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THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP AND WORK DISCIPLINE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH JOB SATISFACTION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT AT PERCUT SEI TUAN DISTRICT

Muhamar Akbar Habibi Sianipar[*], Barham Siregar & Saima Rambe
Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia
Email: akbarhabibisianipar26@gmail.com [*]

Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the extent to which leadership and work discipline influence employee performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as an intervening variable at the Percut Sei Tuan Sub-District Office. The research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method and a total sampling technique, resulting in all 45 employees being included as respondents. The data analysis procedures consisted of validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, and path analysis. The findings indicate that leadership has a significant effect on both job satisfaction and employee performance. Work discipline was also found to significantly influence both variables. Moreover, job satisfaction plays an important role in enhancing employee performance. Further analysis confirms that leadership and work discipline jointly produce a significant effect on performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Practically, this study highlights the importance of effective leadership, strong work discipline, and efforts to improve job satisfaction as strategic measures to strengthen the performance of public-sector employees.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Leadership, Work Discipline.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the era of democratization and decentralization, the government sector is required to improve performance to optimize public services. As the leading government unit providing public services, the sub-district office plays a strategic role in realizing effective, efficient, and accountable governance. The credibility of a sub-district's performance in carrying out its role depends heavily on the ability of its human resources to overcome various challenges and provide satisfactory services to the public. Therefore, improving performance is a crucial factor that must be considered, especially considering aspects that can influence performance.

For government agencies to fulfill their responsibilities and adhere to the principles of good governance, employees must work honestly, cleanly, and professionally. Employees must act objectively and non-discriminatorily. The development of a government's service quality is reflected in the performance of its employees. Organizational goals can be achieved through continuously increasing productivity, which is driven by high employee performance. Performance reflects the level of effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling individual duties and responsibilities in accordance with established standards. According to Mangkunegara (2017), performance is the overall work results achieved by employees in carrying out their duties in accordance with their assigned responsibilities. Good employee performance is

essential for the organization to function optimally and provide excellent service to the public.

Employee performance at the sub-district office significantly determines the quality of service, therefore, the influencing factors require a more in-depth study. Employee performance in government environments is influenced by several factors, one example being leadership. Leadership plays a crucial role in directing, guiding, and motivating employees to perform well and achieve organizational goals. Leadership is the skill of a leader in influencing, motivating, and directing the behavior of individuals or groups to achieve specific goals (Robbins & Judge, 2019). A conducive work environment, capable of boosting employee morale and providing clear direction, is the hallmark of a good leader. However, ineffective leadership within an organization can lead to a lack of motivation, increased employee absenteeism, and decreased overall performance.

Leadership acts as a dynamic force that drives and coordinates. Organizations must be continually driven and coordinated by the leadership's attitude. A leader in an organization can be considered effective if they can manage the organization and influence the behavior of their subordinates to collaborate toward common goals. Based on previous research (Putra, 2021; Yuningsih et al., 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2023; Hotimah et al., 2024), it was found that leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the relationship between these two variables.

In addition to leadership, work discipline is a crucial factor that can influence employee performance. Work discipline is a form of employee compliance. Regulations, policies, and work standards established by the organization must be adhered to by employees to further develop their work discipline. According to Syafrina (2017), work discipline is the behavior of employees in complying with all policies, both verbal and written, implemented by the agency. Violations will result in sanctions. Good work discipline reflects employee responsibility for their work, including effective use of time, adherence to rules, and a strong work ethic.

High work discipline is essential in government because it directly relates to the quality of public services. Highly disciplined employees can be more productive, committed to their work, and carry out their duties more effectively and efficiently. Conversely, a lack of discipline can lead to work delays, decreased productivity, and decreased public satisfaction.

Previous research (Putra, 2021; Yuningsih et al., 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2023) has shown that work discipline has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. However, research by Hotimah et al. (2024) shows that, although work discipline has a positive effect, it is not significant on employee performance. This suggests that other factors may moderate the relationship between work discipline and employee performance, such as work motivation, job satisfaction, or a conducive work environment. In the Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district Office, work discipline is a crucial factor that needs to be considered in efforts to improve the quality of public services. Employees who are disciplined in carrying out their duties will be more professional, have a high level of responsibility, and are better able to complete their work.

One of the crucial goals for human resources in an organization to achieve optimal employee performance is job satisfaction, a crucial factor that cannot be ignored. Job satisfaction is crucial because if employees have a high level of job satisfaction, their performance will improve, and the organization will succeed in achieving its goals. Job satisfaction is the positive or negative feelings an employee experiences regarding their job, including the work environment, organizational policies, and relationships with coworkers and superiors.

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Job satisfaction is an individual's general attitude toward their job, reflecting feelings of pleasure or displeasure based on evaluations of various aspects of the job (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more enthusiastic, have high loyalty, and contribute more to the organization. Conversely, job dissatisfaction can lead to low motivation, increased absenteeism, and even high employee turnover. Previous research (Putra, 2021; Yuningsih et al., 2022; Wahyuni, Sultan & Dandu, 2023; Hotimah et al., 2024) found that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, it is also necessary to explore the relationship between these two variables, whether it will also have an impact on the sub-district office of Percut Sei Tuan District.

While leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction play a vital role in improving employee performance, there are several challenges that need to be addressed in a government context. Some of these challenges include:

1) Lack of work motivation: Employees who feel underappreciated or don't receive appropriate incentives tend to lose enthusiasm for work.
2) Unsupportive work environment: Factors such as limited work facilities and bureaucratic pressures can reduce employee productivity.
3) Lack of commitment to regulations: Employees who lack strong discipline often exhibit behavior that doesn't align with organizational standards.

To address these challenges, policies are needed that support strengthening leadership, improving work discipline, and creating a conducive work environment to enhance employee satisfaction and performance.

Employee performance in government, particularly at the Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district Office, is significantly influenced by various factors, including leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction. However, the role of job satisfaction as an intervening variable cannot be ignored, as employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more motivated to deliver their best performance. Therefore, this study is crucial for a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between leadership, work discipline, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The results are expected to provide insights for local governments in improving the effectiveness of leadership and human resource management, thereby creating employees who not only perform high but also feel satisfied in carrying out their duties. This will enable the provision of public services to be more optimal, transparent, and accountable, thereby realizing quality governance.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW
Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence, direct, and motivate others to achieve organizational goals. A leader must possess competence, responsibility, decision-making skills, and build good relationships with subordinates. Leadership is not just about position, but also about how someone is accepted and followed without coercion. According to Prayudi et al. (2022), there are six types of leadership: personal, impersonal, authoritarian, democratic, paternalistic, and talent-based. Personal leaders interact directly with subordinates, authoritarians are firm and disciplined, democratic leaders involve members in decision-making, paternalistic leaders are protective, while talent-based leadership emerges naturally from within the group.

Leadership is influenced by four factors: charisma that inspires subordinates, inspirational motivation that fosters commitment, intellectual stimulation that encourages innovation, and individual attention to employee needs and development (Prayudi et al., 2022).

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Servant Leadership Indicators

Leadership indicators include strong analytical skills, good public speaking, courage, listening skills, and assertiveness (Ndruru, 2021).

Work Discipline

Work discipline is employee compliance with regulations, policies, and work responsibilities to create order and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals. Discipline reflects respect for rules and responsibility for the authority held. Work discipline is influenced by various factors, including fair compensation, leadership role models, clarity of rules, courage to impose sanctions, supervision, and attention to employees (Surbakti, 2021). These factors play a crucial role in shaping compliant and responsible work behavior.

Work Discipline Indicators

Work discipline indicators include attendance, adherence to regulations and work standards, vigilance at work, and work ethics (Subakti, 2021). These five indicators reflect the level of employee compliance, responsibility, and professionalism in carrying out their duties.

Performance

Performance is the results of a person's work in carrying out their duties and responsibilities over a specific period, both in terms of quality and quantity, in accordance with established standards. High performance is characterized by commitment, courage to take risks, realistic goals, thorough planning, and the ability to implement work plans (Silaen et al., 2021). According to Silaen et al. (2021), performance assessment factors include the quantity and quality of work, job knowledge, activity planning, authority, discipline, and initiative. These factors reflect an employee's ability, responsibility, and contribution to achieving organizational goals.

Performance Indicators

Employee performance indicators include work quality, work quantity, punctuality, effectiveness, and commitment (Silaen et al., 2021). These five indicators assess the extent to which employees are able to produce good work, on time, efficiently use resources, and demonstrate responsibility and loyalty to the organization.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a positive or negative feeling felt by employees about their work, arising from achieving targets, benefits provided by the organization, and the match between expectations and reality in the workplace (Suyatno et al., 2020). This satisfaction can be both comprehensive and specific, encompassing aspects such as salary, relationships with coworkers, and the physical and psychological conditions of the work environment.

Five main factors influence job satisfaction: need fulfillment, discrepancies between expectations and reality, achievement of values, fairness in treatment, and a harmonious organizational culture (Wijaya, 2022). When these five factors are met, employees tend to feel highly satisfied and motivated to deliver their best performance for the organization.

Job Satisfaction Indicators

There are six indicators of job satisfaction: fair pay, satisfaction with the job itself, career development opportunities, good supervision, harmonious relationships with coworkers, and comfortable working conditions that support productivity. (Wijaya, 2022).

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method, in which the researcher formulated and tested hypotheses based on data obtained from the Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district Office. The study population consisted of 45 employees working at the office.

Due to the relatively small number of employees, this study employed a total sampling technique, thus selecting all members of the population. Data were collected through literature review, interviews, observations, and questionnaires using a Likert scale.

The analysis phase began with instrument validity and reliability testing to ensure measurement accuracy and consistency. A series of classical assumption tests were then conducted, including tests for normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a t-test to examine partial effects, an F-test to examine simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In terms of gender, the majority of respondents in this study were male, 29 (64.4%), while 16 (35.6%) were female, out of a total of 45 employees at the Percut Sei Tuan District Head's Office. Age distribution shows that the majority of employees are in the 36–50 age group, with a total of 23 (51.1%). In terms of education, the majority of respondents held a Bachelor's degree (S1), 25 (55.6%). This finding indicates that the majority of employees have completed higher education, which is an important foundation for professionalism and quality performance in government.

Validity Test

Table 1. Data Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	P value	Information
Leadership (X1)	X1.1	0,000	Valid
	X1.2	0,000	Valid
	X1.3	0,000	Valid
	X1.4	0,000	Valid
	X1.5	0,000	Valid
	X1.6	0,000	Valid
	X1.7	0,000	Valid
	X1.8	0,000	Valid
	X1.9	0,001	Valid
	X1.10	0,005	Valid
Work Discipline (X2)	X2.1	0,000	Valid
	X2.2	0,000	Valid
	X2.3	0,000	Valid
	X2.4	0,000	Valid
	X2.5	0,000	Valid
	X2.6	0,000	Valid
	X2.7	0,000	Valid
	X2.8	0,000	Valid
	X2.9	0,000	Valid
	X2.10	0,000	Valid
	X2.11	0,000	Valid
	X2.12	0,000	Valid
Job Satisfaction (Z)	Z.1	0,000	Valid
	Z.2	0,000	Valid
	Z.3	0,000	Valid

	Z.4	0,000	Valid
	Z.5	0,000	Valid
	Z.6	0,000	Valid
	Z.7	0,000	Valid
	Z.8	0,000	Valid
	Y.1	0,000	Valid
	Y.2	0,000	Valid
	Y.3	0,000	Valid
	Y.4	0,000	Valid
Performance (Y)	Y.5	0,000	Valid
	Y.6	0,000	Valid
	Y.7	0,000	Valid
	Y.8	0,000	Valid
	Y.9	0,000	Valid
	Y.10	0,000	Valid

Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

Based on the data analysis, all statement items for the variables of leadership, work discipline, job satisfaction, and employee performance obtained a p-value <0.005. Since all values were below the 0.05 significance level, it can be concluded that the instrument for each variable met the eligibility criteria. Therefore, each statement item for the four variables was declared valid and suitable for use in this study.

Reliability Test

Table 2. Data Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	*N of Items*	Information
Leadership (X1)	0,968	10	
Work Discipline (X2)	0,981	10	Meets Reliable Requirements
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,975	10	
Performance (Y)	0,980	10	

Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

The reliability test results for the four research variables showed Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.986, 0.981, 0.975, and 0.980, respectively. These values indicate a very strong level of internal consistency, as they are well above the minimum limit of 0.60. Therefore, all items in these variables are considered reliable and can be used in this study.
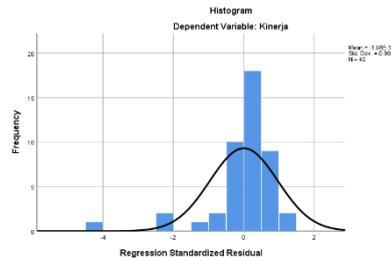
Classical Assumption Test
Normality Test

Figure 1. Histogram Normality Test
Source: (Data Processing Results from IBM SPSS Statistics 2025)

The normality test using a histogram graph shows that the residuals have a normal distribution pattern, characterized by a symmetrical histogram shape that approaches a bell-shaped curve. The residual mean value is very close to zero ($-1.98E-15$) and the standard deviation of 0.965 also supports the fulfillment of the normality assumption. Subsequently, the data normality was further tested using a Normal P-Plot graph.
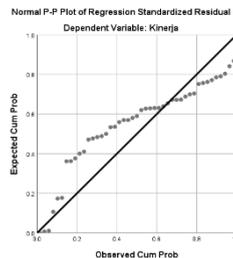

Figure 2. Normality Test P-P Plot
Source: (Data Processing Results from IBM SPSS Statistics 2025)

The results of the normality test using a Normal P-P Plot show that the residual points are spread around the diagonal line, indicating that the residual data follows a normal distribution. Thus, it can be concluded that the assumption of normality is met.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients²

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standarized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.933	1.568		.595	.555		
	Kepemimpinan	.026	0.18	.068	1.455	.153	.737	1.357

Disiplin Kerja	.166	.274	.189	.606	.551	.345	2.898
Kepuasan Kerja	.106	.322	.082	.329	.745	.543	1.841

a. Dependent Variable: Kinerja

Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

The results of the multicollinearity test show that all variables have tolerance values exceeding 0.10 and VIF values below 10. Therefore, it can be concluded that multicollinearity does not occur in the model. Therefore, the variables Leadership, Work Discipline, and Job Satisfaction can be analyzed simultaneously in the regression without affecting the validity of the resulting estimates.

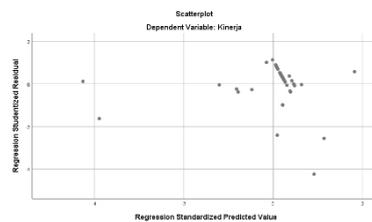**Heteroscedasticity Test**

Figure 3. Scatterplot Heteroscedasticity Test Results
Source: (Data Processing Results from IBM SPSS Statistics 25)

The results of the heteroscedasticity test using a scatterplot graph show that the residual points are randomly distributed above and below the zero axis without forming any particular pattern. This indicates the absence of heteroscedasticity, so the regression model meets the homoscedasticity assumption and is suitable for further analysis.

Autocorrelation Test

Table 4. Autocorrelation Test Results
Model Summary^{-b}

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbion Watson
1	.967[a]	.935	.930	1.63285	2.014

a. Predictors: (Constant), Kepauasan Kerja, Kepemimpinan, Disiplin Kerja
b. Dependent Variable: Kerja

Thus, the Durbin–Watson value is obtained as follows:

Table 5. Uji Tidak Terdapat Antokorelasi

n	d	dL	dU	4-dl	4-dU
45	2,014	1,328	1,666	2,672	2,334

Source: (Data Processing Results from IBM SPSS Statistics 2025)

The autocorrelation test results show a Durbin-Watson value of 2.014, falling between the upper limit (dU = 1.666) and 4–dU (2.334). Based on Ghozali's (2018) criteria, this indicates that there is no autocorrelation in the regression model, so the residuals between observations are independent, and the model is suitable for further hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

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Partial Test (T-Test)

The t-table can be obtained by calculating the following formula:

$$t_{table} = \frac{a}{2}; (n - k - 1)$$
$$= \frac{0{,}05}{2}; (45 - 4 - 1)$$
$$= 0{,}025 ; 40$$

This formula is used as the basis for determining the t-distribution value at a specific significance level. Based on this calculation, the t-table value at the 0.025 level with 40 degrees of freedom (df) is 2.021. This t-table value is then used to compare it with the calculated t-value in the partial test analysis.

Table 6. T-Test Results

Variable Independent	Variable Dependent	T_{count}	Sig.	Results
Leadership (X1)	Performance (Y)	4.084	0.000	There is influence
Work Discipline (X2)	Performance (Y)	23.681	0.000	There is influence
Leadership (X1)	Work Discipline (Z)	3.917	0.000	There is influence
Work Discipline (X2)	Work Discipline (Z)	20.634	0.000	There is influence
Job Satisfaction (Z)	Performance (Y)	17.190	0.000	There is influence

Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

The results of the partial test (t-test) show that all independent variables have a significant effect on the dependent variable, with a Sig. value < 0.05 and t-count > t-table (2.021). Leadership (X1) has a significant effect on Performance (Y) (t = 4.084; Sig. = 0.000) and on Job Satisfaction (Z) (t = 3.917; Sig. = 0.000). Work Discipline (X2) also has a significant effect on Performance (Y) (t = 23.681; Sig. = 0.000) and on Job Satisfaction (Z) (t = 20.634; Sig. = 0.000). In addition, Job Satisfaction (Z) has a significant effect on Performance (Y) (t = 17.190; Sig. = 0.000). Thus, all hypotheses (H1–H5) are accepted because they show a significant influence between the variables.

Simultaneous Test (F Test)

The F-table value can be obtained by calculating it using the following formula:

$$F_{table} = k - 1 ; n - k$$
$$= 4 - 1 ; 45 - 4$$
$$= 3 ; 41$$

This formula is used as the basis for determining the f-distribution value at a certain significance level. Based on the calculation results with degrees of freedom for the numerator (df1) of 3 and the denominator (df2) of 41, the F-table value is 2.83. This f-table value is then used to compare it with the calculated f-value in the simultaneous test analysis.

Table 7. F Test Results

Variable Independent	Variable Intervening	Variable Dependent	F_{Count}	Sig.	Results
Leadership (X1) Work Discipline (X2)	-	Performance (Y)	293.343	0.000	There is influence
Leadership (X1) Work Discipline (X2)	Job Satisfaction (Z)	Performance (Y)	196.221	0,000	There is influence

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Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

The F-test results show that Leadership (X1) and Work Discipline (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on Performance (Y), with an F-count of 293.343 and a Sig. of 0.000 (<0.05), thus H6 is accepted. Furthermore, the F-test by including the mediating variable Job Satisfaction (Z) produces an F-count of 196.221 and a Sig. of 0.000 (<0.05), which means that Leadership, Work Discipline, and Job Satisfaction together have a significant effect on Performance. Thus, the regression model is declared valid, and H7 is accepted because all three variables are proven to have a simultaneous influence on improving employee performance.

Coefficient of Determination (R2) Test

In this test, the assessment reference refers to Chin's (1998) opinion in Melati et al., 2024, where an R^2 value > 0.67 is categorized as strong, a value between $0.33 < R^2 \le 0.67$ is considered moderate, and a value of $0.19 < R^2 \le 0.33$ is categorized as weak.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination Test Results
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.967[a]	.935	.930	1.63285
a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Satisfaction, Leadership, Work Discipline				

Source: (Results of IBM SPSS Statistics 2025 data processing)

Based on the test results, the R Square value of 0.904 indicates that 90.4% of the variation in Employee Performance can be jointly explained by three independent variables: Servant Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Work Environment. The remaining 9.6% is influenced by other factors outside the model not included in this study. The findings of this study also indicate that Leadership and Work Discipline have a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance, both directly and indirectly through Job Satisfaction at the Percut Sei Tuan District Head's Office.

Partially, the influence of leadership is reflected in the leader's ability to analyze problems, convey clear directions, be assertive, and be responsive to employee needs, thus contributing to improved performance. Work discipline also contributes positively through punctuality, compliance with regulations, vigilance at work, and a good work ethic. Furthermore, these two variables also impact Job Satisfaction, which is evident in aspects of satisfaction with salary, nature of work, development opportunities, supervision, coworkers, and working conditions. Higher levels of satisfaction then have a direct impact on the quality, quantity, effectiveness, and timeliness of employee work.

Simultaneously, Leadership and Work Discipline were shown to have a significant influence on Employee Performance, both before and after the inclusion of mediating variables. When Job Satisfaction acted as an intervening variable, the influence of both variables became stronger, as reflected in the R^2 value of 0.935, which was categorized as very high. This confirms that the synergy between effective leadership, consistent discipline, and a high level of job satisfaction can produce optimal employee performance. This finding aligns with previous research (Wahyuni et al., 2023; Putra, 2021; Yuningsih, 2022; Hotimah, 2024), which all emphasized the importance of leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction in improving the performance of public sector officials.

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E. CONCLUSION

This study shows that leadership and work discipline have significant partial and simultaneous effects on employee job satisfaction and performance, while job satisfaction also has a strong effect on performance. All hypotheses (H1–H7) were accepted, with a simultaneous contribution of 93%, indicating that the model is highly effective in explaining employee performance.

The leadership of the Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district Office needs to strengthen its visionary, communicative, and assertive leadership style, while simultaneously improving employee discipline through regular coaching and supervision. Job satisfaction can be enhanced through improving the work environment, focusing on employee welfare, and rewarding outstanding performance. Future researchers are advised to add other variables, such as the work environment, compensation, or intrinsic motivation, to achieve more comprehensive research results.

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