

## **The Effects Of Leadership, Work Discipline, And The Work Environment On Employee Job Satisfaction (A Case Study At Universitas Islam Nusantara)**

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### **Abstract**

This study analyzes the influence of leadership, work discipline, and work environment on job satisfaction among educational staff at Universitas Islam Nusantara, a private religious university in Bandung. Unlike previous studies that demonstrated the role of work discipline primarily in operational organizations, this study examines these relationships among non-academic university staff. Statistical diagnostics support the nonsignificant results. A quantitative cross-sectional design was used, based on a census of 86 educational staff, using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire with 21 items, which was analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results indicate that work environment ( $\beta = 0.344$ ;  $t = 3.407$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) and leadership ( $\beta = 0.255$ ;  $t = 2.506$ ;  $p = 0.014$ ) have positive and significant effects, whereas work discipline does not have a significant effect ( $\beta = 0.060$ ;  $t = 0.599$ ;  $p = 0.551$ ; 95% CI [-0.161; 0.301]). The model explains 22.7% of the variation in job satisfaction (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.227$ ;  $F = 9.297$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Work discipline actually had the highest score (81.95%). Still, its range was the narrowest and its contribution to unique variance was only 0.33%, indicating that a high level of a factor is not synonymous with its explanatory power. These findings suggest that in organizations where discipline is already institutionalized, discipline functions more as a basic prerequisite than as a differentiator of satisfaction. Consequently, policy priorities should focus on improving facilities and managerial attention, as well as on the quality of communication and employee engagement by leadership.

**Keywords:** work discipline; leadership; job satisfaction; work environment; educational staff



## **INTRODUCTION**

Job satisfaction is an individual's evaluative attitude toward their work—that is, a positive emotional state arising from an assessment of work experiences (Locke, 1976; Robbins & Judge, 2017). This construct is important not only as an indicator of employee well-being but also because it is linked to organizational loyalty and effectiveness (Herzberg et al., 1959; Robbins & Judge, 2017). In higher education institutions, attention to job satisfaction is generally focused on faculty members. In reality, the smooth operation of daily academic services depends on educational support staff—namely, administrative staff, unit managers, and support service personnel such as janitors and security guards. Their work differs fundamentally from that of faculty members: it is more routine, bound by bureaucratic structures, has limited career paths, and occurs under diverse employment statuses.

These conditions are evident at Universitas Islam Nusantara (Uninus), a private religious university in Bandung that employs support staff with permanent, contract, and outsourced employment statuses. A preliminary survey of 15 support staff members revealed that, on average, approximately 43% of respondents were dissatisfied with various aspects of their jobs. The most prominent dissatisfaction was found in facilities and benefits (53% dissatisfied), involvement in decision-making (53%), and career development opportunities (47%). Although on a small scale, these preliminary findings suggest that the sources of dissatisfaction are related to how employees are led, the conditions of their workplace, and the work arrangements that govern them. In this study, these three domains are operationalized as leadership, work environment, and work discipline.

The literature on these three determinants is relatively well-established. Effective leadership has consistently been reported to increase job satisfaction in both business organizations (Arianto, 2018; Hayati, 2016; Suryadharma et al., 2016) and among university faculty (Mgaiwa, 2023). Both the physical and non-physical work environments have also been shown to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Mariyanti & Saputri, 2019; Mgaiwa, 2021; Saputra & Rahyuda, 2018; Sitinjak, 2018). Work discipline is also generally reported to have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Azhar et al., 2020; Djari & Sitepu, 2017; Purnamasari, 2018), including in studies that examined all three variables simultaneously (Muaroma & Indriati, 2022).

A closer examination of the evidence base on work discipline reveals two gaps. First, the most methodologically comparable evidence comes from operational organizations, namely private plantations, the furniture industry, security units, and service companies (Dzulhaq & Firdaus, 2024; Hamdani Arief & Saputro, 2024; Muaroma & Indriati, 2022; Ong et al., 2021). In such organizations, supervision is field-based, so



discipline levels vary significantly among workers. Studies in higher education focus on faculty members and do not examine work discipline (Mgaiwa, 2021, 2023), or they treat discipline as a downstream effect of job satisfaction (Sarmiento & Suryani, 2022). Evidence from educational settings remains limited and is reported without adequate diagnostic analysis (Djari & Sitepu, 2017; Purnamasari, 2018). Consequently, it remains unclear whether discipline still explains job satisfaction among non-academic staff at universities, where discipline is institutionalized through fixed working hours, attendance systems, and personnel regulations.

Second, when an antecedent is insignificant, survey-based human resource management research rarely reports information that lets readers distinguish between the absence of an effect and data limitations—such as variable distribution, confidence intervals for coefficients, unique variance contribution, or statistical power. Even nonsignificant results tend to be interpreted solely as a failure of the hypothesis, rather than as information regarding the boundary conditions under which a relationship holds.

Based on these two gaps, this study aims to analyze the effects of leadership, work discipline, and work environment on the job satisfaction of Uninus's educational staff. This article makes three contributions. Theoretically, it shows that a high level of a factor is not synonymous with its explanatory power for job satisfaction, helping explain the limitations of the discipline–satisfaction findings. Methodologically, this article supports non-significant results with replicable statistical diagnostics. Practically, this article provides a basis for setting priorities in non-academic personnel policies at universities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Job Satisfaction and Theoretical Foundations**

Job satisfaction is understood as the result of an individual's evaluation of the fit between what they receive from their job and what they believe they deserve (Locke, 1976; Robbins & Judge, 2017). The Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) distinguishes between motivators—such as achievement, recognition, and self-development—and hygiene factors—such as organizational policies, supervision, and working conditions. Hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, but their presence does not necessarily increase satisfaction.

This study does not adopt this dichotomy literally, since Herzberg also classified supervision and working conditions as hygiene factors. What is borrowed is the underlying logic: factors that are uniformly met tend to lose their ability to distinguish levels of satisfaction among individuals. Two complementary frameworks enrich this logic. Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) states that satisfaction depends on the balance between the input an employee provides and the rewards they receive. Self-

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Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) adds that externally regulated behavior does not fulfill the need for autonomy, so its contribution to satisfaction is minimal.

### Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between leadership and job satisfaction is most directly explained by Path–Goal *Theory*, which posits subordinate satisfaction as the primary outcome (House, 1971; House & Mitchell, 1974). According to this theory, a leader's behavior is accepted and satisfying to the extent that it is viewed as a source of immediate satisfaction or as a means of achieving future satisfaction (House, 1996). Clear direction reduces role ambiguity, involvement in decision-making fulfills the need for recognition, encouragement strengthens self-confidence, and the leader's accountability to the team creates psychological security. Because leadership effectiveness is situation-contingent (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993), this study measures leadership as the effectiveness of behavior as perceived by subordinates, combining situational, directive, participative, and supportive elements.

The choice of this construct is based on two considerations. First, subordinates assess all indicators, so the behaviors measured must be observable in day-to-day work interactions. Clarity of direction, involvement in decision-making, and accountability for the team meet this criterion. In contrast, constructs such as long-term vision or intellectual stimulation are harder for staff in routine jobs to assess reliably. Second, in higher education settings, leadership effectiveness is more consistently associated with clear direction, staff consultation, and fair treatment than with transformational behaviors (Bryman, 2007).

Empirical support for this relationship is strong. A meta-analysis by Judge et al. (2004) found that the “*consideration*” dimension had a total validity of 0.48 and was most strongly associated with follower satisfaction. In higher education, leadership as perceived by academics also remains influential on job satisfaction after controlling for demographic variables (Mgaiwa, 2023). Similar findings have been reported in various organizations in Indonesia (Arianto, 2018; Hayati, 2016; Muaroma & Indriati, 2022; Suryadharma et al., 2016).

*H1: Leadership has a positive effect on the job satisfaction of educational staff.*

### Work Discipline and Job Satisfaction

Work discipline refers to employees' respect for and adherence to organizational rules and regulations, whether written or unwritten (Hasibuan, 2019; Sutrisno, 2011). Conventional arguments state that discipline fosters order, efficiency, and reduced conflict, giving employees a sense of calm and accomplishment (Hasibuan, 2019; Mangkunegara, 2013). This argument is supported by studies reporting a positive

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influence of discipline on job satisfaction (Azhar et al., 2020; Djari & Sitepu, 2017; Dzulhaq & Firdaus, 2024; Hamdani Arie & Saputro, 2024; Ong et al., 2021; Purnamasari, 2018).

Two reasons call into question the generalizability of this argument. First, the most comparable studies are set in organizations with varying levels of employee discipline, so discipline varies enough to explain differences in satisfaction. In organizations where discipline is institutionalized, such variation tends to be suppressed. Second, the direction of the relationship itself remains debated. Sarmiento and Suryani (2022) modeled discipline as a mediator between job satisfaction and performance, whereas Setianingrum et al. (2023) positioned satisfaction as a mediator between discipline and performance. Following the dominant argument in the literature, the second hypothesis is formulated directionally and treated as a test of its applicability limits.

*H2: Work discipline has a positive effect on the job satisfaction of educational staff.*

### **Work Environment and Job Satisfaction**

The work environment encompasses everything surrounding the worker that influences the performance of their duties. This environment includes physical aspects, such as cleanliness, lighting, air circulation, and facilities, as well as non-physical aspects, such as relationships with coworkers and supervisors and the work climate (Sedarmayanti, 2017). A clean, safe environment supported by adequate facilities fosters work enthusiasm and comfort, which ultimately leads to satisfaction (Sunnyoto, 2013). Within the framework of Equity Theory, facilities and managerial attention are also part of the rewards employees receive for their contributions (Adams, 1963).

Empirical evidence of this relationship is consistent across both the business and public sectors (Mariyanti & Saputri, 2019; Saputra & Rahyuda, 2018; Sitinjak, 2018). In higher education, Mgaewa (2021) demonstrated that the perceived work environment is associated with faculty satisfaction, with involvement in decision-making as the most critical dimension. These findings also indicate that not all dimensions of the work environment significantly affect faculty satisfaction.

*H3: The work environment positively affects educational staff job satisfaction.*

### **Position on Previous Research**

A critical review of previous studies reveals that the strength of evidence supporting the discipline–satisfaction relationship is inconsistent. Ong et al. (2021) provide the most rigorous comparison because they used a census of 66 employees and multiple linear regression, with an Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.561. However, that model included work commitment—an attitudinal variable conceptually closely related to job satisfaction—so its explanatory power cannot be directly compared to models in which

all predictors lie outside the realm of attitudes. Muaroma and Indriati (2022) tested the same set of variables as this study on 76 employees but did not report partial coefficients or classical assumption tests; thus, the most dominant variable and the model's validity cannot be assessed. Hamdani Arip and Saputro (2024) used only 35 respondents for three predictors—far below the rule of  $n \geq 50 + 8k$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019)—and reported differing Adjusted  $R^2$  values between the abstract and the results table. Dzulhaq and Firdaus (2024) conducted a census of 100 employees, but their abstract did not detail the results of the partial tests for each variable.

Studies set in higher education have different strengths and limitations. Mgaiwa (2023) used standardized instruments—namely, the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* and the *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire*—on 411 academics at four universities, whereas Mgaiwa (2021) studied 116 academics at two universities. Both studies used *convenience sampling* and examined faculty members, not support staff. Sarmiento and Suryani (2022) conducted a census of 97 permanent employees at a university in Timor-Leste but identified work discipline as a mediator of performance. In general, these studies used cross-sectional designs with self-report questionnaires, did not control for methodological bias, and reported few confidence intervals, unique variance contributions, or statistical power. This study positions itself at the intersection of these two groups of studies. The constellation of variables tested is the same as in studies of operational organizations. However, the population consists of non-academic college staff, and the results are reported alongside diagnostics that allow substantive interpretation of nonsignificant results.

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

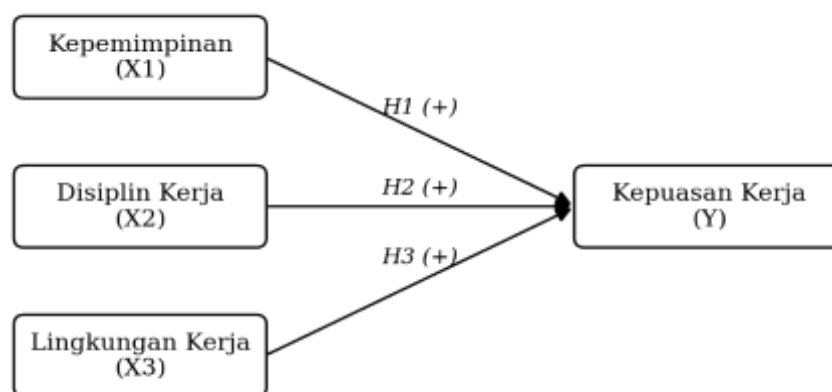


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Design and Respondents**

A deductive approach was chosen because the study's objective was to test hypotheses derived from established theory and to compare the relative strengths of the three antecedents. The study population consists of all 86 educational staff members at Uninus. Due to the small population size, all members were included as respondents through exhaustive sampling or a census (Arikunto, 2019; Sugiyono, 2019), thereby eliminating any respondent selection process that could introduce selection bias. A census also ensures the representation of all work units and employment statuses, which have varying job characteristics. Data collection began in June 2025, and all questionnaires were fully completed and ready for analysis. The sample size meets the rule  $n \geq 50 + 8k = 74$  for multiple regression with three predictors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). However, it remains below the stricter rule for testing individual coefficients, namely  $n \geq 104 + k$  (Green, 1991).

Male respondents were in the majority (76.7%), with 52.3% holding permanent positions and 47.7% on contract. Respondents' highest level of education was high school/vocational school/Islamic high school (48.8%), bachelor's degree (40.7%), and master's degree (10.5%). The work units with the most respondents were housekeeping (24.4%) and security (10.5%), while the remainder were distributed across various academic and administrative units. This composition indicates that the population includes both administrative staff and support service personnel, a diversity that was taken into account in the interpretation of the results.

### **Variable Measurement**

The four variables were measured using 21 statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) developed from indicators in previous studies (Dzulhaq & Firdaus, 2024; Fitriyah, 2023; Nurfitri, 2024; Rosmiati et al., 2023; Salsabila & Rojuaniah, 2023). Leadership, work discipline, and work environment were each measured using five items, while job satisfaction was measured using six items (Table 1). Variable scores are the sum of item scores and are treated as interval-scale data (Nugroho, 2018). The instrument was developed following a preliminary phase consisting of structured interviews with representatives of educational staff and work unit leaders, as well as a pre-survey of 15 educational staff members, to ensure the relevance of the indicators to working conditions at the research site.



**Table 1. Variable Measurement and Instrument Quality**

| Variable                         | Statement Items (Summary)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Item–Total Correlation (r) | $\alpha$ |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Leadership (X1)<br>5 items       | Supervisors adapt their leadership style to the team's circumstances; convey work instructions clearly; involve subordinates in decision-making; provide regular encouragement; and take responsibility for the team's performance                                | 0.601–0.709                | 0.695    |
| Work Discipline (X2)<br>5 items  | Arriving on time and following rules; completing tasks on time; carrying out supervisors' instructions; maintaining a professional attitude; working consistently every day                                                                                       | 0.606–0.668                | 0.614    |
| Work Environment (X3)<br>5 items | Clean workspace and good lighting; good relationships with coworkers and supervisors; adequate work facilities; a sense of physical and psychological safety; a work environment that does not cause excessive stress                                             | 0.611–0.655                | 0.611    |
| Job satisfaction (Y)<br>6 items  | Satisfied with current job; feels appreciated for work performance; satisfied with facilities and benefits; feels comfortable working at the organization; satisfied with relationships with coworkers and supervisors; sees opportunities for career development | 0.519–0.724                | 0.662    |

Note: 1–5 Likert scale. Table r (df = 84;  $\alpha$  = 0.05) = 0.1764 (one-tailed) and 0.2120 (two-tailed). All items are significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

We tested item validity using item–total correlations. All coefficients (0.519–0.724) exceeded the critical r values at df = 84 and  $\alpha$  = 0.05, for both the one-tailed (0.1764) and two-tailed (0.2120) tests. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha with a criterion of  $\alpha \geq 0.60$  (Ghozali, 2021). The  $\alpha$  values ranged from 0.611 to 0.695, thus meeting the criterion but remaining below the commonly used threshold of 0.70 for the "good" category. This limitation is related to the small number of items per construct and the

broad scope of the indicators, and was accounted for in the interpretation through attenuation correction.

### Analysis Techniques

The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS version 27, employing the model  $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$ . Multiple regression was chosen because the model included only direct paths with a single metric dependent variable; thus, path analysis or structural equation modeling would not provide additional information. Simple linear regression was not used because it cannot control for the effects of other independent variables. In contrast, covariance-based structural equation modeling requires a sample size much larger than 86. Assumption tests included residual normality (Kolmogorov–Smirnov with Lilliefors correction), multicollinearity (*tolerance* and VIF), and heteroscedasticity (Glejser test and scatterplot). Since the hypotheses are directional, the t-test decision uses a one-tailed t-value of 1.663 (df = 82;  $\alpha = 0.05$ ); conclusions are also examined against a two-tailed t-value of 1.989. Model fit is assessed using the F-test and Adjusted  $R^2$ .

To ensure that the interpretation does not rely solely on significance values, the analysis was supplemented with standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ), 95% confidence intervals for the coefficients ( $b \pm 1.989 \times SE$ ), unique variance contribution ( $sr^2 = t^2(1 - R^2)/df$ ), partial correlations, the  $f^2$  effect size (Cohen, 1988), power estimates, and corrections for reliability attenuation.

## RESULTS

### Classical Assumption Tests

The model residuals satisfy the normality assumption, albeit marginally. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic was 0.094 with an Asymp. Sig. of 0.058, and a Monte Carlo test based on 10,000 samples yielded a Sig. of 0.058 with a 99% confidence interval between 0.052 and 0.064, all of which are above 0.05. There is no multicollinearity (*tolerance* 0.880–0.911; VIF 1.098–1.136). The Glejser test shows no heteroscedasticity (Sig. 0.416–0.695), and the residual scatter plot shows no systematic pattern. VIF values close to 1 also indicate that the three independent variables are relatively independent of one another; for work discipline, only about 8.9% of its variance can be explained by the other two independent variables.

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows that all four variables were rated highly by respondents, with scores ranging from 78.99% to 81.95% of the ideal score. Work discipline received the highest score (81.95%), with the indicator for daily work consistency reaching 84.42%. However,

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this same variable had the smallest standard deviation (3.081) and coefficient of variation (15.04%) among the independent variables. The lowest indicator across the entire instrument was satisfaction with facilities and benefits (73.72%), followed by career development opportunities and managerial support and attention, each at 76.98%.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables**

| Variable              | Actual/Ideal Score | % of Ideal Score | Mean (max. ) | SD    | KV      | Highest indicator                          | Lowest indicator                             |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Leadership (X1)       | 1,710 / 2,150      | 79.53 %          | 19.88 (25)   | 3.333 | 16.76 % | Responsibility for the team (81.16%)       | Clarity of instructions (78.37%)             |
| Work discipline (X2)  | 1,762 / 2,150      | 81.95 %          | 20.49 (25)   | 3,081 | 15.04 % | Consistent every day (84.42%)              | Timely completion of tasks (80.70%)          |
| Work environment (X3) | 1,708 / 2,150      | 79.44 %          | 19.86 (25)   | 3,220 | 16.21 % | Physical and psychological safety (82.79%) | Facilities and managerial attention (76.98%) |
| Job satisfaction (Y)  | 2,038 / 2,580      | 78.99 %          | —            | 3,594 | —       | Job satisfaction (82.56%)                  | Facilities and benefits (73.72%)             |

Note: N = 86. SD = standard deviation; CV = coefficient of variation. The standard deviation of the independent variable is derived from the relationship  $\beta = B \times SD_x / SD_y$ ; the standard deviation of job satisfaction is derived from the total sum of squares in the ANOVA table.

### Hypothesis Testing

The regression estimate yields the equation  $Y = 9.166 + 0.275X_1 + 0.070X_2 + 0.384X_3$  (Table 3). The constant of 9.166 is not interpreted substantively because the condition where all independent variables are zero lies outside the range of possible scores; the minimum score for each independent variable is 5. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ( $t = 2.506$ ;  $p = 0.014$ ), thus supporting H1. The



work environment also has a positive and significant effect ( $t = 3.407$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ), thus supporting H3. With  $\beta = 0.344$ , the work environment is the strongest predictor, followed by leadership ( $\beta = 0.255$ ). Conversely, work discipline ( ) had no significant effect ( $t = 0.599$ ;  $p = 0.551$ ), so H2 is not supported. The conclusions regarding the three hypotheses remain unchanged when using two-tailed criteria.

**Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression on Job Satisfaction**

| Variables             | B     | SE    | $\beta$ | t     | p     | 95% confidence interval for B | sr <sup>2</sup> | VIF   | Decision           |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|
| Constant              | 9.166 | 3.058 | —       | 2.997 | 0.004 | —                             | —               | —     | —                  |
| Leadership (X1)       | 0.275 | 0.110 | 0.255   | 2.506 | 0.014 | [0.056; 0.494]                | 5.71%           | 1.136 | H1 is supports     |
| Work discipline (X2)  | 0.070 | 0.116 | 0.060   | 0.599 | 0.551 | [-0.161; 0.301]               | 0.33%           | 1.098 | H2 is not supports |
| Work environment (X3) | 0.384 | 0.113 | 0.344   | 3.407 | 0.001 | [0.159; 0.609]                | 10.56%          | 1.119 | H3 is supports     |

*Note.* N = 86. R = 0.504; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.254; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.227; F(3, 82) = 9.297;  $p < 0.001$ ; standard error of the estimate = 3.161. The p-value is the two-tailed value from the SPSS output. CI = confidence interval; sr<sup>2</sup> = unique variance contribution. Partial correlations: X1 = 0.267; X2 = 0.066; X3 = 0.352. Individual f<sup>2</sup> effect sizes: X1 = 0.077; X2 = 0.004; X3 = 0.142.

The overall model is significant ( $F = 9.297$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with R<sup>2</sup> = 0.254 and Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.227. This means that the three independent variables explain 22.7% of the variation in job satisfaction. The model's effect size, f<sup>2</sup> = 0.34, is slightly below the threshold for a large effect (0.35) according to Cohen (1988). The standard error of the estimate is 3.161, compared to the standard deviation of job satisfaction of 3.594, indicating that the model reduces prediction error by approximately 12%.

Additional diagnostics clarify the status of work discipline. Its coefficient (0.070) is smaller than its standard error (0.116), and the 95% confidence interval includes zero and extends into negative territory. Its partial correlation is only 0.066, and its unique variance contribution is 0.33%, compared to 5.71% for leadership and 10.56% for the work environment. Its individual effect size (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.004) is also well below the threshold

for a small effect (0.02). With 86 respondents and three predictors, this study has a power of approximately 0.94 to detect a moderate-sized individual effect ( $f^2 = 0.15$ ). Thus, if work discipline had a moderate effect, that effect would very likely be detected.

## DISCUSSION

### Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Support for H1 confirms that the quality of leadership behavior as perceived by subordinates is a source of job satisfaction among educational staff. This finding is consistent with Path–Goal Theory (House, 1971, 1996) and with meta-analytic evidence that a leader’s attention to subordinates is closely related to follower satisfaction (Judge et al., 2004). These results are also consistent with studies in higher education (Bryman, 2007; Mgaiwa, 2023) and with studies in Indonesia (Arianto, 2018; Hayati, 2016; Muaroma & Indriati, 2022; Suryadharma et al., 2016). For non-academic staff, these findings indicate that the path–goal mechanism is not limited to highly autonomous jobs such as those of faculty members. Rather, in structured, routine jobs, the clarity of instructions and supervisor support are key determinants of day-to-day work experiences.

Descriptive patterns provide insights into areas for improvement. Leaders’ accountability for team performance received the highest rating (81.16%), while the clarity of instructions received the lowest rating (78.37%). The pre-survey also showed that involvement in decision-making was the leadership aspect most frequently rated as unsatisfactory. Because the leadership construct is composite, the results highlight the importance of overall leadership effectiveness. However, they cannot be used to conclude that one leadership style is superior to another.

These findings are also relevant to the heterogeneous composition of educational staff. For support staff and contract employees, immediate supervisors are likely to be the primary channel for obtaining information, recognition, and resolution of work-related issues. Within the path–goal framework, the leader’s role in clarifying paths and removing obstacles becomes more important when employees have few other organizational resources (House, 1996). Nevertheless, leadership’s unique variance contribution (5.71%) is smaller than that of the work environment, suggesting that the quality of interactions with supervisors is insufficient without adequate working conditions.

### Work Discipline and Job Satisfaction

The rejection of H2 is the finding that most demands an explanation, since work discipline was actually the variable with the highest score. This paradox can be understood through the distinction between level and variance. Descriptive analysis measures how high the average score is, whereas regression explains why some employees are more satisfied than others by tracing the variables that vary along with



those differences. Variables that are high and relatively uniform across all respondents provide little variation on which to base an explanation.

The data from this study follow this pattern. Work discipline has the highest mean (20.49 out of a maximum score of 25), the smallest standard deviation (3.081), and the lowest coefficient of variation (15.04%). This phenomenon is known as *the ceiling effect*, which restricts the *range*. Nevertheless, the variation between variables is moderate, with a coefficient of variation of 16.76% for leadership and 16.21% for the work environment. Therefore, the restriction of range is more appropriately viewed as one contributing factor rather than as the sole explanation.

Several alternative explanations can be ruled out. This lack of significance is not due to multicollinearity, as only about 8.9% of the variance in work discipline overlaps with other independent variables. This lack of significance is also not solely due to sample size, as the power for a medium-sized effect is quite high (0.94), while the observed effect is very small ( $f^2 = 0.004$ ). Limitations in reliability do indeed diminish the observed relationship; the attenuation factor between work discipline and job satisfaction is  $\sqrt{(0.614 \times 0.662)} = 0.638$ . However, after correction, the partial correlation is estimated to be only about 0.104 and remains very small.

Theoretically, this pattern indicates that work discipline has shifted from being a distinguishing factor to becoming an established organizational norm. Educational staff discipline is externally regulated through working hours, attendance, supervisory oversight, and personnel sanctions; for contract employees, discipline is also a prerequisite for contract renewal. This type of externally regulated behavior does not meet the need for autonomy, so its contribution to satisfaction is small (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Following the “hygiene factors” logic—analogue to the “hygiene factors” (Herzberg et al., 1959)—the absence of discipline may cause dissatisfaction, but its widespread presence no longer adds to satisfaction. Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) provides the next layer of explanation. Discipline is an input from employees, whereas the rewards received—particularly benefits and perks—are actually the indicators with the lowest scores (73.72%). High contributions without commensurate rewards do not lead to satisfaction.

The population's heterogeneity adds another dimension. About one-third of respondents work in cleaning and security units, where work patterns and supervisory mechanisms differ from those of administrative staff. Given this composition, greater variation in discipline across groups might actually be expected. That discipline remains insignificant suggests strong institutionalization of disciplinary norms across all groups. However, a multigroup analysis is needed to confirm whether patterns differ between groups.



Two other explanations warrant open acknowledgment. First, the direction of causality may be reversed—that is, satisfied employees become more disciplined, as implied in the model by Sarmento and Suryani (2022); the cross-sectional design does not allow for testing this direction. Second, discipline is measured through self-reports of one's own behavior, even though this construct is laden with social values. Such measurements are prone to social desirability bias and general methodological bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), which can artificially suppress response variation.

Compared to previous studies, these findings differ from those of Muaroma and Indriati (2022) and Ong et al. (2021), which used comparable sample sizes (76 and 66 respondents) and similar analytical techniques but were set in private plantations and service companies. The equivalence of these methods points to context as the source of differences, particularly regarding the degree of disciplinary variation within organizations. However, the findings of Djari and Sitepu (2017) regarding employees at a polytechnic indicate that this distinction cannot be simplified into a dichotomy of higher education versus non-higher education institutions. What is more likely to be a determining factor is the degree of institutionalization and disciplinary uniformity within the population. This pattern aligns with Mgaiwa (2021), who found that certain dimensions of the work environment lose their distinctiveness in an academic setting. Thus, these findings do not contradict the prior literature but indicate the conditions under which the relationship holds: the discipline–satisfaction relationship can only be detected when discipline still varies sufficiently among employees.

### **Work Environment and Job Satisfaction**

The work environment emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.344$ ), contributing 10.56% of unique variance. This finding aligns with the view that the physical and non-physical conditions of the workplace shape comfort and work motivation (Sedarmayanti, 2017; Sunyoto, 2013), and is consistent with previous studies (Mariyanti & Saputri, 2019; Mgaiwa, 2021; Saputra & Rahyuda, 2018; Sitinjak, 2018). In practical terms, a one-point increase in each work environment item—or a five-point increase in the total score—is associated with an increase of approximately 1.92 points in the job satisfaction score.

These findings share both similarities and differences with those of Mgaiwa (2021). Among academics, involvement in decision-making determines satisfaction, whereas the dimensions of resources and job demands do not significantly influence intrinsic satisfaction. Among educational support staff, however, it is the resource aspects—specifically facilities and managerial attention—that are most frequently rated low. This difference can be understood through the nature of the work. Faculty members derive intrinsic satisfaction from academic activities. They therefore depend less on the



availability of facilities, whereas administrative and support staff rely directly on the availability of work facilities.

This finding also clarifies the argument presented in the previous section. In the Two-Factor Theory, working conditions are classified as maintenance factors, but in this study, they emerged as the strongest determinant of satisfaction. This does not contradict the interpretation of work discipline. On the contrary, both findings indicate that a factor can explain differences in satisfaction as long as its fulfillment varies among employees. The work environment has not been uniformly met: facilities and managerial attention are the lowest indicators in this variable (76.98%), while physical and psychological safety are the highest (82.79%). Because the work environment involves an assessment of conditions outside the respondent's control, respondents are also freer to provide varied assessments compared to when evaluating their own work discipline. One item in the work environment category (good relationships with coworkers and supervisors) is conceptually similar to one item in the job satisfaction category (satisfaction with relationships with coworkers and supervisors), which may slightly amplify the relationship between the two variables.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study offers three theoretical implications. First, a high level of a particular antecedent is not synonymous with its explanatory power regarding job satisfaction; equating the two can lead to misleading interpretations of survey-based research. Second, the effect of work discipline on job satisfaction appears to depend on contextual conditions—specifically, the degree of variation in discipline within the organization—so the discipline–satisfaction literature needs to explicitly state its boundary conditions. Third, the logic of the Two-Factor Theory is more productive when interpreted dynamically—that is, as the degree to which a factor is met within a population—rather than as a fixed classification of factor types. Reporting confidence intervals, unique variance contributions, and test power enables this distinction and should become standard practice in reporting nonsignificant results.

### **Practical Implications**

For higher education administrators, improvement efforts should prioritize the work environment, particularly the modernization of work facilities and managerial attention that is responsive to staff needs. The next priority is strengthening the communication skills of unit leaders and involving academic staff in decision-making. The already high level of work discipline is an asset that needs to be maintained through transparent and fair oversight, not intensified, as programs that merely tighten disciplinary enforcement are unlikely to increase satisfaction. Low satisfaction with benefits and career

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opportunities indicates the need to reevaluate the compensation system and establish written career paths open to all employment statuses, thereby maintaining a balance between employee contributions and rewards.

In terms of implementation sequence, a realistic first step is to conduct an audit of facilities by work unit, as the condition of facilities may differ between administrative units and support service units. These findings also suggest that employee satisfaction surveys conducted by the institution should not stop at average scores. Factors with high scores are not necessarily drivers of satisfaction; what needs to be identified are factors whose fulfillment still varies among employees and across units.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that work environment and leadership determine the job satisfaction of educational staff at Universitas Islam Nusantara, while work discipline has no significant effect. These three variables explain 22.7% of the variation in job satisfaction, with the work environment being the strongest predictor. Work discipline has the highest score, but its range is the narrowest, and its contribution to unique variance is close to zero. This pattern indicates that in organizations where discipline is already institutionalized, discipline functions more as a basic prerequisite than as a differentiator of satisfaction. This finding explains the differences with previous studies without refuting them, namely by demonstrating the conditions under which they apply.

This study has several limitations. The data were drawn from a single institution and collected cross-sectionally, thus limiting generalizability and causal inferences. All variables were measured via self-report at a single point in time, making them susceptible to common method bias, and the instruments' reliability fell into the adequate category (0.611–0.695). Leadership was measured as a composite construct; there was content overlap between one work environment item and one job satisfaction item; and the sample size fell below the stricter guidelines for testing individual coefficients. Additionally, the heterogeneous population—in terms of both job type and employment status—was not analyzed by group.

Future research plans include five directions. First, replicate the study at several universities with varying levels of institutionalized discipline to directly test boundary conditions. Second, measuring discipline using objective data, such as attendance records and task completion timeliness, or through supervisor evaluations. Third, longitudinal designs or path analysis to test the direction of the discipline–satisfaction relationship. Fourth, a multigruppe analysis based on employment status and job type. Fifth, an extension of the model to include compensation and career development, which emerged in this study as the greatest sources of dissatisfaction.



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