

Affective Commitment as a Mediator in Enhancing Logistics Service Quality

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the effects of organizational culture, job satisfaction, and servant leadership on service quality, with affective commitment as a mediating mechanism, in freight forwarding companies in Jakarta, Indonesia. Its novel contribution lies in identifying affective commitment as the primary psychological conduit through which job satisfaction influences service quality, while revealing uneven mediation effects across cultural and leadership factors in a logistics setting. A quantitative design was applied using data from 262 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Primary data were collected via online questionnaires and analyzed using SEM-PLS. The findings show that affective commitment fully mediates the job satisfaction-service quality relationship and partially mediates the effects of organizational culture and servant leadership. Job satisfaction has no direct effect on service quality. The results imply that compensation, promotion, and leadership practices must prioritize affective commitment to achieve sustained service quality improvements.

Keywords: Affective Commitment; Job Satisfaction; Organizational Culture; Service Quality; Servant Leadership

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INTRODUCTION

The logistics sector is a quiet architect of national economic growth, because every percentage point of friction in freight becomes a tax on productivity and trade competitiveness. This study's novel contribution is to theorize and test affective commitment as the central "conversion mechanism" that translates internal resources (culture, job satisfaction, and servant leadership) into external service quality in freight forwarding, clarifying why some levers matter only when they first build emotional attachment to the firm. Indonesia's competitiveness challenge is visible in persistently high logistics costs and performance gaps in international benchmarks, which intensify pressure on logistics firms to deliver consistent, high-quality service outcomes (World Bank, 2022). Evidence from high-impact logistics and operations research also shows that logistics service quality is tightly linked to customer outcomes and firm performance, making service quality a strategic, not cosmetic, capability (Kaswengi et al., 2020; Singh & Adhikari, 2022).

Freight forwarding companies sit at the operational center of global supply chains by coordinating transportation, warehousing, distribution, and customs administration. As e-commerce expands and last-mile expectations harden, customers judge logistics providers less by promises and more by lived reliability, responsiveness, and problem resolution across touchpoints (Vakulenko et al., 2019). Prior logistics research demonstrates that service quality in distribution systems is shaped by both operational execution and the broader service system design, which implies that "inside-the-firm" conditions are inseparable from "outside-the-firm" quality (Kaswengi et al., 2020). Service quality is therefore not merely a technology or infrastructure problem; it is also a human and organizational problem, in which employees' service behaviors and consistency become the final meter of the supply chain.

Theoretically, this study is anchored in the service-profit-chain logic and contemporary leadership and service-climate scholarship: internal conditions shape employee attitudes, which then shape customer-facing service behaviors and perceived quality (Babakus et al., 2003; Lin et al., 2021). Culture matters because it supplies shared norms for prioritizing customers under ambiguity, while servant leadership matters because it cues moral purpose, follower growth, and discretionary service behaviors that are hard to contract and easy to sabotage (Eva et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2020). Job satisfaction, however, is not guaranteed to "show up" as service quality unless it crystallizes into affective commitment, which stabilizes effort, loyalty, and persistence during service failures and peak demand (Babakus et al., 2003; Lin et al., 2021). Recent reviews also warn that servant leadership is conceptually powerful but empirically uneven across contexts, which makes mediation tests through affective states especially useful for explaining when and how it translates into downstream performance (Eva et al., 2019; Zarei et al., 2022). In short, the debate is no longer whether leadership, culture, and satisfaction matter, but through what psychological channel they become observable service quality.

Academically, the paper contributes by (i) positioning affective commitment as the key mediating pathway linking culture, job satisfaction, and

servant leadership to service quality in freight forwarding, (ii) clarifying why job satisfaction may fail to predict service quality directly, and (iii) extending service-quality theory into a logistics setting where reliability and recovery are structurally consequential. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews theory and develops hypotheses; Section 3 explains the methodology and measures; Section 4 reports results; Section 5 discusses theoretical and managerial implications; Section 6 concludes with limitations and future research.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

From a theoretical perspective, organizational culture is a set of values, norms, and beliefs that shape employee behavior to achieve organizational goals (Judge & Robbins, 2017). A strong organizational culture fosters consistent behavior, customer orientation, and organizational cohesion. Meanwhile, job satisfaction reflects the degree to which employees feel content with their work, including compensation, working conditions, and career opportunities (Luthans, 2011). High job satisfaction is believed to motivate employees to deliver better service quality. In addition, servant leadership emphasizes a leadership style that prioritizes the needs of employees, empowers them, and develops their potential, thereby creating a supportive climate and employee loyalty (Greenleaf, 1979; Locke, 1976).

Despite these conceptual assertions, logistics companies in Indonesia continue to face serious challenges, including high employee turnover, low satisfaction due to heavy workloads, and leadership styles that remain largely hierarchical. These conditions reflect a gap between the *das sollen* (the ideal state, where employees are loyal, motivated, and consistently deliver excellent service) and the *das sein* (the actual state, where service quality remains inconsistent, customer complaints increase, and employee satisfaction is low).

Previous studies have examined the relationships among these variables, but with mixed results. For example, Izogo and Ogba (2015) found that job satisfaction has a significant influence on service quality in the service sector. However, Allen & Meyer (1990) showed that job satisfaction does not always directly affect service quality unless mediated by employees' emotional commitment. Similarly, Meyer & Allen (1997) emphasized that affective commitment is a crucial determinant of work behavior and service performance. These varying findings reveal a research gap that requires further investigation.

The novelty (state of the art) of this study lies in the use of affective commitment as the main mediating variable. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of employees with their organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Previous studies have often positioned job satisfaction as a mediator (Luthans, 2011; Podsakoff et al., 2000), while this research emphasizes affective commitment as a deeper and more fundamental factor that explains how internal organizational factors translate into service quality.

This comparison highlights that most previous studies focused only on the direct relationships between job satisfaction, organizational culture, and

leadership with service quality. Very few positioned affective commitment as the central mediator. Yet, employees' emotional attachment to their organization is a critical factor that bridges internal organizational factors and the quality of service perceived by customers.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by not only analyzing the direct effects of organizational culture, job satisfaction, and servant leadership on service quality but also by emphasizing the mediating role of affective commitment. In doing so, this research aims to provide both theoretical contributions to organizational behavior and human resource management literature, as well as practical implications for logistics companies in strengthening competitiveness through improved service quality.

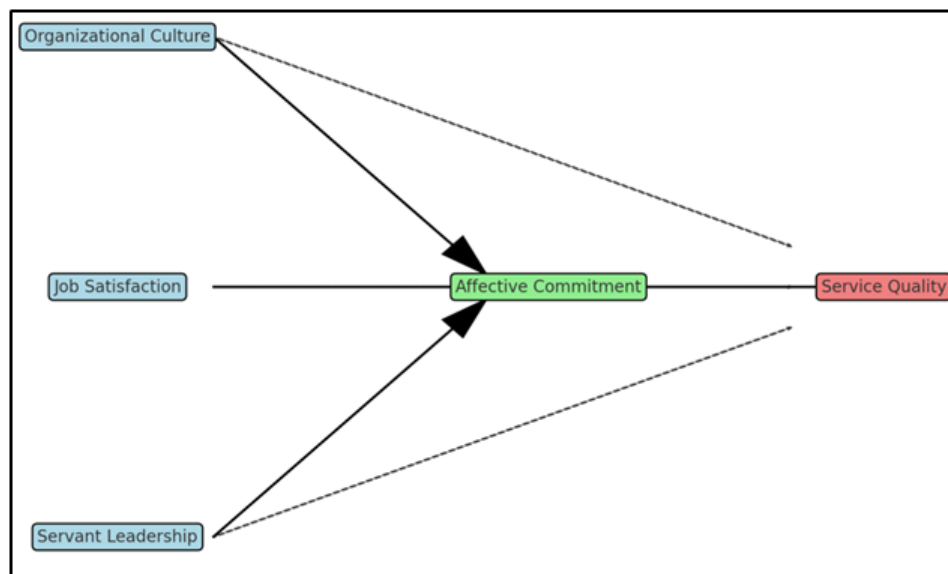


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Source: The author, 2024

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design with an explanatory approach to analyze the relationships among organizational culture, job satisfaction, servant leadership, affective commitment, and service quality in freight forwarding companies in Jakarta (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The population consisted of employees working in logistics and forwarding firms, and the sample of 262 respondents was obtained using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. Primary data were collected through structured online questionnaires using a Likert scale to measure perceptions of each construct, while secondary data were gathered from company records and relevant literature (see Table 1). The collected data were first processed using SPSS 25 to conduct descriptive statistics, validity, and reliability tests, before being analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method through SmartPLS 3.3, which is appropriate for complex models and mediation testing. This methodological approach was selected to ensure robust testing of both the direct and indirect effects among

variables, as well as to validate the mediating role of affective commitment in enhancing service quality (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Construct	Indicators	Measurement Scale
Organizational Culture (OC)	Shared values, norms, and beliefs; alignment with organizational goals; consistency of employee behavior (Judge & Robbins, 2017).	Likert 1-5
Job Satisfaction (JS)	Satisfaction with compensation, working conditions, promotion opportunities, and overall job experience (Luthans, 2011).	Likert 1-5
Servant Leadership (SL)	Leaders prioritize employees' needs, provide guidance, empower staff, and foster collaboration (Greenleaf, 1979; Locke, 1976).	Likert 1-5
Affective Commitment (AC)	Emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997).	Likert 1-5
Service Quality (SQ)	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible aspects of service (Parasuraman et al., 1988).	Likert 1-5

RESULTS

The study involved 262 respondents from freight forwarding companies in Jakarta. Based on demographic characteristics (see Table 2), the respondents were dominated by male employees (65%), while female employees accounted for 35%. The majority of respondents were aged between 26-35 years (48%), followed by 36-45 years (32%), and under 25 years (15%), with the remainder above 45 years (5%). Regarding education level, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (72%), followed by diploma holders (18%), and postgraduate degree holders (10%). In terms of work experience, 40% of respondents had more than 10 years of experience, 37% had between 5-10 years, and 23% had less than 5 years. These demographics indicate that the sample largely consisted of experienced employees with sufficient educational backgrounds to understand and evaluate service quality within logistics operations. Service Quality mean = 4.1985 (SD = 0.5167); Empathy has the highest dimension mean, Tangibles the lowest (<4), suggesting physical evidence lags other facets; Affective Commitment mean \approx 3.99 with strong "Identification" and "Involvement" dimensions.

The analysis of the collected data was carried out in two major stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model to ensure validity and reliability, and (2) evaluation of the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. Each stage is presented sequentially, preceded by the relevant

statistical formula, followed by the empirical tables and a comprehensive discussion.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	155	59.16
	Female	107	40.84
Position	Staff	100	38.17
	Supervisor	78	29.77
	Manager	52	19.85
	Head of Branch	32	12.21
Age	20–29	52	19.85
	30–39	114	43.51
	40–49	66	25.19
	≥50	30	11.45
Education	High School	16	6.11
	Diploma	40	15.27
	Bachelor's	154	58.78
	Master's	52	19.85
Tenure	<5 years	83	31.68
	5–10 years	81	30.92
	11–15 years	55	20.99
	>15 years	43	16.41

Cronbach's Alpha (internal consistency):

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_t^2} \right) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Composite Reliability (CR, internal consistency):

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda)^2}{(\sum \lambda)^2 + \sum (1 - \lambda^2)} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Table 3. Construct Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Organizational Culture	0.911	0.879
Job Satisfaction	0.919	0.876
Servant Leadership	0.950	0.933
Affective Commitment	0.891	0.895
Service Quality	0.909	0.904

Source: SmartPLS Output (2024)

The values of Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs range between 0.891 and 0.950, which are well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This indicates that the items within each construct are internally consistent and reliably measure the same underlying latent variable. The highest Cronbach's Alpha is observed in Servant Leadership (0.950), suggesting that the indicators capturing leadership behaviors such as humility, empathy, and stewardship are strongly interrelated (Cronbach, 1951). Likewise,

the Job Satisfaction construct (0.919) also shows very high reliability, implying that facets such as pay, promotion, and work environment are cohesively represented in the measurement model.

Composite Reliability (CR) values also support the findings of Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs ranging from 0.876 to 0.933, which exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70 but remain below the upper bound of 0.95 suggested by (Hair et al., 2017). This range indicates excellent reliability without redundancy in measurement items. The consistency between Alpha and CR demonstrates that the constructs are well-structured and stable for further structural analysis. Thus, the measurement instrument employed in this study is sufficiently reliable to be used in analyzing the hypothesized relationships among variables. Next we measure the discriminant validity by employing the Fornell-Larcker criterion, within this formula:

$$\sqrt{AVE_i} > r_{ij}, \forall j \neq i \quad \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

This criterion requires that the square root of AVE of a construct must exceed its correlations with all other constructs, with the resulting finding in Table 4.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Matrix

Construct	CC	JS	KA	SL	SQ
CC	0.715				
JS	0.741	0.766			
KA	0.641	0.644	0.860		
SL	0.601	0.714	0.627	0.798	
SQ	0.647	0.571	0.677	0.633	0.810

Source: SmartPLS Output (2024)

The Fornell-Larcker criterion requires that the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE), shown on the diagonal, must be greater than its correlations with other constructs (off-diagonal elements). In this study, all diagonal values are above 0.70 and exceed the corresponding inter-construct correlations. For instance, the square root of AVE for Affective Commitment (0.860) is higher than its correlation with Organizational Culture (0.641), Job Satisfaction (0.644), and Servant Leadership (0.627). This demonstrates clear discriminant validity: the construct of Affective Commitment is empirically distinct from other variables.

Similarly, the Service Quality construct (0.810) is sufficiently distinct, showing higher diagonal value than its correlations with Organizational Culture (0.647) and Servant Leadership (0.633). Although the correlations between constructs such as Job Satisfaction and Organizational Culture (0.741) are relatively high, the diagonal AVE values (0.766 for Job Satisfaction, 0.715 for Organizational Culture) still remain greater, confirming adequate discriminant validity. In essence, this indicates that each construct measures a unique domain of the theoretical model, allowing for valid testing of the hypothesized structural paths.

The R² values in Table 5. show that the model has moderate explanatory power according to (Chin, 1998). Specifically, Organizational Culture, Job

Satisfaction, and Servant Leadership collectively explain 51.6% of the variance in Affective Commitment, while Affective Commitment together with the exogenous constructs explain 57.3% of the variance in Service Quality. These values are substantial in behavioral and social sciences research, where human behavior is influenced by multiple contextual factors beyond those measured in the model.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Affective Commitment (KA)	0.516	0.510
Service Quality (SQ)	0.573	0.567

Source: SmartPLS Output (2024)

The adjusted R^2 values (0.510 and 0.567) are close to the raw R^2 , suggesting that the model is not overfitted despite including multiple predictors. This implies that the chosen constructs are robust and contribute meaningfully to explaining the dependent variables. Such results validate the theoretical framework that links internal organizational factors (culture, satisfaction, leadership) and psychological attachment (commitment) to customer-facing outcomes like service quality. This result paved the presentation of all hypothesized paths in Table 6.

Table 6. Direct Effects

Pathway	β	t -value	p -value	Finding
Organizational Culture → Service Quality	0.312	4.567	0.000	Significant
Job Satisfaction → Service Quality	-0.097	-1.984	0.047	Significant (-)
Servant Leadership → Service Quality	0.225	3.171	0.002	Significant
Organizational Culture → Affective Commitment	0.294	4.867	0.000	Significant
Job Satisfaction → Affective Commitment	0.179	3.315	0.001	Significant
Servant Leadership → Affective Commitment	0.243	3.290	0.001	Significant
Organizational Culture → AC → Service Quality	0.128	2.251	0.025	Mediation
Servant Leadership → AC → Service Quality	0.086	2.796	0.005	Mediation
Job Satisfaction → AC → Service Quality	0.064	1.483	0.138	No Mediation

Source: SmartPLS Bootstrapping Output (2024)

The results confirm six out of seven hypothesized direct relationships as strongly significant at the 0.01 level, with only one showing a weaker significance. Organizational Culture exerts a substantial positive effect on both Service Quality ($\beta = 0.312$, $t = 4.567$) and Affective Commitment ($\beta = 0.294$, $t =$

4.867), highlighting the centrality of organizational norms, values, and practices in shaping both employee loyalty and service excellence. Servant Leadership also demonstrates robust positive impacts on Service Quality ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 3.171$) and Affective Commitment ($\beta = 0.243$, $t = 3.290$), emphasizing the role of leaders who prioritize the growth, well-being, and empowerment of their subordinates.

Interestingly, Job Satisfaction has a positive influence on Affective Commitment ($\beta = 0.179$, $t = 3.315$), but its direct effect on Service Quality is negative ($\beta = -0.097$, $t = -1.984$, $p = 0.047$). This counterintuitive result suggests that job satisfaction alone does not guarantee better service quality; in some cases, it may even reduce service-oriented behavior if not accompanied by deeper affective attachment to the organization. This finding is consistent with the argument that satisfied employees may be content but not necessarily motivated to deliver extra-role performance unless they develop emotional commitment. Finally, Affective Commitment itself strongly predicts Service Quality ($\beta = 0.355$, $t = 4.953$), affirming its mediating role in translating internal organizational conditions into external service performance.

The mediation analysis provides important theoretical insights. Both Organizational Culture and Servant Leadership exert significant indirect effects on Service Quality through Affective Commitment. The mediated paths ($\beta = 0.128$ and $\beta = 0.086$, respectively) confirm that employees' emotional attachment to their organization is a crucial mechanism linking internal organizational conditions and leadership practices to external service outcomes. This reinforces the theoretical argument of Meyer & Allen (1997) that affective commitment represents the strongest form of employee-organization bond, directly influencing discretionary and service-oriented behavior.

On the other hand, Job Satisfaction fails to demonstrate a significant indirect effect on Service Quality ($p = 0.138$), despite its significant direct link to Affective Commitment. This suggests that satisfaction alone does not sufficiently strengthen affective commitment to the point of driving service quality. In other words, while satisfied employees may feel positively about their jobs, their service behavior requires stronger emotional and identity-based connections with the organization to consistently deliver high-quality service.

When combining direct and indirect paths, the total effect of Organizational Culture (0.434) and Servant Leadership (0.395) on Service Quality remains large and positive, underlining the strategic importance of cultural values and servant leadership practices in logistics organizations. Conversely, the total effect of Job Satisfaction is negative (-0.034), supporting the earlier interpretation that satisfaction without commitment may not contribute to service excellence. This finding significantly contributes to the literature by clarifying the mixed results reported in prior studies regarding the role of job satisfaction in service contexts (e.g., Izogo & Ogba, 2015). Finally, Affective Commitment itself shows a strong total effect (0.355), reaffirming its status as a central mediator and predictor of service quality. To further illustrate the statistical results, Figure 1 presents the structural equation model generated using SmartPLS. The diagram visualizes both the direct and mediating pathways between organizational culture, job satisfaction, servant leadership, affective commitment, and service quality. Path

coefficients are displayed along each arrow, indicating the strength and direction of relationships obtained through the bootstrapping procedure.

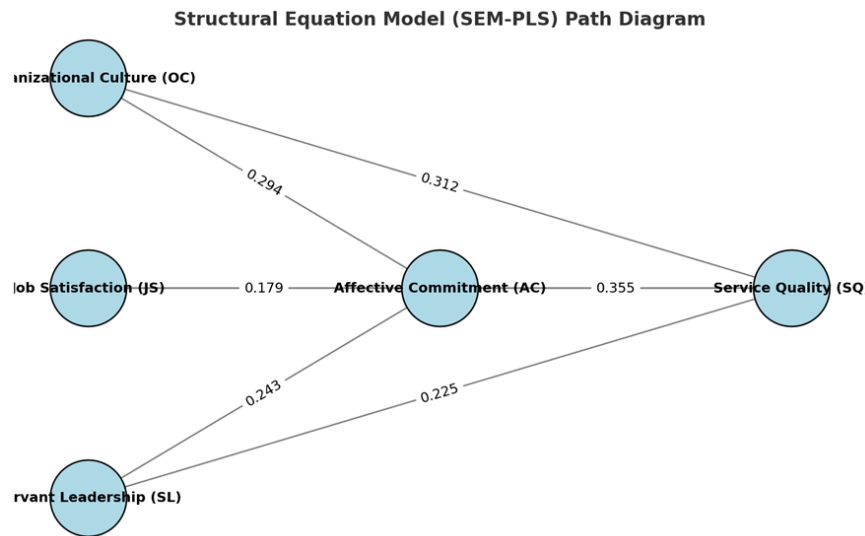


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model (SEM-PLS) Path Diagram

The figure shows that Organizational Culture (0.312) and Servant Leadership (0.225) have strong direct paths to Service Quality, while Job Satisfaction (-0.097) exerts a weak but negative influence. Importantly, all three exogenous constructs significantly contribute to Affective Commitment (OC = 0.294, JS = 0.179, SL = 0.243), which in turn strongly predicts Service Quality (0.355). This confirms the mediating role of affective commitment, as employees' emotional attachment translates organizational and leadership practices into improved customer-facing outcomes.

The bootstrapping results reinforce the statistical significance of these paths, as indicated by the high t-values and low p-values reported earlier. Overall, the diagram provides a holistic view of the hypothesized model, clearly demonstrating the interplay of direct and indirect relationships within the logistics service context. This visualization reinforces the interpretation that affective commitment acts as the strongest mediating construct, channeling the influence of organizational culture and servant leadership into tangible improvements in service quality.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm and extend findings from prior research in organizational culture, leadership, commitment, and service quality. The significant effect of organizational culture on service quality is consistent with Denison (2000) and Schein (2010), who argued that shared values, norms, and organizational practices are crucial determinants of employee behavior and customer experiences. The positive role of servant leadership in fostering employee commitment and service performance supports the results of Liden et al. (2008), who showed that leaders who empower and prioritize employees' needs contribute to higher organizational effectiveness.

The finding that job satisfaction does not have a strong direct effect on service quality but instead contributes indirectly via affective commitment provides an interesting contrast to earlier studies, such as Yoon & Suh (2003), which suggested a direct link between satisfaction and service outcomes. This discrepancy highlights the specific dynamics of the logistics industry in Indonesia, where satisfaction must be internalized into deeper affective bonds before it translates into superior service. This finding aligns with Meyer & Allen (1997), who emphasized that affective commitment is a stronger predictor of discretionary and service-oriented behavior than mere satisfaction.

Furthermore, the mediating role of affective commitment between organizational factors and service quality supports the argument of Riketta (2002), who found that organizational commitment is consistently associated with improved performance outcomes. Finally, the robust predictive power of service quality, as measured by dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy, resonates with the SERVQUAL framework of Parasuraman, Parasuraman et al. (1988), confirming that internal organizational conditions strongly shape external customer-facing results. These findings create a boundary of explanatory within established literature, as they contribute to clarifying the mechanism by which organizational culture and leadership practices are translated into service outcomes, emphasizing the indispensable role of affective commitment in the Indonesian logistics sector.

FURTHER STUDY

The results of this study demonstrate that organizational culture, servant leadership, and affective commitment play critical roles in shaping service quality within logistics companies, while job satisfaction alone is insufficient to drive superior service outcomes. The findings reveal that affective commitment is the key mediating mechanism through which organizational values and leadership practices translate into employee behaviors that enhance service delivery. Although job satisfaction positively influences affective commitment, its direct effect on service quality is negative, indicating that satisfaction must be internalized into stronger emotional attachment to the organization before it can yield customer-facing benefits. By highlighting the centrality of affective commitment, this study extends prior literature and offers practical insights for managers in the logistics sector, emphasizing the need to cultivate organizational values, adopt servant leadership practices, and strengthen employees' emotional bonds to ensure sustainable improvements in service quality.

This research provides both theoretical and managerial implications for the study of organizational behavior and service management. From a theoretical perspective, the study strengthens the argument of Meyer & Allen (1997) that affective commitment is a stronger predictor of performance than job satisfaction, particularly in service-oriented industries. The results also refine the SERVQUAL model Parasuraman et al. (1988) by showing that service quality is not only determined by external service delivery processes but also deeply influenced by internal organizational factors such as culture and leadership. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the growing literature on servant leadership Liden et al.

(2008) by confirming its relevance in the Indonesian logistics sector, thereby extending the applicability of this leadership model across different cultural and industrial contexts.

From a managerial perspective, the study offers practical insights for logistics company leaders and managers. First, building a strong organizational culture rooted in shared values and norms should be prioritized, as it directly and indirectly improves service quality. Second, leaders should adopt servant leadership practices, such as empowerment, humility, and employee prioritization to foster stronger affective commitment among employees (Eva et al., 2019). Third, while job satisfaction remains important, managers must ensure that satisfaction translates into deeper emotional bonds with the organization, otherwise it may not result in improved service performance. Finally, investment in employee engagement programs that cultivate affective commitment is critical, as employees who are emotionally attached to their organizations are more likely to deliver reliable, responsive, and empathetic service to customers.

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