



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Empowerment leadership to improve work engagement through affective commitment in employees of the HR division at PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research examines the connection between empowering leadership, emotional commitment, and job engagement among staff in the Human Resources Division of PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya, Indonesia. Employing a quantitative method and saturated sampling technique, data were gathered from 60 employees via questionnaires and examined using SEM Smart PLS. The results of the research showed that empowering leadership has a significant effect on affective commitment, which consequently leads to a considerable boost in work engagement. Empowering leadership directly influences work engagement as well. This research highlights the significance of enabling leadership in cultivating emotional connections and job enthusiasm, providing practical suggestions for management strategies to improve employee involvement and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Affective Commitment; Empowerment Leadership; Human Resources Management; Organizational Performance; Work Engagement

1. Introduction

Empowerment leadership has emerged as a key topic in management because of its significant impact on employee work engagement. In an increasingly competitive work environment, companies have an urgent need to optimize employees' performance for organizational goals. Work engagement represents the good emotional and psychological condition of employees and is one of the important elements that support the success of an organization. On the other hand, work engagement is related not only to individual well-being but also to productivity and achieving general organizational goals.

Work engagement, according to [1] is a state when employees show enthusiasm, dedication, and full involvement in their work. [2] explain that work engagement is a dynamic factor because it comprises enthusiasm, absorption, and dedication to the work, hence improving workers' performance and well-being. On the other hand, low levels of work engagement adversely affect employee productivity, work ethic, and even raise stress levels. This is a problem faced by many organizations the world over, and which PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya, Indonesia is no exception.

The studies conducted so far have demonstrated that work engagement significantly influences the performance of both individuals and organizations. Employees with high levels of engagement have been reported to show high job satisfaction, low turnover, and high productivity. According to [3], companies characterized by highly engaged employees have increased competitive advantages, since such employees result in a decrease in recruitment and

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training costs because of the low flow of workers. Furthermore, [4] added that engaged employees reveal high loyalty to the company, hence contributing to the stability of the company's operations.

Work engagement is a challenge that has to be overcome in PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya through an effective leadership approach. One applicable approach to this is the concept of empowerment leadership proposed by [5]. According to the theory, leaders should empower their employees through support, encouragement, and advice. In this regard, empowerment leadership will enhance the self-esteem of the employees and make them feel valued in the workplace. This will motivate the employees to a larger extent to work independently and efficiently, hence enhancing their overall work engagement.

[6] also emphasized that empowering leadership is positively associated with affective commitment and work engagement. This research identified affective commitment as a significant mediator that connects empowering leadership to work engagement. Affective commitment pertains to employees' emotional allegiance stemming from their attachment or connection to the company's values and goals. [7] indicated that affective commitment notably enhances the impact of empowering leadership on employee performance. Affective commitment in an organizational context increases not only individual motivation of the team players but also a collaborative working environment among team members. [8] explained that highly engaged employees tend to build a positive and supportive work environment that adds to the overall outcomes of the organization. [9] further highlighted the point that employees with affective commitment have higher motivational levels and engagement, hence a positive impact on company productivity.

This study aimed to explore the impact of leadership empowerment on the emotional commitment and job engagement of staff in the Human Resources Division of PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya. As a state-owned enterprise engaged in agribusiness activities, good human resource management is required as a sound basis underlying the operating activities of the company. The HR division conceptually plays a strategic role in creating an environment that provides support for the work engagement of employees. Therefore, it is necessary to describe how leadership in empowerment is able to improve affective commitment and work engagement within this division.

This may promote a sense of empowerment among the employees in the HR division, thus increasing engagement in work. This research also expects to give recommendations for strategic steps for the company in managing human resources, especially in increasing engagement in work by strengthening affective commitment. Conceptual Model Conceptual model: The conceptual model in this study is referring to the study by [2] and describes individual and psychological factors that are influential on work engagement. Applies to PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya to analyze its appropriateness.

This research provides a theoretical contribution to the science of human resource management no less than practical contributions to companies. Companies can design strategies to enhance employee performance in contributing to organizational goals optimally by understanding the interaction of empowerment leadership, affective commitment, and work engagement.

2. Literature Review

Empowerment Leadership refers to a leadership style that uses empathy and builds trust to help employees develop their own ideas and opinions. When employees feel valued, they experience more intense emotional reactions to the organization. Employees with a strong work ethic and moral character consistently develop more intense affective commitment. This affective commitment is characterized by a sense of ownership and emotional attachment to the organization. Empowering leaders will see increased employee productivity, which in turn will strengthen their emotional commitment to the organization.

Empowerment leadership establishes a workplace that encourages trust, transparent communication, and employee participation in the decision-making process [10]. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and dedication to the organization, which in turn enhances levels of affective commitment [11]. Employees who experience empowerment tend to form a deeper emotional bond with the organization, display greater loyalty, and are more inclined to support its success [12]. Overall, recent research indicates that empowering leadership plays a crucial role in boosting emotional commitment among employees, resulting in a more engaged and committed workforce.

Leaders must attune themselves to the distinct needs and preferences of their team members in order to effectively foster a robust emotional commitment through empowering leadership [13]. This is supported by research conducted by [14], which indicates that empowering leadership significantly impacts affective commitment. They found that

leaders who show autonomy and unconditional respect for employees can increase their emotional intelligence and commitment to the Company [14]. Therefore, based on this argument, the hypothesis that can be developed is as follows. H1: Empowerment Leadership has an effect on Affective Commitment.

The emotional bond that employees have with their organization is known as affective commitment, and it has a significant impact on work engagement or job-related stress. Employees with high levels of affective commitment consistently report a more mature work environment for them. They work with dignity, dedication, and a greater sense of connection to their tasks. This is because employees with strong emotional ties to their organization are more resilient and have an intrinsic motivation to contribute to the best of their ability. As a result, emotional commitment encourages employees to be more engaged in their work, both mentally and physically.

Affective commitment and work engagement represent fundamental concepts within the field of organizational psychology, and understanding their interconnection is essential for improving employee satisfaction and achieving organizational success. Affective commitment refers to the emotional connection and alignment an individual feels towards the organization, while work engagement signifies a state of positivity, fulfillment, and energy in which employees are fully immersed in their work tasks.

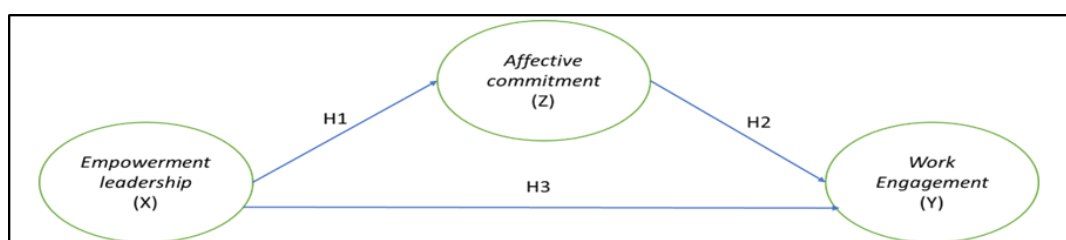
Studies indicate that emotional commitment can positively influence job engagement. When employees experience an emotional bond with their organization, they are likely to commit to their roles and show greater dedication and enthusiasm [15]. This aligns with the study carried out by [16], which indicates that employees who exhibit high affective commitment are likely to engage more deeply in their tasks, dedication, and absorption evidenced by [16]. It is noted that employees' emotional connections motivate them to put in more effort and concentrate better on their tasks. Consequently, the hypothesis can be expressed in this manner. H2: Affective Commitment has an effect on Work Engagement.

In addition to influencing affective commitment, empowerment leadership also has a direct effect on work engagement. Leaders who empower their subordinates will foster loyalty. And do not have a greater self-centered attitude towards their work. By increasing their sense of intrinsic motivation and ability. So as to encourage workers to be more focused, confident, and persistent in achieving better results in their work. High work engagement can be seen by three elements of enthusiasm, dedication, and full work engagement. The latter can be enhanced by a supportive work environment.

As stated by [17] that an empowering leadership style gives employees the freedom to make decisions, which directly affects work engagement. [6] argue that leadership that empowers employees creates a supportive atmosphere for increasing work engagement. They emphasize that empowerment leadership not only gives employees a sense of confidence, but also increases their active participation in the organization.

Leaders who enhance employee empowerment by providing increased responsibility, autonomy, and support can significantly boost employee morale and engagement. When employees feel empowered, they are more inclined to actively participate in their responsibilities. This finding aligns with research conducted by [3] which states that empowerment leadership can increase work engagement. It was found that leaders who provide support to employees by empowering will encourage employees to be fully engaged in their work, by increasing elements such as vigor, dedication, and absorption [3]. Therefore, the following hypothesis formulation can be determined. H3: Empowerment Leadership has an effect on Work Engagement.

Based on the information given earlier. The foundational concept for this research is elaborated on in more detail as follows:



Source: designed by Authors

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

This research employs a quantitative method to examine the link between empowering leadership and emotional commitment, and work engagement in employees of the Human Resources division at PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya, Indonesia. Referring to [18], the quantitative method was chosen because it allows testing objective theories through the analysis of relationships between variables that are measured numerically.

The research utilized a saturated sampling method, encompassing the whole population of 60 staff members from the HR department. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, supported by interviews and observations as supporting techniques. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from available documents and reports.

The variables studied include empowerment leadership as an independent variable, which according to [6] is a leadership style that encourages employee initiative and independence. Work engagement is the dependent variable, defined by [1] as a positive psychological condition characterized by high energy and enthusiasm in working. Affective commitment acts as a mediating variable, which according to [19] reflects the emotional bond of employees with the organization. Measurement of each variable was carried out through a questionnaire with a Likert scale, allowing for comprehensive statistical analysis using SEM Smart PLS to understand the relationship between variables in an organizational context.

4. Results

4.1. Outer Model

4.1.1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is used to test whether a questionnaire is valid or not on each variable. The validity test criteria to be considered valid are $r \text{ count} > r \text{ table}$. The results of the validity test show that $r \text{ table}$ in this study with $df = (n-2) = 60-2 = 58$ with a significance of 0.05 is 0.254.

Table 1 Result of Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Statement	r count	r table
Empowerment Leadership	X.1	0.891	0.254
	X.2	0.866	0.254
	X.3	0.845	0.254
	X.4	0.730	0.254
Work Engagement	Y.1	0.858	0.254
	Y.2	0.877	0.254
Affective Commitment	Z.1	1.000	0.254

Source: processed field data with Smart PLS

Based on table 1. the calculated r has a value $>$ from the $r \text{ table}$. namely 0.254. So. it can be concluded that each statement from all of these variables is declared valid.

4.1.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is utilized to confirm that each concept of every construct or latent variable is distinct from other variables. In this research, the value of discriminant validity is observed in the cross loading. Discriminant validity is deemed satisfactory when the cross-loading value between the indicator and its respective construct exceeds that of the indicator with other constructs. The table below presents the findings of the discriminant validity of the research model by examining the Cross-Loading value.

Table 2 Result of Discriminant Validity Test

Statement	Affective Commitment	Empowerment Leadership	Work Engagement
AC.1	1.000	0.605	0.625
EL.1	0.567	0.891	0.643
EL.3	0.449	0.866	0.557
EL.5	0.523	0.845	0.605
EL.6	0.473	0.730	0.434
WE.1	0.468	0.608	0.858
WE.3	0.612	0.570	0.877

Source: processed field data with Smart PLS

The results presented in Table 2 regarding the cross-loading estimation demonstrate that the loading value of each indicator on its corresponding construct exceeds the values of other cross-loadings. Consequently, it can be concluded that all constructs or latent variables exhibit robust discriminant validity, signifying that the indicators within each construct block are more prominent than those in the other blocks.

4.1.3. Composite Reliability

Composite reliability is utilized to evaluate reliability, indicating how well indicators consistently measure a variable. The reliability value is deemed acceptable if the composite reliability exceeds 0.70. The subsequent results pertain to the composite reliability test.

Table 3 Result of Composite Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Empowerment Leadership	0.854	0.902	0.698
Work Engagement	0.671	0.859	0.752

Source: processed field data with Smart PLS

Based on the information presented in Table 3, the composite reliability for the variables of Empowerment Leadership and Work Engagement exceeds 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is above 0.50. It is posited that Affective Commitment acts as a mediating factor that strengthens the relationship between Empowerment Leadership and Work Engagement, thus providing a more comprehensive insight into the manner in which Empowerment Leadership can enhance Work Engagement. From the table that has been described, it can be concluded that all variables meet the requirements and have good reliability. So, the variables in this study are declared reliable.

4.2. Inner Model

4.2.1. Path Coefficients

Table 4 Result of Path Coefficients

Relationship	Original sample (O)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P values
EL → AC	0.340	2.616	0.009
AC → WE	0.650	7.913	0.000
EL → WE	0.472	3.957	0.000

Source: processed field data with Smart PLS

Path Coefficients are utilized to evaluate the significance and strength of the connection between variables. A Path Coefficients value is deemed significant when the T-Statistic exceeds 1.96 at a significance level of 5% or when P-Values are less than 0.05.

The data presented in Table 4 illustrates the impact of the Empowerment Leadership variable on Affective Commitment, which has an Original Sample (O) value of 0.340. This is supported by a T-Statistic of 2.616, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.009, which is less than 0.05, thereby confirming its significance. Furthermore, the relationship between Affective Commitment and Work Engagement is characterized by an Original Sample (O) value of 0.650, a T-Statistic of 7.913, significantly greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000, also below 0.05, indicating a significant correlation. Additionally, the effect of Empowerment Leadership on Work Engagement is represented by an Original Sample (O) value of 0.472, a T-Statistic of 3.957, which surpasses 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000, confirming its significance as it is less than 0.05.

4.2.2. Test of coefficient of determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination is a measuring tool used to determine the extent to which a model is able to apply variations in dependent variables.

Table 5 Result of coefficient of determination

Variable	R-Square	R-Square adjusted
Affective Commitment	0.366	0.355
Work Engagement	0.532	0.516

Source: processed field data with Smart PLS

From Table 5, it can be deduced that the R-Square value for the Affective Commitment variable stands at 0.366. This indicates that around 36.6% of the variance in Affective Commitment is explained by other variables within the model, including Empowerment Leadership. In contrast, the R-Square value for Work Engagement is 0.532, which signifies that 53.2% of the variation in Work Engagement is influenced by both Affective Commitment and Empowerment Leadership. Therefore, it can be concluded that the factors of Affective Commitment and Work Engagement are characterized as moderate.

5. Discussion

5.1. Relationship between variables

5.1.1. The relationship between Empowerment Leadership and Affective Commitment

According to the research results, the variable EL, or Empowerment Leadership, positively and significantly influences AC, or Affective Commitment, as evidenced by the Original Sample: 0.340; T-Statistic: 2.616 (>1.96); P-Value: 0.009 (<0.05).

On the same note, [20] established that Empowerment Leadership encourages employee emotional attachment to the organization through a supportive and trusting work environment and involvement in decision-making. It is here that leaders who empower employees boost their sense of belongingness and emotional attachment to the organization, which is basically the core of Affective Commitment. Also, [6] established that the same leadership style is directly connected with an increase in job satisfaction, work effort, and effective commitment.

5.1.2. The relationship between Affective Commitment and Work Engagement

The research findings demonstrated that Affective Commitment significantly and positively impacts Work Engagement, as indicated by an Original Sample (O) value of 0.650, a T-Statistic of 7.913 (exceeding 1.96), and a P-Value of 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

This could be attributed to the fact that [19] asserted that individuals who have a high Affective Commitment manifest greater work engagement as attached with the organization. Therefore, it will motivate the working professionals to perform the allotted jobs with passion, commitment, and sincerity. Further to that, [16] have incorporated that work engagement is many a times grounded in pride as well as affiliation for being employed with the organizations.

5.1.3. *The relationship between Empowerment Leadership and Work Engagement*

The findings of this research further demonstrated that Empowerment Leadership (EL) has a positive and significant direct impact on Work Engagement (WE), as evidenced by an Original Sample (O) value of 0.472, a T-Statistic of 3.957 (exceeding 1.96), and a P-Value of 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

The finding of the results goes with the arguments of [3], who say that in an empowering leadership, a sense of self-confidence, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation important for work engagement are created. Leaders who give freedom and responsibility inspire workers to be enthusiastic, attentive to work with dedication. Also, [14] found that Empowerment Leadership has an effect on affective commitment that also enhances work engagement.

5.2. Managerial Implication

The results of this research present several managerial implications that can enhance employee affective commitment and work engagement by implementing empowerment leadership strategies. Empowerment leadership is an enabling style of leadership that empowers employees to feel more responsible for their work. Thus, management should train leaders to give employees trust in decision-making and involve them in strategic discussions. This can increase employees' feeling of belonging and emotional association with the organization [6].

Moreover, a supportive work environment is an integral part of the process in developing employee engagement. It might guarantee employees contribution are rewarded and strengthen two-way communications to build a good relationship among working groups within the organizations. Accordingly, the organization provides ample chance for the employee to be appreciated and attached emotionally. As such, the discussion has aligned with [21].

Moreover, training and development for employees, allowing their innovations to be expressed, and career pathing can enhance their self-confidence and engagement. [14] explained that such empowerment makes workers more likely to engage in work because their work is appreciated.

Finally, ensuring a good balance of workload and fostering a collaborative culture are crucial interventions to support employee well-being. Thus, these are the ways organizations may create enabling working conditions, which in return enhance overall organizational performance [3].

6. Conclusion

The objective of this research is to showcase enabling leadership that enhances the emotional commitment and job engagement of staff in the Human Resources Division of PT Perkebunan Nusantara I Regional 4 Surabaya, Indonesia. It was noted that empowering leadership positively and significantly impacts affective commitment, Original Sample: 0.340; T-Statistic: 2.616; P-Value: 0.009. This implies that an empowering leadership approach, characterized by employee support, trust, and participation in decision-making, is likely to enhance employees' emotional connection to the organization. Moreover, it was discovered that affective commitment significantly impacts work engagement. Paraphrased Sample: 0.650, T-Stat: 7.913, P-Val: 0.000. In other words, when employees exhibit strong emotional commitment, they typically demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication, and are completely involved in their work. Furthermore, direct empowering leadership positively impacts work engagement with an original sample of 0.472, a T-statistic of 3.957, and a p-value of 0.000.

R-square explained that 36.6% of variation in affective commitment is by empowering leadership, and 53.2% variance in work engagement is accounted for by affective commitment and empowering leadership. This is an explanation of how the variables moderate to elicit work engagement.

This thus means that an empowering leadership style strengthens not only the emotional bonds of employees but also leads to work engagement. The study therefore recommends that organizations embrace the empowering leadership practice as a way of creating a supportive work atmosphere, enhancing employee loyalty, and consequently improving organizational performance.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors wish to declare that none has any interest to disclose.

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