

EMPLOYEE LOYALTY THROUGH THE ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR: LEADER MEMBER EXCHANGE AND WORK LIFE BALANCE AT PT. BATANG HARI BARISAN

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the impact of leader member exchange and work-life balance on employee loyalty at PT Batang Hari Barisan. Data were collected through surveys and questionnaires distributed to a sample of 74 respondents. Path analysis was used as the analysis method, with SmartPLS used for statistical processing. The findings show that leader member exchange and work-life balance significantly influence job satisfaction. Furthermore, leader member exchange has a significant influence on employee loyalty, while work-life balance has no direct impact on employee loyalty. Job satisfaction was found to significantly influence employee loyalty. In addition, leader member exchange impacts employee loyalty indirectly through the mediation of job satisfaction, whereas job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work-life balance and employee loyalty.

Keywords: *Employee Loyalty, Leader Member Exchange, Work Life Balance, Job Satisfaction*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepuasan kerja sebagai mediator dampak leader member exchange dan work life balance pada loyalitas karyawan di PT Batang Hari Barisan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui survei dan kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada sampel sebanyak 74 responden. Analisis jalur digunakan sebagai metode analisis, dengan SmartPLS digunakan untuk pengolahan statistik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa leader member exchange dan work-life balance secara signifikan mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja. Lebih lanjut, leader member exchange memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap loyalitas karyawan, sedangkan work-life balance secara langsung tidak berdampak pada loyalitas karyawan. Kepuasan kerja terbukti secara signifikan mempengaruhi loyalitas karyawan. Selain itu, leader member exchange berdampak pada loyalitas karyawan secara tidak langsung melalui mediasi kepuasan kerja, sedangkan kepuasan kerja tidak memediasi hubungan antara work-life balance dan loyalitas karyawan.

Keywords : *Loyalty Employees , Leader Member Exchange, Work Life Balance , Job Satisfaction*

Introduction

In activities operations , the company depend on labor to produce goods and services, with management function organization completely done by the department source Power human resources (HR). Source Power existing human beings can help employee performance and improve productivity company if function organization well managed . For example, PT. Batang Hari Barisan, a companies operating in the sector processing material standard rubber , has optimize use source Power human . This company is recognized as one of the largest in Padang City in industry processing rubber . To face competition in the market, PT. Batang Hari Barisan focuses on production rubber with standard quality high . Resource management Power efficient human being is one of element key influencing success a company .

Performance generated is indicator main from performance source Power human . In the context of the company that produces goods , such as factories and MSMEs, performance of sources Power man reflected through productivity . Meanwhile , in the service sector , such as hospitals and health centers , the performance of human resources Power man realized through effective and satisfactory service (Jamil, 2022) .

In today's context , business organizations are required to adapt yourself and strengthen position competitive them so they can facing the challenges that will come . Source Power humans , in particular employee , play role key in various aspects operational company . They act as planner , implementer , and taker essential decision in achieve organizational targets . Therefore, increasing productivity employee can achieved through use of resource management Power effective human resources . Companies must implement policies that will push employees to follow the plan that has been determined . Loyalty employee reflect character individuals who are not only carry out their main duties well, but also demonstrate initiative to undertake additional tasks , including collaborating with other coworkers (Adhitya, 2024).

Loyalty can defined as demonstrated commitment , dedication , and trust to a person or organization . Loyalty also includes commitment emotional and responsible responsible for providing quality service tall as well as show good behavior . According to (Wirawan, 2018), there are a number of things that influence faithfulness employees . This includes job satisfaction , motivation , work environment , organizational processes , culture organization , leadership serving (*servant leadership*), commitment to organization , *work-life balance* , and *leader member exchange* .

Leader member exchange refers to the increase quality communication between leaders and members team , which can make an impact positive on second performance split

parties . Although thus , in implementation , relationship between employees and supervisors often classified into two category : constructive relationships and destructive relationships . Relationships positive tend build belief , attitude optimistic , and loyalty from employees , while negative relationships have the opposite impact (Wijaya & Siswoyo , 2020). Interaction between leaders and members team own role crucial in reach success a organization . Good treatment of employee can increase desire them to sacrifice for the sake of interests company . In addition , the attitude positive given to employee will push them to improve contribution to the organization they have (Wijaya & Siswoyo , 2020).

Work-life balance is important factors for everyone individuals who have a profession , because allow them to have balanced quality of life both in affairs family and also work . This balance includes various sources power , including support for parent and child care , services health , as well as welfare employees , in addition to the necessary relocation process . Currently, many a company that provides various programs that support family use help employee in guard This balance . Examples of such programs include flexible working hours , job sharing, jobs , and options for work from distance far (Kembuan et al., 2021). *Work-life balance* refers to the condition Where individual can manage two important aspects of their lives , namely work and life personal . From the perspective employees , this balance means the ability to balance not quite enough answer professional and obligations personal , including those related to family . On the other hand , companies face difficulty in creating supportive work environment balance between work and life so employee can pour out attention they are on their task have in the workplace (Kembuan et al., 2021).

Job satisfaction is condition emotional that reflects attitude a employees , both positive and also negative , against work as well as not quite enough the responsibility he bears . In general , there is assumption that individual in position managerial tend feel higher job satisfaction compared to those at lower levels . But , some studies indicates that This view is not always right , because rotation position often have a greater impact on level experienced job satisfaction (Adha et al., 2019).

Loyalty employee can measured through level faithfulness they in contribute to PT. Batang Hari Barisan. To maintain employee quality , company need fulfil rights that are part of from interest employees , as well as create a work environment that suits your needs them , including providing comfort in do activities . If company is unable fulfil these aspects, the risk of employees resigning self (*turnover*) will increase . Below is presented data regarding employees who left PT. Batang Hari Barisan during period 2018-2022 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Data on the Number of Employees of PT. Batang Hari Barisan 2018-2022

Year	Beginning of Period	Enter	Go out	End of Period
2018	90	5	3	92
2019	92	-	12	80
2020	80	4	2	82
2021	82	2	5	79
2022	79	-	5	74

Source : PT. Batang Hari Barisan

Based on Table 1, the level loyalty employee in matter faithfulness Work show different dynamics every year. In 2018, there were 90 employees at the beginning period , with the addition of 5 new employees and the reduction of 3 employees , so that amount end employee reached 92 people. The following year, 2019 , started with 92 employees , but none addition new employees and 12 employees left, resulting in amount end employee decreased to 80 people. In 2020, the number of beginning employee is 80 people, with the addition of 4 new employees and a reduction of 2 employees , so that amount end increased to 82 people. Furthermore , in 2021, starting with 82 employees , there was addition of 2 employees , but 5 employees left, so amount end employee reduced to 79 people. Finally , in 2022, with 79 employees at the beginning period and without new additions , as well as 5 employees leaving, the number end employees to 74 people.

Based on the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that loyalty Current employees are not at an optimal level . This assumption is related to the factor *work-life balance* and *leader-member exchange* . Research by (Hawa & Nurtjahjanti , 2018) shows existence impact significant from *work-life balance* on loyalty employees . In addition, research by (Oktavianda , 2018) also concluded that *leader member exchange* contribute in a way significant on loyalty employee .

This analysis offers new contribution in field human resource management by highlighting role Job satisfaction as a mediator of *leader-member exchange* and *work-life balance* in influence loyalty employees at PT. Batang Hari Barisan. The novelty of this research lies in the emphasis on the importance of role job satisfaction as a mediator of impact *leader member exchange* in increase loyalty employees , as well as invention that *work life balance* does not contribute directly to loyalty employees ; this is challenging assumption general that *work life balance* always correlated with loyalty higher employees .

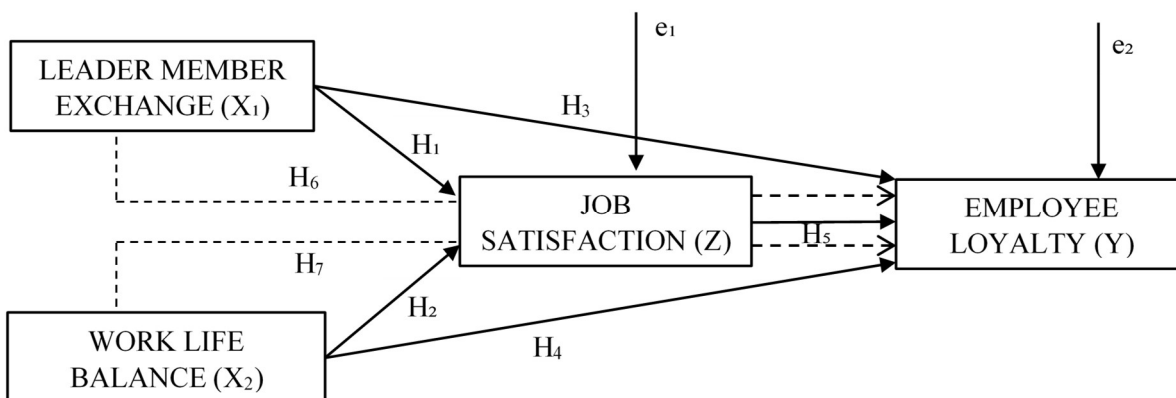
This study objective is to investigate the role work satisfaction as an impact mediator *leader member exchange* as well as *work-life balance* on loyalty employees . Here This is connection hypothetical :

H1: *Leader member exchange* allegedly impact positive on satisfaction Work

H2: *Work life balance* allegedly impact positive on satisfaction Work

- H3: Leader member exchange allegedly impact positive to loyalty employee
- H4: Work life balance allegedly impact positive on loyalty employee
- H5: Satisfaction Work allegedly impact positive to loyalty employee
- H6: Satisfaction Work allegedly mediate impact leader member exchange on loyalty employee
- H7: Satisfaction Work allegedly mediate impact work life balance on loyalty employee

Figure 1. Research Framework



Method

This research was conducted at PT. Batang Hari Barisan, a company that focuses on processing rubber , located on Jalan By Pass No. 18, Ambacang Market , District Kuranji , Padang City, West Sumatra. The research population includes all over employee company , with a total of 74 people. Considering amount population does not exceed 100 people, all the population is made research subjects . Thus , researchers decided to use overall population as many as 74 people as samples . Data analysis in this study was carried out using *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) through the *Partial Least Square* (PLS) program .

Table 2. Definition Operational Variables

Variables	Definition	Indicator	Source
Employee Loyalty	Employee loyalty can be defined as the level of commitment demonstrated by employees in an effort to protect and support the organization, both in the context of the work environment and outside, against threats or disruptions that may be caused by irresponsible parties .	1. Keta a tan as well as compliance 2. Not quite enough answer 3. Service 4. Honesty	(Wibowo, 2018)
Job satisfaction	Satisfaction Work defined as a series emotions felt by employees about level comfort or discomfort in operate task they .	1. Work challenge 2. Condition support 3. Wages which is appropriate	(Robbins & Coutler, 2018)

Leader Member Exchange	<p><i>Leader-member exchange</i> refers to the interactions that occur between leaders and members group , where the relationship This play role important in dynamics team , which is marked by four aspect main : affection , loyalty , contribution , and respect professional .</p>	<p>4. Compliance personality colleague Work 1. <i>Respect</i> 2. <i>Trust</i> 3. <i>obligation</i></p>	(Simamora, 2017)
Work-Life Balance	<p><i>Work-life balance</i> is aspect important for every individual in environment work , because matter This allow they For reach quality harmonious life in interaction with family as well as in implementation task work .</p>	<p>1. Type work 2. You are place Work 3. Problem Work 4. Need time For family 5. Need time For personal</p>	(Sutrisno, 2018)

The population of this study involved 74 respondents who were all over employees of PT. Batang Hari Barisan. Use of methodology taking sample in a way random , especially technique taking sample saturated , allows all over employee put in population sample . This study uses *Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)* with *Partial Least Squares (PLS)* to analyze data. PLS-SEM serves as an approach alternatives to investigate market orientation and equality structural to assess relatedness between latent construction, accommodating linear or non-linear association across indicators in a way simultaneously . This method is characterized by its flexibility and robustness, since it does not require strict assumptions (Hair et al., 2018).

Results and Discussion

The total number of questionnaires distributed in all fields is 74, with a total of 74 questionnaires returned and included in the study. *The outer model* functions as a tool measurement, it is very important to assess validity and reliability of the research model. In the field of research, the aspects conceptual and relational a model cannot test in a way adequate for the relationship because consequences to the point refinement in the measurement model has completed satisfactorily. This stage aims to explain connection between block indicators with latent variables.

In the development stage, correlation values ranging from 0.5 to 0.6 are considered sufficient. However, in the context of this study, *convergent validity* is set with a threshold above 0.6 .

Figure 2. Outer Model Test Results Before Elimination

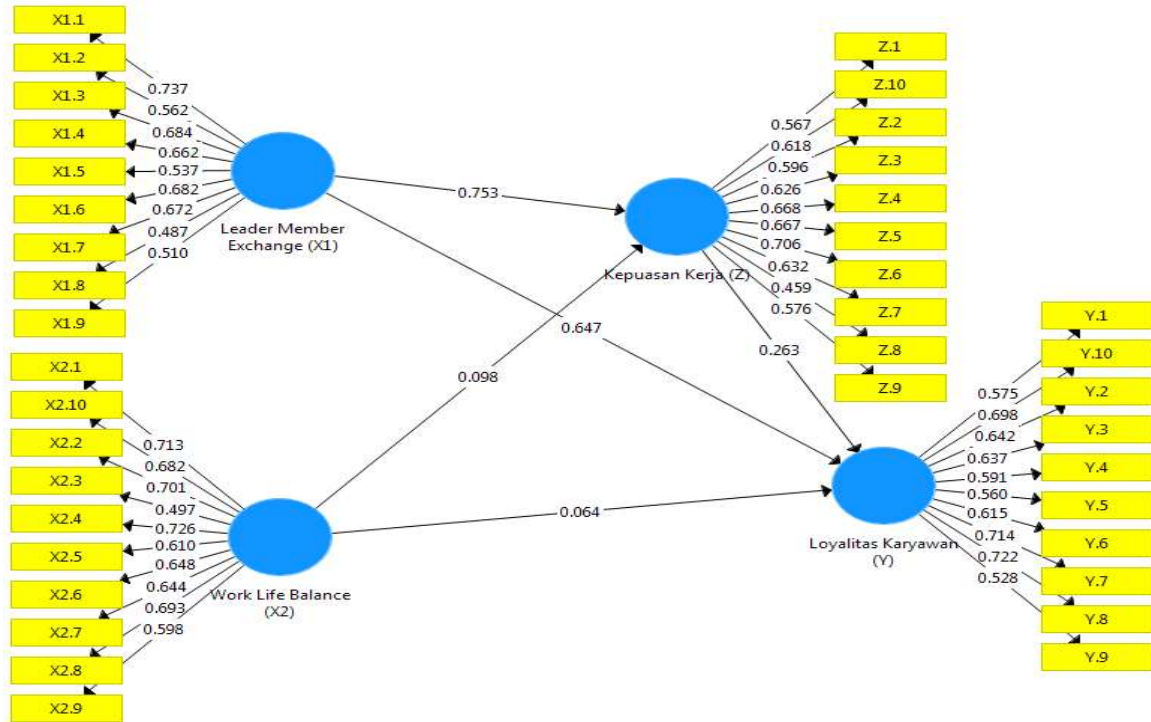
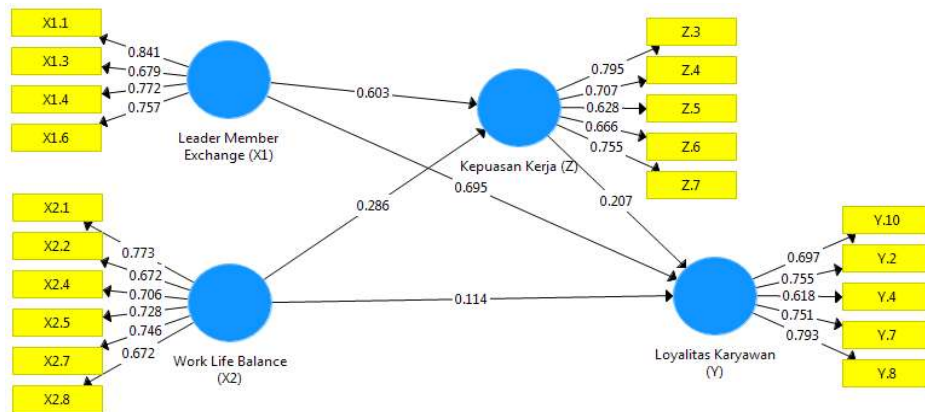


Figure 3. Outer Model Test Results After Elimination



Based on the presented figure 3, this study sets the minimum *convergent validity value limit* of 0.6. Several indicators of the *leader member exchange* and *work-life balance* variables have been removed in the context of employee loyalty analysis through job satisfaction .

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Variables	AVE
Loyalty Employee (Y)	0.508
Leader member exchange (X1)	0.584
Work life balance (X2)	0.526
Satisfaction (Z)	0.514

Source : Processed results SmartPLS , 2023

The findings in Table 3 show that all constructs or variables examined in this study demonstrate strong validity, as indicated by the *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* value which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.50.

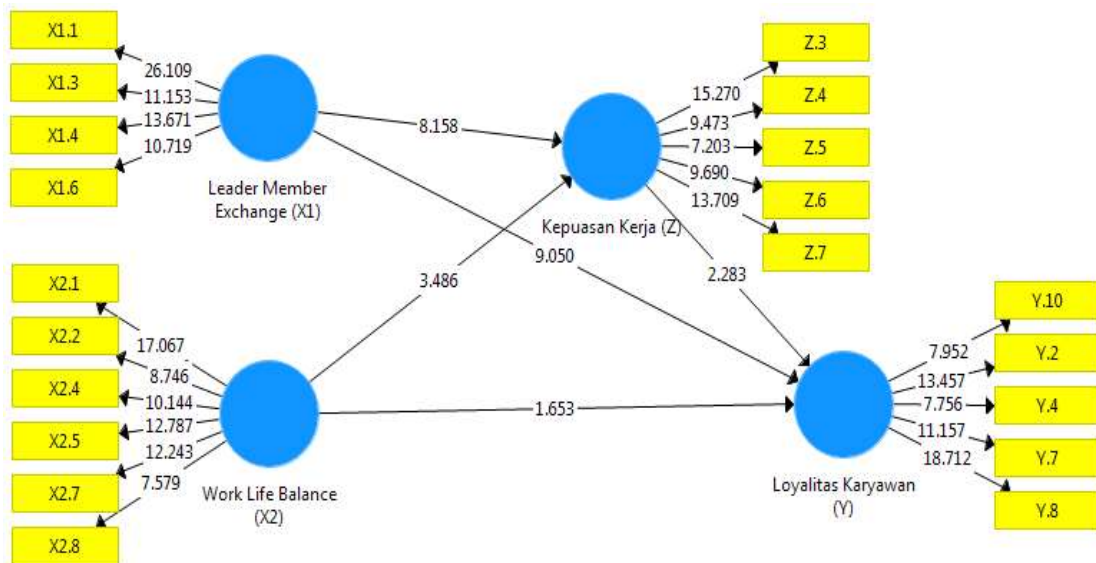
Table 4. Reliability Values

Construct (Variable)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Conclusion
Loyalty Employee (Y)	0.756	0.837	Reliable
Leader member exchange (X1)	0.760	0.848	Reliable
Work life balance (X2)	0.773	0.846	Reliable
Satisfaction (Z)	0.812	0.864	Reliable

Resource : Processed results SmartPLS , 2023

Based on the findings presented in Table 4, both the values reliability composite and also mark *Cronbach's alpha* of each construct or variable beyond the figure is 0.70. This shows level high data reliability, so show that the data can considered can trusted and reliable.

Figure 4. Structure Inner Model



Based on the picture the structure of the model above can stated in form the model equation is as follows :

- a. Model Equation I, illustrates in a way overall impact construct *leader member exchange* and *work-life balance* on job satisfaction . This model includes the resulting coefficient as well as consider level error that reflects estimation that cannot be explained in this study.

$$Z = 8.158 X_1 + 3.486 X_2 + e \dots\dots\dots 1$$

b. Model Equation II, describes in a way overall impact construct *leader member exchange* , *work-life balance* , and job satisfaction on loyalty employee . In this model, there are coefficient that reflects the relationship between each construct , as well as existence error estimates expressed as errors .

$$Y = 9,050 X_1 + 1,653 X_2 + 2,283 Z + e \dots\dots\dots 2$$

Table 5. Test Results Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement	Original Sample Value	T Statistics	P Values	Information
H1	<i>Leader Member Exchange</i> (X1) → Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.603	8,158 > 1.96	0.000 < 0.05	Accepted
H2	<i>Work Life Balance</i> (X2) → Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.286	3,486 > 1.96	0.001 < 0.05	Accepted
H3	<i>Leader Member Exchange</i> (X1) → Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.695	9,050 > 1.96	0.000 < 0.05	Accepted
H4	<i>Work Life Balance</i> (X2) → Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.114	1.653 < 1.96	0.099 > 0.05	Rejected
H5	Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.207	2,283 > 1.96	0.023 < 0.05	Accepted
H6	<i>Leader Member Exchange</i> (X1) → Job Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.125	2,261 > 1.96	0.024 < 0.05	Accepted
H7	<i>Work Life Balance</i> (X2) → Job Satisfaction (Z) → Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.059	1.648 < 1.96	0, 100 > 0.05	Rejected

Based on the results of the H1 analysis with the SmartPLS tool, the value recorded in Table 5 is 0.603, t-statistic 8.158> t-table 1.96. Then, the p-value 0.000 <0.05, indicating rejection (H0) and acceptance (Ha). Thus, the study findings indicate that *Leader Member Exchange* has a positive and significant impact on Job Satisfaction. This finding is consistent with studies conducted by (Eşitti & Kasap, 2020), (Helmy, 2021), (Zulfa, 2021), (Lubis, 2022) which resulted in a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. The quality of interaction between leaders and employees affects the level of trust, support, and communication obtained by workers. When *leader member exchange* is high, leaders provide more personal attention and support to members, and involve them in decision making. This increases employees' sense of appreciation and fairness, which contributes to increased work motivation and commitment. Employees who feel supported by their

leaders tend to experience increased levels of happiness at work. Positive interactions between leaders and team members contribute to the creation of a conducive work environment, where employees feel comfortable expressing ideas and raising concerns. In turn, this improves employee mental health. Empirical research (Jufrizen et al., 2023), (Tahir et al., 2023) shows that compared to employees with poor exchange relationships, employees who work with high-quality *leader member exchange* tend to be more satisfied with their jobs.

Based on the results of the H2 test study, using SmartPLS, the values recorded in Table 5 are 0.286, t-statistic 3.486 > t-table 1.96, and p-value 0.001 < 0.05, emphasizing that (H0) is rejected and (Ha) is accepted. Thus, the results of the study indicate that *Work-Life Balance* has a positive and significant impact on Job Satisfaction. This finding is consistent with studies conducted by (Putra et al., 2020), (Arief et al., 2021), (Aruldoss et al., 2022), (Rony & Yulisyahyanti, 2022) which resulted in a positive and significant *work-life balance* affecting job satisfaction. This happens because these conditions allow employees to meet their needs in both personal and professional aspects. When individuals are able to balance time between work demands and personal life, this can help reduce stress and fatigue, which ultimately contributes to increased psychological well-being. Employees who feel in control of their time and responsibilities tend to be more motivated, highly committed, and more satisfied with their work. Companies that prioritize *work-life balance* tend to create a more flexible and open workplace, which in turn can increase employee loyalty and productivity. Empirical studies (Aruldoss, 2021), (Aziz et al., 2023) found that *work-life balance directly* affects increased job satisfaction because employees feel more appreciated and can live a more meaningful life, without having to sacrifice one aspect of their life. This is different from the findings by (Endeka et al., 2020), (Tirta & Enrika, 2020), (Maharani et al., 2023) that there is no impact of *work-life balance* on job satisfaction.

Based on the findings of the H3 analysis using the SmartPLS tool, the values recorded in Table 5 are 0.695, t-statistic 9.050 > t-table 1.96, and p-value 0.000 < 0.05, indicating rejection of the hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the hypothesis (Ha). Thus, the findings indicate that *Leader Member Exchange has a significant positive* impact on Employee Loyalty. This finding is consistent with the analysis conducted by (Anam et al., 2023), (Uly et al., 2023), and (Setiaji et al., 2024) which resulted in a positive and significant impact on employee loyalty. A strong relationship in *leader member exchange encourages the creation of bonds based on trust, appreciation, and support between leaders* and team members, thereby increasing employee loyalty. In this relationship, employees feel appreciated and recognized for their contributions, thereby increasing their emotional involvement and commitment to the organization. Employees who have strong *leader*

member exchange relationships tend to feel motivated to perform at their best, because they believe that their leaders care about and support their career development. Trust and open communication between leaders and team members also strengthen employees' sense of emotional attachment, which ultimately influences their loyalty to the organization. Several empirical studies have shown that employees who experience high-quality *leader member exchange interactions* demonstrate higher levels of loyalty due to increased job satisfaction and better perceptions of organizational justice.

Based on the analysis conducted using SmartPLS to test the H4 hypothesis, the values obtained are listed in Table 5 as 0.114, t-statistic of 1.653 <t-table 1.96, and p-value of 0.099> 0.05. This indicates that acceptance (H0) and rejection (Ha). Thus, the findings of the analysis indicate that there is no significant impact of *Work-Life Balance* on Employee Loyalty. This finding is in line with studies that have been conducted (Mea & Se, 2023), (Yudiani et al., 2023), and (Reners et al., 2024) which resulted in no impact of *work-life balance* on employee loyalty. This is because there are other factors that can be more dominant, such as organizational culture, opportunities for career development, and financial compensation. Although *work-life balance* is important for employee personal well-being, some employees may place more value on factors such as recognition, job stability, or career path. In addition, there are cases where employees with good *work-life balance* still feel less loyal due to poor interpersonal relationships at work or minimal prospects for self-development. Research also shows that loyalty is often influenced by emotional commitment to the company, which is not always directly related to *work-life balance*. Thus, although *work-life balance* can increase job satisfaction, it is not always strong enough to ensure loyalty without the support of other organizational factors.

Based on the H5 analysis with SmartPLS, the values recorded in Table 5 are 0.207, t-statistic 92.283> t-table 1.96, and p-value 0.023 <0.05, indicating that the hypothesis (H0) is rejected and (Ha) is accepted. Thus, the results of the study indicate a significant positive impact of Job Satisfaction on Employee Loyalty. This finding is consistent with the results of the analysis conducted by (Bagis & Adawiyah, 2022), (Rahmat & Rasyidi, 2023), and (Reners et al., 2024) which resulted in a significant positive impact of job satisfaction on employee loyalty, where employees who feel satisfied with their work tend to show a higher level of commitment to the organization. When employees feel that their needs and expectations are met through a positive work atmosphere, fair compensation, and good interactions with superiors and coworkers, it will encourage them to stay in the company for a long time. Job satisfaction contributes to increased emotional involvement and a sense of belonging to the organization, which in turn reduces the desire to look for work outside. Employees who have high levels of job satisfaction usually show increased performance,

which in turn can strengthen their loyalty to the organization. This relationship is reinforced by balance theory and social exchange theory, which claim that employees who feel they are treated fairly will be more loyal to the organization.

Based on the results of the SmartPLS analysis, the original sample H6 value of 0.125, plus a t-statistic of 2.261 <t-table 1.96, and a p-value of 0.024 <0.05, causes rejection (H0) and acceptance (Ha). Thus, the results of the study show that Job Satisfaction is able to mediate the impact of *Leader Member Exchange* in a significant positive way on Employee Loyalty. There has been no previous research that also concluded that *leader member exchange* has a significant impact on employee loyalty if mediated by job satisfaction. Job satisfaction acts as a mediator in the impact of *leader member exchange* on employee loyalty. Positive exchanges between leaders and subordinates create constructive interactions, where leaders provide support, trust, and appreciation to employees. This contributes to increased job satisfaction, which reflects positive perceptions of work due to recognition, appreciation, and a supportive work environment. When employees feel satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to develop deeper loyalty to the organization. This loyalty is reflected in long-term commitment, higher levels of engagement, and a desire to support the company's vision and mission. Thus, job satisfaction acts as an important link that strengthens the impact of *leader member exchange* on employee loyalty, making employees feel valued and motivated to continue working for the organization.

Based on the results of the SmartPLS analysis, the original sample H7 value of 0.059, plus a t-statistic of 1.648 <t-table 1.96, and a p-value of 0.100 > 0.05, causes H0 to be accepted and Ha to be rejected. Thus, the study findings show that Job Satisfaction is not optimal as a mediator of the impact of *Work Life Balance* on Employee Loyalty. This finding is in line with previous analysis by (Reners et al., 2024) which also indicated that *work-life balance* does not have a significant impact on employee loyalty if mediated by job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is unable to be a mediator in the relationship between *work-life balance* and employee loyalty because although good *work-life balance* can improve individual well-being, its impact on employee loyalty is more direct and not always through job satisfaction. Employees may remain loyal due to other factors, such as company culture, emotional attachment, or career development opportunities, even though job satisfaction has not been fully achieved. Loyalty is often determined by long-term commitment and the fit between personal values and organizational values, which may not depend on daily satisfaction levels. Furthermore, a good *work-life balance* can directly increase loyalty because it provides the flexibility that employees want without having to increase job satisfaction first. This indicates that the impact between *work-life balance* and employee loyalty is complex and does not depend entirely on mediating variables such as job satisfaction .

Conclusion

Based on the explanation and results of the hypothesis analysis above, it is concluded that *leader member exchange* as well as *work life balance* significantly positive impact on job satisfaction, *leader member exchange* in a way positive significant influence on employee loyalty, but *work life balance* has no impact on employee loyalty. Meanwhile, job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee loyalty. Furthermore, job satisfaction is effective as a mediator in impact *leader member exchange* on employee loyalty , but ineffectiveness job satisfaction in mediate *work life balance* in affect employee loyalty. This study has several limitations, including the possibility of bias in the measurement of employee job satisfaction and loyalty that relies on subjective perceptions of respondents. In addition, other factors that may influence employee loyalty, such as salary or career development opportunities, were not analyzed in this study. This study may also not be applicable to all industries or geographic locations. For future research, it is recommended to explore additional variables that may influence employee loyalty, such as compensation and professional development opportunities. Research can also be conducted across different industry sectors and locations to increase the generalizability of the results. In addition, using a more objective measurement method may help reduce potential bias in the evaluation of employee job satisfaction and loyalty .

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