



Profit : Jurnal Kajian Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah

Vol. 9 No. 2 (2025) : 767-779

Available online at <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/profit/index>

BUILDING HIGHER EDUCATION COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH JOB SATISFACTION, OPTIMIZING LOYALTY AND WORK ABILITY OF OPERATIONAL EMPLOYEES

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33650/profit.v9i1.13768>

Received : November 2025

Revised : November 2025

Accepted : December 2025

Abstract :

This study analyzes the influence of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus. The results show a positive influence between job satisfaction on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, this can be seen from the t_{value} of 4.601 > t_{table} of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. There is a positive influence between loyalty on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, this can be seen from the t_{value} of 4.601 > t_{table} of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. There is a positive influence between work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, this can be seen from the t_{value} of 4.601 > t_{table} of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. And there is an influence of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, which is proven to be significant, the F_{value} of 25.869 > F_{table} of 3.91 with a significance level below 5%.

Keywords : *Job Satisfaction, Loyalty, Work Ability, Employee Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a strategic factor in supporting the success of any organization, including higher education institutions. In an era of increasingly complex global competition, educational institutions are required to provide quality services, be responsive to the dynamics of community needs, and be adaptive to change (Dahlia et al, 2023). This concerns not only the quality of education provided but also the effectiveness of internal management, including the performance of its human resources (Gumara et al, 2024). Employee performance in the context of higher education extends beyond the implementation of administrative tasks, but also includes active contributions to creating a productive and efficient academic environment that supports learning and research processes (Nurzanah & Damaiyanti, 2023). Therefore, employee performance is a key foundation in maintaining and enhancing an institution's reputation, accreditation, and competitiveness at the

local, national, and even international levels (Astiti et al, 2019).

As one of the developing private higher education institutions in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah University of Kudus (UMKU) has a very significant role in educating the nation through the provision of quality higher education. In carrying out this role, UMKU does not only rely on the competence of lecturers and the quality of the curriculum, but also relies heavily on the performance of educational staff and administrative staff who are the spearheads in various aspects of academic and non-academic services (Faisal, 2025). High-performing employees are a determining factor in ensuring that every administrative process runs efficiently, student services are carried out well, and campus resource management can be optimized sustainably (Rachmadina & Baskoro, 2024). Therefore, it is important for UMKU to continuously evaluate and develop factors that influence the improvement of employee performance, in order to guarantee overall managerial and service quality (Hermawati et al, 2023).

Many previous studies have shown that employee performance is influenced by various variables, both internal and external. In this context, there are three main variables that are often studied as determinants of performance: job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability (Ningsih, 2023). Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which a person feels satisfied with their job, including the work environment, compensation system, interpersonal relationships, and the match between expectations and reality in the job. Satisfied employees tend to exhibit positive behavior, have high motivation, and are committed to completing tasks well. Conversely, job dissatisfaction can impact increased absenteeism, low productivity, and high turnover rates (Sopali et al, 2025).

In addition to job satisfaction, employee loyalty is also a crucial factor in supporting performance. Loyalty refers to an employee's emotional attachment and long-term commitment to the organization where they work (Ratna et al, 2023). Loyal employees will have a strong sense of belonging to the institution, tend to stay long-term, and are willing to contribute their best to the organization's success. Loyalty is also an important social capital in building a solid and harmonious work culture, thereby creating productive synergy between individuals within an institution (Gamil Al-Aghbari et al, 2025). In the context of UMKU, employee loyalty is crucial considering the dynamics of changing educational policies and the challenges of competition between universities, which require internal stability and strong collaboration (Syaftrin & Nofritar, 2024).

The third variable that influences performance is work capability, which encompasses the knowledge, skills, and technical competencies an employee possesses in carrying out their duties. Work capability serves as a fundamental prerequisite for producing quality performance (Sundari et al, 2018). Employees with strong capabilities will more easily adapt to job demands, address emerging issues, and actively contribute to the development of work processes (Pelealu, 2022). Especially in the complex and dynamic environment of higher education, work capability is a determining factor in

ensuring the smooth operation of operational activities and the success of the institution's strategic programs (Fajri, 2024).

These three variables job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability do not stand alone, but are interrelated and form a complete work ecosystem. In many cases, increased job satisfaction can foster loyalty, and high loyalty can motivate employees to continue developing their skills (Zahra et al, 2025). Similarly, adequate work ability can be a source of satisfaction for employees, as they feel competent and recognized for their contributions (Erliana et al, 2024). Therefore, it is important to examine these three variables simultaneously to comprehensively understand how they influence employee performance (Sibagariang et al, 2025).

At Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, issues related to human resource development and improving employee performance are of significant concern. In recent years, UMKU has implemented various strategic steps such as employee training and development, improving the remuneration system, and improving the work environment. However, there is little empirical research systematically measuring the influence of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability on employee performance within the campus environment. This presents a relevant research gap that needs to be addressed through a scientific approach. By conducting this research, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the factors that significantly influence employee performance can be obtained, thus providing a basis for consideration in formulating more effective and targeted HR management policies (Rahmawati & Marhalinda, 2022).

The urgency of this research is further reinforced by the reality that competition among universities is increasingly fierce, particularly in terms of accreditation, the number of new students, and external collaboration (Umbure, et al, 2023). Therefore, employee performance is one of the invisible assets needs to receive proportional attention. Especially in the era of digital disruption and changes in educational regulations, organizations that are able to manage their human resources adaptively will have a stronger competitive advantage (Anjarrini et al, 2024). Therefore, research on the influence of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability on employee performance is not only academically relevant but also practically important for the development of higher education institutions, particularly Muhammadiyah University of Kudus.

It can be concluded that employee performance is a fundamental aspect in supporting the achievement of the vision and mission of higher education institutions (Fadli et al, 2023). Three main variables that are suspected to have a significant influence on employee performance, namely job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability, need to be analyzed thoroughly to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of HR performance (Amin et al, 2024). Therefore, this research is important to be conducted in order to contribute to the development of HR management theory and assist the management of Muhammadiyah Kudus University in formulating strategies to improve employee performance sustainably. Based on the description above, the title of this research is "The Influence of Job Satisfaction, Loyalty and Work Ability on

Employee Performance at Muhammadiyah Kudus University."

RESEARCH METHOD

Types of Research

This type of research is quantitative research which is research using data in the form of numbers and statistical analysis to test hypotheses related to the influence of job satisfaction, loyalty and work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus.

Sampling Method

The population in this study was all 228 employees of Muhammadiyah University of Kudus. A sample is a portion or a certain number of excerpts taken from a population and examined in detail. This means that the researcher used a portion of the population that had been determined, so that conclusions could be drawn about the entire population. This sample of 80 employees was then used in this study using the technique of *purposive sampling*, which is a sampling technique based on certain considerations (PG et al, 2022). This means that the researcher took samples from educational staff at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus who were entitled to receive and complete the questionnaires distributed by the researcher, including security guards, office boys, and administrative staff who had been determined and examined in detail by the researcher.

Method of Collecting Data

Data collection uses a questionnaire method. In this case, it consists of a number of questions or statements posed by the researcher to obtain information based on self-reports (*self report*) or on the subject's personal knowledge and/or beliefs. In this case, the questionnaire was distributed to educational staff at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions or a closed-ended questionnaire format. These questions were used to analyze the respondents' answers. The level of cognition will be an important factor in answering closed-ended questions, designed using a Likert scale (*likert scale*).

Definition and Measurement of Variables

Employee performance

Performance is the results of work achieved, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with responsibilities, without violating the law, and in accordance with ethical morals. Indicators include quantity, quality, punctuality, attendance, and cooperation.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is closely linked to an employee's future survival in the company. Employees who experience job satisfaction feel happy and satisfied, enjoy their work, and don't try to evaluate their job to find a new one. Indicators include pride in their work, enjoyment and love for their work, passion and happiness with their work, and responsibility for their work (Sara et al, 2023).

Loyalty

Employee loyalty is the willingness of employees to contribute with all their abilities, skills, thoughts, and time to achieve company goals, maintain company secrets, and refrain from actions that are detrimental to the company while they are employees. Indicators include obedience, responsibility, dedication, and honesty (Ifeoma et al, 2021).

Work Ability

Work ability is the work results achieved by a person in carrying out the tasks assigned to him based on skill, experience, sincerity, and time. The indicators are intellectual ability and physical ability (Widyastuti & Prabowo, 2023).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis used in this study was multiple linear regression, which aims to estimate or predict the quantitative influence of each independent variable. This test was used to answer the question of whether the variables of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability affect employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus using the following formula:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where:

X₁ : Job satisfaction

X₂ : Work loyalty

X₃ : Work ability

e : Employee performance

a : Permanent

b₁ :Regression coefficient between job satisfaction and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus

b₂ :Regression coefficient between work loyalty and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus

b₃ :Regression coefficient between work ability and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus

e : error

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Instrument Test Results

To test the validity and reliability of the instrument, the author used SPSS version 20 analysis. The following are the results of the reliability test based on *pilot test* (non-respondents) amounted to 30 people. The validity and reliability test results can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1.1 Reliability Test Results

Variables	Reliability Coeffiens	Alpha	Information
Job satisfaction	0,907	0,60	Reliabel
Loyalty	0,895	0,60	Reliabel

Work ability	0,794	0,60	Reliabel
Employee performance	0,836	0,60	Reliabel

Based on table 1.1, it can be seen that each variable has a value *Cronbach Alpha* > 0.60. Thus, all variables (X_1 , X_2 , X_3 and Y) can be said *reliable*. For the validity level, a significance test was carried out by comparing the calculated r value with the table r value with an alpha of 0.05. The table r was obtained as 0.360. If the calculated r (for r for each item can be seen in the column *Corrected Item Total Correlation*) is greater than the table r and the r value is positive, then the item or question is said to be valid. The results of the validity analysis can be seen in the following table:

Tabel 1.2 Validity Test Results

Variabel	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	r tabel	Keterangan
Job satisfaction (X_1)	P1	0,831	0,360	Valid
	P2	0,919	0,360	Valid
	P3	0,816	0,360	Valid
	P4	0,858	0,360	Valid
Loyalty (X_2)	P1	0,597	0,360	Valid
	P2	0,772	0,360	Valid
	P3	0,879	0,360	Valid
	P4	0,885	0,360	Valid
Work ability (X_3)	P1	0,664	0,360	Valid
	P2	0,664	0,360	Valid
Employee performance (Y)	P1	0,759	0,360	Valid
	P2	0,546	0,360	Valid
	P3	0,733	0,360	Valid
	P4	0,755	0,360	Valid
	P5	0,427	0,360	Valid

Based on table 1.2 above, it can be seen that each item has r_{count} greater than r_{table} and has a positive value. Thus, the items or questions are said to be positive on average *valid*.

Partial Test (Uji t)

The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Based on the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the t value_{count} > t_{table} . This can be seen from the t value_{count} amounting to 4,601 > t_{table} . The value of 1.664 with a significance level below 5% means that H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis that job satisfaction influences employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus is proven to be significant and accepted. This can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1.3 Regression Results of X_1 against Y

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constanta	6.059	1.955	3.099	.003

Job Satisfaction (X1)	.289	.381	4.601	.000
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a. Dependent Variabel: Employee performance (Y)

The Influence of Loyalty on Employee Performance

From the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > t_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ amounting to $2,903 > t_{\text{table}}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%, meaning H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis that loyalty influences employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus is proven significant and accepted. This can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1.4 Regression Results of X2 against Y

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constanta	6.059	1.955	3.099	.003
Loyalty(X2)	.280	.241	2.903	.005

a. Dependent Variabel: Employee performance (Y)

The Influence of Work Ability on Employee Performance

Based on the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > t_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ amounting to $7,363 > t_{\text{table}}$ The value of 1.664 with a significance level below 5% means that H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is an influence between work ability and employee performance at Muhammadiyah Kudus University is proven significant and accepted. This can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1.5 Regression Results of X3 against Y

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constanta	6.059	1.955	3.099	.003
Work ability (X3)	.590	.594	7.363	.000

a. Dependent Variabel: Employee performance (Y)

Multiple Linear Regression Test (Uji F)

The results of the multiple linear regression test can be seen below:

Tabel 1.5 ANOVAa

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	125.677	3	41.892	25.869	.000 ^b
Residual	123.073	76	1.619		
Total	248.750	79			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work ability (X3), Loyalty (X2), Job satisfaction (X1)

From table 4.10 above, it can be seen that the F value is 25.869 with a significance level of 0.000 less than 0.005 (Sig. < 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the variables of job satisfaction, work loyalty, and work ability have a significant influence on employee performance at Muhammadiyah Kudus University.

Based on the simultaneous test results above, we then need to determine the mathematical equation. Calculations using SPSS version 20 yield the following regression equation:

$$Y = 6,059 + 0,289 X_1 + 0,280 X_2 + 0,590 X_3$$

This can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 1.6 Results of Multiple Linear Regression Equation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.059	1.955		3.099	.003
1 Job satisfaction (X1)	.289	.063	.381	4.601	.000
Loyalty (X2)	.280	.096	.241	2.903	.005
Work ability (X3)	.590	.080	.594	7.363	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance (Y)

Based on the equation above, it can be seen that the job satisfaction variable has a positive influence of 0.289, work loyalty has a positive influence of 0.280 and work ability has a positive influence of 0.590, this means that the better the job satisfaction, work loyalty and work ability, the better the performance of employees of Muhammadiyah Kudus University.

Discussion

The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Based on the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > t_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ amounting to 4,601 $> t_{\text{table}}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%, meaning H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected. Thus, the hypothesis that job satisfaction influences employee performance at the Muhammadiyah University of Kudus is proven to be significant and accepted. According to Robbins and Judge in (Hamulic et al, 2024), a review of 300 studies revealed a strong correlation between job satisfaction and performance. Moving from the individual to the organizational level, we also found support for the satisfaction-performance relationship. When we collect satisfaction and performance data for the organization as a whole, we find that organizations with more satisfied employees tend to be more effective than those with fewer employees. (Dahlia et al, 2023) explains, "Job satisfaction is a pleasant emotional attitude and a love for one's work." Job satisfaction in work is the satisfaction enjoyed in work by obtaining good work results, placement, treatment, equipment, and a good work environment. Satisfaction outside of work is the employee's job satisfaction enjoyed outside of work by receiving the amount of compensation they receive from their work, so they can buy their needs. In addition, according to Robbins in, job satisfaction can be conceptualized as a very broad disposition towards an employee's job, marked by the differences felt by employees both in terms of the actual benefits obtained by employees with appropriate and acceptable returns for employees.

The Influence of Loyalty on Employee Performance

Based on the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > t_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ amounting to $4,601 > t_{\text{table}}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5% means that H_a is accepted, H_o is rejected. Thus, the hypothesis that there is an influence between work loyalty and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus is proven to be significant and accepted. According to Preko and Adjetey in (Ratna et al, 2023), in their research, employee loyalty contribute Employee loyalty has a significant and positive impact on employee performance. Research shows that loyalty has a significant and positive impact on performance. Employee loyalty is reflected not only in the length of the employment relationship but also in improved performance. Employee loyalty serves as a guarantee for the company that employees are ready to do their best for the company's progress. Loyalty to the company makes work easier for employees. Meanwhile, according to Siagian in (Erliana et al., 2024), loyalty is explained as an employee's tendency not to move to another company because loyalty can affect employee comfort while working for a company. According to Ronaldy in (Gumara et al., 2024), employee loyalty is defined as an employee's willingness to contribute their abilities, skills, thoughts, and time to participate in achieving company goals, maintain company secrets, and refrain from actions detrimental to the company while working as an employee.

The Influence of Work Ability on Employee Performance

Based on the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20, it can be seen that the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > t_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $t_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ amounting to $4,601 > t_{\text{table}}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5% meaning H_a is accepted, H_o is rejected. Thus, the hypothesis of the influence between work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah Kudus University is proven to be significant and accepted. This means that work ability and work motivation have a significant relationship with employee performance. This means that every small change, whether increasing or decreasing in work ability and work motivation will affect the increase or decrease in employee performance. This is supported by previous research presented in the journal of (Sibagariang et al., 2025) which shows that there is a significant influence between work ability and work motivation on employee performance.

The Influence of Job Satisfaction, Loyalty and Work Ability on Employee Performance

The variables of job satisfaction, work loyalty and work ability on employee performance are proven from the results of computer processing using SPSS version 20. It can be seen that the $F_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}} > F_{\text{table}}$. This can be seen from the $F_{\text{value}_{\text{count}}}$ of $25,869 > F_{\text{table}}$ of 3.91 with a significance level below 5%, meaning H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected. Thus, the hypothesis that there is an influence between job satisfaction, job loyalty, and work ability on employee performance at the Muhammadiyah University of Kudus is proven to be significant and accepted. Organizational performance, according to (Syafrin & Nofritar, 2024), is a measure of how efficiently and effectively an organization can achieve its stated goals. Therefore, effectiveness and efficiency are general

criteria for organizational performance. Individual performance is the result of employee work, reviewed from both quality and quantity aspects based on established work standards. One of the determining factors of performance within a company is job satisfaction, loyalty, and ability. A company needs to focus on employee welfare, which can influence job satisfaction, job loyalty, and work ability so that employees can make maximum contributions to the company. This is in accordance with the results of previous research by Fitriani, Mansyur Ramly, and Muhsin Wahid, which found that ability, loyalty, and satisfaction have a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the South Sulawesi Provincial DPRD Office.

CONCLUSION

After the researcher conducted the analysis, the researcher was able to provide several conclusions as follows:

There is a positive influence between job satisfaction and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, this can be seen from the t value amounting to $4,601 > t_{table}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. There is a positive influence between loyalty and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, as evidenced by the t -value amounting to $4,601 > t_{table}$ of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. There is a positive influence between work ability and employee performance at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus, as seen in the t -value amounting to $4,601 > t_{table}$ The value of 1.664 with a significance level below 5%. Furthermore, there is a significant influence of job satisfaction, loyalty, and work ability on employee performance at Muhammadiyah Kudus University, as evidenced by the F value of $25,869 > F_{table}$ of 3.91 with a significance level below 5%.

Despite the best possible efforts, this study still has many limitations, including: This study only focuses on one object with almost the same work at Muhammadiyah University of Kudus. The number of research respondents is still too small to support the ability to generalize the research results.

Based on the research results above, the agenda given for further research includes: 1) In order for job satisfaction, loyalty and work ability to continue to increase, there needs to be a fair award from the institution according to performance. 2) Institutions should increasingly improve the form of giving better rewards to employees so that their performance will improve. 3) To obtain better and more accurate study results, it is necessary to conduct tests on the factors that influence employee performance by adding more variables.

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