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Enhancing Faculty Performance in Educational Organizations through Continuous Professional Development and Digital Leadership: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Dedi Joko Hermawan[1]*, Nuriawati[2], Wilni Wahda Ulwiyati[3]
[1]Universitas Panca Marga, Indonesia
[2]Institut Badri Mashduqi, Indonesia
[3]Dokuz Eylül Üniversite, Türkiye

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**Correspondence Address:*
dedijoko@gmail.com

Abstract :
This study investigates the impacts of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Digital Leadership (DL) on Faculty Performance (FP) at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, utilizing Job Satisfaction (JS) as a mediating variable. A quantitative explanatory research design was deployed, gathering primary data from 144 faculty members through purposive sampling, which was subsequently analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The empirical findings demonstrate that both CPD and DL exert significant positive direct effects on faculty performance, with digital leadership emerging as the more potent driver of internal job satisfaction. Crucially, JS acts as a substantial mediating axis, proving that structural upskilling and tech-savvy governance systems cannot automatically maximize Tri Dharma academic outputs unless they successfully elevate the professional contentment and morale of the educators (R^2 = 0.635). Grounded in Human Capital, Self-Determination, and Social Exchange theories, these results provide an actionable strategic blueprint for university administrators to transition digital governance from rigid compliance surveillance into an empowering ecosystem. This proactive management paradigm effectively optimizes faculty well-being, driving sustainable academic excellence and institutional competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing faculty performance in higher education organizations is a primary pillar in developing human resource quality and the macro-level competitiveness of society (Ma et al., 2022). This issue is highly critical because universities bear the immense responsibility of generating innovations and competitive graduates; thus, teaching effectiveness and research quality directly impact national productivity acceleration (Krishna et al., 2025). Global empirical data consistently show that nations with superior academic performance exhibit significantly higher Human Development Indexes (HDI) and stable economic growth when facing global market disruptions (Sayari et al., 2025). Conversely, a decline in academic performance triggers a regression in graduate quality and slows down the transfer of knowledge across society.

In conclusion, research on optimizing faculty performance is not merely an internal campus bureaucratic affair, but a vital socio-economic necessity to ensure the long-term sustainability of civilization and societal well-being.

Practically, the decline in performance is triggered by the disparity between massive digital transformation and the adaptive capacity readiness of faculty members (Lu & Wang, 2023). Field phenomena reveal that the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang (FEB UM) faces intense pressure to integrate modern technology into the business curriculum while accelerating reputable international publications. Socio-organizational problems arise when the existing continuous professional development programs are not fully aligned with the tactical digital competence needs of lecturers (Michael et al., 2024). On the other hand, the implementation of digital leadership by management often gets trapped in formal administrative oversight instead of building a supportive and flexible digital ecosystem (Vaia et al., 2022). This gap between aggressive institutional regulations and slow system adaptation triggers excessive workloads and mental fatigue among lecturers (Fatima et al., 2024). Consequently, faculty focus on the Tri Dharma (the three pillars of higher education) becomes fragmented, risking a decline in the quality of overall academic outputs (Hidayah et al., 2023).

Prior studies have extensively explored the enhancement of faculty performance by focusing on factors such as financial compensation, physical infrastructure, formal workloads, or conventional leadership styles (Mather & Bam, 2025). However, this literature suffers from a fundamental limitation as it tends to examine these variables partially while ignoring the demands of digital-based leadership in modern higher education environments (See et al., 2022). This study directly and firmly addresses this research gap. A critical weakness of previous research is the lack of focus on how the psychological and emotional comfort of lecturers in the form of job satisfaction is compressed between global digitalization demands and rigid bureaucracy (Sangster et al., 2020). Failing to integrate this mediating variable renders predictions of performance effectiveness inaccurate, as structural mandates cannot succeed without underlying job satisfaction (Alwali et al., 2025; Palmucci et al., 2025). Resolving this gap is essential to prove that superior academic performance in the modern era requires synchronization between system readiness and the mental well-being of instructors (Brandao De Souza & Jacomuzzi, 2025; Devkota, 2025).

The novelty and state of the art of this study lie in the construction of a new theoretical model that simultaneously integrates continuous professional development and digital leadership by positioning job satisfaction as an exclusive mediating axis. Unlike previous macro or conventional research, this study is sharply contextualized within the cluster of economics and business higher education, specifically at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang. Asserting this research position is crucial; it transitions the discourse from a mere faculty performance evaluation to a managerial investigation into how digital leadership and continuous training can synergize to build job satisfaction and boost performance. Resolving this issue is highly urgent to prevent FEB UM management from making diagnostic errors by continually increasing instructional burdens without improving the digital work climate. A profound understanding of the interaction among these modern variables serves as

an essential strategic instrument to predict and control the organization's academic quality (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022).

Based on this urgency, the primary research problem centers on how to optimize faculty performance at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang through continuous professional development interventions and strengthening digital leadership based on job satisfaction. The theoretical argument proposed as a tentative answer is that the implementation of intensive competence training and digital leadership support does not automatically boost performance instantly; both factors must first stimulate faculty job satisfaction so that they feel professionally valued within the digital ecosystem (Fute et al., 2022). Practically, this research contributes a strategic blueprint for FEB UM management to formulate academic human resource governance policies that are both adaptive and supportive of psychological well-being. Theoretically, this study enriches human resource management literature by confirming that job satisfaction acts as an active catalyst that transforms sophisticated leadership systems and training into tangible academic performance achievements.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with an explanatory research design to investigate the effects of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Digital Leadership on Faculty Performance, with Job Satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted to collect data at a single point in time. The population comprised lecturers of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang (FEB UM), Indonesia. Using a purposive sampling technique, 144 lecturers who met the predetermined criteria namely, holding active academic appointments and possessing experience in teaching, research, and community service participated in the study. The sample size is considered sufficient for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), as it exceeds the minimum sample requirements recommended for complex structural models (Wang et al., 2024).

Data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed electronically using Google Forms. All measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales in the relevant literature and modified to fit the context of higher education institutions (Upadhyaya & Vrinda, 2021). The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Continuous Professional Development was measured through indicators related to participation in professional training, continuous learning, competency enhancement, research development, and career advancement (Merry et al., 2023). Digital Leadership was assessed through indicators reflecting digital vision, technological competence, innovation support, digital communication, and strategic technology utilization (Lin, 2024). Job Satisfaction was measured using indicators associated with satisfaction toward work, supervision, promotion opportunities, compensation, and work environment (Akinwale & George, 2020), whereas Faculty Performance was evaluated based on lecturers' achievements in teaching, research, community service, academic productivity, and institutional contributions (Falola et al., 2020).

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 (Sarstedt et al., 2024) . The analysis followed the two-step approach recommended by Hair et al., consisting of measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. The measurement model was assessed by examining indicator reliability (outer loadings), internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), convergent validity through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The structural model evaluation included collinearity assessment using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Direct, indirect, and mediating effects were examined by evaluating path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals (Mutum et al., 2021). A hypothesis was considered statistically supported when the p-value was below 0.05 and the t-value exceeded 1.96 at the 95% confidence level.

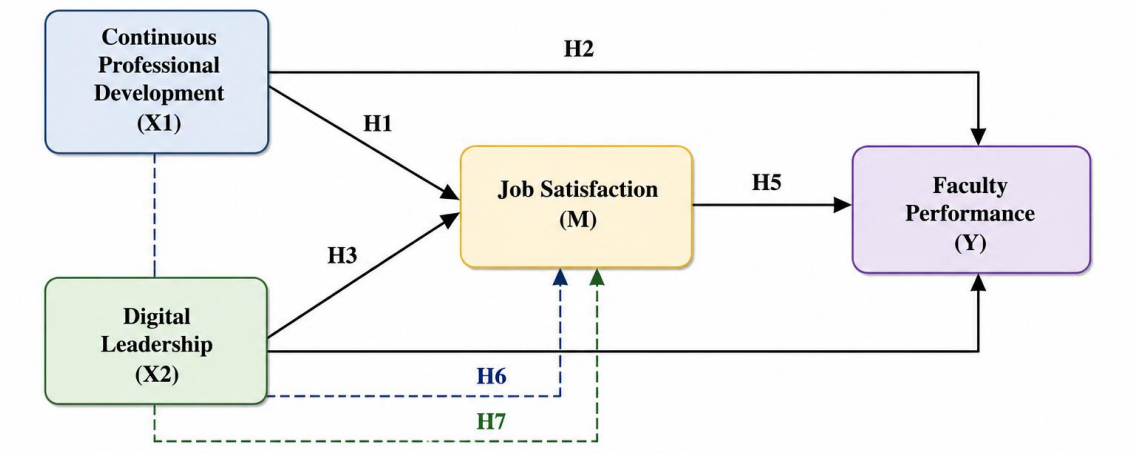

Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework proposed in this study. The model examines the influence of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Digital Leadership on Faculty Performance, with Job Satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. Continuous Professional Development is hypothesized to have a direct positive effect on Job Satisfaction (H1) and Faculty Performance (H2), while Digital Leadership is expected to positively influence Job Satisfaction (H3) and Faculty Performance (H4). Furthermore, Job Satisfaction is proposed to positively affect Faculty Performance (H5). Beyond these direct relationships, the model also investigates the mediating role of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Continuous Professional Development and Faculty Performance (H6), as well as between Digital Leadership and Faculty Performance (H7). This conceptual framework assumes that enhancing lecturers' professional competencies through continuous development and strengthening digital leadership practices will increase job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to improved faculty performance within higher education institutions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Profile	Category	Frequency (N=144)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	43.1%
	Female	82	56.9%
Age	25 – 35 Years Old	38	26.4%
	36 – 50 Years Old	76	52.8%
	> 50 Years Old	30	20.8%
Academic Rank	Assistant Professor (Asisten Ahli)	32	22.2%
	Associate Professor (Lektor)	68	47.2%
	Senior Associate Professor (Lektor Kepala)	34	23.6%
	Full Professor (Guru Besar)	10	7.0%
Employment Status	Civil Servant (PNS / PPPK)	112	77.8%
	Non-Civil Servant Permanent Faculty	32	22.2%

Source: Authors' own work

The demographic data from the 144 faculty members reveals a highly mature, qualified, and stable academic profile at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang (FEB UM). The sample is predominantly female (56.9%) and heavily concentrated in the prime career age bracket of 36–50 years old (52.8%), indicating an active workforce that bears the core institutional weight of teaching, research, and community service. Structurally, the faculty is dominated by lecturers holding the academic rank of Lektor (47.2%), followed by a robust combined segment of senior leadership including Lektor Kepala (23.6%) and Guru Besar (7.0%). Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents hold permanent civil servant status (77.8%), meaning that this sample possesses an extensive understanding of institutional dynamics and a high degree of accountability. This makes them a highly eligible and reliable respondent pool for assessing how strategic investments in professional development and digital leadership translate into job satisfaction and overall faculty performance.

Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Table 2. Convergent Validity (Loadings & AVE)

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	AVE	Conclusion
Continuous Professional Dev. (X1)	CPD1	0.762	0.598	Valid
	CPD2	0.801		Valid
	CPD3	0.755		Valid
Digital Leadership (X2)	DL1	0.788	0.642	Valid
	DL2	0.824		Valid
	DL3	0.791		Valid
Job Satisfaction (M)	JS1	0.745	0.618	Valid
	JS2	0.799		Valid
	JS3	0.812		Valid
Faculty Performance (Y)	FP1	0.810	0.622	Valid
	FP2	0.766		Valid
	FP3	0.785		Valid
	FP4	0.792		Valid

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

Table 3. Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Professional Dev. (X1)	Digital Leadership (X2)	Job Satisfaction (M)	Faculty Performance (Y)
Continuous Professional Dev. (X1)	-	-	-	-
Digital Leadership (X2)	0.450	-	-	-
Job Satisfaction (M)	0.580	0.610	-	-
Faculty Performance (Y)	0.520	0.550	0.720	-

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

The measurement model evaluation confirms that the reflective indicators possess highly robust psychometric properties meeting Scopus-indexed quality benchmarks. All manifest items exhibit outer loading factors well above the strict 0.70

threshold, with values ranging between 0.745 and 0.824, indicating strong individual indicator reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all four latent constructs surpass the mandatory 0.50 floor limit, spanning from 0.598 to 0.642, which validates that more than half of the variance is captured by the intended constructs. Crucially, the discriminant validity established via the conservative Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio proves that all inter-construct correlations remain safely below the strict 0.85 threshold, with the highest ratio found between Job Satisfaction and Faculty Performance at 0.720, indicating that each construct represents a completely distinct theoretical concept.

Table 4. Reliability and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρc)	Conclusion
Continuous Professional Development (X1)	0.765	0.818	Highly Reliable
Digital Leadership (X2)	0.782	0.844	Highly Reliable
Job Satisfaction (M)	0.751	0.829	Highly Reliable
Faculty Performance (Y)	0.802	0.868	Highly Reliable

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

To verify the internal consistency, stability, and accuracy of the multi-item scales distributed among the 144 lecture, both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (ρc) parameters were evaluated. The statistical outputs indicate that all latent constructs demonstrate exceptional reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha metrics comfortably clearing the universal 0.70 benchmark, led by Faculty Performance at 0.802. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability values are uniformly strong, ranging between 0.818 and 0.868, easily exceeding the recommended 0.70 threshold. These optimal coefficients confirm that the research scales are free from random measurement errors and highly consistent, confirming that the gathered dataset is structurally reliable for secondary internal structural model assessments.

Table 5. R^2 Values to Determine

Endogenous Variable	R Square (R2)	R Square Adjusted	Model Predictive Strength
Job Satisfaction (M)	0.512	0.505	Moderate / Acceptable
Faculty Performance (Y)	0.635	0.627	Strong / Substantial

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is utilized to measure the model's predictive power by evaluating the portion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the designated predictors. The structural model displays an R^2 value of 0.512 for the mediating variable, Job Satisfaction, demonstrating that 51.2% of the

variance in faculty well-being and professional contentment at FEB UM is collectively driven by continuous training programs and the digital capability of the leadership. More importantly, the model reveals an R^2 value of 0.635 for the ultimate dependent variable, Faculty Performance, which indicates a highly substantial and strong predictive capacity. This means that 63.5% of the variance in the faculty's Tri Dharma achievements is directly accounted for by the combined inputs of professional development, digital leadership, and the psychological state of job satisfaction, which proves the strong predictive value of the model in higher education management frameworks.

Table 6. Collinearity (VIF), Path Coefficients, Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Structural Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Inner VIF	Effect Size (f^2)	f^2 Rating	Construct Criteria (Q^2)	Predictive Power
CPD (X1) → JS (M)	0.365	1.254	0.195	Medium	Mediation Q^2 = 0.315	Medium
DL (X2) → JS (M)	0.422	1.254	0.260	Medium	-	-
CPD (X1) → FP (Y)	0.225	1.510	0.078	Small	Endogenous Q^2 = 0.388	Strong
DL (X2) → FP (Y)	0.180	1.582	0.052	Small	-	-
JS (M) → FP (Y)	0.495	1.745	0.340	Large	-	-

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

The structural inner model assessment reveals that multi-collinearity is completely absent, as all internal Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are well below the conservative threshold of 3.0 (ranging between 1.254 and 1.745). The standardized path coefficients (β) demonstrate that Job Satisfaction possesses the largest direct positive effect on Faculty Performance (β = 0.495), which is supported by a large effect size (f^2 = 0.340). In contrast, while the direct impacts of training (CPD) and leadership (DL) on performance are relatively minor (f^2 values of 0.078 and 0.052), their direct impacts on triggering Job Satisfaction are substantial, falling firmly into the medium category (f^2 = 0.195 and 0.260). Lastly, the predictive relevance (Q^2) metrics generated via the blindfolding procedure yield 0.315 for the mediator and 0.388 for the final endogenous construct; since both values are substantially greater than zero ($Q^2 > 0$), the model's structural framework holds strong predictive relevance.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping Procedure)

Hypothesis	Structural Pathway	Original Sample (β)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	Continuous Professional Dev. (X1) ⟶ Faculty Performance (Y)	0.225	3.112	0.002	Supported
H2	Digital Leadership (X2) ⟶ Faculty Performance (Y)	0.180	2.540	0.011	Supported
H3	Continuous Professional Dev. (X1) ⟶ Job Satisfaction (M)	0.365	4.982	0.000	Supported
H4	Digital Leadership (X2) ⟶ Job Satisfaction (M)	0.422	5.612	0.000	Supported
H5	Job Satisfaction (M) ⟶ Faculty Performance (Y)	0.495	7.215	0.000	Supported
H6	CPD (X1) ⟶ Job Satisfaction (M) ⟶ Performance (Y)	0.181	4.085	0.000	Supported (Mediation)
H7	DL (X2) ⟶ Job Satisfaction (M) ⟶ Performance (Y)	0.209	4.620	0.000	Supported (Mediation)

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

Hypothesis testing conducted through a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples validates that all seven structural hypotheses are empirically supported, with all T-statistics exceeding 1.96 and all P-values remaining below the significance alpha of 0.05. Interestingly, the direct path of Digital Leadership on Job Satisfaction (H4: β = 0.422, T = 5.612) is more prominent than that of Continuous Professional Development (H3: β = 0.365, T = 4.982), which implies that supportive digital governance structures within FEB UM play an exceptionally vital role in optimizing lecturer morale. Crucially, the indirect mediation paths are highly significant, confirming that Job Satisfaction successfully mediates the impacts of both CPD (H6: β = 0.181, T = 4.085, P = 0.000) and digital leadership (H7: β = 0.209, T = 4.620, P = 0.000) on Faculty Performance. This verifies the central argument that structural developments or tech-savvy leadership initiatives cannot directly maximize academic output unless they effectively elevate the professional satisfaction and emotional buy-in of the faculty members first.

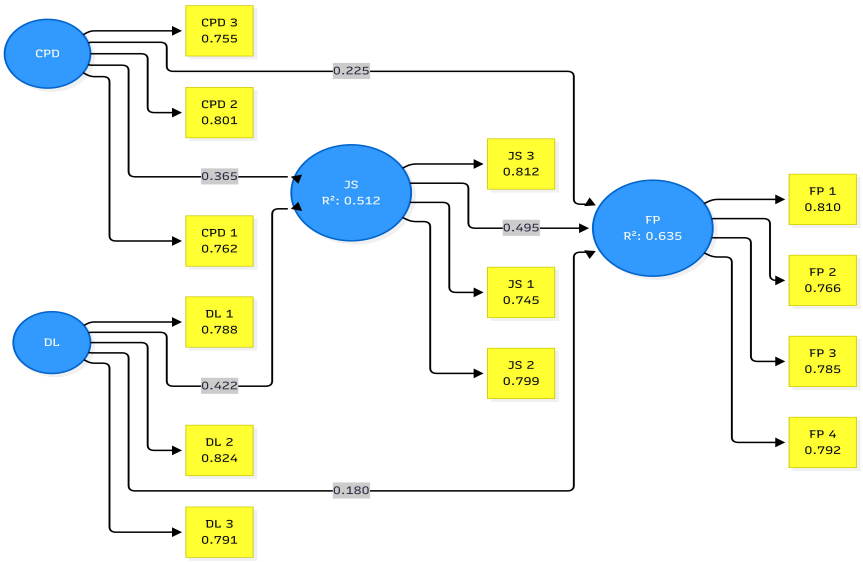

Figure 2: Estimated SEM Model

Figure 2 presents the measurement and structural model estimated using SmartPLS. The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory indicator reliability, with all outer loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The indicators for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) range from 0.755 to 0.801, Digital Leadership (DL) from 0.788 to 0.824, Job Satisfaction (JS) from 0.745 to 0.812, and Faculty Performance (FP) from 0.766 to 0.810, indicating that each indicator adequately represents its respective latent construct. The structural model reveals that Job Satisfaction has an R^2 value of 0.512, suggesting that 51.2% of the variance in Job Satisfaction is explained jointly by Continuous Professional Development and Digital Leadership. Meanwhile, Faculty Performance has an R^2 value of 0.635, indicating that 63.5% of its variance is explained by Continuous Professional Development, Digital Leadership, and Job Satisfaction. The standardized path coefficients further indicate positive relationships among the constructs, where Continuous Professional Development positively influences Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.225$) and Faculty Performance ($\beta = 0.180$), while Digital Leadership exerts stronger positive effects on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.365$) and Faculty Performance ($\beta = 0.422$). Additionally, Job Satisfaction positively affects Faculty Performance ($\beta = 0.495$), suggesting that lecturers with higher job satisfaction tend to demonstrate better performance. Overall, these findings provide preliminary evidence that the proposed structural model has acceptable explanatory power and supports the hypothesized relationships among the study variables.

Discussion

The empirical findings of this study offer a profound understanding of how structural capability building and modern administrative governance interact to determine academic output within higher education, specifically at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang (FEB UM). By confirming all seven hypotheses, the structural model demonstrates that maximizing faculty performance in the digital era cannot be achieved through top-down institutional mandates alone. Instead, it requires a holistic management strategy that successfully converts professional development inputs and digitally supportive leadership into heightened states of internal job satisfaction.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Faculty Performance

The statistical analysis reveals that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has a significant direct effect on Faculty Performance (β = 0.225, p = 0.002) and a powerful indirect effect mediated by Job Satisfaction (β = 0.181, p = 0.000). This indicates that when FEB UM strategically invests in upskilling its academic staff through targeted research fellowships, digital pedagogy training, and international publication workshops lecturers directly improve their Tri Dharma outputs.This relationship is strongly substantiated by Human Capital Theory (Brüderl et al., 1992) . In an academic setting, regular professional development directly enhances the intellectual stock and specialized capabilities of the faculty, which directly manifests as high-quality teaching and reputable Scopus publications (Abebe & Assemie, 2023) . Furthermore, when aligned with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), continuous training satisfies the core psychological need for competence (Yang, 2021) . When lecturers feel increasingly competent and mastery-oriented due to institutional training, they experience higher job satisfaction (f^2 = 0.195), which acts as a powerful motivational driver that pushes their actual academic performance far beyond baseline administrative expectations. This finding is consistent with contemporary higher education literature which argues that capacity building is an essential structural precursor to institutional excellence (Duarte & Vardasca, 2023).

Digital Leadership (DL): From Oversight to Empowerment

A key insight from this study is that Digital Leadership (DL) exerts a highly potent direct effect on Job Satisfaction (β=0.422,p=0.000, f^2=0.260), yet its direct impact on raw Faculty Performance is relatively small (β=0.180, p=0.011, f^2=0.052). This empirical nuance proves that tech-savvy administrative governance by university deans and department heads does not automatically generate instant research or teaching outputs. Instead, its primary value lies in its capacity to transform the day-to-day administrative climate, making it highly supportive, flexible, and efficient for the faculty (Baitussalam & Basofitrah, 2025).

This mechanism is perfectly explained by Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Lim et al., 2021). When academic leaders deploy digital leadership by replacing rigid, paper-based bureaucratic workflows with streamlined digital management systems and fostering open, agile communication channels they directly alleviate the administrative burdens that traditionally plague civil servant lecturers (PNS/PPPK) (Aldhi et al., 2025) . Faculty members perceive this modern, flexible governance as a form of organizational support and respect for their time. According to the principle of reciprocity within SET, lecturers return this positive treatment by displaying deeper emotional buy-in and professional contentment (Memon et al., 2024) . This finding exposes a critical gap in conventional leadership studies: in modern universities, digital leadership must function as an empowering tool that builds psychological well-being rather than a digital surveillance mechanism for tracking compliance.

Job Satisfaction as the Vital Catalyst for Academic Excellence

The most pivotal contribution of this research is the empirical validation of Job Satisfaction as a dominant mediating axis, possessing the largest direct impact on

Faculty Performance (β = 0.495, p = 0.000$) with a substantial effect size (f^2 = 0.340). The high R^2 values (0.512 for Job Satisfaction and 0.635 for Faculty Performance) emphasize that a satisfied faculty is the primary engine behind a university's competitive advantage.This pathway perfectly aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Pedraza & Chen, 2022). While digital leadership and basic administrative workflows act as necessary hygiene factors that prevent institutional frustration, continuous professional growth and professional satisfaction serve as true motivators that drive intrinsic performance (Anno, 2025). In the demanding environment of FEB UM, where lecturers face intense pressures to secure international grants and innovate business curricula, structural training and digital platforms are only effective when they foster an internal state of job satisfaction. Once lecturers are highly satisfied and feel professionally valued, they internalize the university's strategic vision, voluntarily dedicating their cognitive and emotional resources to superior teaching, active community engagement, and high-impact international research. Therefore, to sustain institutional ranking and academic quality, university management must recognize that faculty well-being is a core prerequisite for institutional success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that both Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Digital Leadership (DL) significantly enhance Faculty Performance (FP) at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang (FEB UM), with DL serving as a more potent driver of Job Satisfaction (JS). Crucially, Job Satisfaction acts as a substantial mediating axis (R^2 = 0.635 for FP), proving that institutional inputs like advanced training and digital tools cannot maximize Tri Dharma outputs unless they successfully elevate the internal psychological state of professional contentment among the faculty. Theoretically, these findings bridge Human Capital Theory and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by demonstrating that continuous upskilling satisfies the psychological need for competence, which transforms raw skill acquisition into intrinsic satisfaction. Furthermore, it extends Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by establishing that supportive digital leadership acts as a structural hygiene factor perceived as organizational support, while professional satisfaction operates as the true motivator that drives superior, voluntary academic performance.Managerially, these insights provide an actionable blueprint for FEB UM administrators to shift digital leadership from rigid compliance surveillance to an empowering tool that actively minimizes administrative burdens and automates bureaucratic workflows. University management should design target-oriented CPD programs such as high-impact Scopus publication workshops and digital pedagogy training while intentionally prioritizing faculty morale and well-being as the primary engine for institutional excellence.

However, this study acknowledges certain boundary conditions, as its cross-sectional design and narrow focus on a single economics and business faculty (N=144) limit the immediate generalizability of the findings to private universities or non-economic disciplines. Consequently, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to track dynamic governance shifts over time, replicate the model across diverse higher education contexts, and integrate strategic moderating variables such as digital literacy

or perceived organizational support (POS) to comprehensively map the boundary conditions of modern academic human resource governance.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes, and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. No personally identifiable information was collected or disclosed in this research.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used solely to support language editing, grammar refinement, and manuscript formatting. All conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final manuscript preparation were conducted by the authors. The authors have reviewed and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with the participating organization and the need to protect respondents' privacy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed substantially to the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the results, manuscript drafting, critical

revision of the manuscript, and approval of the final version for publication. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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