

THE ROLE OF INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEES' AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT CARRIED OUT BY LEADERS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of intrinsic job satisfaction in enhancing employees' affective commitment, with leadership behavior—specifically servant leadership—as the driving factor. Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to the fulfillment employees derive from the nature of the work itself, while affective commitment reflects their emotional attachment to the organization. Using a quantitative correlational approach, this study involved 103 correctional officers as respondents. Data were gathered through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that servant leadership positively influences both intrinsic job satisfaction and affective commitment. Furthermore, intrinsic job satisfaction serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment. These findings offer insights into effective leadership practices and emphasize the importance of fostering meaningful job experiences to build stronger emotional bonds between employees and the organization.

Keywords: Intrinsic job satisfaction, Affective commitment, Servant leadership, Correctional officers, Leadership behavior

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a central role in shaping employee behavior, performance, and loyalty in public sector organizations, including correctional institutions (Lapas). In these environments, employees face high psychological and operational pressures, such as social tensions, overcrowding, and increasing demands for reform in public services. These challenges necessitate a leadership approach that emphasizes humanistic values, empowerment, and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Servant leadership, as conceptualized by Greenleaf et al. (2002), offers a model that prioritizes the well-being and development of employees. However, its effectiveness in enhancing employees' affective commitment—defined as emotional attachment to the organization—has shown mixed empirical results, especially in prison settings where systemic limitations and organizational stress are prevalent.

One potential explanatory factor is intrinsic job satisfaction, which refers to the satisfaction derived from the nature of the work itself—such as a sense of purpose, autonomy, and personal fulfillment. Research has indicated that intrinsic job satisfaction may serve as a crucial psychological resource that reinforces the emotional commitment of employees when leaders exhibit servant-oriented behaviors (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2018). When intrinsic satisfaction is high, employees are more likely to internalize organizational values and exhibit loyalty.

Despite growing evidence of the relationship between leadership, job satisfaction, and commitment, studies specifically exploring how intrinsic job satisfaction mediates the link between servant

leadership and affective commitment in correctional settings are still limited. This study seeks to fill that gap by using Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a theoretical framework, positing that reciprocal, trust-based leader-employee relationships cultivate stronger emotional bonds and satisfaction at work.

This research thus aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of servant leadership on affective commitment, with a focus on the mediating role of intrinsic job satisfaction. By doing so, it contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of public sector human resource management, especially in high-stress institutions such as prisons.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Blau (1964), posits that relationships in organizations are built upon reciprocal exchanges. In this context, employees are more likely to show positive attitudes and commitment when they perceive fair treatment, support, and appreciation from their leaders. This framework helps explain how servant leadership—marked by empathy, care, and service—can foster emotional engagement and job satisfaction.

In line with SET, when leaders consistently support and respect employees, this promotes feelings of fairness and intrinsic satisfaction, which in turn reinforce affective commitment. Thus, SET is particularly useful in interpreting how positive leader behaviors can result in strong, sustainable psychological bonds between employees and their organization.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes serving others, particularly subordinates, by fostering their growth and well-being (Greenleaf et al., 2002). This leadership style supports trust, collaboration, and personal development, which can enhance not only work satisfaction but also emotional commitment to the organization.

In prison environments characterized by stress, bureaucracy, and strict hierarchy, servant leadership can function as a relational buffer—helping employees feel valued and supported despite systemic challenges. Previous studies (Ma et al., 2021; Waller et al., 2020) suggest that servant leadership can increase employee engagement and affective outcomes, though its success depends on the presence of psychological enablers such as job satisfaction.

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction

Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to the pleasure or fulfillment derived from the nature of the work itself—such as autonomy, meaningfulness, and achievement—rather than external rewards (Hendri, 2019). In stressful and resource-limited environments like prisons, intrinsic motivators may be more impactful in sustaining employees' psychological well-being and loyalty.

Within the SET framework, intrinsic satisfaction represents an internalized response to supportive leadership. When leaders create work conditions that enable employees to find purpose and autonomy in their roles, intrinsic satisfaction increases, which in turn strengthens affective commitment. Therefore, intrinsic job satisfaction may mediate the relationship between servant leadership and emotional attachment to the organization.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment and identification of an employee with their organization (Bavik, 2020; Iqbal et al., 2021). It reflects an employee's genuine desire to remain a part of the organization and align with its goals. Among the three commitment dimensions

(affective, continuance, normative), affective commitment is the strongest predictor of discretionary effort and long-term retention.

High levels of affective commitment are associated with improved performance and reduced turnover, especially in high-stress public sectors. Given this, identifying leadership approaches and workplace factors that foster emotional bonds—such as servant leadership and intrinsic job satisfaction—is essential.

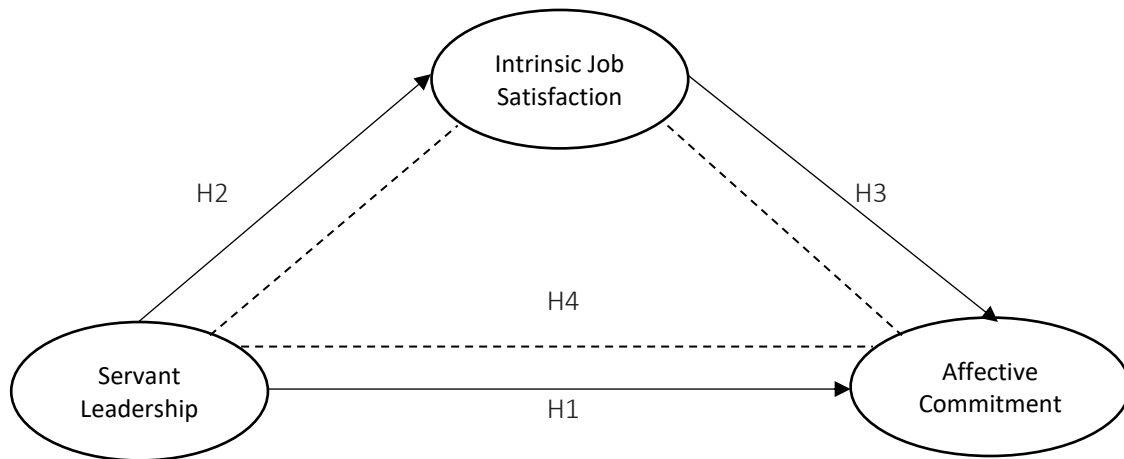


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a quantitative research with a causal approach that aims to examine the effect of servant leadership on employees' affective commitment, with intrinsic job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This approach was chosen because it enables the identification of causal relationships between the variables outlined in the conceptual framework. The use of a quantitative method is considered appropriate to produce objective, measurable findings using statistically validated instruments (Ghozali, 2018). By focusing on intrinsic job satisfaction and affective commitment, this research provides empirical insights into the psychological mechanisms through which leadership influences emotional attachment in correctional institution employees.

The population in this study were all employees at the Class IIA Purwokerto Correctional Institution (Lapas) totaling 103 people. Because the population is relatively small and still within the limits that allow for comprehensive research, this study uses a saturated sampling technique (census), namely the entire population is used as a sample. Thus, the sample in this study amounted to 103 respondents who were active employees at the Class IIA Purwokerto Prison. The use of saturated sampling techniques aims to obtain more accurate and representative data without the risk of sampling error.

The data collection technique was carried out using a questionnaire compiled based on the variable indicators in the study, which had previously been tested for validity and reliability through limited trials. The questionnaire was distributed directly to all prison employees who were respondents, to ensure a high response rate and avoid filling bias. Furthermore, the data obtained were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling approach based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software. The SEM-PLS technique was chosen because it is suitable for predictive research models, can accommodate small to medium sample sizes, and is able to analyze latent relationships between constructs simultaneously.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity testing in Structural Equation Modeling analysis based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) aims to measure the extent to which indicators are able to represent the construct being measured (Hair et al., 2014). One of the criteria used to assess convergent validity is the outer loading value of each indicator against its construct. In this context, an indicator is said to be valid if its loading factor value is greater than 0.7, which indicates that more than 50% of the indicator's variance is explained by the measured latent construct. Values above 0.7 reflect the indicator's strong and consistent contribution in explaining latent variables, as well as strengthening the reliability and validity of the model as a whole. Thus, when all indicators in the model have loading values above 0.7, it can be concluded that the construct in the model has good convergent validity.

Table 1. Loading Factor

Indicator	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Servant Leadership
IJS1	0,853		
IJS2	0,779		
IJS3	0,882		
IJS4	0,861		
IJS5	0,789		
AC1		0,871	
AC2		0,875	
AC3		0,884	
SL10			0,848
SL2			0,891
SL3			0,859
SL4			0,849
SL5			0,812
SL6			0,746
SL7			0,835
SL8			0,810
SL9			0,805
SL1			0,736

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on the results of the convergent validity test using Outer Loading in the SEM-PLS model, all indicators in each variable show loading values above the minimum threshold of 0.70, which indicates that the instrument has met the indicator validity requirements. For the Intrinsic Job Satisfaction variable, indicators IJS1 to IJS5 have loading values between 0.779 and 0.882. In the Affective Commitment variable, indicators AC1 to AC3 show loading values between 0.871 and 0.884. Meanwhile, in the Servant Leadership variable, indicators SL1 to SL10 have loading values ranging from 0.736 to 0.891. These values indicate that each indicator has a significant contribution to the latent construct it represents. Therefore, all indicators are declared valid and can be used for further analysis in the measurement model.

The Construct Reliability and Validity test in SEM-PLS aims to assess the extent to which the constructs in the research model show internal consistency and convergent validity. There are several indicators used in this test, namely Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability are used to measure construct reliability, where the recommended value is at least 0.7. Meanwhile, the AVE value is used to measure convergent validity, with a minimum threshold of 0.5. If all indicator values meet the

criteria, then the construct is considered reliable and valid, so it is suitable for use in the structural model.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	0,890	0,896	0,919	0,695
Affective Commitment	0,849	0,852	0,909	0,768
Servant Leadership	0,946	0,948	0,954	0,673

Source: Data processing results, 2025

The results of the reliability test show that the three latent variables, namely Intrinsic Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment, and Servant Leadership, have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7 (0.890; 0.849; and 0.946, respectively) and Composite Reliability values above 0.7 (0.919; 0.909; and 0.954). This indicates that the indicators in each construct have high internal consistency. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the three also exceed 0.5 (0.695; 0.768; and 0.673), which indicates that the constructs have good convergent validity because they are able to explain more than 50% of the variance of their respective indicators.

The Discriminant Validity test in SEM-PLS aims to ensure that each construct in the model actually measures different concepts from each other. One of the commonly used methods is the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compares the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each construct with the correlation between other constructs. Discriminant validity is declared fulfilled if the square root value of AVE (shown on the diagonal of the table) is higher than the correlation between constructs (values outside the diagonal). This indicates that the construct is more highly correlated with its own indicators compared to other constructs, thus confirming that each construct is unique and does not overlap with other constructs in the model.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

Variable	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Servant Leadership
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	0,834		
Affective Commitment	0,792	0,876	
Servant Leadership	0,847	0,809	0,820

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Through the Fornell-Larcker test, each construct has a higher AVE square root value compared to its correlation with other constructs. For example, the AVE square root value of Intrinsic Job Satisfaction is 0.834 which is higher than the correlation with Affective Commitment (0.792) and Servant Leadership (0.847). This confirms the existence of discriminant validity. On the other hand, the results of the cross-loading test also support that all indicators have the highest loading on the measured construct, and are not higher on other constructs, thus indicating that these indicators truly represent their constructs.

The F-Square test in the SEM-PLS approach is used to measure the magnitude of the exogenous influence on the endogenous by looking at how much a variable contributes to increasing the R-Square value of the endogenous construct. The F-Square value provides an indication of whether a construct has a small (≥ 0.02), medium (≥ 0.15), or large (≥ 0.35) effect on other constructs in the

structural model. Thus, this test is important to evaluate the predictive power of the relationship between variables in the research model.

Table 4. F-Square

Variable	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Servant Leadership
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction		0,133	
Affective Commitment			
Servant Leadership	2,548	0,220	

Source: Data processing results, 2025

The results of the influence test between variables show that Servant Leadership has a significant influence on Intrinsic Job Satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 2.548 (> 1.96), so the hypothesis is accepted. However, the influence of Servant Leadership on Affective Commitment is not significant ($t = 0.220$), and the influence of Job Satisfaction on Affective Commitment is also not significant ($t = 0.133$), because both have t-statistic values below the significance threshold. Thus, only one path is proven to be significant, namely between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

The R-Square test in Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is used to measure the magnitude of the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable. A high R-Square value indicates that the model has good predictive power. In general, an R-Square value of 0.25 is considered weak, 0.50 moderate, and 0.75 strong. While R-Square Adjusted takes into account the number of indicators and variables in the model, thus providing a more conservative measure of the predictive power of the model.

Table 5. R-Square

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	0,718	0,715
Affective Commitment	0,695	0,689

Source: Data processing results, 2025

The R-Square value for Job Satisfaction is 0.718, indicating that 71.8% of the variability in Intrinsic Job Satisfaction can be explained by Servant Leadership. Meanwhile, Affective Commitment has an R-Square value of 0.695, which means that 69.5% of the variation in Affective Commitment is explained by Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction although the direct effect is not significant. Overall, the R-Square value indicates that this model has strong explanatory power although some relationships between constructs are not statistically significant.

Hypothesis testing in Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is carried out to test the influence between latent variables in the research model. This process involves analyzing the path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value values to determine whether the relationship between variables is statistically significant. A t-statistic value above 1.96 (at a significance level of 5%) indicates that the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there is a significant influence between the independent variables on the dependent variable. In addition, the direction of the coefficient (positive or negative) indicates the type of relationship that occurs. This hypothesis test is crucial in empirically proving the causal relationship that has been formulated in the conceptual framework of the study. The validity of the results of this test provides a strong basis for drawing conclusions about the influences tested in the SEM-PLS model.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Servant Leadership to Affective Commitment	0,130	3,758	0,000
Servant Leadership to Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	0,036	23,766	0,000
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction to Affective Commitment	0,120	3,153	0,002
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction mediat Servant Leadership to Affective Commitment	0,105	3,070	0,002

Source: Data processing results, 2025

DISCUCCION

Servant Leadership to Affective Commitment

The test results show that the influence of servant leadership on organizational commitment is statistically significant. The t-statistic value of 3.758 exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96, with a p-value of 0.000 which is below the significance level of 0.05. With a standard deviation of 0.130, the first hypothesis is accepted. This shows that servant leadership has a real contribution in increasing employee organizational commitment.

Theoretically, these results are in line with the theory of service leadership put forward by Greenleaf (1970), which emphasizes that leaders who serve the needs of their subordinates are able to foster loyalty and commitment. Service-oriented leadership creates strong interpersonal relationships, empowers employees, and strengthens psychological bonds with the organization. Thus, servant leadership not only regulates, but also guides and supports emotionally. This condition makes employees feel appreciated and more attached to the goals of the organization.

In the context of organizations in Indonesia, especially in the public service sector and companies that are oriented towards collective values, the practice of servant leadership is very relevant. Many organizations today are trying to build a humanistic work culture, where leaders are present as facilitators and companions. These results indicate that organizations that implement servant leadership have the potential to create a more loyal workforce. With increased organizational commitment, the company's long-term stability and performance can be more assured.

Servant Leadership to Intrinsic Job Satisfaction

Based on the results of statistical tests, servant leadership has a significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 23.766. This figure far exceeds the minimum limit of t-statistics of 1.96, indicating a very high strength of the relationship. A p-value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship is very significant. With a low standard deviation of 0.036, these results strengthen the reliability of the findings.

Theoretically, these findings are supported by Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory, which explains that intrinsic factors such as appreciation, attention, and individual development greatly influence job satisfaction. Servant leadership provides space for employees to grow, learn, and be heard, which are important components in creating high job satisfaction. When leaders are there to support, not just give orders, then the work relationship becomes more meaningful. Job satisfaction becomes more than just compensation, but also a sense of belonging and meaning in the work.

This phenomenon is very relevant in facing the challenges of modern organizations that demand high employee retention and engagement. In many organizations, especially after the pandemic, a humanistic approach such as servant leadership is an important solution to foster employee psychological well-being. Satisfied employees tend to be more productive, loyal, and proactive in carrying out their duties. Therefore, organizational investment in building servant leaders is very strategic to create a healthy work culture.

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction to Affective Commitment

The results of the third hypothesis test show that job satisfaction has a significant effect on organizational commitment. The t-statistic value of 3.153 indicates a fairly high strength of the relationship, and the p-value of 0.002 indicates significance at the 95% confidence level. With a standard deviation of 0.120, this model shows good stability. Therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of employee commitment to the organization.

From the perspective of social exchange theory, individuals who are satisfied with their work will be more likely to reciprocate with commitment and loyalty to the organization. Job satisfaction fosters a sense of justice, comfort, and appreciation for the efforts that have been given. Employees who feel their work is meaningful and appreciated will have a higher intention to stay and contribute more. Therefore, job satisfaction is a key component in forming organizational commitment.

This phenomenon is in line with the fact that many organizations face the issue of high turnover due to low job satisfaction. In a competitive work environment, organizations are required to create a positive work experience so that employees not only survive, but also grow with the company. These results emphasize the importance of paying attention to the welfare and psychological aspects of employees in designing work systems. Strong organizational commitment will only grow from individuals who feel satisfied and appreciated.

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable Between Servant Leadership and Affective Commitment

The test results show that job satisfaction acts as a significant mediator between servant leadership and organizational commitment. The t-statistic value of 3.070 and the p-value of 0.002 indicate that this mediation effect is statistically valid. The standard deviation of 0.105 indicates the stability of the mediation effect. Thus, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is able to bridge the influence of servant leadership on increasing organizational commitment.

According to Baron and Kenny's (1986) theory regarding mediation, the mediation variable explains the mechanism of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. In this case, servant leadership directly increases job satisfaction, and job satisfaction is what drives the formation of organizational commitment. This means that the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment is not only direct, but also through a very significant indirect path. This shows that servant leadership produces satisfaction, which in turn increases loyalty.

This phenomenon reflects the importance of a holistic approach in building employee and organizational relationships. Organizations that only focus on leadership structures without paying attention to employee welfare may not get full commitment from their subordinates. Job satisfaction is an important catalyst in transforming leadership values into long-term commitment. Therefore, organizations that develop servant leadership must also ensure the creation of a satisfying work environment so that its positive effects are truly felt.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of statistical analysis, all hypotheses in this study show a significant relationship between servant leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Servant leadership is proven to have a direct positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, with a

high t-statistic value and a p-value below 0.05. In addition, job satisfaction is also proven to be a significant mediator in strengthening the influence of servant leadership on organizational commitment. Overall, the structural model used in this study supports the important role of servant leadership in building job satisfaction which ultimately increases employee loyalty to the organization.

However, there are several theoretical and practical limitations in this study. Theoretically, this study only relies on a quantitative approach without exploring the subjective experiences of employees in more depth, so it does not capture the psychological and emotional nuances in the relationship between variables. From a practical perspective, the application of servant leadership may not be implemented evenly in all types of organizations, especially those with a strict hierarchical structure or an authoritative work culture. In addition, external factors such as economic conditions, organizational culture, and communication style can also affect the effectiveness of the model used. This study also has several methodological limitations that need to be considered. The use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions longitudinally. The limited sample size in one region or sector also makes the generalizability of the findings less strong. Therefore, it is recommended that further research use a longitudinal approach with a wider variety of industrial sectors. Future research can also consider moderating variables such as organizational culture or emotional intelligence to enrich the understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between variables in the context of leadership and organizational commitment.

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