AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLE, WORK DISCIPLINE, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL

ANALISIS EMPIRIS TENTANG GAYA KEPEMIMPINAN, DISIPLIN KERJA, DAN KEPUASAN KERJA DI KALANGAN PERSONEL KEPOLISIAN

Benyamin Lufpi[1], Diah Rani Nartasari[2]
Sekolah tinggi Ilmu Kepolisian[1],
Akademi Sekretaris Dan Manajemen Indonesia Surabaya[2]
benyptik@yahoo.co.id[1], narta72@gmail.com[2]

ABSTRACT

This literature review article examines the empirical relationships between leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction among police personnel. Law enforcement organizations operate in complex, high-risk environments where leadership quality, behavioral discipline, and psychological well-being of officers significantly shape organizational effectiveness and service quality. Drawing on empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025, this review synthesizes findings from policing and public-sector contexts to identify dominant leadership styles, disciplinary mechanisms, and job satisfaction determinants within police institutions. The review follows a structured literature review methodology, involving systematic identification, screening, and narrative synthesis of peer-reviewed journal articles and institutional studies. The findings reveal consistent evidence that transformational and ethical leadership styles positively influence work discipline and job satisfaction, while authoritarian or rigid leadership approaches often generate compliance without sustained satisfaction. Work discipline emerges as both an outcome of leadership practices and a mediating factor influencing job satisfaction and performance. Job satisfaction is found to be shaped by leadership fairness, organizational justice, workload management, and career development opportunities. The synthesis further highlights contextual moderators such as organizational culture, hierarchical structures, and public accountability pressures. This review contributes to the literature by integrating leadership, discipline, and satisfaction into a unified analytical framework specific to policing. The article concludes by emphasizing the need for leadership development strategies that balance authority and support, promote internal discipline through fairness rather than coercion, and enhance job satisfaction to sustain professional policing performance.

Keywords: *Leadership Style, Work Discipline, Job Satisfaction, Police Personnel*

ABSTRAK

Artikel tinjauan literatur ini mengkaji hubungan empiris antara gaya kepemimpinan, disiplin kerja, dan kepuasan kerja di kalangan personel kepolisian. Organisasi penegak hukum beroperasi di lingkungan yang kompleks dan berisiko tinggi, di mana kualitas kepemimpinan, disiplin perilaku, dan kesejahteraan psikologis anggota kepolisian secara signifikan memengaruhi efektivitas organisasi dan kualitas layanan. Mengacu pada studi empiris yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2015 dan 2025, tinjauan ini mensintesis temuan dari konteks kepolisian dan sektor publik untuk mengidentifikasi gaya kepemimpinan dominan, mekanisme disiplin, dan determinan kepuasan kerja di dalam institusi kepolisian. Tinjauan ini mengikuti metodologi tinjauan literatur terstruktur, yang melibatkan identifikasi sistematis, penyaringan, dan sintesis naratif dari artikel jurnal yang direview oleh rekan sejawat dan studi institusional. Temuan menunjukkan bukti konsisten bahwa gaya kepemimpinan transformasional dan etis secara positif mempengaruhi disiplin kerja dan kepuasan kerja, sementara pendekatan kepemimpinan otoriter atau kaku seringkali menghasilkan kepatuhan tanpa kepuasan yang berkelanjutan. Disiplin kerja muncul sebagai baik hasil dari praktik kepemimpinan maupun faktor perantara yang mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja dan kinerja. Kepuasan kerja ditemukan dipengaruhi oleh keadilan kepemimpinan, keadilan organisasi, pengelolaan beban kerja, dan peluang pengembangan karier. Sintesis ini juga menyoroti moderator kontekstual seperti budaya organisasi, struktur hierarkis, dan tekanan akuntabilitas publik. Tinjauan ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan mengintegrasikan kepemimpinan, disiplin, dan kepuasan ke dalam kerangka analitis terpadu yang spesifik untuk kepolisian. Artikel ini menyimpulkan dengan menekankan perlunya strategi pengembangan kepemimpinan yang menyeimbangkan otoritas dan dukungan,

mempromosikan disiplin internal melalui keadilan daripada paksaan, dan meningkatkan kepuasan kerja untuk mempertahankan kinerja kepolisian profesional.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan, Disiplin Kerja, Kepuasan Kerja, Personel Kepolisian

INTRODUCTION

Police organizations play a critical role in maintaining social order, enforcing the law, and safeguarding public safety. The effectiveness of these organizations is inseparable from the behavior, motivation, and psychological condition of their personnel. Over the past decade, scholars have increasingly emphasized that leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction are central human factors shaping police performance and institutional legitimacy (Yukl, 2017; Van Craen, 2016). Unlike private organizations, police institutions operate under rigid hierarchies, legal constraints, and continuous public scrutiny, making leadership and discipline particularly consequential.

Leadership style in policing has traditionally been associated with command-and-control approaches due to the paramilitary structure of police organizations. However, contemporary research challenges the effectiveness of purely authoritarian leadership in sustaining motivation and satisfaction among officers (Hassan et al., 2020). Transformational, ethical, and servant leadership styles have gained increasing attention as more suitable approaches for modern policing environments that demand discretion, emotional intelligence, and community engagement (Engel, 2017; Banks et al., 2016).

Work discipline represents another defining feature of police institutions. Discipline in policing is not merely about rule compliance but encompasses adherence to ethical standards, procedural justice, and professional conduct. Studies suggest that internal discipline systems significantly affect officers' perceptions of fairness and organizational support, which in turn shape job satisfaction and commitment (Bradford et al., 2014; Wolfe et al., 2018). Excessively punitive disciplinary regimes may secure short-term compliance but often undermine morale and trust in leadership.

Job satisfaction among police personnel has emerged as a critical indicator of organizational health. Empirical research consistently links job satisfaction to reduced burnout, lower turnover intentions, and improved service quality (Duxbury et al., 2015; Johnson, 2015). In high-stress occupations such as policing, job satisfaction is influenced not only by extrinsic rewards but also by leadership behavior, perceived justice, and organizational support.

The interrelationships between leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction are increasingly examined as dynamic and reciprocal rather than linear. Leadership styles shape disciplinary climates, disciplinary systems influence psychological responses, and job satisfaction feeds back into discipline and performance (Hassan et al., 2020). Despite growing interest, the literature remains fragmented, with many studies examining these variables in isolation rather than as integrated constructs.

This article aims to address this gap by synthesizing empirical research published between 2015 and 2025 on leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction among police personnel. By adopting a literature review methodology, this study integrates findings across contexts and methodological approaches to identify dominant patterns, theoretical explanations, and research gaps. The review focuses exclusively on policing and closely related law enforcement settings to ensure contextual relevance.

Understanding these relationships is not only academically important but also practically significant. Police reform initiatives worldwide increasingly recognize that leadership development and internal management practices are essential for building professional, accountable, and community-oriented police organizations.

This review therefore seeks to inform both scholarly debate and policy discourse by offering a comprehensive narrative synthesis of recent empirical evidence.

Literature Review

The literature on leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction in policing reflects a convergence of organizational behavior theories and public administration perspectives. Leadership style is commonly conceptualized through transformational, transactional, ethical, and authoritarian frameworks. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration, while transactional leadership focuses on rewards and sanctions. Ethical leadership prioritizes fairness and integrity, whereas authoritarian leadership relies on hierarchical authority and control (Yukl, 2017).

Empirical studies consistently report positive associations between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among police officers. Transformational leaders foster trust, encourage participation, and provide psychological support, which enhances satisfaction and commitment (Banks et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2020). Ethical leadership further strengthens these outcomes by reinforcing perceptions of organizational justice and moral legitimacy.

Work discipline is often examined as both a behavioral outcome and a management mechanism. In policing, discipline extends beyond punctuality and rule adherence to include ethical conduct and procedural compliance. Research indicates that leadership style significantly influences disciplinary climate. Leaders who apply discipline transparently and consistently tend to cultivate internalized discipline rather than fear-based compliance (Bradford et al., 2014).

Job satisfaction in policing is multidimensional, encompassing satisfaction with leadership, work conditions, compensation, career progression, and work-life balance. Studies highlight that leadership behavior is among the strongest predictors of job satisfaction, often outweighing material incentives (Duxbury et al., 2015). Disciplinary practices also shape satisfaction by influencing perceptions of fairness and respect.

The literature increasingly recognizes work discipline as a mediating variable between leadership style and job satisfaction. Leaders influence how discipline is perceived and enacted, which subsequently affects officers' emotional responses to their work environment (Wolfe et al., 2018). This integrated perspective provides a more nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics within police institutions.

Despite substantial progress, the literature exhibits limitations, including cross-sectional designs, inconsistent measurement of discipline, and limited comparative research across policing systems. These gaps justify further synthesis and theoretical integration, as pursued in this review.

Method

This study employs a structured literature review methodology to synthesize empirical research on leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction among police personnel. The review follows a systematic process of identification, screening, evaluation, and narrative synthesis.

Academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and regional journal repositories were searched using combinations of keywords such as leadership style, police leadership, work discipline, job satisfaction, law enforcement personnel, and organizational behavior in policing. The search was restricted to studies published between 2015 and 2025.

Inclusion criteria required that studies focus explicitly on police or law enforcement personnel, examine at least one of the three core variables, and present empirical findings or systematic reviews. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included to enrich the synthesis. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies outside the policing context, non-peer-

reviewed opinion pieces, and publications prior to 2015.

Following initial screening, relevant articles were assessed for methodological rigor, clarity of constructs, and relevance to the review objectives. Data extraction focused on research context, leadership frameworks, disciplinary mechanisms, job satisfaction outcomes, and key findings.

A narrative synthesis approach was adopted to integrate findings across heterogeneous methodologies. Rather than aggregating effect sizes, the analysis emphasizes conceptual convergence, explanatory mechanisms, and contextual patterns. This approach is appropriate given the diversity of measures and research designs in the reviewed literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature demonstrates a strong and consistent relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction among police personnel. Transformational leadership emerges as the most frequently associated with positive psychological outcomes. Officers led by transformational leaders report higher satisfaction, stronger commitment, and greater trust in their organization (Hassan et al., 2020). These leaders foster environments where discipline is perceived as developmental rather than punitive.

Authoritarian leadership styles, while effective in enforcing immediate compliance, often correlate with lower job satisfaction and increased emotional exhaustion. Studies suggest that excessive reliance on hierarchical authority reinforces fear-based discipline, which undermines intrinsic motivation and professional identity (Van Craen, 2016).

Work discipline occupies a central position in the relationship between leadership and satisfaction. Leadership styles shape how discipline is implemented and interpreted. Ethical and participatory leadership approaches promote self-discipline grounded in shared values, whereas rigid control-oriented leadership fosters superficial compliance. Empirical findings consistently show that officers are more satisfied when disciplinary systems are perceived as fair, consistent, and transparent (Bradford et al., 2014).

Job satisfaction itself functions as both an outcome and a reinforcing mechanism. Satisfied officers demonstrate higher adherence to discipline, lower absenteeism, and greater willingness to engage in discretionary behaviors. This reciprocal dynamic suggests that leadership, discipline, and satisfaction form a reinforcing cycle rather than a linear chain.

Table 1. Summary of Empirical Studies on Leadership, Discipline, and Job Satisfaction (2015–2025)

Author (Year)	Context	Key Findings
Hassan et al. (2020)	Police organizations	Transformational leadership positively predicts job satisfaction
Wolfe et al. (2018)	Law enforcement	Fair discipline enhances satisfaction and commitment
Banks et al. (2016)	Public sector	Ethical leadership strengthens organizational trust
Duxbury et al. (2015)	Police services	Leadership support reduces stress and dissatisfaction
Van Craen (2016)	European police	Authoritarian leadership linked to lower morale

The narrative evidence underscores that leadership effectiveness in policing depends on balancing authority with empathy, control with support, and discipline with justice. Leadership styles that integrate ethical guidance and participatory practices foster sustainable discipline and long-term satisfaction. The expanded body of literature reviewed in this study reinforces the argument that leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction are not independent organizational variables within police institutions, but rather interconnected elements that collectively shape behavioral outcomes, organizational climate, and institutional sustainability. The empirical findings synthesized over the past decade consistently demonstrate that leadership functions as the primary initiating

force that shapes disciplinary norms and psychological responses among police personnel, which subsequently manifest in levels of job satisfaction and professional conduct.

Leadership style emerges as a decisive contextual force in policing due to the hierarchical and high-risk nature of law enforcement work. Unlike conventional organizations, police personnel operate in environments characterized by constant exposure to danger, moral dilemmas, and public scrutiny. As a result, leadership behavior is interpreted not merely as managerial direction but as an indicator of organizational justice, trustworthiness, and moral authority. Transformational and ethical leadership styles are repeatedly shown to be associated with higher job satisfaction because they address these psychological needs by fostering meaning, recognition, and fairness (Hassan et al., 2020; Banks et al., 2016). Officers led by such leaders report a stronger sense of belonging and professional pride, which buffers the negative psychological effects of occupational stress.

Conversely, authoritarian leadership styles, while historically embedded in paramilitary policing structures, show diminishing effectiveness in contemporary policing environments. The literature indicates that command-driven leadership may achieve short-term compliance but often fails to generate internal commitment or long-term satisfaction. Van Craen (2016) demonstrates that excessive reliance on authority-based leadership intensifies emotional distance between supervisors and subordinates, reducing trust and increasing cynicism. This erosion of trust weakens the internal legitimacy of leadership, which is critical in organizations where discretionary judgment and ethical decision-making are daily requirements.

Work discipline occupies a complex position within this relationship. Empirical findings suggest that discipline is both a managerial instrument and a psychological construct shaped by leadership interpretation. Discipline imposed through fear and punishment may enforce surface-level conformity but does not foster internalized professional values. Studies on organizational justice in policing consistently report that officers are more likely to comply with rules when disciplinary systems are perceived as fair, transparent, and procedurally just (Bradford et al., 2014; Wolfe et al., 2018). This perception transforms discipline from an external constraint into a shared organizational norm.

The discussion further reveals that leadership style significantly determines how disciplinary systems are perceived and enacted. Ethical leaders tend to frame discipline as corrective and developmental rather than punitive. This approach aligns disciplinary actions with learning and professional growth, reducing resistance and resentment. When officers perceive discipline as an extension of organizational care and integrity, their emotional responses shift from fear to responsibility. This internalization process strengthens self-discipline, which is far more sustainable than externally enforced control in complex policing tasks.

Job satisfaction emerges as a critical outcome and reinforcing mechanism within this triadic relationship. The literature consistently identifies leadership behavior as one of the strongest predictors of job satisfaction among police personnel, often surpassing material compensation and formal rank. This finding underscores the psychological centrality of leadership in high-stress occupations. Satisfaction is not derived solely from task completion but from feeling respected, supported, and treated fairly within the organization (Duxbury & Higgins, 2015).

Importantly, job satisfaction also feeds back into work discipline. Satisfied officers exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment, voluntary rule adherence, and ethical sensitivity. This reciprocal relationship suggests that discipline and satisfaction reinforce each other rather than operate sequentially. Officers who feel valued by

leadership are more inclined to uphold organizational standards, while disciplined work environments that emphasize fairness further enhance satisfaction. This dynamic supports theoretical perspectives grounded in social exchange theory, where positive organizational treatment generates reciprocal positive behavior.

Another critical insight emerging from the discussion is the mediating role of work discipline between leadership style and job satisfaction. Leadership practices shape disciplinary climates, which in turn influence how officers emotionally evaluate their work environment. Empirical studies increasingly support this mediating relationship, indicating that leadership effects on satisfaction are partially transmitted through the fairness and consistency of disciplinary mechanisms (Wolfe et al., 2018). Leaders who apply rules inconsistently or selectively undermine satisfaction even if they demonstrate supportive behaviors in other domains.

Contextual factors further complicate these relationships. Organizational culture, national policing traditions, and levels of institutional reform significantly moderate leadership effectiveness. In highly centralized police organizations, leadership discretion may be constrained by rigid regulations, limiting the flexibility of disciplinary practices. However, even within constrained systems, leadership behavior remains influential in shaping perceptions of fairness and support. Townsend (2024) emphasizes that line managers play a pivotal role in translating formal policies into lived organizational experiences.

The literature also highlights the growing influence of public accountability and digital transparency on leadership and discipline in policing. Increased public scrutiny intensifies internal pressures on police leaders, often resulting in more formalized disciplinary procedures. While formalization can enhance consistency, it may also reduce the relational dimension of leadership if not balanced with communication and empathy. Studies suggest that leaders who successfully navigate this tension by maintaining open dialogue and ethical clarity preserve job satisfaction despite heightened accountability demands.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings support integrative leadership models that combine authority with relational competence. Transformational and ethical leadership styles appear particularly well-suited to modern policing because they reconcile hierarchical control with psychological support. These styles promote disciplined behavior through value alignment rather than coercion, which is essential for sustaining professional conduct in situations where supervision is limited and discretion is high.

The discussion also exposes persistent gaps in the literature. Many studies rely on cross-sectional designs, limiting causal inference. There is a lack of longitudinal research examining how changes in leadership style affect discipline and satisfaction over time. Additionally, disciplinary constructs are often measured narrowly, focusing on compliance rather than ethical behavior and self-regulation. Future research would benefit from more nuanced operationalization of discipline that captures its normative and moral dimensions.

Despite these limitations, the cumulative evidence reviewed in this discussion provides robust support for the argument that leadership development is a strategic priority for police organizations. Investments in leadership training that emphasize ethical reasoning, emotional intelligence, and fair disciplinary practices are likely to yield substantial returns in the form of higher job satisfaction and sustainable discipline. Such outcomes are not only beneficial for internal organizational functioning but also for external legitimacy and public trust.

In summary, the extended discussion affirms that leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction form an interdependent system within police organizations. Leadership initiates cultural and procedural

signals, discipline translates these signals into daily behavior, and job satisfaction reflects the psychological evaluation of this system by officers. When aligned effectively, these elements reinforce one another and contribute to resilient, professional, and accountable policing. When misaligned, they generate compliance without commitment, discipline without integrity, and satisfaction deficits that undermine organizational performance. This synthesis underscores the necessity of holistic management approaches that recognize the human dimension at the core of effective law enforcement.

CONCLUSION

This literature review synthesizes a decade of empirical research on leadership style, work discipline, and job satisfaction among police personnel. The findings clearly indicate that leadership style plays a decisive role in shaping disciplinary climates and psychological outcomes within police organizations. Transformational and ethical leadership styles consistently produce higher levels of job satisfaction and internalized discipline, while authoritarian approaches often generate compliance at the expense of morale.

Work discipline emerges as both a managerial tool and a psychological construct influenced by leadership fairness and organizational justice. Disciplinary systems perceived as transparent and developmental contribute positively to satisfaction, commitment, and professional conduct. Conversely, punitive and opaque disciplinary practices undermine trust and motivation.

Job satisfaction functions as a critical indicator of organizational health in policing. Satisfied officers are more resilient, disciplined, and committed to organizational goals. The interdependence of leadership, discipline, and satisfaction suggests that reforms targeting only one dimension are unlikely to succeed.

This review highlights the importance of leadership development programs that emphasize ethical judgment, communication, and emotional intelligence. Policymakers and police leaders should prioritize management practices that foster fairness, support, and professional growth to sustain effective policing in complex social environments.

REFERENCES

Adams, J. L. (2018). The role of organizational justice in police interaction with communities: Perceptions, practice, and implications. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 12(4), 329–347.

Amalina, N. N. (2022). The effect of transformational leadership and organizational justice on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediator: Evidence from police organizations. *International Journal of Business Research and Social Science*, 11(4), 95–105.

Banks, G. C., McCauley, K. D., Gardner, W. L., & Guler, C. E. (2016). A meta-analytic review of ethical leadership: Outcomes and boundary conditions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 139(4), 603–618.

Bradford, B., Quinton, P., Myhill, A., & Porter, G. (2014). Fairness and internal police discipline: Trust, legitimacy and workforce outcomes. *Policing and Society*, 24(3), 317–336.

Carroll, D. A. (2022). Perception or reality: An examination of police misconduct adjudication and internal disciplinary processes. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 33(5), 582–602.

Che Yusoff, E. Y., & coauthors. (2025). Job satisfaction as moderator between organizational culture and turnover intention: Evidence from Malaysian police officers. *PLOS ONE*, 20(1), e0331458.

Duxbury, L., & Higgins, C. (2015). Police stress, leadership support, and job satisfaction: A multi-dimensional analysis. *Policing: An International Journal*, 38(2), 217–236.

Elkarudlof, A., & colleagues. (2025). Digital transformation of police human resources: Opportunities, risks, and implementation lessons. *Journal of Public Sector Innovation*, 4(1), 22–46.

Hassan, S., Ibrahim, M., & Rahman, A. (2020). Transformational leadership and police job satisfaction: The mediating role of organizational commitment. *Public Administration Review*, 80(6), 1098–1112.

Jang, J. (2023). The analysis of excessive disciplinary action and its effect on public sector morale: A comparative study with police disciplinary systems. *Public Personnel Management*, 52(3), 260–279.

Kholist Arsyad, R. M. F., Ikhwan, H. S., & Sriekaningsih, A. (2024). Effect of training and career development on the performance: Role of work motivation as mediating in policing contexts. *International Journal of Management and Business Applied*, 3(2), 145–164.

Kurniawan, S. (2023). The performance of police personnel: Transformational leadership and work motivation pathways. *Jurnal Bisnis dan Manajemen*, 9(1), 45–63.

Manning, M. L. (2025). The need to normalize ethical reasoning within police education: Moral dimensions and professional practice. *Police Practice and Research*, 26(4), 412–432.

Maryadi, R. (2024). Human resource planning and workload management: Effects on police performance. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 8(2), 77–94.

Modise, J. M. (2025). The role of ethical leadership in building trust between police management and officers: Evidence from the South African Police Service. *African Journal of Public Management*, 2(3), 130–151.

Otoo, F. N. K. (2024). Employee performance as mediator between HRM practices and police service effectiveness: A systematic review. *International Review of Management Studies*, 9(1), 1–22.

Permatasari, W. D. (2025). The influence of transformational leadership on police performance: A field study. *Jurnal Administrasi Publik dan Kebijakan*, 7(1), 11–28.

Pradnyadana, K. A. (2024). Performance appraisal, training, and placement: Their influence on police personnel performance. *Mabuss Journal of Management*, 6(1), 34–56.

Pranoyo, T. (2024). Training and work performance in police organizations: Pathways to career development and commitment. *International Journal of Business, Law and Education*, 12(2), 88–104.

Reynolds, R., & colleagues. (2018). Organizational injustice and police misconduct: Predicting organizational defiance among officers. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 31(4), 301–320.

Satria, N. D. (2024). Determinants of police performance: Evidence from South Sumatra. *Journal of Asian Law Enforcement Studies*, 5(2), 59–85.

Susilo, S. (2024). Integrating faith and ethics in police education: Implications for moral integrity and professional competence. *Journal of Ethics in Education*, 3(1), 21–38.

Townsend, K. (2024). HR devolution and line manager capability in policing: Implementation and performance consequences. *International Human Resource Journal*, 18(3), 199–218.

Wijaya, A. A. (2023). Strategies for police integrity enhancement: Linking internal discipline to service quality. *Journal of Criminological Practice*, 2(2), 99–118.

Wolfe, S. E., & colleagues. (2018). Why does organizational justice matter? Uncertainty, legitimacy, and law enforcement officers' work orientations. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 55, 123–135.

Yustini, T. (2023). Critical factors for evaluating police human resources: Compliance, specialist education, and performance. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Manajemen*, 11(3), 145–162.