



How Empathy and Leadership Communication Foster Employees' Affective Commitment: The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation

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ABSTRACT

Employees' affective commitment in the livestock sector has been relatively under-researched, particularly regarding the factors that influence it. This study aims to analyze the effects of empathy and Leadership Communication on employees' affective commitment, with intrinsic motivation serving as a mediating variable. The study employed a quantitative approach with a population of 100 employees at PT Charoen Pokphand Jaya Farm in Central Java. The research sample consisted of 50 respondents, determined using the Slovin formula. Data were collected via a Google Forms-based questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that Leader empathy and intrinsic motivation have a significant effect on employees' affective commitment. Leader empathy also has a significant effect on intrinsic motivation. Conversely, Leadership Communication does not have a significant effect on either Intrinsic Motivation or affective commitment. Furthermore, Intrinsic Motivation does not mediate the effects of empathy or Leadership Communication on Employees' Affective Commitment

INTRODUCTION

The livestock industry is a strategic sector that plays a vital role in supporting national food security. However, it is currently facing numerous challenges, including slowing market demand, limited feed raw material supplies, rising production costs, and global economic uncertainty, all of which negatively affect organizational productivity and operational efficiency (Meylinah, 2024; Tang & Kwok, 2024). These challenges require companies not only to optimize their operational processes but also to manage their human resources effectively. In this context, employees' affective commitment has become a critical organizational factor, as it reflects employees' emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and loyalty to the organization, which in turn contribute to higher job performance, stronger work engagement, and lower turnover intentions. Conversely, low levels of affective commitment may reduce employee performance and weaken an organization's competitive advantage (Pulido-Martos et al., 2024).

Previous studies have identified leader empathy and Leadership Communication as important determinants of employees' affective commitment by fostering positive workplace relationships, mutual trust, and open communication (Johannessen, 2023; Muss et al., 2026). Furthermore, according to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is proposed as an underlying psychological mechanism through which leaders' behaviors satisfy employees' basic psychological needs, thereby strengthening their emotional attachment to the organization (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Nevertheless, prior research has produced inconsistent findings, with most studies focusing solely on the direct relationships among these variables and being conducted primarily in the service, education, and healthcare sectors rather than in the livestock feed industry. Moreover, empirical studies examining the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationships between leader empathy, Leadership Communication, and employees' affective commitment within Indonesia's livestock feed industry remain limited (Howard et al., 2016; Pulido-Martos et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to examine the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationships between leader empathy, Leadership Communication, and employees' affective commitment at PT Charoen Pokphand Jaya Farm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leader Empathy

Leadership communication refers to the process through which leaders convey information, directions, and feedback to foster shared understanding, trust, and effective coordination between leaders and employees. Effective leadership communication is characterized by openness, clarity of information, message consistency, active listening, and two-way communication that encourages employee participation (Johansson, 2018; Lee & Dong, 2023). Previous studies have demonstrated that transparent leadership communication strengthens employee–organization relationships, enhances trust, and promotes organizational commitment (Lee & Dong, 2023). Leadership communication is commonly measured through indicators including openness, information clarity,

timeliness of communication, two-way communication, and constructive feedback, which collectively reflect the quality of leader-employee interactions (Men & Stacks, 2014).

Leadership Communication

Leadership Communication merupakan proses penyampaian informasi, arahan, dan umpan balik yang bertujuan membangun pemahaman, kepercayaan, serta koordinasi yang efektif antara pemimpin dan karyawan. Komunikasi yang efektif ditandai dengan keterbukaan, kejelasan informasi, konsistensi pesan, kemampuan mendengarkan aspirasi, serta komunikasi dua arah yang mendorong partisipasi karyawan (Johansson, 2018; Lee & Dong, 2023). Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Leadership Communication yang transparan mampu meningkatkan kualitas hubungan organisasi dengan karyawan, memperkuat kepercayaan, dan mendorong komitmen organisasi (Lee & Dong, 2023). Pengukuran Leadership Communication umumnya meliputi keterbukaan, kejelasan informasi, ketepatan waktu penyampaian, komunikasi dua arah, dan pemberian umpan balik sebagai Indikator kualitas interaksi antara pemimpin dan karyawan (Men & Stacks, 2014).

Employees' Affective Commitment

Employees' affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and identification with their organization, leading them to remain with the organization because they genuinely want to rather than because of obligation or economic necessity (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Among the dimensions of organizational commitment, affective commitment is widely regarded as the most influential because it contributes to higher employee loyalty, work engagement, job performance, and retention (Andersén & Jansson, 2024; Pulido-Martos et al., 2024). It is commonly assessed using indicators such as emotional attachment, sense of belonging, pride in being part of the organization, willingness to remain a member of the organization, and identification with organizational values and goals (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These indicators continue to be widely adopted because they have consistently demonstrated strong validity and reliability across numerous studies (Andersén & Jansson, 2024; Pulido-Martos et al., 2024).

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to an individual's internal drive to perform work because it is inherently interesting, meaningful, and personally satisfying rather than motivated by external rewards or pressures (Ryan & Deci, 2020). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation develops through the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—which subsequently enhances job performance, creativity, work engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Howard et al., 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Intrinsic motivation is commonly measured through indicators such as enjoyment of work, interest in work, personal satisfaction, perceived meaningfulness of work, and self-development orientation (Gagné et al., 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, intrinsic motivation is regarded as an

important psychological mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence employees' positive work attitudes and behaviors (McAnally & Hagger, 2024).

Leader Empathy and Employees' Affective Commitment

B According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), leader empathy fulfills employees' psychological need for relatedness, thereby enhancing their feelings of appreciation, trust, and emotional attachment to the organization. Previous studies have consistently shown that empathetic leaders strengthen employees' affective commitment (Pulido-Martos et al., 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Leader empathy positively affects employees' affective commitment.

Leadership Communication and Employees' Affective Commitment

Open, clear, and participative leadership communication fulfills employees' psychological needs, builds trust, and strengthens the relationship between employees and the organization. Previous research has demonstrated that effective communication contributes to greater employee loyalty and stronger organizational commitment (Lee & Dong, 2023; Men & Stacks, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Leadership communication positively affects employees' affective commitment.

Intrinsic Motivation and Employees' Affective Commitment

Based on Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation encourages employees to work because they find their work meaningful and enjoyable, thereby strengthening their emotional attachment to the organization. Previous studies have also reported a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment, and various positive workplace behaviors (Gagné et al., 2022; Howard et al., 2016; McAnally & Hagger, 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Intrinsic motivation positively affects employees' affective commitment.

Leader Empathy and Intrinsic Motivation

Leader empathy enhances employees' intrinsic motivation by fulfilling their psychological needs through care, support, and positive interpersonal relationships. Previous studies have demonstrated that relationship-oriented leadership behaviors significantly strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation (Fuller, 2023; Muss et al., 2026; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Xue et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Leader empathy positively affects employees' intrinsic motivation.

Leadership Communication and Intrinsic Motivation

Effective and supportive leadership communication fulfills employees' basic psychological needs, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation. Previous research has shown that transparent and participative communication enhances autonomous motivation and employee engagement (Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell,

2025; Lee & Dong, 2023; McAnally & Hagger, 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Leadership communication positively affects employees' intrinsic motivation.

The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation in the Relationship Between Leader Empathy and Employees' Affective Commitment

Drawing upon Self-Determination Theory, leader empathy is expected to strengthen employees' affective commitment by enhancing intrinsic motivation through the fulfillment of employees' basic psychological needs. Previous studies have also identified intrinsic motivation as an important psychological mechanism linking leadership behaviors to organizational commitment (Howard et al., 2016; Muss et al., 2026; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Xue et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Intrinsic motivation mediates the positive relationship between leader empathy and employees' affective commitment.

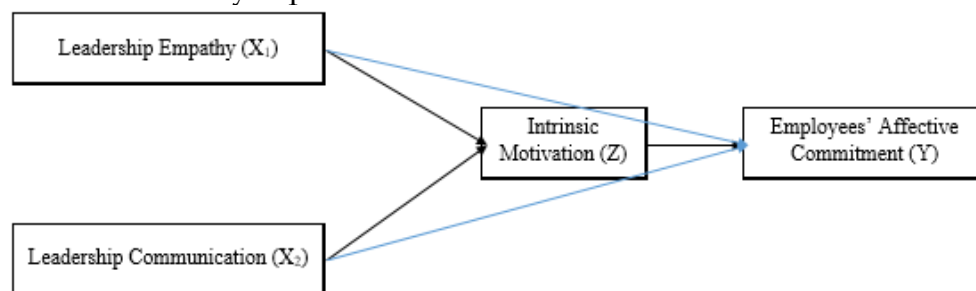
The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation in the Relationship Between Leadership Communication and Employees' Affective Commitment

Open and participative leadership communication is expected to enhance employees' intrinsic motivation by satisfying their basic psychological needs, which subsequently strengthens their affective commitment to the organization. Previous studies have similarly suggested that intrinsic motivation serves as an important mechanism explaining the relationship between leadership communication and organizational commitment (Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell, 2025; Lee & Dong, 2023; McAnally & Hagger, 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Intrinsic motivation mediates the positive relationship between leadership communication and employees' affective commitment.

Conceptual Framework

In this section is about conceptual framework. The conceptual framework proposed in this study is presented in Picture 1.



Picture 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the effects of leader empathy and leadership communication on employees' affective commitment, with intrinsic motivation serving as a mediating variable. The

proposed research model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) (Bougie & Sekaran, 2025; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The study population comprised all 100 employees of PT Charoen Pokphand Jaya Farm, Central Java Region. A sample of 50 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error (Sugiyono, 2022). This sample size satisfies the minimum requirement for SEM-PLS analysis (Hair et al., 2022). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed with SmartPLS 4 to examine both the direct and indirect relationships among the research variables. The operational definitions of the study variables are presented below.

Table 1. Operational Variables

Variable	Indicator	Definition	Kode	Referensi
Leadership Empathy (X1)	<i>Cognitive empathy</i>	Understanding subordinates' perspectives	X1.1	(Muss et al., 2026)
		Recognizing needs	X1.2	
		Considering subordinates' conditions before acting	X1.3	
	<i>Affective empathy</i>	Caring	X1.4	
		Emotional support	X1.5	
		Concern for well-being	X1.6	
Leadership Communication (X2)	<i>Openness</i>	Open communication	X2.1	(Lee & Dong, 2023 dan Men & Stacks, 2014)
	<i>Clarity</i>	Clarity of information	X2.2	
	<i>Timeliness</i>	Timeliness of information delivery	X2.3	
	<i>Two-way communication</i>	Two-way communication	X2.4	
	<i>Feedback</i>	Providing feedback	X2.5	
Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	<i>Enjoyment of work</i>	Enjoying the work assigned	Z1.1	(Gagné et al., 2015 dan Ryan & Deci, 2020)
	<i>Interest in work</i>	Greater interest in the work	Z1.2	
	<i>Personal satisfaction</i>	Personal satisfaction in completing the work	Z1.3	
	<i>Meaningfulness of work</i>	Giving meaning to each job	Z1.4	
	<i>Personal growth and development</i>	Desire to continually develop and improve one's abilities	Z1.5	
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	<i>Emotional attachment</i>	Emotional attachment to the company	Y1.1	(Meyer et al., 2002 dan Meyer & Allen, 1991)
	<i>Sense of belonging</i>	Employees' sense of belonging to the company	Y1.2	
	<i>Organizational pride</i>	Employee pride in being a member of the company	Y1.3	
	<i>Desire to remain</i>	Employee desire to be a member of the company	Y1.4	
	<i>Identification with organizational goals and values</i>	Employee identification with the company's goals and values	Y1.5	

The research data were collected through a Google Forms-based questionnaire developed based on the measurement indicators of leader empathy, leadership communication, intrinsic motivation, and employees' affective commitment. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to assess respondents' level of agreement with each statement (Bougie & Sekaran, 2025; Sugiyono, 2022). The data were subsequently analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. The analysis involved evaluating the measurement model (outer model) to assess construct validity and reliability, followed by the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) through the examination of R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), as well as hypothesis testing. Hypotheses and mediation effects were tested using the bootstrapping procedure, with statistical

significance determined based on t-values greater than 1.96 and p-values below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2022; Nitzl et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

RESULT

This section will present an explanation of the results of the analysis conducted in this study. Each test will be explained and presented in tabular form.

Table 2. Statistic Descriptive Test

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviasi
Leader Empathy (X ₁)	3,000	5,000	4,073	0,617
Leadership Communication (X ₂)	3,000	5,000	4,090	0,622
Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	3,000	5,000	4,300	0,605
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	3,000	5,000	4,123	0,632

Based on the results of the descriptive statistics, all variables had mean scores above 4.00, namely Leader Empathy (4.073), Leadership Communication (4.090), Intrinsic Motivation (4.300), and Employees' Affective Commitment (4.123), indicating that respondents gave positive ratings to all research variables. Furthermore, standard deviations smaller than the mean indicate that respondents' answers were relatively homogeneous, while the minimum value of 3.000 indicates that there were no extremely low ratings. Thus, employees' perceptions of Leader Empathy, Leadership Communication, Intrinsic Motivation, and Affective Commitment at PT Charoen Pokphand Jaya Farm in the Central Java region fall into the good to very good categories.

Table 3. Validity Convergent Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Meaning
Leader Empathy (X ₁)	X1.1	0,796	0,673	Valid
	X1.2	0,864		Valid
	X1.3	0,828		Valid
	X1.4	0,846		Valid
	X1.5	0,881		Valid
	X1.6	0,690		Valid
Leadership Communication (X ₂)	X2.1	0,682	0,629	Valid
	X2.2	0,807		Valid
	X2.3	0,821		Valid
	X2.4	0,803		Valid
	X2.5	0,842		Valid
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	Y1.1	0,765	0,714	Valid
	Y1.2	0,724		Valid
	Y1.3	0,720		Valid
	Y1.4	0,740		Valid
	Y1.5	0,732		Valid

Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	Z1.1	0,905	0,542	Valid
	Z1.2	0,838		Valid
	Z1.3	0,766		Valid
	Z1.4	0,870		Valid
	Z1.5	0,841		Valid

The results of the convergent validity test show that all indicators for the variables Leader Empathy, Leadership Communication, Intrinsic Motivation, and Employees' Affective Commitment meet the validity criteria, with outer loadings ranging from 0.682 to 0.905. Although two indicators had values slightly below 0.70—namely, X1.6 (0.690) and X2.1 (0.682)—both are still acceptable because they exceed the minimum threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, all variables have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.50; therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators have met the requirements for convergent validity and are suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Table 3. HTMT Test

	HTMT	Limit	Meaning
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y) ↔ Leader Empathy (X1)	0,637	0,900	Valid
Leadership Communication (X2) ↔ Leader Empathy (X1)	0,866	0,900	Valid
Leadership Communication (X2) ↔ Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,671	0,900	Valid
Intrinsic Motivation (Z) ↔ Leader Empathy (X1)	0,616	0,900	Valid
Intrinsic Motivation (Z) ↔ Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,744	0,900	Valid
Intrinsic Motivation (Z) ↔ Leadership Communication (X2)	0,505	0,900	Valid

The results of the discriminant validity test using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) showed that all construct pairs had HTMT values below the maximum limit of 0.90, ranging from 0.505 to 0.866, thus meeting the criteria for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, each construct in this study can be empirically distinguished from the other constructs and is suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test

	X ₁	Y	X ₂	Z
Leader Empathy (X1)	0,820			
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,573	0,736		
Leadership Communication (X2)	0,756	0,566	0,793	

Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,590	0,647	0,469	0,845
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The results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criteria show that all constructs have a root mean square of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value greater than their correlation with other constructs. Thus, all variables have met the criteria for discriminant validity, meaning that each construct is able to distinguish itself from other constructs, and the research model is suitable for proceeding to the structural model evaluation stage (inner model).

Table 5. Reliability Test

	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	Meaning
Leader Empathy (X1)	0,902	0,915	Reliable
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,790	0,797	Reliable
Leadership Communication (X2)	0,852	0,865	Reliable
Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,900	0,915	Reliable

The results of the reliability test show that all research variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70, thereby meeting the reliability criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2022). Thus, all constructs are deemed to have good internal consistency, and the research instrument is suitable for structural model analysis (inner model).

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test

	VIF	Meaning
Leader Empathy (X1) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	2,796	No issues
Leader Empathy (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	2,331	No issues
Leadership Communication (X2) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	2,335	No issues
Leadership Communication (X2) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	2,331	No issues
Intrinsic Motivation (Z) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	1,537	No issues

The results of the multicollinearity test show that all relationships between variables have Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranging from 1.537 to 2.796, which are below the maximum recommended limit (<5.00) by Hair et al. (2022).

Thus, the research model does not exhibit multicollinearity, thereby satisfying the assumptions of the structural model and is suitable for proceeding to the R-Square testing and hypothesis testing stages.

Table 6. R² and Q² Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q-Square
Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,510	0,485	0,285
Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,350	0,328	0,239

The results of the structural model evaluation show that Employee Affective Commitment has an R-Square value of 0.510, while Intrinsic Motivation has an R-Square value of 0.350, indicating that both models have moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Q² Predict values for Employee Affective Commitment (0.285) and Intrinsic Motivation (0.239) are above zero, indicating that the models possess medium predictive relevance. Thus, the research model has adequate ability to explain and predict the endogenous variables, making it suitable for hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 7. F Square Test

	F-Square	Influence
Leader Empathy (X1) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,005	Very low
Leader Empathy (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,200	Moderate
Leadership Communication (X2) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,071	Low
Leadership Communication (X2) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,002	Very low
Intrinsic Motivation (Z) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,286	Medium

The results of the Effect Size (f^2) test indicate that the effect of Intrinsic Motivation on Employees' Affective Commitment ($f^2 = 0.286$) and Leader Empathy on Intrinsic Motivation ($f^2 = 0.200$) fall into the moderate category, whereas the effect of Leader Communication on Employees' Affective Commitment was low ($f^2 = 0.071$). Meanwhile, the effects of Leader Empathy on Employee Affective Commitment ($f^2 = 0.005$) and Leader Communication on Intrinsic Motivation ($f^2 = 0.002$) were classified as very low (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, intrinsic motivation makes the greatest contribution to explaining

employees' affective commitment, followed by the effect of leader empathy on intrinsic motivation.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test

	Hipotesis	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Meaning
H ₁	Leader Empathy (X1) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	1,967	0,049	Accepted
H ₂	Leadership Communication (X2) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	1,581	0,114	Rejected
H ₃	Intrinsic Motivation (Z) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	3,332	0,001	Accepted
H ₄	Leader Empathy (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	2,273	0,023	Accepted
H ₅	Leadership Communication (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z)	0,216	0,829	Rejected
H ₆	Leader Empathy (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	1,878	0,060	Rejected
H ₇	Leadership Communication (X1) → Intrinsic Motivation (Z) → Employees' Affective Commitment (Y)	0,197	0,844	Rejected

The results of the path coefficient test show that, of the seven hypotheses proposed, only Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 3, and Hypothesis 4 were accepted. Leader empathy was found to have a significant effect on employees' affective commitment ($p = 0.049$) and intrinsic motivation ($p = 0.023$), while intrinsic motivation also had a significant effect on employees' affective commitment ($p = 0.001$). Conversely, leader communication did not have a significant effect on affective commitment ($p = 0.114$) or intrinsic motivation ($p = 0.829$). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation did not mediate the effect of leader empathy on affective commitment ($p = 0.060$) or the effect of leader communication on affective commitment ($p = 0.844$). Thus, the results of this study indicate that employees' affective commitment is more directly influenced by leader empathy and intrinsic motivation than by leader communication or the mediating mechanism of intrinsic motivation.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that Leader Empathy has a positive and significant effect on Employees' Affective Commitment. The greater the empathy demonstrated by leaders through their care, understanding, and support for employees, the stronger the employees' emotional attachment, loyalty, and sense

of belonging to the organization. This finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which states that positive treatment from leaders will be reciprocated with positive attitudes from employees (Kieserling, 2019), and is supported by research by Grego-Planer (2022) and Santana-Martins et al. (2022).

The research results indicate that Leadership Communication does not have a significant effect on Employees' Affective Commitment, although there is a positive relationship between the two. This suggests that communication focused solely on conveying information is insufficient for building emotional commitment if it fails to foster trust and high-quality two-way communication. This finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Kieserling, 2019) and is supported by Benagin & Hinlayagan (2025) as well as Lee & Kim (2022), who state that the quality of a relationship is a stronger determinant of commitment than the intensity of communication.

The research findings demonstrate that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on employees' affective commitment. Employees who enjoy their work, find it meaningful, and derive personal satisfaction from it tend to have a higher level of emotional attachment to the organization. This finding supports Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which states that intrinsic motivation drives organizational engagement and commitment (Ryan & Deci, 2020), and is consistent with the research by Xue et al. (2022) and Zhou et al. (2022).

The results of the study indicate that Leader Empathy has a positive and significant effect on employees' Intrinsic Motivation. A leader's care and support make employees feel valued, thereby enhancing their intrinsic work motivation. This finding aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which explains that a leader's support can fulfill employees' basic psychological needs, thereby increasing Intrinsic Motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These results are also supported by Decuyper et al. (2022) and Pincus (2024).

The results of the study show that leadership communication does not have a significant effect on employees' intrinsic motivation. This indicates that communication alone is not sufficient to increase intrinsic motivation without being accompanied by empowerment, opportunities for growth, and the fulfillment of employees' psychological needs. This finding aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) and is supported by the meta-analysis by Xue et al. (2022), which states that intrinsic motivation is more strongly influenced by an empowering leadership style than by communication alone.

The research results show that intrinsic motivation does not mediate the effect of leader empathy on employees' affective commitment. Although leader empathy directly increases intrinsic motivation and affective commitment, the indirect effect via intrinsic motivation is not significant. These findings suggest that Leader Empathy is more effective at building affective commitment through direct interpersonal relationships than through the mechanism of Intrinsic Motivation. These results are supported by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) as well as studies by Bai et al. (2023) and Liu et al. (2023).

The results of the study indicate that intrinsic motivation does not mediate the effect of leadership communication on employees' affective commitment. Leadership communication has not been shown to increase intrinsic motivation

and therefore cannot strengthen affective commitment. According to Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation will only develop if employees' basic psychological needs are met (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These findings are supported by Lee & Kim (2022) and Xue et al. (2022), who emphasize that leadership communication is more effective when it is participatory, dialogic, and capable of building trust.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study shows that Leader Empathy and Intrinsic Motivation have a positive effect on Employees' Affective Commitment, whereas Leadership Communication has no significant effect on either affective commitment or Intrinsic Motivation. Furthermore, Leader Empathy was found to increase Intrinsic Motivation; however, Intrinsic Motivation did not mediate the effects of either empathy or Leadership Communication on Employees' Affective Commitment. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on factors influencing affective commitment by integrating Leader Empathy, Leadership Communication, and Intrinsic Motivation within the livestock industry. Practically, companies are advised to strengthen empathy-oriented leadership competencies, improve the quality of communication to make it more participatory, and create a work environment that supports intrinsic motivation in order to enhance employees' emotional attachment, loyalty, and performance.

SUGGESTION

This study is still limited to employees of PT Charoen Pokphand Jaya Farm in the Central Java region; therefore, the results cannot yet be generalized to other regions or companies. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the population and sample to various regions in Indonesia, compare characteristics across regions or companies, and consider adding other variables that may influence employees' affective commitment in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding and provide a basis for developing human resource management strategies.

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