validation

Informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, procedures involved, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Author biography

Pamela Kembabazi, a student pursuing a masters degree of arts in public administration and

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Johnson Atwiine: research supervisor at Bishop Stuart University.

Juliet Kembabazi: research supervisor at Bishop Stuart University.

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