

## Determinant of Affective Commitment: Mediation and Moderation Mechanism of Job Satisfaction and Job Tenure

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### ABSTRACT

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**Objectives:** The objective of this study is to analyze the effect of followership in increasing affective commitment, complemented by a mediation mechanism using job satisfaction and moderating variable job tenure.

**Methodology:** This study is using the quantitative research approach involving 131 employees from the service industry in East Java. Data retrieval using a convenience sampling technique. The instrument used is a questionnaire that is distributed online. Data analysis used SEM\_PLS with Smartpls 3.0 application.

**Finding:** The results found that followership can increase work satisfaction, and job satisfaction can directly affect commitment. Surprisingly, good followership had no direct effect on affective commitment. However, the followership mediation mechanism successfully increases affective commitment through job satisfaction. Finally, job tenure has succeeded in strengthening the role of followership in increasing affective commitment.

**Conclusion:** These findings suggest that if a leader wants to increase employees' affective commitment using a followership attitude, they must pay attention to employee job satisfaction and tenure.

**Keywords:** Followership; Affective Commitment; Job satisfaction; Job tenure.

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## INTRODUCTION

The service industry significantly differs from manufacturing companies because services are closely related to service and customer satisfaction to increase repurchases and productivity (Kandampully et al., 2023). The service industry has more complex problems related to the role of followership in providing clear and precise directions to employees so that they can complete their work according to leadership expectations (Yasin et al., 2023). So, conducting an in-depth study of followership in the service industry is interesting. Furthermore, data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency shows that most workers in Indonesia in 2022 will be in the service sector at 48.4%. The latest service industry development data in Indonesia in 2023 shows a rapid increase in the third quarter of 4.94% on an annual basis. Furthermore, based on business fields, the top five highest growth was in the service sector, namely transportation, and warehousing, which grew at 14.7%; other service sectors at 11.1%; corporate services at 9.4%, and information and communication at 8.5% on an annual basis (Theodora, 2023). These data show that the service sector has been the main contributor to the growth of aggregate labor productivity in Indonesia over the past decade, so the data supports the problem raised, namely the importance of affective commitment to the service sector.

Followership has two dimensions (Kelley, 1992) independent critical thinking and active engagement. The findings from Wang et al. (2020) validated these two dimensions and found that active engagement was more closely impacted by commitment than other types of followership behavior. Meanwhile, Jin et al. (2016) also explained that independent critical thinking means employees do not always obey leaders' wishes but must adapt. Active engagement is related to voluntary actions and exceeding followers' expectations to support leadership in realizing organizational goals.

Affective commitment is part of organizational commitment introduced by Mayer & Allen (1991). One form of continuance commitment is related to a person's desire to continue their work because they cannot get another job. Then normative commitment is related to employee loyalty to stay with the organization because there is pressure from other parties or because they feel uncomfortable if they have to leave the organization, considering that the organization has provided many services to them. Meanwhile, affective commitment is related to the employee's attitude to continue to pursue their work, and there is no desire to leave their job/organization even though there is an offer from another organization. Affective commitment is the highest level among the three types of employee commitment to the organization (Mayer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is a crucial indicator of an employee's emotional feelings, beliefs, and values (Robbin & Judge, 2008).

Drawing upon Cognitive dissonance theory (CDT; Festinger, 1957), this study proposes job satisfaction as mediating the influence of followership on affective commitment. Job satisfaction which is used as a mediating variable is the worker's perceived feelings of delight or discontent when the employee receives the outcomes of their actions per their desires, aspirations, and beliefs (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Arief, H et al., 2023). If leaders aim to increase employee satisfaction, they must equate what has been promised with the reality in the field, or the conformity between hopes/expectations and reality needs to be paid attention to.

This study aims to analyze the effect of followership in increasing affective commitment directly and indirectly through job satisfaction in service company employees. This research continues the recommendations from research results from Peyton et al. (2023), which suggested conducting studies in other service industries regarding the role of leader-follower

and commitment by adding a mediating variable mechanism for job satisfaction as a novelty in this research.

### **Research Gap**

In addition, within the researcher's knowledge, little research directly examines the role of followership on affective commitment, such as Chan & Mak (2014), on students and supervisors at hi-tech companies in Israel (Johnson et al., 2017). Furthermore, several previous researchers on affective commitment to the service industry in Pakistan and Bangladesh (Guohao et al., 2021; Hosen et al., 2024), the banking industry (To & Billy, 2023), hospitality (Park & Hai, 2024), education (Alshuhumi et al., 2024). However, previous researchers have not examined affective commitment to the logistics service industry by looking at the role of followership. So this study is unique in the determinants of affective commitment from the point of view of followership in the service industry in Indonesia which has problems in the majority of workers in the service sector using mediation and moderation mechanisms. So novelty is proposed as a mediating role for job satisfaction on the influence of followership and affective commitment and the moderating role of job tenure. Job tenure has the potential to moderate followership relationships and affective commitment. Cohen (1991) suggests that the relationship with commitment is closely related to the moderation effect of job tenure. Furthermore, tenure is closely related to readiness, acceptance, and commitment to change (Caldwell et al., 2009). Finally, this research attempts to fill this *empirical gap* using the lens of cognitive dissonance theory (Harmon-Jones, 2019), which explains that the determining factors of employee attitudes and assessments are based on a leader's attitude toward empowering them.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Affective Commitment**

Mayer & Allen (1991) explain three forms of commitment widely known among academics. One of them is affective commitment. Affective commitment is closely related to employees' emotions and feelings of attachment to the company where they work. Workers with solid dedication will demonstrate improved productivity because they possess an emotional connection, resulting in a feeling of affiliation with the company, and will consistently exert more extraordinary endeavors for the advancement of the organization (Murniasih & Ketut, 2016). Furthermore, identification and involvement with the organization are characteristics of affective commitment, which is an emotion that has blended with a person's feelings for the organization (Wiganda & Marsasi, 2023). These employees are also willing to relinquish their values and adapt to the company (Fahmi, 2016). Much research has been conducted on affective commitment, such as Chernyak-Hai et al. (2023), who conducted a study on United States and British workers. On university academic staff in Jordan (Haffar et al., 2023). In small and medium enterprises in Iraq (Tajeddini et al., 2023). employees in Germany (Lott & Abendroth, 2023). And 8,000 personnel at a manufacturing firm in Indonesia (Qurotalain et al. 2022). However, previous researchers have not investigated the role of followership as a determinant of affective commitment. Thus, this research investigates the role of followership in service companies in Indonesia.

### **Followership**

This study uses followership theory as the basis for determining the hypothesis. The study of followers and following in the leadership process is known as followership theory. Accordingly, following behaviors, follower roles, and consequences related to the leadership process are all included in the construct of followership. Taking a constructionist perspective means considering that the leadership process is co-constructed (Uhl-Bien, 2014).

Followership is not about how individuals interact with their work or colleagues but about those of superior status, such as leaders. For instance, these facilitators may encompass how followers assume accountability about leaders, how they communicate with leaders, and their approach to resolving issues concerning leaders (Carsten et al., 2010). Cheng et al. (2022) delineate six significant possibilities and directions in the examination of leadership and followership as eye contact offers an objective substitute for emerging leadership that does not depend on subjective evaluations, gaze patterns provide a pathway for identifying diverse leadership styles, gaze patterns present a way for evaluating team coordination and effectiveness, the impact of eye contact on shaping group dynamics can be utilized to create workplace interventions, such as those aimed at increasing the status and power of traditionally and stereotypically marginalized employees (e.g., women, racial minorities), how visual attention varies across different contexts, situations, and professional spheres, and advancements in eye-tracking methodologies.

These discoveries from (Carsten et al., 2010) have significant consequences regarding organizations' preference for inactivity (e.g., unquestioning compliance and respect) or activity (e.g., collaboration or shared leadership) among their workers and whether workers' followership framework aligns with the organization's atmosphere. Additionally, they have implications for leadership studies as they confirm the necessity to "change perspectives" by thoroughly examining the other aspect of the leadership equation, the implementation of followership, and maybe even propose a necessity to broaden perspectives of leadership beyond leading downwards to leading upwards. When employees feel a good leader's followership attitude, they will be able to enhance affective commitment (Park et al., 2023; Yasin et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020) as well as job satisfaction (Jin et al., 2016; Wang & McChamp, 2019). In addition, the relationship between followership styles and job satisfaction revealed that pragmatists valued extrinsic components of work more than intrinsic ones, while exemplary followers gave greater weight to intrinsic features (Hinić, 2017). The relationship between followership and job satisfaction is consistent with Deci's (1991) research, which finds that people who are intrinsically motivated value support for their sense of autonomy (or independent thought) because it gives them a sense of control over their behavior and helps them to view it as a product of their own decisions rather than outside forces. Based on the theoretical and empirical studies above, the researcher has the following hypothesis:

H1: Followership directly affects on affective commitment

H2: Followership directly affects on job satisfaction

### **Job Satisfaction**

Drawing upon Cognitive dissonance theory (CDT), this study proposes job satisfaction as mediating the influence of followership on affective commitment. According to the notion of cognitive dissonance theory, people who have two or more contradictory beliefs will experience dissonance, an uncomfortable state, until they can change their beliefs to resolve this state (Festinger, 1957). Despite its origins in social psychology, this idea is frequently used in

management research (Hinojosa et al., 2017). Furthermore, more specifically the use of CDT in the service industry is explained by Kim (2011) who revealed that CDT has been widely used in a wide context in the fields of health, marketing, and human resources. So the use of CDT in the multidisciplinary field further strengthens the theory and deserves to continue to be studied. Job satisfaction is dynamic in that it is not a fixed condition that can be influenced and changed both inside and outside the workplace (Schmidt, 2007). Furthermore, an individual's opinion of their current position and working conditions is what determines their level of satisfaction at work (Kosasih et al., 2024). As job satisfaction increases, as well as affective commitment. As a result, managers must pay more attention to this issue (Jufrizen & Azila, 2023). Job satisfaction is an employee's attitude or feelings towards pleasant or unpleasant aspects of work under their respective assessments (Hoboubi et al., 2017). An employee's satisfaction is related to commitment because an internal locus of control will make a manager satisfied, and satisfied managers will behave in a way that shows commitment to the company (Srivastava et al., 2013). Some managers assume that employees with high pleasure give rise to high work fellowship and high achievement (Davidescu et al., 2020). Job satisfaction contributes to the development of affective commitment to their organization on 305 executives working in India (Pathardikar et al., 2023). Then, job happiness is more transient than commitment, therefore workers may show job satisfaction faster than they can express commitment since commitment requires more time (Demircioglu, 2023).

Based on theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies, this study proposes conceptual novelty by adding job satisfaction variables as mediation between followership and affective commitment (see Currivan, 1999; Ho et al., 2009). Furthermore, based on the results of a meta-analysis from (Cantarelly et al., 2016) found that job satisfaction and affective commitment are closely related. Ho et al., (2009) stated that employee turnover is higher and organizational performance suffers as a result of low organizational commitment when job satisfaction is low. Then, job satisfaction can increase affective commitment in 30 different organizations in the United Arab Emirates (Yousef, 2000). When employees with high levels of active followership were more satisfied with their jobs (Jin et al., 2016). Sunatar (2023) found that job satisfaction mediates the influence of work facilities and performance. Job satisfaction successfully mediates the influence of innovation climate on affective engagement (Demircioglu, 2023). Then job satisfaction also mediates the influence between procedural justice and affective commitment (Pathardikar et al., 2023). Yuliantini et al. (2024) found that the achievement of job satisfaction among employees will raise employee commitment. Based on this explanation, to the knowledge of the authors, this study is the first to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction on the influence between followership and affective commitment.

H3: Job satisfaction directly affects affective commitment

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of followership on affective commitment

### **Job Tenure**

Job tenure has the potential to moderate followership relationships and affective commitment. Cohen (1991) suggests that the relationship with commitment is closely related to the moderation effect of job tenure. Based on demographic theory, they revealed that gender, age, educational background, management level, experience, and length of work have been widely examined in the context of personal change (Pfeffer, 1983). Furthermore, tenure is closely related to readiness, acceptance, and commitment to change (Caldwell et al., 2009). Previous studies have examined several demographics influencing commitment, such as age, gender, and

marital status (Visanh & Xu, 2018). In the context of this study, job tenure is predicted to moderately influence followership and affective commitment. In addition to previous research studies, job tenure is closely related to commitment and followership because both concepts cannot be presented quickly to working employees. It takes a long time because commitment is related to the steadiness in the heart after joining the organization.

H5: Job tenure strengthens the relationship between followership and affective commitment

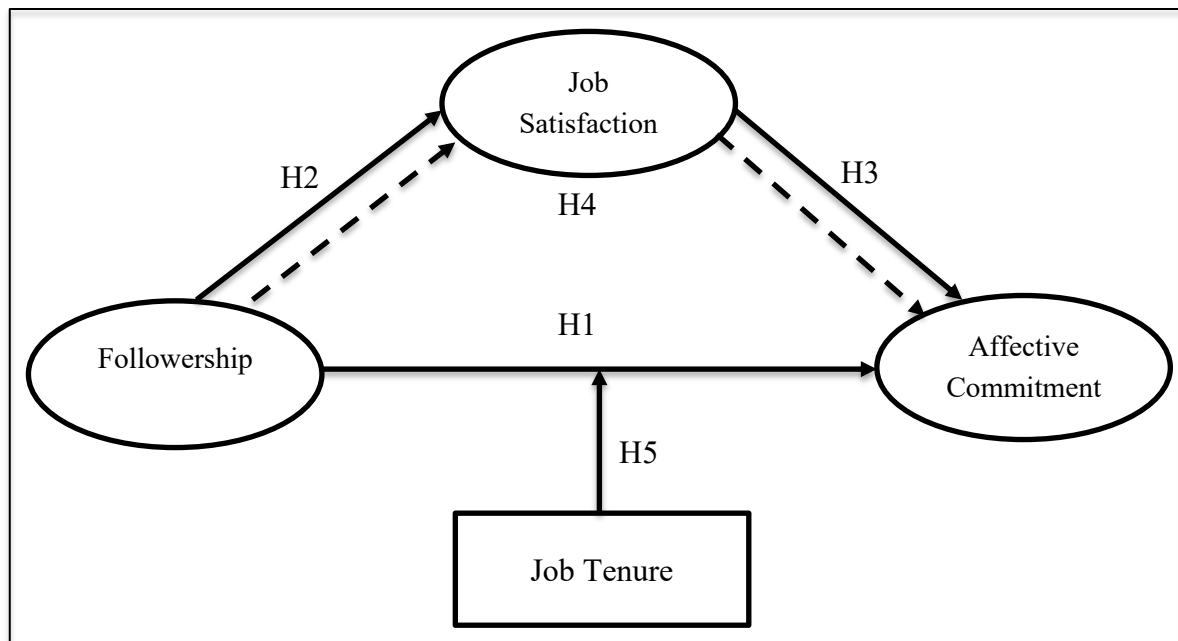


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHOD

This study aims to investigate the role of followership on affective commitment. Furthermore, the research uses a mediation mechanism of job satisfaction on the influence between followership and affective commitment. We collected data using questionnaires distributed directly to respondents online using Google Forms in July-August 2023 on employees of service companies in East Java with the criteria of being an employee who works in a service company and has worked for at least 5 years. The population in this study is unknown due to the limited access of researchers to internal company data, so this study uses the minimum sample size of the Gpower application as used by (Hendayani & Fernando, 2023) using a convenience sampling technique. Based on data analysis, it was found that the minimum number of samples in this study was 125. There were 135 questionnaires distributed, and after screening the data by removing outliers, the remaining 131 questionnaires were suitable for data analysis. Data analysis was carried out using SEM-PLS with Smartpls version 3.0 application following suggestions from (Hair et al., 2022) in determining the rule of thumb. In testing mediation, we follow the steps from (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

We adapted from previous research to measure all variables in this study. The followership variable adapted from Jin et al. (2016) includes two indicators, namely independent critical thinking and active engagement, using 8 (eight) statement items. The job satisfaction variable is adapted from Luthans (2006) with 6 (six) indicators, namely the job itself, salary, promotion, supervision, co-workers, and working conditions using 10 (ten) statement items. The affective commitment variable is adapted from Kreitner & Kinicki (2014) with 3 (three) statement items. Job tenure is measured by three provisions, namely 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and more than 10 years. All statement items in the questionnaire are arranged using a Likert scale.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Measurement Model

This research conducted validity and reliability testing following suggestions from Hair et al., (2022) using convergent validity with the rule of thumb The loading factor value must be greater than 0.70 and the average variance extracted value is greater than 0.50. The validity testing presented in Table 1 can be concluded that all items in the construct have a validity value that meets the minimum criteria. Meanwhile, reliability testing uses double criteria of composite and Cronbach's alpha ( $> 0.70$ ). The results of the reliability testing can be seen in Table 1 which shows that all items used in the questionnaire have valid and reliable items and can be continued with structural equation modeling testing.

**Table 1.** Validity and Reliability

Variables	Item	Loading Factor	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Followership	Fol1	0.800	0.914	0.930	0.624
	Fol2	0.802			
	Fol3	0.831			
	Fol4	0.818			
	Fol5	0.726			
	Fol6	0.784			
	Fol7	0.774			
	Fol8	0.780			
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.854	0.961	0.967	0.745
	JS2	0.884			
	JS3	0.920			

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	JS4	0.939			
	JS5	0.940			
	JS6	0.873			
	JS7	0.932			
	JS8	0.721			
	JS9	0.731			
	JS10	0.801			
Affective Commitment	Acom1	0.895	0.917	0.947	0.857
	Acom2	0.955			
	Acom2	0.927			

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Discriminant validity testing uses HTMT criterion value with a cut-off value of 0.85. In Table 2 it is shown that the HTMT criterion value of all variables is below 0.85 so that it is declared valid and meets the validity test criteria.

**Table 2.** HTMT Criterion

Variables	1	2	3
1. Job Tenure			
2. Affective Commitment			
3. Followership	0.817		
4. Job Satisfaction	0.823	0.843	



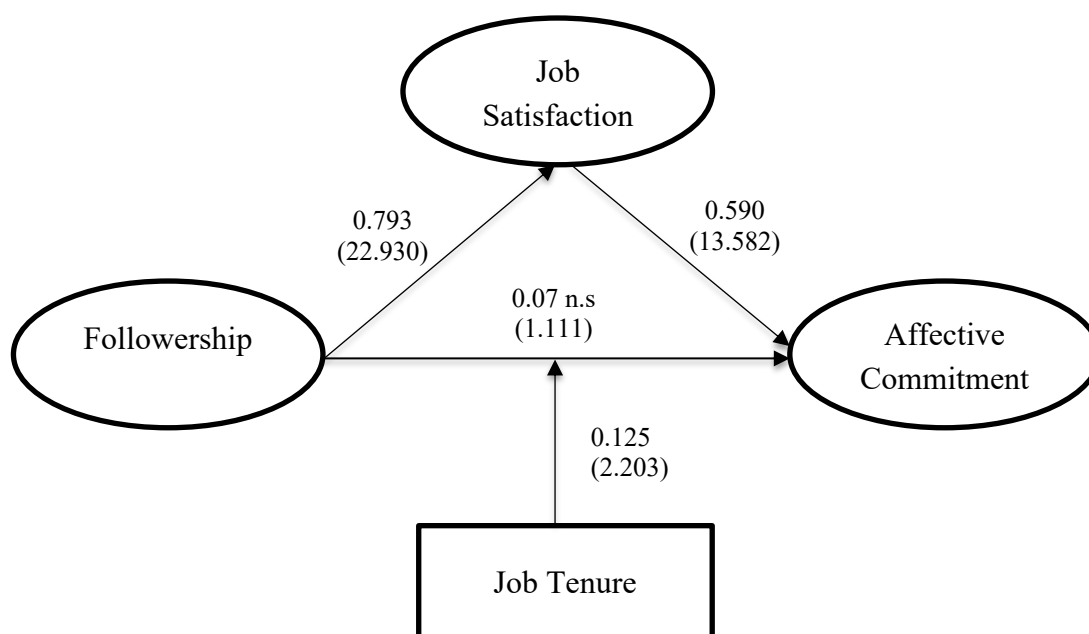


Figure 2. Result of Structural Analysis

n.s = not significant

### Structural Equation Modelling

Table 3. Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
Followership => Affective Commitment	0.079	1.111	0.267	Rejected
Followership => Job Satisfaction	0.793	22.930	0.000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction => Affective Commitment	0.590	13.582	0.000	Accepted
Job Tenure => Affective Commitment	0.642	5.727	0.000	Accepted

Hypothesis testing used in this research is the Smartpls application with bootstrapping technique using 5,000 resamplings following suggestions from (Hair et al., 2022). Table 3 above is the result of inner model testing. The results represent that followership unable to increase affective commitment, this implies hypothesis 1 is rejected. Furthermore, the influence of followership can enhance employee satisfaction, which means the second hypothesis is accepted. Meanwhile, satisfaction also increases affective commitment directly, which means H3 is accepted.

**Table 4.** Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
<b>Mediation</b>				
Followership => Job Satisfaction => Affective Commitment	0.705	10.607	0.000	Accepted
<b>Moderation</b>				
Job Tenure	0.125	2.203	0.028	Accepted

Table 4 presented in terms of indirect or mediating influence, it is known that job satisfaction has a successful mediating role in the perfect mediation category (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) because the direct influence of followership on affective commitment is not significant. However, with the existence of job satisfaction changes significantly. The R-square value is 0.628 (job satisfaction), which means followership can explain job satisfaction by 62.8%. Meanwhile, Affective commitment has an R-square (0.909), this implies that affective commitment could be illustrated by 90.9% of its variations while the rest is explained by other variables.

### Discussion

The first hypothesis, which predicts the role of followership directly on affective commitment, was rejected in this study ( $b = 0.07$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). These findings illustrate that good followership attitudes from leaders are not able to directly increase affective commitment from employees. Based on empirical studies in the field, it was found that the majority of employees have a high commitment to the company without being influenced by the leadership's followership.

Hypothesis 2 which proposed the effect of followership in increasing work satisfaction was proven to be accepted ( $b = 0.79$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). These results are consistent with researchers' predictions that proactively involved followers take initiative, embrace responsibility, and actively engage in performing their tasks. These workers take on additional duties beyond their basic job obligations and strive to accomplish objectives (Kahn, 1990). The results of this study are in line with the findings of (Rajesh et al., 2023) in India who found the same results.

The findings are accepted in the third hypothesis where the role of job satisfaction is significant in increasing employee commitment ( $b = 0.89$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings of this investigation align with the forecasts made by researchers that favorable emotions experienced by employees can enhance their outlook on work and motivate them to strive for more than just monetary benefits or professional progress (Belwalkar et al., 2018). These findings support the results of studies from (Meredith et al., 2023) who said job satisfaction can increase affective commitment.

Testing the indirect or mediating influence in this study found that job satisfaction successfully played a mediating role in the influence of followership on affective commitment with a positive coefficient value of 0.70 and a significance value below 5% which can be classified as perfect mediation/full mediation. These results show that job satisfaction makes the leader's role of followership further increase employee affective commitment. Wang et al., (2023) also found the same thing that good followership can directly increase job satisfaction. The empirical results of this research show novelty by finding that job satisfaction acts as a connecting factor between followership on affective commitment.

Examining the role of job tenure moderation, the study found that job tenure successfully strengthened the influence of followership and affective commitment ( $b = 0.12$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The results of this study illustrate that the longer an employee works the greater their commitment

because the sense of belonging to the organization is higher, supported by good followership from personal employees. The results of the study are in line with the findings of (Ashraf, 2020) which also found that job tenure strengthens employee commitment.

The following are several implications of the findings that contribute to human resource science, especially followership theory and organizational commitment theory by Ellen & Mayer. Followership from organizational leaders is very important in increasing employee affective commitment through high job satisfaction. The research results suggest paying attention to work pleasure first to enhance employees' commitment to the company, especially in terms of affective commitment (emotional attachment of employees as shown by self-identification as part of the organization and involvement in the organization). In line with Pathardikar et al., (2023) who suggest using/involving job satisfaction in increasing affective commitment in employees. Dubey et al., (2023) also suggest that there is a need for job satisfaction so that extra employee behavior increases.

## CONCLUSION

To fill the empirical gap in previous research where there has been a lack of study on the role of followership in increasing affective commitment, this research seeks to contribute to research on the role of mediation as a novelty in the service industry in Indonesia. The role of followership in increasing affective commitment through job satisfaction in service industry employees empirical studies have been carried out. This research provides theoretical contributions to followership and cognitive dissonance theory. The leader's attitude in providing direction will have an impact on the emotional side of an employee, which ultimately impacts commitment to work.

This research has practical contributions, especially to human resource management in service companies. Our findings illustrate that followership cannot directly increase affective commitment because affective commitment is related to employees' values and emotions toward the place they work. However, followership has an impact on employee job satisfaction. This means that if leaders provide space to express opinions and convey ideas, employees feel valued as human beings, ultimately making them feel satisfied. So leaders must have an awareness of this. Furthermore, job satisfaction in this study became a connecting variable between followership and affective commitment. This means that initially, followership had no impact on affective commitment, but with job satisfaction, the influence between these two variables became significant. In practical terms, it can be interpreted that if an employee wants to increase affective commitment using a followership attitude, the leader needs to pay attention to employee satisfaction first.

Job tenure is proven to strengthen the role of followership in increasing affective commitment in organizations. Practically, leaders need to give positive affirmations to employees with long job tenures because they tend to have more outstanding commitment compared to new employees. This is because of a greater sense of belonging, allowing them to contribute actively both with and without orders.

Finally, this study has some limitations, such as this empirical research failed to prove the role of followership on affective commitment, so future researchers can look for other variables that can increase affective commitment. Second, this research was carried out using cross-sectional, which means it can only describe one situation. Future researchers can use experimental methods by providing treatment to one group and carried out longitudinally or gradually over time. Third, this research focuses on employees in service companies located in East Java,

future researchers can conduct research in the same industry in different provinces which may result in different results.

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