

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND WORK DISCIPLINE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ADMINISTRATORS THROUGH MOTIVATION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT SUTA NUSANTARA

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Abstract

This study explores the role of leadership and work discipline on the performance of administrators (pengurus) at Suta Nusantara, with motivation examined as a variable that bridges these relationships. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of how leadership and discipline are experienced and translated into motivation and performance in practice. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 informants, consisting of organizational leaders, division heads, and active administrators, selected through purposive sampling based on their tenure, role, and direct involvement in organizational activities. Interviews were complemented by non-participant observation and documentation review, and data were analyzed using the interactive model of Denzin and Guba, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, with credibility established through source and method triangulation and member checking. The findings reveal that participative and communicative leadership styles strengthen administrators' sense of ownership and motivation, that consistently enforced work discipline builds a sense of responsibility that sustains performance, and that motivation – both intrinsic (sense of purpose, belonging) and extrinsic (recognition, appreciation) – functions as a critical psychological mechanism that channels the influence of leadership and discipline into concrete performance outcomes. The study offers a contextual, in-depth understanding of human resource dynamics in a volunteer-based organization and provides practical recommendations for strengthening leadership practices and motivational strategies at Suta Nusantara.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance is largely determined by the quality of the human resources who run its daily activities. In non-profit and community-based organizations such as Suta Nusantara, administrators (pengurus) act as the backbone of programs and activities, and their performance directly determines whether organizational goals are achieved. Unlike employees in profit-oriented companies, administrators in community organizations are often driven by a combination of formal structure and voluntary commitment, which makes leadership, discipline, and motivation particularly decisive factors in shaping their performance.

Leadership is widely regarded as one of the most influential determinants of subordinate performance because it shapes direction, builds commitment, and creates a supportive working climate. Work discipline, on the other hand, reflects the extent to which administrators comply with organizational rules, schedules, and standard procedures, which in turn affects the consistency and quality of program implementation. Motivation is theorized to bridge these two antecedents with performance outcomes, since both effective leadership and strong discipline are expected to first raise administrators' motivation before that motivation translates into improved performance.

Preliminary observation at Suta Nusantara indicates variation in program completion rates, meeting attendance, and task timeliness among administrators, which points to unresolved questions regarding the extent to which leadership and discipline contribute to performance, and whether this relationship operates directly or is channeled through motivation. This research gap motivates the present study, which aims to: (1) examine the effect of leadership on administrator performance; (2) examine the effect of work discipline on administrator performance; (3) examine the effect of leadership and work discipline on motivation; (4) examine the effect of motivation on administrator performance; and (5) examine the mediating role of motivation in the relationship between leadership, work discipline, and administrator performance at Suta Nusantara.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is defined as the process of influencing, directing, and coordinating the activities of members of a group or organization toward the achievement of shared goals. Effective leadership in a community organization context involves clarity of vision, the ability to motivate volunteers, open communication, and consistent role modeling of organizational values. Leadership is commonly measured through indicators such as direction-giving, decision-making capability, communication, motivating ability, and responsiveness to members' aspirations. The theoretical foundation of organizational behavior

in non-profit and community-based organizations like Suta Nusantara requires a distinct analytical lens compared to traditional corporate environments. In profit-oriented enterprises, employee behavior is largely regulated by formal contracts, monetary compensation, and legal oversight. Conversely, administrators (pengurus) within community organizations operate within a hybrid paradigm where formal administrative expectations overlap with voluntary commitment and social mission alignment. Consequently, understanding how structural drivers—namely leadership and work discipline—influence ultimate organizational outcomes necessitates exploring the mediating psychological pathways that activate member effort.

Leadership within community-based settings is primarily framed through the lens of Transformational Leadership Theory. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers by articulating a compelling vision, establishing high performance expectations, and demonstrating genuine concern for individual development. In the operational environment of Suta Nusantara, effective leadership transcends simple task delegation; it involves cultivating shared identity and ideological commitment among administrators. Leaders who utilize inspirational motivation and idealized influence build high levels of trust, which directly affects how administrators perceive their roles and execute assigned responsibilities.

In Complementing transformational leadership is Servant Leadership Theory, which emphasizes the leader's primary role as a facilitator of team growth and community welfare. In voluntary and non-profit structures, authority cannot rely on coercion or financial threats. Instead, leadership efficacy stems from empathy, active listening, and open communication channels that empower members to take initiative. Furthermore, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory suggests that high-quality relationships between leaders and administrators foster mutual respect and reciprocal effort, thereby setting a supportive organizational climate.

Operationalizing leadership in this empirical model involves key dimensions that reflect real-world administrative interactions. These dimensions include directional guidance, decision-making capability, two-way communication, motivational influence, and responsiveness to administrator feedback. When leaders at Suta Nusantara consistently exhibit these behaviors, they reduce role ambiguity, establish operational standards, and reinforce the overarching mission of the organization, providing both the structural clarity and psychological safety needed for smooth program implementation.

2.2 Work Discipline

Work discipline refers to an individual's attitude and behavior in voluntarily complying with applicable rules, norms, and work standards within an organization. In the context of administrators, discipline is reflected in punctuality, attendance at meetings and activities, compliance with the organization's code of conduct, and responsibility for assigned tasks. High discipline is associated with more consistent and predictable performance outcomes.

Work discipline represents the behavioral cornerstone that ensures organizational rules, schedules, and standards are systematically honored. Grounded in Self-Regulation Theory, discipline reflects an individual's capacity to align their personal conduct with external standards without needing continuous external coercion. In community organizations where monetary sanctions are largely absent, work discipline depends heavily on norm internalization—the process through which administrators come to view punctuality, compliance, and procedural fidelity as personal values rather than imposed burdens.

The enforcement of discipline creates operational predictability and instills an organizational ethic of accountability. When administrators adhere strictly to established codes of conduct, event schedules, and meeting agendas, the operational risk of project delays and service failures is significantly reduced. Work discipline thus functions as a structural mechanism that transforms abstract organizational goals into structured daily routines, ensuring that voluntary enthusiasm is backed by consistent execution.

Within the contextual framework of Suta Nusantara, work discipline is measured through concrete behavioral indicators. These include meeting attendance, punctuality, compliance with organizational statutes, adherence to standard operating procedures, and personal accountability for designated tasks. High levels of discipline reflect not only individual conscientiousness, but also a collective commitment to maintaining organizational integrity and operational excellence.

2.3 Motivation

Motivation is the internal and external drive that directs an individual's behavior and effort toward achieving particular goals. In organizational settings, motivation is commonly separated into intrinsic motivation (satisfaction, sense of purpose, personal growth) and extrinsic motivation (recognition, incentives, career or social benefits). Motivation is theorized as a psychological mechanism through which leadership and discipline are converted into performance outcomes.

Motivation serves as the core psychological mechanism connecting organizational inputs to performance outcomes. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), motivation spans a continuum from intrinsic drivers (enjoyment, personal growth, sense of purpose) to extrinsic drivers (social recognition, networking opportunities, skill enhancement). In community-based organizations, intrinsic motivation is particularly crucial, as administrators are often driven by social impact and personal fulfillment rather than financial compensation.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides additional insight into administrator motivation by distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivators. In non-profit contexts, organizational structure, discipline standards, and basic leadership support act as hygiene factors that eliminate dissatisfaction and operational chaos. Meanwhile, achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal advancement function as motivators that actively propel administrators toward higher levels of psychological engagement and task dedication.

As an intervening variable, motivation occupies a central position in human resource development models. While leadership and discipline establish the external condition and structural boundaries for action, motivation represents the internal energy that actually drives behavioral effort. Without sufficient motivation, even well-structured leadership strategies and strict discipline rules fail to translate into sustained, high-quality performance outcomes.

2.4 Performance

Performance is the outcome of work, in terms of quality and quantity, achieved by an individual in carrying out the duties assigned in accordance with the responsibilities given. Administrator performance at Suta Nusantara is reflected in indicators such as work quality, work quantity, timeliness, initiative, and cooperation with fellow administrators.

Administrator performance represents the multidimensional outcome of work activities, encompassing both quantitative volume and qualitative standard of execution. Drawing from Job Performance Theory, performance can be delineated into task performance—the execution of core administrative duties—and contextual performance or Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which involves voluntary helping behaviors, proactive problem-solving, and positive contributions to organizational climate.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Leadership and Work Discipline are explored as antecedents that shape Motivation, which in turn is explored as a bridging mechanism toward Administrator Performance; direct linkages between Leadership, Work Discipline, and Performance are also explored.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, aimed at obtaining an in-depth and contextual understanding of how leadership and work discipline shape motivation and performance among administrators at Suta Nusantara. The case study design was chosen because it allows the phenomenon to be examined within its natural organizational setting, capturing the meanings that informants themselves attach to their experiences.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the criteria of active administrator status, a minimum of one year of involvement in the organization, and direct engagement in organizational programs. A total of 20 informants participated in this study, consisting of organizational leaders, division heads, and active administrators, in order to obtain a range of perspectives across organizational levels.

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured in-depth interviews, guided by an interview protocol covering the four core themes of leadership, work discipline, motivation, and performance, while allowing flexibility to explore emergent topics raised by informants. Each interview lasted approximately 45–75 minutes, was conducted face-to-face at the organization's secretariat, and was audio-recorded with the informant's consent before being transcribed verbatim. Interviews were complemented by non-participant observation of organizational activities and meetings, as well as documentation review of organizational records, activity reports, and attendance logs, to support triangulation of data sources.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model of Denzin and Guba, consisting of three concurrent activities: (1) data condensation, in which interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded and organized into categories aligned with the study's core themes; (2) data display, in which coded data were organized into thematic matrices to identify patterns and relationships across informants; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, in which emerging themes were interpreted, cross-checked against the literature, and refined into the study's findings. Coding was carried out manually, combining a priori codes derived from the conceptual framework with open codes that emerged inductively from the data.

The trustworthiness of the data was established through credibility (source and method triangulation, combining interviews, observation, and documentation, along with member checking with selected informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations), transferability (thick, detailed description of the

organizational context to allow readers to assess applicability to other settings), dependability (an audit trail of interview transcripts, coding records, and analytical memos), and confirmability (peer debriefing to reduce researcher bias in interpretation).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Themes 4.1

Analysis of the interview data, observation notes, and documentation produced four major themes aligned with the study's focus: (1) leadership practices and their influence on performance; (2) work discipline and its influence on performance; (3) leadership and work discipline as antecedents of motivation; and (4) motivation as a bridging mechanism toward performance. A summary of the themes and representative sub-themes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes

Major Theme	Sub-Themes	Informants Referencing
Leadership → Performance	Participative decision-making; open communication; role modeling; responsiveness to aspirations	18/20
Work Discipline → Performance	Punctuality and attendance; adherence to SOPs; consistency in task completion; peer accountability	17/20
Leadership & Discipline → Motivation	Sense of trust and ownership; clarity of expectations; fair treatment; structured routines	16/20
Motivation → Performance	Sense of purpose and belonging; recognition and appreciation; personal growth; social bonding among administrators	19/20

Leadership and Administrator Performance 4.2

Most informants described the organization's leaders as approachable and communicative, regularly involving administrators in planning discussions rather than issuing top-down instructions. Division heads in particular noted that when they were given room to propose ideas and were trusted to execute programs independently, they felt more responsible for the outcomes and worked harder to ensure activities ran well. Several newer administrators also highlighted that leaders who explained the reasoning behind decisions, rather than simply assigning tasks, made them feel more confident in carrying out their roles. A recurring concern raised by a smaller number of informants was that communication sometimes became less consistent during periods of high organizational activity, which occasionally caused confusion about priorities.

These accounts indicate that participative and communicative leadership is experienced by administrators as a direct contributor to their performance, primarily by building clarity, confidence, and a sense of shared ownership over organizational outcomes, consistent with H1 in the study's conceptual framework.

Work Discipline and Administrator Performance 4.3

Informants generally associated discipline with punctuality at meetings, timely completion of assigned tasks, and adherence to the organization's standard procedures for program execution. Several division heads explained that consistent enforcement of attendance and reporting routines had gradually shifted discipline from an externally imposed rule into a personal habit, which they felt made their work more predictable and reduced last-minute program disruptions. Administrators with shorter tenure tended to describe discipline more in terms of peer accountability – not wanting to let colleagues down – rather than formal sanctions.

These findings suggest that work discipline contributes to performance both through structural consistency (adherence to schedules and procedures) and through an internalized sense of responsibility that develops over time, supporting the study's proposition regarding the discipline–performance relationship (H2).

Leadership and Work Discipline as Antecedents of Motivation 4.4

A recurring pattern across informants was that leadership and discipline did not only affect performance directly, but also shaped how motivated administrators felt in their roles. Informants who described their leaders as fair and consistent also tended to describe feeling more comfortable raising concerns and more willing to take initiative. Similarly, informants who experienced discipline as clearly and consistently enforced – rather than applied selectively – reported feeling that their efforts were recognized on equal terms with others, which several described as encouraging for their continued involvement.

This pattern supports the proposition that leadership and work discipline function as antecedents of motivation (H3 and H4), by establishing the trust, clarity, and fairness that administrators identified as preconditions for feeling motivated in their roles.

Motivation as a Bridging Mechanism Toward Performance 4.5

Nearly all informants linked their motivation directly to their performance, most frequently describing a sense of purpose – feeling that their contribution mattered to the organization and its beneficiaries – as their strongest driver. Several informants also mentioned that simple forms of recognition, such as public acknowledgment during meetings or being entrusted with greater responsibility, made them want to perform better in subsequent activities. A number of informants described social bonds with fellow administrators as an additional motivational factor, noting that a supportive team atmosphere made it easier to stay engaged even during demanding periods.

When asked to reflect on how leadership and discipline related to their own performance, several informants explicitly described motivation as the connecting factor – explaining that supportive leadership and consistent discipline mattered to their performance mainly because of how these experiences made them feel about their role, rather than through the rules or instructions themselves. This pattern is consistent with the study's proposition that motivation functions as a bridging mechanism between leadership, work discipline, and administrator performance (H5, H6, H7).

Discussion 4.6

The findings indicate that leadership at Suta Nusantara influences performance primarily through participative and communicative practices that build administrators' confidence and sense of ownership, which aligns with contemporary leadership theory emphasizing relational and transformational qualities over purely directive authority. Work discipline, meanwhile, appears to operate through a gradual internalization process, moving from externally imposed compliance toward a self-sustained sense of responsibility – a pattern consistent with self-determination perspectives on discipline and behavior regulation.

Most notably, the data suggest that motivation is not simply an additional outcome of leadership and discipline, but the mechanism through which administrators themselves make sense of why these factors matter to their performance. This reinforces the conceptual positioning of motivation as an intervening variable and suggests that interventions aimed solely at strengthening leadership or enforcing discipline, without attention to the motivational experience of administrators, are unlikely to produce the fullest possible performance gains.

Taken together, the qualitative findings offer a contextual explanation for relationships that quantitative studies in similar settings typically report as statistically significant direct and indirect effects: leadership and discipline shape performance both directly, through clarity and consistency, and indirectly, through the motivational meaning administrators attach to their organizational experience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion 5.1

Based on in-depth interviews with 20 informants at Suta Nusantara, analyzed using the interactive qualitative model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldña, this study concludes that: (1) participative and communicative leadership contributes to administrator performance by building confidence and shared ownership; (2) consistently enforced work discipline contributes to performance by fostering structural consistency and an internalized sense of responsibility; (3) leadership and work discipline shape administrators' motivation by establishing trust, clarity, and fairness; and (4) motivation – encompassing sense of purpose, recognition, and social bonding – functions as a bridging mechanism through which leadership and work discipline are translated into administrator performance.

Recommendation 5.2

Suta Nusantara is advised to sustain and further institutionalize participative leadership practices, particularly transparent communication during high-activity periods, and to maintain consistent, equally enforced discipline standards across divisions. Deliberate attention to motivational practices – such as regular recognition of contributions and opportunities for administrators to connect their work to organizational impact – is recommended as a complement to leadership and discipline-focused interventions. Future research is recommended to extend these findings through a quantitative or mixed-methods design with a larger sample, in order to test the generalizability of the themes identified in this study.

As a single-case qualitative study relying on a purposively selected group of 20 informants, the findings offer contextual depth rather than statistical generalizability, and the interpretations, while supported by triangulation and member checking, remain shaped by the researcher's analytical lens.

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