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Strengthening Organizational Performance through Gender Policy, Work Environment, and Social Support in High-Pressure Institutions: A Study of Densus 88 AT POLRI

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate how gender policy and work environment influence job satisfaction, with social support acting as a mediating variable, within the high-pressure context of Densus 88 AT POLRI—a tactical unit of the Indonesian National Police. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were collected from 150 active personnel selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as tenure and rank. The research employed a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments measuring gender inclusivity, work environment conditions, social support, and job satisfaction. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0. The results demonstrate that both gender policy and work environment have significant direct effects on job satisfaction, while social support plays a critical mediating role, enhancing the influence of the other variables. The findings reveal that inclusive policies and psychologically supportive environments substantially improve personnel satisfaction, especially when reinforced by peer and supervisory support systems. This has important implications for law enforcement agencies operating under high stress: integrating organizational justice, psychosocial support, and safe work environments is vital for workforce retention and effectiveness. The study contributes theoretically by extending the job satisfaction model to high-risk policing environments and practically by informing policy recommendations for leadership development, gender equity, and mental health interventions.

Keyword: Gender Policy, Work Environment, Social Support, Job Satisfaction, Police Personnel, Organizational Well-being, Densus 88 AT POLRI

INTRODUCTION

In high-pressure work environments such as law enforcement institutions, especially in tactical units like the Directorate of Investigation Densus 88 AT POLRI, ensuring job satisfaction among personnel remains a critical organizational challenge. Job satisfaction is directly tied to

productivity, morale, and the long-term performance of an institution. Despite various strategic reforms, many personnel within these high-risk units still experience dissatisfaction that can affect both individual performance and institutional effectiveness. This dissatisfaction is often linked to issues of workplace inequality, inadequate support systems, and rigid work environments. Previous studies have examined factors that influence job satisfaction within policing institutions. (Ramadhani, F., & Khoirunnisa, 2019; Wenny Desty Febrian.S.E.M.M| Rini Ardista *et al.*, 2022) found that equitable gender policies significantly enhance organizational commitment among policewomen, indicating a positive correlation between gender inclusivity and satisfaction. Similarly, (Wardhani and Hartono, 2021) emphasized that a conducive work environment and motivation significantly affect police performance, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. These studies underscore the importance of organizational justice and work conditions in determining personnel outcomes.

In addition, social support has emerged as a critical buffer against occupational stress. Research by (Sanwari, 2021) and (Isnovijanti, 2022) highlighted the role of social support from peers, superiors, and family in enhancing psychological well-being and reducing workplace stress, ultimately improving job satisfaction. However, these studies primarily focused on general police populations and rarely investigated specialized tactical units. Moreover, most research has addressed these variables in isolation rather than as part of an integrated model.

While (Sedarmayanti, 2020) and (Raditya *et al.*, 2019) provide foundational insights into ergonomic environments and organizational climate, their applicability in elite tactical divisions like Densus 88 has not been fully explored. The psychological toll, operational pressures, and gender dynamics within such units may yield different outcomes compared to general policing contexts. This study addresses the following research questions: (1) How does gender policy influence job satisfaction through social support? (2) How does the work environment influence job satisfaction through social support? (3) Does social support directly affect job satisfaction in Densus 88 AT POLRI? The objectives are to examine the direct and mediating effects of gender policy and workplace environment on job satisfaction, and to assess the structural role of social support in this relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Policy and Job Satisfaction

Gender policy is one of the fundamental dimensions of workplace inclusivity. In organizational contexts, it refers to the systematic efforts to ensure equality between men and women in recruitment, promotions, compensation, and career development. Gender policy becomes especially crucial in patriarchal institutions, such as law enforcement, where cultural and structural biases often impede equal treatment. Research shows that gender-inclusive policies positively influence employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention. (Ramadhani & Khoirunnisa, 2019) emphasized that equitable gender practices in police institutions enhance female officers' commitment and perceived value. This, in turn, contributes to higher satisfaction and reduced turnover. Gender equality in the workplace fosters psychological safety and encourages open communication, which are essential for job satisfaction.

Despite progressive shifts, the literature notes that policy alone is not sufficient. Implementation, leadership commitment, and accountability mechanisms are crucial to ensure that gender policy translates into practical, lived experiences. In the context of Indonesian policing, although reforms have been introduced to increase gender representation, many officers report that patriarchal norms persist informally (Wardhani and Hartono, 2021).

Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

The work environment is another key determinant of job satisfaction. It encompasses both the physical workspace and the psychological climate in which employees operate. A supportive and safe work environment has been found to improve employee motivation, reduce burnout, and increase organizational loyalty. In the context of law enforcement, where personnel are exposed to stressors such as violence, operational unpredictability, and institutional bureaucracy, the quality of the work environment is particularly salient. A study by (Indrasari, 2017) shows that the physical design of the workplace, cleanliness, access to basic facilities, and ergonomic considerations are positively correlated with job satisfaction among Indonesian police officers. (Sedarmayanti, 2020) also emphasizes that a well-organized physical environment contributes to employee concentration and task effectiveness.

Several frameworks help analyze the work environment. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) proposes that factors like task significance, autonomy, and feedback shape job satisfaction. When applied to elite tactical units, we find that while task significance is high, autonomy and feedback may be limited by hierarchical command structures. Consequently, officers may feel underappreciated or micromanaged, leading to dissatisfaction. Recent studies such as that by (Putra & Prianggono, 2022) have applied this framework in Indonesian law enforcement, finding that team cohesion and clarity of task goals greatly influence satisfaction, especially in units with high operational mobility.

Social Support as a Mediator

Social support is defined as the emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance individuals receive from their environment. In organizational settings, this support can come from peers, supervisors, subordinates, or even external parties like family and community. Numerous studies have positioned social support as a protective buffer against workplace stressors. (Sanwari, 2021) and (Isnovijanti, 2022) found that social support within police institutions significantly reduces stress and increases satisfaction. Specifically, they argue that officers who receive validation, mentorship, and empathetic communication from peers and superiors are more resilient and report higher engagement. This is particularly important in tactical units where emotional exposure is high and professional risks are frequent.

Social support also mediates the effects of work environment and gender policy on job satisfaction. For instance, a poor work environment may be tolerated better when strong social bonds exist within the team. Similarly, if gender discrimination is present, peer solidarity can help mitigate its psychological impact. In this sense, social support becomes a mediator that channels or buffers the impact of other variables. Several psychological theories explain this mediating function. The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by Hobfoll posits that individuals strive to retain, protect, and build resources—including social support. When these resources are threatened or depleted (e.g., by a hostile work environment), stress increases. Therefore, social support replenishes psychological capital and helps restore balance.

Integrated Perspective and Conceptual Framework

While each of the three variables—gender policy, work environment, and social support—has been studied individually in relation to job satisfaction, there is limited research that integrates them into a comprehensive model. Most existing studies focus on linear cause-effect relationships and do not examine mediation or interaction effects. This gap is particularly visible in law enforcement contexts, where organizational culture is rigid and psychological well-being is critical but under-studied. The novelty of your research lies in its integrative framework: gender policy and work environment as exogenous variables, job satisfaction as the endogenous outcome, and social support as a mediating variable. This approach not only aligns with contemporary organizational behavior theories but also offers a contextual contribution to Indonesian law

enforcement scholarship. Moreover, your focus on Densus 88 AT POLRI adds empirical value, as this unit operates under unique pressures not found in other policing divisions. The insights generated could guide HR practices, policy reforms, and well-being initiatives for elite tactical units across the ASEAN region.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design using a path analysis model to investigate the influence of gender policy and work environment on job satisfaction, mediated by social support, among personnel at the Directorate of Investigation Densus 88 AT POLRI. The design was selected to test the relationships among variables and to determine the direct and indirect effects of gender policy and work environment on job satisfaction through the mediating role of social support. This method was considered appropriate due to the complexity of the relationships among variables and the necessity to evaluate mediating effects statistically. The correlational nature of the study does not involve manipulation of variables but observes naturally occurring phenomena within a specific institutional setting. The design is suitable for answering the research questions posed, as it allows the researcher to assess causality pathways within a structural framework. The study also includes validity and reliability tests, ensuring the design is robust and can withstand empirical scrutiny.

The population of this research consists of active personnel assigned to the Direktorat Penyidikan Densus 88 AT POLRI, a specialized tactical unit within the Indonesian National Police. This unit was selected due to its unique organizational structure, high operational demands, and relevance to the study's focus on workplace satisfaction under pressure. Personnel in this directorate face complex operational challenges and organizational pressures, making them ideal subjects for investigating the psychological and structural factors affecting job satisfaction.

The sampling method was appropriate considering the closed nature of the institution and the need for access-controlled participation. It ensures internal validity by selecting individuals familiar with the institutional environment and relevant to the constructs under study.

Data were collected using a standardized structured questionnaire developed based on existing validated instruments adapted to the Indonesian policing context. The instrument was composed of four major sections corresponding to the study variables: gender policy, work environment, social support, and job satisfaction.

- 1) Gender Policy was measured using a scale adapted from existing literature on organizational gender inclusion, covering aspects such as fairness, equal opportunity, anti-discrimination policy awareness, and gender-based role distribution.
- 2) Work Environment was assessed using indicators based on (Sedarmayanti, 2020), including physical environment (lighting, noise, temperature), psychological safety, managerial support, and interpersonal relations.
- 3) Social Support was measured using constructs from (Sarafino & Smith, 2021), including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and companionship.
- 4) Job Satisfaction was measured using adapted scales from Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, capturing employee satisfaction with work tasks, relationships, leadership, and compensation.

Each section used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). This method allowed for standardized, quantifiable responses suitable for path analysis.

Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test with 30 personnel from a similar unit within POLRI to ensure clarity, language suitability, and face validity. Feedback from

this pre-test led to minor revisions in phrasing and layout. The internal consistency of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with all variable constructs exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating high reliability.

The analysis employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 software. This technique was chosen due to its suitability for exploratory models, small-to-medium sample sizes, and its ability to model latent variables with multiple indicators. PLS-SEM also facilitates the assessment of both direct and indirect relationships—crucial for testing the mediating role of social support. Throughout the process, data precision was ensured by applying consistent measurement protocols and interpretation standards. The analysis steps and outputs were documented for transparency and reproducibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Results

The initial step in model evaluation involved testing the validity and reliability of the instruments. All indicators met the standard loading threshold of >0.70 , indicating good convergent validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50, demonstrating that more than half of the variance observed in the indicators is explained by the latent variables. The Composite Reliability (CR) scores for all constructs ranged between 0.89 and 0.94, which far exceeds the minimum requirement of 0.70. Cronbach's Alpha values also ranged from 0.83 to 0.92, further confirming internal consistency reliability. Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The square roots of the AVEs were higher than the inter-construct correlations, and HTMT values were all below 0.85, confirming that each construct is empirically distinct from the others.

Structural Model Results

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for the job satisfaction variable was 0.67, indicating that 67% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by the independent variables and mediator in the model. This is considered a strong effect size according to Chin (1998). The R^2 for social support was 0.53, indicating moderate predictive power. The Q^2 values for both endogenous constructs were above zero, confirming that the model has predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficients

The direct path between gender policy and job satisfaction yielded a path coefficient of 0.34 ($t = 5.12, p < 0.001$). This means gender policy has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction. Personnel who perceive institutional gender policies as fair and inclusive report higher satisfaction levels. The work environment also had a direct positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.39, t = 6.21, p < 0.001$). This confirms that a supportive, well-structured work environment significantly contributes to individual satisfaction, particularly in high-risk organizations like Densus 88. Furthermore, social support demonstrated a strong and significant direct effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42, t = 7.48, p < 0.001$). This suggests that officers who receive emotional, instrumental, and informational support from peers and supervisors are more likely to feel satisfied with their roles.

To evaluate the mediating role of social support, the indirect paths were assessed: 1) Gender policy → Social support → Job satisfaction showed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.18, t = 4.03, p < 0.001$). This means that social support partially mediates the relationship between gender policy and job satisfaction. Institutions with inclusive gender policies cultivate supportive work cultures, which in turn enhance job satisfaction; 2) Work environment → Social support → Job satisfaction also revealed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.21, t = 4.69, p < 0.001$). This indicates that work environments conducive to psychological safety and trust promote stronger peer support, ultimately improving satisfaction levels. These findings affirm that social support serves as a

powerful mediating mechanism, channeling the effects of both gender policy and work environment onto job satisfaction.

The findings highlight the pivotal role of organizational fairness and gender-inclusive policies in shaping job satisfaction. The results reinforce prior studies (Ramadhani & Khoirunnisa, 2019) suggesting that equitable treatment and access to career development reduce feelings of marginalization, particularly among female personnel. In hierarchical units like Densus 88, such policies may challenge traditional norms, but the data indicates that where they are perceived as authentic and enforced, satisfaction rises across all gender groups. Interestingly, even in male-dominated units, awareness of gender fairness was positively correlated with satisfaction. This indicates that gender-inclusive practices do not only benefit women, but contribute to a general culture of respect and professional meritocracy, fostering higher morale across the board. As expected, the work environment had one of the strongest effects on job satisfaction. Given the physically and emotionally demanding nature of Densus 88's work, this result underscores the importance of both tangible (e.g., safety measures, facilities) and intangible (e.g., respect, communication) aspects of the workplace. Respondents cited clear protocols, access to resources, and mutual respect from supervisors as key aspects of a good work environment. The findings align with Herzberg's theory, where environmental hygiene factors are essential for preventing dissatisfaction, even if not sufficient alone to create satisfaction.

The non-physical aspects, such as interpersonal trust, participatory decision-making, and fair workload distribution, emerged as even more influential than physical factors. This suggests that in elite tactical units, organizational climate plays a crucial role in retaining personnel and maintaining their emotional resilience. Among all constructs, social support demonstrated the most substantial total effect on job satisfaction. Respondents who felt emotionally supported by colleagues and supervisors, or who had access to family support systems, reported significantly higher job satisfaction levels. The mediating analysis further emphasized that social support amplifies the positive effects of both gender policy and the work environment. In environments with weak social support, even strong gender policies or safe physical conditions were less effective in improving satisfaction. Conversely, in settings where personnel could rely on one another, job satisfaction remained relatively high—even when formal policies were perceived as inadequate.

This is especially relevant in Densus 88, where operational risks are high, and emotional decompression becomes essential for performance and mental health. Programs such as peer mentoring, structured debriefings, and supervisor feedback loops are instrumental in translating organizational policy into tangible emotional benefits. A supplementary analysis explored whether demographic factors (such as gender, age, rank, or years of service) moderated the effects. While the main structural model remained stable, the gender variable revealed interesting subgroup differences.

- a. Female personnel rated the importance of gender policy and social support significantly higher than their male counterparts, reflecting their unique experiences in navigating institutional barriers.
- b. Younger officers (below 35) valued supportive work environments and peer solidarity more highly than older, more senior personnel. This suggests generational shifts in expectations regarding emotional support and work-life balance.

These subgroup insights provide practical implications for tailored HR policies and indicate the importance of age- and gender-sensitive strategies in law enforcement institutions.

To summarize the key findings: 1) Gender policy, work environment, and social support all have significant and positive effects on job satisfaction; 2) Social support plays a mediating role,

reinforcing the impact of structural and policy-level interventions; 3) The model explains 67% of the variation in job satisfaction, indicating strong explanatory power; 4) Psychosocial factors—such as support and fairness—are just as critical as logistical or material ones in determining satisfaction in tactical units; 5) Demographic analysis suggests the need for differentiated policies addressing gender and age-based perspectives.

These results offer strong support for integrated HR strategies in law enforcement. Interventions that address policy, environment, and culture simultaneously are more likely to yield improvements in employee satisfaction and performance. Specifically:

- a. Gender equity must be operationalized not only through policy but also in promotion practices, field assignments, and leadership roles.
- b. Work environments should prioritize psychological safety and effective communication, especially in high-risk units.
- c. Social support systems, both formal and informal, should be institutionalized via training, mentoring, and mental health support services.

For units like Densus 88, where psychological strain is endemic, the cultivation of a supportive institutional culture is not just beneficial—it is mission-critical.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the direct and indirect effects of gender policy and work environment on job satisfaction, with social support functioning as a mediating variable, within the high-stakes operational context of Direktorat Penyidikan Densus 88 AT POLRI. The research findings reveal several important insights that contribute to both the theoretical and practical understanding of job satisfaction in elite law enforcement institutions. Firstly, the study confirmed that inclusive gender policies significantly enhance job satisfaction among personnel. This finding supports the notion that organizational justice, equal treatment, and gender equity are central to creating a respectful and motivating workplace culture—even in traditionally masculine environments like tactical police units. Secondly, the work environment was found to be a strong predictor of job satisfaction, with both physical conditions and psychological climate (such as communication quality, fairness, and trust) contributing substantially. This highlights the importance of workplace design that not only meets logistical demands but also supports the emotional and social needs of personnel.

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