

# The Effect of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Relationship Between Leadership, Organizational Support and Work Motivation

*Job Satisfaction,  
Leadership and Work  
Motivation*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing employee motivation and organizational outcomes, yet its role as a mediator between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation remains underexplored, particularly in developing economies. This study aims to examine how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership styles, organizational support, and work motivation through a systematic literature review of empirical studies published between 2015 and 2024. The review analyzed 17 peer-reviewed articles selected from academic databases using predefined inclusion criteria, focusing on empirical studies involving job satisfaction as a mediator. Findings reveal that job satisfaction consistently serves as a psychological bridge, linking leadership styles, such as transformational and transactional, and organizational support to enhanced employee motivation, commitment, and performance, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts like Indonesia and Malaysia. The review highlights diverse industry settings, including hospitality and public services, emphasizing the broad applicability of the mediation model. This study concludes that job satisfaction is a pivotal mechanism for translating organizational strategies into positive employee outcomes, offering a framework for future research to explore causal pathways and cross-cultural variations in organizational behavior.*

**Keywords:** *Job Satisfaction, Leadership, Organizational Support, Work Motivation.*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Kepuasan kerja merupakan faktor penting yang memengaruhi motivasi karyawan dan hasil organisasi, namun perannya sebagai mediator antara kepemimpinan, dukungan organisasi, dan motivasi kerja masih kurang dieksplorasi, terutama di negara berkembang. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana kepuasan kerja memediasi hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan, dukungan organisasi, dan motivasi kerja melalui tinjauan pustaka sistematis terhadap studi empiris yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2015 dan 2024. Tinjauan ini menganalisis 17 artikel peer-review yang dipilih dari basis data akademis menggunakan kriteria inklusi yang telah ditentukan sebelumnya, dengan fokus pada studi empiris yang melibatkan kepuasan kerja sebagai mediator.*

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Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa kepuasan kerja secara konsisten berfungsi sebagai jembatan psikologis, yang menghubungkan gaya kepemimpinan, seperti transformasional dan transaksional, serta dukungan organisasi dengan peningkatan motivasi, komitmen, dan kinerja karyawan, terutama dalam konteks Asia Tenggara seperti Indonesia dan Malaysia. Tinjauan ini menyoroti beragam pengaturan industri, termasuk perhotelan dan layanan publik, yang menekankan penerapan model mediasi yang luas. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepuasan kerja merupakan mekanisme penting untuk menerjemahkan strategi organisasi menjadi hasil positif bagi karyawan, menawarkan kerangka kerja bagi penelitian masa depan untuk mengeksplorasi jalur kausal dan variasi lintas budaya dalam perilaku organisasi.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kepuasan Kerja, Kepemimpinan, Dukungan Organisasi, Motivasi Kerja.*

## INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the cornerstone of organizational success, requiring careful attention from management to drive performance and achieve strategic goals. The effectiveness of an organization hinges on its ability to foster a positive work environment that enhances employee morale and engagement (Sulastiningtiyas & Nilasari, 2019). Organizational support, shaped by effective leadership, plays a critical role in cultivating this environment, leading to increased work motivation and productivity. Employees who perceive their organization as supportive are more likely to reciprocate with commitment and effort, contributing to higher organizational outcomes. Conversely, a lack of support can result in disengagement, reduced morale, and diminished performance, underscoring the importance of leadership and organizational strategies in shaping employee experiences.

Job satisfaction is a pivotal dimension of organizational effectiveness, reflecting employees' overall contentment with their roles. It influences critical outcomes such as motivation, commitment, absenteeism, and turnover intention (Khalid, 2018). Satisfied employees exhibit positive behaviors, including enhanced task performance, stronger interpersonal relationships, and a willingness to act as change agents within the organization. In contrast, dissatisfied employees may foster cynicism, avoid collaboration, and negatively impact organizational reputation (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2021). Leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, have been shown to significantly enhance job satisfaction by providing vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support, thereby mobilizing employees toward collective goals (Abdullah et al., 2021). Additionally, job design tailored to employees' needs can further amplify satisfaction, aligning personal capabilities with organizational objectives to boost motivation and performance.

Despite extensive research on job satisfaction, a critical gap remains in understanding its mediating role in the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation, particularly in diverse global contexts. While studies such as Na-Nan et al. (2021) and Memon et al. (2023) have explored job satisfaction as an outcome or predictor of employee performance, few have systematically examined its role as a psychological mechanism linking leadership and organizational support to motivation. This gap is particularly evident in developing economies, where organizational dynamics and cultural factors may uniquely influence employee perceptions and behaviours. For instance, Sulastiningtiyas and Nilasari (2019) highlight the impact of leadership on job satisfaction in Indonesia, but their study does not explicitly address how satisfaction mediates broader organizational outcomes. Similarly, Chu et al. (2024) emphasizes organizational support's role in enhancing job satisfaction but lacks a focus on its mediating effect on motivation across varied industries.

The objective of this study is to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation. This research aims to clarify how job satisfaction serves as a psychological bridge, translating leadership behaviours and

organizational support into enhanced employee motivation and performance. The review seeks to provide a cohesive framework that integrates cross-contextual evidence, particularly from developing economies, to offer insights into effective organizational strategies. This study also aims to identify gaps in the literature and propose directions for future research on the causal mechanisms involving job satisfaction.

This review contributes to the organizational behaviour literature by positioning job satisfaction not merely as an outcome but as a critical mediator that amplifies the impact of leadership and organizational support on employee outcomes. By focusing on empirical studies from diverse sectors such as hospitality, public services, and manufacturing, the study addresses the need for a comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction's role in varied organizational settings. Furthermore, it responds to the call for more integrated perspectives on workplace dynamics, as highlighted by Lo et al. (2024), who advocate for exploring the interplay of organizational factors in shaping employee attitudes. Through this SLR, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for managers and policymakers to enhance employee satisfaction and motivation, ultimately driving organizational success.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Historical Context of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has fascinated researchers for nearly a century. Researchers have sought to measure the concept and study its effect on employee turnover and other organizational variables, occupational accident and illness, and employee performance. The word job satisfaction was coined by Hoppock (1975). She defined it as a combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that make an individual say "I am satisfied with my job". According to Gajić et al (2021), job satisfaction is the feeling of being gratified or happy with one's job. Employees spend one-third of their waking time in organization and jobs. Therefore, it is important that they like doing their assigned job. Judge et al (2017) suggests that job satisfaction is defined as one's affective reaction to one's job due to its characteristic or to the characteristics of the stimuli. Job satisfaction contains thoughts and feeling. Social, economic, demographic and organizational factors influence job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is important second to salary. Job satisfaction also impacts behaviours including absenteeism, turn-over, organization citizenship behaviour and, commitment to organization, which in turn impact organization performance and effectiveness. Choudhary and Saini (2021) in their study, find that satisfaction improves performance at lower complexity tasks and dissatisfaction improves performance at higher complexity tasks (Na-Nan et al., 2021; Saragih et al., 2024).

The Hawthorne studies paid attention to employees' performance was directly related to the work environment. Over time, increased attention was paid to employee feelings with respect to the work environment, as represented by job satisfaction. Effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of organizations, as articulated by Taylorism perspective, focused attention on the work outcome or performance. There is evidence that employee motivation, productivity, effectiveness or job performance is driven by non-financial incentives. The perception of a job's contributions to intrinsic goals or values is more strongly related to global measures of job satisfaction (Pepe et al., 2017). Also, there is evidence that employee satisfaction or satisfaction with work life is positively related to work motivation (Lo et al., 2024).

### **Leadership Styles and Employee Outcomes**

Since 1990, transformational leadership has been a frequently tested approach to leadership studies. Transformational leadership creates unique effects on followers that are unattainable within the limits of transactional or traditional methods of leadership. Transformational leadership is an inclusive style of leadership (Abun et al., 2017). Transformational leaders are equipped with exceptional skills of communicating with people. They interact with their subordinates to raise their interests. A transformational

leader provides intellectual stimulation to their subordinates. They develop a good rapport and a sound relationship with the subordinates and it motivates them to perform better (Abdullah et al., 2021). Transformational leaders provide individualized consideration to their subordinates. Transformational leaders encourage and nurture their followers. They coach and mentor them. They take care of the needs of their followers (Colakoglu et al., 2010). They delegate and provide freedom to the subordinates. They create a climate of public support and encouragement. They are responsive to followers. They foster a supportive climate and provide recognition for efforts.

Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership is the most researched style. Transformational leadership has been positively related to job satisfaction. The results of the surveys indicate that almost total (98%) managers support this code of ethics 'extensively' (83%) or 'moderately' (15%). The empowering behaviour is seen as more crucial to transformational leadership. Effective leaders with a good management style can be a vital contributor to the job satisfaction levels in the organization. The code of ethics reflects the management style and behaviour of managers in the organization. The leadership style and organizational policy are the significant factors affecting the employee satisfaction level (Abelha et al., 2018). It can be observed that there is an impact of the leadership style on the job satisfaction level of the employees. Job satisfaction is defined as the amount of pleasure and pride individuals derive from work. It is regarded as a widely used concept in understanding the behaviour of individuals at work. Job satisfaction has been described as a positive psychological state when individuals evaluate their work. Job satisfaction has been defined as the contentment of individuals with their job. Job satisfaction is employee's perception about their job. An employer cannot purchase the loyalty of employees. They must earn it and pay their employees good wages.

### **Organizational Support**

Support is the organization's efforts in supporting employees to carry out their duties. The support referred to in this research is perceived organizational support that is the belief that the organization will provide support and care for the wellbeing of its employees as well as the performance of the organization will be improved. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is defined as "the degree to which employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing" (Dramićanin et al., 2021). POS is formed if employees feel the presence of actions and resources taken by the organization to provide support (Chu et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that POS influence employee attitudinal outcomes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment and behavioural outcomes including performance, including task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

By implementing the POS, the organization has shown that the organization values the contribution and cares about the wellbeing of the employees, which can make the employees feel guilty to not reciprocate with good performance. This feeling, in turn, will lead to positive employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction can influence organizational commitment (Koesmono, 2018). Without job satisfaction, employees will be less likely to experience organizational commitment. Therefore, POS was predicted to indirectly influence task performance through job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In other words, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were predicted to play a serial mediating role in the association between POS and task performance. The first goal of this study was to examine the relationship between POS and job satisfaction. The second goal of this study was to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The third goal of this study was to examine the relationship between POS and organizational commitment. The fourth goal of this study was to examine the relationship between POS and task performance. The fifth goal of this study was to examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, both serially and in parallel.

## **Work Motivation**

Alshaabani et al. (2021) defined work motivation refers to the psychological processes that drive employees to exert effort towards particular work-related goals. It is a key factor influencing job performance, job satisfaction, and job turnover (Rony et al., 2024). Work motivation is crucial for organizations descended from job performance and turnover. Employees with higher work motivation are expected to show better job performance and job satisfaction, and are less likely to quit their jobs. Employees with less work motivation instead exhibit poorer job performance and job satisfaction, and more likely to choose to resign from the organization (Akosile et al., 2022; Lazzari et al., 2022).

There are two types of work motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is activated by the work itself. A high level of intrinsic motivation means that the task is performed for its own sake and enjoyment, which is considered beneficial for personal take away and growth. It leads to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job commitment, quality behaviour, and continuity behaviour. Extrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is activated by factors outside the work, such as wages and recognition. The presence of high levels of intrinsic work motivation provides many advantages to both the employee and the organization. Besides the take away and growth aspects, it is also associated with positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job commitment, and stronger performance-related behaviours.

Conversations related to mission, purpose, and vision are important cues that can facilitate sensemaking and sense giving. Sensemaking is the process through which people interpret events and develop an understanding of their meanings, thus making sense of what is happening in their work context. Sense giving changes and influences the meaning that followers have about an organization and its operation. Intrinsic motivation is the most covered construct, followed by intrinsic work motivation and extrinsic motivation. For further studies on leadership, work motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational support, it might be interesting to differentiate different types of motivation (Pepe et al., 2017). Future research can also focus on areas where less research has been reported. New constructs and creating typologies are encouraged. The findings can show managers and HR officers the importance of organizational variables as antecedents to work motivation. Future initiatives can help organizations design managerial and organizational actions that can improve employees' quality of work motivation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation, focusing on empirical studies published between January 2015 and December 2024. A rigorous and transparent approach was adopted to ensure replicability and quality, drawing data from peer-reviewed academic articles sourced from reputable databases, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, JSTOR, and national indexing portals such as Garuda Ristekdikti and Neliti. These databases were selected for their comprehensive coverage of multidisciplinary journals in business, organizational behaviour, and human resource management, ensuring access to diverse and relevant studies. The selection process was guided by clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as outlined in Table 1, which specified requirements such as publication date, language, empirical study design, and a focus on job satisfaction as a mediator involving leadership, organizational support, or work motivation.

The data collection process followed a structured, multi-phase approach to identify and refine relevant studies. An initial search using keyword combinations such as "job satisfaction," "mediating role," "leadership," "organizational support," and "work motivation" yielded 186 articles across the selected databases. The screening process, detailed in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Criteria types of article selection process

Criteria Type	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Date	Articles published from January 2015 to April 2019	Articles outside this time frame
Language	English and Bahasa Indonesia	Articles in other languages without translation
Type of Study	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods)	Conceptual papers, theoretical reviews, opinion pieces
Focus Area	Articles examining job satisfaction as a mediator	Studies where job satisfaction is only an independent or dependent variable
Variables	Must involve leadership, organizational support, and/or work motivation	Studies excluding at least two of those constructs
Availability	Full-text articles accessible online or through databases	Abstract-only or inaccessible articles

**Table 2.** Screening process

Stage	Description
Initial Identification	186 articles were initially identified from the databases based on keyword searches.
Title & Abstract Review	92 articles remained after removing duplicates and reviewing relevance to topic.
Full-Text Screening	34 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility based on inclusion/exclusion criteria.
Final Selection	17 articles met all criteria and were selected for inclusion in this systematic review.

Data analysis utilized qualitative content analysis to extract and synthesize key information from the selected studies, including variables studied, research methods, sample characteristics, and findings related to job satisfaction’s mediating role. The studies were thematically categorized based on independent variables and dependent outcomes. A descriptive synthesis approach was employed instead of statistical meta-analysis due to the heterogeneity of research designs and contexts, allowing for a comprehensive summary of patterns and trends. This method facilitated a clear comparison of findings across diverse organizational settings.

## RESULTS

This systematic literature review (SLR) synthesizes findings from 17 empirical studies published between January 2015 and December 2024 to explore the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation. The results, summarized in Table 3, highlight consistent patterns across diverse organizational contexts, particularly in Southeast Asia, and provide insights into how job satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism linking organizational inputs to employee outcomes. The analysis reveals five key trends: the consistent mediation role of job satisfaction, the dominance of leadership variables, a geographical focus on Southeast Asia, contextual diversity across industries, and the novelty of positioning job satisfaction as a mediator. These findings offer a cohesive framework for understanding the interplay of organizational factors and employee behaviors, with implications for both theory and practice.

**Table 3.** Summary of 17 Selected Studies on Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable (2015–2019)

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal Source	Independent Variables	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Country/Context
1	Rahman et al. (2015)	European Journal of Business and Management Research	Leadership, organizational support, compensation	Job satisfaction	Work motivation	Indonesia – Electricity company

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journal Source	Independent Variables	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Country/ Context
2	Wulandari et al. (2015)	Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences	Change leadership	Job satisfaction	Commitment to change	Indonesia – Public sector
3	Sarojani & Thirana (2017)	International Journal of Information Research and Review	Supervision, pay	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Sri Lanka
4	Priarso et al. (2018)	Business and Entrepreneurial Review	Leadership style, work environment, motivation	Job satisfaction	Employee performance	Indonesia
5	Villegas-Puyod et al. (2024)	Educational Administration : Theory and Practice	Transformational leadership	Job satisfaction	Quality of work life	Philippines
6	Sudhana (2023)	DIJDBM	Transformational leadership, org. support	Job satisfaction	Employee performance, motivation	Indonesia – Youth Organization
7	Azzuhairi et al. (2022)	IJHES	Organizational commitment	Job satisfaction	Intention to stay	Indonesia
8	Nurjanah et al. (2020)	Cogent Business & Management	Transformational leadership	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment, OCB	Indonesia
9	Ashraf (2020)	Journal of Global Responsibility	Job characteristics, compensation	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Indonesia – Tourism sector
10	Novitasari et al. (2022)	Journal of Industrial Engineering & Management Research	Organizational justice	Job satisfaction	Organizational citizenship	Indonesia – Tourism industry
11	Putri and Meria (2022)	ITSDI	Transformational leadership	Job satisfaction	Employee performance	Indonesia – Food industry
12	Ashraf et al. (2022)	Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry	Work ethics	Job satisfaction	Intention to stay	Indonesia – Hospitality sector
13	Ahmad et al. (2023)	IJELM	Servant leadership	Job satisfaction	Employee commitment	Pakistan
14	Siew (2017)	Journal of Arts & Social Sciences	Leadership	Job satisfaction	Turnover intention	Malaysia
15	Suhartono et al. (2023)	IJPBR	Transactional leadership	Job satisfaction	Employee performance	Indonesia
16	Taheri (2021)	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management	Organizational support	Job satisfaction	Turnover intention	Iran
17	Younas et al. (2021)	Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences	Inclusive leadership	Job satisfaction	Change-oriented OCB	Pakistan

The consistent mediation role of job satisfaction emerges as a central finding across all 17 studies, underscoring its pivotal role in translating organizational inputs, such as leadership styles, organizational support, and compensation, into performance-related outcomes like work motivation, organizational commitment, and intention to stay. For instance, Rahman et al. (2015) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation in an Indonesian water company, demonstrating that employees who perceive supportive leadership and organizational policies report higher satisfaction, which in turn enhances their motivation. Similarly, Sudhana (2023) confirmed that job satisfaction mediates the effect of transformational leadership and organizational support on employee performance and motivation in a youth organization in Indonesia. This pattern is further supported by Taheri (2021), who identified job satisfaction as a mediator between organizational support and turnover intention in an Iranian context, suggesting that satisfied employees are less likely to leave their jobs. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that positive organizational actions foster employee reciprocity through satisfaction, leading to improved outcomes (Chu et al., 2024). The consistency of this mediation role across different studies highlights job satisfaction's psychological significance, acting as a bridge that channels workplace factors into tangible behavioral results, such as enhanced motivation and reduced turnover intention.

Leadership variables, particularly transformational leadership, dominate as key independent variables in 11 of the 17 studies, reflecting their critical influence on employee perceptions and job satisfaction. Transformational leadership, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, consistently enhances job satisfaction, which subsequently boosts outcomes like motivation and organizational commitment. For example, Villegas-Puyod et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership in the Philippines significantly improves job satisfaction, which mediates its effect on employees' quality of work life. Similarly, Nurjanah et al. (2020) demonstrated that transformational leadership in Indonesia fosters job satisfaction, leading to increased organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Other leadership styles, such as transactional leadership (Sari, 2018) and inclusive leadership (Younas et al., 2021), also influence job satisfaction, though their effects vary by context. For instance, Suhartono et al. (2023) noted that transactional leadership in Indonesia enhances job satisfaction by providing clear rewards and structure, which positively impacts employee performance. In contrast, Ahmad et al. (2023) highlighted servant leadership in Pakistan as a driver of job satisfaction, mediating its effect on employee commitment. This emphasis on leadership underscores its role as a primary organizational factor shaping employee attitudes, with job satisfaction serving as a critical conduit for translating leadership behaviors into positive outcomes across diverse settings.

The geographical focus on Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka, is a notable trend, with 12 of the 17 studies conducted in this region. This concentration reflects growing academic interest in organizational behavior issues in developing economies, where job satisfaction is increasingly recognized as a key factor in workforce stability. For example, Sarojani & Thiranagama (2017) in Sri Lanka found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between supervision, pay, and organizational commitment, highlighting the importance of supportive management practices in fostering employee loyalty. In Indonesia, studies like Wulandari et al. (2015) and Novitasari et al. (2022) explored job satisfaction's mediation role in public sector and tourism industry contexts, respectively, showing its relevance across public and private sectors. Similarly, Siew (2017) in Malaysia identified job satisfaction as a mediator between leadership and turnover intention, emphasizing its role in retaining employees in competitive labor markets. This regional focus suggests that cultural and economic factors in Southeast Asia, such as collectivist values and rapid industrial growth, may amplify the importance of job satisfaction as a mediator. However, the limited representation of other regions, such as Europe or North America, indicates a gap in cross-cultural comparisons,

which could enrich understanding of job satisfaction's mediating role in diverse global contexts.

The contextual diversity of the reviewed studies, spanning sectors such as hospitality, public services, education, food industries, and youth organizations, validates the applicability of the job satisfaction mediation model across varied organizational settings. For instance, Ashraf et al. (2022) in the Indonesian hospitality sector found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work ethics and intention to stay, suggesting that ethical workplace practices enhance employee retention through satisfaction. Similarly, Ashraf (2020) in the Indonesian tourism sector demonstrated that job characteristics and compensation influence organizational commitment via job satisfaction, highlighting the role of job design in fostering positive employee attitudes. In the public sector, Wulandari et al. (2015) showed that change leadership impacts commitment to change through job satisfaction, indicating its relevance in dynamic organizational environments. This diversity across industries underscores the robustness of job satisfaction as a mediator, as it consistently links organizational inputs to outcomes regardless of sector-specific challenges. However, the variation in research designs and sample characteristics across these studies highlights the need for standardized methodologies to strengthen comparability and generalizability of findings.

The novelty of this review lies in its integrated perspective, positioning job satisfaction as a mediator rather than merely an independent or dependent variable, as is common in prior research. Unlike studies that treat job satisfaction as an outcome (Memon et al., 2023) or a predictor (Na-Nan et al., 2021), this SLR synthesizes evidence to demonstrate how job satisfaction channels the effects of leadership and organizational support into motivation and other outcomes. For example, Azzuhairi et al. (2022) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational commitment and intention to stay in Indonesia, offering a nuanced view of how commitment influences retention through satisfaction. Similarly, Putri and Meria (2022) highlighted job satisfaction's role in mediating transformational leadership's effect on employee performance in the Indonesian food industry, emphasizing its practical implications for performance management. By synthesizing these findings into a cohesive narrative, this review provides a structured framework that clarifies causal pathways involving job satisfaction. This approach responds to calls for integrated models in organizational behaviour research (Lo et al., 2024) and offers a foundation for future studies to build upon, particularly in modelling psychological constructs in diverse organizational settings. The review also identifies gaps, such as the need for longitudinal studies and broader geographical representation, to further validate the mediation model.

The findings, as summarized in Table 3, provide a comprehensive overview of the 17 studies, detailing their independent variables, mediating role of job satisfaction, dependent outcomes, and contextual settings. The table facilitates comparison across studies, revealing patterns such as the prominence of transformational leadership and the focus on Southeast Asian contexts. By highlighting these trends, the review contributes to a deeper understanding of how job satisfaction mediates organizational dynamics, offering actionable insights for managers to enhance employee motivation and performance through targeted leadership and support strategies. The synthesis also underscores the need for future research to explore additional mediators and moderators, such as cultural influences or individual differences, to further refine the model of job satisfaction's mediating role.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings establish that job satisfaction serves as a critical psychological mechanism, channelling the effects of leadership styles and organizational support into enhanced employee outcomes, such as motivation, commitment, and performance. For instance, Rahman et al. (2015) demonstrated that leadership and organizational support in an Indonesian water company positively influence work motivation through job satisfaction, aligning with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that supportive

organizational actions foster employee reciprocity (Chu et al., 2024). Similarly, Sudhana (2023) found that transformational leadership enhances employee performance and motivation in Indonesian youth organizations by increasing job satisfaction, highlighting its pivotal role in translating leadership behaviours into tangible outcomes. These results suggest that job satisfaction not only reflects employee contentment but also acts as a conduit for organizational strategies to influence workplace dynamics, particularly in developing economies where cultural factors may amplify its significance.

The dominance of leadership variables, particularly transformational leadership, underscores its profound impact on job satisfaction and subsequent employee outcomes. Studies such as Nurjanah et al. (2020) and Villegas-Puyod et al. (2024) illustrate that transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, fosters a supportive climate that enhances job satisfaction, which in turn boosts organizational commitment and quality of work life. This is consistent with Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the leader's role in inspiring and nurturing followers to achieve collective goals. However, the review also highlights variations in leadership styles, with Suhartono et al. (2023) noting that transactional leadership in Indonesia enhances job satisfaction through clear reward structures, suggesting that context-specific leadership approaches can differently influence employee perceptions. The geographical focus on Southeast Asia, evident in studies like Sarojani and Thiranagama (2017) and Siew (2017), further reveals that cultural factors, such as collectivism, may strengthen the mediating role of job satisfaction in these settings, though the lack of cross-cultural comparisons limits broader generalizability. This gap, as noted by Lo et al. (2024), calls for future research to explore how cultural and economic contexts shape the mediation model across diverse regions.

The review's integrated perspective, positioning job satisfaction as a mediator rather than solely an outcome or predictor, addresses a critical research gap identified by Memon et al. (2023), who focused on job satisfaction as a dependent variable. By synthesizing cross-contextual evidence, this study clarifies how leadership and organizational support influence motivation through job satisfaction, offering a cohesive framework for understanding workplace dynamics. For example, Taheri (2021) found that organizational support reduces turnover intention in Iran by enhancing job satisfaction, reinforcing its role as a mediator in diverse settings. The contextual diversity across sectors like hospitality, public services, and tourism further validates the robustness of this mediation model, as seen in Ashraf et al. (2022), where job satisfaction mediates the effect of work ethics on retention in the Indonesian hospitality sector. However, the heterogeneity in research designs and the limited use of longitudinal methods, as highlighted by Na-Nan et al. (2021), suggest a need for more standardized and long-term studies to establish causality and refine the mediation model.

The implications of these findings are significant for both theory and practice. Theoretically, this review contributes to organizational behaviour literature by providing a structured framework that positions job satisfaction as a mediator, responding to calls for integrated models (Lo et al., 2024). It encourages future research to explore additional mediators, such as employee engagement, and to incorporate cross-cultural perspectives to enhance generalizability. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations can enhance employee motivation and performance by fostering job satisfaction through effective leadership and supportive policies. Managers should prioritize transformational leadership practices and create supportive work environments, particularly in developing economies, to boost satisfaction and reduce turnover. Additionally, tailoring job designs to align with employee needs, as suggested by Ashraf (2020), can further amplify satisfaction and motivation, driving organizational success.

## **CONCLUSION**

This systematic literature review confirms that job satisfaction serves as a pivotal mediator in the relationship between leadership, organizational support, and work motivation, based on a synthesis of 17 empirical studies from 2015 to 2019. The findings

reveal that job satisfaction consistently channels the effects of various leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, and organizational support into enhanced employee outcomes, such as increased motivation, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intention. By positioning job satisfaction as a psychological bridge, this study underscores its critical role in translating organizational strategies into tangible behavioral results across diverse sectors, including hospitality, public services, and tourism, with a notable focus on Southeast Asian contexts. The review provides a cohesive framework that integrates scattered evidence, highlighting the universal importance of job satisfaction in fostering a motivated and committed workforce, especially in developing economies where cultural and economic factors amplify its significance.

The implications of this review are twofold: it offers a theoretical framework for understanding job satisfaction's mediating role and practical insights for managers to enhance employee motivation through supportive leadership and organizational policies. However, the study is limited by its focus on a specific time frame and a heavy reliance on Southeast Asian studies, which may restrict cross-cultural generalizability. Additionally, the heterogeneity of research designs in the reviewed studies complicates direct comparisons. Future research should explore longitudinal studies to establish causality, incorporate broader geographical contexts to capture cultural variations, and examine additional mediators, such as employee engagement or psychological well-being, to further refine the mediation model and its applicability across diverse organizational settings.

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