

Research Article

Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment: A Qualitative Case Study in a Private University Faculty Setting

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of organizational culture and its impact on employees' organizational commitment within a faculty at a private university. A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving 15 participants consisting of lecturers and administrative staff selected through purposive sampling based on tenure and organizational involvement. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis, with an interview protocol focusing on cultural practices, communication patterns, and perceived commitment levels. Data was analyzed using thematic coding, including open, axial, and selective coding to identify key patterns and relationships. To ensure research rigor, credibility strategies such as data triangulation across sources and member checking were applied to validate findings. The results indicate that organizational culture, characterized by collaboration, discipline, transparency, and open communication, significantly strengthens affective, normative, and continuance commitment. A supportive work environment fosters emotional attachment, while clear policies and professional development opportunities enhance employees' sense of responsibility and intention to remain in the organization. These findings provide both theoretical and practical implications for strengthening organizational commitment in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Organizational Commitment, Employee Engagement, Work Environment, Human Resource Management, Employee Performance

JEL Classification: M12, M14, D23

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1. Introduction

Organizational commitment has become a critical issue in human resource management, particularly in knowledge-based institutions such as universities. In an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment, organizations are required to maintain high levels of employee commitment to ensure productivity, performance, and sustainability. Employees with strong organizational commitment tend to demonstrate higher engagement, lower turnover intention, and better overall performance (Colquitt et al., 2018).

However, many organizations still face challenges in maintaining consistent levels of commitment due to changes in work environments, leadership styles, and organizational systems. This phenomenon highlights the importance of identifying key factors that influence employee commitment in organizational settings.

One of the most influential factors in shaping organizational commitment is organizational culture. Organizational culture reflects shared values, norms, and practices that guide employee behavior within an organization. A strong, positive culture can foster a sense of belonging, improve communication, and encourage collaboration among employees (Schein, 2017). Previous studies have shown that organizations with well-implemented cultures tend to achieve higher employee satisfaction and commitment (Alshuhumi et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of organizational culture implementation may vary depending on how well employees internalize and practice it in their daily activities.

In higher education institutions, the role of organizational culture is even more significant given the complexity of academic work. Universities are characterized by diverse stakeholders, including lecturers, administrative staff, and students, who interact in a multidimensional environment. This complexity requires a culture that supports collaboration, innovation, and adaptability (Gorzelay et al., 2021). Despite this, several studies indicate that many higher education institutions still struggle to align their organizational culture with employee expectations, leading to suboptimal levels of commitment (Dzimińska et al., 2020). This gap suggests the need for further investigation into how organizational culture is implemented and its direct impact on employee commitment in academic settings.

From a theoretical perspective, organizational commitment consists of three main dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment to the organization, normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation, and continuance commitment is related to the perceived cost of leaving the organization. Research has shown that organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping these dimensions by influencing employees' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors (Kim et al., 2020). However, existing studies often focus on corporate or industrial sectors, while limited research explores these relationships in educational institutions, particularly in developing countries.

Furthermore, empirical findings on the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment remain inconsistent. Some studies report a strong positive relationship between the two variables (Alshuhumi et al., 2024), while others suggest that the impact may depend on mediating factors such as leadership style, job satisfaction, and work environment (Sariwulan et al., 2019). This inconsistency indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed through more context-specific studies. Understanding how organizational culture is implemented in a particular institutional setting and how it affects employee commitment is essential to provide more accurate and relevant insights.

Based on the phenomenon and research gap described above, this study aims to analyze the implementation of organizational culture and its influence on employees' organizational commitment in a higher education institution. Specifically, this study seeks to identify how cultural values and practices are applied, examine their impact on different dimensions of organizational commitment, and evaluate supporting factors that strengthen employee commitment. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on organizational behavior by providing empirical evidence from the higher education sector. Practically, the results can serve as a reference for organizational leaders in designing effective cultural strategies to enhance employee commitment, improve performance, and ensure organizational sustainability.

Despite extensive research on the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment, important gaps remain regarding the specific mechanisms by which cultural practices

shape the different dimensions of commitment in faculty environments. Existing studies largely focus on corporate or general educational settings and often rely on quantitative approaches, providing limited insight into how culture is experienced, interpreted, and enacted by lecturers and administrative staff in their daily activities. In particular, little is known about how micro-level cultural elements—such as communication patterns, leadership support, and informal norms—interact to influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment in a faculty context. This study addresses this gap by offering an in-depth qualitative case analysis of a private university faculty, highlighting context-specific dynamics and lived experiences that are often overlooked in prior research. By uncovering how organizational culture is practically implemented and internalized, this study provides novel insights into the culture–commitment mechanism. It contributes to a more nuanced understanding of organizational behavior in higher education institutions.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

Literature Review

Organizational culture is a fundamental concept in organizational behavior that reflects the shared values, beliefs, and norms that guide employee actions within an organization. According to Schein (2017), organizational culture operates at multiple levels, including artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions, which collectively shape how individuals behave and interact in the workplace. A strong organizational culture provides a sense of identity and direction, helping employees understand expected behaviors and organizational goals. Furthermore, culture plays a crucial role in influencing employee attitudes, job satisfaction, and performance (Colquitt et al., 2018).

In addition, organizational culture has been widely recognized as a determinant of organizational effectiveness. A culture that promotes collaboration, trust, and innovation can enhance employee engagement and productivity (Gorzelay et al., 2021). Research by Alshuhumi et al. (2024) indicates that a supportive organizational culture positively affects employee attitudes by fostering identification with organizational values. Similarly, Dżimińska et al. (2020) emphasize that a well-established culture contributes to a sustainable and adaptive organizational environment, particularly in complex institutions such as universities.

Organizational commitment, on the other hand, refers to employees' psychological attachment to their organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualize organizational commitment in three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance. Affective commitment relates to emotional attachment, normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation, and continuance commitment is associated with the perceived cost of leaving the organization. These dimensions collectively determine the extent to which employees remain loyal and dedicated to organizational goals.

Previous studies have demonstrated that various organizational factors, including leadership, work environment, and organizational culture, influence organizational commitment. For instance, Kim et al. (2020) found that organizational culture significantly influences employees' emotional attachment and loyalty. Similarly, Sariwulan et al. (2019) highlighted that a positive work environment and supportive organizational practices contribute to higher levels of commitment. Additionally, research by Miao et al. (2017) shows that employees with strong commitment tend to perform better and exhibit lower turnover intentions, reinforcing the importance of commitment to organizational success.

In the context of higher education institutions, the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment becomes increasingly relevant. Universities operate in a dynamic environment that requires collaboration, adaptability, and continuous development. According to Daly and Dee (2006), a culture that encourages participation and open communication can enhance faculty commitment and job satisfaction. Moreover, Badri and Panatik (2020) emphasize that supportive organizational practices and a balanced work environment are essential for maintaining high levels of commitment among academic and administrative staff.

Hypothesis

Instead of formulating a general hypothesis, this study adopts exploratory research propositions that are more consistent with a qualitative approach. Organizational culture is understood as a system of shared values and practices that shape employee attitudes and behaviors (Schein, 2017), while organizational commitment consists of affective, normative, and continuance dimensions reflecting emotional attachment, obligation, and cost-based considerations (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Prior studies suggest that specific cultural elements may influence these dimensions through different mechanisms (Kim et al., 2020; Sariwulan et al., 2019). In this context, collaboration and open communication are expected to foster affective commitment by strengthening emotional attachment and a sense of belonging (Alshuhumi et al., 2024). Transparency and fair organizational practices are proposed to enhance normative commitment by reinforcing trust and employees' sense of obligation toward the organization (Schein, 2017; Sariwulan et al., 2019). Meanwhile, discipline, structured systems, and clear policies are expected to influence continuance commitment by increasing perceived stability and the benefits associated with remaining in the organization (Gorzelay et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020). Based on these considerations, the study is guided by the following propositions:

H1: Collaboration and open communication strengthen affective commitment through emotional attachment and identification

H2: Transparency and fair practices enhance normative commitment through trust and perceived obligation

H3: Discipline and structured systems increase continuance commitment through perceived stability and retention considerations

3. Data and Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design to analyze the implementation of organizational culture and its impact on employees' organizational commitment. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it enables an in-depth understanding of organizational phenomena, particularly by exploring employee perceptions, behaviors, and experiences within a specific institutional context. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is effective in capturing complex social interactions and organizational dynamics that cannot be fully explained through quantitative methods.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all lecturers and administrative staff within a faculty at a private higher education institution. These individuals are selected because they play a central role in shaping organizational culture and fostering organizational commitment. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria, such as employment status (permanent and non-permanent employees), years of service, and involvement in organizational activities. This approach ensures that the selected participants have sufficient knowledge and experience related to the research topic. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), purposive sampling is suitable for studies that require in-depth information from knowledgeable participants.

Data Collection Techniques

Data in this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data are obtained through direct observation and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and administrative staff. Observation is conducted to understand organizational culture practices, such as communication patterns, teamwork, and work discipline. Meanwhile, interviews are used to explore employees' perceptions of organizational culture and their level of commitment.

Secondary data are collected from institutional documents, reports, and relevant literature to support the analysis. The combination of these data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings (Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis Method

The data analysis in this study uses qualitative descriptive analysis. The analysis process consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data obtained from interviews and observations. Data display is conducted by presenting the data in a structured form, such as narratives and thematic categories, to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on patterns and relationships identified in the data.

4. Results

The results of this study are presented in a structured manner, starting with descriptive analysis and progressing to findings derived from the analysis of relationships between variables. The analysis aims to explain how organizational culture is implemented and how it influences employees' organizational commitment.

Table 1. Descriptive Results of Research Variables

Variable	Indicator	Description of Findings
Organizational Culture	Collaboration	Employees actively work together in teams
	Communication	Open and effective communication is maintained.
	Discipline	Employees follow structured work procedures.
	Leadership Support	Leaders provide guidance and support.
	Transparency	Organizational processes are conducted openly
Organizational Commitment	Affective Commitment	Employees show emotional attachment
	Normative Commitment	Employees feel responsible toward the organization.
	Continuance Commitment	Employees tend to remain in the organization.

This study presents findings from a thematic analysis of interview transcripts, observations, and document reviews. The analysis followed three stages: open coding to identify initial concepts, axial coding to group related codes, and selective coding to develop overarching themes. From this process, three major themes emerged: (1) collaborative and communicative culture, (2) transparency and perceived fairness, and (3) structured systems and work discipline. Each theme is linked to specific dimensions of organizational commitment and supported by representative participant quotations.

Theme 1: Collaborative and Communicative Culture → Affective Commitment

This theme was derived from initial codes such as "teamwork," "open discussion," and "mutual support," which were grouped under relational interaction patterns. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of collaboration in fostering a sense of belonging. One lecturer stated, "We often discuss problems together, and it makes me feel like I am part of a team, not working alone." Similarly, an administrative staff member noted, "Communication here is quite open; we can share ideas without hesitation." These findings indicate that repeated positive interactions and open communication contribute to emotional attachment, forming the basis of affective commitment.

Theme 2: Transparency and Perceived Fairness → Normative Commitment

This theme emerged from codes such as "clear policies," "open decision-making," and "fair treatment." These were categorized into perceptions of organizational integrity and consistency. Participants highlighted that transparency strengthens their trust in the institution. As one respondent explained, "When decisions are explained clearly, we feel respected and more

responsible to do our part." Another added, "Fair policies make us feel we should give back to the organization." This suggests that normative commitment is reinforced by perceived fairness and reciprocity, leading employees to internalize organizational values as a moral obligation.

Theme 3: Structured Systems and Work Discipline → Continuance Commitment

This theme was developed from codes including "clear procedures," "job stability," and "career structure." These codes reflect how organizational systems shape employees' considerations about staying. A participant noted, "The system here is quite structured, so we know what to expect in our career path." Another stated, "There is stability in this job, which makes me think twice about leaving." These findings indicate that structured systems and discipline enhance perceived stability and benefits, influencing continuance commitment through rational cost–benefit evaluation.

Furthermore, the analysis of organizational commitment indicates that employees demonstrate strong commitment across its dimensions. Employees exhibit emotional attachment to the organization, reflected in their sense of belonging and willingness to contribute. In addition, a sense of responsibility toward organizational goals is evident, suggesting normative commitment. Employees also tend to remain within the organization due to perceived benefits and stability, reflecting continuance commitment. These findings suggest that employees are not only engaged but also motivated to maintain long-term relationships with the organization.

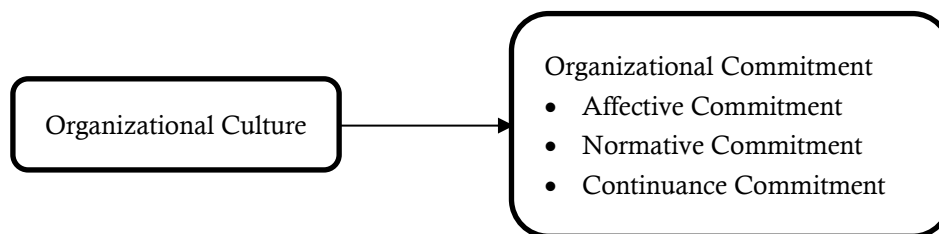


Figure 1. Empirical Research Model

The empirical relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment is illustrated in Figure 1, which presents the research model. The model demonstrates that organizational culture directly influences organizational commitment. The direction of this relationship indicates that stronger cultural implementation is associated with higher levels of employee commitment. This finding supports the assumption that organizational culture serves as a foundation for shaping employee attitudes and behaviors.

Overall, the results reveal that organizational culture plays a crucial role in influencing employees' organizational commitment. A well-implemented culture fosters positive employee attitudes, which, in turn, support organizational effectiveness. These findings provide a basis for further interpretation in the discussion section, particularly in understanding the mechanisms through which organizational culture affects commitment.

5. Discussion

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Affective Commitment

The findings indicate that collaboration and open communication strengthen affective commitment through context-specific relational mechanisms. In the faculty setting, where lecturers and administrative staff depend on continuous coordination, collaborative practices reduce hierarchical distance and promote more inclusive interactions. This environment fosters psychological safety, allowing employees to express ideas and concerns without fear, which in turn builds trust and emotional attachment to the organization. Therefore, affective commitment emerges not only from shared values but from repeated positive interaction experiences embedded in daily academic and administrative activities. This supports the social exchange perspective, which holds that consistent, supportive interactions lead to stronger emotional bonds (Blau, 2017;

Meyer & Allen, 2021; Alshuhumi et al., 2024). However, this relationship is also contingent on leadership practices. Leaders who actively facilitate open communication and collaboration can amplify these cultural effects, whereas weak leadership may limit their impact despite the presence of similar cultural values (Bass & Riggio, 2026).

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Normative Commitment

The results show that transparency and fair organizational practices enhance normative commitment by shaping employees' perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. In this faculty context, transparent communication regarding policies, workload distribution, and decision-making processes reduces ambiguity and builds institutional trust. As employees perceive consistency and fairness in organizational practices, they are more likely to internalize institutional norms and develop a sense of moral obligation to contribute. This suggests that normative commitment is not merely compliance with rules, but a response to perceived organizational integrity and reciprocity. These findings are consistent with the view that organizational culture provides behavioral guidance and reinforces moral responsibility (Schein, 2017; Sariwulan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, alternative explanations should be considered. For instance, long tenure and professional norms in academic environments may independently foster a sense of obligation, meaning that normative commitment may also be influenced by career identity and institutional attachment beyond cultural factors alone.

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Continuance Commitment

The study also finds that discipline, structured systems, and clear policies influence continuance commitment by increasing perceived stability and reducing uncertainty in the work environment. In a faculty setting, where career progression and institutional procedures are often formalized, clear systems help employees evaluate the benefits of remaining in the organization, including job security, career continuity, and access to professional development. As a result, employees are more likely to stay due to rational considerations related to the perceived costs of leaving. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the role of organizational practices in shaping retention decisions (Gorzelay et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020). However, continuance commitment appears to be more strongly influenced by economic and structural factors than by culture alone. Compensation, employment status, and job security may play a more dominant role in determining employees' decisions to remain (Meyer & Allen, 2021). In addition, leadership support in providing career opportunities can further reinforce this effect. Therefore, organizational culture should be understood as interacting with structural and economic factors, rather than acting as a standalone determinant of continuance commitment.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping employees' organizational commitment within a private university faculty, aligning with the research aim of understanding how cultural practices influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The key contribution of this study lies in identifying specific culture–commitment mechanisms: collaboration and open communication foster affective commitment through emotional attachment, transparency strengthens normative commitment through perceived fairness and obligation, and structured systems enhance continuance commitment through stability and cost–benefit considerations. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as they are derived from a single institutional case and may not be fully generalizable. The transferability of results depends on similar organizational contexts, and reliance on interview data may introduce positivity bias, leading respondents to present more favorable perceptions of their organization.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest several actionable strategies. To strengthen affective commitment, organizations can implement formal culture rituals such as regular team forums and cross-unit collaboration programs, with measurable outcomes in increased employee engagement. Normative commitment can be enhanced through transparent policy communication, including open briefings and accessible documentation, supported by supervisor

coaching to reinforce fairness and trust, which may improve perceived organizational support and loyalty. To sustain commitment, organizations should establish fair recognition systems and structured career development pathways that link performance to rewards and progression opportunities, thereby increasing retention rates. By aligning specific cultural practices with distinct dimensions of commitment, organizations can implement more targeted and measurable strategies to improve both employee engagement and long-term retention.

Recommendation

Organizations should adopt a stepwise culture-improvement plan: (1) diagnosis through surveys and interviews to assess gaps in collaboration, transparency, and discipline; (2) intervention via team forums (affective commitment), transparent policy communication and supervisor coaching (normative commitment), and fair recognition with structured career pathways (continuance commitment); and (3) monitoring using indicators such as engagement, perceived fairness, and retention rates evaluated quarterly. Future research should apply multi-site comparisons and mixed methods to enhance generalizability. It is also recommended to test mediators, such as job satisfaction and moderators, including leadership style and employment contract type, to explain the culture–commitment relationship better.

Limitations and avenues for future research

This study is limited by its focus on a single institutional context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or organizations. The use of qualitative methods and a relatively small sample may also limit the ability to capture broader patterns of organizational behavior. Additionally, the study examines only one main variable, without considering potential mediating or moderating factors. Future research is recommended to use quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, include larger, more diverse samples, and explore additional variables, such as leadership, job satisfaction, and employee engagement, to provide more comprehensive insights.

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