



# LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF MECHANISMS FOR BUILDING EMPLOYEE LOYALTY AND DELONGINGNESS

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## **Abstract**

Leadership styles influence organizational commitment through distinct mechanisms for each commitment dimension. Transformational leadership builds affective commitment through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership contributes to continuance commitment through reward and consequence clarity. Authentic leadership builds normative commitment through moral value internalization and ethical identity formation. Servant leadership strengthens sense of belonging through inclusive climate creation and interpersonal support. Ethical leadership establishes justice underlying all commitment forms. Leadership effects are mediated by perceived organizational support, justice, psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and leader member exchange quality. Individual differences and organizational culture moderate each leadership style effectiveness. Sustainable long term commitment requires leadership consistency over time and integration of commitment building values into entire organizational systems.

**Keyword:** leadership styles, organizational commitment, affective commitment, employee loyalty, belongingness

## Introduction

Organizational commitment constitutes a fundamental construct in human resource management that determines the sustainability of the relationship between employees and the companies for which they work. Employees with high commitment tend to retain their positions longer, exert discretionary effort beyond formal requirements, and behave as organizational ambassadors in external environments (Jaiswal et al., 2019). Conversely, low organizational commitment correlates with high rates of absenteeism, counterproductive behavior, and turnover intentions. Within the contemporary business landscape, where competition to acquire and retain talent is fierce, organizational commitment serves as a strategic asset that determines competitive advantage. Companies with a committed workforce exhibit higher levels of innovation, better service quality, and faster adaptability to market changes. Various studies have identified that organizational commitment does not develop automatically, but rather results from a series of positive work experiences, including the relationship between employees and their immediate superiors. The quality of daily interactions between leaders and subordinates, the way leaders communicate the organizational vision, and the extent to which leaders demonstrate concern for employee well-being serve as primary determinants in shaping long-term commitment. Therefore, an understanding of how leadership influences organizational commitment is highly crucial for management practitioners. This strong attachment is basically closely related to work engagement, the empirical development of which is simultaneously influenced by the effectiveness of performance appraisal, leadership behavior, and the innovative behavior capacity of employees (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022).

Various leadership styles have been identified in management literature, each with distinct characteristics and influences on employee behavior (Xanthopoulou & Karampelas, 2020). Transformational leadership emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, whereas transactional leadership focuses on rewards and punishments based on target achievements. Authentic leadership highlights consistency between spoken values and real actions, while ethical leadership emphasizes setting clear moral standards and enforcing accountability. Each of these leadership styles possesses a

different mechanism of influence on organizational commitment. Transformational leaders build affective commitment through the creation of an inspiring vision and providing meaning to work. Transactional leaders are more effective in building continuance commitment, which is commitment based on the cost-benefit calculation of leaving the organization. Meanwhile, authentic and ethical leadership contribute to the development of normative commitment, which is a sense of moral obligation to remain within the organization. Understanding these differing mechanisms is important for organizations in selecting and developing leaders who match their specific needs. No single leadership style is superior in all situations; the effectiveness of a style depends heavily on organizational characteristics, the nature of the work, and the expectations and values held by employees. Within a more specific operational framework, the application of ethical leadership and social responsibility serves as the main pillar guaranteeing organizational managerial governance with integrity (Rojak & Darmawan, 2021). Furthermore, transformational leadership also holds a strategic role as an agent of social change capable of sustainably transforming organizational value systems (Rojak, Darmawan, & Khayru, 2022).

Employee loyalty, as one of the dimensions of organizational commitment, is heavily influenced by their perceptions of the fairness and support received from leaders (Darmawan et al., 2020). Employees who perceive that their leaders treat all subordinates fairly, provide rewards based on merit, and listen to input earnestly will develop a deep sense of loyalty (Zanabazar et al., 2023). This loyalty manifests in behaviors such as defending the organization when criticized by outsiders, recommending the organization to friends and family as a good place to work, and being willing to work beyond normal hours when required. Conversely, employees who feel treated unfairly or ignored by their leaders will develop cynical attitudes and psychological distance from the organization. They may continue to work formally due to economic necessity, but their loyalty has been eroded. Over the long term, this loss of loyalty will visually appear through declining work quality, increased errors, and the loss of organizational citizenship behavior. Effective leaders understand that loyalty cannot be purchased with money alone, but must be built through consistent and meaningful interactions. They invest time to know

subordinates personally, understand their career aspirations, and provide the support necessary to achieve those goals. This interactional support is proven to contribute directly to overall employee performance achievements through the stimulation of innovative behavior and the reinforcement of work engagement in operational environments (Putra & Mardikaningsih, 2022). The context of leadership effectiveness is also relevant within the educational sphere, where effective leadership, strict work discipline, and high work motivation serve as primary determinants in enhancing teacher performance (Saputra & Darmawan, 2023).

A sense of belonging is a dimension of organizational commitment related to the feeling of being an important part of the organization (Zanabazar et al., 2023). Employees with a strong sense of belonging identify themselves with the organization, feel pride when the organization achieves success, and feel called to contribute to solving organizational problems (Borde et al., 2022). Leadership influences a sense of belonging through the creation of a climate of inclusion, where every employee feels accepted, valued, and given opportunities to participate. Leaders who build a sense of belonging actively involve subordinates in decision-making that affects their work, celebrate diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and create rituals and symbols that reinforce a shared identity. Conversely, authoritarian leaders who make unilateral decisions without consultation tend to make employees feel like executors of orders rather than meaningful members of the organization. A low sense of belonging correlates with social isolation in the workplace, decreased initiative, and the desire to seek another, more welcoming work environment. In an era where remote work and virtual teams are increasingly common, the challenge of building a sense of belonging becomes greater due to limited face-to-face interactions. Leaders need to develop new skills in building emotional connections through digital media, creating virtual spaces for informal interactions, and intentionally designing experiences that reinforce team identity. To face these modern team interaction challenges, the implementation of situational leadership strategies is proven to be highly crucial to enhance the quality of change management while optimizing collective team performance (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022).

An employee's long-term commitment to the company is the outcome most desired by organizations because it correlates with workforce stability,

cross-generational knowledge transfer, and a reduction in recruitment and training costs (Eddine et al., 2023). Employees with long-term commitment are not easily tempted by higher salary offers from competitors because they value the non-financial aspects of the employment relationship, such as the meaning of the work, the quality of relationships with colleagues and superiors, and personal development opportunities. Leadership plays a central role in building long-term commitment through the creation of organizational trust. This trust is built when employees observe that their leaders are consistent between words and actions, competent in executing their roles, and care about the well-being of subordinates beyond personal interests. Leaders who wish to build long-term commitment also need to demonstrate their own commitment to the organization; employees will hesitate to commit to a company if they see that top leaders change frequently or that senior executives care more about personal career interests than collective success (Grego-Planer, 2022). Furthermore, long-term commitment requires clear career paths and opportunities to grow; leaders need to actively mentor subordinates in planning their careers, provide appropriate challenges, and advocate for promotions when subordinates are ready. Without leader support in career development aspects, talented employees will seek opportunities elsewhere even if they are satisfied with other aspects of the job. In addition, the dynamics of long-term bonds and internal corporate resilience align with discourses on adaptive capacity and transformation processes essential in shaping organizational social resilience (Oluwatosin, Rojak, & Darmawan, 2023).

The primary problem faced by organizations is the declining level of organizational commitment across various industrial sectors, especially among millennial and Generation Z workers. Employment surveys consistently indicate that younger workers tend to change jobs every two to three years, not because of dissatisfaction with a specific company, but because they do not develop an emotional bond strong enough to stay (Briggs et al., 2022). This phenomenon is exacerbated by changes in employment structures that are increasingly project- and contract-based, reducing opportunities to build long-term relationships. Organizations face a dilemma between meeting workforce flexibility demands from a business standpoint and building commitment that requires stability and continuity. The root of the problem often lies in leadership practices that are not adaptive to changing employee

expectations. Many leaders still apply leadership styles suitable for previous generations, such as command-and-control approaches or seniority-based reward systems, whereas contemporary employees desire autonomy, transparency, and meaning in their work. This gap between the applied leadership style and employee expectations creates disengagement that damages commitment. Organizations also fail to develop middle-level leaders who serve as the spearhead of daily interactions with employees. Leadership training is frequently ceremonial and does not alter actual behavior, leaving core issues unresolved. A more systematic approach is required to understand the mechanisms of leadership's influence on commitment and to design appropriate interventions. This misalignment within managerial ranks is often complicated by psychological clashes at the operational level, where contextual sensemaking processes and role conflict frequently arise during the execution of subordinate development functions by line managers (Jahroni & Darmawan, 2013).

Another problem is the lack of understanding regarding how the different dimensions of organizational commitment—*affective*, *continuance*, and *normative* are influenced differently by distinct aspects of leadership. Most organizations still treat commitment as a single concept and apply the same strategy to increase it, even though the psychological mechanisms underlying each dimension are very different. *Affective* commitment, which is emotional attachment to the organization, is most influenced by the quality of personal relationships between leaders and subordinates, such as emotional support, recognition, and empowerment. *Continuance* commitment, which is the awareness of the costs that must be borne if leaving the organization, is more influenced by structural policies such as retirement programs, seniority allowances, and the difficulty of finding alternative employment (Xanthopoulou & Karampelas, 2020). *Normative* commitment, which is a sense of moral obligation to stay, is influenced by the socialization of organizational values, the formation of team norms, and observations of how the organization treats other employees (Tidhar, 2023). Effective leaders must be able to read which dimension of commitment is most relevant for each employee based on their personal and situational characteristics. An employee who highly values social relationships might be more responsive to interventions that build *affective* commitment, while a pragmatic employee might be more

influenced by improvements in continuance commitment. Unfortunately, most leaders lack the analytical framework to make this differentiation and apply the same approach to all subordinates, thereby limiting the effectiveness of interventions. This limitation in differentiation reflects the need for attention to basic workplace hygiene factors, given that the job satisfaction level of field workers remains heavily influenced by real synergies between physical environmental quality and leadership presence (Radjawane & Darmawan, 2022). A balanced interactive relationship between leadership, workplace comfort, and the alignment of work capabilities will ultimately lead to the comprehensive optimization of individual performance achievements (Sinambela & Lestari, 2022).

The urgency of this research lies in the need to provide practical guidance for organizations in developing effective leadership to build employee commitment amid changing workforce demographics and evolving expectations. High turnover costs, the loss of institutional knowledge, and declining productivity due to low commitment are real problems faced by organizations every day. This research is necessary to identify specific leadership practices that possess the greatest influence on each dimension of organizational commitment. The theoretical contribution of this research is the refinement of the relationship model between leadership and commitment by considering the mediating and moderating roles of psychological variables. Its practical contribution is the availability of concrete recommendations for organizations in designing leadership development programs and performance management systems that encourage commitment-building leadership behaviors. As an implementable option, optimizing the role of servant leadership can be explored as a strategic approach to enhance team work effectiveness amidst the demands of a volatile modern corporate environment (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2014).

The objective of this research is to analyze the mechanisms of influence of various leadership styles on the dimensions of organizational commitment, namely affective, continuance, and normative commitment. This research aims to identify specific leadership practices that are most effective in building loyalty, a sense of belonging, and long-term employee commitment. The results of the research are expected to contribute to the development of leadership and organizational commitment theories as

well as provide a practical reference for organizations in designing leadership capacity development programs.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative literature study approach to address the research questions regarding the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment. As explained by Henn, Weinstein, and Foard (2005), social research aimed at building a theoretical understanding of a complex relationship can be effectively conducted through systematic literature synthesis. This method was chosen because the topics of leadership and organizational commitment have been extensively studied over several decades, providing a rich accumulation of knowledge to be synthesized. The literature study approach allows the researcher to identify consistent patterns across studies, as well as to uncover gaps that still need to be filled by future research. The research procedure follows the principles outlined by Wagner, Kawulich, and Garner (2012) concerning the implementation of systematic and transparent social research. The first step is the identification of a clear and focused research question. The second step is a structured literature search using academic databases such as ProQuest, EBSCO, and Google Scholar with keywords such as leadership styles, organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, employee loyalty, and sense of belonging. The third step is the selection of sources based on established inclusion criteria, including topic relevance, methodological quality, and publication year within the last two decades to ensure relevance to contemporary organizational conditions.

Data analysis in this literature study is conducted through a comparative thematic approach as proposed by Lampard and Pole (2015). This approach emphasizes the importance of systematic comparison across studies to identify consistently emerging themes as well as contradictions that require further explanation. The researcher performs repeated readings of the selected sources to identify how each study defines and operationalizes leadership styles and organizational commitment. These differences in definition and operationalization are essential to understand because they can explain why studies that seem contradictory are actually measuring different things. Once an understanding of the definitions is

reached, the researcher extracts the main findings from each study, including reported effect sizes, identified mediating and moderating variables, and the sample context used. These findings are then grouped based on the leadership styles studied, such as transformational, transactional, authentic, ethical, and servant leadership. For each leadership style, the researcher identifies the psychological mechanisms proposed as explanations for their influence on organizational commitment. The synthesis process is carried out by comparing mechanisms proposed by various studies, identifying which are most supported by consistent empirical evidence, and proposing integrations when findings appear contradictory (Dale & Fox, 2008). The final result of this process is a conceptual model explaining how various leadership styles influence the dimensions of organizational commitment through specific mediating mechanisms.

## Result and Discussion

Transformational leadership exerts the strongest and most consistent influence on employees' affective commitment compared to other leadership styles. Transformational leaders inspire subordinates through the articulation of an attractive vision of the organization's future, challenge established assumptions through intellectual stimulation, and provide individualized consideration to the development needs of each employee. Collectively, these four behavioral dimensions create a psychological environment where employees feel that their work possesses meaning that transcends financial rewards. When leaders are capable of articulating how each individual's contribution relates to larger organizational goals, employees internalize organizational values as their own. This internalization process constitutes the core of affective commitment, wherein employees remain within the organization because they want to, rather than because they feel forced or obligated. Transformational leaders also build trust through consistency between words and actions, which serves as the foundation for openness to influence. Employees who trust their leaders will more easily accept proposed changes and demonstrate a greater willingness to exert extra effort. Furthermore, genuine individualized consideration from a transformational leader makes employees feel valued as individuals, rather than merely as factors of production. This feeling of being valued activates the norm of

reciprocity, wherein employees feel indebted to reciprocate the attention received with a higher level of commitment toward the organization. The formation of this commitment is essentially part of an integrative strategy that collaborates the roles of work-life quality, leadership effectiveness, and the strength of perceived organizational support to optimize employees' institutional engagement (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2021).

Transactional leadership demonstrates a more limited influence on affective commitment, but exhibits a significant effect on continuance commitment. Transactional leaders operate based on clear principles of economic exchange; they provide rewards when subordinates achieve agreed-upon targets and apply corrections when standards are not met. This transparent structure of rewards and punishments helps employees understand the consequences of their behavior, thereby reducing uncertainty within the employment relationship. For employees with a pragmatic orientation, clarity regarding what will be obtained in exchange for the effort exerted can enhance the cost-benefit calculation of remaining within the organization. Continuance commitment refers to employees' awareness of what they stand to lose if they leave the organization, including seniority, benefits, and the professional networks they have built. Transactional leaders who consistently link performance to rewards help build an accumulation of investments that makes employees reluctant to leave. Nevertheless, transactional leadership has weaknesses in building long-term commitment due to its reliance on external monitoring. When the promised rewards are no longer attractive or when monitoring weakens, continuance commitment built on a transactional foundation tends to decline rapidly. In addition, an excessive focus on extrinsic rewards can shift employees' intrinsic motivation, so that when rewards are discontinued, there is no longer a reason to remain committed. Therefore, while transactional leadership is useful for achieving short-term compliance, this style is insufficient for building deep and sustainable commitment. The limitations of this extrinsic exchange emphasize that to achieve optimal and sustainable employee performance, organizations need to synergize these aspects of leadership and commitment with the reinforcement of organizational culture and fair compensation schemes (Ernawati et al., 2022).

Authentic leadership uniquely contributes to the development of normative commitment, which is a sense of moral obligation to remain

within the organization. Authentic leaders are characterized by high self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and a strong internalized moral perspective. They do not claim to have all the answers, admit mistakes when they occur, and remain consistent between their spoken values and real actions. This behavior creates clear ethical standards for the entire organization. Employees working under authentic leaders learn that integrity is valued and that upholding moral principles is more important than winning at any cost. The socialization of these values shapes normative commitment, wherein employees feel they have an obligation to stay because the organization has treated them and others fairly. Normative commitment differs from affective commitment because it relies less on positive feelings toward the organization; an individual can possess high normative commitment even when not feeling happy with their job, because they feel that leaving the organization would be an immoral act. Authentic leaders build normative commitment through moral empowerment, which involves giving employees space to make ethical decisions and supporting them when those decisions are unpopular. Employees who feel supported in doing the right thing, even when it is disadvantageous in the short term, will develop a moral identity tied to the organization. This identity then becomes a highly resilient source of commitment because leaving the organization means betraying the internalized moral standards. This process of internalizing moral values and fairness in interactions aligns with the importance of implementing procedural justice and a healthy negotiation approach in daily interactions between leaders and subordinates (Gani, 2022).

Ethical leadership overlaps with authentic leadership but emphasizes a different aspect, namely the enforcement of clear and consistent behavioral standards. Ethical leaders explicitly communicate expectations regarding what behavior is acceptable and what is not, and apply fair consequences when standards are violated. They also actively consider the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders, rather than focusing solely on short-term profits. This behavior influences organizational commitment primarily through the creation of a climate of justice. Employees who perceive that the organization is managed fairly, where rules are enforced without favoritism, and where the voices of all parties are heard before critical decisions are made, will develop trust toward the

system. This systemic trust serves as a powerful predictor of both affective and normative commitment. Furthermore, ethical leadership reduces uncertainty regarding what is required to succeed within the organization. In an ethical environment, employees do not need to worry that coworkers using unethical tactics will gain an unfair advantage, or that they will be penalized for following rules when those rules are unpopular. This certainty frees up mental energy that can be allocated toward productive work, which in turn enhances job satisfaction and commitment. Ethical leaders also serve as role models; employees who observe their leaders consistently choosing the ethical path despite temptations to take shortcuts will be motivated to emulate that behavior. This modeling process reinforces ethical values across the organization, creating a positive cycle that strengthens commitment over time. Within a practical scope, integrating these leadership moral values demands the support of strong interpersonal skills from the leader figure to ensure employee work effectiveness is optimized (Hariani & Sigita, 2022).

Servant leadership demonstrates a strong influence on employees' sense of belonging, which is the feeling of being an important part of the organization. Servant leaders place the needs of subordinates above their personal interests, listen actively, empower others to grow, and build community in the workplace. This behavior directly targets the basic human psychological need for relatedness with others. When leaders consistently demonstrate that they care about the well-being of subordinates as whole persons, rather than merely as workers, employees feel they are within a psychologically safe environment. This feeling of safety allows employees to be themselves without fear of judgment, which forms the foundation of an authentic sense of belonging. Servant leaders also intentionally create opportunities for meaningful interactions among team members, such as through team rituals, shared celebrations, or collaborative projects. These interactions build social bonds that transcend formal work relationships. Employees who possess strong social bonds with colleagues tend to develop a deep sense of belonging because they do not want to lose the relationships they have built. In teams led by servant leaders, conflicts are handled constructively with a focus on problem-solving rather than blaming individuals. This approach reinforces the feeling that every team member is valuable and that differences of opinion

are natural. A sense of belonging built through servant leadership is highly resilient because it stems from positive relationship experiences rather than external incentives or normative pressures. Employees with a strong sense of belonging will voluntarily take on extra responsibilities and defend the organization when it is criticized, not because they expect rewards, but because they view the organization as an extension of themselves. This contributory tendency reaffirms the strategic role of work-life quality and clear leadership orientation in nurturing organizational commitment at the grassroots level (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2021).

The influence of leadership on employee loyalty is mediated by perceived organizational support. Loyalty, defined as the willingness to remain and exert extra effort despite attractive alternative options, develops when employees feel that the organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions. Leaders act as the most visible agents of the organization to employees; when leaders demonstrate supportive behavior, employees tend to attribute that behavior to the organization as a whole. Conversely, when leaders behave harshly or unfairly, employees conclude that the organization fundamentally does not care. This attribution is crucial because loyalty is directed toward the organization, not toward individual leaders. An employee might be highly loyal to a specific leader, but if that leader subsequently moves to another organization, that loyalty does not automatically transfer. Therefore, to build sustainable loyalty, leaders need to ensure that their supportive behaviors are perceived as a reflection of organizational values rather than merely personal kindness. This can be achieved by consistently linking leadership actions to organizational policies and values, as well as giving credit to the organization when positive outcomes occur. In addition to the mediation of perceived organizational support, loyalty is also influenced by trust in the leader. Employees who trust their leaders are confident that the leaders will protect their interests even when they are not being supervised. This trust reduces the need for rigid formal contracts and allows for more flexible, mutually beneficial work relationships. In a high-trust environment, loyalty grows organically because employees feel they are in a secure and reliable relationship. These interpersonal relationship dynamics confirm that leader attention toward employee well-

being holds a central role in driving comprehensive organizational productivity (Darmawan, Irfan, & Al Hakim, 2022).

An employee's long-term commitment, which differs from commitment at a specific point in time, requires continuous maintenance through consistent leadership practices. Commitment that only lasts while a specific leader is still in office is not true long-term commitment. Healthy organizations build leadership systems where values and practices that construct commitment are internalized across all management levels, independent of specific individuals. This demands systematic leadership development, wherein future leaders are selected based on value alignment with organizational culture, trained in commitment-building behaviors, and evaluated based on the commitment outcomes of their teams. Long-term commitment is also influenced by the clarity of career paths provided by the organization. Employees who observe that they can grow and develop within the organization without having to leave to obtain promotions will be more inclined toward long-term commitment. Leaders play a role in building this clarity through regular career discussions, providing challenges that match the employee's development level, and advocating for internal promotions. Furthermore, long-term commitment requires a sense of procedural justice that is consistent over time. Employees who have experienced injustice in the past may find it difficult to trust that situations have changed, so those negative experiences continue to affect their commitment. Leaders need to proactively address past wounds by acknowledging previous mistakes, apologizing if necessary, and demonstrating consistent behavioral changes over the long term. Rebuilding broken commitment requires time and patience, but it is possible if leaders demonstrate their own commitment to the improvement process. At a strategic level, maintaining these long-term employment bonds can be optimized through the continuous integration of employee professionalism and leadership effectiveness (Ernawati et al., 2020).

Individual employee differences, such as personality, values, and career stages, moderate the influence of leadership styles on organizational commitment. Employees with a high need for affiliation defined as a strong desire to establish harmonious relationships with others are more responsive to leadership that builds a sense of belonging, such as servant leadership. They will exhibit higher affective commitment when leaders demonstrate personal concern and create opportunities for social

interaction. Conversely, employees with a high need for achievement the drive to attain standards of excellence are more responsive to transformational leadership that provides intellectual challenges and an inspiring vision. They are motivated by opportunities to develop competence and contribute to meaningful goals. Employees with an internal locus of control, who believe they can control their own destiny, tend to be less affected by transactional leadership because they dislike being controlled by external rewards. In contrast, employees with an external locus of control are more comfortable with clear structures and predictable consequences, making them more responsive to transactional leadership. Career stages also moderate the influence of leadership; employees early in their careers may require more guidance and direction, making them responsive to transactional leadership that provides clarity of expectations. Employees in mid-career stages may highly value autonomy and meaning, thus being responsive to transformational leadership. Employees late in their careers may value stability and recognition for loyalty, making them responsive to ethical leadership that emphasizes fairness. Effective leaders are capable of reading these individual differences and adjusting their style rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. This adaptive capability, known as leadership flexibility, is a key competency that distinguishes ordinary leaders from extraordinary ones in building commitment. This flexibility also includes a leader's capacity to facilitate work-life balance that is socially constructed within organizational cultural norms (Eddine & Darmawan, 2022). Furthermore, the adaptation of servant leadership styles within team operations is proven to be a determining factor for success in enhancing team effectiveness and performance on a macro level (Irfan & Al Hakim, 2022).

Organizational culture interacts with leadership styles in influencing employee commitment, creating significant effects of congruence or incongruence. In cultures that value collectivism and harmony, servant leadership and ethical leadership tend to be more effective because they align with the dominant values. Conversely, in cultures that prize individualism and competition, transformational leadership which provides autonomy and personal challenges may be more appropriate. When a leadership style does not align with the organizational culture, the message conveyed becomes confusing for employees. A transformational

leader in a highly hierarchical bureaucratic culture might be perceived as a threat by upper management, leading to a lack of support for their efforts to empower subordinates. Consequently, employees observe an inconsistency between what the leader says and the reality of the broader system, which damages the leader's credibility and reduces their influence on commitment. Therefore, leadership development aimed at building commitment cannot be conducted in isolation from organizational culture change efforts. In situations where the organizational culture is highly unsupportive of commitment such as a culture that prizes short-term results above all else even the best leaders will struggle to make a meaningful difference. Leadership change must be accompanied by changes in reward systems, human resource policies, and informal norms that reinforce commitment-supporting values. This process requires time and cross-functional coordination, but it is the only path to building sustainable commitment at the organizational level. Top leaders hold a specific responsibility to initiate and maintain this cultural shift, as they possess the authority to alter policies and allocate the necessary resources. This powerful interaction between organizational culture and leadership serves as an accurate determinant in driving comprehensive organizational effectiveness (Darmawan, 2022). The synergy of these two aspects remains relevant even for untangling and optimizing work commitment among contract workers through the reinforcement of their operational competence (Hariani, 2023).

The quality of the exchange relationship between a leader and a subordinate, or leader-member exchange (LMX), significantly influences organizational commitment through a mechanism of positive reciprocity. In high-quality exchange relationships, leaders provide valuable resources such as autonomy, support, and access to critical information to subordinates. In return, subordinates provide discretionary effort, loyalty, and commitment that go beyond formal contractual requirements. This relationship develops through a series of repeated interactions where both parties test each other's commitment. Leaders who consistently fulfill promises, defend subordinates in difficult situations, and give credit for success to the team will build a reputation as a reliable superior. This reputation then facilitates the formation of high-quality relationships with new subordinates because they have heard of positive experiences from colleagues. Conversely, leaders who break

promises, take credit for subordinates' work, or leave subordinates to face problems alone will damage trust and limit exchange relationships to a minimum transactional level. The quality of this exchange relationship strongly influences affective commitment because employees who have a good relationship with their direct supervisor tend to enjoy their work more. They feel that the supervisor cares about their career development and will provide support when needed. This feeling of being supported reduces stress and enhances psychological well-being, which in turn strengthens emotional attachment to the organization. Furthermore, high-quality exchange relationships provide access to informal resources that are unavailable to employees with low-quality exchange relationships, such as information about promotional opportunities or advice on navigating organizational politics. This access enhances an employee's ability to succeed, which further reinforces commitment because they feel that the organization is a place where they can achieve their career goals. The reinforcement of these operational bonds runs parallel to the importance of leadership in nurturing and maintaining the quality of services and products, particularly amidst volatile situations of organizational uncertainty (Irfan & Putra, 2021).

Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice perceived by employees constitute vital mediating mechanisms between leadership and organizational commitment. Distributive justice relates to the perception that the rewards received are proportional to the contributions made. Leaders influence distributive justice through decisions regarding the allocation of bonuses, promotions, and desirable tasks. When these decisions are made transparently and based on objective criteria, employees develop a positive perception of justice. Procedural justice pertains to the perception that the processes used to reach decisions are fair, regardless of whether the decision's outcome personally benefits the employee. Leaders who involve subordinates in decision-making that affects them, listen to objections earnestly, and provide logical justifications when decisions do not meet subordinate expectations will build high perceptions of procedural justice. Interactional justice concerns the quality of interpersonal treatment during the decision-making process. Leaders who treat subordinates with respect, courtesy, and dignity even when delivering bad news will build strong perceptions of interactional justice. These three dimensions of justice independently affect organizational commitment, particularly affective and

normative commitment. Employees who feel fairly treated develop trust that the organization is fundamentally good and that they are safe to invest in a long-term relationship. They also develop a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate the fair treatment received by committing to the organization. Conversely, perceived injustice triggers resentment and a desire to retaliate, which can manifest as a decrease in commitment, an increase in counterproductive behavior, or even acts of sabotage. Leaders who are aware of the importance of justice will deliberately design transparent and consistent processes, as well as train themselves to communicate respectfully in all situations. Within the context of strengthening organizational commitment integratively, this leadership variable needs to be synergized with the provision of proportional incentive schemes and the formulation of a conducive organizational culture (Jahroni et al., 2021).

Psychological empowerment defined as a sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact presents another mechanism connecting leadership to organizational commitment. Transformational and participative leaders empower subordinates by delegating authority, providing autonomy in determining how to achieve goals, and demonstrating confidence that subordinates are capable of executing the responsibilities given. This empowerment influences affective commitment because it satisfies the basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence. Employees who feel empowered tend to view their work as meaningful and feel they possess control over how tasks are performed. This sense of control reduces stress and enhances job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens emotional attachment to the organization. Furthermore, empowerment increases normative commitment because employees who are granted trust feel obligated to reciprocate that trust with higher commitment. They also tend to develop an identity as co-owners of organizational success rather than merely executioners of commands. However, empowerment is not suitable for all employees or all situations. Employees with a low need for control or an external locus of control may experience anxiety when granted too much autonomy. Similarly, in situations that require strict coordination or compliance with predefined procedures, excessive empowerment can disrupt efficiency. Effective leaders are capable of adjusting the level of empowerment to match subordinate characteristics and situational demands, granting full autonomy only when

subordinates are ready and the situation permits. The ability to make these adjustments requires a profound understanding of each subordinate's capacity and preference, which can only be obtained through regular interaction and careful observation. This investment of time to know subordinates individually is one of the distinct hallmarks of leaders who successfully build long-term commitment. In addition, the effectiveness of a democratic leadership style is proven to provide a balanced space for autonomy and yields a positive impact on enhancing employee performance on a macro level (Lestari & Putra, 2021).

Perceived organizational support defined as employees' belief that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being functions as a central mediator in the influence of leadership on commitment. Employees observe their leaders' behavior and use these observations as evidence of how the organization generally treats its workforce. Leaders who are supportive, fair, and ethical signal that the organization is a good place to work. Conversely, abusive or unfair leaders signal that the organization does not care about its employees. Employees who perceive high organizational support tend to develop strong affective commitment because they feel that the organization has invested in them. The principle of reciprocity dictates that beneficiaries are inclined to return the kindness received; employees who feel supported will reciprocate with commitment and extra effort. Perceived organizational support also increases normative commitment through the internalization of the value that loyalty to a supportive organization is a morally correct action. Furthermore, organizational support reduces the perception of costs associated with remaining in the organization, which indirectly affects continuance commitment. Employees who feel supported are less likely to consider alternative employment because they value the non-financial aspects of their current employment relationship. To build perceived organizational support, leaders need to ensure that their actions are consistent with pro-employee organizational policies. For instance, if the organization has a generous family leave policy, leaders must actively encourage subordinates to utilize it without guilt. If the organization provides training programs, leaders must allocate work time for subordinates to attend. Inconsistencies between positive organizational policies and unsupportive leader behavior will damage perceived

organizational support, as employees conclude that such policies are merely for external publicity rather than genuinely helping the workforce. This condition aligns with empirical findings that the simultaneous influence of leadership, a comfortable work environment, and the alignment of work capabilities serve as the primary pillars in boosting employee performance achievements (Sinambela & Lestari, 2022).

A psychological climate that supports innovation and risk-taking is also influenced by leadership and contributes to organizational commitment, particularly in dynamic industries. Leaders who encourage experimentation, tolerate reasonable failures, and reward learning from mistakes create a climate where employees feel safe to take risks. In such a climate, employees develop affective commitment because they feel that the organization supports their growth and development. They do not have to fear that a failed initiative will damage their careers, allowing them to focus on long-term learning. Conversely, a climate that punishes even the slightest failure will drive defensive behavior, where employees only do what they are told and avoid additional responsibilities. In a defensive environment, commitment tends to be low because employees feel trapped in a system that does not support their development. Leaders who build a positive psychological climate do so through role modeling, specifically by openly acknowledging their own mistakes and discussing what was learned. They also actively shield subordinates who take reasonable risks that do not succeed from disproportionate punishment. Furthermore, they celebrate successes originating from subordinate initiatives, giving proper credit and publicizing success stories throughout the organization. This positive psychological climate influences not only commitment but also innovative performance, creating a virtuous cycle where commitment drives innovation and innovation reinforces commitment. Organizations that successfully build such a climate will possess a sustainable competitive advantage because they can adapt more quickly to market changes while retaining a dedicated workforce. Within the context of this transformation, transformational leadership holds a vital role as an agent of social change capable of reconstructing the organizational value system toward a more adaptive work climate (Rojak, Darmawan, & Khayru, 2022).

The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment has been widely documented.

Effective leadership enhances job satisfaction by fulfilling various employee needs, such as the needs for autonomy, competence, social relationships, and meaningful work. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to develop affective commitment because they enjoy their day-to-day work experiences. Nevertheless, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are distinct constructs; an individual can be satisfied with their job but not committed to the organization—for example, if they are satisfied with their assigned tasks but do not care whether the organization they work for succeeds or fails. Conversely, a person can be committed to the organization despite being dissatisfied with their current job, such as when they believe in the organization's mission and are confident that the situation will improve in the future. Leaders who understand this distinction will design interventions tailored to specific conditions. For satisfied but uncommitted employees, interventions that build identification with the organization, such as explaining how their contributions impact the entire organization, may be required. For dissatisfied but committed employees, interventions that improve daily working conditions, such as refining workflows or increasing autonomy, might be more appropriate. Effective leaders regularly measure both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, utilizing the data to diagnose the root causes of problems and design precise interventions. They also recognize that the relationship between satisfaction and commitment is reciprocal; commitment can enhance satisfaction because committed employees tend to interpret work experiences more positively. This virtuous cycle can be reinforced through interventions that target both constructs simultaneously, such as recognition programs that reward contributions while also strengthening identification with the organization. This integrative effort aligns with empirical evidence that work discipline, intrinsic motivation, and the appropriateness of the leadership style are essential prerequisites for maximizing individual performance within institutions (Irfan, 2022).

A crisis of trust in top leadership can massively damage organizational commitment, even when relationships with direct supervisors remain strong. Employees who lose trust in the CEO or the board of directors due to scandals, policies perceived as unfair, or dishonest communication will develop a cynical attitude toward the entire

organization. This cynicism then erodes affective and normative commitment, as employees feel that the organization is fundamentally unworthy of their loyalty. Although their immediate supervisors may be decent individuals, employees realize that these supervisors lack the power to change problematic policies or replace incompetent top leaders. In such situations, commitment may survive at the team or unit level, but not at the level of the organization as a whole. Employees might continue to work due to continuance commitment (fear of job loss) or out of loyalty to team members, but they will not exert discretionary effort beyond formal requirements. Restoring trust after a crisis requires tangible actions from top leadership, not merely apologies or promises of change. Such actions may include the resignation of responsible parties, the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms, the implementation of strict transparency policies, and the involvement of employees in strategic decision-making processes. Line leaders can act as two-way communication channels, conveying subordinate concerns to upper management and explaining the corrective measures being taken. However, without substantial changes from top leaders, line leaders' efforts to maintain commitment will be akin to patching a leaking ship; they can reduce the rate of the leak but cannot stop it entirely. Organizations experiencing a crisis of trust must acknowledge that rebuilding commitment takes years, not months, and that some employees may never return to their original level of commitment. The urgency of solid leadership in restoring operational stability is also recognized in the field of education, where effective leadership, the enforcement of discipline, and the reinforcement of work motivation serve as primary instruments in boosting teacher performance (Saputra & Darmawan, 2023).

The influence of leadership on organizational commitment is not static, but rather evolves over time through a process of collective sensemaking. When a new leader joins or when an existing leader changes their behavior, employees do not immediately alter their commitment drastically. Instead, they observe the leader across various situations, test the consistency between words and actions, and discuss their observations with colleagues. Through these social interactions, a collective interpretation of leadership is formed, which subsequently influences commitment. This sensemaking process explains why the influence of

leadership on commitment often requires time to manifest, and why sudden leadership changes can cause unpredictable fluctuations in commitment. Leaders who wish to build long-term commitment need to be patient and consistent, recognizing that every interaction is an opportunity to reinforce or weaken the collective interpretation of their leadership quality. They also need to proactively manage the narrative surrounding their leadership, for instance, by openly discussing the rationale behind difficult decisions and acknowledging their limitations. Leaders who attempt to manipulate perceptions through short-term impression management tactics may succeed temporarily, but when inconsistencies are detected, the damage to trust will be far more severe than if they had been honest from the outset. In the long run, the only path to sustainable commitment is consistent, authentic leadership where the leader's actions align with stated values, and where employee well-being is a genuine priority rather than mere rhetoric. This social construction of meaning underscores the strategic role of leadership figures in reproducing and maintaining organizational cultural values through the utilization of symbols and meaningful communal rituals (Irfan & Sajjapong, 2023).

## Conclusion

Leadership styles influence organizational commitment through different mechanisms for each dimension of commitment. Transformational leadership is most effective in building affective commitment through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership contributes to continuance commitment through clarity of rewards and consequences. Authentic leadership builds normative commitment through the internalization of moral values and ethical identity. Servant leadership strengthens the sense of belonging by creating a climate of inclusion and interpersonal support. Ethical leadership creates the justice that underlies all forms of commitment. The influence of leadership is mediated by perceptions of organizational support, justice, psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and the quality of exchange relationships. Individual employee differences and organizational culture moderate the effectiveness of each leadership style. Long-term commitment requires leadership consistency over time and the integration of commitment-building values into the entire organizational system.

The practical implications of this research are that organizations need to develop leaders at all levels who possess the flexibility to apply different leadership styles according to the commitment dimensions they wish to build and the characteristics of their subordinates. Leadership development programs should include training on reading subordinate needs, adjusting leadership styles, and building trust through consistency between words and actions. Managerial performance appraisal systems need to include team commitment indicators as one of the success metrics. Further research is suggested to test the integrative model proposed in this study using a longitudinal design that can capture the dynamics of commitment changes over time. Cross-cultural studies are also required to understand how cultural values moderate the effectiveness of various leadership styles in building commitment. Organizations are advised to conduct periodic commitment surveys and use the results as feedback for leadership development.

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