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Dynamics of Senior Employee Loyalty: A Case Study of Retention Factors at PT San Jaya Putra

Iing Sri Hardiningrum¹, Anita Sumelvia Dewi², Adinda Tya Agustina³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Manajemen, Universitas Islam Kediri

Email: iingsri@uniska-kediri.ac.id, anita@uniska-kediri.ac.id, taadinda27@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

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Loyalitas karyawan senior penting bagi keberlanjutan organisasi karena menyimpan pengalaman, pengetahuan kerja, dan relasi yang terbentuk dalam jangka panjang. Penelitian ini bertujuan memahami faktor-faktor yang membentuk dan mempertahankan loyalitas karyawan senior di PT San Jaya Putra. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus tunggal. Data utama diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan seorang karyawan senior yang bekerja sejak tahun 2004, didukung oleh observasi nonpartisipatif dan telaah dokumen yang relevan. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik induktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa loyalitas berkembang melalui keterkaitan tiga dimensi, yaitu intrinsik, ekstrinsik, dan relasional. Dimensi intrinsik tercermin dalam keterikatan emosional, rasa memiliki, dan pemaknaan perusahaan sebagai bagian dari perjalanan hidup. Dimensi ekstrinsik meliputi keamanan kerja, fleksibilitas, kesejahteraan, dan fasilitas pendukung kerja, sedangkan dimensi relasional terbentuk melalui apresiasi, komunikasi terbuka, dukungan atasan, dan hubungan harmonis dengan rekan kerja. Temuan utama menegaskan bahwa loyalitas karyawan senior tidak semata-mata didasarkan pada pertimbangan ekonomi, tetapi pada akumulasi pengalaman hidup dan kerja selama lebih dari dua dekade yang memperkuat identitas organisasi dan keterikatan psikologis. Studi ini merekomendasikan pengakuan masa bakti, pemanfaatan karyawan senior sebagai mentor, serta penguatan dukungan dan hubungan sosial di tempat kerja.

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Employee Loyalty, Employee Retention, Senior Employees, Case Study, Human Resource Management

Senior employee loyalty is important for organizational sustainability because it preserves experience, work-related knowledge, and relationships accumulated over time. This study aims to understand the factors that shape and sustain senior employee loyalty at PT San Jaya Putra. A qualitative approach with a single-case study design was employed. The primary data were obtained through an in-depth interview with a senior employee who had worked at the company since 2004, supported by non-participant observation and a review of relevant

documents. The data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The findings show that loyalty develops through the interrelationship of three dimensions: intrinsic, extrinsic, and relational. The intrinsic dimension is reflected in emotional attachment, a sense of belonging, and the meaning of the company as part of the employee's life journey. The extrinsic dimension includes job security, flexibility, welfare, and work-support facilities, while the relational dimension is formed through appreciation, open communication, supervisory support, and harmonious relationships with co-workers. The main finding confirms that senior employee loyalty is not based solely on economic considerations, but on more than two decades of accumulated work and life experiences that strengthen organizational identification and psychological attachment. The study recommends recognizing long service, involving senior employees as mentors, and strengthening organizational support and social relationships in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Employee loyalty is a strategic concern in human resource management because employee departure can disrupt operational continuity, increase replacement and training costs, and erode institutional knowledge accumulated through experience. This issue is especially important for senior employees, whose contribution is embedded not only in task proficiency but also in long-standing relationships, tacit knowledge, and familiarity with organizational routines.

Previous research has established important predictors of retention, but its dominant designs leave a specific explanatory gap. Hausknecht, Rodda, and Howard (2009) identified reasons for staying through survey-based comparisons, while Ng and Feldman (2010) examined age and work attitudes through meta-analysis. In Indonesia, Purba and Seniati (2010) and Suryani (2019) tested statistical relationships involving personality, organizational culture, job satisfaction, commitment, and employee behavior. These studies explain which variables are associated with commitment or retention, but they do not show how employees with very long tenure interpret loyalty as an experience that develops across organizational and personal life events. Hom et al. (2017) similarly noted that turnover research has been dominated by predictive models, leaving room for approaches that examine the meanings underlying decisions to stay.

PT San Jaya Putra provides an information-rich setting for examining this issue. The company has operated in the industrial sector for more than two decades and its workforce includes employees from different tenure cohorts. Its operational activities require mobility and continuing coordination with drivers and other external parties, making experience-based knowledge and relational continuity important to daily work. Most notably, the company retains an employee who joined in 2004 and has remained through more than two

decades of organizational change and major personal life milestones.

The case is selected because of this unusually long and contextually rich employment history, rather than because the company is claimed to be a statistical outlier in workforce size or turnover. Publishable figures on the total number of employees and annual turnover rate were not available in the dataset; consequently, the empirical rationale is stated transparently and is limited to the documented characteristics of the organization, the operational role, and the existence of a two-decade employment relationship.

Accordingly, the research gap lies not merely in the limited use of qualitative methods, but in the absence of a temporal and meaning-centered explanation of senior employee loyalty in an Indonesian industrial context. Existing studies tend to treat satisfaction, compensation, support, commitment, and embeddedness as separate predictors. This study instead examines how intrinsic attachment, extrinsic organizational support, and relational bonds accumulate and interact over time until the organization becomes intertwined with an employee's identity and life history.

Based on this gap, the study addresses three questions: (1) What factors shape and sustain the loyalty of a senior employee at PT San Jaya Putra? (2) How is loyalty constructed and interpreted through more than two decades of work experience? and (3) How do intrinsic, extrinsic, and relational factors interact in sustaining long-term retention?

This study therefore aims to develop a contextual understanding of senior employee loyalty through an in-depth single-case analysis. Its contribution is to explain retention as an accumulated temporal process involving organizational identification, psychological attachment, support, and social relationships, while providing practical direction for organizational recognition, mentoring, and relationship-based retention practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Loyalty, Commitment, and the Decision to Stay

This study treats employee loyalty as a multidimensional outcome rather than as tenure alone. Its behavioral dimension is reflected in the decision to remain and contribute consistently, whereas its attitudinal dimension involves affective attachment, value congruence, and willingness to maintain organizational membership. Organizational commitment therefore provides a useful starting point, but loyalty is broader because it connects the intention to stay with identification, relationships, and accumulated experience.

Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model distinguishes affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment explains remaining because of emotional attachment, continuance commitment reflects the perceived cost of leaving, and

normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation. For a senior employee, these motives may coexist; however, long service should not automatically be interpreted as loyalty because employees may stay for calculative reasons without developing emotional attachment. Hom et al. (2017) similarly emphasize that retention requires attention to both withdrawal processes and the forces that make continued membership meaningful.

B. Organizational Support and Relational Reciprocity

The extrinsic foundation of retention is explained through organizational support theory. Employees form a general belief about whether the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When support is expressed through fair treatment, job security, flexibility, recognition, and adequate work resources, employees are more likely to reciprocate through stronger affective commitment and reduced withdrawal. The meta-analytic evaluation by Kurtessis et al. (2017) reinforces the role of fairness, supervisor support, and favorable job conditions as central antecedents of perceived organizational support.

Relational experiences translate organizational practices into personally meaningful signals. High-quality relationships with supervisors provide trust, respect, and reciprocal obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), while cohesive relationships with co-workers create social capital and everyday psychological comfort (Coleman, 1988). Thus, compensation and facilities are not treated as isolated incentives; their retention value depends partly on whether employees interpret them as evidence of appreciation, reliability, and organizational care.

C. Job Embeddedness and the Temporal Accumulation of Loyalty

Job embeddedness explains why employees remain through three interrelated elements: links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Links refer to connections with people and organizational activities; fit concerns compatibility between the employee, job, and organization; and sacrifice concerns the material or psychological losses associated with departure. This framework integrates intrinsic, extrinsic, and relational factors more effectively than models that examine satisfaction or compensation as independent predictors.

For senior employees, embeddedness is also temporal. Repeated interactions, organizational changes, family milestones, and shared difficulties can transform ordinary workplace links into a personal history. A long-standing psychological contract develops through accumulated expectations, trust, and reciprocal obligations (Rousseau, 1989). Consistent with Ng and Feldman (2010), longer tenure may therefore be associated with more stable and value-based work attitudes, although the meaning of that tenure must be interpreted from the employee's lived experience rather than inferred from length of service

alone.

Recent aging-workforce research also shows that the continued employment of experienced workers is supported by an age-inclusive organizational climate, appreciative leadership, flexible work design, development opportunities, knowledge management, and appropriate transition practices (Wilckens et al., 2021). Validation of the Later Life Workplace Index further demonstrates that these practices can be organized as a coherent organizational system rather than as disconnected benefits (Finsel et al., 2023). These studies strengthen the argument that senior employee retention depends on the alignment between individual needs and organizational practices across the later stages of working life.

D. Organizational Identification and Psychological Ownership

Organizational identification explains how membership becomes part of an employee's self-definition. Employees with strong identification experience organizational successes and difficulties as personally relevant and tend to use collective language when describing the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Riketta, 2005). Identification therefore provides the psychological mechanism through which long tenure becomes more than repeated attendance: the organization is incorporated into the employee's sense of who they are.

Psychological ownership complements identification by explaining the feeling that the organization is personally meaningful and worth protecting (Pierce et al., 2001). Identification answers the question of who the employee is in relation to the organization, whereas psychological ownership concerns the felt sense that the organization is partly 'mine.' Together, these concepts clarify why a senior employee may describe a workplace as a second family and experience departure as an identity loss, not merely a financial change.

E. Cultural and Industrial Context

The meaning of loyalty is shaped by context. In a collectivist setting, harmony, reciprocal obligation, respect for authority, and long-term interpersonal ties may carry greater weight than they do in strongly individualist settings (Hofstede et al., 2010). Indonesian evidence also indicates that organizational culture, satisfaction, personality, and affective commitment are associated with constructive employee attitudes and behavior (Purba & Seniati, 2010; Suryani, 2019). These findings support the need to interpret retention through social relationships and local meanings rather than transferring Western retention models without contextual examination.

The industrial context further increases the relevance of continuity because operational work often depends on tacit knowledge, coordination routines, and relationships with internal and external parties. In such settings, the departure of a long-tenured employee may involve the loss of relational and experience-based knowledge that is difficult to replace

through formal recruitment alone. The present study therefore examines loyalty as an organizational resource embedded in both the employee and the surrounding network of work relationships.

F. Integrated Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes the following process: organizational support and relational quality provide security, appreciation, and trustworthy exchanges; these experiences strengthen affective commitment, organizational identification, and psychological ownership; repeated over time, they deepen links, fit, and perceived sacrifice; and the resulting job embeddedness sustains long-term loyalty. Tenure functions as a temporal accumulation process rather than as a sufficient indicator of loyalty, while the collectivist and industrial context shapes how support and relationships are interpreted.

This framework organizes the analysis into three empirically observable dimensions. The intrinsic dimension concerns emotional attachment, identity, meaning, and ownership; the extrinsic dimension concerns security, welfare, flexibility, and work resources; and the relational dimension concerns supervisor support, co-worker cohesion, and external work ties. The dimensions are analytically distinguishable but mutually reinforcing, because organizational resources acquire meaning through relationships and repeated experience.

Accordingly, the study does not assume a simple linear relationship in which compensation directly produces loyalty. It examines how material support, interpersonal relationships, and subjective meaning become integrated across more than two decades of employment. This integrated perspective guides the thematic analysis and provides the basis for interpreting senior employee loyalty as an accumulated, identity-relevant, and context-dependent retention process.

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Paradigm and Approach

This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach to understand loyalty as a meaning-laden experience situated within a specific organizational context. Rather than treating loyalty as a measurable attitude detached from experience, the study examines how a long-serving employee interprets the decision to remain, the support received from the organization, workplace relationships, and the integration of employment with personal life history (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

B. Research Design and Unit of Analysis

A single-case study design was employed, with PT San Jaya Putra constituting the organizational case and the lived experience of one information-rich senior employee constituting the primary embedded unit of analysis. This design was selected because the

boundaries between long-term loyalty and its organizational context cannot be meaningfully separated, and because an employee who has remained since 2004 offers an intensive temporal account of loyalty formation (Yin, 2018). The study therefore prioritizes analytical depth and contextual explanation rather than statistical representation or cross-cohort comparison.

The case is treated as an instrumental opportunity to examine how more than two decades of accumulated work experiences become connected to organizational identification, perceived support, interpersonal relationships, and reasons for staying. Accordingly, the article does not claim that one participant represents all senior employees at PT San Jaya Putra or the Indonesian manufacturing workforce.

C. Research Site, Participant Selection, and Profile

PT San Jaya Putra was selected purposively because the company has operated for more than two decades and provides access to a long-serving employee whose employment trajectory spans substantial organizational and personal changes. The participant was selected through criterion-based purposive sampling using the following criteria: (1) an active employee of PT San Jaya Putra; (2) employment beginning no later than 2004, resulting in approximately two decades of tenure at the time of the study; (3) direct experience of organizational change and long-term employment relations; (4) a work role involving regular internal coordination and interaction with drivers or other external parties; and (5) willingness to describe work experiences voluntarily and reflectively.

One participant met the study's focal criteria and served as the primary source of narrative evidence. The participant was assigned the code KS-01. The exact job title and personal demographic details are not reported because they were not used as analytical variables and, in a single-company case, could increase the risk of identification. The profile information relevant to the analysis is summarized below.

Code	Organizational profile	Tenure	Role in the study
KS-01	Senior employee in an operational coordination role; exact title, age, and gender withheld for confidentiality	Joined in 2004; approximately two decades of service	Primary information-rich participant and principal source of interview evidence

Because the study focused on a predefined information-rich case, theoretical saturation was not used as a stopping criterion. Data collection was considered sufficient when the interview and contextual materials provided a coherent account of the focal participant's long-term loyalty and no additional claims beyond the bounded case were required.

D. Data Collection Procedures

The interview transcript constituted the primary data corpus. A semi-structured in-depth

interview explored the participant's employment history, reasons for remaining with the company, perceptions of welfare and job security, organizational flexibility, relationships with supervisors and co-workers, work-support facilities, and the relationship between work and significant personal life events. The semi-structured format ensured coverage of the research questions while allowing the participant to elaborate on experiences and meanings in their own terms (Bryman, 2016).

The interview evidence was supported by non-participant observation of the work setting and social interactions during fieldwork, as well as a review of organizational documents that were accessible and relevant to the case. The researchers did not participate in operational activities. Observation and documents were used to contextualize and check the plausibility of the participant's account; they were not treated as substitutes for interview evidence and were not used to claim an independently verified employee count or turnover rate. This distinction maintains consistency with the scope of the available data.

Procedural conversation, including greetings, scheduling remarks, and closing small talk, was excluded from the analytic corpus. Statements were retained when they conveyed experience, interpretation, perceived organizational treatment, relational dynamics, or reasons for staying. Quotations were translated into formal academic English while preserving their substantive meaning.

E. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the transcript and field materials; generation of initial codes; grouping of related codes into candidate themes; review of themes against the complete case record; definition and naming of themes; and production of an interpretive narrative supported by interview excerpts. Coding remained close to the participant's language before being organized into the broader themes of intrinsic attachment, extrinsic organizational support, and relational experience.

A case-based evidence matrix was used to connect each interpretive claim with the relevant quotation, observation note, or contextual document. Negative or qualifying evidence was retained when it limited the interpretation. The analysis did not use open, axial, and selective coding as a grounded-theory procedure, because the objective was not to generate a formal theory but to develop a contextual thematic explanation of one bounded case.

F. Trustworthiness and Researcher Reflexivity

Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was supported by method triangulation

across interview, non-participant observation, and accessible documents, together with member checking of the interpreted summary with KS-01. Transferability was supported through a detailed description of the organizational setting, participant tenure, work role, and boundaries of the case, enabling readers to judge relevance to other settings.

Dependability was strengthened through an audit trail documenting the interview guide, transcript preparation, coding decisions, theme revisions, and the links between claims and evidence. Confirmability was pursued by distinguishing the participant's statements from the researchers' interpretations and by avoiding claims that could not be supported by the available case materials. Because loyalty may easily be interpreted as an inherently positive organizational outcome, the researchers maintained reflexive notes concerning prior assumptions and repeatedly checked whether interpretations were grounded in the transcript rather than in normative expectations about long service.

The principal methodological limitation is the reliance on one primary participant. This limitation is explicitly bounded in the design: the findings offer an intensive explanation of how loyalty was experienced in this case, not a prevalence estimate or a generalized account of all senior employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The findings are based on the information-rich account of KS-01, a senior employee who joined PT San Jaya Putra in 2004 and worked in an operational coordination role. Because the study involved one primary participant, all quotations are identified using the same code and tenure descriptor rather than creating labels for additional informants who were not part of the data. Variation is presented across experiences, including biographical continuity, organizational support, work-family tension, and workplace relationships.

"I have worked at PT San Jaya Putra since 2004, since before my daughter was born."
(KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

This biographical marker situates employment within the participant's personal life course. Tenure was not narrated merely as a numerical length of service; it was remembered through a family milestone, indicating that the employee's work history and personal history had developed in parallel. The evidence therefore supports an interpretation of loyalty as accumulated continuity, while remaining bounded to the experience of KS-01.

Table 2. Thematic structure of the case findings

Theme	Empirical indicators	Case-level meaning
Biographical continuity	Employment since 2004; tenure recalled through the birth of the participant's	Long service is embedded in personal life history rather than represented only by

	daughter	years of tenure.
Intrinsic meaning	Feeling appreciated and supported; ability to balance work and family	Work is valued beyond salary and facilities because organizational treatment carries emotional meaning.
Practical organizational support	Flexible response to family needs; mobile phone and operational transportation	Resources and discretion help KS-01 perform a high-mobility coordination role and sustain motivation.
Relational experience	Simple recognition, open communication, assistance in solving problems, and desire for closer co-worker ties	Supportive exchanges strengthen the experience of being valued and socially connected.
Boundary tension	Work communication sometimes continues at home through the work phone	Loyalty coexists with work-family strain; organizational support does not remove all pressures of the role.

Long Tenure as Biographical Continuity

KS-01 connected the meaning of work with a long personal and family trajectory. The participant did not describe remaining in the company as a single decision made at one point in time. Instead, continued employment appeared as a sequence of experiences in which work, family development, and organizational relationships accumulated together. This temporal pattern provides the empirical basis for interpreting senior loyalty as a lived process rather than as tenure alone.

“For me, work satisfaction is not only about salary or facilities. It is also about feeling appreciated, supported, and able to maintain a balance between work and family life.” (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

quotation distinguishes material rewards from the relational and personal meanings attached to work. Salary and facilities were acknowledged, but KS-01 emphasized appreciation, support, and the ability to remain present in family life. Thus, the intrinsic dimension of loyalty in this case was expressed through the meaning assigned to organizational treatment, not through an unsupported claim that economic considerations were irrelevant.

Organizational Flexibility, Work Resources, and Boundary Tension

Organizational support was experienced through discretion in responding to family responsibilities and through resources that facilitated operational work. KS-01 described the company as allowing flexibility when an important family matter required attention, provided that work responsibilities remained controlled.

“When I need to attend an important family matter, the company gives me room to do so as long as my work remains under control.” (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

“All of this support has a major effect on my motivation. I become more enthusiastic because the company does not only demand results; it also provides real support, and that strengthens my loyalty.” (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

The participant also identified a company-provided mobile phone and operational transportation as practical forms of support. These resources were directly connected to the

demands of an operational coordination role involving mobility and communication with drivers and external parties.

"I am provided with a mobile phone for work communication and operational transportation. Both are very helpful because my work requires high mobility and intensive communication with drivers and external parties." (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

The experience was not uniformly positive. The same communication facility that supported performance also extended work demands into the home. This qualifying evidence is important because it shows that organizational support and loyalty can coexist with boundary strain.

"There are times when work feels as though it is carried home because communication through the phone continues. I try to set priorities and separate working time from family time as much as possible." (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

Taken together, these accounts support a finding of perceived organizational support, practical work facilitation, and flexibility. The available case evidence does not, however, establish that compensation was competitive or that a formal guarantee of job security existed; such claims are therefore not made in the results.

Relational Recognition and Social Connectedness

Relational experience was visible in everyday recognition and problem-solving interactions with the supervisor. Rather than referring to formal awards, KS-01 highlighted simple appreciation after targets were achieved.

"I receive simple appreciation, such as a thank-you when a target is achieved. That makes me feel valued." (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

"My supervisor is open to suggestions and directly helps to find a solution when there is a problem." (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

These statements show that the relational dimension consisted of recognition, openness, and assistance, rather than interaction with the supervisor in a purely formal chain of command. KS-01 also differentiated current support from practices that still needed improvement. The participant proposed additional rewards and collective activities to strengthen employee relationships.

"It would be better if there were outbound activities or gatherings so that relationships among employees could become closer." (KS-01, approximately 20 years of tenure)

The proposal for gatherings should not be interpreted as evidence that team cohesion was already uniformly strong. Instead, it reveals an unmet relational expectation: KS-01 valued social closeness and believed that the company could create more opportunities for it. This distinction adds variation to the account by separating experienced supervisory support from desired improvement in co-worker cohesion.

Interaction of the Findings within the Bounded Case

Within this case, intrinsic, extrinsic, and relational dimensions were interconnected. Appreciation acquired meaning through the supervisor relationship; flexibility made it possible to negotiate family responsibilities; work facilities supported operational performance but also generated communication demands beyond working hours; and more than two decades of repeated experiences gave these conditions temporal depth. The evidence does not demonstrate a causal sequence applicable to all employees. It shows how KS-01 interpreted the combined experiences of support, strain, recognition, and biographical continuity as reasons for sustained motivation and loyalty.

DISCUSSION

Loyalty as Temporally Accumulated Organizational Embeddedness

The central contribution of this case is that senior employee loyalty cannot be reduced to compensation, tenure, or a single favorable work attitude. KS-01 connected the decision to remain with a biographical history that began in 2004, repeated experiences of being valued, practical organizational support, and relationships that had developed over time. Long tenure therefore functioned not merely as elapsed time, but as a process through which work experiences accumulated into personal meaning and organizational attachment.

This pattern is consistent with organizational identification, in which membership becomes part of an employee's self-concept (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Dutton et al., 1994), and with psychological ownership, in which an organization is experienced as personally meaningful (Pierce et al., 2001). In this case, the strongest evidence was not a generalized statement that the company was a second family, but the participant's placement of employment alongside family milestones. Loyalty was thus expressed as biographical continuity: remaining with the company also meant preserving a part of the participant's own life history.

Organizational Support, Reciprocity, and Boundary Tension

The case also refines an exclusively economic explanation of retention. KS-01 defined a satisfactory work experience through appreciation, support, flexibility for important family matters, and facilities that enabled operational responsibilities. These experiences are compatible with perceived organizational support, because organizational actions were interpreted as evidence that the company valued the employee's contribution and cared about personal well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The participant's account that support increased motivation and loyalty also reflects a reciprocal response rather than a purely calculative exchange.

However, organizational support was not uniformly beneficial. The work telephone

facilitated coordination with drivers and external parties, but it also allowed job communication to continue at home. This boundary tension is important because it shows that the same resource can support performance while increasing work-family spillover. The finding therefore does not justify a simple claim that facilities automatically strengthen loyalty; their retention value depends on whether the organization also establishes reasonable communication boundaries and workload expectations.

Relational Quality and an Unmet Need for Cohesion

The participant's experience of simple appreciation, openness to suggestions, and direct assistance from the supervisor is consistent with the trust, respect, and support emphasized in leader-member exchange theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These everyday relational practices mattered because they translated organizational support into concrete interpersonal experiences. They helped the participant feel recognized rather than treated only as a functional resource.

The evidence concerning co-worker cohesion requires a more cautious interpretation. KS-01 proposed outbound activities or gatherings so that employees could become closer. This proposal indicates that social connectedness was valued, but it is not evidence that strong team cohesion had already been achieved. The distinction between experienced vertical support and desired horizontal cohesion makes the finding more critical: the company appears to have a relational strength in supervisor support while still having room to create broader opportunities for peer interaction.

Interaction of the Dimensions

Taken together, the intrinsic, organizational, and relational dimensions formed a case-specific configuration rather than an independently tested causal sequence. Appreciation and supervisor support strengthened links; flexibility and operational familiarity supported fit; and more than two decades of personal and professional investment increased the perceived sacrifice associated with leaving. These mechanisms correspond to the links, fit, and sacrifice dimensions of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). The distinctive feature of this case is that these dimensions acquired depth through repeated experiences and personal milestones, while also containing tensions such as after-hours communication and an unmet need for stronger peer cohesion.

Theoretical Implications

First, this study offers a cautious extension of job embeddedness theory by highlighting temporal-biographical accumulation. The concepts of links, fit, and sacrifice are commonly treated as conditions that explain why employees stay. The present case suggests that their meaning can change qualitatively as repeated work experiences become

intertwined with personal milestones. Time is therefore not proposed as a statistically validated additional variable, but as a sensitizing dimension that explains how embeddedness can deepen and become part of an employee's life narrative.

Second, the findings connect job embeddedness with organizational identification and psychological ownership. The participant's attachment was not demonstrated by tenure alone; it was expressed through the meaning assigned to recognition, support, operational competence, and continuity across life stages. This distinction is theoretically important because long service should not automatically be equated with loyalty. Tenure becomes loyalty when continued membership is accompanied by affective identification, perceived reciprocity, and a sense that leaving would involve psychological as well as practical sacrifice.

Third, the study provides contextualized evidence from an Indonesian industrial organization without claiming broad cultural generalization. The bounded case shows how relational and biographical mechanisms can operate in an operational work setting characterized by mobility, coordination with external parties, and family-related boundary demands. Broader claims about collectivism or the manufacturing workforce require comparative data from additional employees and organizations.

Managerial Implications for PT San Jaya Putra

The first managerial priority is to recognize long service in a way that preserves experience and organizational knowledge. Because KS-01's loyalty was closely tied to accumulated life and work history, PT San Jaya Putra should combine tenure recognition with substantive roles such as mentoring newer employees, documenting operational knowledge, and involving senior employees in problem-solving or onboarding. This recommendation addresses the finding that long-term attachment is strengthened when experience is treated as meaningful rather than merely counted in years.

The second priority is to formalize the relational practices that the participant already valued. Supervisors should be encouraged to provide timely appreciation, invite suggestions, and assist with work obstacles. At the same time, the company should establish reasonable protocols for after-hours communication, including urgency criteria, backup contacts, and agreed response windows. This would retain the operational benefit of mobile communication while addressing the work-family spillover reported by KS-01.

The third priority is to respond directly to the participant's unmet expectations. A transparent reward mechanism can provide additional recognition for contribution and responsibility, while periodic gatherings or team-building activities can create opportunities for closer peer relationships. These programs should be evaluated through employee

feedback rather than treated as ceremonial events, because the evidence indicates a desire for stronger cohesion, not proof that cohesion is already uniformly high.

Methodological Reflexivity

The researchers entered the field with concepts of loyalty and retention already present in the interview guide, creating a risk of privileging supportive experiences and overlooking contradictory evidence. Reflexive notes and an audit trail were therefore used to record assumptions, coding decisions, and alternative interpretations. The analysis deliberately retained disconfirming or complicating evidence, particularly work communication extending into the home and the participant's view that co-worker relationships still required improvement.

Credibility was further supported through member checking and comparison of the interview account with non-participant observation and available organizational documents. Because informal Indonesian expressions were edited and translated into academic English, the quotations and interpretations should be understood as meaning-preserving representations rather than mechanically literal equivalents. This reflexive position limits overstatement while keeping the participant's intended meaning central to the analysis.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Conclusions

Within this bounded case, senior employee loyalty was sustained through the temporal accumulation of organizational and relational experiences rather than through tenure or financial considerations alone. For KS-01, employment since 2004 became intertwined with personal life milestones, while repeated appreciation, supervisory support, flexibility for important family matters, operational facilities, and familiarity with the work environment strengthened the meaning of remaining with PT San Jaya Putra.

The study therefore interprets long-term loyalty as temporally accumulated job embeddedness: links were reinforced through supportive relationships, fit developed through operational competence and organizational familiarity, and the perceived sacrifice of leaving deepened as work became part of the participant's life history and identity. The case also reveals two qualifications: mobile communication supported performance but created work-family spillover, and the participant's request for gatherings indicates that peer cohesion remained an area for improvement. These findings offer an intensive case explanation and should not be generalized to all senior employees.

Limitations

This study is limited by its reliance on one information-rich participant within a single organization. The evidence captures the depth of one senior employee's experience but cannot

establish how widely the identified meanings are shared across other employees, occupational groups, or industrial organizations.

The cross-sectional and retrospective account may also be affected by selective recall, while limited access to workforce-level turnover and retention records prevented comparison between the participant's narrative and broader organizational patterns. Non-participant observation, available documents, member checking, and an audit trail strengthened credibility, but they do not remove the bounded nature of the case.

Suggestions

First, to address the finding that loyalty was closely tied to accumulated experience and personal meaning, PT San Jaya Putra should combine long-service recognition with substantive roles. Senior employees can be involved as mentors, contributors to operational knowledge documentation, and facilitators in onboarding or problem-solving so that recognition also protects institutional knowledge.

Second, to preserve the supervisory support valued by KS-01, managers should institutionalize simple but consistent practices of appreciation, openness to suggestions, and direct assistance when work obstacles arise. These practices should be included in supervisory routines rather than depending only on individual managerial style.

Third, to address the work-family spillover associated with mobile communication, the company should establish clear after-hours communication protocols, including criteria for urgent matters, backup contacts, and reasonable response windows. This action would retain the operational benefits of the work telephone without allowing routine communication to extend unnecessarily into family time.

Fourth, to respond to the participant's expressed need for additional recognition and closer peer relationships, the company should develop transparent reward criteria and periodic gatherings or team-building activities based on employee input. Their effectiveness should be evaluated through feedback on perceived fairness, social connection, and practical value rather than through attendance alone.

Future research should address the study's limitations by involving multiple senior and non-senior employees, comparing several organizations, and incorporating longitudinal data and verified HR records. Such designs would test whether temporal-biographical accumulation operates similarly across employees and clarify how it relates to retention outcomes at the organizational level.

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