

The Role of Participative Leadership on Job Performance: Job Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the effect of participative leadership style on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediator. The results of the study aids in describing how performance and participative leadership are related, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable, particularly in the manufacturing industry. The study employed a quantitative method, with 99 employees of a pesticide company in Banten province as respondents. Samples were populated based on a purposive sampling technique. Structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques were employed for the analysis, utilizing SmartPLS 4. The results of the study show that participative leadership has a significant direct effect on employee performance ($M=0.623$; $P=0.000$). Job satisfaction also has a significant direct effect on performance ($M=0.651$; $P=0.000$). In addition, job satisfaction mediates between participative leadership and performance ($M=0.464$; $P=0.000$). In addition, participative leadership style and job satisfaction explain 58.8% ($R^2=0.588$) of the performance. Hence, the companies should focus on training all leaders to practice participative leadership in daily work and continuously improving factors that improve employee job satisfaction. Both of the focuses will improve employee performance.

Keywords: Performance, Job Satisfaction, Human Capital



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INTRODUCTION

Amid challenges from competitors and unstable political and economic situations, the role of organizational leaders becomes crucial. Leaders must be able to direct all members of the organization so that they can work together to achieve the goals that have been set. Participative

leadership has drawn the attention of numerous scholars during the past two decades. ([Chan, 2019](#); [Huang et al., 2010](#)). Participative leadership is also referred to as a democratic leadership style that actively incorporates employees' goals into the organization's goals and effectively increases their sense of belonging by involving them in management and decision-making, with the intention of successfully increase workers' sense of belonging and actively incorporate their individual objectives into those of the company. Consequently, leaders actively practice "participation management" for their teams throughout the daily leadership process. ([Jing et al., 2017](#); [Wang et al., 2022](#)).

Kahai et al. (1997) defined participative leadership, which is a leadership style wherein leaders solicit input from staff members before making choices, assign decision-making power to their team in practice, and promote staff members' active involvement in decision-making. Furthermore, he also defined two main attributes of participative leadership: first, employees are advised before decisions are made to address problems together; second, employees are given tools to promote them in the work process. In practice, participatory leadership is also characterized by the following attributes: first, leaders and subordinates are on equal footing and have complete trust in one another during employee participation in the decision-making process; second, democratic consultation is used to resolve organizational challenges. Third, leaders still make the final decision even when a variety of employees participate in decision-making under participative management ([Wang et al., 2022](#)).

In a previous study, Chan (2019) discovered that the relationship between job satisfaction and participative leadership helps to clarify leadership management approaches, demonstrating that employees' job satisfaction may be raised by participative leaders who engage them in enjoyable activities at work. This research provides a foundation for our study that seeks to further explore the relationship between participative leadership and employee performance. Participative leadership, which is defined by independence, cooperation, and transparency, inspires team members to work creatively by providing original concepts and solutions and giving them ample time and space to come to the best decision. Employee participation in decision-making is encouraged and facilitated by leaders who practice participatory leadership, commonly referred to as democratic leadership. This may entail asking for opinions, exchanging data, and proactively requesting team members' input. Contributing to decisions gives workers a stronger sense of accountability and ownership for the results, which boosts job satisfaction. Employees who experience participatory leadership feel appreciated and inspired to share their thoughts and efforts, which creates a more stimulating workplace. By showing that the leader appreciates and values their opinions, involving staff members in decision-making helps to increase trust between team members and leaders. Participatory leadership has the potential to foster a more upbeat and cooperative workplace where staff members are more at ease exchanging ideas and cooperating ([Lam et al., 2015](#); [Li et al., 2018](#)).

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Earlier scholars found that participative leadership is positively correlated to performance, and studies have primarily employed social exchange theory or motivational theory to examine the psychological processes that link performance and participative leadership. Participatory leadership's consultative approach increases the likelihood that staff members will encounter organizational and managerial values. These workers are also more likely to be devoted, involved, and loyal than those under a directive leader. Employee performance is typically improved by participative leadership, which involves leaders in decision-making. It improves engagement, raises morale, and cultivates a sense of ownership, all of which contribute to increased productivity and superior results. The following are some advantages of participative leadership: Employees are more likely to be engaged and motivated, which results in higher effort and productivity, when they believe their opinions are appreciated and they have a say in choices. Employees who experience participatory leadership feel more a part of the company and their work, which boosts morale and job satisfaction. Employee participation in decision-making can lead to a greater variety of viewpoints and ideas, which encourages innovation and creativity among team members. A participatory approach promotes teamwork and candid communication, which improves decision-making and problem-solving skills. ([Huang et al., 2010](#); [Jia et al., 2007](#); [Newman et al., 2016](#); [Somech, 2005](#)).

According to several definitions, job satisfaction can be either a positive or negative emotional state brought on by an evaluation of one's work ([Brief & Weiss, 2002](#); [Locke, 1976](#)) or an affective response to one's work and attitude toward it ([Hsieh, 2016](#); [Weiss, 2022](#)). In order to prevent employee dissatisfaction, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory requires hygiene considerations, such as job security, compensation, working conditions, and fringe benefits. To inspire an employee to work better, motivational elements are required, such as accountability and acknowledgment ([Herzberg, 1964](#)). Furthermore, according to Herzberg's two-factor theory, different sets of factors influence job satisfaction and discontent. It suggests that motivators, which support greater motivation and job satisfaction, are distinct from hygiene aspects, which are necessary to avoid unhappiness. Therefore, high performance is expected of someone who obtains incentive aspects from job happiness ([Hsieh, 2016](#)). Six major components of job satisfaction are identified by Robbins and Judge (2013): the work itself, including tasks, learning opportunities, and responsibilities; discipline; attendance; current salary and the fairness of the compensation system; opportunities for advancement; supervision, including leadership style, coworker support, and work relationships; and the work itself. Human capital expertise substantially impacts organisational performance ([Stiles & Kulvisaechana, 2003](#)). Skilled and trained employees are considered key assets of growing organisations ([Pasban & Nojedeh, 2016](#)).

Employee performance is the accomplishment of tasks and obligations. According to Chang & Chen (2011), performance in an organizational setting is usually described as the extent to which an employee or other organizational member helps the organization achieve its objectives. Numerous aspects, including flexibility, work-life balance, communication, skill development, well-being, leadership, and technology use, all have an impact on employee performance ([Davenport & Ronanki, 2018](#); [Rigby et al., 2021](#); [Saing & Eprianto, 2025](#)). Employee engagement,

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corporate culture, job satisfaction, motivation, education, skills, and leadership style are some of the factors that affect employee performance (Dewi, Deviyantoro, et al., 2024; Dewi, Gentari, et al., 2024; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study is to seek the influence of participative leadership on job performance, with job satisfaction as the intervening. This research framework is relevant with current organization needs on high performance employee. So that the organization should continuously seek the variables that influence job performance. Their relationships were chosen for a reason that the construct has not yet been studied in the manufacturing company.

Based on the literature above, the study's conceptual framework and some hypotheses can be developed.

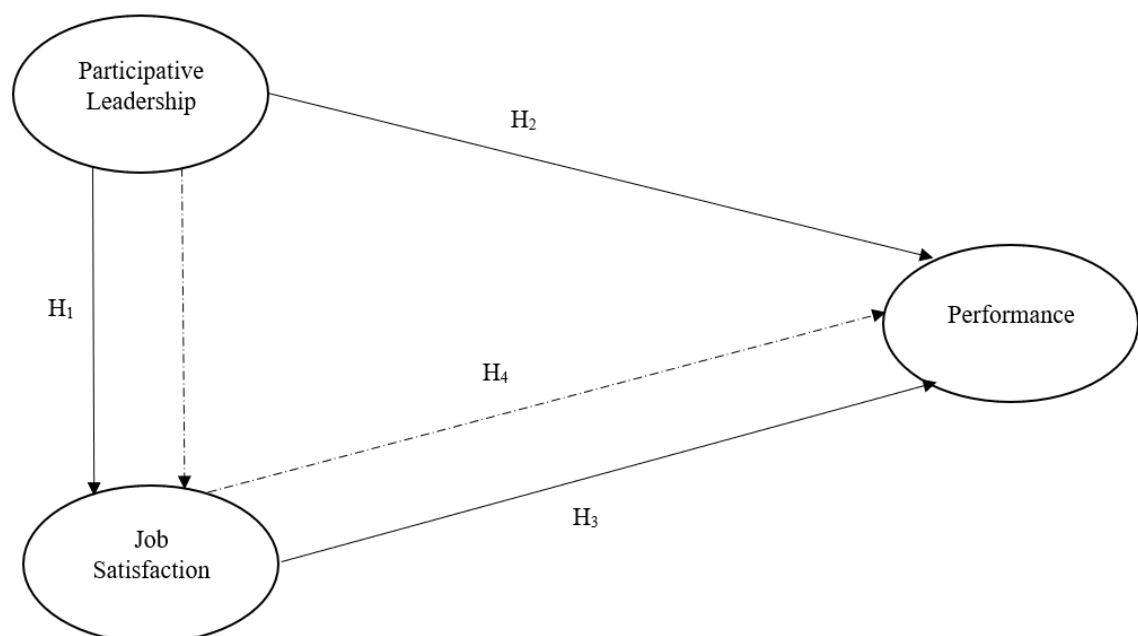
H1: Participative leadership positively influences job satisfaction.

H2: Participative leadership positively influences performance.

H3: Job Satisfaction positively influences performance.

H4: Participative leadership positively influences performance through job satisfaction.

Figure 1. Research Framework



METHOD

This study used a quantitative research approach and a primary research design with 99 employees of a pesticide company in Banten province as participants. Samples were populated based on a purposive sampling technique for employee with at least one year of work experience. The respondents were employees, both male and female, aged between 18 and 56, and holding junior high, high school, and bachelor's degrees. They work at various departments such as formulation, packing, maintenance, warehouse, health, safety, environment, quality control and laboratory, security, and general affairs.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Details

Items	Classification	Compositions
Education	Junior High School	14.1%
	High School	65.7%
	Bachelor	20.2%
Gender	Female	16.2%
	Male	83.8%
Age	20 – 29	37.4%
	30 – 39	28.3%
	40 - 49	14.1%
	>49	20.2%
Length of service	1 – 10	67.7%
	11 – 20	7.1%
	>20	25.3%
Employment status	Permanent	59.6%
	Casual	40.4%

Table 1 shows that 83.8% of respondents are male, and 65.7% of their education is high school level. The biggest portion of respondents is 20 – 29 years old at 37.4%. 67.7% of respondents have 1 – 10 years of service, and the majority of the respondents are permanent employees at 59.6%.

The performance variable indicators are based on dimensions of task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. There were 12 questions taken from Muzakki et al. (2019) with a Likert scale range of 1 – 5. It was found that 11 of 12 questions were valid. The question sample was “Employees can complete tasks effectively.”

The following were markers of participative leadership: decision domain, level of participation, structure, justification, and participation goal. There were 18 questions adopted from Somech (2005) with a Likert scale range of 1 – 5. It was found that 9 of 18 questions were valid. The question sample was “Employees can make choices independently.”

The job satisfaction indicators were positions in the job itself, promotion, supervision, coworkers, and salary. There were 12 questions taken from Robbin & Judge (2011) with a Likert scale range of 1 – 5. It was found that 6 of 12 questions were valid. One of the questions was “I’m content that the company’s salary allows me to cover my living expenses.”

The data collected were processed with SmartPLS 4 with the analysis steps as follows: data preparation, which includes the data cleaning and transformation; measurement model assessment (outer model), which focuses on factor loading, reliability (Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability), and convergent/discriminant validity; structural model assessment (inner model), which includes path coefficients, R-squared, F-squared, and model fit.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model Evaluation

The first step in PLS data analysis is measurement model assessment (outer model evaluation). The purpose of the outer model test is to define the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. This step is important to ensure that the indicators used truly reflect the construct being measured, so that the results of the analysis can be trusted. Using validity and reliability testing, the outer model’s analytical process is evaluated. Below is the PLS model testing result showing the research framework and each value of the indicator outer loadings, and the path coefficients of the constructs.

Figure 2. PLS Model Testing

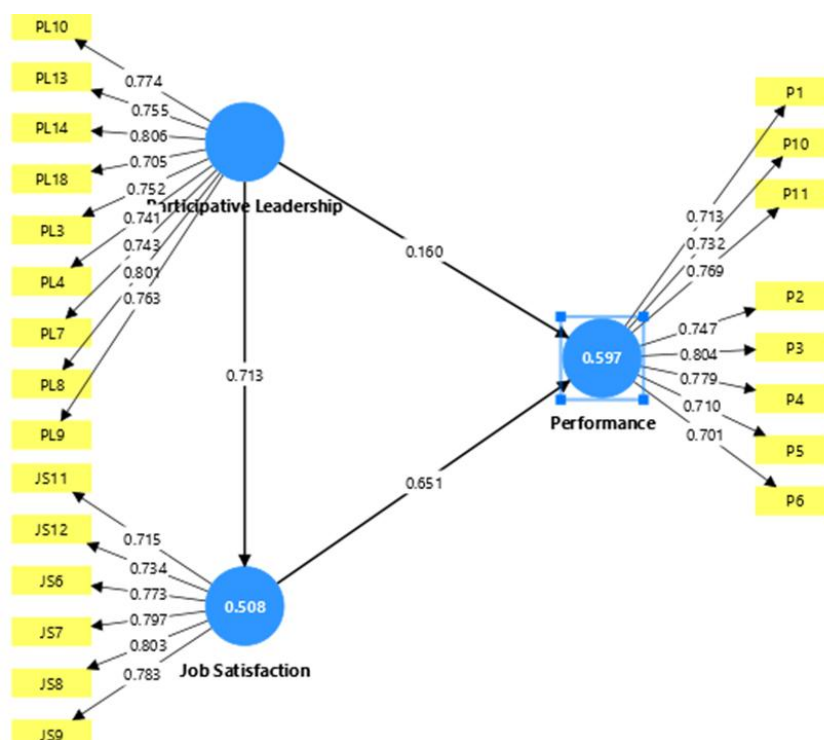


Figure 2 shows the results of the measurement model (outer model) test for every indication whose outer loading is bigger than 0.7. This reveals that the correlated indicators can calculate the construct accurately (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2. Outer Loading

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading
Job satisfaction	JS11	0.715
	JS12	0.734
	JS6	0.773
	JS7	0.797
	JS8	0.803
	JS9	0.783
Performance	P1	0.713
	P10	0.732
	P11	0.769
	P2	0.747
	P3	0.804
	P4	0.779
	P5	0.710
	P6	0.701
Participative leadership	PL10	0.774
	PL13	0.755
	PL14	0.806
	PL18	0.705
	PL3	0.752
	PL4	0.741
	PL7	0.743
	PL8	0.801
	PL9	0.763

Source: SmartPLS 4 data processed 2025

Regarding Table 2, the outer loading of all indicators for job satisfaction, performance, and participative leadership is bigger than 0.7. An outer loading value greater than 0.7 indicates that the indicator has good convergent validity. So that the conclusion is that the convergent validity values are accepted and valid.

Table 3. Reliability Test Result

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Remarks
Job Satisfaction	0.861	0.865	0.896	0.590	Reliable
Participative Leadership	0.909	0.913	0.925	0.579	Reliable
Performance	0.886	0.890	0.909	0.555	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data 2025

Referring to Table 3, each research variable has a composite reliability (CR) value greater than 0.7 and an AVE value greater than 0.5. All of the research variables are reliable, to put it another way.

Inner Model Evaluation

To determine whether the relationship between the construct variables is consistent with theory, we continue the inner model evaluation as follows.

Table 4. R² Test

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
Job Satisfaction	0.508	0.503
Performance	0.597	0.588

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data 2025

Table 4 reveals the adjusted R-squared value of the performance variable as 0.588. This figure explains that the variables associated with job satisfaction and participative leadership explain 58.8% of the performance variable, with the rest 41.2% coming from variables not covered in this study.

Table 5. F² Test

Construct	Job Satisfaction	Participative Leadership	Performance
Job Satisfaction			0.516
Participative Leadership	1.032		0.031
Performance			

Source: SmartPLS 4 processed data 2025

Table 5 shows a relationship between job satisfaction and the performance variable with an F-squared value of 0.516. According to Henseler et al. (2009), an F-squared number above 0.35 is considered a strong effect. This means that job satisfaction has a strong influence on performance.

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The F-squared value of participative leadership on performance is 0.031. This means that job satisfaction has a weak influence on performance. Meanwhile, the F-squared value of participative leadership on job satisfaction of 1.032, which is considered a moderate effect.

This formula was used to determine the Goodness of Fit (GoF):

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0.575 \times 0.597^2} = 0.453$$

According to Tenenhaus et al. (2004), since the GoF number is 0.453, it means that the model can take into account 45.3% of the achievable fit.

Hypothesis Testing

To investigate the influence of participative leadership and job satisfaction on performance, hypothesis testing was carried out. The bootstrapping approach was utilized to test the assumptions.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Result

H	Construct Variables			Direct	Indirect	P
	Independent	Mediation	Dependent			
1	Participative Leadership		Job Satisfaction	0.713		0.000
2	Participative Leadership		Performance	0.623		0.000
3	Job Satisfaction		Performance	0.651		0.000
4	Participative Leadership	Job Satisfaction	Performance		0.464	0.000

Source: SmartPLS processed data 2025

Table 6 shows that all of the hypotheses have been tested, and the results reveal a positive and significant effect of all the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable.

We can interpret the Table 6 data as follows: Participative leadership has a constructive path coefficient ($M=0.713$) and an outstanding influence on job satisfaction ($P=0.000$). This coefficient suggests that an increase in participative leadership style can significantly increase employee job satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. We can conclude that participative leadership has an outstanding effect and a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Participative leaders share authority, granting subordinates accountability and independence. They also entangle employees in decision-making and problem-solving (Bortoluzzi et al., 2014; Kahai et al., 1997). Thus, the empowered and trusted employee will have a pleasant feeling while working. This is in line with the previous study by Chan (2019) on the big retail store in Hong Kong. This study adds to the body of research on participatory leadership by demonstrating how it improves workers'

job satisfaction and work engagement. The findings are consistent with research by Chan (2019), which also found that participative leadership increases job satisfaction.

The following is the interpretation that was obtained from the SmartPLS 4.0 program's analysis of the study data: The hypothesis test results in Table 6 show that participative leadership has a substantial effect on performance ($P=0.000$) and a positive path coefficient ($M=0.623$). As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. In summary, performance is positively correlated with and significantly impacted by participative leadership. Leaders who apply a participative leadership style will always seek input, ideas, and solutions from employees. On the other hand, employees will feel appreciated and have high self-confidence to complete their work tasks, and ultimately will improve their performance. This finding is similar to a previous study by Miao et al. (2014), in a large garment manufacturing firm in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, and a study conducted by Chang et al (2020) in some technology firms in Taiwan.

Job satisfaction has a positive path coefficient ($M=0.651$) and an outstanding effect on performance ($P=0.000$). It indicates the refusal of the null hypothesis. Highly contented employees will be inspired to give their best effort. Increased organizational loyalty, lower absentee rates, and increased productivity have all been linked to high job satisfaction ([Judge et al., 2020](#)). Employee satisfaction increases engagement, dedication, and motivation, all of which lead to increased productivity. However, workplace discontent is often associated with absenteeism, worker turnover, and disengagement, all of which have a negative impact on organizational performance ([Afrahi et al., 2022](#); [Ardianto et al., 2024](#)). According to a number of experts, if workers are happy in their positions, they will perform work that merits compensation. In addition to ensuring the maximum level of job happiness, it fosters enduring loyalty among employees. The results of this study are in line with the previous study ([Carvalho et al., 2020](#); [Lysandra et al., 2023](#); [Wua et al., 2022](#)).

Table 6 reveals the participative leadership indirect effect on performance with the mediation of job satisfaction. Participative leadership has a positive path coefficient ($M=0.464$) and a significant impact on performance ($P=0.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is condemned. A participative leader empowers the employee to give their suggestion, opinion, and solution in doing the job. This will increase the positive feelings of employees and make them enjoy their jobs. People who love what they do find it easier to get up and go to work every day. Additionally, contented employees are more enthusiastic and productive at work. However, contented employees are more inclined to go above and above in their employment. ([Gazi et al., 2024](#); [Inayat & Khan, 2021](#); [Katebi et al., 2022](#)). Kahpi et al (2020) found that job satisfaction mediates participative leadership on performance during their study at a petrochemical company in Cilegon, Indonesia.

This study still has a number of limitations that need to be resolved. First of all, the factors influencing employee performance across all Merak manufacturing industries could not be sufficiently described by this study due to its focus on a single industry. Future studies are supposed to cover a wider variety of Merak's manufacturing companies and incorporate other factors that can affect employee performance. Future academics may look into the dimensionality of the variables, such as organizational culture, employee engagement, or individual motivation, that also affect employee performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that a participative leadership style significantly improves employee job satisfaction and performance. Job satisfaction plays an important role in improving job performance, because satisfied employees are more motivated and productive. In addition, to improve the performance of their units, organizations can teach their managers to support participatory leadership. These executives who receive coaching in leadership development programs may be better equipped to support their staff members' opinions since they are more inclined to consider their recommendations while making decisions. The development program can include decision-making simulations that involve employee input. Overall, the organization should focus on increasing the participative leadership implementation and increasing employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, suggestions for a more thorough investigation that examines factors that can improve organizational performance.

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