

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUST IN SUPERIORS AND WORK DISCIPLINE AMONG TEACHERS AT SMK N 5 AND SMK N 11 SEMARANG

Dzulfiqar Adi Irfanto

Universitas Widyatama, Indonesia

*e-mail: dzulfiqar.adi@widyatama.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between work discipline, leadership, and trust in superiors has been well documented. This study aims to investigate the relationship between trust in supervisors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and 11 Semarang. A sample of 90 teachers with civil servant status was obtained through convenience sampling, which allowed for accessible and voluntary participation. The trial of the measurement tools was conducted on July 24 and 25, 2018, involving 39 teachers from both schools. The research findings demonstrate a significant positive relationship between Trust in Superiors and teachers' work discipline. Moreover, the research highlights the importance of effective leadership practices in educational settings. The findings may serve as a foundation for future research, encouraging further exploration of the factors influencing teacher behavior and the development of strategies aimed at fostering trust within educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources play a crucial role in determining the success and achievement of organizational goals. Organizations demand that human resources improve their work productivity to sustain and enhance performance, revenue, and profits (Ardiansyah, 2013). In the field of education, teachers are the cornerstone for improving educational quality. Teachers hold a strategic position in educational reform efforts that aim to enhance academic quality since they are considered the heart and soul of educational institutions (Kunandar, 2007).

Schools operate as organizational systems where each member performs specific roles to achieve collective goals. Despite this structure, not all employees, including teachers, consistently demonstrate their best efforts. Teachers, however, share the essential responsibility of delivering effective and meaningful instruction to students. A high level of discipline among teachers is critical to ensure that students receive structured and impactful education (Hasibuan, 2016). Discipline encompasses adherence to rules, punctuality, and appropriate conduct in executing tasks.

According to Indonesia's Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are professional educators tasked with educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education settings (Kunandar, 2007). Discipline plays a vital role in enabling teachers to perform their duties effectively. Teachers who exhibit disciplined behavior can manage their responsibilities better and foster a conducive learning environment (Sa'adah, 2010).

Research suggests that teacher discipline positively influences students' learning interest and academic achievements (Naser, 2012; Tintri & Fitriatin, 2012).

Despite its importance, issues related to teacher discipline have emerged in Indonesia. For instance, interviews and observations at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang revealed several issues, including teachers arriving late for classes, unfilled teaching schedules, and non-participation in routine school activities (Sukoco, 2017). These disciplinary issues were partly attributed to the school principals' lack of time to supervise teachers and inconsistent enforcement of penalties (Hartono, 2017). Such challenges indicate the necessity for better leadership and trust between teachers and school principals.

Trust in superiors is a critical factor influencing employee behavior, including work discipline (Nyhan, 2000). Trust is built on perceptions of the superior's integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness (Pierce & Newstrom, 2009). Research by DeConinck (2010) demonstrates that when employees perceive fairness in reward distribution and organizational justice, they develop trust in their superiors, which positively affects their performance. Trust fosters a conducive work environment where employees are more willing to adhere to organizational rules and policies.

Leadership also plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher discipline. Effective school principals can create an organizational climate where discipline is naturally upheld, as employees view rules and policies as essential for their success and well-being (Black & Langenfeld, 1994; Rivai, 2004). Chanthea (2014) highlights that effective school leadership significantly enhances teacher discipline. When teachers trust their principals, they are more likely to be motivated and willing to adhere to organizational norms (Nyhan, 2000).

Given the relationship between work discipline, leadership, and trust in superiors, this study aims to investigate the connection between trust in superiors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. By exploring this relationship, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for educational institutions in fostering a more disciplined and productive teaching environment.

Human resources are integral to the educational system's growth and sustainability, particularly in Indonesia, where teachers play a pivotal role in educational reform. The professional responsibilities of teachers extend beyond classroom instruction to encompass mentoring, evaluating, and guiding students as stipulated in Indonesia's Law No. 14 of 2005. This law emphasizes the strategic position of teachers in shaping the nation's educational landscape. Consequently, teacher discipline becomes a critical element in ensuring that educational activities run smoothly and achieve their intended outcomes. Effective teacher discipline involves not only adherence to schedules and rules but also maintaining professional conduct in the execution of duties.

However, maintaining teacher discipline remains a persistent challenge in many Indonesian schools, including SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. Observations and interviews have identified several recurring issues, such as tardiness, incomplete teaching schedules, and minimal participation in school activities. These problems can undermine the educational process and student outcomes. School principals, as key organizational leaders, have a vital role in addressing these issues by implementing consistent disciplinary measures and fostering a climate of accountability. Unfortunately, a lack of effective supervision and inconsistent rule enforcement has contributed to the ongoing discipline problems in these schools.

Building a culture of discipline among teachers requires trust in school leadership. Trust serves as a foundation for collaborative relationships between teachers and school principals. When teachers perceive their superiors as competent, fair, and supportive, they are more likely to exhibit disciplined behavior and adhere to organizational rules. Empirical research has consistently shown that trust in

leaders significantly influences employee commitment and performance (DeConinck, 2010). Educational institutions can benefit from fostering an environment where leadership inspires trust and motivates teachers to fulfill their roles responsibly.

This study seeks to explore the relationship between trust in superiors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang, offering valuable insights for enhancing teacher performance through improved leadership practices. This study contributes to the understanding of the dynamics between trust in superiors and work discipline among teachers by providing empirical evidence of their significant positive relationship. By highlighting how increased trust in leadership correlates with enhanced work discipline, the research underscores the importance of effective leadership practices in educational settings. These insights can inform school administrators and policymakers seeking to improve teacher performance and create a more disciplined work environment. Additionally, the findings may serve as a foundation for future research, encouraging further exploration of the factors influencing teacher behavior and the development of strategies aimed at fostering trust within educational institutions. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the critical role of leadership in shaping a productive and responsible teaching workforce.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between trust in supervisors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. The dependent variable was work discipline, while the independent variable was trust in supervisors. The population consisted of 130 teachers from both schools, with eligibility criteria that included a minimum of one year of work experience and civil servant status. A sample of 90 participants was obtained through convenience sampling, which allowed for accessible and voluntary participation.

Data collection utilized psychological scales to measure work discipline and trust in supervisors, based on the Likert model. The work discipline scale comprised 48 items across dimensions such as attendance, obedience, vigilance, and ethical behavior, while the trust in supervisors scale included 40 items divided among dimensions like integrity, competence, and consistency. Prior to data collection, the validity and reliability of the instruments were tested through item discrimination analysis and expert judgment. Ethical practices were followed by obtaining informed consent and ensuring data confidentiality. Data were collected during regular school hours to minimize disruption. Simple regression techniques were employed to analyze the relationship between the variables, with assumptions of normality and linearity tested to confirm the suitability of the data for analysis. The results provided insights into the dynamics between trust in supervisors and work discipline among the participating teachers.

RESULTS

The research procedure involved several stages, beginning with field orientation, which aimed to understand the characteristics of the research subjects and the research location. This study was conducted at SMK Negeri 5 Semarang and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. SMK Negeri 5 Semarang is located at Jalan Dokter Cipto No. 121, Karangturi, Semarang Timur, Kota Semarang. The school accommodates 1,382 students and 82 teachers and is equipped with complete facilities, including laboratories, a library, and a mosque. The school's vision is to become a nationally and internationally standardized education center grounded in faith, devotion, and Indonesian culture. Meanwhile, SMK Negeri 11 Semarang is situated at Jalan Grafika Raya, Banyumanik, Kota Semarang. The school has

1,632 students and 92 teachers, along with various educational facilities. Its vision is to produce professional, morally upright, and globally aware human resources.

The preparation phase included administrative arrangements, measurement tool preparation, and a trial implementation. For administrative preparation, the researcher submitted a research permit request from the Faculty of Psychology at Diponegoro University, Semarang, for both schools, with the corresponding letter numbers. After obtaining the permit, the researcher proceeded to conduct the trial and the research. The preparation of measurement tools involved the development of two scales: the Trust in Superiors Scale and the Work Discipline Scale. These scales were discussed with academic supervisors to ensure the validity of the language and concepts. The Work Discipline Scale was based on aspects proposed by Rivai (2004), consisting of 48 items, while the Trust in Superiors Scale was based on dimensions outlined by Robbins (2003), containing 40 items.

The trial of the measurement tools was conducted on July 24 and 25, 2018, involving 39 teachers from both schools. Data obtained from the trial were processed using SPSS version 21.0.

The research results included tests for discrimination power, reliability, and validity for both measurement scales. The Work Discipline Scale initially consisted of 48 items. After three rounds of analysis, 31 valid items were retained. In the first round, 34 items were valid with a reliability coefficient of 0.865. In the second round, 31 items remained valid, with a reliability coefficient of 0.927. The third round confirmed the same 31 valid items, with an increased reliability coefficient of 0.929. Table 1 summarizes the analysis results.

Meanwhile, the Trust in Superiors Scale initially had 40 items. After two rounds of analysis, 38 valid items were retained. In the first round, 38 items were valid with a reliability coefficient of 0.961. The second round confirmed the same 38 valid items with an improved reliability coefficient of 0.963. Table 2 summarizes the analysis results.

The normality test was conducted using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and the results indicated that the data followed a normal distribution with a significance value greater than 0.05. The homogeneity test, performed using Levene's Test, showed that the data variance was homogeneous, with a significance value greater than 0.05.

The Pearson correlation test revealed a significant positive relationship between trust in superiors and work discipline, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.562$ and a p-value less than 0.01. Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrated that trust in superiors significantly influenced work discipline, with an F value of 24.56 and a p-value less than 0.01. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.316, indicating that 31.6% of the variability in work discipline could be explained by trust in superiors.

The research findings suggest that trust in superiors plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' work discipline. This aligns with Robbins (2003)'s theory, which emphasizes the importance of integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness of leaders in building subordinates' trust. The study also highlights that aspects such as attendance and compliance significantly influence work discipline, consistent with Rivai (2004)'s perspective. Therefore, schools are encouraged to foster better communication and openness between leaders and teachers to improve work discipline.

The research findings demonstrate a significant positive relationship between trust in superiors and teachers' work discipline. This study provides practical implications for school management in improving teacher performance through strengthening the relationship between school leaders and teaching staff.

The research involved 88 teachers with civil servant status at SMK Negeri 5 Semarang and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. Initially, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 90 teachers, but two did not return the completed forms, resulting in a response rate of 97.77%. The incomplete return of

questionnaires was primarily due to the teachers' workload and job responsibilities. Additionally, the researcher faced difficulties in controlling the return rate as the questionnaires were distributed through the public relations department and the vice-principals of the two schools rather than directly to the subjects. Table 3 presents the general characteristics of the research subjects.

The descriptive analysis aimed to provide an overview of the scores obtained from the variables Trust in Superiors and Work Discipline. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables in both hypothetical and empirical forms. The descriptive statistics were used to categorize the research subjects for each variable based on Azwar (2017)'s classification system. This system places individuals into hierarchical groups along a continuum based on the measured attributes.

The categorization for the Work Discipline variable shows in Table 5 reveals that none of the teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang fell into the "Very Low" category. Only 3.41% were in the "Low" category, while the majority (79.55%) were in the "High" category, and 17.04% were in the "Very High" category.

For the Trust in Superiors variable, there were no teachers in the "Very Low" or "Low" categories. Approximately 31.82% were in the "High" category, and the majority (68.18%) fell into the "Very High" category. These findings indicate a generally positive perception of trust in superiors and a strong work discipline among the teachers surveyed.

Table 1. The Work Discipline

Round	Minimum Rix	Maximum Rix	Reliability Coefficient
1	-0.292	0.716	0.865
2	0.171	0.717	0.927
3	0.273	0.736	0.929

Table 2. The Trust in Superiors

Round	Minimum Rix	Maximum Rix	Reliability Coefficient
1	0.130	0.885	0.961
2	0.286	0.889	0.963

Table 3. The general characteristics of the research subjects

Category	Description	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	48.86%
	Female	45	51.14%
Length of Service	2-10 years	19	21.59%
	11-15 years	20	22.73%
	16-19 years	6	6.82%
	≥ 20 years	43	48.86%
Age	25-40 years	20	22.73%
	41-45 years	9	10.22%
	46-50 years	20	22.73%
	≥ 51 years	39	44.32%

Table 4. The descriptive statistics for the variables in both hypothetical and empirical forms

Variable	Statistic	Hypothetical	Empirical
Work Discipline	Maximum Score	124	121
	Minimum Score	31	90
	Mean	77.5	108.07

Standard Deviation	15.5	9.461
Trust in Superiors	Maximum Score	152
Minimum Score	38	84
Mean	95	114.80
Standard Deviation	19	11.137

Table 5. The Work Discipline and Trust in Superiors variable categorization

Variable	Formula Interval	Score Range	Categorization	Number (N)	Percentage
Work Discipline	$\mu - 3 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu - 1.5 \text{ SD}$	$X \leq 66.5$	Very Low	0	0%
	$\mu - 1.5 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu$	$66.5 < X \leq 95$	Low	3	3.41%
	$\mu < X \leq \mu + 1.5 \text{ SD}$	$95 < X \leq 123.5$	High	70	79.55%
	$\mu + 1.5 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu + 3 \text{ SD}$	$123.5 < X \leq 152$	Very High	15	17.04%
Trust in Superiors	$\mu - 3 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu - 1.5 \text{ SD}$	$X \leq 54.25$	Very Low	0	0%
	$\mu - 1.5 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu$	$54.25 < X \leq 77.5$	Low	0	0%
	$\mu < X \leq \mu + 1.5 \text{ SD}$	$77.5 < X \leq 100.75$	High	28	31.82%
	$\mu + 1.5 \text{ SD} < X \leq \mu + 3 \text{ SD}$	$100.75 < X \leq 124$	Very High	60	68.18%

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between trust in superiors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 Semarang and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang. The findings revealed a positive relationship between these two variables, with a correlation coefficient of 0.859 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of trust in superiors are associated with higher levels of work discipline among teachers, and conversely, lower levels of trust correspond to lower levels of discipline. These results support the hypothesis that trust in superiors is positively correlated with work discipline.

Work discipline is defined as the consistent and orderly adherence to established rules and norms within an organization (Rivai, 2004). A disciplined workforce is essential for achieving organizational goals, as it ensures employees' compliance with organizational standards, increases productivity, and fosters ethical behavior. The high levels of work discipline observed in this study can be attributed to the presence of clear rules, strong leadership, and consistent enforcement of regulations by school principals.

The study's findings align with previous research. Rivai (2004) emphasized that good leadership, clear organizational rules, and a supportive work environment significantly contribute to employees' work discipline. Similarly, Rahardian & Indrawati (2020) highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in leadership, suggesting that leaders who can effectively manage emotions and build trust with their subordinates promote better work discipline. According to Rahardian & Indrawati (2020), trust is the foundation of effective leadership and is critical for fostering a disciplined and motivated workforce.

Furthermore, the study by Sujiono (2012) demonstrated that leadership and work discipline positively influence teachers' performance. Effective leadership creates a supportive work

environment that encourages discipline and enhances teacher performance. The findings of this study corroborate their conclusions, emphasizing the importance of trust in superiors as a factor contributing to teachers' work discipline.

The categorization results revealed that 68.18% of teachers had a very high level of trust in their superiors, while 31.82% were in the high category. None of the teachers fell into the low or very low categories. This indicates that teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang generally have a high level of trust in their superiors. Nyhan (2000) highlighted that a competent leader is essential for gaining subordinates' trust. The high trust levels observed in this study may be attributed to the competence and effective leadership of the school principals.

Similarly, the work discipline categorization showed that 79.55% of teachers were in the high category, 17.04% were in the very high category, and only 3.41% were in the low category. None of the teachers fell into the very low category. These results suggest that most teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang exhibit high levels of work discipline. Factors contributing to this high level of discipline include the presence of clear rules, strong leadership, government regulations, and the enforcement of sanctions for violations (Sutrisno, 2010). Observations and interviews with teachers revealed that the clear and consistently enforced rules by school principals played a significant role in maintaining high levels of discipline.

The regression analysis indicated that trust in superiors contributes 73.8% to work discipline, while the remaining 26.2% can be attributed to other factors such as leadership, communication, work motivation, and performance (Yusuf, 2013). Organizational culture has also been identified as a factor influencing work discipline (Hendriani & Artati, 2014). These findings suggest that while trust in superiors is a significant factor, other elements also play a role in shaping teachers' work discipline.

The findings of this study have several practical implications. First, school administrators should prioritize building and maintaining trust with their teachers, as this is a critical factor influencing work discipline. Providing clear rules, consistent enforcement of regulations, and effective communication can further enhance discipline levels. Additionally, leadership development programs that focus on building emotional intelligence and fostering trust can help school leaders create a more disciplined and productive work environment.

One of the strengths of this study is its focus on the relationship between trust in superiors and work discipline in the educational sector, which provides valuable insights for school management and educational policymakers. However, this study has some limitations. First, the sample size was limited to teachers at two schools, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample to increase the generalizability of the results. Additionally, this study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future studies could incorporate objective measures of work discipline to validate the findings.

Another notable aspect of this study is the emphasis on fostering a healthy organizational climate in educational institutions. A positive organizational climate can strengthen the relationship between trust in superiors and teacher discipline. Teachers who feel valued and respected are more likely to exhibit disciplined behavior and align themselves with institutional goals. Organizational support, including recognition programs, regular feedback sessions, and professional development opportunities, can contribute to a conducive environment where trust and discipline thrive (Adeniyi et al., 2024; Ahsan, 2024; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024). Future studies could explore how these factors interact to influence teacher discipline further.

The role of communication in strengthening trust and discipline should also be highlighted. Effective communication between school principals and teachers builds transparency, reduces misunderstandings, and promotes a shared sense of purpose. When school leaders communicate

expectations clearly and consistently, teachers are better equipped to adhere to institutional rules and maintain discipline in their daily routines (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Observations from this study suggested that schools with open communication channels experienced higher levels of teacher engagement and discipline, reinforcing the importance of communication as a leadership competency.

Lastly, the study underscores the potential benefits of participative leadership in enhancing trust and work discipline. School principals who involve teachers in decision-making processes foster a sense of ownership and accountability among their staff (Chanthea, 2014). This participatory approach strengthens trust and motivates teachers to maintain discipline since they perceive themselves as integral to the school's success. Educational institutions should consider adopting participatory leadership strategies to promote a collaborative and disciplined work culture. These recommendations aim to guide school administrators and policymakers in building more effective, disciplined, and trust-driven educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between trust in superiors and work discipline among teachers at SMK Negeri 5 and SMK Negeri 11 Semarang, finding a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.859$, $p < 0.05$) that indicated higher trust leads to greater work discipline. Regression analysis revealed that trust in superiors accounts for 73.8% of the variance in work discipline, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership in fostering a disciplined work environment. However, the study faced limitations, including the use of industrially aligned indicators for measuring work discipline and a cross-sectional design that restricts causal inferences. Future research should adopt tailored measurement instruments, explore additional influencing factors like organizational culture, and consider longitudinal designs to capture the evolving dynamics of trust and discipline. Additionally, examining external factors and conducting comparative studies across different educational contexts could offer a more comprehensive understanding of teacher discipline. Practical recommendations for school administrators include implementing trust-building strategies and reward systems to enhance teacher performance and discipline.

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