

Impact of Paternalistic Leadership on Organisational Commitment among *Abdi Dalem*: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and Compensation

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ABSTRACT

A traditional institution like a palace regards organisational commitment as a vital factor to maintain performance and sustainability, but interestingly, it provides its own internal system and uniqueness in comprehending and practicing it. This article examines the impact of paternalistic leadership (PL) on organisational commitment (OC), using job satisfaction (JS) and compensation as mediators. JS and compensation are considered minor variables in measuring the direct impact of PL on OC. The sample consists of 229 out of 1300 individuals working as *Abdi Dalem* (palace servants) in various positions within the Yogyakarta Palace, Indonesia. The hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings revealed a significant negative impact of PL on OC. However, when both mediators were considered, a positive impact between PL and OC through compensation emerged. Interestingly, while PL had a positive impact on JS, it had a negative impact on OC. These results highlight the unique nature of the relationship between PL and OC within the specific context of the population under study. The article suggests that traditional institutions like the Yogyakarta Palace have unique characteristics in the relationship between PL and OC, with implications for stakeholders in policy-making.

Keywords: Commitment, job satisfaction, leadership, organisation, palace, Yogyakarta

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 30 September 2024

Accepted: 02 May 2025

Published: 17 October 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.33.5.04>

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of a complex society, leadership models have evolved to meet the needs of institutions and organisations (Caesar, 2016; Irawanto et al., 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2020). As a distinctive model, paternalistic leadership (PL) has emerged as an important research topic examined by various scholars using

diverse approaches, contexts, and cases. Researchers have also explored PL through various studies in different countries and organisations, highlighting rich patterns and characteristics, particularly within a specific case and cultural context (Irawanto & Ramsey, 2011; Jackson, 2016; Mansur et al., 2017; Selvarajah & Meyer, 2017, 2020), various cases at each level of the institution (Y. Chen et al., 2019), such as education (Dianingrum et al., 2022), family (Soylu, 2011), and workplaces (X. Chen et al., 2014). Among the various topics, the investigation of the impact of PL on OC in palace institutions has received little attention. Therefore, this article makes a significant contribution to the development of PL by presenting empirical evidence from *Abdi Dalem* (palace servants) of the Yogyakarta Palace through the mediating roles of JS (JS) and compensations or rewards.

Apart from cross-cultural aspects, studies on PL continue to attract scholars ranging from information sharing, openness, and creativity (Duan et al., 2024), religious ethics (Chaudhary et al., 2023), to ethical climate (Cheng & Wang, 2015). In particular, the impact of PL on OC has become a significant area of research for scholars, demonstrating a positive relationship with organisational dynamics (Irawanto & Novianti, 2021; Ünler & Kılıç, 2019). The existing studies in general concluded that PL has a positive impact on OC (Aycan, 2015; Chaudhary et al., 2023; X. Chen et al., 2014).

The positive effect occurs within the context of modern leadership and a conventional compensation and reward system. Indeed, previous studies have

primarily investigated the influence of compensations on OC within a standard compensation and remuneration framework (Suprihatini et al., 2023). Meanwhile, this study investigates how the mediating roles of JS and compensations within the Yogyakarta Palace influence OC. The palace institution, serving as the case study for this research, presents intriguing insights since a compensation system within the palace institution does not comply with the regional minimum wage of Yogyakarta (Tjong & Schmillen, 2019). As the only kingdom that has maintained political and cultural power after Indonesian independence, the Yogyakarta Palace has deep historical roots in Java and is highly respected in the context of Indonesian state formation (Assilmi, 2024; Monfries, 2008; Ratnawati & Santoso, 2021). It persistently preserves its cultures, traditions, and myths, which strengthen the palace's image within Indonesian society (Grave, 2014). This fact has significant implications for leadership studies, workplace dynamics, and organisational behaviour within modern society (Ratnawati & Santoso, 2021; Sari et al., 2023; Wijayanti & Nafiah, 2019; Wulandaru et al., 2025).

Examining the relationship between paternalistic leadership (PL) and organisational commitment (OC) with job satisfaction (JS) and compensation as mediating factors among *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace provides valuable empirical data from distinct socio-cultural contexts. This research can contribute to a broader understanding of leadership and organisational dynamics, offering new

insights and perspectives that enhance the depth of studies in these fields. Furthermore, by exploring the unique hierarchical structures and deeply ingrained cultural values within the Yogyakarta Palace, this study reveals how traditional leadership models adapt and function in contemporary settings. These findings can inform both academic discourse and practical applications, particularly in developing culturally sensitive leadership strategies in diverse organisational environments.

In contrast, several studies have provided empirical evidence that paternalistic leadership (PL) does not support organisational commitment (OC) under specific conditions. These conditions include the influence of Islamic work ethics (Chaudhary et al., 2023), the authoritarian dimension of PL (X. Chen et al., 2014; Dianingrum et al., 2022; Islam et al., 2022), the ethical climate within the organisation (Erben & Güneşer, 2008), leadership in the African context (Nnaemeka & Onebunne, 2017), and cultural differences across East Asian societies using the triad model of PL (Cheng et al., 2014). This highlights the complexity and tradition-dependent nature of PL's impact on OC, suggesting that its effectiveness can vary significantly based on cultural, ethical, and organisational factors.

The inconsistency in empirical research on the effects of paternalistic leadership underscores the importance of this study, which offers a new empirical perspective from the specific context of traditional and cultural institutions like a palace. The primary purpose of our article is, therefore, to address this confusion and assess how

paternalistic leadership affects OC through the roles of JS and compensation. This article explores the potential for developing PL models in such settings, thereby broadening the debate and research agenda on leadership models in diverse contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employed symbolic interactionism, a social psychological theory developed by George Herbert Mead, to examine the social interaction and socialisation of *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace. The theory explains that social interaction is shaped by the interpretation of language and symbols between people (Azarian, 2021). Humans respond to things based on their understanding, and society is seen as a product of these interactions. It is created and maintained through repeated interactions, where people use symbols—such as words, gestures, and facial expressions—to communicate (Blumer, 1969). According to Mead, society consists of five key elements: self, action, object, social interaction, and collective action (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). This theory is widely used to understand social interaction and symbolic action, which shape social order and culture (Dennis & Martin, 2007). Thus, this study applied the theory to evaluate attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived actions among *Abdi Dalem* of the Yogyakarta Palace. This theory considerably examines a large scope of social structure, institutions, social organisation, social process within institutions, and power (Hall, 2003; Paul, 1998), which is also related to the social and cultural process of *Abdi*

Dalem within the traditional institution of the Yogyakarta Palace.

Following Blumer, this study employed symbolic interactionism to explore the social life of the *Abdi Dalem*, which consists of recurrent joint actions sustained by shared meanings, habits, interpretations, and negotiations (Schwalbe, 2020). The theory is operationalised by focusing on how *Abdi Dalem* interpret their roles, responsibilities, and identities within the symbolic universe of the Yogyakarta Palace. The research investigates how meanings are constructed and negotiated through their everyday interactions—both with fellow *Abdi Dalem* and with the royal family—using culturally embedded symbols such as royal ceremonies, uniform attributes, ritual language, and hierarchical gestures (Gibson & Lehn, 2021). These symbolic forms serve not only as markers of identity and social order but also as tools for transmitting traditional values and sustaining loyalty to the palace. By observing how *Abdi Dalem* internalises these meanings and acts upon them, the study reveals the dynamic processes of identity formation, norm reinforcement, and role enactment, illustrating how the palace, as a traditional institution, continues to reproduce its cultural legitimacy through symbolic interactions (Dennis & Martin, 2007).

Paternalistic Leadership

Paternalistic leadership combines authority and benevolence (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008), demonstrating a deep concern for employee welfare, akin to a parent-child

relationship (Ayca et al., 2013). This leadership style is frequently observed in communal and cultural contexts, particularly in Asian countries (X. Chen et al., 2014). Farh and Cheng (2000) present a strong case for the positive aspects of paternalism. They assert that authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality are some of the aspects of paternalism. Authoritarianism involves a superior exerting strong authority and control over subordinates, demanding absolute obedience. Rather, paternalistic leaders typically use close monitoring to convey high expectations to subordinates and encourage them to meet performance requirements. This argument aligns with the fact that institutions in Eastern countries employ PL to resonate with the socio-cultural context of society (Irawanto et al., 2016). The traditional institution of the Yogyakarta Palace serves as a compelling example that enriches the discourse on PL and its application within specific cultural contexts. This version emphasizes the significance of the Yogyakarta Palace as an influential example and strengthens the argument for its relevance in the broader discourse on PL. Furthermore, paternalistic leaders promote their subordinates' professional development with significant energy and resources, offering timely and suitable guidance (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008).

Job Satisfaction

As an important concept and practice within organisations, this term was first introduced by Hoppock (1937) and then developed by academics and practitioners (Kalleberg,

1977; Copeland et al., 2022). It is defined as an employee achievement, manifested in positive attitudes and behaviour, which stem from the psychological aspects of employee satisfaction with work environment factors (Bashir & Gani, 2020). The personal nature of JS, influenced by social status and cultural privilege experienced by *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace, provides new evidence regarding the complexity of JS. The debates over JS have been linked to various factors such as leadership models (Mwesigwa et al., 2020), teamwork (Lee et al., 2017), work environment (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015), and personal commitment (Li & Xie, 2020). By examining a specific case, such as a palace institution, the measurement of JS can be further developed and refined. In the context of paternalistic leadership, ensuring job satisfaction is essential for maintaining employee performance and securing long-term organisational success. Based on the findings of previous research, the following hypotheses can be made between PL and the OC:

H1. Paternalistic leadership has a positive impact on organisational commitment.

H2. Paternalistic leadership has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Compensation

Most companies provide not only salaries but also compensation in the form of rewards, such as goods or awards, to complement wages and benefits. These rewards are part of the management compensation provided to employees (Lazear, 2018). Compensation is

a reward given to employees, either directly or indirectly. Direct compensation includes basic salary and other forms of income paid directly to employees (Schmitz & Yzerbyt, 2020). Compensation is a complex strategy aimed at rewarding employees for their performance and motivating them to achieve high levels of productivity (Herpen et al., 2005; Mahato & Kaur, 2023). Numerous studies have demonstrated that compensation encompasses various forms, ranging from financial incentives such as direct salary, commissions, and bonuses to indirect benefits such as insurance, social assistance, pensions, and education, as well as non-financial rewards (Maggino, 2023).

Non-financial rewards and non-material incentives include elements such as increased responsibility, recognition, pro-social behaviour, encompassing social norms, reciprocal obligations or altruism, opportunities for growth, and appreciation within the work environment (Grillos, 2017; Mu, 2022). In the context of the Yogyakarta Palace, non-material incentives are fundamental aspects that reveal the cultural values deeply embodied and accepted within the institution of the palace. These rewards play a crucial role in enhancing employee motivation and JS, contributing to a more positive organisational culture and long-term employee retention (Nawa & Kempa, 2017). Based on the previous findings regarding how paternalistic leadership influences compensation, the following hypothesis can be made between PL and compensation.

H3. Paternalistic leadership has a positive impact on compensation.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is the degree to which an individual feels connected to and involved in an organisation (Steers, 1977). OC extends beyond passive employee loyalty; it involves an active relationship in which employees willingly invest their efforts to support and advance the organisation’s goals and sustainability (Meuer & Allen, 1997). Previous studies on OC have focused on measuring performance and output within organisations (Lee & Kim, 2023; Jang et al., 2021). Low employee commitment can lead to higher turnover rates and a reluctance to contribute to the organisation’s success, which in turn impedes overall organisational performance (Frederiksen, 2017). OC refers to loyalty and dedication to an organisation, reflecting a willingness to contribute to its goals. This often leads to increased JS, lower turnover rates, and improved organisational performance (Agrawal & Srivastava, 2018; Luz et al., 2018). OC is tied to work experiences that foster a sense of belonging, emotional attachment, and ownership towards the organisation (Greenberg, 2011). In the context of the Yogyakarta

Palace, OC is also reflected in the loyalty of palace servants to the sultan and the institution. This deep-rooted allegiance not only preserves the palace’s cultural heritage but also ensures the continuity of its traditions and values across generations. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

- H4.* Job satisfaction has a positive impact on organisational commitment.
- H5.* Compensation has a positive impact on organisational commitment.
- H6.* Job satisfaction has a moderating impact on the correlation between paternalistic leadership and organisational commitment.
- H7.* Compensation has a moderating impact on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and organisational commitment.

METHODS

Conceptual Framework

This study explores the impact of PL on OC. It also examines how PL affects OC through compensation and JS. The research model demonstrating the impact of PL on OC can be found in Figure 1.

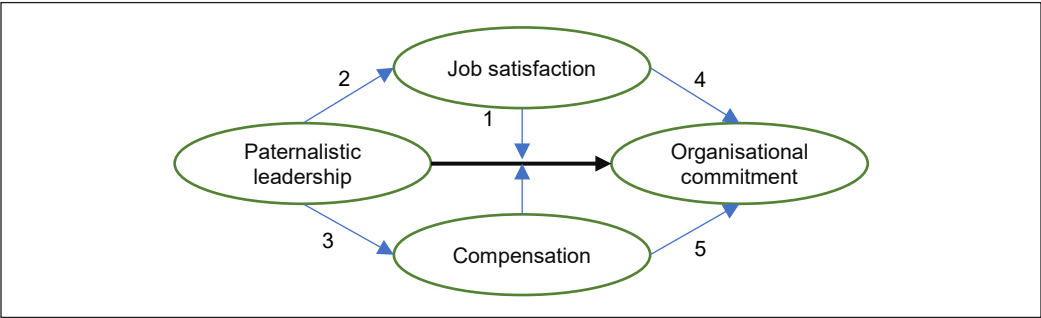


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Data Collection and Sample Size

The population in this study consisted of 1300 members of the Yogyakarta Palace. The research sampling used convenience sampling technique to select relevant respondents was employed to select respondents from the palace servants. The accepted and appointed servants as *Abdi Dalem*, are divided into two main groups: *Punakawan* (general public) and *Keprajan* (both from military and civil service officials). The survey was conducted online using Google Forms and distributed to a predetermined population. A total of 229 respondents participated in the study, selected through non-probability sampling, specifically using the purposive sampling method. This method was chosen because the population met specific criteria established by the researcher (Acharya et al., 2013), for instance, the criteria included being over 17 years of age and having completed at least two years of internship. The selection of *Abdi Dalem* as a sample considered factors such as their active involvement and loyalty to the Yogyakarta Palace. After conducting a screening test, the researcher eliminated 20 respondents who were classified as outliers and did not meet the criteria for the filtering questions. As a result, the study concluded with 229 valid respondents, meeting the minimum sample size for SEM as recommended by Hair et al (Hair et al., 2014). The data were collected in two months, from October 16 to December 16, 2023, following the permit issued by the palace official. The permit, detailed in letter No. 0979/KHPP/Mulud.X/

JIMAWAL.1957.2023, granted the researcher access to collect data from the lowest level of *Abdi Dalem* (called as *Jajar* and *Bekel*) to the highest one (*Bupati Kliwon*).

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents in this study were male (91.27%) and over the age of 50 (68.56%). Most respondents held the rank of *Bekel* (32.31%), followed by *Jajar* (15.28%), *Kaprajuritan* (13.54%), *Lurah* (10.92%), and other positions such as *Wedono*, *Bupati*, *Penewu*, or *Keparak*. Additionally, 11 respondents were in internship positions, selected based on a criterion of having completed more than two years of internship. The educational level of respondents was predominantly high school (42.79%), with most being married (90.39%). A significant portion of the respondents had more than 10 years of service (81.22%) and frequently interacted with their superiors (72.93%).

Table 1
Demographic statistics

Variable	Total (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	209	91.27
Female	20	8.73
Age		
20 - 29	20	8.73
30 - 39	14	6.11
40 - 49	38	16.59
50 - 59	65	28.38
60 - 69	57	24.89
70 - 79	28	12.23
80 - 89	7	3.06
Position		
Jajar	35	15.28
Bekel	74	32.31
Lurah	25	10.92
Penewu	12	5.24

Table 1 (continue)

Variable	Total (N)	Percentage (%)
<i>Wedono</i>	21	9.17
<i>Bupati</i>	14	6.11
<i>Kaprajuritan</i>	31	13.54
<i>Magang</i>	11	4.80
<i>Keparak</i>	6	2.62
Education		
Master degree	3	1.31
Undergraduate	39	17.03
Collage	4	1.75
Senior High School	98	42.79
Junior High School	37	16.16
Elementary School	44	19.21
No formal education	4	1.75
Status		
Married	207	90.39
Single	19	8.30
Other	3	1.31
Internship period		
< 5 years	29	12.66
5 - 10 years	14	6.11
> 10 years	186	81.22
Interaction with superiors		
Sometime	49	21.40
Occasionally	13	5.68

Note. *Jajar* = first rank; *Bekel* = second rank; *Lurah* = third rank, like a head of a servant group ; *Penewu* = fourth rank, like a head of village; *Wedono* = fifth rank; *Bupati* = sixth rank, like a regent; *Kaprajuritan* = special servants for bodyguards; *Magang* = internship; *Keparak* = mostly female servants whose duties are close to the sultan

Measurement

In determining the sample size, this study followed the recommendations of Sekaran and Bougie (2016) developed from Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample consisted of servants of the Yogyakarta Palace and was selected using a systematic random sampling method. A total of 229 respondents were selected for data analysis, which was

considered sufficient (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Meanwhile, the questionnaire was developed following a thorough review of previous studies, theories, and international scales. The study measures the variable of PL using a scale modified by Irawanto et al. (2016), which includes visible, authoritarian, benevolent, moral incorruptedness, moral courage, moral impartialness, dan moral magnanimity. All survey questions were formulated based on the scale and the contextual situation in the Yogyakarta Palace. This situation pertains to the existence of a traditional leadership model, which is a characteristic of Javanese bureaucratic culture. This leadership model has been adopted by the Indonesian bureaucracy, especially since the New Order era.

JS is measured using a scale introduced by McGrandle (McGrandle, 2019), with 4 scales: aspirational, calmness, sincerity, independence, and leadership. Four statements were assessed using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Two of these statements are: (1) ‘The current job allows you to work calmly,’ and (2) ‘The job provides opportunities for independent work.

The measurement of compensation is based on a scale developed by Herpen (Herpen et al., 2005) and evaluates the perception of *Abdi Dalem* towards higher rewards for more professional and demanding performance, compared to another system that offers lower rewards but is more informal and less demanding. The indicators used to evaluate work compensation, as outlined by Nawa and Kempa (Nawa & Kempa, 2017), include

reasonable salaries that are in line with job responsibilities, incentives that are commensurate with the sacrifice, allowances that are in accordance with expectations, and adequate facilities. This indicator was selected because it is relevant to the research context in the Yogyakarta Palace, particularly after the Special Autonomy Law No. 13/2012 was issued. It guarantees that the Yogyakarta Palace is to receive special funds (Danais), which include additional compensation for *Abdi Dalem*. The presence of Danais could be investigated to determine whether this extra compensation provides additional motivation and dedication for *Abdi Dalem* to fulfil their responsibilities and remain committed to the organisation.

OC is measured using a scale developed by John P. Meyer and Natalie J. Allen (Meuer & Allen, 1997), which includes indicators such as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. These three dimensions were selected because they encompass personal, material, organisational, social, and cultural factors (value systems) that align with the context of *Abdi Dalem* assignments, which are based not only on skills but also on tradition-based devotion.

Data Analysis Tool

Once the data were collected, the relationship between PL and OC was examined using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). This method was selected because it works effectively in exploratory research, which has little substantial understanding and information

(Hair et al., 2014). Additionally, PLS-SEM is a latent variable modelling approach that simultaneously handles multiple variables and accounts for measurement errors. It is widely used in business research due to its high statistical power for analysing complex structural equation models with multiple constructs (Hair et al., 2012). Data analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS 4.0 application (Ringle et al., 2012).

RESULTS

Data were analysed using PLS-SEM, a technique employed across various fields, including research on OC. This method is especially well-suited for investigating new variables, as demonstrated in this study. The analysis proceeded in three stages: evaluation of the measurement model, assessment of the structural model, and evaluation of the blindfolding procedure, also known as predictive relevance. The measurement model assessment was found to be satisfactory, allowing for the subsequent evaluation of the structural model. This stage aims to test the research hypotheses, assess the significance of the structural relationships, and determine whether the hypotheses are supported (Hair et al., 2014). Following this, the blindfolding procedure was conducted to assess the predictive relevance of the developed research model. Predictive relevance is indicated if the value obtained for the reflective endogenous variable is greater than 0. Finally, the moderation effect was tested, with a t-value greater than 1,96 considered as supporting the hypothesis (Hair et al., 2014).

Measurement Model

The analysis of the measurement model examined several components, including indicator loadings, average variance, and composite reliability. Additionally, the assessment addressed concerns related to discriminant validity by evaluating factor loadings and the relationships between latent variables. The primary objective of assessing convergent and discriminant validity was to establish content validity by verifying item factor loadings, as outlined by Hair et al. (2014). The factor loadings for the 37 questions in the instrument were found to be 0.70, indicating a significant contribution to clarifying the underlying structures. The evaluation procedure for determining convergent and discriminant validity of the model constructs followed a reflective measurement approach and involved multiple stages. In summary, in PLS-SEM, the measurement models of reflectively measured constructs are evaluated by systematically testing convergent and discriminant validity, as described, and this has been successfully achieved in this study.

The results of the loading factor calculation reveal that there are 3 indicators

with weak values (<0.708). These indicators are KK6 and KK3 on the JS variable, both with loading factor values of 0.690 and 0.697, respectively, and indicator I8 on the reward variable with a loading factor value of 0.699. Despite their weak values, these indicators were not eliminated as they met all convergent validity criteria (see Table 2). Convergent validity was assessed based on Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, or rho_a values, with the criteria being values >0.70 and AVE values of ≥ 0.50 .

The test results for convergent validity show a Cronbach’s alpha value greater than 0.883, composite reliability above 0.9, and an AVE value exceeding 0.554, indicating that the content and validity requirements are met. In order to determine how much each construct in the structural model differs from the others, discriminant validity must be assessed after the loading factors and convergent validity have been confirmed. Discriminant validity is evaluated using HTMT ratios and cross-loading values, as presented in Table 3:

The results of the discriminant validity test, as shown in Table 4, indicate an HTMT value <0.90 . Additionally, Table 5 presents the cross-loading test results, which

Table 2
Convergent validity

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Compensation	0.910	0.914	0.925	0.554
Paternalistic Leadership	0.955	0.962	0.959	0.612
Job Satisfaction	0.886	0.923	0.913	0.637
Organisational Commitment	0.883	0.900	0.910	0.629

Table 3
Discriminant validity assessment based on HTMT values

Variable	Compensation	Paternalistic Leadership	Job Satisfaction	Organisational Commitment
Compensation				
Paternalistic Leadership	0.220			
Job Satisfaction	0.260	0.408		
Organisational Commitment	0.693	0.190	0.197	

Table 4
Results of R² and Q² values

Variable	R ²	Q ²
Compensation	0.048	0.037
Job Satisfaction	0.176	0.161
Organisational Commitment	0.424	0.021

demonstrate that each indicator’s loading on its respective construct is higher than its loading on other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model used in this study is valid.

Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

Once the validity and reliability of the outer model have been established, the next step is to evaluate the hypothesised relationships in the inner model through several procedures. The first procedure involves assessing multicollinearity among the independent variable constructs in the structural model by examining the VIF (variance inflation factor) values. According to the criteria set by Hair (Hair et al., 2014), VIF values should be <5. The results of the multicollinearity assessment indicate that all VIF values are <5, demonstrating that both the inner and outer models are free from multicollinearity (Table 4).

R² measures the variance explained by each endogenous construct and is often referred to as the predictive power within the sample. It reflects the explanatory power of a model but does not indicate its predictive power outside the sample. R² values range from 0 to 1, with higher values representing greater explanatory power. The acceptability of R² values depends on the context. In social sciences, an R² value of 0.75 is considered substantial, 0.50 is moderate, and 0.25 is weak. In other fields, such as predicting stock returns, an R² value as low as 0.10 may be deemed satisfactory.

The R² value for the compensation variable is 0.048, which is classified as weak according to the criteria. This indicates that PL explains only 4.8% of the variance in compensation, with the remaining 95.2% influenced by variables not included in this study. Similarly, the R² value for JS is 0.176, also classified as weak. This means that PL accounts for just 17.6% of the variance in JS, while 82.4% is influenced by external variables. In contrast, the R² value for OC is higher at 0.424, suggesting that PL explains 42.4% of the variance, with the remaining 57.6% attributed to other variables outside this study.

Another method for assessing the prediction accuracy of the PLS technique is by calculating the Q^2 value, which evaluates both out-of-sample prediction and explanatory power within the sample. The Q^2 value must be greater than 0 for a given endogenous construct to indicate the predictive accuracy of the structural model for that construct. As a guideline, Q^2 values greater than 0, 0.25, and 0.50 represent small, medium, and large predictive relevance, respectively. The test results show that the Q^2 value for the reward variable is 0.037, the Q^2 value for JS is 0.161, and the Q^2 value for OC is 0.021. These values suggest that the model in this study demonstrates good predictive relevance. The last stage is to determine the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients, which normally vary from -1 to +1, by analysing the model's explanatory and predictive power.

A Goodness-of-Fit Test (GoF)

The GoF index is a comprehensive measure used to validate the combined performance of the measurement model and the structural model. It is calculated as the square root of the average communality index multiplied by the average R^2 value of the model. The GoF value ranges from 0 to 1, with interpretations as follows: 0.1 indicates a small GoF, 0.25 denotes a moderate GoF, and 0.36 represents a high GoF. The calculation results show that the GoF value of the model is 0.368, which falls into the high GoF category. This indicates that the empirical data explain the measurement model with a high level of fit.

Hair noted that PLS is a type of SEM analysis designed for predictive purposes (Hair et al., 2014). Lower RMSE (root mean squared error) and MAE (mean absolute error) values compared to those of the baseline linear regression model (LM) indicate that the model has better predictive power. The calculation results show that PLS-SEM yields lower values than the regression model, demonstrating that PLS-SEM provides more precise predictive power for this study.

Statistical Hypothesis Test

A statistical hypothesis test is conducted by examining the t-statistic and p-value. Assuming a significance level of 5%, a t-value greater than 1.96 (for a two-tailed test) and a p-value <0.05 indicate that the indicator weight is statistically significant. If both the t-statistic and p-value meet these criteria, it suggests a significant influence between the exogenous and endogenous variables, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis. According to Table 5, the results from the SmartPLS 4 bootstrapping algorithm, of the seven proposed hypotheses, three are rejected: (1) the direct impact of PL on OC, (2) JS on OC, and (3) the impact of PL on OC mediated through the JS variable. The remaining four hypotheses show significant relationships between variables and are accepted.

DISCUSSION

The statistical findings of this study provide evidence that PL does not directly impact OC; instead, it needs the mediating role

Table 5
Statistical hypothesis test

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values	Conclusion
Paternalistic leadership -> Organisational commitment	0.042	0.043	0.060	0.705	0.481	Unsupported
Paternalistic leadership -> Job satisfaction	0.420	0.427	0.056	7.551	0.000	Supported
Paternalistic leadership -> Compensation	0.219	0.227	0.062	3.533	0.000	Supported
Job satisfaction -> Organisational commitment	-0,005	-0,005	0,062	0,083	0.934	Unsupported
Compensation -> Organisational commitment	0.642	0.644	0.055	11.716	0.000	Supported
Paternalistic leadership -> Job satisfaction -> Organisational commitment	-0.002	-0.003	0.027	0.081	0.936	Unsupported
Paternalistic leadership -> Compensation -> Organisational commitment	0.141	0.146	0.041	3.424	0.001	Supported

of other variables, namely compensation. Additionally, the JS variable, which was proposed as a mediator in this study, was found to be ineffective in mediating the influence of PL on OC. In the context of *Abdi Dalem*, who has a spiritual attachment to the palace and particularly to the sultan, satisfaction, including job satisfaction in the workplace, is a collective experience and context-dependent, constructed through culture, morals, and an understanding of the way of life within Yogyakarta society. Social and cultural meanings, conveyed through symbols rooted in the palace, have shaped the people’s understanding and social interactions with the palace.

These results contrast with previous research, which suggested that PL has a positive effect on OC (Irawanto et al., 2016; Khudhair et al., 2022; Ünler & Kılıç,

2019). Empirical data from *Abdi Dalem* of the Yogyakarta Palace shows that OC stems from their social status as *Abdi Dalem*, which grants them privileges as members of palace servants and earns them respect in society. This practice is deeply rooted in social interactions that shape the understanding of the palace’s values, which are established as the foundation of social and cultural order within Yogyakarta society. Indeed, the privileges are deeply ingrained in those who engage with the Yogyakarta Palace, particularly *Abdi Dalem*. Thus, their commitment is not derived from leadership but rather from their social status within the social milieu in Yogyakarta. *Abdi Dalem* is perceived as a chosen person who reflects being taken for granted, meaning they already possessed a commitment to the palace before taking on the position,

fully aware of the associated costs and benefits. These findings from *Abdi Dalem* in the palace not only corroborate previous research (Chaudhary et al., 2023; X. Chen et al., 2014; B. S. Cheng et al., 2014; Dianingrum et al., 2022; Erben & Güneşer, 2008; Islam et al., 2022; Nnaemeka & Onebunne, 2017) but also strengthen the argument that social recognition and titles, rather than direct leadership influence, play a crucial role in shaping OC.

Meanwhile, there is a strong relationship between PL and JS (Chan & Mak, 2012; Irawanto et al., 2020). Empirical data from palace servants supports the hypothesis that PL positively influences JS (H2). Being *Abdi Dalem* provides a sense of comfort in their work and JS under PL, which is considered to have noble leadership values in the context of the Yogyakarta Palace. The impact of leadership on JS is manifested through the bestowal of titles to *Abdi Dalem* by the sultan himself. For instance, *Abdi Dalem*, who shares a noble family lineage with the sultan, will be honoured with the title *Gusti* (high respect) before their name. Additionally, *Abdi Dalem*, with the rank of regent, will be given the title *kanjeng*, which denotes elder and obedience. Holding these titles grants individuals a respected social status, both as individuals and as representatives of the palace.

Another crucial aspect of the palace institution is the provision of compensation, which reinforces the loyalty and dedication of those who serve, particularly *Abdi Dalem*. Compensation not only acknowledges their contributions but also ensures the

sustainability of their commitment to preserving the cultural and traditional values of the palace. Appropriate pay strategies can have a favourable impact on employee well-being and productivity (Lazear, 2018). In the Yogyakarta Palace, non-material rewards and compensations are experienced by *Abdi Dalem* in forms of recognition, social norms, altruism, and appreciation by society (Grillos, 2017). However, material compensations hold greater significance for the younger *Abdi Dalem*, whose lifestyles are more materially orientated and who possess superior skills, particularly in arts and culture. This allows them to participate in various performance activities organised by the palace, both domestically and internationally. The empirical data confirm that PL influences compensation (H3), which is in line with previous studies (Schmitz & Yzerbyt, 2020; Mahato & Kaur, 2023; Maggino, 2023).

The unique evidence on OC in the context of *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace arises from a deep sense of devotion to the institution rather than from the conditions and facilities provided by the palace. Indeed, the traditional leadership of Yogyakarta Palace, following Dickson et al. (2003), is culturally contingent (emic) and cannot be applied as a “universal” leadership theory (etic). The empirical data from the Yogyakarta Palace revealed the uniqueness of titles, statues, and recognitions that seem important within Yogyakarta society. These cultural symbols not only reflect the social hierarchy but also serve as key markers of identity and belonging, reinforcing the

palace's central role in the community. It also requires a contextual understanding of traditional leadership, which is a *sine qua non* in rural areas, such as in rural South Africa (Koenane, 2018).

In so doing, the previous studies suggesting that JS is positive to OC (H4) are not supported (Jang et al., 2021; Mwesigwa et al., 2020). This suggests that the OC of *Abdi Dalem* is not driven by the level of JS they experience. Instead, this commitment is something they have held since before joining or registering as servants of the palace. The foundation of being *Abdi Dalem* is personal commitment with loyalty and devotion to the sultan and the palace. This tradition of service reflects Javanese culture, which regards the palace as the centre of life. The complexity of OC among *Abdi Dalem* of the Yogyakarta Palace offers valuable insights that enrich previous studies. These studies have explored factors such as psychological well-being and the interplay between salary satisfaction and normative commitment (Lee & Kim, 2023; Luz et al., 2018). By examining the unique cultural and institutional context of *Abdi Dalem*, this research adds a nuanced understanding to the existing body of knowledge on OC.

Furthermore, the impact of compensation on OC is found to be significantly positive (H5), which is in line with previous studies (Maggino, 2023; Nawa & Kempa, 2017). Leaders of traditional institutions like the palace should recognise that the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of rewards and their commitment is influenced by individual

cultural values. Therefore, leaders need to prioritize cultural considerations rather than relying solely on general strategies. This also underscores the significant difference in OC between public and private sector organisations, with the latter typically having better financial resources to invest in employee retention. *Abdi Dalem* works in the palace to seek the sultan's blessing (*ngalap berkah*). This blessing is an abstract reward, yet its influence is so powerful that it shapes the social life of *Abdi Dalem*. For them, welfare is not only worldly but also spiritual, manifested through inner peace and happiness.

The mediating role of JS in the impact of PL on OC (H6) is rejected. Empirical data from *Abdi Dalem* of the palace indicate that JS does not influence their level of OC to the sultan as a paternalistic leader. In this context, *Abdi Dalem* of the Yogyakarta Palace already possesses an internal OC, which is derived from their interactions with the wider community. These findings are particularly interesting as they reveal that JS is unable to mediate the influence of PL on OC. *Abdi Dalem* has an a priori OC, which is further supported by field findings that JS, including the fulfilment of basic needs, the opportunity for self-expression, and social interaction, does not play a mediating role.

The relationship between PL and OC often depends on the prevailing compensation and reward system. Employees who receive fair and ideal rewards from paternalistic leaders tend to exhibit high OC. Conversely, when compensations are perceived as unfair or inadequate, it can lead to lower

OC (Herpen et al., 2005; Mahato & Kaur, 2023). Moreover, the mediating role of compensation in the influence of PL on OC (H7) is accepted. *Abdi Dalem* perceives compensation and rewards as a form of appreciation beyond material benefits, encompassing symbolic rewards such as peace and the blessings of the sultan. This demonstrates a strong consistency between rewards as a form of appreciation and the spirit of devotion exhibited by *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace.

This finding underscores that material rewards enhance the commitment of *Abdi Dalem*, suggesting that traditional institutions like the palace could benefit from incorporating a business management dimension. The performance of *Abdi Dalem* is not solely based on traditions and intangible values but also relies on a tangible incentive system, such as material rewards. Providing these rewards strengthens *Abdi Dalem's* belief that the palace's PL genuinely cares about their well-being. By adopting the best practices of the Yogyakarta Palace, the sultan and other kingdom institutions of the Archipelago should consider developing a stronger business management tradition. This approach would likely increase the OC and performance of *Abdi Dalem*.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that PL does not impact OC in the context of a palace institution. The OC of *Abdi Dalem* comes from their social status, which provides them with privilege and respect from the community. Interestingly, while

PL significantly influences JS by creating a comfortable environment for *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace, JS does not affect OC. This is because OC is established voluntarily from the first moment they prepare to join the palace. Thus, JS does not serve as a mediator between PL and OC. *Abdi Dalem's* commitment is directed towards the sultan as their leader and the institution of the palace, making JS a secondary factor. Meanwhile, compensation is the only mediating role that directly supports the impact of PL on OC.

Implications for Theory And Practice

In the theoretical aspect, this study offers the conceptual contribution of OC, which is positively influenced by compensation and JS, to be redefined in the context of traditional and cultural institutions like the palace. This empirical data confirms the significance of rewards in the palace as a traditional institution in Yogyakarta, which is linked to the voluntary commitment of *Abdi Dalem* to the sultan and the palace. Further, it explores the potential for developing PL models in such settings, thereby broadening the debate and research agenda on leadership models in diverse contexts. The implications for broader leadership theory development suggest that the embodiment of cultural values, spiritual attachment, and loyalty should be emphasised in developing leadership models by incorporating the symbols and spiritual aspects rooted in the palace.

In the specific context of the theoretical development of symbolic interactionism,

the findings contribute to this theory by highlighting how organizational commitment (OC) and paternalistic leadership (PL) are shaped not only through rational-instrumental factors such as compensation but also through culturally specific symbols, rituals, and interactions that carry deep meaning for *Abdi Dalem*. The findings reveal that the symbolic value of rewards and the performative aspects of leadership in the palace setting play a central role in shaping voluntary commitment. This reinforces the symbolic interactionist emphasis on meaning-making and social negotiation in institutional settings. By showing how cultural symbols—such as ritual gifts, honorific language, and ceremonial participation—mediate the relationship between leadership and commitment, the study expands the application of symbolic interaction theory beyond its conventional focus on micro-level interactions. It demonstrates how the theory can be used to interpret broader organizational and cultural dynamics in traditional institutions, thereby contributing to the ongoing evolution of symbolic interactionism in understanding complex, value-laden social structures.

Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for policymakers in developing new models and approaches for traditional institutions like the palace. They challenge such institutions to create more effective systems of appreciation, compensation, and rewards for *Abdi Dalem*. For stakeholders involved in policymaking, this study has significant implications for the practical management and governance of traditional

institutions like the palace, offering a better understanding of the complex aspects of leadership models and organizational culture.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The study's limitations include the use of a convenience sampling approach, focusing solely on individuals working at *Abdi Dalem* in the Yogyakarta Palace. This sampling method means that the respondents may not adequately represent the entire community of traditional and cultural institutions across the archipelago's palaces and kingdoms. As a result, the findings may not be generalisable to other similar institutions. The future study is expected to consider employing more diverse and representative sampling methods to enhance the applicability of the results across different traditional and cultural settings, like the palace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. The authors would also like to extend their thanks to the interrater and the study participants, especially the stakeholders of the Yogyakarta Palace institution, for their contributions.

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