



The Role of Strategic Leadership and Job-Related Motivation on Work Discipline and Employee Performance: A Case of the Life Insurance Sector of Indonesia

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Abstract. Given the importance of strategic leadership in driving organizational success, understanding how it impacts motivation, discipline, and performance is crucial for both scholars and practitioners. Therefore, this study explores the relationships between strategic leadership (SL), job-related motivation (JRM), work discipline (WD), and employee performance within the life insurance sector in Jakarta, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was used, with data collected from 174 employees through structured questionnaires. The obtained data were analyzed using SmartPLS version 3.3.0. The findings revealed that SL significantly and positively influences JRM, WD, and employee performance. JRM was found to have a positive impact on both WD and employee performance. Additionally, WD directly affects employee performance. The results also demonstrated that JRM and WD act as significant mediators between SL and employee performance.

Keywords: Employee performance, Job-related motivation, Strategic leadership, Work discipline.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are navigating a rapidly changing environment driven by factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and evolving consumer preferences. These trends have led to several key developments in the way organizations are managed. The integration of digital technology into all areas of a business has become crucial. Organizations leverage technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, and big data to improve efficiency (Mikołajewski et al., 2024; Wei et al., 2023) and decision-making processes. Additionally, to remain competitive, adopting strategic leadership (SL) is essential to guide organizations through these changes and ensure long-term success (Rahman et al., 2018). Strategic leaders provide a clear vision and direction for the organization (Özmen, 2020). They set long-term goals that align with the company's mission and values, helping to steer the organization through both opportunities and challenges. Moreover, in a fast-changing environment, strategic leaders play a key role in navigating change (Teng, 2024). They help the organization adapt by fostering a culture of innovation and ensuring that the workforce is flexible and responsive to new developments.

Much of the existing literature on SL focuses on Western business environments (Gutierrez et al., 2012). A gap exists in how SL influences employee performance in non-Western cultures, particularly in regions such as Southeast Asia. For example, leadership approaches that are effective in one culture may not translate well into another (Wang & Kühlmann, 2015; Zhu et al., 2017), particularly in the context of Indonesia, where leadership may be influenced by cultural or religious norms. Additionally, research has extensively covered how SL affects overall organizational performance, but there is a gap in understanding how SL specifically influences job-related motivation (JRM), work discipline (WD), and employee performance.

Strategic leaders often focus on inspiring employees by linking the organization's mission to employees' personal values and career growth, which increases their motivation and better performance (Yas et al., 2023). Employees under SL become more agile, adapting quickly to new challenges and maintaining high levels of performance (Nwachukwu & Vu, 2020). However, Mui et al. (2018), Najmi et al. (2018) found no significant impact. Strategic leaders always push for large-scale changes, which can meet resistance from employees, especially if they feel left out of the decision-making process (Munawaroh et al., 2021). This resistance can neutralize or even negate any potential positive impact on employee performance. Moreover, there are potential mediating variables that could influence the relationship between SL and employee performance that warrant further exploration. JRM and WD, for instance, could serve as critical intervening variables in this relationship. Therefore, investigating these factors could provide insights into how strategic leaders can create positive environments that foster higher performance while also promoting employee motivation and WD.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership (SL) is a multifaceted concept that involves a leader's ability to anticipate, envision, and adapt to changes while enabling others to make strategic decisions. Strategic leaders are able to create a clear vision (Belias & Trihas, 2022), foresee future trends, and remain flexible to adapt to changing circumstances. Strategic leaders facilitate organizational learning by sharing narratives about the organization's identity (Boal,

2007) and by networking to solve problems.

The key dimensions of SL (Cannella et al., 2009), which profoundly affect organizational outcomes, include (a) *anticipation and vision* (i.e., leader's ability to foresee and plan for future challenges and opportunities), (b) *flexibility* (i.e., adaptability to changing environments and conditions, and (c) *empowerment* (i.e., enabling others within the organization to make strategic decisions). SL is linked to various HRM variables such as WD, work motivation, and performance (Choiriyah et al., 2021; Razak et al., 2018), indicating its broad impact on organizational dynamics (Belias & Trihas, 2022). Thus, effective SL is crucial for navigating turbulent environments, fostering innovation, and driving organizational transformation (Bhardwaj et al., 2020).

2.2. Job-Related Motivation

Job motivation refers to the internal and external factors that stimulate employees to take action to achieve work-related goals. Job-related motivation (JRM) is a critical determinant of job performance, employee retention, and organizational success. Therefore, understanding and leveraging these factors can lead to improved employee performance and organizational success (Chan & Hooi, 2023; Girdwichai & Sriviboon, 2020).

Fredrick Herzberg's research explored internal and external factors influencing job satisfaction, which is relevant to understanding JRM (Jodon, 2023). Intrinsic motivation involves internal factors such as personal satisfaction, interest in the work, and a sense of achievement. However, extrinsic motivation includes external rewards like salary, bonuses, and other benefits (Chan & Hooi, 2023; Sutha et al., 2023). Motivated employees are more likely to show greater commitment to their jobs, even in challenging situations, which minimizes the impact of problems (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012). Moreover, employee motivation fully mediates the relationship between SL and employee performance (Owek et al., 2021).

2.3. Work Discipline

Work discipline (WD) refers to the adherence of employees to the rules and regulations set by the organization, which directly impacts their productivity. According to Roshida and Paskarini (2021), WD is the obedient attitude of an employee towards workplace rules, significantly affecting work productivity. High levels of WD are associated with improved employee performance and organizational commitment. However, lack of discipline can lead to inefficiencies and reduced effectiveness in completing tasks (Oktari & Suhardi, 2021).

In the context of remote work, maintaining WD presents challenges due to the lack of physical oversight and potential distractions (Asatiani & Norström, 2023). Organizations can improve WD by providing rewards for high discipline and implementing sanctions for violations (Suryana et al., 2019). Discipline at work ensures smooth operational activities and higher productivity (Roshida & Paskarini, 2021). The higher WD often leads to better performance.

2.4. Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to an individual's job performance and productivity in relation to pre-established criteria and organizational objectives (Hambardzumyan, 2016). According to Siregar and Suma (2024), employee performance is a measure of how well employees complete their tasks and achieve organizational objectives. Employee performance is a critical factor for organizational success, and it is considered a key asset for organizations, as high-performing employees drive business success and competitive advantage (Alefari et al., 2018; Siregar & Suma, 2024).

Factors influencing employee performance include motivation, job satisfaction, work environment, compensation policies, quality of work life, and competence (Nguyen & Giang, 2020; Rodjam et al., 2020; Umrani et al., 2019). Other factors affecting employee performance include reward and recognition, development and training, job promotion, income (Nguyen & Giang, 2020), and leadership styles (Hassan & Basit, 2024; Hundie & Habtewold, 2024).

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1. SL on JRM, WD, and Employee Performance

Scholars have extensively studied the relationship between leadership styles and employee job motivation, particularly focusing on SL. SL directly enhances JRM and satisfaction, which in turn positively affects employee performance (Bernanthos, 2018; Pancasila et al., 2020). SL affects job performance by providing continuous learning opportunities and empowerment (Azbari et al., 2015). Strategic leaders implement continuous training and development programs for employees to enhance their motivation. Also, strategic leaders focus on empowering employees to boost their discipline, leading to positive job performance outcomes (McCarter et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2018). Thus,

H₁: SL has a positive influence on JRM

H₂: SL has a positive influence on WD

H₃: SL has a positive influence on employee performance

3.2. JRM on WD and Employee Performance

Motivation is the cornerstone of productivity in any organization, as it helps employees put in better efforts in an effective manner, thereby increasing the quality of work (Rengamani, 2019). According to Salsabilla et al. (2022), employees with higher motivation levels tend to exhibit better WD. Moreover, material and non-material ways of motivation, such as specific rewards and recognition, strongly influence employee work performance. In addition, prioritizing rewards over recognition may be more effective in driving employee performance during an economic setback (Chan & Hooi, 2023). Chien et al. (2020) further noted that both intrinsic (i.e., enjoyment of work) and extrinsic motivators (i.e., financial reward) have been shown to improve employee performance. However, intrinsic motivators often have a more substantial impact. Therefore,

H₁: JRM has a positive influence on WD

H₂: JRM has a positive influence on employee performance

3.3. WD on Employee Performance

WD contributes to the work effectiveness of employees (Tentama et al., 2020). WD ensures that employees adhere to set schedules, rules, and procedures, which fosters consistency in the workplace. This consistency reduces variability in performance, enabling employees to meet deadlines and maintain quality standards. Additionally, employees who are punctual and follow the rules are more reliable, leading to better overall performance (Kelibulin et al., 2020; Sari & Snelling, 2024). Thus,

H₃: WD has a positive influence on employee performance

3.4. JRM and WD as Mediators

JRM and WD play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between SL and employee performance. SL involves setting a clear vision (Hana Arrfou & Al-Edeinat, 2016; Udin et al., 2019), which can inspire employees and give their work a sense of purpose. This alignment of individual and organizational goals boosts JRM, as employees are more likely to feel that their efforts contribute meaningfully to long-term success. When motivation is high, employees are likely to show greater initiative and perform better (Chan & Hooi, 2023). Moreover, SL fosters a positive work environment (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007) where employees understand the organizational goals, enhancing their motivation to perform tasks effectively, which improves overall performance. Thus,

H₄: JRM mediates the positive influence of SL on employee performance

H₅: JRM mediates the positive influence of SL on WD

H₆: WD mediates the positive influence of SL on employee performance

4. RESEARCH METHOD

4.1. Procedure and Sample

This study employs a quantitative approach aimed at examining the relationships among key variables: SL, JRM, WD, and employee performance. A survey method utilizing structured questionnaires was administered to employees within the life insurance sector in Jakarta, Indonesia, to gather data. Employing saturated sampling ensured the inclusion of all employees in the target population. The participants were asked to fill the structured questionnaires from May 15 to September 12, 2024. Ultimately, 174 completed questionnaires were returned from a total of 216 distributed, resulting in a commendable response rate of 80.6%. Regarding gender distribution among the 174 respondents, a majority were female, comprising 51.8% of the sample, while males accounted for 48.2%. In terms of age, respondents predominantly fell within the 21-30 age range, representing 59.5% of the sample. Additionally, the data indicated that a significant portion of respondents, 67.7%, had a length of service of three years.

4.2. Measures

To effectively measure the variables in the proposed model, SL is measured using four items, such as "My leader sets the directions of the organization" (Deeboonmee & Ariratana, 2014; Schoemaker et al., 2013). JRM is also measured using four statements, like "My organization's policies are tailored to suit each employee" (Nguyen et al., 2024; Tran & Do, 2020). WD is measured using four items, including "I persistently adhere to work standards" (Maryani et al., 2021). Employee performance is measured using four statements, such as "I consistently deliver the highest quality of work" (Astuty & Udin, 2020).

4.3. Data Analysis

Data in this study was analyzed by applying Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.3.0 to assess the relationships between variables. PLS-SEM is a powerful tool for researchers dealing with complex models (Sarstedt et al., 2022), and it is widely used in management and leadership studies (Udin et al., 2024). PLS-SEM is particularly useful for handling small sample sizes and non-normal data (Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, PLS-SEM can accommodate more complex model structures, which is advantageous for exploratory research.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessing the reliability and validity of the constructs is crucial to ensure that the measurement instruments accurately and consistently capture the concepts. The results for construct reliability and validity using SmartPLS 3.3.0 are shown in Table 1. The factor loadings of the four constructs (i.e., SL, JRM, WD, and employee performance) are greater than 0.7, indicating that they all strongly reflect the constructs. The values of Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) are above the 0.7 threshold, which confirms that each construct has good internal consistency. Moreover, the values of average variance extracted (AVE) for SL (0.649), JRM (0.610), WD (0.572), and employee performance (0.580) are greater than 0.5, confirming convergent validity.

Table 1: Construct reliability and validity

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	α	CR	AVE
Strategic leadership	SL1	0.786	0.820	0.881	0.649
	SL2	0.811			
	SL3	0.806			
	SL4	0.819			
Job-related motivation	JRM1	0.814	0.786	0.862	0.610
	JRM2	0.761			
	JRM3	0.739			
	JRM4	0.807			
Work discipline	WD1	0.741	0.752	0.842	0.572
	WD2	0.789			
	WD3	0.758			
	WD4	0.735			
Employee performance	EP1	0.761	0.759	0.847	0.580
	EP2	0.705			
	EP3	0.816			
	EP4	0.761			

Table 2 and Figure 1 presented the specific direct and indirect effects of the study. The findings showed that SL is positively and significantly associated with JRM ($\beta = 0.909$, $T = 37.993$, $\rho = 0.000$), WD ($\beta = 0.570$, $T = 5.363$, $\rho = 0.000$), and employee performance ($\beta = 0.377$, $T = 5.020$, $\rho = 0.000$). Thus, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported. Moreover, the results revealed that JRM is positively and significantly associated with WD ($\beta = 0.314$, $T = 2.505$, $\rho = 0.013$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.451$, $T = 5.646$, $\rho = 0.000$). Therefore, hypotheses H4 and H5 are supported. In addition, the results acknowledged that WD depicts a direct significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.148$, $T = 2.623$, $\rho = 0.009$), indicating that hypothesis H6 is supported.

To explore how JRM and WD influence the relationship between SL and employee performance, the bootstrapping method is used to test for indirect effects (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The results, provided in Table 2, revealed that the mediation of JRM is also significant for SL and employee performance ($\beta = 0.409$, $T = 5.502$, $\rho = 0.000$) and WD ($\beta = 0.285$, $T = 2.450$, $\rho = 0.015$). Thus, hypotheses H7 and H8 are supported. Moreover, the results delineated that WD mediates the positive impact of SL on employee performance ($\beta = 0.085$, $T = 2.239$, $\rho = 0.026$). Therefore, hypothesis H9 is also supported.

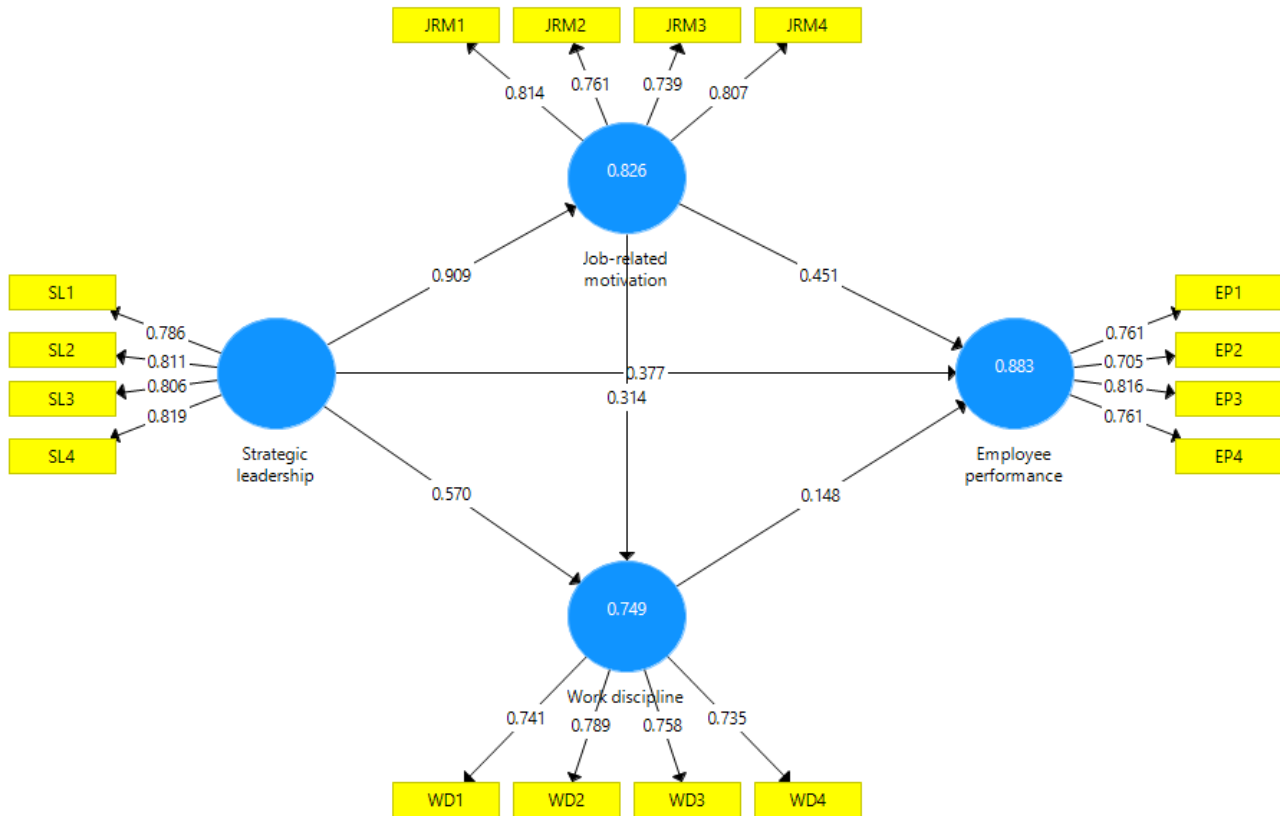


Figure 1: Research framework.

Table 2: Specific direct and indirect effects.

Hypotheses	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
<i>Direct effects</i>				
Strategic leadership → Job-related motivation	0.909	0.024	37.993	0.000
Strategic leadership → Work discipline	0.570	0.106	5.363	0.000
Strategic leadership → Employee performance	0.377	0.075	5.020	0.000
Job-related motivation → Work discipline	0.314	0.125	2.505	0.013
Job-related motivation → Employee performance	0.451	0.080	5.646	0.000
Work discipline → Employee performance	0.148	0.057	2.623	0.009
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
Strategic leadership → Job-related motivation → Employee performance	0.409	0.074	5.502	0.000
Strategic leadership → Job-related motivation → Work discipline	0.285	0.116	2.450	0.015
Strategic leadership → Work discipline → Employee performance	0.085	0.038	2.239	0.026

As noted above, the finding that SL has a significant and positive impact on JRM, WD, and employee performance aligns well with existing leadership theories, particularly SL theory. Strategic leaders, through clear vision, alignment of goals, and fostering an environment of engagement, are able to enhance employee motivation. Motivated employees are more likely to exhibit greater self-discipline in meeting organizational goals and, consequently, improve their performance. Strategic leaders offer a clear vision, which helps employees understand the purpose of their roles and how they fit into the broader organizational objectives. This alignment of individual goals with organizational strategy enhances job motivation (Berg, 2015). SL also involves empowerment practices, giving employees autonomy and encouraging participation in decision-making. According to Sousa et al. (2023), this empowerment satisfies employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which leads to higher job motivation. Moreover, leaders who set clear expectations and foster accountability create a disciplined work environment where employees are more likely to meet deadlines and adhere to standards, improving performance outcomes (Qi et al., 2022; Udin et al., 2023).

The positive relationship between JRM and both WD and performance suggests that motivated employees are more likely to exhibit disciplined behaviors that are necessary for high performance. When employees are motivated, they are more committed to organizational goals and are willing to exert greater effort to achieve them. Furthermore, employees who find intrinsic value or extrinsic rewards in their work are more likely to be

disciplined in their approach to achieving success. Research has shown that employees with higher levels of job motivation tend to engage more persistently in task completion, leading to better performance (Chan & Hooi, 2023; Haryono et al., 2020).

WD, which encompasses adherence to policies, punctuality, and consistent effort in job tasks, was found to directly improve employee performance. Disciplined employees are able to maintain a high standard of work and avoid counterproductive behaviors that can detract from performance. Ostlund and Balleine (2009) posit that disciplined behavior is crucial for consistent and goal-directed actions. Employees with strong self-discipline are more likely to manage their time effectively and meet their performance goals. In addition, WD often leads to greater operational efficiency as employees consistently follow processes, reduce errors, and avoid time-wasting behaviors. This results in improved individual and overall organizational performance.

WD and JRM act as critical intermediary mechanisms through which the effects of SL materialize. Leaders who emphasize discipline help in setting structures that prevent deviant workplace behaviors and maintain a high-performance culture. The path-goal theory of leadership (Al Mazrouei & Bakri, 2023) explains how leaders can influence employee outcomes by motivating them toward goal achievement. Strategic leaders, by fostering motivation, improve the likelihood of employees performing at their best.

5. CONCLUSION

The study, based on the findings, concludes that SL plays a critical role in enhancing employee motivation, discipline, and performance. The positive and significant associations between SL and these key variables underscore its importance in fostering a productive organizational environment. JRM, as an intermediary, significantly influences both WD and employee performance, suggesting that motivated employees are more disciplined and perform better. Additionally, WD is shown to have a direct impact on employee performance, highlighting its essential role in achieving organizational goals. The mediating effects of both JRM and WD further reinforce the idea that SL indirectly boosts employee performance by fostering motivation and discipline. These insights emphasize the need for organizations, particularly in the life insurance industry, to focus on developing strong SL to drive motivation, discipline, and, ultimately, high employee performance.

The findings add to the body of knowledge on SL by demonstrating its multifaceted impact on organizational outcomes, particularly in the areas of JRM, WD, and employee performance. This underscores the centrality of SL within the broader framework of leadership theories, positioning it as a key driver of both individual and organizational success. The study further confirms that JRM and WD not only directly affect employee performance but also serve as important links between SL and employee outcomes. This opens new possibilities for researchers to explore how SL influences employee performance through these pathways. Therefore, organizations, particularly in the life insurance industry, should prioritize cultivating strong SL. Leaders who can effectively inspire motivation (Malewar & Gupta, 2023) and instill discipline will likely see significant improvements in overall employee performance. Training programs for leaders should focus on developing strategic vision, communication skills, and the ability to motivate and maintain WD. Moreover, given the significant role of JRM in influencing both WD and employee performance, organizations should invest in motivational initiatives. This could include recognition programs, professional development opportunities, and career growth incentives to ensure that employees remain engaged, leading to better discipline and higher performance.

A key limitation of this study is its focus on employees from the life insurance sector in Jakarta, Indonesia, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other industries or regions with different cultural or organizational contexts. Additionally, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships over time, as it captures data at a single point. Therefore, future research should broaden the scope by expanding the study to different industries and regions to improve the generalizability of the findings across various organizational and cultural contexts. Additionally, adopting longitudinal designs would allow for a deeper understanding of how the effects of SL evolve over time, offering insights into the long-term impact of SL on JRM, WD, and employee performance. This approach would also help establish stronger causal relationships between these variables, providing a more comprehensive view of leadership dynamics in organizations. Moreover, exploring other mediators and moderators, as well as conducting cross-cultural comparisons, would offer richer insights into how SL influences employee outcomes across diverse settings.

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