

Can Job Satisfaction Be Achieved Through Organisational Commitment and Leader Member Exchange for Lecturers ?

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of organizational commitment (OC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on the job satisfaction (JS) of lecturers at private universities in South Kalimantan.

Approach – This study employs a quantitative approach involving 300 lecturers working at private universities in South Kalimantan. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the direct and indirect relationships among LMX, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Findings/Results – The findings reveal that LMX has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Organizational commitment also has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, LMX has a positive and significant indirect effect on job satisfaction through organizational commitment, indicating that organizational commitment plays a mediating role in the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. These findings demonstrate that the quality of relationships between lecturers and their leaders can strengthen lecturers' organizational commitment and ultimately enhance their job satisfaction.

Originality/Value – This study highlights the importance of organizational commitment and high-quality interpersonal relationships between lecturers and institutional leaders in improving job satisfaction within private universities. The findings provide practical implications for university management in developing a supportive, collaborative, and relationship-oriented work environment. By positioning organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism between LMX and job satisfaction, this study provides a more comprehensive explanation of how leadership relationships contribute to lecturers' positive work attitudes.

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1. Introduction

Human resource behaviour is an interesting topic to study and has undergone considerable development in recent decades. Research in this field covers various aspects, including job satisfaction (JS) as well as a number of other variables that can influence it, both directly and indirectly (Tharikh et al., 2016). Facts on the ground show that the success of an organisation is largely determined by the quality of its human resources (HR). Employees are one of the most important stakeholders in an organisation, as they play a crucial role in determining the success and failure of the organisation (Liaquat & Mehmood, 2017).

Human resource management (HRM) is a strategic element in increasing organisational competitiveness. Thus, the function of HRM, together with organisational management as a whole, needs to redesign work practices to create mutually beneficial conditions. Human resource behaviour plays an important role in supporting the achievement of organisational goals. In the midst of an era of globalisation and increasingly fierce international competition, the ability to recruit, retain, and manage human resources is a key factor in increasing the competitiveness and success of the industry as a whole (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010)

Basically, problems in the field of HR centre on how an organisation can manage its employees effectively to achieve common goals. In the midst of increasingly fierce competition, organisations are required to focus not only on productivity, but also on the psychological well-being of employees. One of the strategic issues in HR that has received great attention is job satisfaction (JS). This is because job satisfaction has a strong relationship with motivation, loyalty, performance, and the sustainability of the work relationship between employees and the organisation (Na-Nan et al., 2020) Thus, understanding and managing job satisfaction is an integral part of efforts to improve the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. Job satisfaction is also one of the important indicators in assessing the success of HR management in the higher education environment. Research on job satisfaction has become a major focus in the field of HRM, especially in an effort to improve individual and organisational performance (Maibvisira et al., 2022). Various previous studies have shown that JS is influenced by a number of factors, including the work environment, workload, organisational commitment (OC), rewards received and the quality of interactions between individuals in the work environment.

JS is a combination of physiological, environmental, and psychological conditions that affect a person (Luzipho et al., 2020). Job satisfaction is one of the key factors in increasing individual productivity and performance in the work environment, including in universities. Lecturers, as a key component of the educational process, need working conditions that support them to work optimally. In this context, OC and the quality of the relationship between superiors and subordinates (LMX) are two important factors that affect the level of job satisfaction (Bennouna et al., 2024)

Lecturers are a central actor in the world of higher education. Lecturers' performance is greatly influenced by the level of JS they feel. JS reflects the extent to which a person feels satisfied with the work they do and plays an important role in determining the loyalty, productivity, and attachment of lecturers to the institution where they work. In the context of private universities (PTS) in South Kalimantan, organisational dynamics and interpersonal relationships among academics are strategic issues. One of the variables that affects JS is OC. OC can be interpreted as the level of an individual's attachment to the organisation where they work (Nelwan et al., 2024) In the study of organisational behaviour, OC is seen as a very important aspect because it reflects an individual's behaviour patterns, set of intentions, motivations, and attitudes toward the organisation (Hermanto et al., 2024). This condition

illustrates how strong an employee's psychological attachment to their work is, as well as the extent to which they adopt the values and characteristics of the organisation.

OC reflects a psychological condition that indicates an individual's identification with an organisation and influences behaviour within the organisation. Commitment from employees and the organisation itself is necessary for organisational goals to be achieved. Organisations can increase employee engagement by providing job satisfaction (Tharikh et al., 2016). Research on job satisfaction has become a major focus in the field of HRM, especially in an effort to improve individual and organisational performance. Various studies show that job satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors, including work environment, workload, OC, compensation and interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Various studies in the field of organisational behaviour have revealed a relationship between OC and JS. OC can be understood as a form of value-orientation towards the organisation that reflects how an individual views his or her work as a priority and shows loyalty to the institution in which he or she works. OC can also encourage an individual's creative attitude (Yang & Li, 2023). OC reflects an impulse that motivates individuals to stay in the organisation and contribute fully to efforts to achieve organisational goals (Abebe & Assemie, 2023). Meanwhile, JS is a crucial aspect of employee life, as employees who feel satisfied with their work tend to feel more comfortable and productive in the work environment. JS is defined as the positive feelings that a person has towards his or her work, which is the result of the individual's assessment and various experiences in the workplace (Kim et al., 2023). The JS aspect in the workplace is considered to be very important to the lives of employees. Employees tend to feel higher comfort and satisfaction when the JS aspect is fulfilled. In addition, employees who have a positive attachment to the company generally show higher productivity and morale, and are more likely to stay longer in the company (Hayati & Rifani, 2025).

OC is seen as one of the main predictors of job satisfaction. Meyer and Allen (1990) developed three dimensions of OC, namely affective, normative, and continuance, each of which contributes to employees' perceptions and attitudes towards their institution. The higher the OC level, the higher the job satisfaction level (Abebe & Assemie, 2023). The results of the study (Ahmad et al., 2010) found that OC has no direct influence on job satisfaction. On the other hand, the results of the study (Tharikh et al., 2016) state that OC has a significant influence on job satisfaction. These differences in results show that the relationship between the two variables is still inconsistent and requires further research. Therefore, research on the relationship between OC and JS is an interesting topic and important to be reviewed, especially in the context of lecturers in the university environment.

Another variable that affects JS is LMX. The quality of the relationship between leaders and members is one of the main factors that can affect JS. However, the extent to which these two factors have a simultaneous impact on the JS of lecturers in South Kalimantan is still rarely researched. LMX focuses on the quality of the relationship between leaders and team members. A good relationship between leaders and members can improve JS, as members feel valued and supported (Bennouna et al., 2024). In the context of lecturers, a positive relationship with superiors can contribute to improving JS. Therefore, this study aims to explore how these two factors interact and contribute to lecturers' JS.

Improving the quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates through the LMX approach is one effective way to encourage improved employee performance (Che et al., 2021). Positive exchange relationships between leaders and team members will strengthen work commitment. Followers' trust in leaders plays a role in shaping followers' cognitive styles (M.

Wang et al., 2023) The quality of LMX that employees perceive plays a role in increasing work effort, so that employees not only work optimally, but also show a willingness to perform extra behaviours outside of their formal job description (Hayati & Rifani, 2025)

The LMX model emphasises the importance of the quality of the reciprocal relationships formed between leaders and subordinates in the organisation. The quality of these relationships is not uniform, but rather is strongly influenced by the interaction between individual factors and organisational factors. Employee psychology and behaviour, including a sense of security in the workplace, are strongly influenced by emotions as well as the leadership approach applied (C. Wang et al., 2024). The LMX theory emphasises the importance of the quality of the relationship between leaders and members. The quality of these relationships includes trust, respect, and mutual obligation, which, if well built, can increase motivation, work attachment and job satisfaction. On the other hand, LMX's basic philosophy encourages two-way communication, where leaders and subordinates give each other input openly, which can ultimately create healthier and more productive working relationships (Nugroho et al., 2020) The results of the study (Bennouna et al., 2024) state that LMX has a significant influence on job satisfaction, while the results of the study (Toscano et al., 2022) state that LMX has no significant influence on job satisfaction. This study will address the difference in results from the two studies.

This study was conducted on lecturers at private universities in South Kalimantan. Although OC and LMX and their influence on JS have been extensively researched, there has been no research exploring how the quality of relationships between lecturers and leaders affects JS in the context of higher education in South Kalimantan, which has different cultures and organisational dynamics. This research can provide more in-depth insights into how OC and LMX affect lecturers' job satisfaction. High LMX is positively correlated with job satisfaction in various sectors (Bennouna et al., 2024).

Although the relationship between LMX, OC and JS has been widely discussed in the literature on organisational behaviour, most research has been conducted on the industrial sector and public organisations, and very few have examined these three variables simultaneously in the teaching profession. In contrast to business organisations, lecturers have distinctive job characteristics, such as a high level of professional autonomy, academic freedom, a collegial system, a professional identity that is stronger than organisational identity, and the demands to carry out the tridharma of higher education simultaneously. Under these conditions, the quality of the relationship with the leader may not always translate into JS directly as found in the non-academic sector. Instead, the relationship can work through the formation of OC before finally influencing JS.

Previous research generally assumes that the quality of the relationship between superiors and subordinates directly increases OC and JS through relatively uniform social exchange mechanisms. This assumption does not necessarily apply to the academic work environment. In addition, local contexts such as South Kalimantan Province as a research location have not been widely explored in the scientific literature. Empirical studies on lecturer job satisfaction are still dominated by research in big cities such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta or Bandung. Research that takes into account the context of universities in South Kalimantan that have different cultural, social and institutional backgrounds has not been widely conducted. In fact, understanding this matter is very important in formulating relevant HRM policies. Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining how OC and LMX together affect the JS of PTS lecturers in South Kalimantan.

The condition of private universities also makes this study different; most private universities face limited resources, dependence on foundations, pressure on the achievement of performance indicators, and the need to retain quality lecturers in the midst of competition between universities (Hayati et al., 2024). This causes the relationship between leaders and lecturers to not only reflect the quality of supervision, but also become a source of organisational support that can strengthen commitment and maintain JS.

Based on this, this study not only replicates the known relationship between LMX, OC and JS. Instead, this study examines whether these mechanisms remain valid in academic settings. This provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the basic assumption of *Social Exchange Theory* that high-quality relationships with leaders always generate a positive response directly (Zhou et al., 2021). In an academic setting, the benefits of LMX may first be realised through increased OC before finally translating into JS.

Social Exchange Theory predicts that high-quality exchange relationships create reciprocal obligations that lead to positive work attitudes (Blau, 1964). Nevertheless, organisational behaviour research offers competing causal explanations regarding the sequence between OC and JS. Some studies place JS as a precursor to OC, while others argue that OC serves as a psychological mechanism by which LMX affects JS. This unresolved theoretical problem receives limited attention in higher education settings.

The study makes three theoretical contributions. First, it expands the application of Social Exchange Theory by showing that the consequences of high-quality LMX can go beyond direct attitudinal responses. In an academic context, LMX can contribute (though not greatly) to JS by strengthening lecturer OC, suggesting that reciprocal exchange can involve ongoing organisational engagement processes. Second, this study shows that OC is a psychological mechanism that explains how the relationship between LMX and JS is formed in the academic environment. Third, the study provides contextual insights by examining these mechanisms in academic work, where professional responsibility and organisational relationships coexist. The academic environment provides an opportunity to reconsider whether the relationships identified in conventional organisational research operate identically among lecturers.

Empirically, the study also provides evidence of a complementary relationship, not just a mediated one. The findings suggest that LMX has a strong direct positive relationship with JS, while OC also provides a significant indirect pathway. This pattern suggests that OC explains part, but not entirely, the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. This kind of finding is theoretically relevant because it suggests that the influence of LMX quality on lecturer JS cannot be reduced to OC alone. Instead, LMX can affect JS through a variety of pathways, with OC representing one psychological mechanism.

This research is expected to provide useful insights for educational institutions in South Kalimantan in managing their human resources. By understanding the factors that affect JS, it is hoped that the institution can create a better working environment for lecturers, which in turn will improve the quality of education provided to students.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1. Job Satisfaction (JS)

JS is a psychological factor that plays an important role in determining employee performance, as it reflects an individual's evaluation of working conditions, work environment, and rewards received (Mukhtar, 2026). JS is a positive feeling formed from a person's assessment of his work, how his perception of the work and what is gained from the work is considered important (Luthans, 2014). Job satisfaction reflects how far the expectations and realities felt

by individuals in the workplace are in line or in line (Liu et al., 2023) In general, satisfaction is defined as a psychological condition that results when emotions surrounding unfulfilled expectations are combined with previous feelings about the perceived experience (Kim et al., 2023)

In the theory of Discrepancy Theory, it is stated that JS will depend a lot on what the employee expects from the reality felt by the worker. According to Lawyer, 1973 in (Mustafa, 2021) job satisfaction refers to a person who feels his job. If a person shows a positive attitude at work, then he feels satisfied. Job satisfaction is important in an academic environment because it correlates with teaching quality, involvement in research, and loyalty to the institution. Lecturers who are satisfied with their work tend to be more motivated, able to work effectively, foster good relationships, are committed to the organisation, and demonstrate a continuous dedication to the tridharma of higher education.

2.2. Organisational Commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment (OC) is one of the behavioral components that can be used to measure and assess the extent of a worker's ability to carry out their work. OC is a person's strength, identification and involvement in an organisation (Choi et al., 2024) OC has a crucial role in predicting positive employee behaviors that contribute to the success of the organisation. Employees' level of commitment to the organisation encourages them to put personal interests aside as well as make contributions that go beyond their formal duties (Ly, 2023) An employee's commitment to the organisation is not only demonstrated through the desire to remain part of the organisation and belief in its values, but also through psychological readiness to work hard consistently in achieving the organisation's goals (Yang & Li, 2023) High organisational commitment contributes positively to employee behavior and performance, so leaders need to have a comprehensive understanding of the determinants that affect organisational commitment. (Gassas & Salem, 2023) Every organisation faces challenges in managing employee commitment to maintain work sustainability. Low organisational commitment can increase employees' desire to leave, ultimately prompting them to leave the company. This condition has the potential to cause losses for the company. (Hermanto et al., 2024)

2.3. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

Liden and Graen formulated the theory of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) in 1980 (Nugroho et al., 2020) This theory emphasises that the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates plays an important role in understanding the extent to which a leader's influence impacts members, teams, and organisations as a whole. Variations in work quality and motivation between employees make leaders more likely to differentiate the way they interact with individuals in the organisation. Therefore, organisations need to encourage leaders to adjust their approach to subordinates, particularly in providing support to employees who have limitations in problem-solving skills (Toscano et al., 2022)

The basic construction of LMX focuses on the level of closeness and reciprocal relationships between leaders and employees (Drory et al., 2022) Furthermore, LMX also explores how differences in leader-member relationships affect the relationship between leaders' positive emotions and the psychological sense of security felt by employees (Shin & Park, 2021) Often, leaders' impulses to maintain control are rooted in low levels of trust. Therefore, increasing trust between leaders and subordinates is believed to strengthen empowerment practices by leaders (W. Wang et al., 2023).

2.4. Organisational Commitment as a Psychological Mechanism Linking LMX and Job Satisfaction

According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) in (Drory et al., 2022), the relationship between leaders and employees develops through mutual exchanges that foster mutual trust, obligations and long-term commitments. When lecturers see high-quality interactions with their department heads or institutional leaders, they receive not only instrumental support but also social and emotional resources, including respect, recognition, professional autonomy and growth opportunities. These positive exchanges reinforce lecturers' psychological attachment to their institution before forming an overall assessment of the work experience (Ji et al., 2023).

Within academic institutions, this mechanism will be particularly relevant because lecturers generally have high professional autonomy and a strong job identity. Their JS is often influenced not only by their immediate working conditions, but also by whether they feel psychologically connected to the university and view themselves as valued members of the institution. As a result, OC serves as an important psychological process through which high-quality leader-member relationships translate into higher levels of job satisfaction.

Although previous studies have also shown that JS may precede OC, this study adopts the opposite causal sequence because Social Exchange Theory emphasizes that reciprocal social relationships first create commitment to the organization before influencing employees' affective evaluations of their work (Blau, 1964). Therefore, organizational commitment is conceptualized as a psychological mechanism of mediation, not just a work attitude.

2.5. Leader-Member Exchange and Job Satisfaction

The development of LMX theory can be thought of in the form of four stages. Stage 1 is the discovery of differentiated siblings, stage 2 is the investigation of LMX relationship characteristics and its organisational implications, stage 3 is the description of sibling partnership development, and stage 4 is the aggregation of differentiated sibling relationships to the group and network levels. Through H1 the author tries to show the influence of Leader Member Change (LMX) on job satisfaction in an organisation. LMX clearly incorporates the operationalization of a relationship-based approach to leadership (Graen & Uhl-bien, 1995) shows that job satisfaction and Organizational Civic Behavior are always associated with the quality of LMX. In accordance with the results of the study (Bennouna et al., 2024). This is supported by the findings of (Robin Bauwens et al. 2018). Their findings show a leader-member exchange towards job satisfaction. Based on the description above,

H1: LMX has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

2.6. Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

The next aspect of this study will try to show that there is a strong correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. There is a positive influence between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The results of the study (Tharikh et al., 2016) show the influence of organizational commitment on job satisfaction and teacher job performance. These findings show a positive correlation between OC and JS. In line with previous research, research on the influence of organizational commitment on job satisfaction has been conducted; however, research on the influence of organizational commitment on job satisfaction for foundation permanent lecturers (non-civil servants) has not been widely discussed. Based on the description above,

H2: Organisational commitment has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

2.7. LMX and Job Satisfaction Through Organisational Commitment

The last hypothesis in this study is that the authors argue that there is a role of organisational commitment in mediating the influence of LMX on job satisfaction (Zhou et al., 2021) Empirical studies reveal that high-quality leader-member relationships contribute positively

to increasing organisational commitment and can further increase job satisfaction (Hayati et al., 2024). Supervisors have expectations for employee behaviour, and employees have expectations for their boss's behaviour. This condition creates a perspective that does not depend on the hierarchy of the organisation, but on a two-way relationship, where both parties feel that their investment deserves a balanced response (Toscano et al., 2022). A study found a significant relationship between higher LMX and increased job satisfaction (Bennouna et al., 2024) The results of the study showed that there was a relationship between LMX and organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

H3: Organisational commitment plays a role in mediating the influence of LMX on job satisfaction.

3. Methodology

3.1. Type of Research

This study uses a quantitative research design using a survey method to test the causal relationship between LMX, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction of private university lecturers in South Kalimantan. This approach was chosen because it allows for statistical testing of causal pathways and an in-depth understanding of the linkages between psychological constructs and organisational behaviour. The data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) through Smart PLS 3.0 software, which allows simultaneous assessment of multiple dependent relationships. The PLS approach was chosen for its flexibility in modelling complex relationships, its ability to manage relatively small samples, and its suitability for predictive-oriented frameworks, particularly in studies where theoretical development and empirical testing are integrated (Hair et al., 2019). Because the present study employed a cross-sectional research design, the proposed mediation model represents a theoretically informed causal structure derived from Social Exchange Theory rather than definitive evidence of temporal causality. Accordingly, the mediation analysis should be interpreted as testing the plausibility of OC as a psychological mechanism linking LMX and JS. Future longitudinal or time-lagged studies are needed to provide stronger evidence regarding the temporal ordering of these variables.

3.2. Location and Time of Research.

The research was carried out at Private Universities in the LLDIKTI Region XI, Kalimantan. The respondents in this study are permanent lecturers at private universities in the South Kalimantan region. Data collection will be carried out in January, February, and March 2026.

3.3. Population and Sample

The research population is permanent lecturers of the foundation at private universities in the LLDIKTI Region XI environment in the form of a high school totaling 709 lecturers from 20 high schools, private universities in the form of high schools were chosen because this form is the most numerous compared to other forms such as Academies or Universities. Because all respondents came from private universities in the form of high schools, the working conditions of each respondent were not too different.

The target population consisted of 709 permanent lecturers. From this population, 300 lecturers who met the predetermined eligibility criteria participated in the survey. This study used non-probability sampling with purposive sampling techniques. The respondents were selected permanent lecturers at universities in South Kalimantan who worked full-time and had a minimum working period of 5 years and with the consideration that the lecturers knew the conditions of private universities better (Sugiyono, 2019), and they were willing to participate in the research,

The sample size was determined using the formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1996), with a population of 709 lecturers, then a minimum sample size of 254 respondents was obtained which was then rounded to 300 respondents

In the initial stage, a total of 325 questionnaires were distributed to respondents from private universities. Of the 325 questionnaires distributed, as many as 300 questionnaires were returned by respondents and filled out completely, so that they could be declared suitable for use in the data analysis process. Thus, the return rate of complete and processable questionnaires was 92.31%. Meanwhile, as many as 25 questionnaires (7.69%) were not included in the data that could be processed because they were not returned or did not meet the criteria for completeness of filling.

Furthermore, the 300 questionnaires that had been collected were re-examined to ensure the completeness of the answers and the suitability of the data with the criteria of the research respondents. The results of the examination showed that all 300 questionnaires met the criteria and could be used as research data. Therefore, the number of respondents used in the data processing and analysis stage was 300 respondents from 20 private universities. A total of 300 lecturers participated in this study, representing about 42.3% of the target population, which exceeded the minimum sample size recommended for PLS-SEM analysis

3.4. Assessment of Common Method Bias

Because all constructs were measured using self-reported questionnaires administered to the same respondents at a single point in time, procedural and statistical remedies were employed to reduce the possibility of common method bias. Procedurally, respondents were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential, that participation was voluntary, and that there were no right or wrong answers. These procedures were intended to reduce evaluation apprehension and social desirability bias.

Statistically, common method bias was assessed using the full collinearity approach proposed (Kock, 2015).

3.5. Data Measurement Techniques

The measurements for each construct are obtained from an established and validated scale. LMX is measured from three dimensions, namely mutual respect between leaders and subordinates, the second belief, which is where a good relationship is formed from mutual trust between leaders and subordinates, and the third is *Obligation*, where a sense of responsibility and interaction encourages the growth of good relationships between leaders and subordinates (Graen & Uhl-bien, 1995) and developed by researchers according to the research context.

Organizational commitment is evaluated according to the Three-Component Model (TCM) of Meyer & Allen (1991), which divides commitments into affective, sustainable, and normative dimensions, Job satisfaction is measured using indicators recommended by Robbins & Judge (2023), which include salary, nature of work, supervision, co-workers, and promotions, to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of lecturers' satisfaction with various aspects of their work.

Table 1. Variable Operational Definitions

Variable	Operational Definition	Indikator
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IMX	The quality of good relationships between leaders and lecturers at private universities	1) Mutual respect 2) Trust 3) Obligation (Graen & Uhl-bien, 1995) and developed by researchers according to the research context.
Organizational Commitment	Psychological conditions that make employees will work with dedication and have the desire to give more energy and responsibility to support the welfare and success of the organization where they work.	1) Affective commitment 2 Normative commitment 3 Continuing commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991)
Job Satisfaction	A positive emotional state experienced by lecturers when they feel satisfied with the work done.	1) Salary 2) Nature of Work 3) Supervision 4) Co Worker 5) Promotions (Robbins & Judge, 2024)

Source: Data Processed 2026

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Demografi Responden

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by demographic category, including gender, age, education level, and work experience. Detailed statistical analysis of respondents is presented as follows:

Tabel 2. Karakteristik Responden

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency (persons)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	133	44,3
	Female	167	55,7
	Total	300	100,0
Educational Level	Master's Degree (S2)	242	80,7
	Doctoral Degree (S3)	58	19,3
	Total	300	100,0
Age	25–34 years	67	22,3

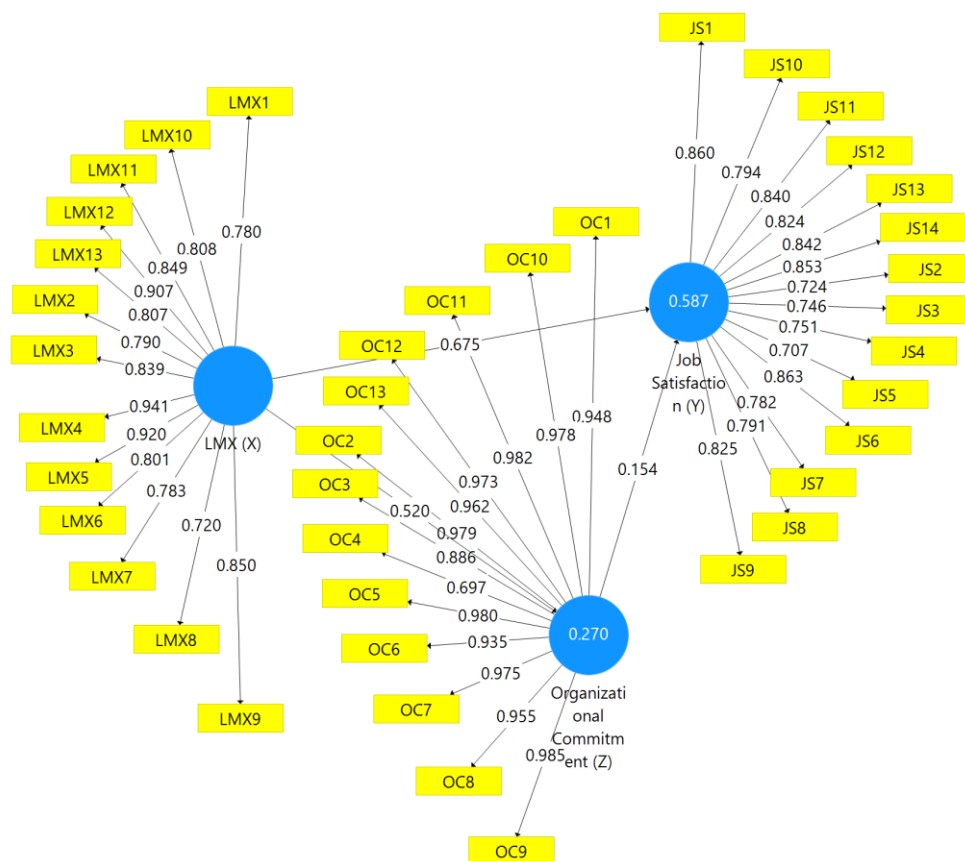
Work Experience	35–44 years	100	33,3
	45–54 years	89	29,7
	≥ 55 years	44	14,7
	Total	300	100,0
	≤ 10 years	9	3,0
	11–20 years	67	22,3
	21–30 years	142	47,4
	> 30 years	82	27,3
	Total	300	100,0

Source: Data Processed 2026

4.2. Validity Convergence

The following figure shows the values of the variable indicators X, Z and Y > 0.6 so that it can be said that all indicators are valid.

Figure 1. Measurement Model



Based on the image, it can be seen that the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) is measured with 13 valid measurement items with an outer loading (OL) between 0.720 and 0.941. Variable reliability is acceptable with Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and a composite reliability of 0.963, above 0.70 (reliability). The AVE convergent variable level of 0.693 > 0.50 has met the requirements of good convergence validity. LMX 4 has the highest OL (0.941). This is related to where a good relationship is formed from mutual trust between leaders and lecturers. Organisational Commitment (OC) variables are measured with 13 valid measurement items with an OL of 0.697-0.985. Acceptable variable reliability with Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability of 0.898, above 0.70 (reliability). The AVE convergence variable level is 0.085 > 0.50 as per the requirements of good convergence validity. OC 9 has the highest LO (0.985),

indicating where the lecturer will receive benefits if they carry out their obligations to the organisation.

The JS variable was measured with 14 valid measurement items with an OL of 0.707-0.863. Variable reliability is acceptable with Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and a composite reliability of 0.957 above 0.70 (reliability). CA above 0.70 (reliability). The AVE convergent variable level of $0.643 > 0.50$ is qualified for good convergence validity. JS 5 has the highest OL of 0.863, which indicates that the performance-based promotion system motivates lecturers to do well

4.3. Variance Extracted (Ave) dan uji Reliability

Table 3. AVE and Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Satisfaction(Y)	0,957	0,957	0,962	0,643
Organisational Commitment (Z)	0,989	0,990	0,991	0,891
LMX (X)	0,963	0,965	0,967	0,693

Source: Data Processed 2026

The AVE value of all variables is > 0.5 , so the validity difference is met. The Cronbach Alpha values > 0.70 , rho_A > 0.70 , and Composite Reliability > 0.60 ; each variable has met the requirements to be said to be reliable (Hair et al., 2019)

4.4. Collinearity Test

Table 4. Collinearity Test

	Job Satisfaction (Y)	Organisational commitment (Z)	LMX (X)
Job Satisfaction(Y)			
Organisational Commitment (Z)	1,370		
LMX (X)	1,370	1,000	

Source: Data Processed 2026

The findings showed a VIF value of < 5.00 , so there were no collinearity problems (Hair et al., 2019)

4.5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Job Satisfaction(Y)	Organisational commitment (Z)	LMX (X)
Job Satisfaction(Y)			
Organisational commitment (Z)	0,514		
LMX (X)	0,784	0,525	

Source: Data Processed 2026

The HTMT assessment criteria refer to a $<$ value limit of 0.85 (conservative) or < 0.90 (looser). The results of the study showed that all HTMT values were below this threshold, so the construct was declared to have adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019).

4.6. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 6. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Job Satisfaction(Y)	Organisational Commitment (Z)	LMX (X)
Job Satisfaction(Y)	0,802		

Organisational Commitment (Z)	0,505	0,944	
LMX (X)	0,755	0,520	0,833

Source: Data processed 2026

The approach used to test discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which involves comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) on the diagonal with the correlation value between constructs outside the diagonal. A construct is declared to have good discriminant validity if the square root value of AVE is greater than the correlation with other constructs. The results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test show that these values are all higher than the correlation values of constructs that correspond to other constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

4.7. Direct Effect

Table 7. Direct Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV I)	P Values
Organisational Commitment (Z) -> Job Satisfaction(Y)	0,154	0,153	0,059	2,625	0,009
LMX (X) -> Job Satisfaction(Y)	0,675	0,677	0,058	11,648	0,000
LMX (X) -> Organisational Commitment (Z)	0,520	0,521	0,049	10,696	0,000

The 3 test results above show a positive and significant number because the P-value < 0.05.

Source: Data Processed 2026

4.8. Indirect Effect

Table 8. Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV I)	P Values
LMX (X) -> Organisational Commitment (Z) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0,080	0,079	0,031	2,622	0,009

Source: Data processed 2026

The mediation analysis demonstrates that OC significantly mediates the relationship between LMX and JS. However, the mediation should be interpreted as complementary partial mediation rather than full mediation because both the direct effect of LMX on JS ($\beta = 0.675$) and the indirect effect through Organizational Commitment ($\beta = 0.080$) are statistically significant.

This finding indicates that high quality leader member relationships influence lecturers' JS through two complementary pathways. First, LMX directly enhances lecturers' positive evaluation of their work by providing professional support, trust, communication, and recognition. Second, LMX indirectly contributes to JS by strengthening lecturers' commitment to their institution, which subsequently increases their satisfaction with their work.

Nevertheless, the indirect effect is considerably smaller than the direct effect, suggesting that OC explains only part of the relationship between LMX and JS. Therefore, OC should not be interpreted as the sole mechanism through which LMX improves JS. Instead, additional

psychological or organizational mechanisms may also contribute to this relationship and deserve further investigation.

4.9. Discussion

These findings explain the importance of the efforts of private universities leaders in South Kalimantan in strengthening organizational commitments through clear communication of vision and mission, career development, and the creation of a positive work climate. Similarly, the quality of interaction between leaders and lecturers needs to be continuously improved through participatory leadership approaches and personalized support. Lecturers' JS does not only depend on individual factors, but is also strongly influenced by organizational aspects and interpersonal relationships in the work environment (Zhou et al., 2021). Data analysis shows that LMX has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.675 and a p-value of 0.000. These findings confirm that the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates is an important determining factor in forming JS (Bennouna et al., 2024). High-quality LMX relationships are characterized by trust, support, and open communication as well as appreciation for subordinates' contributions. When lecturers feel a positive interpersonal relationship with leaders, they will feel more valued and supported in carrying out their duties. This condition creates a sense of psychological security and increases comfort in the work environment. Therefore, effective LMX relationships not only improve the quality of work interactions, but also strengthen the individual's positive perception of their work, resulting in significant increase job satisfaction.

The results of subsequent testing showed that LMX had a positive and significant influence on OC with a coefficient of 0.520 and a p-value of 0.000. These findings indicate that the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates plays an important role in building individual loyalty and attachment to the organization (Hayati et al.2024.) A harmonious relationship with the leader directly encourages lecturers to feel appreciated, motivated, and comfortable in carrying out their responsibilities (Nugroho et al., 2020). Relationships based on mutual trust and appreciation will foster a sense of being valued as part of the organization. When leaders are able to show concern for the needs and aspirations of lecturers, lecturers will feel strong organizational support. This perception ultimately encourages the emergence of a higher commitment to the organization, as individuals feel that the organization values and cares about the contributions they make. This high commitment will then encourage individuals to view their work more positively, so that the level of job satisfaction increases (Nelwan et al., 2024).

The results showed that OC had a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.154 and a p-value of 0.009. These findings show that the stronger an individual's attachment to the organization, the higher the level of job satisfaction felt (Tharikh et al., 2016). Organizational commitment reflects emotional attachment, an individual's identification of the organization's goals to the organization's goals, and the desire to maintain membership in the organization (Kim et al., 2023). Individuals with a high level of commitment tend to view their work as an important part of their contribution to the organization. This condition encourages the emergence of a positive perception of the work environment and the tasks performed, thereby increasing JS. Lecturers who have a high level of commitment, both affectively (feeling emotionally bound) and normative (feeling morally obligated), tend to feel more satisfied in carrying out their duties (Koesmono, 2014)

In addition to direct influence, the results of the study also show that OC plays a mediator role in the relationship between LMX and JS. The indirect effect of LMX on JS through OC is proven to be statistically significant with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.080$. However, the direct effect

of LMX on JS is also positive, stronger and significant with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.675$. This pattern shows that the existence of mediators is not very strong compared to the direct influence between LMS on JS. Therefore, the mediation mechanism found to be more accurately classified as complementary partial mediation, namely partial mediation that is complementary, the results show that direct and indirect influences have the same direction and both remain significant.

The findings also suggest that the contribution of mediation mechanisms through OC is relatively small compared to the direct influence of LMX on JS. The indirect effect coefficient of $\beta = 0.080$ only indicates the presence of additional psychological pathways through OC. OC is not the main mechanism explaining the relationship between LMX and JS. LMX has a stronger relationship with JS directly, whereas increased OC explains only a small part of the relationship.

Substantively, these findings indicate that the quality of the relationship between leaders and lecturers can improve JS through work experience that arises directly from the exchange relationship. Quality LMX relationships can provide better access to leader support, communication, recognition, trust, and work resources, so that JS can be formed without having to go through OC enhancement. At the same time, quality LMX can also strengthen lecturers' attachment to the organization, which in turn contributes to JS. However, the second pathway has a more limited contribution. OC has a relatively small influence so it is better understood as one of the psychological mechanisms that complement LMX's direct influence on JS.

The contribution of this study lies in the affirmation that the relationship between LMX and JS takes place through more than one pathway. OC provides one of the significant explanatory pathways, but the relatively small power of indirect effects suggests that the relationship is complex and cannot be fully explained by a single mediator. These findings also provide a basis for further research to test alternative mediators that could potentially explain a larger proportion of the relationship between LMX and JS quality.

This research emphasizes that the quality of leadership relationships in organizations is a strategic factor. In the context of higher education, a harmonious relationship between leaders and lecturers can create a more supportive and collaborative work environment. This shows that the effectiveness of leadership is not only determined by managerial skills, but also by the ability to build quality interpersonal relationships with members of the organization (Jung et al., 2021) Therefore, strengthening relationship-oriented leadership practices is one of the important strategies in improving the quality of human resources in the university environment (Hayati & Rifani, 2025).

These findings support a theoretical proposition derived from Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which states that high-quality relationships between leaders and members foster lecturers' psychological attachment to their institution, which in turn relates to higher job satisfaction. This interpretation is particularly relevant in the context of private universities, where lecturers often enjoy substantial professional autonomy but at the same time face institutional performance pressures. In such situations, a supportive relationship with academic leadership can strengthen lecturers' sense of belonging and commitment to the institution first, before then influencing their assessment of job satisfaction. OC should therefore be understood as a theoretical psychological mechanism in linking LMX to job satisfaction. In the context of higher education, lecturers who have a strong commitment to the institution will feel that the success of the organization is part of personal success, so they tend to feel higher satisfaction in carrying out their academic roles (Gassas & Salem, 2023)

These findings contribute to a novelty aspect in the development of organisational behaviour studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between LMX and OC JS in the context of higher education. Although various previous studies have examined the influence of LMX on diverse employee work attitudes (Bennouna et al., 2024), this study offers a more comprehensive perspective by placing OC as a mediating variable in the relationship between LMX and lecturer JS. This approach provides a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that explain how the quality of the relationship between leaders and lecturers not only increases JS directly, but also indirectly through increased organisational commitment.

In addition, the novelty of this research also lies in the context of research conducted in the private sector, especially those involving lecturers as academic professionals who have different work characteristics compared to other organisational sectors. The dynamics of the relationship between leaders and lecturers are not only related to the structural aspects of the organisation, but also to academic autonomy, professional responsibility and the demands of the Tridharma of higher education. Therefore, this study provides an empirical contribution that enriches the literature regarding the application of LMX theory and organisational behaviour in the context of higher education institutions. In addition, this study shows that the quality of interpersonal relationships between leaders and lecturers is a strategic determining factor that not only has an impact on the affective aspect (JS), but also on the aspect of psychological attachment (OC). These findings strengthen the argument that the relational approach in leadership has a more dominant role than the structural approach in HRM in higher education.

These findings provide empirical support for an indirect relationship pattern consistent with the role of OC as a psychological mechanism linking LMX to JS. However, because this study uses a cross-sectional design, the identified relationships cannot be used to definitively establish temporal sequences. Therefore, although the model of LMX's influence on JS via OC is statistically supported and has a theoretical basis, the possibility of alternative relationships, including JS as an antecedent of OC, remains open.

Further research needs to use longitudinal or time-lagged designs to test whether the quality of LMX in the previous period was actually followed by an increase in OC and subsequent changes in JS.

These findings imply that strengthening interpersonal relationships between leaders and lecturers is one of the important approaches in improving the quality of human resources in higher education (Nugroho et al., 2020). Thus, this study not only makes a theoretical contribution to the development of organisational behaviour studies, but also makes a practical contribution to HRM in the university environment.

However, since this study uses cross-sectional data collected at a specific point in time, alternative causal explanations cannot be ruled out entirely. Previous studies of organisational behaviour have also suggested that job satisfaction may precede organisational commitment. Therefore, future longitudinal research is recommended to compare competing causal models and build stronger evidence on the temporal sequence between LMX, organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This research produced strong empirical findings that LMX has a positive and significant effect on JS lecturers in South Kalimantan, both directly and through the mediating role of

organisational commitment. This study confirms that the quality of the relationship between leaders and lecturers is a key determinant in forming a positive work attitude.

More in depth, the results of the study explain that high-quality LMX relationships—which are reflected in trust, professional respect, emotional support, and open communication—are able to directly increase lecturers' job satisfaction. At the same time, LMX also significantly strengthens the lecturers' organisational commitment, which then serves as a psychological mechanism that strengthens this influence on job satisfaction. Thus, it is evident that organisational commitment acts as a partial mediator that clarifies the flow of LMX's influence on job satisfaction, even though the effect is smaller than the results of LMX complainants' testing of JS directly.

These findings enrich the literature on human resource management, particularly in the context of higher education, by providing evidence that *social exchange theory* is not only relevant in the business sector but also relevant in the academic environment. This study also explains that quality-based interpersonal relationships (LMX) are an important foundation in building emotional attachment (OC) and affective evaluation of work (JS).

This study confirms that universities in South Kalimantan need to develop a relationship-oriented leadership pattern, not solely structurally or administratively. University leaders are expected to be able to build fair, supportive, and trust-based interactions with lecturers to strengthen organisational commitment, which ultimately has an impact on improving JS and institutional performance.

Theoretically, this study contributes to clarifying the mediating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction, which still shows mixed results in previous studies. With the local context of South Kalimantan, this study also offers a contextual perspective that enriches the generalisation of theories, especially in the university environment in Indonesia, which has distinctive cultural characteristics.

Thus, it can be concluded that improving the quality of LMX is a strategy that not only has a direct impact on job satisfaction, but also indirectly through strengthening OC, so that it becomes a crucial factor in human resource management in universities.

The findings indicate that Organisational Commitment partially explains the relationship between Leader Member Exchange and Job Satisfaction. Although Organisational Commitment constitutes a significant psychological mechanism linking high-quality leader-member relationships to lecturers' job satisfaction, the strong direct effect of LMX suggests that other organisational and psychological factors may also contribute to this relationship.

Based on research findings that show that LMX has a positive and significant effect on JS, both directly and through OC, universities in South Kalimantan need to formulate strategic policies that focus on strengthening the quality of relationships between leaders and lecturers. Institutions need to design a participatory and transparent performance management system, where lecturers are involved in the academic and administrative decision-making process. This engagement will strengthen the perception of organisational fairness and belonging, which ultimately increases organisational commitment as a proven significant mediating variable. Universities should also implement policies to strengthen organisational commitment through the creation of a supportive work environment, including fair awards, clear career development opportunities, and recognition of lecturers' contributions. Programs such as mentoring, coaching, and involvement in higher education activities can be concrete instruments to increase lecturers' emotional attachment to the institution. Universities need to conduct periodic evaluations of the quality of employment relations and lecturer satisfaction, for example, through internal surveys that are integrated into the quality assurance system.

This study is important as a basis for evidence-based decision-making, so that the interventions carried out are more targeted.

Overall, the implication of this policy emphasises that increasing lecturers' job satisfaction is not enough through a structural approach alone, but must be balanced with strengthening relational and psychological aspects. Therefore, managing the relationship between leaders and lecturers is a strategic key in improving OC and creating a productive and sustainable work environment.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study are that the non-probability sampling approach and concentration of respondents in selected private universities limit the generalization of the findings. Therefore, the results cannot be automatically generalized to all lecturers at private universities in South Kalimantan or to the Indonesian higher education sector as a whole. This limitation is particularly relevant because private higher education institutions may differ in leadership practices, organizational culture, promotion systems, employment conditions, and institutional governance. Such contextual differences may shape lecturers' perceptions of leader-member exchange, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Future research could address this limitation by employing probability-based sampling across a broader range of institutions, comparing private and public higher education institutions, and examining institutional differences through comparative or multilevel research designs. A multilevel approach would be particularly useful for assessing whether the relationships among LMX, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction remain consistent when lecturers are nested within universities or departments.

Referring to these findings, several advanced research agendas can be developed to enrich the study of LMX, OC, and JS in the context of higher education. Researchers are further advised to develop a research model by adding other variables that have the potential to strengthen or weaken the relationship between variables, such as organisational culture, transformational leadership style or work engagement. The addition of this variable is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect the lecturer's JS. In addition, the next researcher can also expand the geographical scope and unit of analysis, not only limited to lecturers in South Kalimantan, but also compare with other regions in Indonesia or even across countries. This is important to test the consistency of the findings as well as improve the generalisation of research results.

A primary limitation of this study is its cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish temporal causality among LMX, OC, and JS. Although the proposed mediation model is theoretically grounded in Social Exchange Theory, alternative causal sequences remain plausible. Future studies employing longitudinal or time-lagged designs are recommended to examine competing mediation models and strengthen causal inference.

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