

The Influence of Organizational Trust and Procedural Justice on Affective Commitment

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of procedural justice on affective commitment, with organizational trust serving as a mediating variable. Conducted among 52 civil servants at the Secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in Indragiri Hilir Regency, Indonesia, the research adopts a quantitative, causal-explanatory approach using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that procedural justice significantly and positively affects both organizational trust and affective commitment. Moreover, organizational trust also has a direct and positive effect on affective commitment, and partially mediates the relationship between procedural justice and affective commitment. The model explains 47.1% of the variance in affective commitment, indicating moderate explanatory power. The results confirm that fairness in decision-making processes enhances employee trust and emotional attachment to the organization. Trust acts as a psychological bridge, transforming perceptions of fair treatment into meaningful affective bonds. These findings highlight the importance of ethical leadership, transparent processes, and responsive communication in fostering long-term employee engagement. In practical terms, the study recommends the institutionalization of fair procedures and the cultivation of trust-based leadership behaviors as core strategies to enhance affective commitment in public sector organizations. The study contributes to cross-cultural understandings of workplace justice and engagement dynamics.

Keywords: Procedural Justice, Organizational Trust, Affective Commitment, Public Sector, Employee Engagement

1. Introduction

In modern organizational environments, particularly within public institutions, the success of institutional performance increasingly relies on psychological factors that shape employee behavior. Among these, affective commitment has gained substantial attention due to its deep connection with employee loyalty, emotional attachment, and long-term retention. Affective commitment—defined as an individual's emotional bond and sense of belonging to an organization—plays a crucial role in determining whether employees are willing to go beyond formal obligations in support of organizational goals. This form of commitment does not stem from obligation or financial incentives alone, but rather emerges from a psychological alignment between personal values and organizational purpose.

One of the primary antecedents of affective commitment is the perception of fairness within the organizational system. Procedural justice, a subdimension of organizational justice, refers to the perceived fairness of the processes used in decision-making rather than the outcomes themselves. When employees believe that rules are applied consistently, opportunities are distributed based on merit, and leaders act transparently, they are more inclined to develop trust and emotional connection with the organization. Such perceptions foster not only satisfaction but also willingness to remain loyal, even in the face of adversity. This makes procedural justice a cornerstone for nurturing strong internal organizational bonds, particularly in hierarchical environments such as public agencies, where formal structures often dominate interpersonal dynamics.

However, the connection between procedural justice and affective commitment is not always linear or automatic. Recent scholarship emphasizes that the role of trust within the organization significantly conditions this relationship. Organizational trust, understood as the collective belief that the institution operates with integrity, consistency, and mutual concern, serves as a mediating psychological bridge. When employees observe fair procedures, they are more likely to trust their leaders and the broader institution. This trust, in turn, fosters emotional attachment, reinforcing affective commitment. Without trust, even the fairest policies may be viewed with skepticism, rendering them ineffective in cultivating genuine commitment.

In the context of Indonesian public institutions—particularly regional bureaucracies such as the Secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in Indragiri Hilir—the dynamics of trust, justice, and commitment present a complex landscape. Cultural values, bureaucratic legacy, and informal power structures often shape how decisions are perceived and experienced by employees. In such environments, procedural fairness is frequently contested, especially when strategic decisions (e.g., external task assignments, promotions, or incentives) appear to benefit those with personal ties to authority figures rather than those with proven competence. These conditions erode employees' sense of fairness and subsequently diminish their trust in the organization, posing a significant threat to affective commitment.

Field observations and preliminary reports within the Secretariat of DPRD Indragiri Hilir reveal an observable decline in affective commitment among civil servants. Employees have exhibited signs of disengagement, such as reduced participation in discretionary organizational activities, reluctance to share innovative ideas, and a growing tendency to seek employment elsewhere. These behavioral patterns are often rooted in perceptions of unfair procedures and selective favoritism, which undermine their sense of dignity and professional identity. As procedural fairness deteriorates, so does the level of trust in organizational leadership. This creates a cyclical disillusionment, where employees become detached from institutional goals and gradually withdraw emotionally from their roles.

The theoretical grounding for understanding these phenomena is Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that relationships—whether interpersonal or institutional—are built upon reciprocal exchanges of tangible and intangible rewards. According to Blau (1964), individuals are more likely to invest emotionally when they perceive that their contributions

are recognized and reciprocated fairly. In organizations, fair procedures signal respect and recognition, which are powerful psychological currencies. Conversely, when rules appear arbitrary or inconsistently applied, employees may feel betrayed, leading to a breakdown in trust and disengagement from organizational life. Thus, SET provides a conceptual lens through which the interplay between procedural justice, trust, and commitment can be understood.

Numerous empirical studies lend support to the proposition that procedural justice is a strong predictor of affective commitment. Research by Colquitt and Zipay (2021) indicates that consistent, unbiased decision-making processes enhance employees' perceptions of dignity and respect, key factors in fostering affective bonds. Similarly, studies by Arifin et al. (2020) and Handayani et al. (2021) demonstrate that procedural fairness is not only a matter of compliance, but a determinant of psychological safety and morale. These findings are particularly salient in public institutions, where employees often perceive limited opportunities for advancement and recognition. Ensuring transparent and participatory processes can mitigate feelings of exclusion and dissatisfaction, thereby reinforcing emotional loyalty.

Nevertheless, some studies point to variability in how procedural justice influences affective commitment, suggesting that the presence or absence of trust moderates the relationship. For instance, Yulianti and Handoko (2022) argue that without a foundation of organizational trust, employees may view even well-intentioned procedures with suspicion. This highlights the need to consider trust not merely as a consequence of fairness, but as a necessary condition for fairness to translate into commitment. Trust, in this sense, functions as an interpretive filter through which organizational policies are judged. If trust is absent, procedural efforts may fail to produce the intended psychological outcomes.

Further complicating the issue is the culturally embedded nature of trust in Indonesian institutions. In many bureaucracies, trust is often personal rather than institutional, built through face-to-face interactions, loyalty, and social familiarity. This makes the development of organizational trust more challenging, as formal procedures alone may not be sufficient to win employees' confidence. Leaders must demonstrate ethical consistency, openness, and genuine concern for employee well-being. Failure to do so perpetuates cynicism, even in the presence of structured procedural reforms. Therefore, any strategy to increase affective commitment must address both procedural and relational dimensions of organizational life.

The present study seeks to bridge these insights by investigating the dual influence of procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment among civil servants in Indragiri Hilir. Specifically, it examines whether perceptions of fair processes lead to greater trust in the organization, and whether this trust mediates the development of affective commitment. By focusing on a local governmental context, the study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it refines existing models of organizational behavior by situating them within a non-Western, bureaucratic setting. Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for leaders and human resource managers seeking to enhance institutional engagement and reduce employee turnover.

The urgency of this investigation is underscored by the shifting landscape of public service in Indonesia. As governmental institutions are increasingly pressured to deliver transparent and citizen-centered services, internal organizational health becomes a prerequisite. Employees who are emotionally disengaged or distrustful of their organization are unlikely to contribute meaningfully to innovation or public accountability. Thus, building a workplace culture grounded in fairness and trust is not merely an ethical imperative, but a strategic necessity for institutional resilience and adaptability.

Moreover, understanding the mediation effect of organizational trust offers a nuanced view of how internal policies impact employee attitudes. Rather than focusing solely on procedural reforms, organizations must also invest in relational capital—developing ethical

leadership, promoting open communication, and nurturing a sense of shared purpose. These relational investments serve as the bedrock upon which procedural justice can exert its full psychological influence. In essence, fairness must not only be done, but must be seen to be done—through transparent actions that reinforce trust.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation: Social Exchange and Psychological Reciprocity

The foundation of this study lies in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that human interactions—whether interpersonal or institutional—are shaped by reciprocal exchanges. Blau (1964) originally articulated SET to explain how individuals engage in relationships with the expectation of balanced give-and-take, not necessarily material, but often symbolic or emotional. Within the organizational domain, SET has become an essential framework to interpret how employees evaluate their workplace experiences. When employees perceive they are being treated fairly and respectfully, they tend to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors, such as loyalty, trust, and commitment.

This theory is especially relevant when examining the role of procedural justice in influencing employee behavior. Procedural fairness—understood not only in terms of rules but how those rules are implemented—can be perceived as an "investment" made by the organization. In return, employees offer emotional investment, demonstrated through affective commitment. If the exchange is perceived as unbalanced or exploitative, emotional withdrawal or disengagement may occur. SET thus underlines the psychological mechanisms that bind procedural justice, trust, and commitment into a coherent explanatory model.

2.2 Procedural Justice: More Than a Rulebook

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness in the processes used to make decisions in the workplace. It does not concern the outcome of those decisions, but the manner in which they are made. According to Tyler (2018), individuals are more likely to accept unfavorable outcomes if the procedures leading to those outcomes are seen as fair, unbiased, and respectful. This notion suggests that justice is not confined to results, but includes process legitimacy and consistency.

In the organizational context, procedural justice involves principles such as consistency, neutrality, accuracy, correctability, ethicality, and representation (Colquitt & Zipay, 2021). These dimensions reflect how employees assess fairness: whether procedures are applied equally across individuals and time, whether decisions are made without favoritism, whether adequate information is used, and whether the system allows for correction of errors.

For instance, in the bureaucratic setting of the DPRD Secretariat in Indragiri Hilir, employees reported feeling that career-related decisions were heavily influenced by personal connections rather than merit. When favoritism or "backdoor channels" overshadow formal rules, perceptions of procedural justice are eroded. As a result, even well-crafted policies lose credibility when their application is inconsistent or biased. Therefore, procedural justice is not merely about having the right procedures but about practicing them visibly, transparently, and ethically.

2.3 Organizational Trust: The Emotional Infrastructure

Trust within organizations is a relational asset that cannot be mandated but must be cultivated. It refers to the willingness of employees to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of the intentions or actions of the organization and its leaders (Dirks & Ferrin, 2019). In other words, organizational trust is the belief that the organization will act predictably, reliably, and with the employees' best interests in mind.

Trust in organizations can be understood through several key dimensions: integrity, consistency, competence, openness, and loyalty (Robbins in Rahmat & Abdillah, 2017). Integrity implies adherence to moral and ethical principles. Consistency suggests predictability in behavior. Competence refers to the organization's ability to perform effectively. Openness denotes transparency and willingness to share information. Loyalty involves mutual commitment between the individual and the institution.

In many public institutions in Indonesia, trust is often personal rather than systemic. Employees may trust individual supervisors, but not the institution as a whole. This fragmented trust undermines collective morale. If trust is absent or perceived to be selectively distributed, even the fairest rules can fail. Therefore, fostering organizational trust requires not only structural reforms but also relational leadership that reinforces fairness, honesty, and shared accountability.

2.4 Affective Commitment: The Emotional Attachment to Institutions

Affective commitment is defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It reflects a deep psychological state where individuals remain in an organization because they "want to," not because they "have to" or "ought to." This form of commitment is closely tied to intrinsic motivation and personal values.

Employees with strong affective commitment tend to display higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), initiative, and performance. They are more likely to align their goals with that of the institution, support organizational changes, and show resilience in difficult times. According to Allen and Meyer (1990) in Arifin et al. (2020), affective commitment comprises three components: identification with organizational values, willingness to exert effort, and a strong desire to remain part of the organization.

In the case of civil servants in Indragiri Hilir, a significant decline in affective commitment has been observed. Disengagement manifests through reduced participation, a lack of enthusiasm, and a desire to exit the organization. This detachment can be attributed to procedural unfairness and eroded trust. When employees feel disconnected from organizational values or sense that their voice does not matter, their psychological investment weakens, resulting in lower commitment and performance.

2.5 Linking the Constructs: Justice, Trust, and Commitment

The relationship between procedural justice and affective commitment has been well-documented. When employees feel that decisions are made fairly, they are more likely to trust the organization and develop emotional ties to it. However, this relationship is often mediated by organizational trust. Trust acts as a filter or interpretive lens through which fairness is understood. Employees who trust their organization are more likely to perceive procedures as fair, and consequently, are more committed affectively (Amorim et al., 2022; Yulianti & Handoko, 2022).

Several studies validate this mediating role. For instance, Handayani et al. (2021) found that procedural justice positively impacts organizational trust, which in turn enhances affective commitment. Similarly, Tulung et al. (2020) demonstrated that trust is a significant predictor of organizational commitment, especially in public sector organizations.

These findings are further supported by the work of Ahmad et al. (2020), who explored the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and found that trust mediated the relationship between CSR and affective organizational commitment. These results reinforce the idea that trust serves as a psychological mechanism that translates fair treatment into emotional allegiance.

2.6 Gaps in Current Literature and the Need for Localized Analysis

While numerous studies have established the interconnectedness of procedural justice, organizational trust, and affective commitment, much of the literature is grounded in Western corporate contexts. Little attention has been paid to how these relationships manifest in Southeast Asian bureaucratic systems, particularly in decentralized and highly hierarchical government institutions like those in Indonesia.

Moreover, cultural factors play a significant role. In collectivist cultures, interpersonal relationships and social harmony often influence perceptions of fairness and trust more than formal rules. As such, concepts like "procedural justice" may be interpreted through the lens of communal values and expectations, rather than legal-rational norms. This opens a critical gap in the literature—namely, the need to contextualize theories within specific institutional and cultural realities.

3. Method

This research employed a quantitative, causal-explanatory design to examine the influence of procedural justice on affective commitment, with organizational trust as a mediating variable. The selection of this approach was grounded in the need to empirically test the direction and magnitude of relationships among well-established psychological constructs within the workplace. Causal-explanatory research is particularly effective for understanding not only correlations between variables but also how one variable may influence another through a third, mediating factor. To operationalize this design, the study adopted a deductive approach—beginning with theoretical hypotheses drawn from existing literature and then testing them against field data from a defined organizational setting.

The study was conducted within the Secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of Indragiri Hilir Regency, Indonesia. This institution was purposively chosen due to observable symptoms of declining employee engagement and growing dissatisfaction related to internal fairness and trust. The entire population of civil servants working in this organization—comprising 52 individuals—was involved in the research. Given the small and finite size of the population, a census technique was applied, meaning every eligible individual who had served for at least one year in the organization was included as a respondent. This ensured that participants had adequate exposure to organizational policies and leadership styles to form relevant perceptions regarding justice and trust.

Primary data were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire, which was distributed in person during working hours to ensure full accessibility and encourage completion. The questionnaire consisted of items adapted from validated instruments in prior research, translated into the local language and then back-translated to preserve conceptual accuracy. Each statement was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), allowing for nuanced measurement of respondents' perceptions. The instrument was divided into several sections, covering demographic background, perceptions of procedural justice, levels of trust in the organization, and indicators of affective commitment. Before the main survey, a small-scale pilot test was conducted involving 10 respondents to assess the clarity, reliability, and relevance of the questions, with necessary adjustments made based on feedback.

The three core variables in the study were defined and measured based on established theoretical frameworks. Procedural justice, the independent variable, refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in how decisions are made and rules are applied. It was assessed using indicators such as consistency, impartiality, transparency, and the availability of corrective mechanisms. Organizational trust, the mediating variable, was conceptualized as the degree to which employees believe that the institution operates with integrity, predictability, and concern for their welfare. It encompassed dimensions such as honesty, reliability, competence,

openness, and loyalty. Meanwhile, affective commitment—the dependent variable—was defined as the emotional attachment and identification employees feel toward the organization, which motivates them to remain and contribute positively. This construct was measured through employees' feelings of belonging, their willingness to go beyond formal duties, and their desire to remain part of the organization over time.

To analyze the data, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares method (SEM-PLS), executed using SmartPLS 3.29 software. This analytical tool was chosen for its robustness in handling complex models, particularly those involving mediation analysis, as well as its tolerance for smaller sample sizes and non-normally distributed data. The analysis proceeded in two major phases: measurement model evaluation (outer model) and structural model evaluation (inner model). The outer model assessed the validity and reliability of the constructs through factor loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The inner model tested the direct and indirect relationships among the variables by examining path coefficients and calculating R-squared values. To ensure the statistical significance of these estimates, a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples was applied, yielding confidence intervals and p-values for each path.

Ethical considerations were fully observed throughout the research process. All participants were informed in advance about the purpose and scope of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Participation was strictly voluntary, with no coercion or consequence for non-participation. Additionally, the study received approval from both academic supervisors and relevant administrative authorities within the DPRD Secretariat, ensuring that the research was aligned with institutional norms and respect for employee rights. Overall, the methodology adopted in this study was designed to ensure empirical rigor, contextual relevance, and ethical integrity in exploring the intricate relationships among procedural justice, organizational trust, and affective commitment within a public sector organization.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Respondents and Descriptive Insights

The respondents in this study were 52 civil servants working at the Secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in Indragiri Hilir Regency. All respondents had at least one year of working experience in the institution, ensuring that their responses were grounded in adequate exposure to internal processes and leadership practices. A review of the demographic data showed a relatively balanced distribution of gender and work tenure, with the majority of respondents holding administrative or mid-level staff positions. Descriptive statistics indicated that the overall mean values for procedural justice ($M = 3.79$), organizational trust ($M = 3.85$), and affective commitment ($M = 3.88$) fell within the moderate-to-high range, suggesting that while perceptions of fairness, trust, and commitment exist among staff members, there remains significant room for improvement. These initial figures offered a preliminary affirmation of the study's hypothesis: that employees do feel a degree of emotional attachment to the organization, particularly when they perceive fair and trustworthy leadership practices.

4.2 Measurement Model (Outer Model): Validity and Reliability

Before analyzing the structural relationships between constructs, the study first evaluated the quality of the measurement model. This step was necessary to ensure that the indicators used to measure procedural justice, organizational trust, and affective commitment were statistically valid and reliable. All standardized loading values for the indicators exceeded 0.70, signifying strong correlations between the items and their respective latent constructs.

Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) values for procedural justice (CR = 0.89), organizational trust (CR = 0.91), and affective commitment (CR = 0.88) were above the recommended minimum of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency across items. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct also surpassed the 0.50 threshold, confirming that more than 50% of the variance in each indicator was captured by the latent construct it was intended to measure.

To ensure discriminant validity—meaning that the constructs measured distinct concepts—the Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied. Results showed that the square root of each AVE was greater than the correlations between constructs, confirming that procedural justice, trust, and affective commitment were not only statistically distinct but also conceptually separable. This validation process allowed for confident interpretation of the structural model in the subsequent analysis.

4.3 Structural Model (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Testing

The core of the analysis focused on testing the structural model using the Partial Least Squares approach (SEM-PLS). Path coefficients and significance levels were generated through a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resamples. The results confirmed that all hypothesized relationships in the model were statistically significant:

- a. The direct effect of procedural justice on affective commitment yielded a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.375$ with a p -value < 0.01 , indicating a moderate and significant positive relationship.
- b. The effect of procedural justice on organizational trust showed an even stronger path coefficient ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.001$), revealing that fair procedures strongly enhance employees' trust in the institution.
- c. The effect of organizational trust on affective commitment was also significant ($\beta = 0.406$, $p < 0.001$), establishing that trust directly influences the emotional attachment employees feel toward the organization.
- d. Most notably, the indirect effect of procedural justice on affective commitment through organizational trust was $\beta = 0.196$ ($p < 0.01$), supporting the presence of a partial mediation effect.

The R-squared values (R^2) further underscored the explanatory power of the model. The model explained 23.2% of the variance in organizational trust and 47.1% of the variance in affective commitment. These results suggest that procedural justice and trust are strong predictors of commitment, especially in an organizational setting marked by rigid hierarchies and centralized decision-making. A Variance Accounted For (VAF) calculation revealed that approximately 34% of the total effect of procedural justice on affective commitment was transmitted through organizational trust, confirming partial mediation.

4.4 Interpretation and Theoretical Integration

The empirical findings reinforce the theoretical assertion that fairness in organizational procedures plays a pivotal role in shaping employee attitudes. The significant direct effect between procedural justice and affective commitment reflects earlier theories proposed in the organizational behavior literature, particularly the work of Colquitt and Zipay (2021), which emphasized that when employees believe they are treated fairly, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and emotional investment in their organization.

This is especially relevant in bureaucratic institutions such as DPRD Indragiri Hilir, where formal procedures govern daily operations and promotions. Employees who perceive consistency in rule enforcement, transparency in task distribution, and the availability of redress mechanisms are more inclined to remain committed to the institution. Conversely,

when procedures are perceived as biased or manipulated, the sense of injustice can lead to emotional detachment and increased turnover intentions.

The strong relationship between procedural justice and organizational trust further supports the idea that fairness is a precursor to trust-building. Employees who observe consistent and ethical decision-making are more likely to perceive their leaders and the institution as trustworthy. This trust is not merely a rational judgment—it involves an emotional belief in the organization's goodwill and integrity. These findings are consistent with prior studies such as Setiawan et al. (2020), which emphasized the role of procedural fairness in strengthening trust, particularly in public service institutions.

Equally important is the discovery that organizational trust mediates the effect of procedural justice on affective commitment. This mediation underscores the psychological mechanism through which fairness exerts its influence: employees do not commit to an organization solely because procedures are fair, but because fair procedures build a sense of confidence and psychological safety. Trust acts as an emotional bridge, transforming procedural experiences into deeper affective bonds. This result echoes Social Exchange Theory, which posits that relationships, including those between employees and institutions, are governed by mutual respect, fairness, and reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

4.5 Contextual Implications for the Indonesian Public Sector

The results of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how justice and trust interact to influence commitment within the unique cultural and organizational context of Indonesia. In many Indonesian public institutions, procedural justice is frequently undermined by informal networks, favoritism, and patrimonial management styles. Employees often observe that promotions and task assignments are not always based on merit, but rather on personal relationships with superiors. These patterns erode institutional trust and compromise affective commitment.

Therefore, improving procedural justice is not only a matter of formal policy reform—it also requires a cultural shift in leadership practices, emphasizing ethical consistency, participative decision-making, and open communication. Trust must be cultivated through daily interactions, not just promised in institutional rhetoric. This means managers must actively demonstrate fairness, listen to employee concerns, and model transparency in all decisions.

In practical terms, organizations can enhance affective commitment by institutionalizing fairness in performance evaluations, ensuring equal access to developmental opportunities, and implementing grievance mechanisms that are both accessible and credible. Likewise, trust can be fostered through regular feedback, leadership integrity, and inclusive communication strategies that treat employees not just as subordinates but as valued organizational members.

4.6 Contributions to the Literature and Future Directions

This study contributes to the broader literature by extending well-established theoretical models to a non-Western, bureaucratic environment, thus offering cross-cultural validation of concepts such as procedural justice, trust, and affective commitment. It also provides empirical support for the mediating role of trust, a topic that has received growing but still limited attention in public sector contexts.

Future research may explore longitudinal designs to assess how changes in procedural practices influence trust and commitment over time. Moreover, qualitative studies may offer deeper insights into the subjective experiences and perceptions that underlie these constructs, especially in institutions affected by political patronage or organizational inertia. Another

avenue for exploration involves investigating how organizational culture and leadership styles moderate the relationships identified in this model.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the complex relationship between procedural justice and affective commitment among civil servants, with organizational trust serving as a mediating factor. The results affirm that perceptions of fairness in organizational procedures significantly influence employees' emotional attachment to their workplace. Additionally, the findings confirm that organizational trust is both a product of procedural justice and a crucial pathway through which fairness enhances commitment.

These insights underscore the vital role of procedural justice in shaping internal trust and long-term employee engagement, particularly in public sector institutions where bureaucratic rigidity and hierarchical distance are prevalent. Employees who perceive that decisions are made transparently, consistently, and impartially are more likely to develop a sense of psychological safety and loyalty. Furthermore, the presence of trust amplifies the positive effects of fairness, creating a reinforcing cycle of belief in the organization's integrity.

In practical terms, the findings suggest several strategic implementations. First, public organizations should invest in building transparent and participative procedural systems, especially for performance evaluations, task assignments, and promotions. Second, leadership training should emphasize fairness, ethical conduct, and open communication as trust-building competencies. Lastly, feedback mechanisms must be institutionalized to ensure that perceptions of unfairness are addressed promptly and sincerely.

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