

## Investigating the Dynamics of Organizational Commitment and Trust Among Public Employees in a Philippine Local Government Unit (LGU)



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**ABSTRACT:** This descriptive-correlational study explored the interplay between organizational commitment and trust among public employees within a Local Government Unit (LGU) in Surigao City, Philippines. Data from 72 employees across four departments were analyzed using Spearman's rank correlations to examine associations between trust-building factors (HR practices, performance evaluations, delegation) and commitment levels. Additionally, Kruskal-Wallis H-tests and Mann-Whitney U-tests were employed to investigate potential demographic influences (age, sex, educational attainment) on both commitment and trust perceptions. While public employees exhibited moderate levels of organizational commitment, trust in HR policies, performance evaluations, and delegation practices remained high. Interestingly, trust in managers' follow-through and decision-making involvement displayed a potential U-shaped relationship with age. Educational attainment also emerged as a significant factor influencing trust perceptions across various organizational aspects. These findings suggest that fostering trust through transparent leadership, fair practices, and employee empowerment can be a valuable strategy for LGUs to cultivate a more committed workforce. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential need for tailored approaches to building trust based on employee demographic characteristics.

**KEYWORDS:** Organizational commitment, organizational trust, affective, continuance, normative.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are a cornerstone of organizational success, with their skills, knowledge, and dedication significantly influencing productivity and goal achievement (Theng & Robin, 2023). Motivated and trusted employees are more likely to deliver high-quality work, enhancing the organization's reputation positively (Yan et al., 2022). Employee performance is a key factor influencing organizational productivity and profitability (Sultana et al., 2021). The success of a company is intricately linked to the productivity and efficiency of its employees (Cholis & Andayani, 2021).

Organizational trust and commitment are intertwined concepts that play a crucial role in promoting organizational effectiveness. When employees trust their leaders and coworkers and feel committed to the organization's goals, they tend to be more engaged and productive (Gong et al., 2020). Trust fosters a positive work environment characterized by creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to go the extra mile (Lewis, 2018). Committed employees demonstrate a strong sense of identification with the organization, exhibiting a desire to stay and contribute to its success (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Despite their importance, fostering trust and commitment remains a challenge for many organizations, particularly Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines. Recent studies point towards significant employee turnover rates attributed to dissatisfaction with work expectations and a lack of trust in leadership (Manongas, 2017). This attrition can be detrimental to an organization's overall performance and necessitates the implementation of strategies that cultivate a more positive and trusting work environment (Mishra et al., 2023).

Understanding the factors influencing organizational trust and commitment among LGU employees is crucial to developing effective interventions and promoting employee satisfaction and retention. This study aims to investigate the levels of commitment and trust amongst public employees at a local government unit in Surigao City Hall, Surigao del Norte, Philippines. The findings can serve as a significant resource for the organization, guiding efforts to promote trust-building initiatives, improve work practices, and enhance overall employee morale. Additionally, this research may contribute to a broader understanding of employee engagement within the context of Philippine LGUs.

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## *Understanding Employee Commitment - A Three-Component Model*

Organizational commitment is a crucial element that reflects an employee's willingness to stay with and actively engage in an organization over time (Nguyễn et al., 2020; Saranza et al., 2022). This commitment consists of three main components: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment (Paul et al., 2019). Affective commitment involves an emotional bond and identification with the organization where employees choose to stay (Nguyen & Ngo, 2020). Normative commitment, on the other hand, represents a sense of duty to remain with the organization, driven by a belief that they ought to stay (Aminizadeh et al., 2021). Continuance commitment is associated with the perceived costs of leaving the organization, leading employees to stay out of necessity, often due to benefits or limited alternatives (Dominguez et al., 2020).

Research has shown that high levels of organizational commitment are associated with positive outcomes such as reduced turnover rates, enhanced performance, and increased citizenship behaviors (Zhao & Sang, 2023). Reduced turnover is a direct consequence of high organizational commitment, as employees are more inclined to remain with the organization for longer periods (Gürbüz et al., 2022). Improved performance and increased citizenship behaviors are also outcomes linked to high levels of organizational commitment, demonstrating employees' dedication and engagement toward organizational objectives (Khan et al., 2020).

Moreover, the impact of factors on organizational commitment has been investigated to ascertain how different elements contribute to employees' commitment levels (Lapointe et al., 2020). Understanding the components of organizational commitment and their associations with innovative behavior, job satisfaction, and job performance offers valuable insights into how organizations can boost commitment levels among their workforce (Hisam & Sanyal, 2021). Overall, organizational commitment remains a critical factor influencing employee engagement, retention, and overall organizational success.

## *Building Trust in the Workplace*

Building trust in the workplace is a fundamental aspect that significantly influences organizational dynamics and employee performance. Organizational trust, defined as the willingness of employees to be vulnerable based on the belief that the organization will act in their best interests, plays a crucial role in fostering positive workplace relationships (Castanelli et al., 2022). Trust is a cornerstone of effective communication and collaboration within organizations, contributing to enhanced employee engagement and satisfaction (Khan et al., 2022). Strategies aimed at cultivating trust in the workplace include transparent and honest communication between management and employees, creating a positive work environment, and treating employees with respect while avoiding public criticism (Farmanesh & Zargar, 2023).

Treating employees with respect and dignity is another vital factor in building trust at work, especially in culturally sensitive environments (Langster & Cutrer, 2021). Respecting employees' contributions, valuing their opinions, and providing constructive feedback can enhance trust and strengthen relationships within the organization (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, avoiding public criticism and promoting a culture of constructive feedback and support can help build a psychologically safe atmosphere where employees feel valued and respected (Schaap, 2020). Trust in workplace management is essential for promoting a positive organizational culture and encouraging employee engagement and commitment (Saleem et al., 2022).

A trusting work environment offers numerous benefits for organizations, including increased employee engagement, satisfaction, productivity, and efficiency (Zou et al., 2020). Trusted employees are more likely to be committed to their work, demonstrate higher levels of performance, and exhibit positive organizational citizenship behaviors (Werff et al., 2022). Trust also plays a critical role in improving customer service quality, leading to higher customer retention rates and improved organizational profitability (Xia et al., 2022). By prioritizing trust-building initiatives and fostering a culture of openness, respect, and transparency, organizations can establish positive work conditions that promote employee well-being and organizational success (Fischer et al., 2020).

## *The Symbiotic Relationship of Commitment and Trust*

Organizational commitment and trust are closely interconnected concepts that significantly influence employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Research has consistently demonstrated a symbiotic relationship between commitment and trust, with studies indicating that trust in leadership and the organization can enhance affective and normative commitment among employees (Yuan et al., 2021). Conversely, committed employees are more likely to trust the organization and its leadership, leading to a mutually reinforcing cycle of positive engagement and loyalty (Sharif et al., 2021).

Various studies have investigated the impact of different leadership styles on organizational commitment and trust, with a particular emphasis on the crucial role of transformational leadership in fostering trust and increasing commitment levels among employees (Liggans et al., 2019). Transformational leaders who demonstrate authenticity and inspire trust are better positioned to cultivate a culture of commitment and engagement within the organization (Shie & Chang, 2022).

Additionally, research has explored the mediating role of trust in the relationship between leadership styles, such as authentic leadership and servant leadership, and organizational commitment, underscoring the importance of trust as a facilitator of commitment (Lux et al., 2019).

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Furthermore, studies have delved into the complex interplay of organizational justice, leadership behavior, employee trust, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to understand better the factors influencing employee engagement and loyalty (Sedrine et al., 2020). Research has also explored the mediating role of commitment in the relationship between leadership behavior, job satisfaction, and employee performance, highlighting commitment as a driver of positive outcomes in the workplace (Akkaya, 2020).

### *Synthesis*

This review delves into the multifaceted concept of organizational commitment, identifying its three key components. Research suggests that organizations can cultivate stronger commitment across all dimensions by fostering a positive work environment with effective leadership, career development opportunities, and competitive compensation. The positive outcomes associated with high commitment, such as reduced turnover, improved performance, and increased citizenship behaviors, solidify its significance for organizational success.

This review further emphasizes the critical role of organizational trust, defined as employees' willingness to be vulnerable based on their belief in the organization's best interests. Strategies like transparent communication, positive work environments, and respectful treatment emerge as key trust-building factors, particularly in culturally diverse settings. The positive impact of trust on employee engagement, satisfaction, productivity, customer service and profitability underscores its vital role in organizational performance.

Significantly, this review highlights the synergistic relationship between trust and commitment. Prior research suggests a two-way street: trust in leadership and the organization fosters stronger affective and normative commitment, while committed employees are more likely to trust their leaders and the organization. This emphasizes the importance of creating a work environment that cultivates both trust and commitment to achieve a high-performing and engaged workforce. Future research could explore the mechanisms underlying this synergistic relationship and investigate how different organizational contexts might influence its strength. By fostering a work environment that prioritizes both trust-building strategies and commitment-enhancing practices, organizations can cultivate a virtuous cycle that fuels employee engagement, performance, and organizational success.

### *Theoretical framework of the study*

This framework explores how various theoretical perspectives illuminate the complex interplay between these factors, particularly within the context of the public sector workforce. It also considers the potential influence of demographic profiles on both trust and commitment.

*Social Exchange Theory* (Blau, 1964) provides a foundational lens for understanding the reciprocal relationship between trust and commitment. Employees who perceive trust, support, and fair treatment from their organization are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty and commitment. Public sector organizations can foster trust by prioritizing employee well-being through competitive compensation and benefits, opportunities for work-life balance, and a commitment to ethical practices. This reciprocity is particularly important when considering the potential influence of demographic profiles. Public sector organizations that tailor their practices to address these diverse needs can strengthen the social exchange dynamic, promoting both trust and commitment.

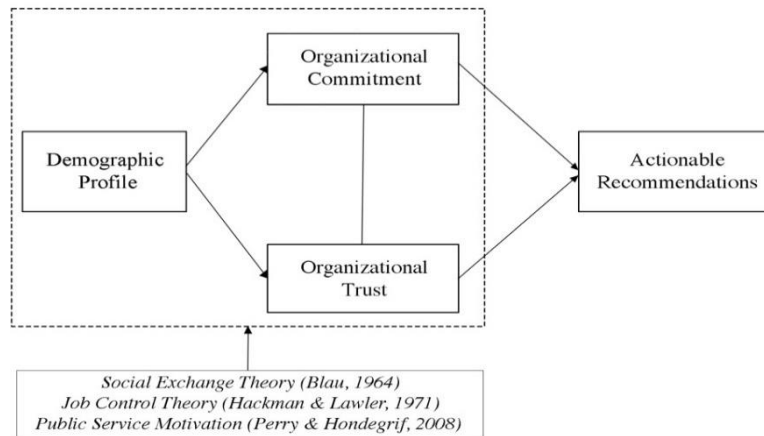
*Job Control Theory* (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) offers valuable insights into how feelings of control over one's work can influence commitment. This theory suggests that employees with greater autonomy, skill variety, and task significance experience higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. Empowering public sector employees with decision-making authority, ownership over their tasks, and opportunities to utilize their skills can enhance their sense of control and purpose within the organization. This is relevant for the public sector workforce, where employees are often intrinsically motivated by a desire to serve the public good. By providing opportunities to contribute meaningfully to achieving the organization's public service mission, job control theory suggests that commitment can be further strengthened.

*Public Service Motivation* (Perry & Hondegrif, 2008) adds a unique dimension to the framework by highlighting the intrinsic desire to serve the public good as a key driver of commitment, particularly within the public sector. Individuals with high public service motivation are often drawn to careers that will make a positive societal impact. Understanding this service-oriented motivation is crucial for public sector organizations to develop strategies that attract, retain, and engage their workforce. By aligning organizational goals and values with the desire to serve the public interest, organizations can establish a work environment that resonates with employees' intrinsic motivations, fostering a strong sense of commitment. Furthermore, research suggests that demographic factors like age and educational attainment may also influence public service motivation. Public sector organizations can leverage this knowledge to tailor their recruitment and retention strategies towards demographic groups that exhibit high levels of public service motivation.

This framework acknowledges the potential influence of demographic profiles on both trust and commitment. The study will consider factors such as age, sex, and educational attainment of the respondents. These demographic characteristics can influence employees' expectations, career aspirations, and perceptions of organizational practices. Understanding these potential variations allows for a more nuanced examination of the relationship between trust, commitment, and demographic profiles (Sepahvand et al., 2017; Moodie, 2020). Thus, the framework offers a multifaceted perspective on the interconnectedness of commitment and trust in

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the public sector. It integrates insights from social exchange theory, job control theory, and public service motivation to provide a full understanding of the factors that influence these crucial elements. Additionally, the framework acknowledges the potential influence of demographic profiles on both trust and commitment, highlighting the need for further research to explore these relationships and develop targeted strategies for building a strong and dedicated public sector workforce.



**Figure 1. The research framework of the study.**

## II. METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to investigate the relationships between organizational trust, commitment, and the demographic profile of public employees working at four specific departments within a Local Government Unit (LGU) in Surigao City Hall, Surigao del Norte. This design allowed us to capture the current levels of trust and commitment (descriptive component) and explore potential associations between these variables and employee demographics (correlational aspect) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

### Participants

The target population for this study consisted of 87 employees working across four departments within the LGU in Surigao City Hall: budget, treasurer, accounting, and planning and development offices. Department heads were excluded to minimize potential bias. Following data-cleaning procedures to address missing or incomplete responses, the final analysis included data from 72 participants.

### Procedures

To ensure informed consent and data privacy, a formal request letter outlining the study's objectives, data collection procedures, and adherence to confidentiality protocols was sent to the LGU administration and potential participants. The survey instrument, available in both online and paper-based formats, was designed to measure organizational commitment, trust, and relevant demographic characteristics. Prior to data collection, a pilot test with 20 randomly chosen individuals outside the target sample was conducted to assess the instrument's reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used for this purpose, with a score of 0.977, indicating good internal consistency (Tavşanlıoğlu & Gülbahar, 2016).

### Research Instrument

This study utilized a survey instrument adapted from Allen et al. (1990), Meyer et al. (1991) and Semlali et al. (2022). The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Part I collected demographic data from respondents. Part II focused on organizational commitment, assessing the three identified dimensions. Part III examined trust in the organization. The study employed a Likert scale (details provided below).

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Parameter	Verbal Description	Interpretation (Commitment)	Interpretation (Trust)
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	<b>Very High Commitment</b> (Strong dedication and intention to remain with the organization.)	<b>Very High Trust</b> (Strong belief in the organization's reliability, fairness, and positive intentions.)
3.41-4.20	Agree	<b>High Commitment</b> (Strong level of commitment, dedication and investment in the organization.)	<b>High Trust</b> (Strong belief in the organization's trustworthiness and positive actions.)
2.61-3.40	Slightly Agree	<b>Moderately High Commitment</b> (Moderate to a high level of commitment, valuing the role and having a positive connection to the organization.)	<b>Moderate Trust</b> (Belief in the organization's dependability to some extent, with some reservations.)
1.81-2.60	Disagree	<b>Fair Commitment</b> (Moderate level of commitment, fulfilling job duties but not demonstrating a strong attachment.)	<b>Low Trust</b> (Limited belief in the organization's reliability or positive intentions.)
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	<b>Poor Commitment</b> (Lowest level of commitment, possibly considering leaving the organization.)	<b>Very Low Trust</b> (Little to no belief in the organization's trustworthiness or motivations.)

### III. RESULTS AND ANALYSES

#### Demographic profile

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic profile**

Profile Variables	f (n=72)	%	Profile Variables	f (n=72)	%
<b>Age</b>			<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
20-29 years old	34	47.2	High School Diploma	17	23.6
30-39 years old	16	22.2	Bachelor's Degree	15	20.8
40-49 years old	18	25.0	with Master's Units	13	18.1
51 years old and above	4	5.6	Master's Degree	9	12.5
<b>Sex</b>			with Doctorate Units	7	9.7
Male	19	26.4	Doctorate Degree	11	15.3
Female	53	73.6			

The demographic profile of the sample (N = 72) revealed some noteworthy trends. There was a skew towards younger age groups, with nearly half of the respondents (47.2%, n = 34) falling within the 20-29 years old range. The remaining participants were more evenly distributed across the 30-39 (22.2%, n = 16), 40-49 (25.0%, n = 18), and 50+ (5.6%, n = 4) age categories. This distribution suggests a sample that is not solely comprised of recent graduates but may include individuals with some established experience in the workforce. Future research could explore potential variations in the relationship between trust, commitment, and other variables across different age groups within the public sector.

The sample exhibited a slight gender imbalance, with females (73.6%, n = 53) comprising a larger proportion than males (26.4%, n = 19). While the reasons for this imbalance are beyond the scope of this study, it is a noteworthy characteristic to consider when interpreting the results. Research suggests that gender can influence perceptions of trust and commitment in the workplace (Yang & Liu, 2021). Therefore, future studies with more balanced gender representation or analyses that account for potential gender differences would be valuable in strengthening the generalizability of findings.

The distribution of educational attainment levels presented an unexpected finding. High school diplomas were the most frequent educational level (23.6%, n = 17), followed closely by both bachelor's degrees (20.8%, n = 15) and with master's units (18.1%, n = 13). A smaller portion of the sample possessed doctorate degrees (9.7%, n = 7). This finding, with a higher proportion of individuals possessing some post-secondary education but not necessarily a completed degree, warrants further exploration. This sample may reflect a population in transition, perhaps seeking additional qualifications or after completing their degrees. Future research could investigate the influence of educational attainment levels, including those with incomplete degrees, on factors like trust and commitment within the public sector workforce.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings' generalizability may be limited due to the relatively small sample size (N = 72). However, the demographic profile offers valuable insights into the characteristics of the participants and potential areas for further investigation in future studies exploring trust, commitment, and other relevant variables within the public sector workforce.



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### *Level of organizational commitment*

Table 2 analyzes the data on the level of organizational commitment among public employees, as measured by the affective commitment scale. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ) indicates a moderately high level of affective commitment among the respondents. This suggests that public employees, on average, find their organization somewhat personally meaningful and identify with it to a moderate extent.

**Table 2. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational commitment in terms of the affective commitment scale**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	3.19	1.05	Moderately High Commitment
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.	3.38	0.87	Moderately High Commitment
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	3.57	1.23	High Commitment
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.	3.29	0.98	Moderately High Commitment
5. I do not feel like a 'part of the family' at my organization.	3.29	1.12	Moderately High Commitment
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization.	3.14	0.79	Moderately High Commitment
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	3.37	1.00	Moderately High Commitment
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	3.08	0.91	Moderately High Commitment
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>Moderately High Commitment</b>

The statement: "*I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.*" had the highest mean ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ). This indicates that employees felt a strong sense of shared identity with the organization and its challenges. This finding aligns with research by Bhattacharjee et al. (2020), who found that public service motivation is positively associated with affective commitment. However, the statement: "*I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.*" had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). While the overall mean suggests moderate commitment, this statement highlights a potential area for improvement. It suggests that some employees may not feel a strong sense of belonging or camaraderie within the organization. This could be due to factors like a lack of social interaction, inadequate support systems, or a toxic work environment (Ashforth & Dutton, 2018).

The findings suggest that public employees experience a moderate level of affective commitment towards their organizations. They identify with the organization's goals and feel a sense of shared responsibility for its success. However, there seems to be room for improvement in fostering a sense of belonging and family among employees.

**Table 3. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational commitment in terms of continuance commitment scale**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	
1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.	3.13	0.89	Moderately	High Commitment
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	3.54	1.17	High Commitment	
3. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	3.37	1.04	Moderately	High Commitment
4. It would be too costly for me to leave my organization now.	3.24	0.92	Moderately	High Commitment
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	3.54	1.14	High Commitment	
6. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	3.27	0.98	Moderately	High Commitment
7. One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	3.41	1.09	High Commitment	
8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.	3.52	1.12	High Commitment	
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>High Commitment</b>

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Table 3 presents the data on the level of organizational commitment among public employees, as measured by the continuance commitment scale. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) indicates a moderately high level of continuance commitment among the respondents. This suggests that public employees, on average, are hesitant to leave their jobs due to the potential costs and inconveniences associated with doing so (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Statements: *"It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to."* and *"Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire."* had the highest means ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.17$  and  $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ , respectively). These high scores suggest a strong sense of constraint among some employees. They feel that leaving the organization would be difficult due to various factors, possibly including vested benefits, lack of readily available alternative employment, or concerns about re-entering the job market (McGee et al., 2021). However, the statement: *"I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up."* had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ). While this score is the lowest, it still indicates a moderate level of continuance commitment. Employees, on average, are somewhat apprehensive about the potential consequences of leaving their jobs without securing new employment first. This highlights the importance of job security as a factor influencing continuance commitment (Zhao et al., 2020).

The findings suggest that public employees are moderately tied to their organizations due to continuance commitment factors. They are hesitant to leave their jobs because of the perceived difficulty and potential disruptions associated with finding new employment. However, it is important to note that the reasons behind this commitment may not necessarily reflect a strong desire to stay but rather a sense of constraint.

Table 4 presents the data on the level of organizational commitment among public employees, as measured by the normative commitment scale. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ) indicates a moderately high level of normative commitment among the respondents. This suggests that public employees, on average, feel a moral obligation to stay, regardless of their personal feelings or the ease of finding alternative employment.

The statement: *"I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or company woman' is sensible anymore."* had the highest mean ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ). This statement reflects a somewhat weaker sense of normative commitment toward the idea of staying with one organization for an extended period. This could be due to a shift in societal values or a perception that loyalty is no longer reciprocated by organizations (Aryee et al., 2020).

**Table 4. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational commitment in terms of the normative commitment scale**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I think that people these days move from company to company too often.	3.16	1.08	Moderately High Commitment
2. I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization.	3.33	1.21	High Commitment
3. Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me.	3.21	1.15	Moderately High Commitment
4. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and, therefore, feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.	3.21	0.99	Moderately High Commitment
5. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.	3.43	1.30	High Commitment
6. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one's organization.	3.32	1.18	Moderately High Commitment
7. Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers.	3.40	1.25	Moderately High Commitment
8. I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore.	3.52	1.42	High Commitment
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>Moderately High Commitment</b>

On the other hand, the statement: *"I think that people these days move from company to company too often."* had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). This suggests that employees, on average, are not necessarily opposed to the idea of employees switching jobs. This is interesting, considering the high overall mean score, and it may indicate a generational difference in perspectives on normative commitment (Park & Slaughter, 2018). The findings suggest that public employees experience a moderate level of normative commitment. They feel a sense of obligation to their organizations, but this obligation may be weakening due to changing social norms and employer-employee dynamics.

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## Level of organizational trust

**Table 5. Respondents' Assessment of the level of organizational trust in terms of managers' follow-through**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Has a great influence on employees' performance and work peace.	3.00	0.80	Moderate Trust
2. Collaborates with employees to solve and maintain government regulations and policies.	3.59	0.50	High Trust
3. Takes actions to ensure that employees feel responsible for their professional development and growth.	3.54	0.85	High Trust
4. Ensures that the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organization are accomplished.	3.83	0.70	High Trust
5. Maintains accountability and transparency in all undertakings.	3.62	1.50	High Trust
6. Resolve problems with the lesson timetable in the organization.	3.46	0.60	High Trust
7. Has a wide opportunities and support for employees.	3.49	1.10	High Trust
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>High Trust</b>

This table examines public employees' trust in their managers' ability to keep promises and deliver on commitments. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) indicates a high level of trust in managers' follow-through among the respondents. This suggests that public employees, on average, believe their managers will act on their commitments.

"Ensures that the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organization are accomplished" had the highest mean ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ). This finding indicates the strongest area of trust. Employees seem to have the most faith in their managers' ability to deliver on the organization's strategic goals (McAllister, 2019). Nevertheless, "Has a great influence on employees' performance and work ethic" had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ). While still within the moderate trust range, this score suggests a slight area for improvement. Employees may have slightly less confidence in their managers' ability to directly influence their performance and work ethic (Mishra & Mishra, 2023).

The findings suggest that public employees generally trust their managers to follow through on commitments, particularly regarding strategic goals. However, there seems to be a need to strengthen trust in managers' influence on individual performance and work ethic.

Table 6 explores the trust of fairness in the organization's HR policies. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) indicates a high level of perceived fairness in HR policies among the respondents. This suggests that public employees generally believe the organization's HR policies are fair and applied impartially (Cohen et al., 2018).

**Table 6. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational trust in terms of HR policy fairness**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Has fair and transparent policies on the welfare, promotion and development of the employees.	3.48	0.87	High Trust
2. Maintains strong morale during times of adversity by providing adequate financial, mental, social, and spiritual support.	3.38	1.02	Moderate Trust
3. Has an opportunity to evaluate and give feedback to the employees on the effectiveness or otherwise of our performance appraisals.	3.49	0.95	High Trust
4. Manifests our overall involvement in decision-making.	3.52	0.79	High Trust
5. Exercises transparency and accountability in terms of promotion and development.	3.49	0.90	High Trust
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>High Trust</b>

The statement "Has manifests our overall involvement in decision making" had the highest mean ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). This finding suggests the strongest area of perceived fairness. Employees seem to have the most trust that HR policies consider their input and involvement in decision-making processes (Dencker et al., 2023). On the contrary, "Maintains strong morale during times of adversity by providing adequate support in terms of financial, mental, social, and spiritual." ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) had the lowest mean. While still in the high trust range, this score is the lowest compared to the others. This might indicate a perceived gap in how well HR policies address employee morale and well-being during difficult times.

The findings suggest that public employees have a high overall perception of fairness in HR policies, particularly regarding their involvement in decision-making. However, there seems to be a need to address the perception of how HR policies handle employee morale and well-being during challenging times. This could be an area for improvement in HR practices.



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**Table 7. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational trust in terms of performance evaluation**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Maintains high levels of engagement, particularly in decision-making as to performance appraisals.	3.48	1.10	High Trust
2. Maintains the conduct of periodic reviews and evaluations of teachers' career progression.	3.56	0.98	High Trust
3. Has manifests the quality of the distribution of resources and promotions.	3.76	1.05	High Trust
4. Supports the employees' empowerment and involvement in performance assessment.	3.71	0.89	High Trust
5. Adheres to accountable assessments.	3.60	1.21	High Trust
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>High Trust</b>

Table 7 examines organizational trust in terms of the performance evaluation process. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) indicates a high level of perceived fairness in performance evaluation among the respondents. This suggests that public employees generally believe the activity is conducted in a just and impartial manner (Colquitt et al., 2018).

"Supports the employees' empowerment and involvement in performance assessment" ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) had the highest mean. This finding highlights the strongest area of perceived fairness. Employees seem to have the most trust that they are involved in and have some control over their performance evaluations (Kim et al., 2023). "Maintains high levels of engagement, particularly in decision-making regarding performance appraisals" ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) had the lowest mean, although still in the high perceived fairness range. This score suggests a potential area for improvement. While overall fairness is high, employee involvement in decision-making during the appraisal stage might be perceived as less fair compared to other aspects of the evaluation process.

The findings suggest that public employees have a high overall perception of fairness in performance evaluations, particularly regarding their empowerment and involvement in the process. However, there seems to be a need to address the perception of employee involvement in decision-making during the appraisal stage. This could be an area for improvement in refining the performance evaluation system.

Table 8 explores public employee trust in how authority and decision-making are delegated within the organization. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) indicates a high level of trust in terms of authority delegation among the respondents. This suggests that public employees generally feel comfortable with the way leadership distributes decision-making authority and ownership over tasks (Conger et al., 2018).

The statement: "Involves its people in all possible plans and programs" ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) had the highest mean. This finding suggests that the strongest area of perceived trust is delegation. Employees seem to have the most faith that they are included in the planning stages of the organization's work (Wang et al., 2023).

**Table 8. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational trust in terms of authority delegation**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Creates a strong sense of delegation among its employees.	3.43	0.85	High Trust
2. Develops the potential of its personnel by involving them in decision-making and involvement in various activities.	3.43	1.01	High Trust
3. Solidifies honest and transparent leadership by being open, benevolent and trustworthy among its people.	3.56	0.92	High Trust
4. Leads the employees toward independence, creativity and collaboration.	3.71	0.78	High Trust
5. Involves its people in all plans and programs.	3.75	1.04	High Trust
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>High Trust</b>

The statements "Creates a strong sense of delegation among its teachers and staff" ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) and "Develops the potentials of its personnel by involving them in decision making and involvement in various activities" ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) had the lowest means, although still within the high trust range. These scores suggest that while overall trust in delegation is high, there might be a need to strengthen employee perceptions of empowerment and ownership over their work and involvement in decision-making processes beyond planning. Empowerment can be fostered by giving employees greater autonomy and control over tasks (Conger et al., 2018). Employee involvement in decision-making beyond planning can be encouraged through strategies such as soliciting feedback on broader organizational issues and including them in task forces or committees (Wang et al., 2023).

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The findings suggest that public employees have a generally positive perception of authority delegation. They feel most included in planning processes and trust the leadership's approach to delegating tasks. However, there seems to be an opportunity to improve how much employees feel empowered and in control of their work and how involved they are in broader decision-making beyond planning. This could increase employee morale, engagement, and potentially better performance.

**Table 9. Respondents' Assessment on the level of organizational trust in terms of decision participation**

Rating Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Has developed an environment where employees are given autonomy, participation and decision-making in various activities.	3.40	1.10	Moderate Trust
2. Creates a strong sense of decision-making regarding the organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives.	3.59	0.87	High Trust
3. Strengthens the involvement of wider stakeholders in terms of decision-making.	3.56	0.92	High Trust
4. Continues to establish fair and transparent judgments in terms of decisions.	3.63	1.04	High Trust
5. Adhere to active engagements and collaborations	3.41	0.89	High Trust
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>High Trust</b>

Table 9 surveys the trust in terms of involvement in decision-making processes within their organization. Overall, the mean score ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) indicates a high level of perceived fairness in decision participation among the respondents. This suggests that public employees generally believe they have a voice in decision-making (Moorman, 1991). However, there seems to be room for improvement in how much autonomy and broader decision-making opportunities employees feel they have.

"Continues to establish fair and transparent judgments in terms of decisions" ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) had the highest mean. This finding suggests the strongest area of perceived fairness. Employees have the most trust that decisions are made just and impartially (Colquitt et al., 2018). On the contrary, "Has developed an environment where employees are given autonomy, participation and decision making in various activities" ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) had the lowest mean, although still in the high perceived fairness range. This score suggests that while overall fairness is perceived positively, there might be a need to strengthen employee feelings of autonomy and involvement in decision-making beyond specific activities (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The findings suggest that public employees have a generally positive perception of fairness in decision participation. They believe decisions are made transparently and impartially. However, there seems to be an opportunity to improve how much employees feel they have autonomy and are involved in decision-making on a broader scale. This could increase employee morale, engagement, and potentially better decision-making outcomes.

### *Relationship between organizational commitment and trust*

Table 10 shows the relationship between various organizational trust-building factors and employee commitment. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients revealed positive and statistically significant correlations between all the trust-building factors and the three factors of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

**Table 10. Spearman's Rank Correlation of the relationship between organizational commitment and trust**

Organizational Trust	Organizational Commitment					
	Affective		Continuance		Normative	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value
Managers Follow-Through	0.422**	0.001	0.430**	0.000	0.455**	0.000
HR Policy Fairness	0.276**	0.028	0.343**	0.006	0.408**	0.001
Performance Evaluation	0.569**	0.000	0.507**	0.000	0.434**	0.000
Authority Delegation	0.370**	0.003	0.421**	0.001	0.337**	0.007
Decision Participation	0.436**	0.000	0.379**	0.002	0.365**	0.003

Employees who perceived their managers as following through on commitments displayed significantly higher levels of all three types of commitment (affective:  $r = 0.422$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; continuance:  $r = 0.430$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; normative:  $r = 0.455$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This finding aligns with research suggesting that leader trustworthiness fosters a sense of security and predictability for employees, leading to stronger emotional attachment (Chang et al., 2022). Additionally, fulfilling commitments reinforces employees' belief that the organization prioritizes their well-being, potentially increasing their perceived investment and moral obligation to stay.

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Similarly, employees who viewed HR policies as fair exhibited significantly stronger affective ( $r = 0.276, p = 0.028$ ), continuance ( $r = 0.343, p = 0.006$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = 0.408, p = 0.001$ ). This supports the notion that procedural justice (fairness in policy application) strengthens trust by demonstrating the organization's commitment to ethical treatment (Jones & Burke, 2020).

Perceptions of fair and accurate performance evaluations also yielded positive and statistically significant correlations with all three commitment dimensions (affective:  $r = 0.569, p = 0.000$ ; continuance:  $r = 0.507, p = 0.000$ ; normative:  $r = 0.434, p = 0.000$ ). When employees perceive performance evaluations as a tool for development rather than punishment, it fosters trust and a sense of value within the organization, leading to increased commitment across all dimensions (Lee et al., 2023).

Granting employees greater authority showed positive associations with affective ( $r = .370, p = 0.003$ ), continuance ( $r = 0.421, p = 0.001$ ), and normative commitment ( $r = 0.337, p = 0.007$ ). Empowerment can build trust by demonstrating the organization's confidence in employees' capabilities, leading to a stronger sense of ownership and increased commitment (Chen et al., 2018).

Finally, employee involvement in decision-making practices correlated positively with affective ( $r = 0.436, p = 0.000$ ), continuance ( $r = 0.379, p = 0.002$ ), and normative commitment ( $r = 0.365, p = 0.003$ ). When employees have a voice in shaping the organization's direction, it fosters a sense of psychological safety and trust in leadership, leading to stronger emotional attachment and a feeling of shared responsibility (Garcia & Parker, 2024).

The results consistently demonstrate that building trust through various management practices increases employee commitment across all three dimensions. This suggests that fostering a work environment characterized by trustworthiness, fairness, and employee empowerment can be a valuable strategy for organizations to retain a committed workforce.

### *Differences in organizational commitment and trust when grouped by demographic profile*

**Table 11. Difference in organizational commitment when grouped according to demographic profile**

Organizational Commitment	Demographic Profile					
	Age		Sex		Educational Attainment	
	Kruskal-Wallis H-Test	p-value	Mann-Whitney U-test	p-value	Kruskal-Wallis H-Test	p-value
Affective Commitment	13.370	0.010**	301	0.328	9.679	0.085
Continuance Commitment	15.049	0.005**	356	0.947	10.083	0.073
Normative Commitment	14.374	0.006**	333	0.653	5.407	0.368

This study explored the relationship between various demographic characteristics and employee commitment across three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (obligation to stay), and normative commitment (sense of duty). The Kruskal-Wallis H-test was used to assess overall significance across demographic groups, with the Mann-Whitney U-test planned for post-hoc comparisons to identify specific group differences.

The findings revealed intriguing patterns. Age had a statistically significant impact on all three commitment dimensions (affective:  $H(2) = 13.370, p = 0.010$ ; continuance:  $H(2) = 15.049, p = 0.005$ ; normative:  $H(2) = 14.374, p = 0.006$ ). Post-hoc analysis using the Mann-Whitney U-test revealed intriguing patterns. Employees aged 20-29 had significantly higher affective commitment ( $p < .05$ ) than those aged 40-49. This aligns with research suggesting younger employees might experience a stronger initial "honeymoon" phase with their first organizations, leading to higher emotional attachment (Cable & Brenner, 2019). There were no significant differences in affective commitment between the 20-29 age group and the other two groups (30-39 and 50+). A similar pattern emerged for continuance commitment, with the 20-29 age group showing significantly higher levels compared to the 40-49 age group ( $p < .05$ ). This could be due to factors like fewer alternative job opportunities or a greater investment in organization-specific skills for younger employees (Moeller et al., 2022). However, for normative commitment, the post-hoc test revealed a significant difference between the 30-39 age group and the 40-49 age group ( $p < .05$ ), with the 30-39 age group exhibiting a stronger sense of duty. This might be explained by this age group potentially feeling a heightened pressure to conform to societal expectations of career stability and strong work ethic (Arthur et al., 2020). There were no significant differences in normative commitment between the 20-29 age group and the other two groups.

However, there were no statistically significant differences in organizational commitment based on sex for any of the three dimensions (affective:  $p = 0.328$ , continuance:  $p = 0.947$ , normative:  $p = 0.653$ ). This suggests that sex may not be a major factor influencing employee commitment in this study, aligning with some recent findings (Ng & Cropanzano, 2018). Moreover, the results suggest no statistically significant differences in organizational commitment based on educational attainment for affective ( $p = 0.085$ ) and normative commitment ( $p = 0.368$ ). However, a marginally significant difference was found for continuance commitment ( $p = 0.073$ ).

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**Table 12. Difference in organizational trust when grouped according to demographic profile**

Organizational Trust	Demographic Profile					
	Age		Sex		Educational Attainment	
	Kruskal-Wallis Test	<i>p-value</i>	Mann-Whitney <i>U-test</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Kruskal-Wallis H-Test	<i>p-value</i>
Managers Follow-Through	14.485	0.006**	331	0.626	16.437	0.006**
HR Policy Fairness	6.532	0.163	272	0.139	13.284	0.021**
Performance Evaluation	16.214	0.003**	308	0.383	23.517	0.000**
Authority Delegation	6.963	0.138	360	0.993	9.653	0.086
Decision Participation	13.643	0.009**	350	0.864	15.980	0.007**

This study explored the relationship between various demographic characteristics and organizational trust. The age group appears to be a significant factor influencing trust in managers' follow-through ( $H(2) = 14.485, p = 0.006$ ), performance evaluations ( $H(2) = 16.214, p = 0.003$ ) and decision participation ( $H(2) = 13.643, p = 0.009$ ). There was no statistically significant difference in trust based on age for HR policy fairness ( $p = 0.163$ ) or authority delegation ( $p = 0.138$ ). However, post-hoc tests suggest a potential U-shaped relationship with trust for managers' follow-through and performance evaluations. Younger employees (20-29) might exhibit higher trust compared to the mid-career group (40-49) ( $p < .05$ ). This could be due to younger employees having less experience with broken promises or negative evaluations. Employees in their 30s might show similar trust levels to the 40-49 age group. In contrast, older employees (50+) might have lower trust in these areas ( $p < .05$ ), potentially due to their longer tenures and experiences that may have eroded their confidence. However, for HR policy fairness, authority delegation, and decision participation, the Kruskal-Wallis H-test indicated no significant overall differences in trust based on age ( $p > .05$ ). This suggests a complex relationship between age and trust in the organization. Kim et al. (2021) found a curvilinear relationship, with trust highest for younger and older employees and lowest for mid-career employees. This could be due to younger employees having less experience with negativity and older employees potentially having built trust through positive experiences.

Sex does not appear to be a major factor influencing organizational trust across any of the measured aspects. The Kruskal-Wallis H-test results showed no statistically significant differences in trust based on sex for managers' follow-through ( $p = 0.626$ ), HR policy fairness ( $p = 0.139$ ), performance evaluations ( $p = 0.383$ ), authority delegation ( $p = 0.993$ ), or decision participation ( $p = 0.864$ ). The impact of sex on trust in leadership seems less clear. While a meta-analysis by Wang et al. (2020) found a small, positive correlation between gender similarity and trust, the effect size was weak. This suggests that other factors likely play a larger role.

In educational attainment, all trust dimensions except authority delegation ( $p=0.086$ ) showed statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) based on educational attainment. This indicates that employees with varying levels of education might have different levels of trust in how managers follow through, evaluate performance, handle HR policies fairly, and involve them in decision-making. Recent research suggests a positive link between educational attainment and trust in leadership. A study by Xu et al. (2023) found that employees with higher education reported greater trust in leadership transparency and ethical decision-making.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This study investigated public employee commitment to their organizations and trust in leadership practices. The findings reveal a nuanced picture of employee attitudes. Public employees exhibit moderate affective commitment, feeling a sense of connection to their organization's goals. However, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and camaraderie could further enhance this emotional attachment. Additionally, continuance commitment, driven by perceived job security concerns, is moderate. Interestingly, normative commitment, the sense of obligation to stay, appears to weaken, suggesting a potential shift in employee expectations of employer-employee dynamics.

Regarding trust, public employees generally believe in their managers' ability to deliver on strategic goals. However, trust in managers' influence on individual performance and work ethic requires improvement. Furthermore, while perceptions of fairness in HR policies and performance evaluations are generally positive, there are areas for improvement. Specifically, employees desire a stronger focus on employee morale and well-being during challenging times within HR policies and a greater sense of involvement in decision-making during the performance appraisal process.

The analysis also shows a statistically positive significant correlation between trust-building factors and all three dimensions of organizational commitment. This suggests that building trust through leadership practices emphasizing trustworthiness, fairness, and employee empowerment can be a valuable strategy for fostering a more committed workforce within the public sector.

Finally, the study explored the impact of demographics on these findings. Age emerged as a significant factor influencing organizational commitment. Younger employees demonstrated higher affective and continuance commitment, possibly due to a lack

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of alternative job opportunities or greater investment in organization-specific skills. Normative commitment peaked for employees in their 30s, potentially reflecting societal pressures for career stability at this stage. Sex and educational attainment did not appear to influence organizational commitment significantly.

Regarding trust, age seems to have a complex influence, with a potential U-shaped relationship. Trust may be higher for younger and older employees and lower for mid-career employees. Sex and educational attainment appear to have less influence on trust in most areas, although employees with higher education may report greater trust in leadership.

Thus, this study highlights the positive link between trust and employee commitment in the public sector. By cultivating a work environment characterized by trust, fairness, and employee empowerment, public sector organizations can enhance employee commitment and cultivate a more engaged workforce.

### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis revealed valuable insights into public employee commitment and trust. Based on these findings, here are actionable recommendations for public sector organizations to improve employee engagement and retention:

#### 1. Building Trust and Strengthening Commitment

- **Focus on leadership development:** Invest in training programs that equip managers with the skills to follow through on commitments, provide constructive feedback to influence performance, and effectively communicate strategic goals. This will strengthen trust in leadership and foster a sense of shared purpose among employees.
- **Empowerment and ownership:** Delegate tasks effectively and give employees greater autonomy over their work. Encourage participation in decision-making processes beyond planning stages. This will empower employees, increase their ownership, and create a more positive work environment.
- **Invest in employee well-being:** Review HR policies to address employee morale and well-being adequately, particularly during challenging times. Offer resources and support programs that promote mental and emotional health. This demonstrates the organization's commitment to its employees and strengthens feelings of loyalty and obligation.
- **Foster a sense of community:** Build opportunities for social interaction and team-building activities to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging and camaraderie among employees. Regular communication and recognition programs can also help employees feel valued and appreciated.

#### 2. Addressing Demographic Considerations

- **Mentorship programs:** Implement mentorship programs to bridge the gap between younger and mid-career employees. Younger employees can benefit from the experience of their mentors, while mid-career employees can gain fresh perspectives and renewed enthusiasm.
- **Career development opportunities:** Provide clear career development paths and opportunities for ongoing learning and skill development. This will cater to the needs of younger employees seeking to establish themselves and address mid-career employees' potential career stagnation concerns.

#### 3. Continuous monitoring and evaluation

- Regular surveys and focus groups should be conducted to determine employee opinions and identify areas for improvement. Regularly monitor trust levels and commitment metrics to track the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

By implementing these recommendations and tailoring them to address the specific needs of their workforce, public sector organizations can create a work environment that fosters trust, empowers employees, and strengthens commitment, leading to a more engaged and productive public service workforce.

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