

UNVEILING THE INFLUENCE OF EMPOWERMENT LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE LOYALTY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE TRUST AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract:

This study examines the influence of empowerment leadership on employee loyalty under the mediating roles of employee trust and job satisfaction among medical staff at the private healthcare system. The investigation was conducted by surveying 374 doctors, nurses, and other medical staffs within 19 cities/provinces in the south of Vietnam. The SmartPLS software was used to conduct the partial least squared structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The findings from the PLS-SEM analysis reveal that empowerment leadership has a direct positive influence on the employee loyalty to the organization of medical staff as well as a positive impact on intermediate variables such as employee trust and employee job satisfaction. On the other hand, the intermediate variables employee trust and employee job satisfaction also have a positive impact on the employee loyalty toward the organization. This research not only contributes to the existing body of knowledge by evaluating the relationship between employee trust, empowerment leadership, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty but also offers valuable recommendations for the management board of private healthcare organizations in southern Vietnam.

Keywords: employee loyalty; employee trust; empowerment leadership; employee job satisfaction; private healthcare sector.

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1. Introduction

Presently, in Vietnam, 1,365 hospitals, excluding military hospitals under the Ministry of Defense, have a combined capacity of 253,447 beds as per the plan. However, there are 339,313 actual hospital beds. Moreover, the country has nearly 500,000 public servants and health workers (UNFPA, 2021). The healthcare sector examines more than 158 million individuals annually and provides inpatient treatment to over 27 million people.

Following nine years of implementing the Law on Examination and Treatment, the private healthcare industry has experienced notable advancements in both scale and number. Alongside the expansion of the public hospital system, private hospitals have also thrived rapidly. In 2011, there were a total of 102 semi-public and private hospitals, collectively providing 5,822 beds (Vo et al., 2020). However, the count of private hospitals has now grown to 248, accompanied by more than 21,048 specialized clinics and an overall capacity of 15,475 beds.

In recent times, the private healthcare industry has actively engaged in medical examination and treatment, resulting in an increase in the number of hospital beds per 10,000 individuals. This change has risen from 23.56 in 2011 to approximately 29 in 2018, encompassing hospital beds, regional polyclinics, and preventive medical unit treatment beds. Out of these, public hospital beds account for around 27 beds per 10,000 people (Raj, 2021). The Ministry of Health evaluations indicate that several large

corporations and enterprises are planning to invest in new hospitals equipped with advanced technology and thousands of beds in the coming years (UNFPA, 2021). A handful of provinces have international hospitals owing to substantial private investments, which, although relatively minor compared to other industries, should be in line with society's potential. Despite the recent rapid growth of the private healthcare sector, its scale remains considerably modest in comparison to other industries.

It is not easy to generalize the human resource (HR) situation in the private hospital system in Vietnam, as it can vary significantly between different hospitals and regions. However, some factors that could impact the HR situation in the private hospital sector in Vietnam include (1) Competition for skilled workers: With the growth of the private healthcare sector in Vietnam, there may be increased competition for skilled healthcare workers, which could drive up salaries and benefits; (2) Lack of standardized HR practices: The private hospital sector in Vietnam is relatively fragmented, and there may be a lack of standardized HR practices and policies, which could result in unpredictable working conditions and benefits across different hospitals; and (3) Challenges attracting and retaining workers: Due to low salaries and benefits compared to other industries, there may be challenges attracting and retaining skilled workers in the private hospital sector.

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In addition, there is a brain drain in public and private hospitals across the country, particularly in southern Vietnam. Some highly skilled doctors and specialists are leaving small or private hospitals and medical centers to bigger or public hospitals, and this situation is increasing daily. As reported by UNFPA (2021), the employment turnover rate at private healthcare sector was over 43% in 2021. Therefore, the retention of these doctors is to maintain and develop the human resources of incredibly highly skilled and specialized doctors to serve the medical examination and treatment for people in the area. The private healthcare service sector is one of the essential and prerequisite orientations for private hospital managers.

Some previous studies have considered the effect of empowerment leadership on satisfaction, employee trust on loyalty, empowerment leadership on organizational loyalty, satisfaction on trust, trust on loyalty, and satisfaction on loyalty. Some previous studies also researched empowerment leadership, job satisfaction, employee trust, and employee loyalty in the service industry. However, very little research has analyzed the relationship between empowerment leadership, job satisfaction, employee trust, and employee loyalty in the healthcare system context, particularly in the private sector. Therefore, the study aims to consider the relationship between empowerment leadership, job satisfaction, employee trust, and employee loyalty in the private healthcare system in southern Vietnam.

2. Research Model and Hypotheses

2.1. Empowerment leadership, Employee Satisfaction, Employee Trust, and Employee Loyalty

Esitti and Kasap (2020) argued that the exchange of ideas between leaders and subordinates mainly determines employees' job satisfaction. Liu et al. (2020) also demonstrated that guided and decentralized leadership increased employee job satisfaction directly and indirectly. In addition, empowerment leadership is considered a sound strategy for creating job satisfaction in the workplace (Boamah et al., 2018; Mufti et al., 2020).

Empowerment leadership is a leadership approach that involves giving employees more autonomy, decision-making power, and control over their work (Arshad et al., 2022). The goal of empowerment leadership is to create a work environment where employees feel empowered to take ownership of their work, make decisions, and use their skills and knowledge to contribute to the success of the organization (Almazrouei, 2021). Empowerment leadership involves delegating more authority to employees, giving them more responsibility, and encouraging them to take risks and make decisions. This approach requires leaders to trust their employees, provide them with the necessary resources and support, and create a culture of open communication and collaboration. As studied by Bharadwaja and Tripathi (2020), empowerment leadership can increase job satisfaction by giving employees more control over their work, which can lead to greater feelings of accomplishment

and pride in their work. When employees feel more satisfied with their job, they are more likely to be loyal to their employer (Kelloway et al., 2012).

In the study of Xiong et al. (2016), researchers have proved that empowerment leadership can create a sense of trust and respect between employees and their managers. When employees feel that their managers trust them to make decisions, they are more likely to feel valued and respected. This can foster a sense of loyalty towards the employer.

The impact of empowerment leadership and employee loyalty has been studied extensively in various scientific contexts, such as sociocultural, political, and managerial. Based on the management context, employee loyalty is considered employee loyalty to the organization (Arshad et al., 2022). Loyalty is described as professional relationships and hierarchy expressed through employees and their superiors (Ineson et al., 2013). Therefore, empowerment leadership will promote employee loyalty to the organization (Book et al., 2019). According to resource conservation theory, employees in constant contact with customers need emotional and psychological resources to maintain their jobs (Wen et al., 2019).

Empowerment leadership is an essential resource to help reduce employees' negative emotions. According to social exchange theory, employees will be more committed to the enterprise if they feel the support of the organization, directly the empowerment of the leader (Wen et al., 2019). Leadership has a positive effect on increasing employee loyalty (Wang et al., 2017). As mediators of the empowerment leadership to employees, leaders will lead to behavioral change on the part of employees, to which employees will respond positively through commitment or loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Liden et al., 1997). Velasco et al. (1998) studied the U.S. workforce on the relationship between empowerment leadership and employee loyalty; the results showed that the empowerment leadership influences employee loyalty. A similar study was carried out by Kunisato et al. (2012) in Japan, who concluded that it leads to loyalty whenever the empowerment leadership is evident.

Wu and Wang (2012) found that charismatic leadership increases employee loyalty. When a leader expresses an opinion regarding satisfaction, that opinion also determines employee loyalty (Flores-Zamora & Garcia-Madariaga, 2017). Therefore, the empowerment leadership behavior positively affects employee loyalty (Ineson et al., 2013).

In addition, Michael et al. (2016) researched the importance of supervisors being influential communicators in providing appropriate support to employees in the organization. This support leads to employee loyalty, which is essential to immediate supervisors rather than the organization itself (Michael et al., 2016). The supervisor is an agent loyal to the organization (Settoon et al., 1996).

Accordingly, Le The Gioi and Le Van Huy (2012) researched employee loyalty, specifically the effects of satisfaction, empowerment leadership, and teamwork spirit. Team, fringe benefits, work environment, and

training were investigated to assess their association with loyalty. It was found that higher levels of empowerment leadership, teamwork, work environment, fringe benefits, training programs, and job satisfaction lead to higher employee loyalty and vice versa.

Studies have explored ensuring a significant relationship between empowerment leadership and employee loyalty and that this relationship is positive (Winder et al., 2019, Arshad et al., 2022)). The studies mentioned above indicated that higher empowerment leadership leads to higher employee loyalty (Peabody et al., 1989; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Roehling et al., 2001). A similar study was carried out by Brashear et al. (2006), which found that when leaders support employees in terms of career development, employee loyalty is increased (Roehling et al., 2001); The positive influence of empowerment leadership on employee loyalty is also confirmed by Liden et al. (2008) again. Therefore, empowerment leadership should be prioritized, which is thought to influence loyalty. Based on the above discussions, the authors propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Empowerment leadership has a positive effect on employee trust.

H2: Empowerment leadership has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction.

H3: Empowerment leadership positively affects employee loyalty.

2.2. Job Satisfaction, Employee Trust, and Employee Loyalty

Employee trust is vital in increasing employee satisfaction and performance (Ababneh, 2020). Although trust and satisfaction cannot increase the direct relationship between managers and performance, trust will positively impact satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2020). Previous empirical evidence shows a significant relationship between trustworthiness and employee satisfaction (Ko & Choi, 2019).

Like the impact of trust on satisfaction, employee trust also positively increases employee loyalty to the organization (Melian-Alzola & Martin-Santana, 2020). Researchers reveal that brand trust increases loyalty (Kaihor et al., 2020). The results show that trust can increase customer loyalty, including internal customers (Paparoidamis et al., 2019). The results of this study emphasized that the development of the internal marketing concept must involve employees as consumers. Therefore, employee trust increases loyalty behavior (Boonlertvanich, 2019; Hung et al., 2019). Several other studies show that job satisfaction is a strong case for employee loyalty (Yanartaş et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019).

Satisfaction studies are mainly associated with consumer behavior (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). However, employee satisfaction and loyalty are essential for maintaining organizational continuity, growth, and success (Chang et al., 2010; Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018). Satisfaction and loyalty provide leverage to increase performance. Employee satisfaction is also a predictor of loyalty (Chao

& Cheng, 2019; Hung et al., 2019). Therefore, increased employee satisfaction will increase employee loyalty (Boonlertvanich, 2019; Jun et al., 2006). Job satisfaction is part of an organization's determination to enhance employee loyalty which helps the organization retain high-performing employees to stay competitive and drive the organization forward (Matzler et al., 2006).

According to Huynh Thi Thu Suong et al. (2021), many previous studies have shown that job satisfaction positively impacts employee loyalty. A study by Frempong et al. (2018) has shown that job satisfaction positively impacts employee loyalty. In their research, the authors also show that businesses need to increase employee satisfaction to promote employee loyalty toward the organization (Huynh et al., 2021). Research conducted by Al-Sada et al. (2017) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Two characteristics of the relationship related to a progressive and developed economy are considered. The results show clear evidence of a strong relationship between job satisfaction and employee loyalty.

On that basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Employee trust positively affects employee job satisfaction.

H5: Employee trust positively affects employee loyalty.

H6: Employee job satisfaction positively affects employee loyalty.

The research model and research hypotheses are presented in Figure 1.

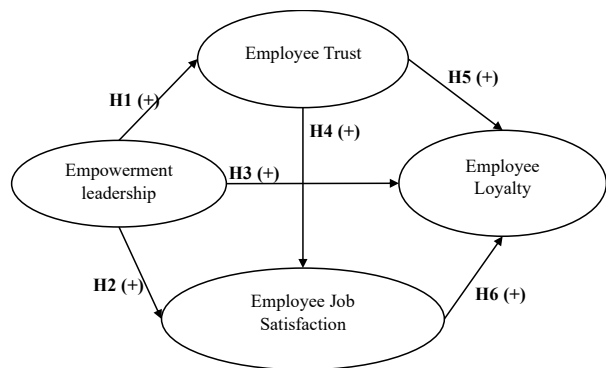


Figure 1: Research Model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Process

This study follows the process of Churchill (1979) and Tran Kim Dung (2005) to propose research steps to suit the topic's objectives. The process Churchill (1979) applied to develop a scale for research concepts in marketing is considered the most popular and often used process by previous studies but has the disadvantage of having to do it. Doing many different studies leads to costly, and time-consuming overcome this shortcoming; Dung (2005) integrated the SEM model into the process

of Churchill (1979) to verify the value of the scale. In general, previous studies have applied three basic steps to develop the scale, which are (1) forming a draft scale (observed variable), (2) a preliminary assessment of the scale, and (3a) a formal assessment of the scale.

Formal quantitative research is conducted to test hypotheses and traditional research models. The study used survey data from 374 medical doctors at private medical examination and treatment facilities in southern Vietnam to test the theoretical model with a convenient sampling method. The data analysis technique analyzes a linear structural model based on partial least squares (PLS-SEM). Regarding the proposed research model and a reflective measurement model, PLS-SEM is more suitable than CB-SEM (Ledden et al., 2007). The steps to perform structural equation model analysis include evaluating the measurement and structural models to test hypotheses and research models (Ngoc, 2020). Finally, the research results will be discussed based on a comparison with previous studies to explain the results from practice, thereby giving some management implications based on the results achieved.

3.2. Sampling method

The results of the interview obtained 400 survey questionnaires; the research screened and retained 374 valid questionnaires for data entry and data analysis; 26 questionnaires were rejected because many answers were almost the same on the scores of the observed variables. Descriptive statistics analyzed the information on the demographic characteristics of the survey subjects. The results of descriptive statistical analysis on the sample were compared with data on the demographics of the medical staff at private medical examination and treatment facilities in southern Vietnam to consider the suitability and representativeness of the sample for the total population. The indicators of descriptive statistical analysis are the frequency and proportion of the expressions (groups) in each demographic variable. The results of descriptive statistics about the survey subjects are presented in Table 1.

From the statistical results of Table 1, regarding demographic information, the gender ratio in the sample is relatively even, with 47.9% male and 52.1% female.

Regarding age, those under 25 accounted for 15.8%; from 26 to 35 years old accounted for 29.1%; from 36 to 45 years old accounted for 27.5%; from 46 to 50 years old accounted for 24.1%; over 50 years old accounted for 3.5%. This result shows that the medical staff at private healthcare organizations in southern Vietnam are relatively young.

Regarding the educational level, the college level accounts for 13.9%; the bachelor's degree accounts for 56.4%; the higher education degree accounts for 29.7%. This result also shows that most medical staff in private medical facilities have bachelor's degrees.

Regarding job positions, most of the medical staff at private healthcare organizations in Ho Chi Minh City are nurses, accounting for 31.8%; then, the Doctors

Table 1: Survey sample statistics.

	Demographic	Quantity	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	179	47.9
	Female	195	52.1
Age	Less than 25	59	15.8
	From 26 to 35	109	29.1
	From 36 to 45	103	27.5
	From 46 to 50	90	24.1
	Over 50	13	3.5
Education Level	Diploma/College Degree	52	13.9
	Bachelor's degree	211	56.4
	Higher Education	111	29.7
Position	Other	0	0.0
	Technician/Staff	49	13.1
	Nurse	119	31.8
	Medico	70	18.7
	Pharmacist	57	15.2
Experience	Doctor	79	21.1
	Less than three years	216	57.8
	From 3 to 5 years	50	13.4
	From 5 to 10 years	72	19.3
Monthly Income (Million VND)	Over 10 years	36	9.6
	Less than 10	54	14.4
	From 10 to 15	78	20.9
	Over 15 to 20	119	31.8
	Over 20 to 30	102	27.3
Geographic Location of the Workplace (Province/ City)	Over 30	21	5.6
	HCMC	38	10.2
	Ba Ria - Vung Tau	28	7.5
	Binh Duong	32	8.6
	Binh Phuoc	21	5.6
	Dong Nai	40	10.7
	Tay Ninh	12	3.2
	Can Tho	21	5.6
	An Giang	17	4.5
	Bac Lieu	17	4.5
	Ben Tre	15	4.0
	Long An	11	2.9
	Ca Mau	16	4.3
Soc Trang	13	3.5	
Hau Giang	12	3.2	
Tra Vinh	22	5.9	
Dong Thap	21	5.6	
Vinh Long	17	4.5	
Kien Giang	17	4.5	
Tien Giang	4	1.1	
TOTAL		374	100

accounted for 21.1%; Medico accounted for 18.7%; Pharmacists accounted for 15.2%, and technicians/staff accounted for the lowest 13.1%.

Regarding working experience, most of the medical staff have relatively low working time with less than three years of working experience, accounting for 57.8%; from 5 to 10 years accounted for 19.3%; from 3 to 5 years accounted for 13.4%, and the lowest over ten years accounted for 9.6%.

In terms of income (million VND/month), the majority of the medical staff at private medical examination and treatment facilities in southern Vietnam have relatively

high incomes, with an average monthly income of over 15 million VNĐ /month to 20 million VNĐ/month, accounting for 31.8%; from over 20 million VNĐ/month to 30 million VNĐ/month, accounting for 27.3%; from 10 million VNĐ/month to 15 million VNĐ/month, accounting for 20.9%; less than 10 million VNĐ/month, accounting for 14.4% and the lowest is over 30 million VNĐ/month, accounting for 5.6%.

Regarding the geographic Location of the workplace, the majority of the medical staff at private medical examination and treatment facilities in southern Vietnam have working places in Dong Nai Province (10.7%), HCMC (10.2%), Binh Duong (8.6%), and Ba Ria – Vung Tau (7.5%).

4. Research findings

4.1. Evaluation of the scale model

4.1.1. Aggregate Reliability

The scale's reliability is an indicator to measure the extent to which the survey variable is not subject to error to determine whether the interview results are accurate and consistent with the actual data. A common approach when evaluating reliability is to use Cronbach's Alpha with a confidence level of 0.7 or higher. According to Hair et al. (2014), the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) of the variables in the observed variable are also used to evaluate the reliability of the data. The reliability of the observed variables with the outer loading coefficient greater than or equal to 0.5 meets the reliability requirements, and the CR coefficient must be greater than or equal to 0.7 to achieve the combined reliability (Staples et al., 1999). The summary results are in Table 2:

Table 2: Reliability and normalized weights (outer loading).

	LOY	EMP	SAT	TRU	α	rho_A	CR	AVE
LOY1	0.835							
LOY2	0.909							
LOY3	0.843				0.921	0.923	0.941	0.762
LOY4	0.865							
LOY5	0.910							
EMP1		0.884						
EMP2		0.905						
EMP3		0.890			0.939	0.940	0.954	0.804
EMP4		0.884						
EMP5		0.920						
SAT1			0.901					
SAT2			0.857					
SAT3			0.874		0.931	0.931	0.948	0.784
SAT4			0.890					
SAT5			0.904					
TRU1				0.864				
TRU2				0.864				
TRU3				0.900	0.928	0.931	0.946	0.778
TRU4				0.908				
TRU5				0.872				

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the AVE coefficient must be greater than or equal to 0.5 to confirm the convergence value. The loading coefficient of each observed variable on the factor is greater than or equal to 0.7 and is significant as evidence of the reliability of the scales. The reliability summary table above shows that the AVE requirements are satisfied. Outer loading of the scale is high (>0.5) and statistically significant (Henseler et al., 2009).

4.1.2. Discriminant validity

Table 3: Cross-loading factor.

	LOY	EMP	SAT	TRU
LOY	0.873			
EMP	0.783	0.897		
SAT	0.721	0.761	0.885	
TRU	0.776	0.740	0.749	0.882

The values are satisfied; this analysis is understood as % of the general variation of the observed variables reflected in the model's factors. The square root AVE of each measurement factor is larger than the correlation coefficient between that factor and other factors, showing the discriminant and reliability of the factors (Hair et al., 2011). Thereby, it shows that the measurement factors have differences, and the scales of the factors do not overlap and influence each other. The bolded numbers are the square root AVE of each observed variable, and the unshaded numbers represent the number of relationships between the factors. The results show that the square root AVE of each factor is larger than the correlation coefficient between that factor and other factors. Thus, the research sample ensures the discriminant of the measurement factors.

4.2. Hypothesis test results

The results of the proposed model are shown in Figure 2; the t-value (bootstrapping) is used to estimate the statistical significance of each path coefficient, as presented in Table 4. Results in Figure 2 show that all links have a (+) impact on Employee Loyalty.

The coefficients on the path are the impact coefficients, and the numbers in the latent variables are R². R² in Employee loyalty is 0.704, meaning that the model's variables explain 70.4% of the variation for the dependent variable, Employee loyalty, while the remaining 29.6% explain it. The variation in employee loyalty has yet to be included in the model.

According to Chin et al. (1996), when analyzing the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable, the researcher not only considers the relationship as well as whether those relationships are significant but also must consider the strong and weak impacts of the relationships to serve as a basis for proposing policy implications. Impact levels 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate weak, medium, and strong influence. The t-value ≥ 1.96 , the relationship is statistically significant.

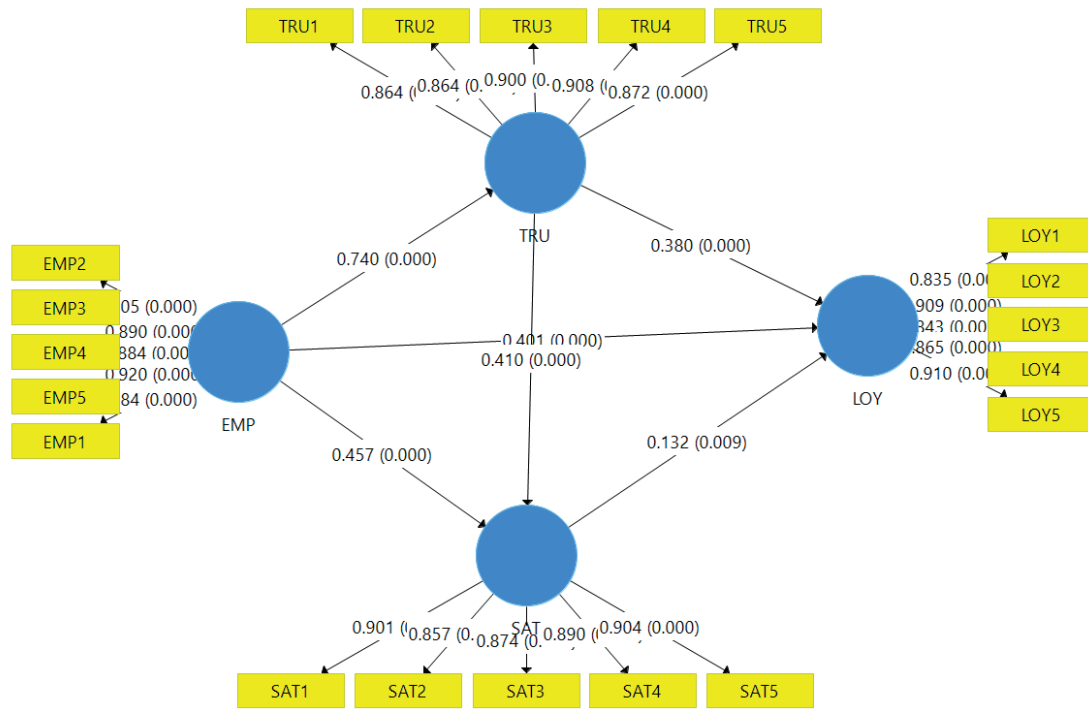


Figure 2: Result of PLS-SEM structural model path coefficient.

The coefficients between the observed and latent variables are load coefficients greater than 0.5. The path coefficient (impact factor) is the coefficient between the latent variables, as shown in Figure 2.

To check whether the impact is statistically significant will be based on the p-value. The following table shows the results of relationships, impact coefficients, and statistical significance. That is the result of hypothesis testing. At the 5% significance level, the author summarizes the results of testing the research hypotheses related to the model.

Table 4: Path coefficients and t-values.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coeff.	T-value (Bootstrap)	P-value	Result
H ₁	EMP→TRU	0.741	32.812	0.000	Accepted
H ₂	EMP→SAT	0.458	9.916	0.000	Accepted
H ₃	EMP→LOY	0.401	8.282	0.000	Accepted
H ₄	TRU→SAT	0.41	8.411	0.000	Accepted
H ₅	TRU→LOY	0.381	7.565	0.000	Accepted
H ₆	SAT→LOY	0.131	2.553	0.011	Accepted

The table of path coefficients and t-values shows that with six hypotheses being tested for the first time, all six hypotheses are supported at the 5% significance level because the p-value <0.05. In this result, all coefficients have positive signs, indicating that the direction of impact between factors is positive (or positive).

Hypothesis H1, H2, and H3 suggest that empowerment leadership positively affects employee trust, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Statistical test results show that

these relationships have the respective impact level of 0.741 (p-value <0.05), 0.458 (p-value <0.05), and 0.401 (p-value <0.05).

Hypothesis H4 and H5 suggest that employee trust positively affects job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Statistical test results show that these relationships have an impact level of 0.410 (p-value <0.05) and 0.381 (p-value <0.05), respectively.

Finally, hypothesis H6 assumes that employee job satisfaction positively affects employee loyalty. Statistical test results show that these relationships have the corresponding impact level of 0.131 (p-value <0.05).

4.3. Analysis of direct and indirect impacts

Because the theoretical model has 04 research concepts that affect each other, the authors will conduct a direct and indirect impact analysis to be able to conclude the intermediate variable (Employee Trust; Satisfaction). The direct effect is the impact between the empowerment leadership variable and employee loyalty. In contrast, the indirect effect through the intermediate variable is employee trust and job satisfaction.

Table 5: Results of direct and indirect impact analysis.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Total	Direct	Indirect	Result
H ₁	EMP→TRU	0.74	0.741		Accepted
H ₂	EMP→SAT	0.761	0.761	0.304	Accepted
H ₃	EMP→LOY	0.783	0.783	0.381	Accepted
H ₄	TRU→SAT	0.41	0.41		Accepted
H ₅	TRU→LOY	0.434	0.434	0.054	Accepted
H ₆	SAT→LOY	0.132	0.131		Accepted

4.4. Proposing governance implications

First, the implication is based on the results of testing the impact of Empowerment Leadership on Employee Trust, Employee Job Satisfaction, and Employee Loyalty. Hypothesis testing results and standardized regression coefficients show that empowerment leadership positively impacts employee loyalty (0.783). Empowerment leadership also positively impacts employee trust (0.740) and job satisfaction (0.761). Therefore, private healthcare organizations in southern Vietnam need to find solutions to increase empowerment to employees. Based on the impacts of empowerment leadership, the organization may be more interested in building employee trust in leadership and the organization and at the same time, creating job satisfaction in the organization, thereby increasing employee loyalty.

Understanding the empowerment from managers and leaders of private healthcare organizations for medical staff working at the facility to increase loyalty to the organization and through employee trust and satisfaction to promote committed behaviors, and dedication to the organization, improve loyalty from employees.

Second, the implication is based on the results of testing the impact of employee trust on employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty. The results of hypothesis testing and standardized regression coefficients show that employee trust positively impacts employee loyalty (0.434). Employee trust also positively impacts employee job satisfaction (0.410). Therefore, private healthcare organizations in southern Vietnam must find solutions to improve employee trust in the leaders of units and organizations. Based on employee trust, the organization can increase the loyalty of the medical staff to the organization.

Third, the implication is based on the results of testing the impact of employee job satisfaction on employee loyalty. The results of hypothesis testing and standardized regression coefficients show that employee job satisfaction positively impacts employee loyalty (0.132). To this research result, private healthcare organizations in southern Vietnam need to pay attention to their employee's job satisfaction, thereby promoting their loyalty to the organization.

5. Discussion

The study proposes 6 hypotheses, and hypothesis testing results show that all 6 hypotheses are accepted at the 5% significance level due to p-Value <0.05. In this result, all coefficients have a positive sign, indicating that the impact direction between the factors is positive (or positive).

Hypothesis H1 states that the higher the empowerment leadership, the higher the trust of the medical staff at private medical facilities. Employees at private clinics tend to trust their leaders when leaders exhibit behaviors that show respect for employees and make employees feel valued at work. The support of leaders will lead to efforts to build trust among employees. Thus, hypothesis H1 is supported by previous studies by [Kelloway et al. \(2012\)](#) that suggested that empowerment leadership will

increase employee's trust; [Wang and Hsieh \(2013\)](#) also argue that the consistency of the leader in exercising control through words or actions, is related to the trust of employees. Besides, the author's research results also agree with the research results of authors such as [Schaubroeck et al. \(2012\)](#), [Chang et al. \(2010\)](#), [Erawan, \(2020\)](#), and [Hu et al. \(2019\)](#).

The accepted hypothesis H2 means that the higher the empowerment leadership, the higher the job satisfaction of medical staff at private medical facilities. The job satisfaction of the medical staff at private healthcare organizations when receiving empowerment, advice, guidance, and suggestions from the leaders as well as managers. The friendly and sociable relationship between leaders and employees creates a cultural environment in the organization that also creates conditions for employees to feel more favorable at work and a sense of satisfaction. In addition, the leadership's assignment of work as well as the reasonable and fair decentralization and authorization for all employees in the organization also helps employees feel more satisfied at work. The results of this study agree with the results of previous studies by [Esitti and Kasap \(2020\)](#), [Liu et al. \(2020\)](#), [Boamah et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Mufti et al. \(2020\)](#).

The accepted hypothesis H3 means that the higher the empowerment leadership, the higher the loyalty to the organization of the medical staff at private medical facilities is increased. The behavior of leaders in the organization will affect the behavior of employees. Through the empowerment leadership such as allowing autonomy at work, letting employees to solve problems independently, and allowing employees solely to complete work in the organization. At the same time, leaders who are interested in personal and family life outside of work will help employees tend to voluntarily dedicate themselves to work. In addition, the leadership creates conditions for individuals in the organization to learn and develop themselves at work, creating conditions for employees to develop, promote as well as have a reasonable income. The results of hypothesis H3 agree with the studies of [Book et al. \(2019\)](#), [Ineson et al. \(2013\)](#), [Wen et al., \(2019\)](#), [Tran Thi Kim Dung, Nguyen Thi Mai Trang \(2007\)](#).

The accepted hypothesis H4 means that the higher the trust of the medical staff, the higher the satisfaction with the work of the medical staff. The relationship between individuals in the organization always affects their job satisfaction. In particular, the trust of employees in the leader as well as the trust in colleagues will help employees have a sociable and friendly working environment. At that time, employees will feel more satisfied with their work. [Ababneh's \(2020\)](#) research results also agree with the author's research results and suggest that employee trust plays an essential role in increasing employee satisfaction. The results of [Roberts and David \(2020\)](#) also show that trust will positively impact employee satisfaction.

The accepted hypothesis H5 means that the higher the trust of the medical staff, the higher the loyalty to the organization of the medical team is increased. When employees trust their leaders as well as colleagues, employees' trust in the organization will increase, and employees will be more attached to the organization. When in an organization, employees feel confident in

other members, they will develop their true feelings for the organization and intend to stay with the organization for a long time, always engaged in all situations because of the organization's goals. Hypothesis H5 results agree with the research results of authors such as Tran Thi Kim Dung, Nguyen Thi Mai Trang (2007), Melian-Alzola and Martin-Santana (2020), Boonlertvanich (2019), Hung et al. (2019).

The accepted hypothesis H6 means that the higher the job satisfaction of the medical staff, the higher the loyalty to the organization of the medical team is increased. The job satisfaction of the medical team is a combination of psychology, physiology, and the working environment of employees for their work. When satisfaction is met, employees tend to engage and commit voluntarily to the organization and to take responsibility for the work done. Many employees are satisfied when the workplace shares the same core values and has the opportunity to learn and develop more within that organization. At that time, employees themselves will think that they are an integral part of the organization, ready to contribute to the organization. Previous studies such as Chang et al. (2010), Keshavarz and Jamshidi (2018), Chao and Cheng (2019), and Huynh Thi Thu Suong et al. (2021) also agree with the results of hypothesis H6.

6. Conclusion

The research results have explored and tested the conceptual measurement model of organizational loyalty of medical staff at private health service facilities southern Vietnam. The structural model test results show that all 6 hypotheses are accepted, of which there are 5 hypotheses with statistical significance of 1% (p-value <0.01), including hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and 1 hypothesis with statistical significance at 5% (p-value <0.05).

The results of structural model analysis show that empowerment leadership has a direct positive influence on the employee loyalty to the organization of medical staff as well as a positive impact on intermediate variables such as employee trust and employee job satisfaction. On the other hand, the intermediate variables employee trust and employee job satisfaction also have a positive impact on the employee loyalty toward the organization.

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This research demonstrates its novelty and originality through several key aspects. Firstly, it explores non-financial factors' influence on employee loyalty, providing valuable insights beyond traditional financial incentives. Secondly, within the healthcare industry, it highlights the paramount importance of empowerment leadership in enhancing employee loyalty, shedding light on a critical factor specific to this context. Lastly, the study identifies and emphasizes the crucial mediating roles of employee trust and job satisfaction in the relationship between empowerment leadership and employee loyalty, further deepening our understanding of the complex dynamics at play. Collectively, these aspects contribute to the originality and uniqueness of this research.

Although specific results have been achieved, the study cannot avoid limitations. Therefore, some further research directions are also proposed to overcome the limitations of this study, specifically as follows:

Firstly, due to the time limitation, the study's sample, medical staff at private healthcare organizations in the southern of Vietnam, has yet to be fully exploited. Therefore, the following research direction needs a larger sample size with a longer data collection time, which will bring better research efficiency in analyzing the employee loyalty of medical staff and doctors.

Second, due to limited research resources, this study only collects data on medical staff at private healthcare organizations in the southern of Vietnam. Therefore, future studies can use the study scale or continue to develop new scales and study other provinces and cities in Vietnam to increase the representativeness.

Third, collecting opinions from the surveyors and the sampling method is still subjective and representative. Most interviewees are medical staff; they need more time to learn and exchange and even lack cooperation, so they are often pressured to answer questions, leading to questions. Answers often need to be corrected. Therefore, the results must reflect the standard way; the representativeness is not high. Further research direction needs to add new factors to the model to expand the research and through the exchange of research experts in the research area.

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