

# The Influence of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturers, and Learning Motivation on the Academic Satisfaction of MPI Students at IAIN Takengon

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation on the Academic Satisfaction of students in the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The research sample consisted of 84 students determined using proportional random sampling techniques. Data collection was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires using a Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and the coefficient of determination with the assistance of SPSS. The results of the study indicate that partially, Lecturer Servant Leadership does not have a significant effect on students' academic satisfaction, with a significance value of  $0.545 > 0.05$ . Meanwhile, Trust in Lecturer has a positive and significant effect on academic satisfaction, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The Learning Motivation variable also has a positive and significant effect on academic satisfaction, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , and is the most dominant variable. Simultaneously, the three independent variables significantly affect students' academic satisfaction, with an F value of 183.613 and a contribution effect of 87.3%. This study emphasizes the importance of building students' trust in lecturers and increasing learning motivation to improve students' academic satisfaction in Islamic higher education institutions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The In responding to the increasingly rapid digital era, higher education institutions are required to go beyond merely achieving academic excellence; they must build students' academic satisfaction as a crucial measure of the quality of educational services. This satisfaction not only reflects student loyalty, learning engagement, and academic achievement, but also strengthens the institution's overall image (Manna et al., 2023). Contemporary research consistently confirms a significant relationship between academic satisfaction and teaching quality, lecturer support, as well as a conducive learning environment (Hopland & Nyhus, 2016), (Syahmer et al., 2022). In the realm of Islamic higher education, particularly in the Islamic Education Management Study Program (MPI), this dimension becomes increasingly relevant because students are expected to integrate managerial competencies with Islamic leadership values and academic ethics.

The phenomenon of declining student academic satisfaction has emerged as an urgent issue in various institutions recently. A UNESCO report revealed that more than 40% of students in developing countries are dissatisfied with post-digitalization learning systems (UNESCO, 2023). In Indonesia, a survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2024) highlighted similar complaints, namely that many students feel a lack of interpersonal support from lecturers, especially in communication and academic guidance. These findings indicate that lecturer-student interaction is the main pillar in shaping academic satisfaction.

This pattern is also visible among MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon. A limited preliminary survey conducted by the researcher among MPI students revealed dissatisfaction with lecturer responsiveness, learning communication, and motivational support, which in turn diminished their enthusiasm, participation, and attachment to the study program. Previous studies reinforce that weak lecturer-student relationships often trigger a decline in satisfaction and learning engagement (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). Theoretically, academic satisfaction is influenced by the dynamics of organizational behavior and educational psychology, where lecturers' servant leadership emerges as a key predictor. This concept, popularized by Robert K. Greenleaf, positions leaders as servants who prioritize empathy, care, and individual development (Greenleaf, R. K., 1977). In higher education, lecturers who practice servant leadership tend to be more sensitive to students' needs, creating a supportive learning climate that enhances satisfaction, motivation, and engagement (Eva et al., 2019).

Another complementary factor is trust in lecturer, as predicted by the organizational trust theory of Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman: trust arises from perceptions of the lecturer's competence, integrity, and benevolence (Mayer et al., 1995). Students who trust their lecturers are usually more open, comfortable, and positive toward the learning process, with empirical evidence showing its impact on satisfaction, engagement, and academic commitment (Liao et al., 2022). Meanwhile, learning motivation is based on Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, which depends on fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence, and social relationships, thereby encouraging greater persistence and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2015). Although the literature on these variables is abundant, research gaps still remain wide open. Some studies have found a direct influence of servant leadership on academic satisfaction (Rodrigues Viana et al., 2023), while others emphasize mediation through trust or engagement. These differences reflect an empirical gap worthy of exploration. Furthermore, most studies focus on business contexts or general students in secular institutions, overlooking the nuances of Islamic education such as MPI, where spiritual values are integrated with academics, thus creating conceptual and population gaps.

Relevant research by Beigi confirms that autonomous motivation strongly correlates with psychological need satisfaction and study satisfaction among university students (Beigi Dehaghi & Zeigler-Hill, 2021). Furthermore, Li stated in his journal that teacher servant leadership influences student academic achievement and satisfaction through the mediation of classroom support, with strong implications for service-based teaching values (Li et al., 2026), and also reported that intrinsic motivation has a dominant influence ( $\beta=0.45$ ) on academic satisfaction in higher education, especially when supported by external factors such as lecturer relationships (Afriza et al., 2022). However, these studies are partial in nature and have not integrated the three variables into a comprehensive model within the

MPI context, which constitutes the main novelty of this study. The urgency of this research is undeniable, considering that low academic satisfaction has the potential to trigger burnout, declining achievement, and dropout amid the challenges of Islamic education. This study aims to analyze the influence of lecturers' servant leadership, trust in lecturer, and learning motivation on the academic satisfaction of MPI students, in order to provide strategic recommendations for the study program.

## 2. METHODS

The research method used in this study is a quantitative method with an explanatory research approach. The quantitative approach is used because this study aims to empirically and measurably examine the influence of the variables of lecturer servant leadership ( $X_1$ ), trust in lecturer ( $X_2$ ), and learning motivation ( $X_3$ ) on student academic satisfaction ( $Y$ ). The explanatory approach (Sofya et al., 2024) was chosen because this study seeks to explain the causal relationships among variables through statistical hypothesis testing (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative approach is considered appropriate for measuring relationships among variables using research instruments in the form of Likert scale questionnaires, thereby producing numerical data that can be statistically analyzed (Boone & Boone, 2012).

This study was conducted on students of the Islamic Education Management Study Program (MPI) with a population of 108 active students from the 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 cohorts. Population refers to the entire research subjects that possess certain characteristics and serve as the source of research data. According to John W. Creswell, population is a group of individuals who share the same characteristics and become the target of research generalization. Quantitative research requires a clearly defined population so that the research results have good external validity. Therefore, all active MPI students were selected as the research population because they were considered relevant to the research objective concerning student academic satisfaction (Majdina et al., 2024).

The sampling technique used in this study was probability sampling with the simple random sampling type. This technique was chosen because all members of the population had an equal opportunity to become research samples, thereby minimizing research bias. The use of simple random sampling is considered appropriate in studies with homogeneous populations such as students within the same study program. Previous studies in the field of education have also widely used simple random sampling because it can enhance the representativeness of quantitative research data (Fauzi & Ansor, 2019).

The sample size determination was carried out using the Slovin formula because the research population was known with certainty, namely 108 students. The Slovin formula is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Description:

n = number of samples

N = total population

e = margin of error

With a population of 108 students and an error tolerance level of 5% or 0.05, the sample calculation is as follows: 84.21 rounded to 84 people. The research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale, namely always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. The lecturer servant leadership variable was measured using the indicators of altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship developed by Robert K. Greenleaf and further developed by John D. Barbuto (Greenleaf, R. K., 1977); (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). The trust in lecturer variable was measured through the indicators of ability, integrity, and benevolence based on organizational trust theory. Meanwhile, the learning motivation variable was measured using the indicators of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, autonomy, competence, and relatedness based on Self Determination Theory (Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L., 2017). The academic

satisfaction variable was measured through indicators of learning satisfaction, lecturer services, and learning environment (Alves & Raposo, 2007; Haverila et al., 2021; Suprianto et al., 2025).

Data analysis in this study used multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of the latest version of the SPSS application. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the partial and simultaneous effects of lecturer servant leadership, trust in lecturer, and learning motivation on students' academic satisfaction. Before hypothesis testing was conducted, validity, reliability, normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests were first carried out to ensure that the data met the requirements for parametric statistical analysis. According to Joseph F. Hair Jr., testing classical assumptions is important so that regression analysis results have a high level of accuracy and validity in quantitative research (Hair Jr., Joseph F, 2019).

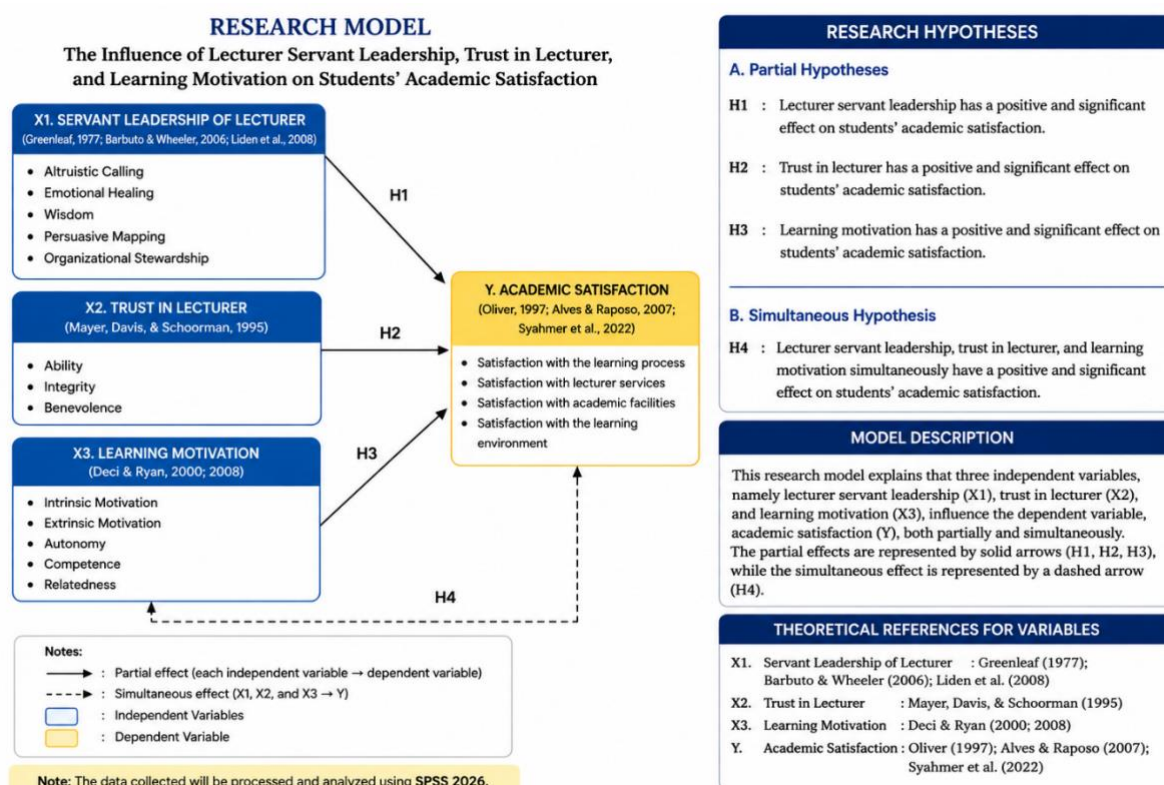


Image 1: Research Model

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Validity and Reliability Testing of the Instrument

Based on the results of the instrument validity test in variables X<sub>1</sub> (Servant Leadership), X<sub>2</sub> (Trust in Lecturer), X<sub>3</sub> (Learning Motivation), and Y (Academic Satisfaction), all statement items were declared valid. This is evidenced by the calculated r-value of each item being greater than the r-table value of 0.361 at a significance level of 5% with a sample size of 30 respondents. In variable X<sub>1</sub>, the calculated r-values ranged from 0.368–0.730. Variable X<sub>2</sub> had calculated r-values between 0.598–0.820. Variable X<sub>3</sub> showed calculated r-values of 0.373–0.815, while variable Y had calculated r-values ranging from 0.446–0.797. Thus, all items in the four variables were able to measure the constructs being studied and were therefore suitable for use as research instruments. In addition to being valid, the research instrument was also declared reliable because all items in each variable met the validity criteria and had a good correlation with the total score. Therefore, the research instruments for the variables of Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, Learning Motivation, and Academic Satisfaction were considered appropriate, consistent, and capable of producing accurate data for further analysis.

### 3.2. Normality Test

Tebel 1: Normality Test\*

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		84
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	0
	Std. Deviation	1,23168065
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0,092
	Positive	0,048
	Negative	-0,092
Test Statistic		0,092
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.075 <sup>c</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		

\*SPSS 2026

Based on the results of the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, a significance value of 0.075 was obtained. This value is greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption in the regression model has been fulfilled.

### 3.3. Multicollinearity

Tabel 2: Multicollinearity\*

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1		
	ServantLeadership	0,948 1,055
	TrustInLecturer	0,299 3,34
	MotivasiBelajar	0,292 3,43

a. Dependent Variable: KepuasanAkademik

\*SPSS 2026

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in the coefficients table, the tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were obtained for each independent variable. The Lecturer's Servant Leadership variable has a tolerance value of 0.948 and a VIF value of 1.055. The Trust in Lecturer variable has a tolerance value of 0.299 and a VIF value of 3.340. Meanwhile, the Learning Motivation variable has a tolerance value of 0.292 and a VIF value of 3.430. These results indicate that all independent variables have tolerance values > 0.10 and VIF values < 10. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model does not experience multicollinearity symptoms. This means that there is no high correlation among the independent variables, so all variables are appropriate to be used in regression analysis to explain their influence on the Academic Satisfaction variable.

### 3.4. Heteroskedasticity

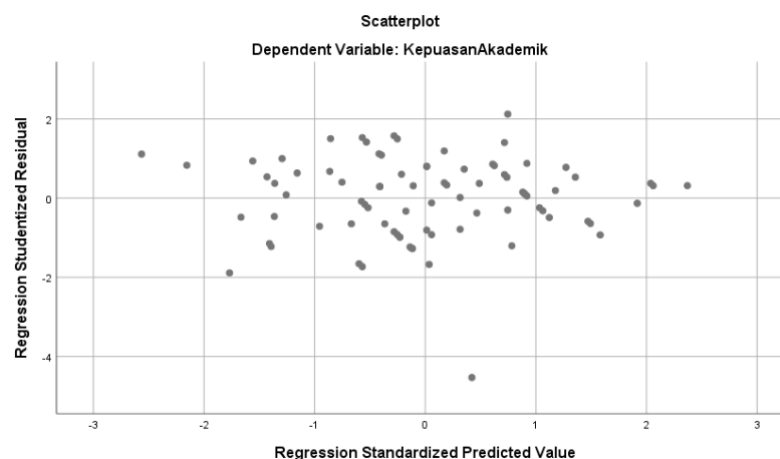


Image 2 : Heteroskedasticity

Based on the heteroskedasticity test scatterplot graph, it can be seen that the data points are randomly distributed above and below the value of 0 on the Y-axis (Regression Studentized Residual). In addition, the distribution of the points does not form any specific pattern, such as a wavy, narrowing, or regularly widening pattern. This indicates that there are no symptoms of heteroskedasticity in the regression model. Thus, the residual variance from one observation to another is constant (homoskedasticity), so the regression model satisfies one of the classical assumptions and is appropriate for further analysis.

### 3.5. Autocorrelation Test

Tabel 3: Autocorrelation\*

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.934 <sup>a</sup>	.873	.868	1.255	1.969

a. Predictors: (Constant), MotivasiBelajar, ServantLeadershipDosen, TrustInLecturer

b. Dependent Variable: KepuasanAkademik

\*SPSS 2026

Based on the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient value (R) obtained is 0.934. This value indicates that the relationship between the variables of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation toward Academic Satisfaction falls into the very strong category. The R Square value of 0.873 indicates that 87.3% of the Academic Satisfaction variable can be explained by the variables of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation. Meanwhile, the remaining 12.7% is influenced by other variables outside this research model.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.868 indicates that after adjusting for the number of independent variables and the sample size, the model's ability to explain the dependent variable remains high at 86.8%. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson value of 1.969 is close to 2, so it can be concluded that there is no autocorrelation in the regression model. Therefore, the regression model has met the classical assumption of autocorrelation and is appropriate for use in testing the research hypotheses.

### 3.6. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the following regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 2.768 + 0.024X_1 + 0.512X_2 + 0.440X_3$$

The equation indicates that the constant value of 2.768 means that if the variables Lecturer Servant Leadership ( $X_1$ ), Trust in Lecturer ( $X_2$ ), and Learning Motivation ( $X_3$ ) are equal to 0, then the value of Academic Satisfaction ( $Y$ ) is 2.768. The regression coefficient for the Lecturer Servant Leadership variable of 0.024 indicates that every 1-unit increase in this variable will increase Academic Satisfaction by 0.024, assuming the other variables remain constant. The regression coefficient for Trust in Lecturer of 0.512 indicates that every 1-unit increase will increase Academic Satisfaction by 0.512. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for Learning Motivation of 0.440 indicates that every 1-unit increase will increase Academic Satisfaction by 0.440.

### 3.7. t-test (Partial)

Tabel 4 : t-test\*

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.768	4.119	.672	.504
1	ServantLeadershipDosen	.024	.039	.025	.608
	TrustInLecturer	.512	.087	.427	5.871
	MotivasiBelajar	.440	.060	.545	7.385

a. Dependent Variable: KepuasanAkademik

\*SPSS 2026

Based on the results of the t-test, the following results were obtained:

- 3.7.1. The Lecturer Servant Leadership variable has a t-value of 0.608 with a significance value of 0.545 > 0.05. This indicates that Lecturer Servant Leadership does not have a significant effect on Academic Satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis stating a partial effect is rejected.
- 3.7.2. The Trust in Lecturer variable has a t-value of 5.871 with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. This indicates that Trust in Lecturer has a positive and significant effect on Academic Satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.
- 3.7.3. The Learning Motivation variable has a t-value of 7.385 with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. This indicates that Learning Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Academic Satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

### 3.8. F-test (Simultaneous)

Table 5: F-test\*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	866.979	3	288.993	183.613	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	125.914	80	1.574		
	Total	992.893	83			

a. Dependent Variable: KepuasanAkademik

b. Predictors: (Constant), MotivasiBelajar, ServantLeadershipDosen, TrustInLecturer

\*SPSS 2026

Based on the results of the F-test, an F-count value of 183.613 was obtained with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that the variables of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation simultaneously or collectively have a significant effect on Academic Satisfaction. Therefore, the regression model used in this study is declared feasible, and the simultaneous hypothesis is accepted.

### 3.9. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Tabel 6: Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.934 <sup>a</sup>	.873	.868	1.255

a. Predictors: (Constant), MotivasiBelajar, ServantLeadershipDosen, TrustInLecturer

b. Dependent Variable: KepuasanAkademik

Based on the Model Summary table, an R Square value of 0.873 or 87.3% was obtained. This indicates that the variables Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation are able to explain the Academic Satisfaction variable by 87.3%, while the remaining 12.7% is influenced by other variables outside the research model.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.868 indicates that after adjusting for the number of independent variables and the sample size, the model still has a very good ability to explain the dependent variable.

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that:

- 3.9.1. Lecturer Servant Leadership does not have a significant effect on students' Academic Satisfaction.
- 3.9.2. Trust in Lecturer has a positive and significant effect on students' Academic Satisfaction.
- 3.9.3. Learning Motivation has a positive and significant effect on students' Academic Satisfaction.
- 3.9.4. Simultaneously, Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation have a significant effect on students' Academic Satisfaction.

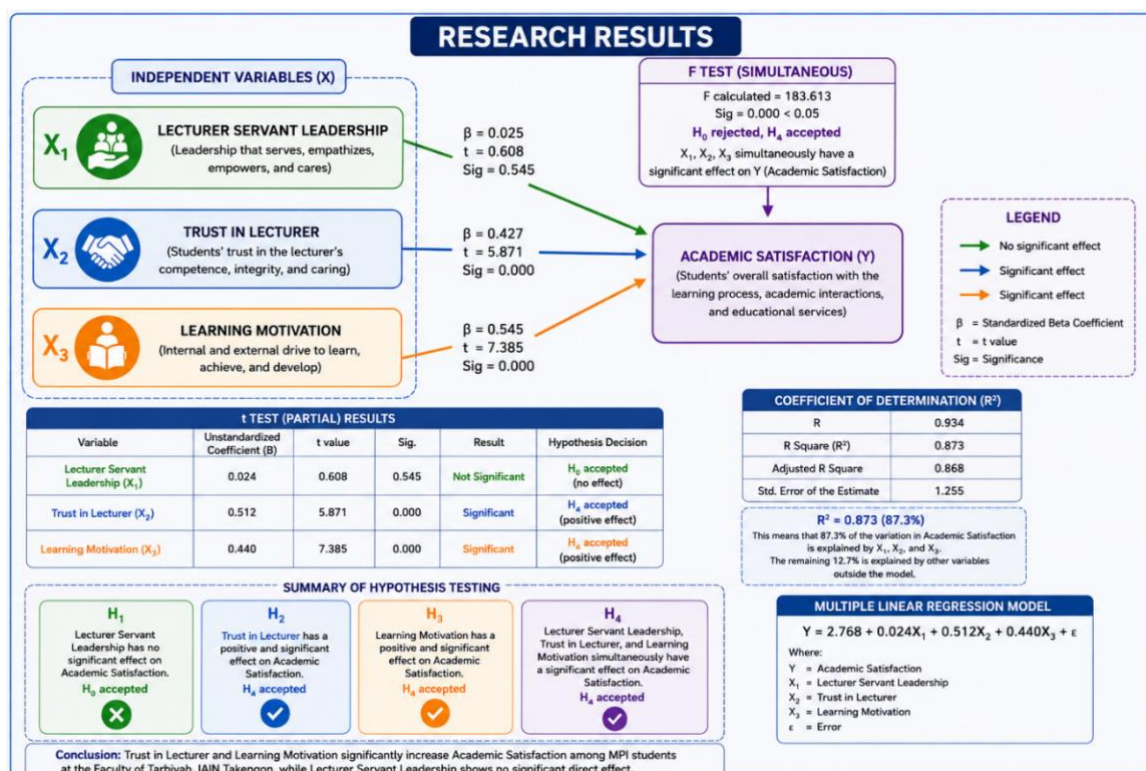


Image 3 : Research Results

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The research results indicate that the variables of Lecturer Servant Leadership, Trust in Lecturer, and Learning Motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on the Academic Satisfaction (Astin, A. W, 1993) of MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon. These findings demonstrate that the quality of the academic relationship between lecturers and students is an important factor in shaping students' learning experiences in Islamic higher education. In the context of Islamic higher education, academic satisfaction is not only influenced by administrative aspects and campus facilities, but is also affected by the quality of interpersonal interaction, emotional support, and a conducive academic climate. The research findings show that the Lecturer Servant Leadership variable does not have a significant effect on students' academic satisfaction. This finding indicates that MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon, have not considered lecturers' leadership style as a primary factor in determining their level of academic satisfaction (Robbins, Stephen P. dan Timothy Judge, 2017). Students tend to pay more attention to learning effectiveness, lecturers' ability to explain material, and the academic results obtained rather than lecturers' personal service-oriented characteristics (Biggs, John, 2011).

Theoretically, servant leadership is a leadership concept that prioritizes serving others through empathy, care, empowerment, and individual development. In higher education, lecturers' servant leadership should be able to create a humanistic and supportive learning atmosphere so that students feel valued and motivated in the learning process. However, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of servant leadership among MPI students has not been strong enough to directly influence academic satisfaction (Mendelson et al., 2019). This condition can be understood because university students tend to have a pragmatic orientation toward learning quality and academic success. Students need lecturers who are competent, communicative, and capable of providing academic certainty rather than merely lecturers who are friendly and service-oriented. This indicates that good interpersonal relationships do not necessarily produce academic satisfaction if they are not accompanied by effective learning quality (Frymier & Shulman, 1995).

On the other hand, the research results show that trust in lecturer has a positive and significant effect on students' academic satisfaction (Shi et al., 2025). Students' trust in lecturers becomes one of the essential foundations for building a comfortable, open, and meaningful learning experience. This trust includes students' confidence in lecturers' competence, integrity, honesty, and ability to guide them academically (García et al., 2023). Students who trust their lecturers generally feel calmer in participating in learning activities, are more confident in discussions, and are more open in expressing the academic difficulties they experience. In the context of Islamic education, trust also has moral and spiritual dimensions because lecturers are viewed not only as teachers but also as role models in shaping students' character. Thus, the higher the students' trust in lecturers, the greater the opportunity for positive academic satisfaction to emerge (Dinh et al., 2021).

These findings are consistent with studies on university lecturer credibility, which show that students' perceptions of instructor credibility are closely related to their learning motivation. Lecturers who are able to build open communication, demonstrate professionalism, and pay attention to students' needs tend to gain students' trust more easily. Within the MPI environment of the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon, harmonious interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students become important capital in creating a conducive academic atmosphere. The learning motivation variable in this study was proven to have a positive and significant effect on students' academic satisfaction, while also being the most dominant variable. This finding indicates that students with high learning motivation tend to experience more satisfying academic experiences (Shafiq et al., 2026). Learning motivation itself refers to internal and external drives that encourage students to learn enthusiastically, achieve accomplishments, and develop their competencies.

Students with strong learning motivation are usually more active in attending lectures, more diligent in completing assignments, and more independent in managing their learning process. In the context of MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon, learning motivation becomes very important because they are required to understand Islamic education management concepts while also possessing leadership and educational institution management skills. Therefore, students with high motivation generally find it easier to enjoy the learning process and experience greater academic satisfaction. The results of this study also support self-determination theory, which explains that intrinsic motivation plays a major role in shaping individual satisfaction when engaging in learning activities. When students have clear learning goals, feel capable of achieving academic targets, and are in a supportive learning environment, their level of academic satisfaction tends to increase. This confirms that learning motivation is the main foundation in building the quality of students' academic experiences in higher education.

Simultaneously, the three independent variables contribute 87.3% to students' academic satisfaction. This figure shows that the combination of lecturer servant leadership, trust in lecturer, and learning motivation has a very strong influence in explaining the academic satisfaction of MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon.<sup>8</sup> However, learning motivation and trust in lecturer are the most dominant factors compared to lecturer servant leadership. These findings have important implications for the development of quality in Islamic higher education. Lecturers are not only required to implement a service-oriented approach toward students but also need to build professional competence, academic integrity, and good interpersonal communication in order to gain students' trust. In addition, higher education institutions need to create an academic environment capable of increasing students' learning motivation through learning innovation, strengthening Islamic academic culture, and providing adequate psychological support.

Thus, this study confirms that the academic satisfaction of MPI students at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Takengon, is influenced by relational and psychological factors that develop throughout the daily learning process. Trust in lecturer and learning motivation are the main factors capable of increasing students' academic satisfaction, whereas lecturer servant leadership has not yet shown a significant direct effect. Therefore, strengthening the quality of academic interaction and increasing students' learning motivation are important strategies for improving the quality of Islamic higher education.

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