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When Does Work Discipline Enhance Employee Performance? A Moderated Mediation Model of Motivation and Continuance Commitment

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze and test the impact of Work Discipline on Employee Performance, using Achievement Motivation as a mediating variable, while the role of Continuance Commitment acts as a Moderated Mediation variable. The research adopts an explanatory quantitative approach with a population of employees from a State-Owned Legal Entity (BHMN) in Bandung City. The author conducted a survey involving 60 respondents who were randomly selected to participate in this research. The results indicate that Work Discipline, Achievement Motivation, and Continuance Commitment have a direct positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Furthermore, Sustainable Commitment proves to play a role as a Moderated Mediation; it weakens the direct effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance but strengthens the effect of Achievement Motivation on Employee Performance. Testing the Index of Moderated Mediation confirms that the indirect effect of Work Discipline on Performance through Achievement Motivation is only significant at moderate to high Continuance Commitment levels. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of differentiating managerial strategies, where strict enforcement of discipline is effective for employees with low commitment, while fostering achievement motivation becomes a key driver of performance for those with high Continuance Commitment.

Keywords: Work Discipline, Achievement Motivation, Continuance Commitment, Employee Performance, Moderated Mediation.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic higher education landscape compels state-chartered public universities in Bandung to transform institutional governance toward greater adaptability, accountability, and global competitiveness. Institutional and financial autonomy provides these universities with managerial flexibility while imposing strict demands for operational efficiency, placing employee performance at the core of public service quality. To meet these targets, university

leaders typically enforce work discipline by emphasizing rule compliance, punctuality, and adherence to standard operating procedures. However, top-down oversight often yields only superficial compliance without driving substantial improvements in work quality.

To overcome the limitations of formal discipline, organizations must cultivate employees' internal psychological drive by fostering achievement motivation. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), consistent discipline establishes behavioral routines that employees gradually internalize into an intrinsic desire for high performance. Employees who internalize these disciplinary values independently set higher targets, initiate creative solutions to workplace obstacles, and align their focus with tangible outcomes—ultimately driving direct improvements in individual performance.

Nevertheless, work discipline, achievement motivation, and employee performance do not interact in isolation from the work environment. Continuance commitment—defined as an employee's rational calculation of the costs and losses associated with leaving the organization—significantly shapes these relational dynamics. Within Bandung's BHMN universities, varying commitment levels, driven by career progression clarity, adequate facilities, and a supportive work climate, determine the extent to which disciplinary enforcement and internal motivation translate into tangible performance gains.

Human resource management experts confirm that optimizing employee performance requires aligning formal control mechanisms with individual psychological drives (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022; Vasudevan et al., 2025). Prior research demonstrates that rigorous work discipline and motivational incentives significantly maximize performance outcomes (Perkasa et al., 2023; Nusraningrum et al., 2024), driven primarily by measurable target-setting and achievement motivation indicators (Latham, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2025). Furthermore, organizational attachment and commitment foster adaptive behavioral patterns that help employees navigate dynamic workplace environments (Ahmad et al., 2023; Qiao et al., 2024; Nuraini & Manik, 2025).

Although prior scholarship has explored multi-mediation models to predict employee performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022), most studies overlook the distinct calculative dimension of continuance commitment in moderating the impact of formal discipline and intrinsic motivation. Researchers predominantly treat organizational commitment either as a simple

antecedent or a single mediator, thereby failing to capture how an employee's cost-benefit calculations attenuate or amplify the efficacy of discipline enforcement and achievement motivation. This study bridges this empirical gap by conceptualizing continuance commitment as a dual-role moderator, examining contingency interactions among disciplinary control, achievement motivation, and employee performance within a unified moderated mediation framework.

Continuance commitment functions as a dual-role moderator that simultaneously buffers and enhances key performance pathways. On one hand, high continuance commitment induces a buffering effect, rendering strict disciplinary measures less impactful on performance gains because employee output is already anchored in organizational ties; conversely, rigid disciplinary enforcement acts as the primary direct driver for employees with low commitment. On the other hand, continuance commitment exerts an enhancing effect that accelerates the transformation of achievement motivation into tangible performance outcomes. This complex interplay creates a moderated mediation mechanism through which continuance commitment shifts the trajectory of work discipline: under low commitment conditions, discipline directly drives performance, whereas under moderate-to-high commitment conditions, discipline impacts performance indirectly by first instilling achievement motivation.

Given the scarcity of research examining the dual-role complexity of continuance commitment within state-chartered public universities in Bandung, this investigation delivers critical theoretical and practical insights. To address this void, the study systematically evaluates the direct effects of work discipline, achievement motivation, and continuance commitment on employee performance, while confirming the impact of discipline on achievement motivation. Furthermore, it analyzes how continuance commitment simultaneously buffers the direct effect of discipline and enhances the effect of achievement motivation on performance. By rigorously testing conditional indirect effects and overall moderated mediation, this research provides a nuanced framework that enables BHMN institutional leaders to manage discipline, motivation, and employee commitment in a balanced and targeted manner.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to map causal relationships and interaction effects among variables affecting staff at a state-chartered public university in Bandung. The sampling procedure utilized simple random sampling to select respondents from the target population. To establish the required sample size with statistical precision, a power analysis was conducted using GPower software, setting a medium effect size (f2 = 0.15), a significance level of alpha = 0.05, a statistical power of 0.80, and the specified regression predictor count. The calculation established an initial random sample of 60 employees; following data screening and the removal of one extreme outlier (casenum 40), the final analytical sample comprised 59 respondents.

Four core operationalized variables formed the conceptual framework of this study. Work discipline measured an employee's willingness and readiness to understand and abide by organizational rules and workplace norms (Soetrisno, 2016). Achievement motivation captured an individual's intrinsic drive toward excellence, which subsequently drove employee performance—defined as tangible work accomplishments aligned with organizational targets and behavioral standards (Brunstein & Heckhausen, 2025). Serving as the moderating variable, continuance commitment evaluated employees' perceptions regarding the financial and professional losses associated with leaving the institution, rooted in their economic and organizational dependencies (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Saleem et al., 2021). Primary data collection relied on a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Prior to hypothesis testing, the distributional properties of the data were evaluated through normality tests to ensure the validity of statistical estimators. The quantitative dataset was then analyzed using the Hayes PROCESS Macro (Model 15). This procedure enabled the rigorous evaluation of conditional process effects and substantiated the presence of moderated mediation driven by continuance commitment in a logical and comprehensive manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Diagnostic testing confirmed that the OLS regression model accurately and comprehensively satisfied all classical assumption requirements. Specifically, the Breusch-Pagan test yielded a significance value well above the 0.05 threshold (p = 0.453$), confirming residual

homoscedasticity. Meanwhile, the Bonferroni-corrected p-value (p = 1.000) and a maximum DFBETA of -0.237 verified that the dataset was free from extreme outliers or influential observations that could distort the estimators. Furthermore, the Z-scores for Skewness (0.261) and Kurtosis (-1.096) remained consistently within the standard threshold of -1.96 to +1.96, validating residual normality. Finally, multicollinearity diagnostics proved that all independent variables and interaction terms (Int_1 and Int_2) were free from linear collinearity, as Tolerance values exceeded 0.10 and VIF values ranged between 3.911 and 6.195$ (well below the critical threshold of 10). These results establish that the Hayes regression model meets the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE) criteria, ensuring high validity for subsequent hypothesis testing.

The First and Second Regression Model Results:

ArchMot = 0,000 + 1,032 X Disc

EPerf = 60,400 + 0,688(Disc) + 0,184(ArchMot) + 0,156(Commit) - 0,020(Int_1) + 0,017(Int_2)

First-stage regression testing confirmed that Work Discipline (Disc) exerts a strong and statistically significant positive influence on Achievement Motivation (ArchMot), yielding a regression coefficient of 1.032 (t = 13.532; p = 0.000). The constant value of 0.000 (p = 1.000) indicates that the model variables underwent mean-centering to eliminate potential multicollinearity. The analysis demonstrates that every one-unit increase in Work Discipline increases Achievement Motivation by 1.032 units, while a 95% Confidence Interval (LLCI = 0.879; ULCI = 1.185) that excludes zero confirms the robust nature of this direct path (a-path) in the Hayes framework.

In the second-stage regression, the analysis recorded a constant value of 60.400 (p = 0.000), representing baseline Employee Performance (EPerf) when all predictors are at their mean values. All three primary variables significantly and independently boosted Employee Performance ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, Work Discipline provided the largest direct contribution to performance (b = 0.688; t = 5.786; p = 0.000), followed by Achievement Motivation (b = 0.184; t = 2.107; p = 0.040) and Continuance Commitment (b = 0.156; t = 2.081; p = 0.042). These findings clarify that enforcing rule compliance, cultivating intrinsic

achievement drives, and strengthening organizational attachment independently enhance employee productivity.

Beyond direct effects, the second model revealed two statistically significant interaction effects ($p < 0.05$) in explaining variations in Employee Performance. The first interaction term (Int_1) produced a negative coefficient of -0.020 ($t = -2.257$; $p = 0.028$; CI: -0.037 to -0.002), confirming that Continuance Commitment significantly attenuates the direct impact of Work Discipline on Employee Performance. Conversely, the second interaction term (Int_2) yielded a positive coefficient of 0.017 ($t = 2.392$; $p = 0.020$; CI: 0.003 to 0.031), proving that Continuance Commitment enhances the impact of Achievement Motivation on Employee Performance. The presence of these dual interaction patterns validates all research hypotheses and establishes organizational commitment as a dual-role moderator.

Table 1. Model Fit

Parameter	**Value**	**Interpretation**
(R)	0,950	The simultaneous relationship between all predictors and Employee Performance is very strong.
(R2)	0,903	90.3% of the variance in Employee Performance is explained by the combination of independent variables and interaction effects within the model.
Adj R2	0,894	The model's explanatory power remains very robust after accounting for additional variables.
F-statistic (F)	98,916	The simultaneous significance test ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) confirms that the regression model is highly valid (well-fitted).
Shrunken R	0,937 - 0,941	Cross-validation estimates are highly stable and close to the primary R-value,

						indicating the absence of overfitting issues.

Statistical diagnostics confirmed the complete validity of the regression model through an F-test value of 98.916 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), proving that the full set of predictor variables and interaction terms simultaneously exerts a significant effect on Employee Performance. A correlation coefficient (R) of 0.950 reflects an exceptionally strong simultaneous relationship among the variables, while the coefficient of determination (R2) of 0.903 indicates that the combined predictors account for 90.3% of the variance in Employee Performance. This strong explanatory capacity remains consistent after adjusting for the number of variables in the model, as demonstrated by an Adjusted R2 of 0.894. Furthermore, a stable Shrunken R range between 0.937 and 0.941 confirms the reliability of the cross-validation estimates, which closely align with the primary R value, proving that the regression model remains free from overfitting and exhibits high generalizability.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Decisions

No	Hypotheses	Coefficient (b / Index)	Nilai t / χ2 / Index	Nilai p / Boot CI	Decisions	Interpretation
1	Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on achievement motivation (Model 1).	1,032	t = 13,532	p = 0,000	Accepted	The direct effect is very strong ($b > 0$, $p < 0.05$).
2	Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Model 2).	0,688	t = 5,786	p = 0,000	Accepted	The direct effect is statistically significant.
3	Achievement motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee	0,184	t = 2,107	p = 0,040	Accepted	The direct effect is statistically significant.

	performance (Model 2).					
4	Continuance commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Model 2).	0,156	t = 2,081	p = 0,042	Accepted	The direct effect is statistically significant.
5	Continuance commitment moderates the influence of work discipline on employee performance.	-0,020	t = -2,257	p = 0,028	Accepted	Significant moderation with a buffering or attenuating effect.
6	Continuance commitment moderates the effect of achievement motivation on employee performance.	0,017	t = 2,392	p = 0,020	Accepted	Significant moderation with an enhancing (synergistic) effect.
7	Achievement motivation mediates the effect of work discipline on employee performance at moderate-to-high levels of commitment.	0,190 (Mean) 0,371 (+1 SD)	BootSE = 0,108 BootSE = 0,117	Boot CI: 0,033; 0,459 Boot CI: 0,182; 0,648	Accepted	The mediation is significant because the bootstrap CI does not cross zero.
8	There is an overall moderated mediation effect in the model.	0,018	BootSE = 0,007	Boot CI: 0,003; 0,031	Accepted	The Index of Moderated Mediation is significant (the bootstrap CI does not cross zero).

Statistical analysis presented in Table 2 demonstrates that all eight empirical hypotheses (H1 through H8) achieved statistical significance at $p < 0.05$. The results confirm

that Work Discipline not only strongly enhances Achievement Motivation (b = 1.032; t = 13.532; p = 0.000), but also directly boosts Employee Performance (b = 0.688; t = 5.786; p = 0.000) alongside Achievement Motivation (b = 0.184; t = 2.107; p = 0.040) and Continuance Commitment (b = 0.156; t = 2.081; p = 0.042). Furthermore, interaction testing validates Continuance Commitment as a dual-role moderator, significantly buffering the direct effect of Work Discipline on Performance (b = -0.020; p = 0.028) while simultaneously enhancing the positive impact of Achievement Motivation on Employee Performance (b = 0.017; p = 0.020). Additionally, conditional indirect effect analysis reveals that Achievement Motivation significantly mediates the discipline-performance link across both moderate (b = 0.190; 95% Boot CI [0.033, 0.459]) and high (b = 0.371; 95% Boot CI [0.182, 0.648]) levels of Continuance Commitment. Ultimately, an Index of Moderated Mediation of 0.018 with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval excluding zero [0.003, 0.031] validates the overall moderated mediation mechanism within this employee performance model.

Simple slopes analysis further confirms that Continuance Commitment (Commit) functions as an enhancing (synergistic) moderator, intensifying the positive influence of Achievement Motivation (ArchMot) on Employee Performance (EPerf).

Table 3: Simple Slopes Analysis (Conditional Effects at ± 1SD)

Commitment Level	**Commitment Value**	**Effect (b)**	**SE**	**t**	**p**	**95% CI**	**Significance Status**
Low (-1 SD)	-10,226	0,009	0,111	0,079	0,937	[-0,213; 0,231]	Not Significant
Moderate (Mean)	0,000	0,184	0,087	2,107	0,040	[0,009; 0,359]	Significant
High (+1 SD)	10,226	0,359	0,117	3,065	0,003	[0,124; 0,594]	Significant

When employee commitment drops to a low level (-1SD), achievement motivation fails to exert a statistically significant impact on performance (p = 0.937). However, as commitment escalates to moderate and high levels (+1 SD), the positive influence of achievement motivation on employee performance substantially strengthens, increasing from (b = 0,184 → b = 0,359).

Achievement motivation does not automatically translate into superior performance when employees lack commitment to the organization. Organizational leaders must actively

cultivate employee commitment first, ensuring that internal achievement drives successfully convert into optimal performance gains.

Table 4: Conditional Direct Effects (Disc → EPerf)

Commitment Level	Commitment Value	Effect (b)	SE	t	p	95% CI	Significance Status
Low (-1 SD)	-10,226	0,890	0,133	6,707	0,000	[0,624; 1,156]	Significant
Moderate (Mean)	0,000	0,688	0,119	5,786	0,000	[0,450; 0,927]	Significant
High (+1 SD)	10,226	0,487	0,163	2,986	0,004	[0,160; 0,815]	Significant

Work Discipline consistently exerts a positive and statistically significant direct effect on Employee Performance across all levels of Continuance Commitment. However, the magnitude of this impact diminishes—exhibiting a clear buffering effect—as commitment levels increase (0,890 → 0,688 → 0,487).

Table 5: Conditional Indirect Effects (Disc → ArchMot → EPerf)

Commitment Level	Commitment Value	Indirect Effect	BootSE	Boot 95% CI	Mediation Status
Low (-1 SD)	-10,226	0,009	0,141	[-0,200; 0,357]	Not significant (CI crosses 0)
Moderate (Mean)	0,000	0,190	0,087	[0,033; 0,459]	Significant (CI does not cross 0)
High (+1 SD)	10,226	0,371	0,117	[0,182; 0,648]	Significant (CI does not cross 0)

Achievement Motivation (ArchMot) functions as a mediator exclusively when employee Continuance Commitment reaches moderate-to-high levels. Under low commitment conditions, Work Discipline fails to impact Employee Performance through the indirect pathway of Achievement Motivation.

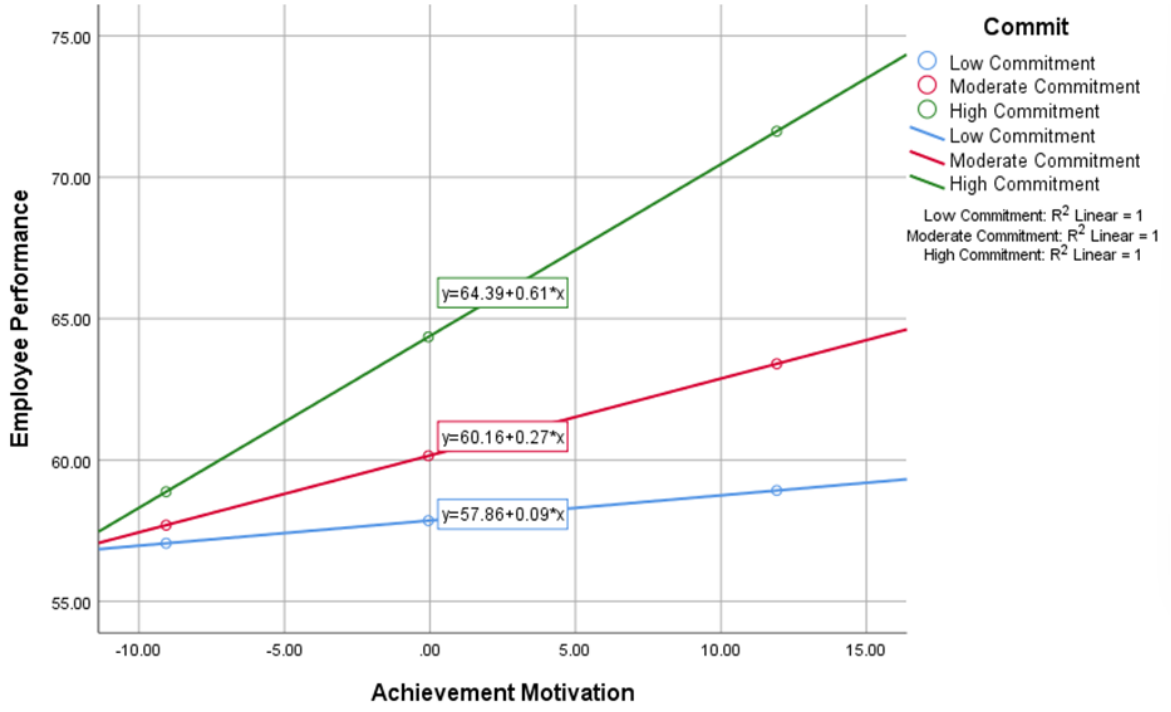


Figure 1: Simple Slopes

Continuance Commitment (Commit) fulfills a dual, complementary role:

Shifting the Performance Driver Mechanism: Among low-commitment employees, performance gains stem purely from direct disciplinary control (non-significant indirect effect of 0.009; dominant direct effect of 0.890). Among employees with low continuance commitment, perceived switching costs are minimal, leaving them without an internal anchor to sustain productivity. Consequently, their performance relies heavily on external regulatory structures—making rigid work discipline the primary direct catalyst (b = 0.890). Conversely, as continuance commitment rises, employees develop a strong rational stake in preserving their institutional tenure, pension security, and career investments within the BHMN university. Because their baseline compliance and output are already safeguarded by this self-interested attachment, additional top-down disciplinary pressure yields diminishing marginal returns (b) drops to (0.487). In essence, high continuance commitment acts as an internal self-regulatory substitute that buffers—and gradually replaces—the need for coercive external oversight.

Unlocking the Motivational Pathway: As employee commitment escalates, the impact of work discipline gradually shifts to cultivate achievement motivation first, which then becomes the primary driver of employee performance gains (indirect effect increases to

0.371). While continuance commitment is traditionally viewed in organizational literature as a passive, cost-avoidance bond, these findings demonstrate that it actively unlocks intrinsic drive when paired with achievement motivation. For low-commitment staff, high achievement motivation fails to materialize into performance (b = 0.009, non-significant) because they lack a long-term horizon within the institution; their ambition remains detached from organizational goals or is directed toward external career mobility. However, when continuance commitment reaches moderate-to-high levels, employees recognize that their long-term economic and professional prosperity is bound to the university's success. This calculative stability channels their intrinsic achievement motivation directly into institutional performance (b) surges to (0.359), transforming personal ambition into tangible organizational value (Alzadjali & Ahmad, 2024; Le & Tham, 2024; Sidharta, 2023).

The empirical findings confirm that work discipline, achievement motivation, and continuance commitment independently serve as key drivers in optimizing employee performance. Consistent rule enforcement and workplace compliance operate not merely as formal oversight mechanisms, but as vital instruments shaping employees' standards of excellence by boosting achievement motivation. These results reinforce prior literature positioning organizational climate and commitment as primary direct predictors of individual performance achievements (Sudha et al., 2023; Vuong et al., 2023). Furthermore, target-focused achievement motivation and rational attachment reflected in continuance commitment significantly elevate performance outcomes, aligning with Silva et al. (2023) regarding the critical role of organizational commitment in executing strategic targets.

This study reveals the unique dynamics of continuance commitment as a dual-role moderator operating with complementary effects. For low-commitment employees, strict disciplinary mechanisms serve as the primary catalyst forcing direct performance improvements. Conversely, when employees display high organizational attachment, rigid disciplinary enforcement no longer produces sharp performance leaps—exhibiting a buffering effect—because their work capacity is already anchored within the institution. However, high commitment pivots into an enhancing mechanism that accelerates the conversion of achievement motivation into tangible performance outcomes, supporting the insights of Alzadjali and Ahmad (2024), Le and Tham (2024), and Sidharta (2023) on how high-commitment systems amplify internal employee potential into productive output.

Testing the Index of Moderated Mediation clarifies the structural mechanism through which continuance commitment reshapes the impact of work discipline on employee performance. Empirical evidence indicates that under moderate-to-high continuance commitment, formal disciplinary oversight no longer impacts performance directly; instead, it operates through a subtle indirect pathway. Disciplinary enforcement first awakens employees' achievement motivation, which subsequently translates this intrinsic drive into peak performance outcomes. These results reinforce the findings of Otoo and Rather (2024) as well as Park et al. (2022), confirming that organizational commitment acts as a structural bridge guiding managerial processes into substantial work engagement and performance achievements.

Theoretically, these findings extend the application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) by demonstrating that external disciplinary controls can internalize into intrinsic motivation when organizations foster a supportive commitment climate. This study introduces a novel conceptual contribution through the framework of dual-function moderation, illustrating how a single variable can simultaneously buffer the effects of external oversight and amplify internal psychological drives on performance. This empirical evidence answers previous research calls regarding boundary conditions in organizational behavior, while reinforcing the arguments of Silva et al. (2023) and Sudha et al. (2023) that the efficacy of the discipline-motivation-performance pathway depends fundamentally on an employee's level of organizational commitment.

From a managerial perspective, these insights urge human resource practitioners and organizational leaders to abandon one-size-fits-all approaches in favor of commitment-tailored leadership strategies. For new hires or low-commitment employees, management should maintain strict oversight, clarify standard operating procedures, and consistently enforce discipline, as these direct mechanisms offer the most effective means to boost performance. Conversely, leaders should refrain from micromanaging senior or highly committed staff, offering them greater work autonomy and innovative space to fully channel their achievement motivation, aligning with recommendations by Alzadjali and Ahmad (2024) regarding adaptive organizational support.

To sustain long-term performance optimization, leadership must cultivate a work environment that channels employees' achievement ambitions through transparent reward

systems, measurable task challenges, and clear career progression. Additionally, institutions must maintain organizational attractiveness and competitive employee welfare, ensuring staff recognize the financial and professional costs of leaving the organization. As highlighted by Le and Tham (2024) and Park et al. (2022), consistent commitment management guarantees that organizational investments in discipline enforcement and motivation development successfully convert into superior, competitive organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work discipline, achievement motivation, and continuance commitment play vital roles as direct drivers of employee performance within a state-chartered public university in Bandung, with work discipline significantly fostering intrinsic achievement motivation. The findings explicitly confirm the function of continuance commitment as a dual-role moderator that restructures the performance-building pathway. On one hand, high commitment buffers the direct impact of discipline enforcement on performance because employee work capacity is already anchored to the organization; on the other hand, it acts as a booster that maximizes the transformation of achievement motivation into tangible performance outcomes. The significant moderated mediation effect demonstrates that as continuance commitment increases, work discipline shifts from direct compliance oversight to igniting achievement motivation prior to elevating overall employee performance.

Based on these conclusions, leaders should implement tailored managerial strategies aligned with employee commitment levels. Management should maintain strict operational oversight, clarify key performance indicators, and consistently enforce standard procedures for low-commitment employees, as formal disciplinary mechanisms most effectively drive performance directly in this group. Conversely, for highly committed employees, leaders should pivot away from micromanagement toward job autonomy frameworks centered on strengthening achievement motivation. Management must cultivate a supportive work ecosystem that fosters individual ambition through measurable task challenges, transparent career paths, and fair reward systems, ensuring sustained employee attachment and converting motivation investments into optimal organizational productivity.

Despite offering robust conceptual clarity, this study has several limitations, including a sample size of 59 net respondents restricted to a single BHMN institution in Bandung and a cross-sectional design that limits the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, the study focuses exclusively on continuance commitment without incorporating affective or normative commitment, which might produce distinct interaction patterns. Future researchers should expand the observational scope across multiple institutions and adopt longitudinal designs to test the temporal consistency of causal relationships. Future studies could also integrate transformational leadership or organizational culture as additional predictors to enrich the moderated mediation framework in organizational behavior modeling.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The authors transparently disclose the use of AI Tool exclusively for the purpose of linguistic editing and grammatical refinement of the original draft. The authors maintain full responsibility for the manuscript's substantive content, data integrity, and final scientific conclusions.

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