International Journal of Social and Education (INJOSEDU) https://languar.net/index.php/INJOSEDU
Vol. 3 No. 8 November (2026), hal., 1310-1325 e-ISSN: 3047-6151

TWO PATHWAYS LINKING RECOGNITION AND FEEDBACK QUALITY TO AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Erni Kurnia[1], Maya Sari Dewi[2]*
[1] Master of Management Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
[2] Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
Corespondensi author email: iamernii2@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines whether recognition and feedback quality are associated with affective commitment both directly and indirectly through employee engagement among civil servants in a provincial government institution. The analysis addresses the limited integration of contribution-focused recognition and perceived feedback quality as distinct nonfinancial managerial resources within a single model. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey, data were collected from 120 nonstructural civil servants at the Communication and Informatics Office of South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. Recognition and feedback quality were positively associated with employee engagement (β = 0.526 and 0.358, respectively) and affective commitment (β = 0.331 and 0.221, respectively). Employee engagement was positively associated with affective commitment (β = 0.276) and statistically mediated the relationships between recognition and affective commitment (β = 0.145, p = .019) and between feedback quality and affective commitment (β = 0.099, p = .042). These findings support complementary partial mediation and highlight direct and engagement-mediated pathways linking two managerial resources to organizational attachment. The cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions.

Keywords: Affective commitment; Civil servants; Employee engagement; Feedback quality; Recognition.

INTRODUCTION

The continuity of digital public services depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on employees who maintain information systems, resolve technical disruptions, and support public communication. In government communication and informatics agencies, these responsibilities require coordination and sustained commitment, even when technical contributions remain largely invisible to organizational leaders and service users. This raises an important question concerning the managerial practices associated with employees' emotional attachment to public organizations. Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with their organization, distinguishing it from commitment based on the costs of leaving or perceived obligation (Meyer & Allen,

1991) . Research involving government employees has associated workplace resources and work engagement with affective commitment, underscoring the importance of everyday work experiences (Borst et al., 2019) . In such settings, sustained service may depend on maintenance work that receives limited visibility, making timely acknowledgment and guidance especially relevant as everyday managerial practices. Yet broad evidence on workplace resources does not fully clarify how specific forms of managerial communication relate to organizational attachment in agencies responsible for digital public services.

Recognition and feedback quality represent distinct nonfinancial managerial resources. Recognition acknowledges employees' efforts, accomplishments, and contributions, signaling that their work is valued (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Feedback quality concerns the relevance, consistency, specificity, and usefulness of performance-related information, particularly its capacity to guide improvement (Qi et al., 2023) . Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory explains how job resources can sustain motivation and engagement, while Social Exchange Theory suggests that favorable organizational treatment may elicit positive employee responses (Bakker et al., 2023; Blau, 1964) . From these perspectives, recognition can affirm the value of employees' contributions, whereas constructive feedback can provide direction and facilitate professional development. Distinguishing these resources also avoids treating appreciation and developmental information as interchangeable forms of support, allowing their potential associations with engagement and commitment to be evaluated separately. Saks (2022) similarly proposed that caring human resource management practices may foster employee engagement by communicating organizational concern for employees. Although that conceptual model did not test recognition and feedback quality as separate predictors, it supports examining how different supportive practices correspond with employees' psychological involvement and organizational attitudes.

Empirical findings on recognition are informative but vary considerably in their constructs and outcomes. Presslee et al. (2023) associated team-based recognition with engagement-related operational indicators and employee effort in restaurant settings; importantly, those indicators were not direct psychological measures of work engagement. Ndiango et al. (2024) found positive associations between recognition, job satisfaction, and self-reported retention intentions among logistics employees, with satisfaction serving as a mediator. Neither study directly measured affective commitment. Thus, favorable recognition-related outcomes do not automatically establish that feeling appreciated translates into stronger organizational identification; the meaning of recognition and the target of employees' attachment matter. Recognition practices may also have unfavorable consequences under certain conditions: Black et al. (2024) demonstrated that public peer recognition could reduce feelings of appreciation when social comparisons were salient. Clarke & Mahadi (2017) reported an association between mutual recognition respect and affective

commitment, but interpersonal respect differs from recognition of work-related achievements. These distinctions suggest that evidence on recognition should not be treated as interchangeable across recognition forms and outcomes. They also establish a rationale for examining contribution-focused recognition specifically in relation to affective organizational commitment.

Feedback research offers complementary evidence concerning informational and relational managerial support. Among Belgian police employees, Audenaert et al. (2021) linked feedback quality with affective commitment and identified leader–member exchange as an important explanatory mechanism. Bak (2020) similarly reported a positive association between the supervisor feedback environment and affective commitment in South Korean local government organizations. Other studies have focused on different outcomes: Soucek & Rupprecht (2020) associated daily supervisor feedback with work engagement, while Qi et al. (2023) found that the alignment of expected and delivered feedback quality was associated with leader–member exchange and work performance. Together, these studies indicate that feedback operates through informational and interpersonal experiences. Nevertheless, a feedback environment, daily feedback occurrence, and the match between expected and delivered quality are not identical to employees' perceptions of feedback quality. The distinction matters in government settings, where formal performance appraisal can coexist with limited timely or actionable guidance, although this possibility must be investigated rather than assumed. Moreover, existing studies have often prioritized relational mechanisms or performance outcomes rather than jointly assessing direct and engagement-mediated associations with affective commitment.

Employee engagement provides a plausible link between managerial resources and organizational attachment. Work engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006), whereas affective commitment concerns emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Their distinction matters because psychological involvement in daily work need not be identical to identification with the employing institution. JD-R Theory positions job resources as antecedents of a motivational process involving engagement (Bakker et al., 2023). However, engagement mediation is not a newly proposed mechanism. Teo et al. (2020) identified work engagement as a mediator between psychosocial working conditions and affective commitment. Borst et al. (2019) reported both direct and engagement-mediated associations between categories of job resources and affective commitment among Dutch government employees, with patterns differing across resource categories. Aboramadan et al. (2020) also linked human resource practices to organizational commitment through engagement, although their commitment measure was not restricted to the affective component. The coexistence of direct and indirect paths is particularly relevant because organizational resources may relate to attachment without their entire association operating through engagement. These

studies establish a strong basis for mediation analysis while indicating the importance of specifying which managerial resources and commitment dimensions are examined.

The remaining contribution is therefore one of conceptual integration and more precise empirical specification, rather than claiming that engagement mediation or public-sector commitment has never been studied. Prior research has frequently assessed broad human resource systems, aggregated job resources, or individual managerial practices with different outcomes and mediators (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Audenaert et al., 2021; Borst et al., 2019). Recognition studies have emphasized effort, job satisfaction, retention intentions, or interpersonal respect, providing less directly comparable evidence concerning recognition of work contributions and affective commitment (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Ndiango et al., 2024; Presslee et al., 2023). Meanwhile, feedback research has highlighted relational exchange and employee performance rather than consistently evaluating engagement as an additional pathway to affective commitment (Bak, 2020; Qi et al., 2023). Examining recognition and feedback quality together is meaningful because recognition communicates appreciation for contributions, whereas feedback provides actionable guidance for work improvement. This gap does not imply that the exact model has never been tested elsewhere; it concerns conceptual alignment and integrated assessment within the body of evidence reviewed for this study. Testing their distinct associations in a single model permits a more differentiated account of how everyday managerial experiences relate to emotional attachment, particularly in a provincial government agency delivering digital public services.

Accordingly, this study examines the direct and engagement-mediated associations of recognition and feedback quality with affective commitment among 120 nonstructural civil servants at the Communication and Informatics Office of South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Using cross-sectional survey data and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), it assesses whether recognition and feedback quality are associated with affective commitment directly and indirectly through employee engagement. Grounded in JD-R Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the study makes three intended contributions. First, it considers recognition and feedback quality as conceptually distinct nonfinancial managerial resources rather than components of an undifferentiated support construct. Second, it evaluates direct and indirect statistical pathways within one model while acknowledging that cross-sectional mediation does not establish causal ordering. Employee engagement is consequently interpreted as a statistical mediator, not evidence of a verified time-ordered psychological sequence. Third, it extends the contextual evidence to civil servants responsible for regional digital public services. Together, these objectives address how two everyday managerial practices relate to employees' emotional attachment through two complementary analytical pathways.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional survey design to examine the associations of recognition and feedback quality with affective commitment, both directly and through employee engagement. The study was conducted at the Communication and Informatics Office of South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, a provincial government institution involved in digital administration, information management, and public communication. The individual civil servant served as the unit of analysis because the constructs reflected employees' perceptions of managerial practices, involvement in their work, and emotional attachment to the organization. The design was intended to test theoretically specified relationships among latent variables at one observation period rather than to establish temporal or causal effects.

The institutional workforce comprised 140 civil servants, including 20 employees occupying structural positions and 120 nonstructural employees. The investigation focused on nonstructural personnel because they were considered directly exposed to routine supervisory feedback, recognition of work contributions, and operational responsibilities associated with digital public services. The methodological criteria further specified civil service status, a nonstructural position, and at least one year of service at the institution. The final dataset included 120 nonstructural civil servants. The analysis therefore represents the reported respondent group in this institution; its findings should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all public employees or of structural-position personnel. Institutional staffing information provided the basis for defining the population, whereas employees' questionnaire responses constituted the primary analytical data.

Data were obtained using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire covering four multi-item constructs and 20 statements. Recognition was assessed using six items addressing supervisor praise, appreciation of performance, acknowledgment of contributions, perceived value, and consistency of recognition. Feedback quality comprised six items concerning objectivity, usefulness, transparency, clarity, support for performance improvement, and timeliness of feedback. Employee engagement was measured using four items addressing energy at work, pride, work meaningfulness, and concentration; these represent selected aspects of engagement rather than the complete Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Affective commitment was assessed with four items reflecting enjoyment of organizational membership, emotional attachment, personal significance, and belonging, consistent with the conceptual distinction developed by Meyer & Allen (1991) . The indicators were analyzed as reflective measures of their corresponding latent constructs. All responses used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The survey provided self-reported, individual-level data on managerial experiences and employee attitudes. Responses were organized by indicator and

construct for descriptive analysis and subsequent structural modeling. Descriptive statistics, including response distributions and mean scores, were used to summarize how respondents evaluated recognition, feedback quality, employee engagement, and affective commitment. Because all constructs were assessed through the same questionnaire at a single time point, the design remains vulnerable to common-method influences and cannot determine the sequence in which managerial experiences, engagement, and commitment develop. Accordingly, the estimated relationships are interpreted as statistical associations, including when the theoretical model specifies directional paths.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted using SmartPLS 4 to estimate the measurement and structural models. Following established PLS-SEM guidance (Hair et al., 2021), reflective measurement assessment considered outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity, together with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for internal consistency. AVE values of at least 0.50 and reliability coefficients of at least 0.70 were used as reference thresholds. Indicators were primarily evaluated against the recommended loading of 0.70, while loadings between 0.60 and 0.70 could be retained when construct-level validity and conceptual coverage supported retention. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), with HTMT values below 0.90 considered acceptable (Henseler et al., 2015) . Structural assessment addressed collinearity through variance inflation factors, explanatory power through R^2, effect sizes through f^2, and predictive relevance through Q^2.

The proposed two-pathway model was evaluated through five direct relationships and two specific indirect relationships. Direct paths connected recognition and feedback quality with employee engagement and affective commitment, alongside the path from employee engagement to affective commitment. The indirect paths linked recognition and feedback quality with affective commitment through employee engagement. Nonparametric bootstrapping in SmartPLS was used to obtain path coefficients, t statistics, and p values for significance testing at the 5% level, using a two-sided reference threshold of approximately 1.96 for t statistics. The mediating role of employee engagement was assessed from the significance of each specific indirect effect, considered jointly with its corresponding direct relationship (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) . This approach distinguishes direct from engagement-mediated associations while avoiding causal interpretation of the mediation findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Respondent Profile and Descriptive Findings

The analysis drew on questionnaires from 120 nonstructural civil servants at the Communication and Informatics Office of South Kalimantan Province. Of these respondents, 76 (63.3%) were men and 44 (36.7%) were women. The two largest age categories were 31–35 years (38 employees; 31.7%) and 36–40 years (37 employees; 30.8%), followed by those aged 25–30 years (30; 25.0%) and over 40 years (15; 12.5%). Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (73; 60.8%). Employment status was unevenly distributed: 101 participants (84.2%) were government employees under work agreements (PPPK), whereas 19 (15.8%) were civil servants in the PNS category. Respondents worked across five organizational units, including the secretariat (42; 35.0%) and public information, communication, and statistics division (37; 30.8%). These figures characterize the analyzed group and were not used as subgroup comparisons or moderators in the structural model.

Table 1 summarizes responses to the four constructs on a five-point agreement scale. Recognition averaged 3.05, suggesting an approximately neutral-to-moderately favorable perception of acknowledgment for work contributions. Employee engagement averaged 3.19, and the thesis reported an affective commitment mean of 3.14. Feedback quality was notably lower, at approximately 2.46 based on the corrected item frequencies, indicating that perceptions of feedback tended toward the lower end of the scale. The difference in descriptive means is relevant because the model examines two distinct managerial resources, not a single composite measure of supervisor support. However, descriptive contrasts alone do not establish statistically significant differences between constructs or indicate which resource has greater explanatory importance.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Constructs

Construct	Items	Mean
Recognition	6	3.05
Feedback Quality	6	2.46
Employee Engagement	4	3.19
Affective Commitment	4	3.14

Source: Primary questionnaire data, 2026. Feedback quality was recalculated using the corrected item frequencies; the affective commitment mean follows the thesis report.

At the indicator level, recognition of contributions by supervisors (R4) received a mean of 3.13, whereas direct praise for performance (R1) was rated 2.97. This pattern suggests some variation in how employees perceived different expressions of recognition. For feedback quality, the corrected objectivity item (FQ1) averaged approximately 2.46, and timeliness (FQ6) averaged 2.44. The comparatively subdued

evaluations across feedback items indicate a potential practical area for managerial attention, although the survey cannot establish whether particular supervisory processes caused these perceptions. Engagement items clustered between 3.18 and 3.22, while the reported affective commitment item means were approximately 3.07–3.18. Overall, the descriptive evidence provides a context for evaluating associations among the four constructs without predetermining the structural results.

Measurement Model Assessment

The reflective measurement model was evaluated before interpreting the structural paths. All 20 indicators were retained in the model documented in the thesis. Most outer loadings met or exceeded 0.70. Three indicators fell slightly below this reference point: recognition item R4 (0.693), employee engagement item EE1 (0.668), and affective commitment item AC2 (0.674). Their retention was justified in the original analysis by their substantive relevance and acceptable construct-level measures. Their comparatively lower loadings should nevertheless be disclosed rather than described as meeting the conventional 0.70 criterion. The loading ranges were 0.693–0.811 for recognition, 0.733–0.815 for feedback quality, 0.668–0.837 for employee engagement, and 0.674–0.853 for affective commitment.

As shown in Table 2, average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50 for all four constructs, ranging from 0.584 for recognition to 0.646 for affective commitment. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.784 to 0.875, while composite reliability ranged from 0.860 to 0.905. These estimates supported adequate internal consistency and convergent validity at the construct level, despite the three indicators with sub-0.70 loadings. The results therefore support interpretation of the latent construct scores, subject to the usual limitations of self-reported measures and the particular operationalization adopted in this study.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Items	Loading Range	AVE	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability
Recognition	6	0.693–0.811	0.584	0.857	0.893
Feedback Quality	6	0.733–0.815	0.615	0.875	0.905
Employee Engagement	4	0.668–0.837	0.608	0.784	0.860
Affective Commitment	4	0.674–0.853	0.646	0.817	0.878

Source: SmartPLS 4 results reported in the thesis, 2026.

Discriminant validity was assessed through cross-loadings, the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). The thesis reported that all indicators loaded more highly on their designated construct than on competing constructs. The square roots of AVE on the Fornell–Larcker diagonal were 0.764 for recognition, 0.784 for feedback quality, 0.780 for employee engagement, and 0.803 for

affective commitment; each exceeded the corresponding interconstruct correlations. HTMT values ranged from 0.178 for recognition–feedback quality to 0.680 for employee engagement–affective commitment, remaining below the 0.90 criterion. The especially low recognition–feedback quality HTMT is consistent with their empirical separability in these data. It does not, by itself, demonstrate that either resource is unique across organizational settings, but it supports estimating their associations independently in the proposed model.

Structural Model Assessment

Assessment of the structural model addressed collinearity, explained variance, effect sizes, and the predictive-relevance indicators reported in the thesis. Inner-model variance inflation factors ranged from 1.010 to 1.793 across the five predictor–outcome relationships, all below the specified threshold of 5. The estimated paths were therefore not accompanied by problematic predictor collinearity according to this diagnostic. This is particularly relevant to the simultaneous inclusion of recognition and feedback quality, because their regression estimates would be more difficult to interpret if the constructs were highly redundant.

Recognition and feedback quality together explained 44.2% of the variation in employee engagement ($R^2 = 0.442$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$). Recognition, feedback quality, and employee engagement together accounted for 40.2% of the variation in affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.402$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.386$). These values indicate meaningful explanatory power within the surveyed organization while leaving substantial variance unaccounted for. The model does not include every determinant of engagement or commitment, and these percentages must not be generalized as explanatory performance for public-sector employees outside this dataset.

Effect-size estimates further differentiated the associations. Recognition had a relatively large f^2 for employee engagement (0.491), whereas feedback quality had a medium f^2 for the same outcome (0.227), using the criteria specified in the study. For affective commitment, f^2 estimates were smaller: 0.122 for recognition, 0.066 for feedback quality, and 0.071 for employee engagement. Thus, the resources' incremental contributions were more pronounced for engagement than for affective commitment within the estimated model. The thesis additionally reported Q^2predict values of 0.416 for employee engagement and 0.327 for affective commitment, with RMSE values of 0.779 and 0.842, respectively. These positive Q^2predict values indicate predictive relevance under the reported procedure; without a detailed comparison against alternative prediction benchmarks, they do not justify claiming superior out-of-sample prediction.

Direct Pathway Findings

All five hypothesized direct paths had positive coefficients and met the study's 5% significance criterion (Table 3). Recognition was positively associated with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.526$, $t = 9.326$, $p < .001$), and feedback quality showed a positive

association with the same construct (β = 0.358, t = 5.516, p < .001). The model therefore indicates that employees reporting higher levels of recognition or more useful and constructive feedback also tended to report greater psychological involvement in their work, conditional on the other predictors included in the structural specification. The magnitude of the recognition coefficient was numerically higher, but no statistical test of the difference between these two coefficients was reported. Their relative sizes should not be interpreted as evidence of a statistically established ranking.

Table 3. Direct Pathway Estimates

Structural Relationship	β	t Statistic	p Value	f^2
Recognition → Employee Engagement	0.526	9.326	< .001	0.491
Feedback Quality → Employee Engagement	0.358	5.516	< .001	0.227
Recognition → Affective Commitment	0.331	3.531	< .001	0.122
Feedback Quality → Affective Commitment	0.221	2.797	.005	0.066
Employee Engagement → Affective Commitment	0.276	2.381	.017	0.071

Source: SmartPLS 4 bootstrapping and structural-model results reported in the thesis, 2026. Values displayed as .000 in the original p-value output are reported as p < .001.

The direct associations with affective commitment are especially important for the article's first pathway. Recognition was positively associated with affective commitment (β = 0.331, t = 3.531, p < .001), even with feedback quality and employee engagement included in the same equation. Feedback quality also retained a positive coefficient (β = 0.221, t = 2.797, p = .005). Accordingly, the data support the presence of direct statistical relationships between both forms of managerial resource and employees' emotional attachment to the organization. The recognition finding addresses the article's emphasis on appreciation of actual work contributions rather than interpersonal respect or a general reward bundle. Meanwhile, the feedback-quality estimate pertains to perceived usefulness and delivery of supervisory information, not merely the frequency with which feedback occurs.

Employee engagement was itself positively associated with affective commitment (β = 0.276, t = 2.381, p = .017). This coefficient indicates that respondents who described greater energy, meaning, pride, and concentration in their work also tended to report stronger emotional attachment to the employing organization. However, its relatively small f^2 of 0.071 demonstrates that a statistically significant path need not account for a large incremental share of outcome variation. Taken together, the five direct results substantiate associations involving two distinguishable managerial resources and two related, but nonidentical, employee attitudes. The cross-sectional design prevents interpreting these estimates as evidence that changing

supervisory recognition or feedback would necessarily produce subsequent changes in commitment.

Engagement-Mediated Pathway Findings

The second pathway concerned the specific indirect associations of recognition and feedback quality with affective commitment through employee engagement. Bootstrapping results indicated a positive and statistically significant indirect association for recognition (β = 0.145, t = 2.353, p = .019). The corresponding indirect association for feedback quality was also positive and significant (β = 0.099, t = 2.035, p = .042), as presented in Table 4. These estimates are consistent with a statistical pathway in which each managerial resource is related to engagement and engagement, in turn, is associated with affective commitment. The feedback-quality indirect effect met the prespecified 5% threshold but was closer to it than the recognition indirect effect; it should therefore be reported precisely rather than characterized as exceptionally robust.

Table 4. Engagement-Mediated Pathway Estimates

Specific Indirect Relationship	β	t Statistic	p Value	Statistical Interpretation
Recognition → Employee Engagement → Affective Commitment	0.145	2.353	.019	Significant indirect association
Feedback Quality → Employee Engagement → Affective Commitment	0.099	2.035	.042	Significant indirect association

Source: SmartPLS 4 bootstrapping results reported in the thesis, 2026.

Importantly, the direct paths from recognition and feedback quality to affective commitment remained positive and statistically significant alongside the two indirect effects. This joint pattern is consistent with complementary partial mediation: engagement accounts for a statistically identifiable portion of each association, but the observed relationships are not exhausted by the engagement pathway. The first pathway therefore comprises direct recognition–commitment and feedback–commitment associations, whereas the second comprises indirect associations through engagement. The two resource constructs were examined within the same model rather than in separate regressions, making their coexisting associations visible. Nevertheless, the estimated indirect coefficients should not be interpreted as verified processes unfolding over time, because recognition, feedback, engagement, and commitment were recorded concurrently. In combination, the results support the article's two-pathway framing while leaving the causal direction and transferability of these associations for future research to establish.

Analysis/Discussion

The findings indicate that recognition and feedback quality are associated with affective commitment through two statistically distinguishable pathways: direct associations and indirect associations involving employee engagement. Their concurrent significance is important because managerial practices may be related to employees' identification with an organization without that relationship being completely accounted for by psychological involvement in daily work. The results are consistent with the motivational role assigned to job resources in Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, while also raising questions about how favorable treatment becomes associated with organizational attachment.[1] The distinction between engagement, which concerns employees' experience of work, and affective commitment, which concerns their emotional relationship with the organization, is essential to interpreting these results.[2] Rather than demonstrating that one attitude develops before another, the model documents the coexistence of these associations among civil servants in one provincial government institution.

Recognition's positive direct association with affective commitment is particularly relevant to the empirical specificity emphasized in this article. The recognition items concern acknowledgment of employees' contributions and performance, mainly by supervisors, rather than generic rewards or public peer recognition. Recognition can be interpreted as a signal that an employee's contribution matters to the employing institution; the observed association suggests that such acknowledgment is also related to feelings of belonging and emotional attachment. This interpretation extends beyond the outcomes examined by Presslee et al., whose team recognition study focused on operational indicators of engagement and effort, and Ndiango et al., who linked recognition with job satisfaction and retention-related intentions.[3] It also requires distinguishing the current construct from the mutual recognition respect examined by Clarke and Mahadi, which concerned reciprocal interpersonal regard rather than performance appreciation.[4] Recognition should not, however, be treated as uniformly beneficial in every format. Black et al. showed that public peer-recognition arrangements can generate unfavorable social comparisons and reduce feelings of appreciation.[5] Their findings do not directly contradict the present estimates because the recognition practices and measured outcomes differ. Taken together, these studies imply that what is recognized and how recognition is communicated matter when evaluating its organizational relevance.

Feedback quality also displayed a positive direct association with affective commitment, suggesting that employees' evaluations of supervisory information correspond to their emotional connection with the organization. This result aligns with public-sector evidence from Audenaert et al., who examined feedback quality and affective commitment among Belgian police personnel through leader–member exchange.[6] Bak similarly reported a positive relationship between the supervisor

feedback environment and affective commitment in South Korean local governments.[7] These studies demonstrate that the feedback–commitment relationship has already received attention in public administration; the present study differs by assessing perceived feedback quality alongside contribution-focused recognition while explicitly retaining an engagement-mediated pathway. The comparatively low descriptive feedback ratings add practical context: employees did not evaluate the quality of feedback as favorably as several other surveyed constructs. Yet this descriptive difference is not proof that deficient feedback caused weaker commitment. It suggests, instead, that clarity, timeliness, usefulness, and constructive guidance deserve attention as potentially improvable managerial experiences.

The significant indirect associations through employee engagement constitute the second pathway. Recognition and feedback quality were each positively related to engagement, while engagement was positively related to affective commitment. Both indirect effects were significant, and the corresponding direct associations remained positive and significant, consistent with complementary partial mediation. This pattern is compatible with the idea that feeling appreciated or receiving useful guidance is associated with greater energy and meaningful involvement in work, which is also associated with stronger organizational attachment. Nevertheless, engagement-mediated commitment is not a previously unexplored relationship. Teo et al. documented engagement mediation between psychosocial working conditions and affective commitment, while Borst et al. demonstrated direct and indirect relationships between categories of job resources and affective commitment among government employees.[8] Aboramadan et al. likewise examined engagement between human resource practices and organizational commitment, although their commitment outcome was broader than affective commitment.[9] The present findings contribute by specifying two managerial resources simultaneously rather than by introducing engagement mediation itself. Moreover, the feedback-quality indirect effect only narrowly met the five-percent significance criterion, warranting a measured interpretation rather than a claim of an exceptionally strong mechanism.

The theoretical contribution is best understood as integration rather than theoretical innovation. JD-R Theory provides an interpretation of recognition and feedback quality as distinct resources associated with motivational engagement, whereas Social Exchange Theory helps explain why favorable managerial treatment might correspond to attachment to the employing organization.[10] These perspectives are complementary but do not imply that the psychological exchanges or motivational sequences themselves were observed. Saks's conceptual account of caring human resource management similarly suggests that employees may respond to organizational concern with engagement, although it does not supply an empirical test of the particular resources examined here.[11] The low HTMT value between recognition and feedback quality reinforces their empirical distinctiveness in this sample, and the

simultaneous positive paths indicate that neither construct was statistically redundant in the specified model. The larger numerical coefficient and effect size for recognition in predicting engagement also make it a salient empirical correlate within this dataset. However, without a formal contrast of coefficients, it is inappropriate to claim a statistically greater effect than feedback quality. In this sense, the research addresses a conceptual integration gap by bringing appreciation, developmental information, engagement, and affective attachment into a single model, not by claiming that the mechanisms are universal or newly discovered.

For management practice, the results suggest treating recognition and feedback as complementary responsibilities rather than interchangeable forms of supervisory attention. Managers could make employees' contributions more visible through specific, consistent acknowledgment while improving the clarity, timeliness, and developmental usefulness of feedback. Recognition should emphasize genuine work contributions instead of public comparisons, and feedback should help employees understand expectations and improve their tasks. These are evidence-informed priorities, not interventions proven effective by this study. Several limitations qualify the interpretation: data came from one provincial institution, predominantly from PPPK employees, and all measures were self-reported at one time point. Neither temporal ordering nor causal mediation can be established, and possible common-method influences remain. The narrow significance margin of the feedback-related indirect association and the retained indicators with loadings below 0.70 further support cautious replication. Longitudinal, multi-institutional research using independently sourced managerial-practice data could test whether similar patterns persist and whether employee engagement precedes changes in affective commitment. The central conclusion is therefore specific: both direct and engagement-mediated associations coexist within the examined organizational context.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the direct and engagement-mediated associations of recognition and feedback quality with affective commitment among civil servants in a provincial government organization responsible for digital public services. The findings demonstrated that recognition and feedback quality were positively associated with both employee engagement and affective commitment. Employee engagement was also positively associated with affective commitment and significantly mediated the relationships involving both managerial resources. The coexistence of significant direct and indirect associations supports a pattern of complementary partial mediation, indicating that employee engagement does not fully account for the observed relationships between these managerial practices and organizational attachment.

The study contributes to human resource management literature by integrating recognition and feedback quality as distinct nonfinancial managerial resources within a

unified model of affective commitment. Drawing on Job Demands–Resources Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the findings extend understanding of how perceived managerial appreciation and constructive performance information are associated with employees' engagement and emotional attachment to their organization. The contribution lies in examining these complementary pathways together rather than proposing an entirely new mediation mechanism.

Practically, the findings suggest that public-sector managers should consider consistent acknowledgment of employee contributions alongside clear, timely, and constructive feedback as complementary aspects of supervisory practice. However, the study's cross-sectional design, self-reported measures, and single-institution setting limit causal interpretation and broader generalization. Future research should employ longitudinal and multi-institutional designs to investigate whether these associations persist across organizational contexts and over time.

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