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THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTEGRITY LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE

[1]Nailul Hisan, [2]Khalimi, [3]Arfin

[1,2,3]Financial Education and Training Agency, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: nailul.hisan@kemenkeu.go.id

Abstract

Integrity-based leadership is expected to shape employees' work attitudes and conduct, yet the mechanism through which it relates to employee discipline requires further empirical examination, particularly in public-sector organizations. This study investigates the relationships among integrity leadership, employee engagement, and employee discipline at the Financial Education and Training Agency (BPPK), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia. Using an explanatory quantitative design, the study surveyed 300 employees selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with 10,000 bootstrap subsamples. Integrity leadership was positively associated with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 8.677$, $p < .001$) and employee discipline ($\beta = 0.271$, $t = 4.123$, $p < .001$). Employee engagement was also positively associated with employee discipline ($\beta = 0.475$, $t = 8.910$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of integrity leadership on employee discipline through employee engagement was significant ($\beta = 0.221$, $t = 6.795$, $p < .001$), while the direct effect remained significant, indicating complementary partial mediation. The model explained 21.7% of the variance in employee engagement and 41.7% of the variance in employee discipline. The findings position employee engagement as a plausible motivational pathway linking integrity-oriented leadership with disciplined conduct. Because the study is based on a single public-sector institution and cross-sectional self-report survey data, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Keywords: integrity leadership, employee engagement, work engagement, employee discipline, public-sector organization, mediation

Introduction

Bureaucratic reform depends not only on formal rules, administrative systems, and oversight mechanisms but also on the everyday conduct of public employees and the leadership practices that shape organizational norms. In public institutions, employee discipline is consequential because it concerns the reliable fulfilment of duties, observance of working hours, compliance with regulations, and adherence to ethical standards. In Indonesia, these expectations are formalized in Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 on Civil Servant Discipline (Government of

the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). However, compliance cannot be understood solely as a product of monitoring and sanctions; employees also interpret organizational expectations through the conduct and example of their leaders.

Integrity leadership is relevant to this process because employees assess leaders not merely by their formal authority but also by the consistency between words and actions, fairness in decision-making, trustworthiness, and moral responsibility. The construct is closely related to ethical leadership and behavioral integrity, although the concepts should not be treated as interchangeable. Ethical leadership emphasizes normatively appropriate conduct and the active communication and reinforcement of ethical standards, whereas behavioral integrity focuses more narrowly on perceived alignment between a leader's words and deeds (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Simons, 2002). Empirical work has linked leader integrity and ethical leadership with trust, engagement, and employee outcomes (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Ete et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2014).

Leadership may influence employee discipline directly through role modelling and the clarification of behavioral expectations. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn appropriate conduct by observing salient models and the consequences of their behavior (Bandura, 1977). In organizations, leaders are visible sources of behavioral information; employees may infer which standards are genuinely valued by observing whether leaders themselves comply with policies and apply rules consistently. This logic is consistent with research identifying ethical leadership as a source of ethical guidance and a predictor of employee attitudes and behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Neubert et al., 2009; Treviño et al., 2003). Evidence from government settings also indicates that ethical leadership is associated with lower absenteeism and stronger organizational commitment and willingness to report ethical problems (Hassan et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, leadership may also operate through employees' psychological relationship with their work. This study conceptualizes employee engagement as work engagement: a positive, fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006). Vigor concerns energy and mental resilience; dedication concerns significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge; and absorption concerns deep concentration and immersion in work. Engagement is conceptually distinct from discipline. Engagement is a motivational and psychological state, whereas discipline refers to compliance with formal and ethical expectations. The distinction matters because a highly engaged employee is not automatically a compliant employee; the proposed relationship requires empirical testing.

Prior research has established the relevance of leadership and work resources for engagement. Studies of ethical and integrity-oriented leadership report positive associations with engagement, including in public-sector settings (Adnan et al., 2022; Ashfaq et al., 2021; Chen & Msuku, 2023; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020; Shabir & Muazzam, 2024; Wibawa & Takahashi, 2021). The job demands–resources perspective further explains engagement as a motivational state supported by job and personal resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023; Demerouti et al., 2001). Integrity-oriented leadership may function as a social and organizational resource by creating trust, predictability, and a credible

ethical climate. Related research has connected behavioral integrity and transparent leadership communication with engagement and performance (Choi et al., 2020; Prottas & Nummelin, 2018; Vogelgesang et al., 2013).

Work engagement has been associated with task and contextual performance, organizational citizenship behavior, service quality, and other positive work outcomes (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002; Khusanova et al., 2021; LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Meta-analytic and review evidence reinforces the importance of engagement while also noting that the construct has sometimes been used inconsistently across psychological states, behaviors, and outcomes (Bailey et al., 2017; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mazzetti et al., 2023; Saks, 2006, 2019). These studies provide a basis for expecting engagement to be associated with disciplined work behavior, but they do not establish that engagement necessarily leads to compliance with public-service rules. Discipline is therefore a distinct outcome that warrants direct examination.

An additional theoretical rationale comes from social exchange theory. When employees perceive leaders and organizations as trustworthy, fair, and supportive, they may reciprocate through positive work attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Perceived organizational support and organizational justice have been associated with favorable employee attitudes and behaviors (Colquitt et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In this study, integrity leadership may strengthen engagement by providing a credible relational context, while engagement may in turn be associated with greater consistency in fulfilling work obligations. This is a proposed explanatory pathway, not a claim that engagement replaces formal accountability.

Despite the accumulated literature, a specific empirical gap remains: relatively little research has examined employee engagement as a mediator between integrity leadership and employee discipline in a public-sector organization. Existing work has more commonly focused on trust, commitment, performance, citizenship behavior, and general work outcomes. The present study addresses this gap by testing a mediation model at the Financial Education and Training Agency (BPPK), an institution within Indonesia's Ministry of Finance. It examines the direct relationships of integrity leadership with employee engagement and employee discipline, the relationship between engagement and discipline, and the indirect relationship through engagement. The study's contribution is to position discipline—rather than performance alone—as an outcome associated with integrity-oriented leadership and work engagement.

Theoretical Framework

Integrity leadership and employee engagement

Integrity leadership in this study is operationalized through honesty and consistency, fairness and role modelling, and trustworthiness and moral responsibility. These dimensions reflect the importance of congruence between stated values and enacted behavior, as well as ethical treatment of organizational members. Behavioral integrity theory highlights the credibility consequences of alignment between managerial words and deeds (Simons, 2002), while ethical leadership theory emphasizes the leader's role as a moral person and moral manager who models and reinforces appropriate conduct (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Treviño et al., 2003).

Employees may be more willing to invest energy and dedication in their work when leaders are perceived as fair, trustworthy, and consistent. Integrity may also strengthen trust and psychological safety, thereby supporting engagement. Empirical studies have reported positive relationships between leader integrity or ethical leadership and engagement (Adnan et al., 2022; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020; Shabir & Muazzam, 2024). The JD–R perspective provides a complementary explanation: credible leadership can be understood as a social resource that supports motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023).

H1: Integrity leadership is positively associated with employee engagement.

Integrity leadership and employee discipline

Leaders communicate behavioral expectations through formal instructions and through their own conduct. When leaders demonstrate honesty, consistency, fairness, and accountability, they provide visible examples of the standards expected of employees. Social learning theory predicts that employees observe and reproduce behavior demonstrated by influential models (Bandura, 1977). Ethical leadership research similarly indicates that leaders can influence employee conduct by modelling ethical behavior and reinforcing organizational norms (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). In public organizations, ethical leadership has been associated with lower absenteeism and greater commitment (Hassan et al., 2014). Behavioral integrity and leader trustworthiness may also contribute to positive follower outcomes (Choi et al., 2020; Ete et al., 2022; Neubert et al., 2009).

H2: Integrity leadership is positively associated with employee discipline.

Employee engagement and employee discipline

Engagement reflects employees' energy, dedication, and absorption in work (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006). These motivational characteristics may support attentive task completion, persistence, and willingness to fulfil responsibilities. The JD–R literature links engagement to positive work outcomes, including performance and proactive behavior (Bakker, 2011; Christian et al., 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Research also associates engagement with organizational citizenship behavior and service quality (LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Prottas & Nummelin, 2018). However, these outcomes are not identical to rule compliance. The current study therefore tests whether engagement is positively associated with the distinct construct of employee discipline.

H3: Employee engagement is positively associated with employee discipline.

The mediating role of employee engagement

The mediation argument combines social learning, social exchange, and motivational-resource perspectives. Integrity-oriented leaders may shape employees' perceptions of appropriate conduct directly through role modelling, while also supporting engagement by creating a trustworthy and fair work environment. Engaged employees may then be more attentive and persistent in fulfilling their obligations. Social exchange theory suggests that favorable relational treatment can elicit reciprocal attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), while research on organizational support and justice demonstrates the relevance of perceived

organizational treatment for employee outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The proposed indirect pathway does not imply that engagement is the sole mechanism connecting integrity leadership and discipline. Other mechanisms—such as trust, ethical climate, perceived fairness, organizational commitment, and self-efficacy—may also be relevant (Ashfaq et al., 2021; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Neubert et al., 2009; Yukl et al., 2013). The current model focuses specifically on engagement as a theoretically plausible mediator.

H4: Employee engagement mediates the positive relationship between integrity leadership and employee discipline.

Research Method

Research design and setting

This study used a quantitative explanatory survey design to examine direct and indirect associations among integrity leadership, employee engagement, and employee discipline. The research was conducted at the Financial Education and Training Agency (BPPK), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia. The study used primary questionnaire data and secondary organizational materials, including institutional documents, relevant regulations, and scholarly literature. The design is cross-sectional; therefore, the estimated relationships should not be interpreted as establishing temporal order or causality.

Population, sample, and sampling procedure

The population comprised 1,203 BPPK personnel as of December 31, 2024, according to the 2025 BPPK Performance Report. The reported population consisted of 813 male employees (68%) and 390 female employees (32%). A sample of 300 employees was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. The population was divided into strata based on occupational categories, and respondents were selected proportionally from each stratum. The manuscript supplied no stratum-level population counts, response rate, or respondent demographic profile beyond the population gender distribution; these details should be added from the original sampling records before journal submission.

Measures

All questionnaire items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Integrity leadership (X) was operationalized through three dimensions: honesty and consistency, fairness and role modelling, and trustworthiness and moral responsibility. Employee engagement (M) was measured through vigor, dedication, and absorption, following the work-engagement conceptualization of Schaufeli et al. (2002, 2006). Employee discipline (Y) was operationalized through compliance with working hours, fulfilment of duties and responsibilities, compliance with regulations and ethical standards, and prevention of misconduct and conflicts of interest. Each dimension was represented by three questionnaire indicators.

The integrity-leadership measure was informed by literature on ethical leadership and behavioral integrity (Brown et al., 2005; Choi et al., 2020; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Ete et al., 2022). Employee discipline was developed with reference to employee compliance and

responsibility and the Indonesian civil-servant discipline framework, particularly Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). The manuscript does not provide the complete item wording, item sources, translation/back-translation procedures, or evidence of content validation. These materials should be supplied in an appendix or supplementary file to make the measurement procedure reproducible.

Control variable

Organizational unit was included as a control variable for employee discipline. The source manuscript does not specify how organizational unit was coded or whether it was represented by dummy variables or another coding scheme. The coding procedure and reference category should be reported in the final submission.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. The measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and normed fit index (NFI). Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples. The indirect effect was assessed through the specific indirect path from integrity leadership to employee engagement and then to employee discipline. PLS-SEM reporting should also make explicit the rationale for method selection, sample adequacy, and the specification of higher-order constructs (Hair et al., 2019, 2021; Henseler et al., 2015; Kock & Hadaya, 2018).

Results

Descriptive statistics

The study included 300 respondents. The reported mean score for integrity leadership was 4.640, employee engagement was 4.445, and employee discipline was 4.798 on a five-point scale. These values indicate generally favorable respondent perceptions of all three constructs. Among the integrity-leadership dimensions, trustworthiness and moral responsibility recorded the highest mean (4.670), followed by honesty and consistency (4.659), and fairness and role modelling (4.591). For engagement, dedication had the highest mean (4.504), followed by vigor (4.428) and absorption (4.402). For discipline, compliance with regulations and ethical standards had the highest mean (4.842), followed by compliance with working hours (4.808), prevention of misconduct and conflicts of interest (4.778), and fulfilment of duties and responsibilities (4.762).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the study constructs and dimensions

Construct/dimension	Mean
Integrity leadership	4.640
Honesty and consistency	4.659
Fairness and role modelling	4.591
Trustworthiness and moral responsibility	4.670
Employee engagement	4.445
Vigor	4.428

Dedication	4.504
Absorption	4.402
Employee discipline	4.798
Compliance with working hours	4.808
Fulfilment of duties and responsibilities	4.762
Compliance with regulations and ethical standards	4.842
Prevention of misconduct and conflicts of interest	4.778

Measurement model

At the lower-order construct level, the manuscript reports AVE values of 0.587 for employee engagement, 0.786 for integrity leadership, and 0.575 for employee discipline. It also reports that all outer loadings exceeded the acceptable threshold, although the individual loading values are not presented in the supplied manuscript. At the higher-order construct level, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.70, and AVE values exceeded 0.50. The HTMT values were reported to range from 0.518 to 0.687. The original manuscript therefore concluded that the measurement model met its convergent-validity, reliability, and discriminant-validity criteria. For transparency, the actual HTMT matrix and all indicator loadings should be included in a supplementary table.

Table 2. Reliability and convergent validity of higher-order constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Employee engagement	0.852	0.911	0.773
Integrity leadership	0.942	0.963	0.895
Employee discipline	0.882	0.919	0.739

Note: Based on the table above, the AVE values for each lower-level variable are as follows: 0.587 for engagement, 0.786 for integrity leadership, and 0.575 for discipline.

Structural model and hypothesis testing

The model yielded an R^2 of 0.217 for employee engagement and 0.417 for employee discipline. Thus, integrity leadership accounted for 21.7% of the variance in engagement, while the predictors in the structural model accounted for 41.7% of the variance in discipline. The reported f^2 values were 0.277 for integrity leadership → engagement, 0.303 for engagement → discipline, 0.097 for integrity leadership → discipline, and 0.004 for organizational unit → discipline. The Q^2 values were 0.165 for engagement and 0.295 for discipline. The model fit indices were SRMR = 0.052 and NFI = 0.888.

Table 3. Structural model and hypothesis-testing results

Structural relationship	**β**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Decision**
Integrity leadership →	0.465	8.677	< .001	Supported

Employee engagement				
Integrity leadership → Employee discipline	0.271	4.123	< .001	Supported
Employee engagement → Employee discipline	0.475	8.910	< .001	Supported
Organizational unit → Employee discipline	−0.048	1.062	0.288	Not supported
Integrity leadership → Employee engagement → Employee discipline	0.221	6.795	< .001	Supported

Note. Bootstrapping used 10,000 subsamples. β denotes the standardized path coefficient.

All four hypotheses were supported. Integrity leadership was positively associated with employee engagement (β = 0.465, t = 8.677, p < .001), supporting H1. Integrity leadership was also positively associated with employee discipline (β = 0.271, t = 4.123, p < .001), supporting H2. Employee engagement was positively associated with employee discipline (β = 0.475, t = 8.910, p < .001), supporting H3. The indirect effect of integrity leadership on employee discipline through engagement was positive and significant (β = 0.221, t = 6.795, p < .001), supporting H4. Because the direct path from integrity leadership to discipline remained significant alongside the significant indirect path, the source manuscript classifies the mediation as complementary partial mediation. The organizational-unit control path was not statistically significant (β = −0.048, t = 1.062, p = .288).

Discussion

Integrity leadership and employee engagement

The positive association between integrity leadership and employee engagement supports H1 and is consistent with research linking leader integrity, ethical leadership, trust, and engagement (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Adnan et al., 2022; Ashfaq et al., 2021). Leaders who act consistently, make fair decisions, and demonstrate moral responsibility may provide employees with a credible social context in which to invest energy and dedication. This interpretation is compatible with the JD–R perspective, which identifies social and organizational resources as motivational conditions for engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023).

The result should not be interpreted as proof that integrity leadership alone produces engagement. The model explains 21.7% of the variance in engagement, leaving substantial variance attributable to other factors, potentially including job resources, workload, autonomy, support, psychological capital, and individual differences. Prior research identifies self-efficacy, organizational commitment, psychological capital, and meaningful work as relevant mechanisms or correlates (Ashfaq et al., 2021; Chen & Msuku, 2023; Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020). The present finding therefore adds support for the relevance of integrity-oriented leadership in this institutional setting while leaving room for additional explanatory variables.

Integrity leadership and employee discipline

The positive direct association between integrity leadership and employee discipline supports H2. The finding is consistent with social learning theory: leaders provide observable examples of how organizational rules and ethical expectations should be enacted (Bandura, 1977; Brown et al., 2005). Behavioral integrity—the perceived alignment between a manager's words and deeds—may be particularly relevant where discipline requires consistency and credibility rather than mere formal instruction (Simons, 2002; Choi et al., 2020; Ete et al., 2022).

The result also aligns with public-sector evidence that ethical leadership is associated with lower absenteeism and stronger employee commitment and ethical voice (Hassan et al., 2014). Nevertheless, employee discipline in the present study is measured through questionnaire indicators rather than independently verified attendance, disciplinary records, or supervisor assessments. Consequently, the result should be interpreted as a positive association with perceived or self-reported discipline, not as demonstrated improvement in objectively recorded disciplinary compliance.

Employee engagement and employee discipline

Employee engagement had a positive association with employee discipline and the largest direct path coefficient among the substantive predictors of discipline ($\beta = 0.475$). This finding suggests that employees who report higher vigor, dedication, and absorption also tend to report stronger compliance with work obligations and standards. Engagement may support disciplined conduct by strengthening attention, persistence, and willingness to complete assigned responsibilities. The finding extends the discussion of engagement beyond performance, service quality, and organizational citizenship behavior (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002; LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Prottas & Nummelin, 2018).

The constructs should nevertheless remain conceptually distinct. Engagement is a motivational state, whereas discipline is a behavioral and regulatory outcome. The observed association does not establish that engagement inevitably produces compliance, nor does it imply that formal supervision and sanctions are unnecessary. Rather, engagement may complement formal systems by supporting employees' capacity and willingness to fulfil responsibilities. This interpretation is consistent with broader engagement reviews and meta-analytic evidence on work-related outcomes (Bailey et al., 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2023; Saks, 2006, 2019).

Employee engagement as a partial mediator

The significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < .001$), together with the significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < .001$), indicates complementary partial mediation in the estimated model. This means that the association between integrity leadership and employee discipline is statistically transmitted in part through employee engagement, while a direct association remains. The direct pathway is consistent with role modelling and social learning; the indirect pathway is consistent with the motivational value of a trustworthy and fair leadership environment.

This interpretation also resonates with social exchange theory: employees may respond to fair and credible treatment with stronger work involvement and constructive behavior (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Related evidence on perceived organizational support and organizational justice underscores the relevance of employees' perceptions of organizational treatment (Colquitt et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). However, the mediation model is not exhaustive. Trust in leaders, ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological empowerment may represent additional mediating or moderating mechanisms (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Neubert et al., 2009; Vogelgesang et al., 2013; Yukl et al., 2013).

Implications

In the BPPK context, the findings suggest that discipline initiatives may benefit from combining formal compliance systems with leadership development and employee-engagement practices. Leadership development can emphasize consistency between words and actions, transparent decision-making, fair treatment, trustworthiness, and accountability. Engagement initiatives may focus on meaningful work, access to resources, constructive feedback, and conditions that support vigor, dedication, and absorption. These recommendations are consistent with public-sector studies highlighting the relevance of ethical leadership and work engagement for organizational functioning (Brennan et al., 2024; Khusanova et al., 2021; Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020).

The non-significant organizational-unit control path ($p = .288$) indicates that the variable, as coded in the model, was not statistically associated with discipline after accounting for the other predictors. This result should be interpreted cautiously because the manuscript does not report the coding of organizational unit, the number of categories, or whether the control was specified appropriately for a categorical variable. It should not be generalized to mean that organizational context is irrelevant.

Theoretical contribution

The study contributes by testing employee discipline as a distinct outcome in a mediation model linking integrity leadership and employee engagement in a public-sector organization. Much of the engagement literature has emphasized performance, citizenship behavior, service quality, commitment, or well-being (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2019). By focusing on discipline, the study brings a regulatory and ethical dimension of employee behavior into the discussion. Its results are consistent with the view that integrity-oriented leadership may

be associated with discipline through both direct role-modelling pathways and an indirect motivational pathway via engagement.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among integrity leadership, employee engagement, and employee discipline among 300 employees of the Financial Education and Training Agency (BPPK), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia. The results indicate that integrity leadership is positively associated with employee engagement and employee discipline, and that employee engagement is positively associated with employee discipline. Employee engagement also carries a significant portion of the association between integrity leadership and employee discipline, while the direct relationship remains significant, indicating complementary partial mediation.

The findings suggest that integrity-oriented leadership and employee engagement are relevant correlates of employee discipline in the studied public-sector context. They support an approach that combines credible leadership role modelling with working conditions that foster engagement, while retaining formal accountability and regulatory mechanisms. Given the cross-sectional, single-institution, questionnaire-based design and the reporting gaps identified above, the results should be treated as context-specific associations that warrant replication and stronger multi-source longitudinal testing.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional survey design. The estimated paths therefore indicate associations at one point in time and cannot establish temporal precedence or causal effects. Longitudinal designs, repeated measurements, or field interventions would be needed to examine whether changes in integrity leadership precede changes in engagement and discipline.

Second, the study was conducted in a single Indonesian public-sector institution. The findings may reflect BPPK's institutional culture, regulatory environment, workforce composition, and leadership arrangements; they should not automatically be generalized to other ministries, local governments, state-owned enterprises, or private organizations. Replication across institutions and occupational groups is required.

Third, the outcome and predictor constructs were measured through a questionnaire survey. This creates a possibility of common-method effects, social desirability, and inflated associations, particularly for a sensitive construct such as employee discipline. Although the source manuscript reports measurement-model statistics, it does not report procedural safeguards or a dedicated assessment of common-method bias. Future studies should combine employee surveys with supervisor ratings, attendance records, disciplinary records, or other administrative indicators, while protecting confidentiality and ensuring that participation does not affect employment decisions.

Fourth, the manuscript does not provide the full questionnaire, individual indicator loadings, complete HTMT matrix, demographic profile of the 300 respondents, response rate, stratum-level sampling details, or the coding scheme for organizational unit. These omissions limit

reproducibility and make it difficult for readers to independently evaluate measurement quality and sampling representativeness. Future reporting should provide these materials in appendices or supplementary files. The authors should also confirm the exact specification of lower- and higher-order constructs and report all measurement and structural statistics in accordance with current PLS-SEM reporting guidance (Hair et al., 2019, 2021; Henseler et al., 2015; Kock & Hadaya, 2018).

Fifth, the model explains 41.7% of the variance in employee discipline, leaving a substantial proportion unexplained. Future research could examine ethical climate, trust in leadership, perceived organizational support, organizational justice, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, job autonomy, and supervisory control as additional explanatory variables or boundary conditions. Such extensions should be theoretically justified and should avoid adding variables solely to increase explained variance.

Finally, the reported sampling method was proportionate stratified random sampling, but the manuscript does not provide the sampling frame, stratum sizes, selection procedure, or nonresponse information. Future studies should document these procedures and conduct an a priori sample-size or statistical-power assessment appropriate to the complexity of the PLS-SEM model. Multi-source and multi-wave designs would strengthen inference and reduce reliance on same-source self-report measures.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

The specific contributions of the authors were not identified in the source manuscript. The following roles must be confirmed by all authors before submission: **Nailul Hisan:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Formal analysis; Writing – original draft. **Khalimi:** Supervision; Validation; Writing – review and editing. **Arfin:** Resources; Data curation; Writing – review and editing.

Declarations

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Ethics Approval

This study does not include Ethical Approval.

Informed Consent

The authors declare that they have obtained consent from all research participants, and that participation was voluntary, with all data kept confidential.

Data Availability

The data in this study are not publicly shared; requests for data may be directed to the researchers, subject to obtaining permission from the relevant organizations and ensuring the confidentiality of participants.

Use of AI-Assisted Tools

The author uses artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools for language editing, translation, or manuscript drafting, in accordance with the policy of the target journal.

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