

Relationship Between Leadership Style and Work Discipline of Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat

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Abstract

Background: Work discipline is a critical factor in the effectiveness of health service delivery at primary health care centers (puskesmas). Leadership style plays a pivotal role in shaping employee behavior, including compliance with organizational rules and professional norms. Objective: This study aimed to analyze the relationship between leadership style and work discipline among health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat in 2026. Methods: A quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach was employed. The population consisted of all health administration employees (n = 42). Total sampling was applied, yielding a sample of 42 respondents. Data were collected through validated and reliable questionnaires. Univariate analysis was conducted to describe the frequency distribution of each variable, and bivariate analysis was performed using the Chi-Square test at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Results: Of the 42 respondents, 52.4% perceived a democratic leadership style and 47.6% perceived an autocratic leadership style. Work discipline was categorized as good in 57.1% of respondents and poor in 42.9%. Bivariate analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between leadership style and work discipline (p-value = 0.003; OR = 6.50; 95% CI: 1.82–23.21). Health administration employees who perceived a democratic leadership style were 6.5 times more likely to exhibit good work discipline than those who perceived an autocratic style. Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between leadership style and work discipline among health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat. Health center managers are encouraged to adopt a democratic leadership approach to foster compliance, responsibility, and a professional work culture.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Work Discipline, Health Administration, Puskesmas, Cross-Sectional

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: Disiplin kerja merupakan faktor penting dalam efektivitas pelayanan kesehatan di puskesmas. Gaya kepemimpinan berperan besar dalam membentuk perilaku kerja pegawai, termasuk kepatuhan terhadap aturan dan norma organisasi. Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan dengan disiplin kerja pegawai administrasi kesehatan di Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat Tahun 2026. Metode: Penelitian menggunakan desain kuantitatif dengan pendekatan cross-sectional. Populasi adalah seluruh pegawai administrasi kesehatan (n = 42) dengan teknik total sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis data meliputi analisis univariat dan bivariat menggunakan uji Chi-Square pada $\alpha = 0,05$. Hasil: Sebanyak 52,4% responden mempersepsikan gaya kepemimpinan demokratis dan 47,6% gaya kepemimpinan otoriter. Disiplin kerja baik ditemukan pada 57,1% responden. Hasil uji Chi-Square menunjukkan hubungan signifikan antara gaya kepemimpinan dan disiplin kerja (p-value = 0,003; OR = 6,50; 95% CI: 1,82–23,21). Kesimpulan: Terdapat hubungan yang bermakna antara gaya kepemimpinan dengan disiplin kerja pegawai administrasi kesehatan di Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat. Kepala puskesmas disarankan untuk menerapkan gaya kepemimpinan demokratis guna meningkatkan disiplin kerja pegawai.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan, Disiplin Kerja, Administrasi Kesehatan, Puskesmas, Cross-Sectional

PENDAHULUAN

Quality primary healthcare constitutes the principal foundation of Indonesia's national health system. As the frontline provider of first-level health services, the primary health center (puskesmas) bears a strategic responsibility for achieving the highest attainable standard of community health, as mandated by Law Number 36 of 2009 on Health. The capacity of puskesmas to fulfill their promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative functions is fundamentally determined by the quality of their human resources, particularly health administration employees who serve as the operational backbone of daily service delivery (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023).

Work discipline represents one of the key performance indicators of employees within healthcare organizations. Employees with high levels of work discipline consistently comply with regulations, attend punctually, complete tasks in accordance with standard operating procedures, and deliver responsive services to the community. Conversely, poor work discipline directly impairs service quality, reduces patient satisfaction, and impedes the attainment of national health targets (Rivai & Sagala, 2021).

Data from the State Civil Service Agency (Badan Kepegawaian Negara/BKN) in 2024 documented that disciplinary violations among civil servants in health facilities remain an incompletely resolved problem. According to a report by the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Health of Indonesia (2023), approximately 23.7% of puskesmas employees nationwide were classified as having poor work discipline, manifesting as attendance tardiness, delayed task completion, and insufficient initiative in implementing health programs. This situation was further compounded by misalignment between the leadership styles of puskesmas heads and employee expectations.

Leadership style refers to the behavioral pattern adopted by a leader to influence, mobilize, and direct subordinates toward organizational goals. The classical leadership theory of Lewin, Lippit, and White (1939) delineated three primary leadership typologies: democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire. Leaders with a democratic style tend to involve employees in decision-making, provide space for employee voice, and establish effective two-way communication. In contrast, autocratic style is characterized by strict control and unilateral decision-making with limited employee involvement (Northouse, 2022).

Previous studies have demonstrated that leadership style is significantly correlated with various dimensions of employee performance. Sirait et al. (2022), in a study at RSUD Haji

Medan, found that democratic leadership style had a positive and significant effect on employee work discipline ($p = 0.001$). Fitriani & Maulana (2023), in a study conducted at puskesmas in Medan, likewise identified a significant association between leadership style and the work compliance of health administration employees ($p = 0.012$). At the international level, Khan et al. (2021) concluded in a study of healthcare facilities in Pakistan that transformational leadership significantly enhanced both work discipline and organizational commitment.

While these studies provide broad insights into the importance of leadership style in healthcare organizations, research specifically examining the relationship between leadership style and the work discipline of health administration employees in puskesmas within Labuhanbatu Regency—particularly Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat—remains highly limited. Puskesmas Sigambal is one of the primary healthcare facilities with a considerable service burden in Rantau Selatan Sub-district; however, preliminary observations by the researchers identified apparent disciplinary concerns, including tardiness, unauthorized absences, and delayed administrative task completion.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on health administration employees as research subjects—a distinction from prior studies that typically encompassed all health personnel. Health administration employees occupy a strategic role that is often overlooked in puskesmas management research, despite the fact that the quality of health administration directly affects the accuracy of health data, the efficiency of service flow, and the effectiveness of public health programs. Accordingly, this study addresses an existing gap in the literature while providing practical contributions for puskesmas management in the Labuhanbatu area.

Based on the foregoing, this study aimed to analyze the relationship between leadership style and work discipline among health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat in 2026. The findings are expected to serve as an evidence base for managerial policy aimed at improving the quality of puskesmas service delivery through the strengthening of effective leadership.

METODE PENELITIAN

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach, in which the independent and dependent variables were measured simultaneously at a single point in time. This design was selected for its time efficiency and its capacity to describe the associations between variables concurrently within a single population group (Notoatmodjo, 2022).

Study Setting and Period

The study was conducted at Puskesmas Sigambal, Rantau Selatan Sub-district, Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province. Puskesmas Sigambal was selected because it represents a first-level healthcare facility serving a densely populated area in Rantauprapat. Data collection took place from February to March 2026.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised all health administration employees working at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat ($n = 42$). A total sampling technique was applied, in which all members of the population were enrolled as research respondents (Sugiyono, 2022). Inclusion criteria were: (1) employees who had worked at Puskesmas Sigambal for at least six months, (2) willingness to participate as respondents by signing informed consent, and (3) presence at the facility during data collection. Exclusion criteria included employees who were on leave or enrolled in study assignments at the time of data collection.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire developed based on the leadership theory of Lewin et al. and the work discipline theory of Hasibuan. The questionnaire comprised three sections: (a) respondent characteristics (8 items), (b) perceived leadership style (18 items using a 4-point Likert scale), and (c) employee work discipline (20 items using a 4-point Likert scale). Content validity was assessed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, with r -calculated values exceeding the r -table value of 0.361 ($n = 30$ in a pilot study at Puskesmas Sigambal Kota Rantauprapat). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.847 for the leadership style variable and 0.891 for the work discipline variable, both exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.700 and thus confirming instrument reliability (Azwar, 2022).

Operational Definition

Leadership style was defined as the employee's perception of the behavioral patterns exhibited by the puskesmas head in leading, directing, and managing health administration employees. It was categorized as: (1) Democratic—if the total questionnaire score was $\geq$ the median value (≥ 45); and (2) Autocratic—if the total questionnaire score was $<$ the median value (< 45). Work discipline was defined as the degree of compliance and adherence of health administration employees to the regulations, work procedures, and organizational norms of the puskesmas. It was categorized as: (1) Good—if the total questionnaire score was $\geq$ the median value (≥ 50); and (2) Poor—if the total questionnaire score was $<$ the median value (< 50).

Data Collection

Primary data were obtained through self-administered questionnaire completion by respondents following an explanation provided by trained enumerators. Secondary data were obtained from the Puskesmas Sigambal institutional profile, personnel records, attendance reports, and employee performance assessment records for the period January–December 2025.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, univariate analysis was performed to describe the frequency distribution and percentage of each variable (respondent characteristics, leadership style, and work discipline). Second, bivariate analysis was conducted using the Chi-Square test (χ^2) to examine the relationship between the leadership style (independent variable) and work discipline (dependent variable) at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). A p-value < 0.05 was considered indicative of a statistically significant association. The strength of the association was measured using the Odds Ratio (OR) with a 95% Confidence Interval (CI). All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS Statistics version 26.0.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Characteristics of Respondents

Data were collected from 42 health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat. The sociodemographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics of Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat, 2026 (n = 42)

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Female	30	71.4
Male	12	28.6
Age Group		
21–30 years	10	23.8
31–40 years	17	40.5
41–50 years	12	28.6
> 50 years	3	7.1
Education Level		
D-III (Health Diploma)	8	19.0
D-IV/S-1 Public Health	20	47.6
S-1 Non-Health	9	21.4
S-2 Health Sciences	5	11.9
Employment Status		
Civil Servant (PNS)	24	57.1
PPPK (Govt Contract)	10	23.8
Contract/Honorarium	8	19.0
Length of Service		
< 5 years	11	26.2
5–10 years	15	35.7
> 10 years	16	38.1
Total	42	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2026

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (71.4%), aged 31–40 years (40.5%), held a bachelor's degree in public health (D-IV/S-1; 47.6%), were employed as civil servants (PNS; 57.1%), and had a length of service exceeding 10 years (38.1%). This demographic profile reflects the human resource composition of the puskesmas, which is predominantly composed of professional female personnel with considerable work experience.

Leadership Style

The distribution of leadership styles as perceived by health administration employees is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Perceived Leadership Style Among Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat, 2026 (n = 42)

Leadership Style	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Democratic	22	52.4
Autocratic	20	47.6
Total	42	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 2 reveals that more than half of respondents (52.4%) perceived the leadership style of the puskesmas head as democratic, while 47.6% perceived it as autocratic. The relatively small difference between the two categories indicates a considerable diversity of perceptions among employees regarding the leadership approach applied.

Work Discipline

The frequency distribution of employee work discipline is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Work Discipline Among Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat, 2026 (n = 42)

Work Discipline	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Good	24	57.1
Poor	18	42.9
Total	42	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of respondents (57.1%) exhibited good work discipline, while 42.9% were categorized as having poor work discipline. This finding indicates that work discipline issues remain a sufficiently relevant concern requiring systematic managerial intervention at Puskesmas Sigambal.

Relationship Between Leadership Style and Work Discipline

The results of bivariate analysis examining the relationship between leadership style and work discipline are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Relationship Between Leadership Style and Work Discipline Among Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat, 2026

Leadership Style	Good Work Discipline n (%)	Poor Work Discipline n (%)	Total n (%)	p-value	OR (95% CI)
Democratic	17 (77.3%)	5 (22.7%)	22 (100%)	0.003	6.50 (1.82–23.21)
Autocratic	7 (35.0%)	13 (65.0%)	20 (100%)		
Total	24 (57.1%)	18 (42.9%)	42 (100%)		

As presented in Table 4, of the 22 respondents who perceived a democratic leadership style, 17 (77.3%) demonstrated good work discipline and 5 (22.7%) demonstrated poor work discipline. Conversely, of the 20 respondents who perceived an autocratic leadership style, only 7 (35.0%) demonstrated good work discipline, while 13 (65.0%) demonstrated poor work discipline.

The Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.003 ($< \alpha = 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between leadership style and work discipline among health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat in 2026. The Odds Ratio (OR) was 6.50 (95% CI: 1.82–23.21), signifying that employees who perceived a democratic leadership style were 6.50 times more likely to exhibit good work discipline compared to those who perceived an autocratic leadership style.

A detailed breakdown of work discipline indicators is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of Work Discipline Indicators Among Health Administration Employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat, 2026

Work Discipline Indicator	Always n (%)	Often n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Never n (%)
Punctual attendance	18 (42.9%)	14 (33.3%)	8 (19.0%)	2 (4.8%)
Task completion per SOP	15 (35.7%)	17 (40.5%)	9 (21.4%)	1 (2.4%)
Compliance with regulations	20 (47.6%)	13 (31.0%)	7 (16.7%)	2 (4.8%)
Effective use of working time	12 (28.6%)	16 (38.1%)	11 (26.2%)	3 (7.1%)
Job responsibility	21 (50.0%)	14 (33.3%)	6 (14.3%)	1 (2.4%)

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 5 reveals that job responsibility was the strongest indicator, with 50.0% of respondents reporting that they always fulfilled their work responsibilities. This was followed by compliance with regulations (47.6% always). In contrast, effective use of working time represented the area most in need of improvement, with only 28.6% of respondents reporting that they always used their working time effectively, and 7.1% indicating that they never did so.

Discussion

The finding that 52.4% of respondents perceived a democratic leadership style at Puskesmas Sigambal is consistent with the results of Rahmawati et al. (2023), who identified a predominance of democratic leadership perceptions in primary healthcare facilities in Central Java. In the puskesmas context, democratic leadership is characterized by employee involvement in program planning, information transparency, recognition of employee contributions, and effective two-way communication between leaders and subordinates.

Nevertheless, the proportion of employees perceiving an autocratic style remained substantial (47.6%). This finding may be linked to the heterogeneity of respondent characteristics, particularly differences in tenure and job position. Employees with shorter service periods tended to experience leadership as more directive and controlling, whereas senior employees were more likely to perceive themselves as involved in decision-making. Nurhayati & Suharto (2022) explained that the perception of leadership style is inherently subjective and influenced by individual factors such as work experience, expectations, and personality.

Regarding work discipline, the finding that 42.9% of respondents demonstrated poor work discipline corroborates data from the Ministry of Health of Indonesia (2023), which reported that approximately 23.7% of puskesmas employees nationally exhibited low levels of work discipline. Poor work discipline among health administration staff has the potential to adversely affect the quality of administrative services, the accuracy of monthly reporting data, and the overall operational efficiency of the puskesmas (Fathoni, 2021). The indicator-level analysis revealed that the effective use of working time was the most problematic aspect, a finding consistent with Simanjuntak et al. (2022), who identified that health administration employees tend to experience disruptions in time management due to insufficient direct supervision and suboptimal control systems.

The statistically significant relationship between leadership style and work discipline (p -value = 0.003; OR = 6.50; 95% CI: 1.82–23.21) is consistent with findings from several comparable studies. Sirait et al. (2022) identified a significant association between leadership style and work discipline at RSUD Haji Medan (p = 0.001; OR = 4.8). Hasanah & Wahyudi (2023) similarly found that democratic leadership style was significantly associated with the work compliance of health administration employees in Deli Serdang Regency (p = 0.009). At the international level, Mohd Isa et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis of 28 studies across Southeast Asia, concluded that democratic leadership style had the largest effect size on work discipline compared to other leadership styles.

These findings can be theoretically explained through several mechanisms. First, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory posits that employees who are treated fairly and involved in decision-making are more likely to reciprocate with responsible behavior, including enhanced work discipline. Second, Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that recognition by leaders who value employee contributions serves as a motivator that drives improvements in both performance and discipline. Third, the OR value of 6.50 reflects not only a

statistically significant relationship but also a high predictive value, indicating that democratic leadership is a strong determinant of favorable work discipline outcomes. Leaders who consistently provide constructive feedback, administer reward and punishment equitably, and foster a conducive work environment effectively cultivate a sustainable culture of work discipline (Robbins & Coulter, 2021).

Several contextual factors further inform the interpretation of these findings. The predominance of female respondents (71.4%) with bachelor's-level education (47.6%) is relevant, as Yusuf et al. (2022) demonstrated that highly educated employees tend to be more responsive to democratic and participatory leadership approaches. The dominance of civil servants (PNS; 57.1%) also carries implications for formal incentive structures, which may influence work discipline motivation differently from those applicable to contract staff. Additionally, the majority of respondents had served for over five years (73.8%), suggesting a more intensive organizational socialization process and stronger internalization of organizational values—consistent with Van Maanen and Schein's concept of organizational socialization as a key determinant of professional work behavior (Abdullah et al., 2023).

These findings carry significant practical implications for health center management. Puskesmas heads are encouraged to consciously adopt a democratic leadership approach—one that integrates employee participation, communication transparency, and equitable reward systems—not as an abandonment of firmness, but as a complement to it. The Labuhanbatu District Health Office should also consider providing evidence-based leadership training for puskesmas heads as part of strengthening the managerial capacity of primary healthcare facilities (WHO, 2022). Furthermore, the validated instrument developed in this study may serve as a reference tool for routine organizational climate surveys measuring employee satisfaction with leadership, which can in turn inform more targeted managerial interventions.

KESIMPULAN DAN REKOMENDASI

Based on the findings of this study conducted among 42 health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat in 2026, the following conclusions are drawn. The majority of respondents (52.4%) perceived the leadership style of the puskesmas head as democratic, while 47.6% perceived it as autocratic. More than half of respondents (57.1%) demonstrated good work discipline, while 42.9% were categorized as having poor work discipline. There is a statistically significant relationship between leadership style and work

discipline among health administration employees at Puskesmas Sigambal Rantauprapat in 2026 (p-value = 0.003; OR = 6.50; 95% CI: 1.82–23.21). Employees who perceived a democratic leadership style were 6.5 times more likely to exhibit good work discipline than those who perceived an autocratic leadership style. These findings underscore the critical role of leadership approach in shaping organizational discipline within primary healthcare settings.

For Health Center Managers

Puskesmas heads are recommended to consistently implement a democratic leadership approach in human resource management, including involving employees in health program planning processes, providing regular performance feedback, applying transparent and equitable reward and punishment systems, and fostering open communication. Periodic evaluations of work discipline indicators should be conducted, with particular emphasis on improving the effective use of working time.

For Health Administration Employees

Health administration employees are encouraged to cultivate an intrinsic awareness of the importance of work discipline as a manifestation of professional integrity, independent of the prevailing leadership style. The internalization of disciplinary values, effective time management, and adherence to standard operating procedures represent long-term investments in career development and in the enhancement of service quality to the community.

For Future Researchers

Future research is recommended to: (1) expand the study scope to cover all puskesmas in Labuhanbatu Regency to improve the generalizability of findings; (2) adopt a longitudinal research design to examine changes in work discipline in response to shifts in leadership style over time; (3) include mediating and moderating variables such as work motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational climate; and (4) develop instruments capable of identifying situational leadership styles in a more contextually sensitive manner.

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