

Value-oriented human resource management: sustainable loyalty in educational organizations

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ABSTRACT

Low employee loyalty and value internalization are still important issues in human resource management. Human resource value is a crucial factor in creating a good working climate. This study aims to analyze how value-oriented HR management shapes sustainable loyalty in the context of educational organizations. The approach used is qualitative, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies in 17 secondary schools in West Java Province. The main findings show that employee loyalty is formed through a synergy between internalisation of organisational values, exemplary leadership, a comfortable working atmosphere, and a strong organisational culture. Values such as honesty, responsibility and sincerity drive employees' emotional attachment, which is strengthened by a supportive work climate and fair leadership. It was concluded that values-based HRM supports institutional stability and creates loyalty that grows naturally and sustainably. The results are useful for managers of educational institutions to design value-oriented HR development strategies, as well as build organizational culture

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Introduction

Human resource (HR) management in educational organisations is a strategic foundation in ensuring the sustainability, quality, and competitiveness of institutions (Ololube, 2021; Wulansari, 2022). Educational institutions, as institutions that form character and knowledge, do not only depend on the curriculum and infrastructure, but rather on the quality of the people who manage them. In this context, HR management's orientation encompasses administration and the development of HR values (Ashrafi & Rajablou, 2020; Birgili & Kırkıç, 2021). The internalisation of these values among employees can foster a sense of commitment, integrity, and work loyalty. Therefore, efforts to build a value-based managerial system are becoming increasingly important amid the challenges of the increasingly complex world of education.

One of the crucial problems that educational institutions often face is the difficulty of building long-term human resource loyalty. The phenomenon of low work commitment, increasing turnover rates, and weak employee attachment to the institutional vision reflects

managerial failure to touch deeper value aspects (Siddiqui et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2020). An approach that is too bureaucratic and transactional creates ambiguity in the meaning of work and erodes the sense of belonging (Puspitasari & Mudzakkir, 2024). Employees tend to carry out routines without emotional and spiritual involvement with the organisation. On the other hand, many institutional leaders have not made value development the foundation of human resource development. This shows that the problem of loyalty is not a technical problem, but a consequence of the absence of value-conscious-based management.

Various previous studies have discussed the importance of employee engagement and organisational climate in increasing work productivity (Ningsih, 2019). However, there is still little research that explicitly places value as an important element in HR management strategies, particularly in the context of educational organisations. The human resource management literature in the field of education generally emphasises aspects of training, incentives, and performance evaluation, without involving the depth of value aspects that form loyalty (Aini & Fitria, 2021; Rohaeni et al., 2022). In fact, the value-based management approach that has been widely applied in the business sector has not been systematically adopted in education management (Freitas & Wiyono, 2023). As a result, a gap emerges between the real needs of the field and the conceptual framework available. This gap becomes a space for the development of new approaches that are more in line with the characteristics of educational institutions.

The research presents a new perspective on HR management that integrates values as the foundation for building employee loyalty. The focus of the study refers to managerial practices and the psychological and cultural experiences of employees in responding to organisational values. This article contributes to the development of a more contextual, humane, and sustainable managerial approach. The uniqueness of this research lies in exploring the value dimension as a strategic instrument in forming loyalty, not just as a normative work ethic. This approach is particularly relevant in educational institutions that ideally prioritise human values, spirituality, and moral responsibility as the basis for human resource development.

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature in educational human resource management and serve as a reference for educational institution leaders in designing effective and value-based human resource management systems. With this approach, employee loyalty is no longer seen as the result of external incentives, but rather as the fruit of the awareness, meaning, and values that live in the organisation's work culture.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach (Murray, 2022) to explore in depth the practice of value-oriented human resource management (HR) and its influence on employee loyalty in

educational institutions. This approach was chosen because it can reveal the meaning of values and subjective experiences of employees in the context of work culture and dynamics of educational organisations.

The research locations include 17 secondary schools spread across several districts and cities in West Java Province. The schools were selected purposively based on criteria: (1) having an active human resource development program, (2) listing institutional values in the school's official documents, and (3) demonstrating organisational stability through employee retention and high loyalty. The informants in the study consisted of school principals, vice principals, senior teachers, and administrative staff who had direct involvement in human resource management.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies (Seniwoliba & Yakubu, 2005). The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide space for exploration of the informant's experiences and views regarding the internalisation of values, work comfort, and forms of loyalty formed. Observations were carried out to directly observe work culture, interaction between employees, and the organisational climate. Meanwhile, the documentation study includes a review of HR policy documents, reports on school activities, and relevant internal archives.

The data was analysed using thematic analysis techniques, which included the process of coding, categorisation, and developing key themes based on patterns of meaning that emerged from the data (Ndenje-Sichalwe & Elia, 2020). The validity of the data is maintained through method triangulation, source triangulation, and member checking with key informants..

Results and Discussion

1. Difficulties in Building Human Resources Commitment in Educational Organisations

The dimension of commitment encompasses formal attendance, fulfilling one's workload, and emotional attachment, as well as a moral responsibility to the institution's vision and mission. From the results of interviews in 17 schools that were the location of the research, the majority of informants stated that building employee commitment is a continuous challenge and is not easy to complete if we rely on administrative policies. Commitments tend to be reactive, incentive-dependent, and not rooted in value awareness. This condition indicates that the management approach used remains predominantly transactional, with no significant impact on the transformational side of human resource management.

Some school principals said that employee turnover, both teachers and education staff, occurred not only because of the salary factor, but also because of the lack of ownership of the

institution. This low sense of attachment makes it easy for employees to move to other institutions when offered opportunities that are considered more profitable. In field observations, it was found that schools lacking a consistent value development system tend to experience human resource instability and an uncondusive work atmosphere. The reason teachers resigned from the school was that they felt uncomfortable, judging that the institution lacked a clear direction for development and failed to foster an emotional attachment. This shows that the root of low commitment is the inability of institutions to build relationships that are affective and valuable.

Employee commitment is basically formed when there is a balance between job satisfaction, recognition, and involvement in the decision-making process. However, in most of the schools studied, employee involvement in strategic processes is still very limited. A hierarchical and bureaucratic work culture makes employees feel only as implementers, not as part of the architect of the organisation (Dymnicki et al., 2021). In interviews, some teachers revealed that they often do not know the long-term direction of the school, and are not involved in designing programs or policies related to human resource development. As a result, teachers are only involved in teaching but are never involved in making important decisions in schools. This phenomenon indicates that weak commitment cannot be separated from weak strategic communication and the absence of a sense of belonging.

In addition, weak value building and lack of reflective forums also contribute to the difficulty of building commitment. Schools as organisations (Wolor et al., 2020) learners are supposed to provide a space for dialogue to strengthen a collective understanding of a common goal. However, based on documentation and observations, not many schools hold regular coaching forums or consistent organisational culture meetings. Most of the coaching is technical, such as curriculum training or administrative strengthening, but it has not touched on aspects of job value formation, spirituality, or integrity. As a result, employees tend to work on the basis of obligation, not because of a call of conscience. In this context, values and commitment are two things that are never consciously met in the managerial process.

These findings are consistent (Asbari et al., 2020; Kim, 2022) regarding the importance of affective commitment in building long-term loyalty. When employees do not have an emotional attachment to the organisation, they tend to view work pragmatically and in the short term. Therefore, the difficulty of building commitment cannot be solved only through personnel policies, but must start from the reformulation of a value-oriented HR management approach. Schools as character-building institutions are not enough with an incentive system and rules, but require the strengthening of a culture that builds collective identity and awareness. In this context, commitment is not just the result of external motivation, but the fruit of the process of internalising value and meaningful involvement in the life of the organisation.

2. Internalising Values as the Foundation of Loyalty

The core values of the organisation such as honesty, responsibility, sincerity, discipline, and collective spirit are the foundations that shape employee work awareness. This process does not take place easily, but through the stages of habituation, leadership example, and strengthening the daily work culture. Schools that consistently instil these values tend to have human resources that are not only structurally compliant but also able to build a good working atmosphere. The power of building the physical condition of the workspace, psychological climate, communication style, relationship patterns between employees, and building an open dialogue space. Informants from several schools mentioned that the comfort of working is closely related to a sense of security to express opinions, trust between individuals, and appreciation for contributions given. In this context, convenience can create productivity and intrinsically strengthen loyalty.

Observations conducted in several schools show that a work environment that supports loyalty is built through three main elements, namely: open communication, supportive leadership, and a healthy space for informal relationships. In these schools, leaders are used to greeting teachers personally, opening dialogue spaces without excessive formalities, and providing enough rest time to maintain a work-life balance. In addition, informal activities such as casual meetings, lunch together, or joint sports are part of the strategy to strengthen the bond between employees. This kind of activity provides space for the formation of familiarity that cannot be achieved through formal working relationships alone.

A healthy and comfortable work environment allows organisational values to be better internalised, as employees are in an open and receptive psychological state (Kim, 2022; Neal M. Ashkanasay, Celeste P.M. Wilderom, n.d.; Wicaksono & Oktaria, 2020). Thus, the work atmosphere serves as a mediator that reinforces the influence of values on loyalty. Schools that successfully manage the work atmosphere will find it easier to instill value and develop loyalty in an ongoing manner.

Work comfort also has an impact on employee participation and engagement levels. In schools with a pleasant work atmosphere, employees are more likely to be actively involved in school programs, participate in self-development activities, and take the initiative to convey innovative ideas. Loyalty in this context is not measured by the length of time an employee stays, but by the quality of their involvement in the organisational transformation process. In contrast, in an uncondusive work environment, loyalty tends to be passive and burdened, which will gradually lead to burnout and a desire to leave the institution.

Thus, it can be concluded that a comfortable work atmosphere plays a significant mediator in the relationship between value internalisation and employee loyalty. This atmosphere provides space for values to be lived, as well as forming socially and emotionally meaningful

work experiences. For educational institutions, creating a comfortable working environment is not the end goal, but an important strategy in forming a healthy, dynamic, and sustainability-oriented organisational culture of human resource loyalty. The core values of the organisation such as honesty, responsibility, sincerity, discipline, and collective spirit are the foundations that shape employee work awareness. This process does not take place instantly, but through the stages of habituation, leadership example, and strengthening the daily work culture. Schools that can instill these values consistently tend to have structurally compliant human resources and have a deep emotional commitment to the institution. This confirms that loyalty is not formed from the outside, but grows from within through lived values.

Schools that successfully maintain the loyalty of their employees generally have a structured and sustainable value coaching system. The coaching program is not only in the form of lectures or formal training, but also through a strong organisational culture and exemplified directly by the leadership. Organisational values are embedded in daily activities such as meetings, evaluations, student services, and informal interactions between employees. When values are not only declared in the vision-mission, but also used as a guideline in decision-making and daily behavior, internalisation becomes stronger and forms genuine loyalty. In observations in several schools, it appears that the success of value development is characterised by low internal conflicts, increased mutual respect, and a strong collective spirit in completing tasks.

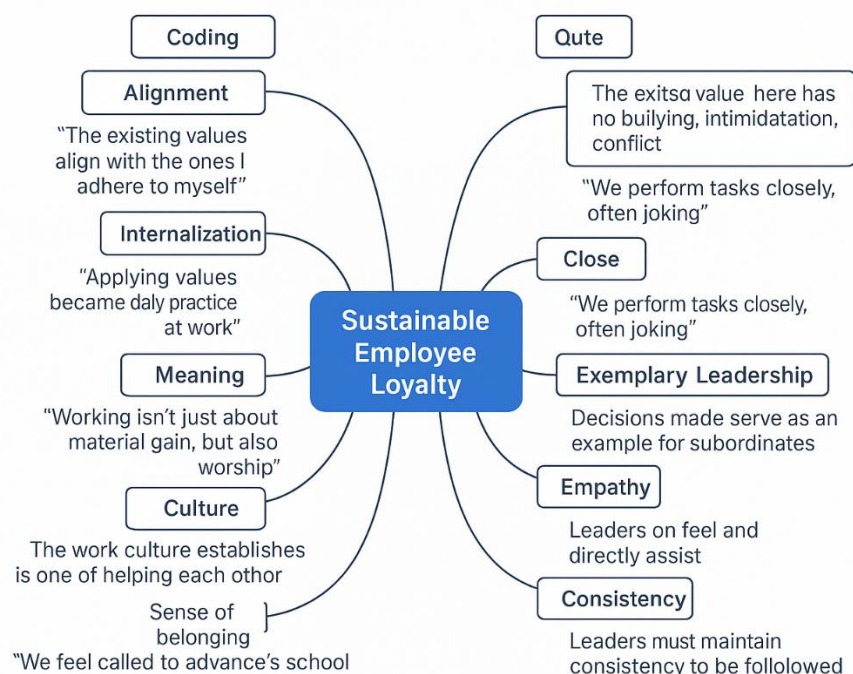


Figure 1. Mappingmind Data Processing Results

3. Comfortable Work Atmosphere as a Loyalty Mediator

The work atmosphere is the physical condition of the workspace, but it also includes the psychological climate, communication style, relationship patterns between employees, and how leaders build open dialogue spaces. Informants from several schools mentioned that the comfort of working is closely related to a sense of security to express opinions, trust between individuals, and appreciation for contributions given. In this context, convenience not only creates productivity, but also intrinsically strengthens loyalty.

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4. Exemplary-Based Leadership as a Loyalty Trigger

The findings in this study reveal that leadership examples are a very important element in

building employee loyalty in educational institutions. In the context of value-based HR management, inspiring leadership is not determined by the number of instructions given, but by how strongly the leader demonstrates consistency between the values said and the values that are executed. Informants from several schools where the study was located emphasised that their loyalty grew not because of a sophisticated work system or large incentives, but because of respect and trust in a leader who was considered fair, honest, and humble. When leaders are role models in behavior, employees tend to feel more comfortable following, even in difficult conditions.

In contrast, in schools led by authoritarian or inconsistent figures, employee loyalty tends to be fragile and temporary (Dymnicki et al., 2021; Ehrlich et al., 2019). The incompatibility between the vision campaigned for and the real actions of the leadership causes a crisis of trust. Some teachers from schools with leadership characters like this said that they felt uninspired and only worked out of obligation.

Observations in the field show that leaders who successfully build loyalty are those who are directly involved in the daily dynamics of employees. They attend not only formal meetings, but also informal activities such as having breakfast together, attending employee family events, or providing personal support when employees face difficulties. This kind of interaction creates a collective experience that builds trust and a sense of belonging. In the context of educational institutions, school principals who lead with heart are able to become a symbol of the value of the institution itself. When leaders practice values such as honesty, responsibility, and caring, employees will naturally adjust and feel compelled to contribute more.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the theory of authentic leadership put forward by Avolio and Gardner (2005), where leadership effectiveness is determined by transparency, consistency of values, and emotional engagement (Luo et al., 2022; Rohyani et al., 2021). Exemplary-based leadership shapes employee behavior, organisational culture that supports long-term loyalty. Loyalty built on respect and psychological connectedness is much more resilient to external pressures than loyalty built solely through structural incentives.

Thus, exemplary-based leadership is an essential element in a value-oriented HR management strategy. Leaders who are able to be role models, build sincere personal relationships, and show integrity in every policy, will strengthen employee loyalty in a deep and sustainable way. In educational institutions, example is not an option, but a necessity for the sustainability of a meaningful and valuable organisation.

5. Employee Loyalty as a Result of Organizational Values, Culture, and Climate

Employee loyalty in the context of educational institutions does not stand alone, but is the cumulative result of value management, organisational culture, and work climate that are systemically formed. The findings of this study confirm that loyalty cannot be formed through

administrative approaches alone, such as regulations or financial incentives. Conversely, loyalty develops when employees feel they live in an environment that upholds their values, a culture that values individual contributions, and a healthy and supportive work climate. These three elements—values, culture, and climate—are intertwined and form the psychological and social foundations of long-term loyalty.

Organisational values that are successfully instilled through internalisation, habituation, and example will form a strong work identity for employees (Maisyaroh et al., 2023; Yuniar, 2020). Values such as honesty, responsibility, sincerity, and togetherness are the principles that animate work behavior and form a solid foundation of loyalty. A healthy organisational culture reinforces the influence of values on loyalty. Schools that have a participatory, open, and respectful culture of difference tend to have employees who feel valued and listened to.

Organisational climate (Kee et al., 2022; Kim, 2022) who support also plays an important role in strengthening loyalty. An open, non-intimidating, and open-ended work climate that allows employees to thrive will create a sense of psychological security. When employees feel valued and trusted, they will show a proactive attitude, initiative, and a desire to persevere.

In a theoretical review, these findings reinforce the view that loyalty is a social construct formed through continuous interaction between individuals and their work environment). Values provide direction, culture creates behavior patterns, and climate provides an emotional feel that frames the entire work process. When all three are aligned and managed consciously, employee loyalty becomes a sustainable natural result. It also signifies that value-oriented HR management is not just a managerial strategy, but a holistic approach to shaping a humane and meaningful work ecosystem.

Thus, employee loyalty is not the result of a single factor, but the fruit of the synergy between the institutional values instilled, the work culture undertaken, and the organisational climate that supports the psychological and social growth of employees. Educational institutions that want to build sustainable loyalty must focus efforts on the consistent and thorough integration of these three aspects. Loyalty is not just about enduring, but about growing along with the values and direction of the institution.

This study has several limitations that need to be observed in interpreting the findings. First, the scope of the research area is limited to 17 schools in West Java Province, so the generalisation of findings to the context of educational institutions in other provinces or countries must be done with caution. Second, the qualitative approach used is contextual and interpretive, so it depends on the depth of the interview and the openness of the informant in conveying his views. Third, the loyalty dimension studied in this study focuses more on emotional aspects and internal values, while loyalty aspects that are operational and performance have not been the main focus. In addition, the relatively limited data collection

time can affect the depth of observation of organisational dynamics longitudinally. Therefore, follow-up research with a quantitative or mix-method approach, as well as a wider scope of territory and time, is strongly encouraged to strengthen external validity and enrich the understanding of value-oriented HR management in a variety of institutional contexts

Conclusion

Employee loyalty in educational institutions is formed through the synergy between internalising values, organisational culture, and a comfortable work atmosphere. Employee commitment is difficult to build without the example of leadership and a value-based HR management system. The internalisation of values encourages emotional attachment, while an open and supportive work climate reinforces a sense of belonging. Leadership exemplary is the main trigger that connects values with loyal employee behavior. Therefore, value-based HR management can increase organisational stability and create ongoing loyalty. These findings recommend the importance of strengthening a culture of values, exemplary leadership, and creating a healthy work climate as core strategies in building employee loyalty in educational institutions.

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