



Work Meaningfulness as a Mediating Mechanism Linking Innovative Leadership and Perceived Organizational Support with Young Talent Commitment

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Abstract: This study examines whether work meaningfulness helps explain how two distinct workplace resources—innovative leadership as a leadership-based resource and perceived organizational support (POS) as an organization-based resource—are associated with young talent commitment. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 131 eligible Millennial and Generation Z employees in the Pelindo Panjang organizational ecosystem. The hypothesized direct and indirect relationships were assessed using PLS-SEM. Innovative leadership was positively associated with both work meaningfulness and commitment. POS was positively associated with work meaningfulness, but its direct association with commitment was not statistically significant. Work meaningfulness was positively associated with commitment and carried significant indirect associations from both innovative leadership and POS to commitment. The contrasting direct paths suggest that leadership and organizational support may reach commitment through different psychological routes. Given the cross-sectional design, the findings are interpreted as associations rather than causal effects. The study contributes by positioning work meaningfulness as a mechanism that differentiates leadership-based and organization-based pathways to young talent commitment.

Keywords: Innovative leadership; perceived organizational support; work meaningfulness; organizational commitment; young talent.

Introduction

Digital transformation, automation and changing business models are transforming work design and the employment relationship, making it more important to retain employees who can learn, adapt and contribute to innovation (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). In this context, organizational commitment is still relevant, as it is the extent to which employees feel attached to and willing to maintain a relationship with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Klein et al., 2014). But for younger employees, commitment cannot be reduced to a material exchange. Evidence on contemporary careers increasingly suggests growth, purpose, relational quality, and meaningful work as important features of how employees evaluate their jobs (Lysova et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2023).

Two organizational resources are especially relevant but theoretically different. Innovative leadership is a leadership-based resource as it is experienced through the behaviour of a proximal leader who encourages

experimentation, participation, learning, and implementation of new ideas (Contreras et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2024). POS is an organization-based resource because it indicates a generalised judgement that the organization values the contributions of employees and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2020). Both resources have been associated with positive work attitudes, but previous findings do not imply that they foster commitment through the same mechanism. Recent studies have demonstrated that meaningful work can connect relational or leadership experiences to affective commitment (Hall et al., 2023; Shafaei & Nejati, 2024). Recent POS research has increasingly identified intervening psychological mechanisms rather than assuming a uniformly direct POS–outcome relationship (Hngoi et al., 2024; Hamid & Kundi, 2025).

The main research gap is the unresolved mechanism. The literature suggests good

reasons to expect both innovative leadership and POS to be important, but less is known about when supportive leadership and organizational support translate into attachment to the organization itself. According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), employees and organizations develop reciprocal obligations when they are treated favourably (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Reciprocity alone, however, does not completely specify the psychological process through which organizational resources are converted into attachment, as employees might notice and value favourable treatment without necessarily reciprocating with stronger organizational commitment (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Work meaningfulness offers a more specific psychological bridge in the process. Leadership practices that promote learning, participation, autonomy, and contribution can help employees see their work as meaningful and worthwhile (Rosso et al., 2010; Lysova et al., 2019; Shafaei & Nejati, 2024), whereas organizational support can communicate that employees' contributions are valued and their well-being matters to the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Such experiences can increase the meaningfulness of work as employees are more likely to see their roles as valuable when their contributions are acknowledged and supported (Lysova et al., 2019). In turn, meaningfulness is associated with more positive work attitudes and organizational attachment because employees connect the perceived purpose and value of their work to their relationship with the organization (Steger et al., 2012; Allan et al., 2019).

Therefore, if a resource is associated with meaningfulness, but not directly with commitment, the strong indirect link via meaningfulness may suggest that the psychological interpretation of the resource by the employees is more important for commitment than the mere presence of the resource. The setting of Pelindo Panjang gives a useful empirical setting to test this theoretical distinction, but the study does not claim novelty only because it is located in an SOE. Its

contribution is the comparison of two pathways in one model: the leadership-based pathway, where innovative leadership leads to work meaningfulness and commitment; and the organization-based pathway, linking POS to the development of work meaningfulness and commitment. The study thus asks whether work meaningfulness is a common psychological mechanism whilst the direct relations of the two resources to commitment differ. This framing is more than a simple test of whether leadership or support 'works' and instead examines how employees translate different organizational experiences into meaningfulness and commitment.

Accordingly, this study investigates the direct relationships among innovative leadership, POS, work meaningfulness and young talent commitment and the indirect relationships among innovative leadership and POS with commitment through work meaningfulness. Because of the cross-sectional nature of the data, the proposed mediation model is considered a theoretically ordered pattern of association, not as evidence of temporal or causal mediation.

Literature Review

Social Exchange and the Meaningfulness Mechanism Organizational behavior provides the disciplinary setting for the constructs examined here, but it is not used as the explanatory theory. The model is anchored primarily in Social Exchange Theory (SET), supplemented by Organizational Support Theory for the POS pathway. SET proposes that employees interpret favorable interpersonal and organizational treatment as resources that can generate reciprocal attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Organizational Support Theory further specifies that employees personify the organization and form a generalized perception of whether it values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Mechanism Linking Workplace Resources, Meaningfulness, and Commitment. The model disentangles the source of the resource from the psychological process by which it may become linked to

commitment. Innovative leadership is displayed in leader behaviours which give employees voice, opportunities to learn, discretion, and chances to implement ideas. Exposure to these behaviours can increase the perceived importance of employees' contributions. POS is perceived as recognition and caring at organizational level; it may enhance employees' feeling that their effort is acknowledged and that their role is significant for the organization. Work meaningfulness in both cases is an employee's evaluation of the meaningfulness, worthwhileness, and alignment of their work with important values (Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012). Meaningfulness is conceptually different from commitment: meaningfulness is about the value of the work itself; commitment is about the employee's attachment or felt obligation to the organization. Thus, an employee might find the work meaningful but not be strongly attached to the employer, or might feel supported by the organization but not translate that support directly into commitment. This distinction makes the meaningfulness of work a plausible intervening mechanism rather than a synonym for commitment.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a psychological attachment to the organization which influences the employee's intention to stay and remain a member (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). This study is based on the three component model of commitment (affective, continuance and normative) which is based on the different reasons for staying. Hence, the outcome is conceptually related to attachment to the organization rather than experiencing the work as meaningful.

Innovative Leadership

Innovative leadership is the set of behaviours of leaders that stimulate learning, openness to new ideas, adaptation and the implementation of change. The implemented measure was comprised of 16 indicators chosen mostly from Contreras et al. (2022) and with conceptual support from De Jong and Den Hartog (2007). In the present study, the indicators were treated as one construct of

innovative leadership. Their content included four behavioural areas applied for the thesis operationalisation: learning and collaboration promotion, safe environment for ideas and change, observation and adjustment, orientation toward people and employee well-being.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is defined as the employees' general perception that the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational Support Theory posits that employees interpret voluntary actions taken by the organization (e.g., recognition, fairness, developmental support, and good working conditions) as indications that the organization values and cares about them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2020). The administered questionnaire grouped POS operationally around concern for well-being, recognition of contribution, career support, and organizational justice and represented by eight items. These item domains constitute measurement content not distinct latent constructs of POS. Recent studies also indicate that POS may operate through intermediate psychological states, suggesting that the link between POS and distal outcomes is not always necessarily direct (Hngoi et al., 2024; Hamid & Kundi, 2025).

Work Meaningfulness

Work meaningfulness is the degree to which employees feel their work is important, valuable, and meaningful to them personally. The wider literature identifies a number of sources of meaning, including personal alignment, relational contribution, social impact and transcendent purpose (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012; Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). However, the present study did not operationalise those four conceptual categories as four latent dimensions. The six-item measure used was based on the thesis operationalisation, informed by May et al. (2004), and included items such as alignment with personal values, positive impact of work, and intrinsic satisfaction. Thus,

meaningfulness refers to the experienced meaningfulness of the work itself, whereas organizational commitment refers to attachment to the employing organization.

Hypothesis Development

SET implies that leader behaviors signaling trust, inclusion, learning, and support can be reciprocated through stronger attachment to the organization when leaders are perceived as organizational agents. Innovative leadership also gives employees opportunities to contribute ideas and participate in change, which can strengthen identification with the organization. Prior leadership research generally supports positive associations between empowering or innovation-oriented leadership experiences and favorable employee attitudes (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Zhu et al., 2024). Thus, H1 is formulated: Innovative leadership is positively associated with young talent commitment.

On the other hand, SET and organizational support theory predict that when employees believe the organization values their contribution and well-being, they are more likely to reciprocate with attachment and willingness to maintain membership. Meta-analytic and review evidence has repeatedly linked POS with commitment, although recent work also indicates that this relationship may depend on intervening psychological conditions (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Hngoi et al., 2024). Thus, H2: POS is positively associated with young talent commitment.

Regarding meaningfulness, innovative leaders invite employees to contribute ideas, experiment, learn, and participate in change. These behaviors can increase experienced significance by making employees see how their contribution matters and by increasing agency in how work is performed. Evidence that inclusive leadership predicts meaningful work supports the broader argument that relational leadership behaviors can shape employees' experience of meaning (Shafaei & Nejati, 2024). Thus, H3: Innovative leadership is positively associated with work meaningfulness.

Beyond leadership, organizational support can signal that employees' work and contributions are recognized by a valued social entity. Such recognition can strengthen the perceived worth of one's role, while care for employee well-being can reinforce a sense that the employment relationship has significance beyond economic exchange. Recent research increasingly positions meaning-related states as mechanisms through which supportive organizational practices influence employee outcomes (Hamid & Kundi, 2025). Thus, H4: POS is positively associated with work meaningfulness.

Work meaningfulness and commitment. Employees who regard their work as purposeful and worthwhile may be more willing to preserve the organizational membership through which that work is enacted. Recent evidence links meaningful work with affective commitment while also showing that the two constructs remain conceptually distinct (Hall et al., 2023). Thus, H5: Work meaningfulness is positively associated with young talent commitment.

The mediating role of work meaningfulness within the innovative leadership pathway can be derived from H3 which proposes that innovative leadership is associated with greater work meaningfulness, and H5 which proposes that meaningfulness is associated with commitment. Integrating these paths, innovative leadership may be linked to commitment partly because leader-enabled voice, learning, and contribution make work more significant to employees. Thus, H6 is formulated: Innovative leadership has a positive indirect association with young talent commitment through work meaningfulness.

Meanwhile, the mediating role of work meaningfulness in the POS pathway can be derived from H4 which proposes that POS is associated with work meaningfulness, and H5 which links meaningfulness to commitment. Thus, organizational care and recognition may be associated with commitment to the extent that employees interpret these signals as evidence that their work and contribution matter. Thus, H7 is formulated: POS has a

positive indirect association with young talent commitment through work meaningfulness.

employees were randomly selected from the members of the frame who had not previously been invited. The earlier invites then

Table 1. Measurement provenance and operationalization

Construct	Operationalization	Source and item count	Scale, adaptation, and example item
Innovative leadership	One latent construct represented by item content on: (1) learning and collaboration; (2) a safe environment for ideas/change; (3) monitoring, adjustment, and constructive problem solving; and (4) people orientation/well-being.	Contreras et al. (2022), with conceptual support from De Jong & Den Hartog (2007); 16 items.	5-point Likert. English-source items were translated into Indonesian by the researcher; no formal back-translation. Example: "My leader encourages employees to continue learning and developing new capabilities." Pilot tested with 30 respondents.
Perceived organizational support	Recognition of contribution; concern for well-being; career support; organizational justice. These are operational item domains within one POS construct.	Eisenberger et al. (1986); Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002); 8 items.	5-point Likert. Researcher translation into Indonesian; no formal back-translation. Example: "The company values my contribution." Pilot tested with 30 respondents.
Work meaningfulness	Alignment with personal values; positive impact of work; intrinsic satisfaction. The broader four-source typology discussed in the literature was not modeled as four dimensions.	May et al. (2004), with conceptual support from Rosso et al. (2010) and Steger et al. (2012); 6 items.	5-point Likert. Researcher translation into Indonesian; no formal back-translation. Example: "My work is consistent with my personal values." Pilot tested with 30 respondents.
Young talent commitment	Affective, continuance, and normative commitment, with two items representing each component.	Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997); 6 items.	5-point Likert. Researcher translation into Indonesian; no formal back-translation. Example: "I have an emotional attachment to this company." Pilot tested with 30 respondents.

Method

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine theoretically ordered relationships between innovative leadership, POS, work meaningfulness, and commitment among young talent. The HR department gave us an initial list of 210 employees. Thirty employees were excluded using the study's eligibility criteria, resulting in a sampling frame of 180 eligible Millennial (1981–1996) and Generation Z (1997–2012) employees. From this frame, 124 employees were randomly selected and individually invited to participate in a Google Forms questionnaire sent through WhatsApp. When there were still some responses outstanding, seven further

responded, and 131 valid questionnaires were obtained from 131 invited employees. The online mode of distribution thus refers to the delivery of questionnaires, while the claimed probability-based element refers to selection from the HR sampling frame.

The data collection period was approximately 46 days, from January 26 to March 13, 2026. Slovin's formula was used to calculate the minimum number of respondents to be recruited from the eligible population of 180 people with an error tolerance of 5%. The minimum number of respondents after rounding was 125, and the final sample was 131 respondents. This computation is not a formal statistical power analysis. PLS-SEM was chosen because the study estimates many latent constructs,

simultaneous direct and indirect associations in one model, and focuses on explained variance and prediction-oriented assessment. Therefore, the nonsignificant paths are interpreted cautiously, rather than as conclusive evidence of no relationship. Descriptive statistics and structural model were estimated using SmartPLS 4.

The questionnaire consisted of 36 items, 16 for innovative leadership, eight for POS, six for work meaningfulness, and six for young talent commitment. Innovative leadership items were adapted from the innovational leadership scale framework of 16 items by Contreras et al. (2022) supported by De Jong and Den Hartog (2007). POS items were guided by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). The work meaningfulness items were operationalised according to the thesis and were primarily based on May et al. (2004), with conceptual support from Rosso et al. (2010) and Steger et al. (2012). Commitment was assessed using the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) with two items each for affective, continuance and normative commitment. All items were originally drawn or adapted from English-language sources and translated into Indonesian by the researcher. No formal independent back translation procedure was undertaken, and this is not claimed in the study. Responses on a 5-point Likert scale were measured, with response options from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Indonesian questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 respondents prior to the main survey and validated for item validity and reliability; all items were retained. Table 1 displays the operationalisation as actually used and example items of the administered questionnaire.

However, the findings should be interpreted with common-method bias in mind as well. The predictor, mediator and outcome variables were all derived from the same respondents in a single questionnaire at the same period of data collection. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their answers, but self-reported data may be subject to perceptual response bias. Statistical

assessment of common method bias was not performed. Thus, the possibility of common-method variance cannot be excluded and should be considered when interpreting the observed relationships.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The ratings of the respondents for each questionnaire item were classified into class interval scales as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Interpretation of Respondents' Assessment

Description	
Score	Interpretation
1,00 – 1,80	Very Small
1,81 – 2,60	Low
2,61 – 3,40	Moderate
3,41 – 4,20	High
4,21 – 5,00	Extremely High

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The mean value for innovative leadership was 4.15. This reflects that the measured leadership behaviours have been rated favourably. The indicator of encouragement of learning and collaboration was found to have the highest mean (4.21). POS had a mean of 4.01 indicating generally favourable perceptions of organisational support. Contribution recognition was the highest among this construct. Mean for work meaningfulness was 4.13, indicating that respondents generally found their work meaningful. Meanwhile, the average of young talent commitment was 3.96. Continuance commitment was the most rated commitment component, showing a greater agreement with statements on the perceived consequences of leaving the organization.

These descriptive results reflect the respondents' feelings toward the measured dimensions based on the mean scores. Hence, the findings do not explain the underlying reasons or consequences of the perceptions.

SEM-PLS Analysis

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The loading factor demonstrates the contribution of each indicator in representing

Table 3. Measurement Model – Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variable	IL	POS	WM	YTC	CA	AVE	CR
IL					0,964	0,650	0,967
X1.1	0,829						
X1.2	0,812						
X1.3	0,830						
X1.4	0,877						
X1.5	0,784						
X1.6	0,780						
X1.7	0,818						
X1.8	0,842						
X1.9	0,830						
X1.10	0,729						
X1.11	0,805						
X1.12	0,856						
X1.13	0,789						
X1.14	0,771						
X1.15	0,754						
X1.16	0,782						
POS					0,936	0,691	0,947
X2.1		0,872					
X2.2		0,832					
X2.3		0,816					
X2.4		0,775					
X2.5		0,809					
X2.6		0,839					
X2.7		0,844					
X2.8		0,859					
WM		0,872			0,906	0,680	0,927
M.1			0,831				
M.2			0,841				
M.3			0,812				
M.4			0,819				
M.5			0,798				
M.6			0,845				
YTC					0,883	0,631	0,911
Y.1				0,819			
Y.2				0,795			
Y.3				0,825			
Y.4				0,792			
Y.5				0,780			
Y.6				0,752			

Source: Data Processed (2026). Note: IL = Innovative Leadership; YTC = Young Talent Commitment; CR = Composite Reliability; WM = Work Meaningfulness; CA = Cronbach Alpha

the latent variable it is intended to measure. If the loading factor is above 0.70, the indicator is valid, but if it is below that, it can be excluded from the model (Hair et al., 2022). The test results show that all the loading factor values on indicators in variables X1, X2, M, and Y are greater than 0.70, which means that all indicators are valid.

The AVE values were evaluated with respect to the threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022). As shown in Table 3, all the AVE values satisfied this criterion, implying that each construct explained the variance of its indicators well. Thus, all the variables are declared as valid and appropriate to further analysis.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	IL	YTC	POS	WM
Fornell and Larcker (1981)				
IL	0,806			
YTC	0,771	0,794		
POS	0,755	0,742	0,831	
WM	0,763	0,783	0,747	0,825
HTMT				
IL				
YTC	0,822			
POS	0,799	0,812		
WM	0,811	0,866	0,806	

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Discriminant validity was tested by using Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015). The Fornell-Larcker and cross-loadings results were consistent with empirical distinction among the constructs. The value of HTMT was less than 0.90, except for the HTMT between work meaningfulness and young talent commitment, which was 0.866, exceeding the more conservative guideline of 0.85. Therefore, both constructs meet the 0.90 cut-off, but their empirical proximity suggests caution, especially in interpreting paths involving meaningfulness and commitment.

The results of the cross loading indicated that the indicators loaded stronger on their intended construct than on the other constructs. These findings are consistent with

discriminant validity but are interpreted in conjunction with the HTMT warning above, rather than as support for consistently 'strong' discriminant validity. Both Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha should be above 0.70 for reliability (Hair et al., 2022). As can be seen from Table 3, all Composite Reliability values for the latent constructs exceeds this threshold, which proves that the indicators implemented in this study have an adequate level of reliability.

Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

Multicollinearity is when the predictor variables in a model are correlated with each other which could lead to incorrect estimates of the path coefficients. In PLS-SEM, high multicollinearity can be problematic because it inflates the standard errors of the path coefficients and therefore decreases the interpretability of the effect of predictors. Therefore, testing for collinearity is necessary to obtain robust, unbiased model estimates. The criteria used in this case is the value of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is less than 5 (Hair et al., 2022). Table 5 indicates that all inner VIF values are less than 5, meaning that there are no problems of multicollinearity in this research model.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	IL	YTC	POS	WM
IL		2,941		2,327
YTC				
POS		2,779		2,327
WM		2,862		

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Table 6 reports the structural associations. Innovative leadership was positively associated with commitment ($\beta = 0.317$, $p = 0.024$) and work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.463$, $p = 0.001$). POS was positively associated with work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.397$, $p = 0.001$), whereas its direct association with commitment was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.222$, $p = 0.202$). Work meaningfulness was positively associated with commitment ($\beta = 0.374$, $p < 0.001$). These

results are directional associations within a cross-sectional model and should not be interpreted as causal effects.

These values indicate substantial explanatory relevance within this sample, but they should not be read as evidence of causal prediction

Tabel 6. Structural Model Results

R ² Young Talent Commitment: 0,703, R ² Work Meaningfulness: 0,651						
Q ² Young Talent Commitment: 0,603 Q ² Work Meaningfulness: 0,622						
Hypothesis	Suggested Effect	Path Coefficient	T Statistic	P Values	Support	F ²
Ha1: IL → YTC	+	0,317	2,260	0,024	Yes	0,115
Ha2: POS → YTC	+	0,222	1,275	0,202	No	0,060
Ha3: IL → WM	+	0,463	3,451	0,001	Yes	0,264
Ha4: POS → WM	+	0,397	3,286	0,001	Yes	0,194
Ha5: WM → YTC	+	0,374	3,967	0,000	Yes	0,165
Ha6: IL → WM → YTC	+	0,173	2,348	0,019	Yes	-
Ha7: POS → WM → YTC	+	0,148	2,986	0,003	Yes	-

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The indirect association from innovative leadership to commitment through work meaningfulness was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.173$, $p = 0.019$), as was the indirect association from POS through work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.003$). The POS pattern is particularly notable because the indirect association was significant while the direct POS–commitment path was not. This statistical pattern is consistent with the proposed meaningfulness mechanism, although temporal mediation cannot be established with cross-sectional data.

Effect sizes provide a substantive complement to p values. For commitment, work meaningfulness had $f^2 = 0.165$, innovative leadership $f^2 = 0.115$, and POS $f^2 = 0.060$. For work meaningfulness, innovative leadership had $f^2 = 0.264$ and POS $f^2 = 0.194$. These estimates indicate that statistical significance and substantive contribution are not interchangeable: for example, the nonsignificant POS–commitment direct path had a small f^2 , whereas both predictors made more substantial contributions to explained variance in work meaningfulness.

Goodness of Fit

The model explained 70.3% of the variance in young talent commitment ($R^2 = 0.703$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.696$) and 65.1% of the variance in work meaningfulness ($R^2 = 0.651$).

beyond the observed cross-sectional data.

Predictive relevance was assessed using Q^2 . The Q^2 values were 0.603 for young talent commitment and 0.622 for work meaningfulness, both above zero, indicating out-of-sample predictive relevance under the procedure used. Q^2 is interpreted alongside, rather than as a substitute for, path coefficients and effect sizes.

In PLS-SEM, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is an absolute model fit measure and is defined as the difference between the observed and predicted correlations (Henseler and Sarstedt, 2013). A SRMR value lower than 0.08 is indicative of a good model fit (Hair et al., 2022). The SRMR of the saturated and estimated models is 0.069, which is much lower than 0.08 indicating a good fit in this study.

Discussion

Leadership-based pathway: Innovative leadership as a resource for meaning and attachment

The leadership pathway shows a dual pattern: innovative leadership was associated directly with commitment and also indirectly through work meaningfulness. This is consistent with the idea that innovative leadership provides both a relational signal and a work-design experience. When leaders invite ideas, tolerate reasonable experimentation,

significantly indirectly associated with commitment via meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.003$). The direct association between POS and commitment was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.222$, $p = 0.202$). Rather than H2 being a result to be explained away, this pattern suggests a limit to simple reciprocity account in which organisational support automatically translates into commitment. Employees may see the organization as supportive, but not necessarily convert that judgement into attachment. Support may become more consequential when it changes how they interpret the value and significance of their work.

This interpretation is consistent with newer research on POS that highlights intervening psychological mechanisms. Hngoi et al. (2024) found that the POS–commitment relationship can work together with job insecurity mechanisms, while Hamid and Kundi (2025) placed POS and meaning of work in a sequential psychological process. The current study extends this discussion by demonstrating a particular pattern of POS relating to meaningfulness and commitment indirectly, but not directly, in the same model. Therefore, the contribution is not that POS is unimportant, but that its meaningfulness seems to depend on how organisational support is psychologically translated into a meaningful work experience.

Work meaningfulness as a distinct psychological mechanism

Work meaningfulness was positively associated with commitment and had the largest f^2 among the direct predictors of commitment (0.165). This result is consistent with research linking meaningful work with affective commitment and other positive work attitudes (Allan et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2023). The mechanism is plausible because meaningfulness concerns whether employees experience their work as purposeful and worthwhile, whereas commitment concerns whether they are psychologically attached to the organization through which that work is performed.

This conceptual distinction is particularly relevant given the HTMT value of 0.866 between work meaningfulness and commitment. It is less than 0.90 but greater than the more conservative guideline of 0.85, suggesting empirical proximity rather than equivalence. For example, the individual may find a task very meaningful, but have a weak attachment to the employer, when the occupation or social purpose is more important than the organization. By contrast, an employee can stay committed for continuance or normative reasons without seeing the work itself as very meaningful. The different referents – value of the work vs bond with the organization – justify modelling meaningfulness as mediator and commitment as outcome and also require cautious interpretation of their empirical separation.

Taken together, the effect sizes and explained variance sharpen the substantive interpretation. The model explained 70.3% of the variance in commitment and 65.1% in work meaningfulness. These values show that the model has substantial explanatory relevance in this sample, but managerial recommendations should be based on the pattern and magnitude of relationships, not simply on whether p values cross a significance threshold.

Contextual and Boundary Implications

The results refine SET by showing that reciprocity may be psychologically elaborated rather than immediate. Meaningfulness was found to be related to both leadership and organization-based resources, but innovative leadership was the only resource that had a statistically significant direct association with commitment. One possible explanation is that proximal leader behaviour is more directly experienced in day-to-day work, whereas organization-level support may need to be translated into a sense that one's contribution is worthwhile before it relates to attachment. This is a theoretical explanation of the pattern seen, not a causal conclusion.

Employment status could be a contextual boundary, not an explanation established by the model. Moreover, 69% of the respondents were outsourced workers and 14% of the

respondents were contract workers; hence, employees may vary in their perceptions of organisational support, membership and future continuity. However, employment status was not modelled as a moderator and it cannot be used to causally explain the nonsignificant POS–commitment path. Future research should test this possibility directly, using multi-group analysis or moderation when sample size and design permit. In practical terms, the evidence at this time supports designing leadership and organisational practices that help employees see the purpose, contribution and importance of their work, rather than the stronger statement that any one practice is universally the 'best' way to foster commitment.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The present study differentiates a leadership-based pathway and an organization-based pathway to young talent commitment. Commitment was related directly and indirectly to innovative leadership through work meaningfulness, while POS was related indirectly to commitment through work meaningfulness but not through a statistically significant direct path. The main contribution of this contrast is that work meaningfulness is an important proposed psychological mechanism linking different workplace resources to commitment. The findings, therefore, support an interpretation that emphasises mechanisms rather than simply stating that more leadership or more organisational support will automatically lead to commitment.

These conclusions are limited by several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow for temporal ordering or causality and longitudinal or time-lagged research is needed to examine whether changes in leadership or support precede changes in meaningfulness and commitment. Second, all the study variables were collected from the same respondents in a single self-report questionnaire and no specific statistical common-method-bias assessment was conducted, so common-method variance cannot be ruled out. Third, the original English-language measurement items were

translated into Indonesian by the researcher without an independent back-translation process. The translated instrument was pilot-tested for item validity and reliability with 30 respondents and all items were retained, although there was no independent establishment of formal semantic equivalence with the original English wordings. Fourth, the relatively high HTMT between work meaningfulness and commitment (0.866) reveals empirical proximity despite the conceptual distinction of both constructs, therefore, the paths involving these constructs should be interpreted with caution. Finally, employment status was not modelled as a moderator, so the predominance of outsourced and contract employees is a possible contextual condition, rather than a demonstrated explanation, of the POS–commitment pattern.

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