

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Employee Retention Through Affective Commitment as an Intervening Variable in The Cooperative, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province

Darmawaty Syam¹, Winarsih², Jullie J. Sondakh³, Hendra N. Tawas⁴, Agus Supandi Soegoto⁵, Hizkia Hendrik David Tasik⁶

^{1,2} Dinas Koperasi Usaha Kecil Menengah, Perindustrian, dan Perdagangan Provinsi Papua Barat Daya

^{3,4,5,6} Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Sam Ratulangi Manado

Email: nadawaty9@gmail.com, winarsihoffice@gmail.com, julliesondakh@unsrat.ac.id, hendranovitawas1971@unsrat.ac.id, supandi@unsrat.ac.id, hizkiatasik1@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh budaya organisasi terhadap retensi karyawan dengan komitmen afektif sebagai variabel intervening pada Kantor Koperasi, Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah, Perindustrian, dan Perdagangan Provinsi Papua Barat Daya. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan metode sensus terhadap 87 karyawan, dan data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) melalui perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap komitmen afektif dan retensi karyawan. Selain itu, komitmen afektif terbukti berperan sebagai mediator parsial dalam hubungan antara budaya organisasi dan retensi karyawan. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa keterikatan emosional karyawan terhadap organisasi merupakan mekanisme psikologis utama yang menjembatani internalisasi nilai budaya organisasi dengan keputusan karyawan untuk bertahan dalam organisasi. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperluas kajian manajemen sumber daya manusia sektor publik dengan memvalidasi peran komitmen afektif dalam konteks daerah otonomi baru. Secara praktis, hasil penelitian ini memberikan implikasi kebijakan bagi pemerintah daerah, khususnya dalam perumusan strategi pengelolaan SDM non-finansial yang menekankan penguatan budaya organisasi dan ikatan emosional karyawan guna menjaga stabilitas aparatur pada institusi pemerintahan yang masih dalam tahap transisi.

Kata kunci: budaya organisasi, komitmen afektif, retensi karyawan, PLS-SEM

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of organizational culture on employee retention with affective commitment as an intervening variable at the Office of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade of Southwest Papua Province. A quantitative approach was employed using a census method involving 87 employees, and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS software. The results indicate that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on affective commitment and employee retention. Furthermore, affective commitment is proven to partially mediate the relationship between organizational culture and employee retention. These findings suggest that employees' emotional attachment serves as a key psychological mechanism linking the internalization of organizational cultural values to retention decisions. From a



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theoretical perspective, this study contributes to public human resource management literature by empirically validating the mediating role of affective commitment within newly established autonomous regional governments. Practically, the findings offer policy-relevant insights for local governments by demonstrating that strengthening organizational culture and emotional attachment can function as effective non-financial human resource management strategies to enhance employee retention and workforce stability in transitional public sector institutions.

Keywords: organizational culture, affective commitment, employee retention, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Employee retention in public sector organizations is one of the fundamental indicators of successful modern governance. In an era of global competition and digital transformation, the ability of public organizations to retain high-performing employees is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of effective and responsive public services (Christensen et al., 2017). Globally, the phenomenon of labor turnover, including public sector turnover, has become a strategic issue because it results in the loss of institutional competence, increased retraining costs, and weakened quality of government services (OECD, 2022). The Global Government Forum (2023) report notes that 42% of government agencies in OECD countries have faced an increase in employee turnover in the last five years, mainly triggered by changing expectations regarding work flexibility, the need for competency development, and the misalignment of organizational culture with individual values. These conditions show that the success of global bureaucratic reform is not only determined by policy innovation, but also by the ability of organizations to build a work culture that fosters employees' emotional commitment to remain within the organization.

In the context of the modern workplace, organizational culture is recognized as a key determinant in building employees' psychological attachment to the institution (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). Organizations with a collaborative, integrative, and adaptive culture have been shown to increase loyalty and reduce turnover (Saad & Abbas, 2018). The McKinsey Global Public Sector Report (2022) study shows that public organizations with a supportive work culture have employee retention rates up to 30% higher than agencies that do not have a clear work value orientation. On the other hand, employee affective commitment is a psychological element that reflects the extent to which employees feel proud, attached, and emotionally connected to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Özdemir et al., 2024). Therefore, research on the role of organizational culture in encouraging affective commitment and employee retention is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in the context of the public sector, which is required to ensure the stability of human resources in supporting public services.

At the national level, Indonesia is facing serious challenges related to the mobility of public sector employees as part of bureaucratic reform. A report by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (2024) shows an increase in requests for inter-agency transfers of up to 17% in 2023, especially in the regional administration and public service sectors. This phenomenon of talent drain is even more pronounced in developing regions, where limited work facilities, career development opportunities, and organizational culture mismatches are factors that influence employees' desire to move (BKN, 2023). Meanwhile, the Central Statistics Agency (2024) reports that the level of satisfaction of the state civil apparatus (ASN) with the national government's work culture is at a score of 72.35, but there are significant disparities between regions, especially in the new provinces and eastern Indonesia. This condition indicates the need to strengthen organizational culture to reinforce employees' affective commitment and reduce the potential for turnover.

The province of Southwest Papua, which was formed in 2022, faces structural and cultural challenges in developing its bureaucratic system. The process of

institutional transition, organizational strengthening, and adaptation to the new government culture requires strong employee capacity and high loyalty to the regional government's vision (BPS Southwest Papua, 2024). The Office of Cooperatives, SMEs, Industry, and Trade (Diskop UKM Perindag) has a strategic role in supporting the development of the micro and small business sector, strengthening the regional supply chain, facilitating trade, and fostering local industry players. In this context, employee retention is very important given the complexity of tasks, the need for technical competence, and the urgency of coordination across agencies and economic actors. Based on the local government performance report (2024), one of the challenges faced by Diskop UKM Perindag Papua Barat Daya is employee attendance fluctuations, limited expert human resources, and indications of a desire to transfer to other agencies due to the organization's still-developing culture. This shows the need for a deep understanding of internal organizational factors that can increase employee attachment to the institution, one of which is through organizational culture and affective commitment.

Theoretically, a strong organizational culture can create a work environment that encourages employee participation and strengthens the sense of identification and alignment of personal values with organizational values (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2024; Alsaad, 2023). When employees feel that the values, norms, and goals of the organization are in line with their personal beliefs, affective commitment will be formed and have an impact on increasing their desire to remain in the organization. Empirical studies support this relationship. Research by Hadian (2017) found that an inclusive and collaborative organizational culture increases the affective commitment of local government employees in Central Java. Similar findings were also obtained in the context of Malaysian public organizations by Lim (2021), which confirmed that organizational culture plays a significant role in encouraging public sector employee loyalty through the mechanism of emotional commitment formation.

Employee retention is an important indicator in maintaining the stability of public organizations. A study by Dunger (2023) on public organizations in the Middle East shows that affective commitment plays a dominant role in reducing employee turnover intentions. In Indonesian literature, research by Sambudi et al., (2024) also found that organizational culture contributes positively to employee retention through affective commitment in provincial government agencies in North Sumatra. However, the dynamics of regional bureaucracy in expanded regions such as Southwest Papua have unique characteristics, including the adaptation of new organizational structures, limited resources, and cultural heterogeneity of the community. These conditions indicate that empirical findings from other regions may not necessarily reflect the conditions of public organizations in Southwest Papua, thus requiring a more in-depth and contextual study to explain the relationship between organizational culture, affective commitment, and employee retention in local agencies.

Conceptually, this study is grounded in a causal framework in which organizational culture functions as a contextual stimulus that shapes employees' affective commitment, which subsequently determines their intention to remain in the organization. Organizational culture provides shared values, norms, and behavioral expectations that foster emotional attachment, while affective commitment represents the psychological bond through which employees internalize organizational identity and purpose. In this framework, employee retention is not merely a rational decision based on economic considerations, but an outcome of emotional identification with the organization.

Previous studies also indicate that there is still room for further research. The study by Efrat and Widodo (2022) conducted in Papua only highlighted work culture and employee satisfaction without considering psychological mechanisms through affective commitment and without linking it to public sector employee retention. Meanwhile, Kaikatuy et al., (2018) in West Papua examined the loyalty of civil servants but did not place organizational culture as a major variable in explaining employee retention in new local government institutions. In addition, a study by Raziq et al., (2025) entitled "Organizational Culture and Employee Retention in Public Sector Institutions" examined the context of South Korean bureaucracy, which has a level of institutional maturity that is very different from the administrative transition of Southwest Papua as a new province. These three studies indicate a scientific gap regarding the integration of organizational culture, affective commitment, and employee retention in the context of regional bureaucracy in eastern Indonesia.

Despite extensive research on organizational culture and employee retention, empirical studies that integrate affective commitment as a mediating psychological mechanism within newly established autonomous regional governments remain limited. Existing studies predominantly focus on mature bureaucratic settings or examine retention without explicitly modeling emotional commitment as an intervening variable. This study addresses this gap by testing an integrated model of organizational culture, affective commitment, and employee retention within the context of a newly formed provincial government using a census-based PLS-SEM approach. Based on this research gap, this study offers a novelty by presenting an empirical analysis of how organizational culture shapes employee affective commitment and influences retention in the context of a new provincial government agency. The novelty of this research lies in its geographical focus on a newly formed region with different bureaucratic dynamics, as well as in its testing of the psychological mechanism of affective commitment as a link between organizational culture and employee retention using a census and PLS-SEM approach. Thus, this study is expected to expand the public management literature, particularly regarding the strengthening of organizational culture and increasing the stability of human resources in developing regions.

In line with this description, the purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of organizational culture on employee retention through affective commitment as an intervening variable in the Cooperative, SME, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that aims to analyze the causal relationship between organizational culture and employee retention with affective commitment as an intervening variable. This approach was chosen because it is able to explain the influence between variables in a systematic and measurable manner, as well as provide empirical support for organizational behavior theory in the context of local bureaucracy. The quantitative approach is considered relevant for testing structural relationship models involving mediating variables and measuring the strength of the influence between variables statistically, as recommended in public sector human resource management research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research population consisted of all 87 employees of the Cooperative, SME, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province. The sampling technique used the census method, in which all members of the population were respondents. The choice of the census method is in line with the recommendations of Sekaran and Bougie

(2020) for public organization research with a limited population, so that the analysis results can provide a comprehensive picture of the actual conditions of the organization. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that measured respondents' perceptions of organizational culture, affective commitment, and retention intentions. This approach is also in line with the characteristics of organizational behavior research, which emphasizes individual perceptions as important indicators of psychological phenomena in public bureaucracy (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2023).

Data analysis used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach through SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it can accommodate small to medium sample sizes, does not require normal data distribution, and is effective for predicting complex relationships between latent variables in social research (Hair et al., 2021). Model evaluation included testing the reliability and construct validity through factor loading indicators, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Furthermore, discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach as recommended by Henseler et al. (2016) to ensure that the research variables had the ability to distinguish one another. After the measurement model met the feasibility criteria, structural analysis was conducted to assess the direct and indirect effects between variables through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

The use of PLS-SEM is also in line with the prediction-based approach that is increasingly used in public organization behavior studies, especially when the research involves psychological variables such as affective commitment that require accurate mediation testing (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Furthermore, the selection of this method is relevant because the research was conducted in a new provincial government agency, where the bureaucratic structure and organizational culture are still in the process of formation, so that an exploratory-predictive analysis model is considered more appropriate. Thus, this research method is designed to provide a strong empirical description of the influence of organizational culture on employee retention through affective commitment in the context of a developing regional bureaucracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved all 87 employees of the Cooperative, SME, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province through a census method. The majority of respondents were in the productive age range of 27–45 years with a dominant educational background of bachelor's degree, reflecting the readiness of employees' competencies in carrying out public service functions, SME development, and trade information management. The average length of service of respondents ranged from 2 to 10 years, indicating that most employees had administrative and technical experience in supporting organizational operations. The average scores of respondents' perceptions of organizational culture, affective commitment, and employee retention were in the high category, with mean scores of 4.18, 4.11, and 4.09, respectively, on a five-point Likert scale.

The evaluation of the measurement model shows that all construct indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, thus meeting the convergent validity requirements. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each variable exceeds 0.50, indicating that the construct is able to explain the majority of the indicator variance. In addition, the Composite Reliability (CR) value was above 0.80 for each construct, indicating good internal consistency. These results show that the research instrument is valid and reliable for measuring organizational culture, affective commitment, and employee retention in the context of local bureaucracy.

Tabel 1. Outer Loadings, AVE dan Composite Reliability

Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR
Organizational Culture	OC1	0.842	0.674	0.914
	OC2	0.875		
	OC3	0.811		
	OC4	0.802		
Affectice Commitment	AC1	0.853	0.687	0.918
	AC2	0.821		
	AC3	0.866		
Employee Retention	ER1	0.837	0.702	0.921
	ER2	0.844		
	ER3	0.869		

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and all values fell below 0.90, suggesting that each construct possessed adequate discriminant validity and reflected unique conceptual dimensions.

Table 2. HTMT Values

Construct	OC	AC	ER
Organizational Culture (OC)	—	0.742	0.698
Affective Commitment (AC)		—	0.715
Employee Retention (ER)			—

The structural model evaluation showed that organizational culture explained 42.1% of the variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.421$). Additionally, organizational culture and affective commitment jointly explained 69.3% of the variance in employee retention ($R^2 = 0.693$), indicating strong explanatory power for this model in the public administration domain.

Table 3. R-Square

Variabel	R ²
Affective Commitment	0.421
Employee Retention	0.693

The bootstrapping analysis demonstrated that all relationships were statistically significant. Organizational culture had a positive and significant direct effect on employee retention ($\beta = 0.354$; $t = 4.112$; $p < 0.001$) and on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.649$; $t = 9.004$; $p < 0.001$). Affective commitment significantly influenced employee retention ($\beta = 0.428$; $t = 5.227$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, affective commitment partially mediated the effect of organizational culture on employee retention ($\beta = 0.278$; $t = 3.389$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Path Coefficients and Bootstrapping Results

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
OC → AC	0.649	9.004	0.000	Significant
AC → ER	0.428	5.227	0.000	Significant
OC → ER	0.354	4.112	0.000	Significant
OC → AC → ER	0.278	3.389	0.002	Partial Mediation

These results confirm that a strong organizational culture enhances employees' emotional attachment to the organization, which subsequently strengthens their intention to remain employed. The high R^2 value for retention suggests that organizational culture and affective commitment are critical drivers of employee stability within this provincial government agency.

The results of this study indicate that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on employee affective commitment, which in turn has an impact on increasing employee retention at the Cooperative, SME, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province. This finding is indicated by the path coefficient value between organizational culture and affective commitment of $\beta = 0.649$ with a high level of significance ($p < 0.001$), as well as an explained variance contribution of 42.1%. This condition indicates that the stronger the internalization of values and norms within the organization, the higher the emotional attachment of employees to the agency. In the context of a regional public organization that is still in the process of structural consolidation, emotional attachment to organizational values is an important foundation in encouraging employee loyalty and contribution to the achievement of institutional goals.

The effect of affective commitment on employee retention is also proven to be significant with a value of $\beta = 0.428$ ($p < 0.001$), which indicates that employees who have strong emotional ties to the organization tend to have a greater desire to continue working and not look for other job alternatives. These findings reflect the importance of the emotional aspect in building the loyalty of public sector employees, especially in new administrative regions such as Southwest Papua. Employees who feel that their personal values are in line with organizational values are better able to show resilience in facing the dynamics of administrative change, new task allocations, and the ongoing bureaucratic adaptation process.

In a developing organization, affective commitment is a factor that helps maintain employee continuity so as not to disrupt public service processes or regional development agendas. Organizational culture also has a direct effect on employee retention ($\beta = 0.354$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that the implementation of collaborative work values, clear internal rules, and supportive leadership can increase employee motivation to stay.

The concept of employee retention in the public sector differs from that in private organizations because the orientation of public service and the social value of work also influence employees' decisions to remain in the organization. The results of this study show that a work environment that emphasizes a sense of togetherness, clarity of institutional goals, and appreciation for employee contributions can create a sense of belonging that encourages retention. This is relevant to the conditions of new provincial government agencies that require stability in the civil service to support institutional capacity building and regional economic policies based on MSMEs and local trade.

Partial mediation of affective commitment ($\beta = 0.278$; $p < 0.001$) shows that organizational culture not only influences retention through emotional mechanisms but

also directly without going through commitment. This means that, in addition to employees' emotional bonds, organizational culture also influences retention through other elements, such as perceptions of fairness, career certainty in the regional bureaucracy, and social comfort in the work environment. These findings confirm that strengthening organizational culture has dual strategic value: first, as a mechanism for forming emotional commitment; second, as a structural factor that provides a sense of security, clear work direction, and value alignment in the implementation of local government tasks.

The R-square value of employee retention of 0.693 shows that organizational culture and affective commitment together contribute significantly to employees' decisions to remain in the organization. This percentage of variance explanation reflects a strong model in the context of a growing bureaucracy. This value also shows that efforts to strengthen the personnel system cannot only rely on structural policies such as financial rewards, job rotation, or technical training, but also on aspects of organizational culture that serve to maintain psychological stability and employee identification with their roles as local government officials.

In the context of Southwest Papua, these findings have significant strategic implications. As a new province, bureaucratic cultural adaptation requires a process of internalizing consistent organizational values so that employees feel they are part of a long-term institutional project. The impact of local cultural diversity, limited administrative resources, and the phase of institutional identity formation can be challenges for employee retention. These findings show that organizational culture strengthening strategies that emphasize social support, open communication, and the formation of collective awareness of the strategic role of agencies can be effective instruments in retaining good performing employees.

In general, the findings of this study confirm that in public sector bureaucracies, especially in developing regions, employee retention strategies must prioritize strengthening a healthy organizational culture and creating a work climate that fosters affective commitment. These results reinforce the view that employee retention is not only the result of practical HR management policies, but also the result of an organization's success in fostering pride, a sense of belonging, and emotional attachment to the tasks and goals of the institution. Thus, the development of organizational culture in local government agencies should be seen as a long-term strategic investment for the sustainability of governance and improvement of public service quality.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that organizational culture has a significant effect on employee retention at the Cooperative, SME, Industry, and Trade Office of Southwest Papua Province, both directly and through affective commitment as a mediating variable. A strong organizational culture has been proven to increase employees' emotional commitment to the institution, thereby encouraging their desire to continue working in the organization. This can be seen from the strong influence of organizational culture on affective commitment, as well as the contribution of affective commitment to employee retention, which shows a significant relationship. These findings reinforce the understanding that the success of public organizations, especially in newly formed regions, is highly dependent on the institution's ability to build and maintain a positive, adaptive work culture that supports employee participation.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a single public organization, which may limit the generalizability

of the findings to other governmental contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture dynamic changes in organizational culture, affective commitment, and retention over time. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal designs and multi-organizational samples to examine the stability of affective commitment over time, as well as to explore the roles of other psychological mechanisms such as public service motivation or perceived organizational support in strengthening employee retention in autonomous regional governments.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that agencies strengthen their organizational culture development programs through effective internal communication, reinforcement of collective values, and enhancement of the role of leaders in providing support and recognition for employee contributions. In addition, it is important for organizations to design HR development strategies that are not only based on structural rewards but also appeal to the psychological aspects of employees, such as a sense of belonging and pride in the organization. The implementation of leadership development training, mentoring, employee empowerment, and periodic organizational culture evaluation mechanisms can be strategic steps to maintain and improve employee retention in the long term.

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