

Reward Systems and Their Effects on Engagement and Organizational Commitment in Virtual Work Environments

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between reward systems and employee engagement alongside organizational commitment within remote work arrangements. A qualitative literature review approach was employed to synthesize findings from various scholarly publications addressing compensation, recognition, training, and career development as components of reward systems. The analysis reveals that reward systems influence engagement and commitment through multiple pathways involving financial and nonfinancial incentives, organizational justice perceptions, and alignment with psychological contracts. Affective commitment demonstrates particular vulnerability to reduced social interaction in virtual environments, while continuance commitment remains responsive to competitive compensation structures. Normative commitment strengthens when reward systems consistently reflect organizational values and demonstrate genuine appreciation for employee contributions. Recognition programs and professional development opportunities emerge as critical nonfinancial rewards that sustain engagement when physical interaction is limited. Procedural and distributive justice moderate the effectiveness of reward systems by shaping employee trust and perceptions of organizational fairness. The findings suggest that organizations should design integrated reward configurations combining financial incentives, public recognition, training opportunities, and career development pathways. Future empirical research should investigate causal relationships between specific reward components and commitment dimensions across diverse industrial and cultural contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in global work patterns have pushed organizations to adjust their approach to human resource management. Remote work, which was initially a situational response, has now become a widely accepted operational model across various industry sectors. This shift carries consequences for how organizations maintain employee engagement and commitment to the company. Allen and Meyer (1990) showed that organizational commitment is formed through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions, each with different determinants. Meanwhile, research on employee engagement has developed rapidly since the early twenty-first century in response to growing awareness of the importance of human capital for competitive advantage. A flexible organizational structure has also been shown to strengthen a

company's capacity to adapt to environmental change, a capability that becomes increasingly necessary once work arrangements shift toward more dynamic and less predictable forms (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Various organizations have begun to realize that employees who are emotionally engaged with their work tend to show higher productivity and lower turnover rates. This becomes even more relevant as work structures shift from face-to-face models toward virtual interaction that relies on technology as the primary medium of communication.

Reward systems have long been recognized as an important instrument in organizational performance management. Various studies show that rewards, both financial and non-financial, influence employee motivation and behavior in the workplace. Angelova et al. (2018) found that increasing short-term

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incentives can significantly drive employee performance under certain conditions. However, the relationship between reward and performance is not linear, since psychological factors such as perceived fairness and individual expectations moderate the effectiveness of the reward system. Speckbacher and Wabnegg (2020) argued that well-designed incentives can stimulate knowledge-seeking behavior and innovation in the workplace. Even so, applying a reward system in a remote setting presents its own complexity, since direct supervision of employee behavior becomes limited. This is precisely why reward design in a remote setting cannot be separated from employee well-being, since a reward system built without attention to quality of work life tends to fail in maintaining motivation once physical supervision is no longer available (Eddine et al., 2021). Minimal supervision demands a redesign of reward mechanisms so they remain relevant to the dynamics of virtual work. Organizations need to consider how rewards can be given fairly and transparently without the physical presence that has traditionally formed the basis for observing daily work behavior.

Employee engagement is a crucial variable in determining organizational success in the era of remote work. Miller and Hill (2017) asserted that organizations wanting an engaged workforce must be deeply involved in supporting employee success at a fundamental level. This engagement covers emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects reflected in employees' enthusiasm and dedication toward their work. Stawicki et al. (2022) showed that emotional intelligence contributes to performance and creativity in knowledge-based work, which has become a dominant characteristic of the digital era. Positive psychological conditions play a similar role, since employees who feel psychologically supported tend to show stronger engagement and a firmer commitment to completing their work tasks (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2022). When employees work from home, the social interaction that traditionally serves as a source of engagement is significantly reduced. Informal meetings in the workspace, side conversations in hallways, and spontaneous moments of collaboration lose their role in building interpersonal relationships. As a result, organizations must look for alternative ways to foster a sense of belonging and engagement among geographically dispersed employees.

Organizational commitment, as a multidimensional construct, changes dynamically when applied in a remote work setting. Vandenberghe (2021) discussed the moderators that

influence affective organizational commitment and highlighted the complexity of the relationship between employees and companies under various working conditions. Affective commitment, which refers to emotional attachment to the organization, is highly sensitive to the influence of the physical work environment. Employees who work from home may experience a decline in identification with the organizational culture due to minimal exposure to collective rituals and norms. Dutta and Dhir (2021) developed a measure of employee loyalty covering the dimensions of commitment and engagement as important indicators of successful human resource management. Meanwhile, Newman and Ford (2022) argued that reciprocal loyalty between organization and employee can be built through signals of commitment given by the company to its workers. A conducive work environment, built through consistent HRM strategy, has also been shown to strengthen employees' organizational commitment, so this environment needs to be deliberately created even when work no longer takes place within a single physical space (Rojak et al., 2022). In remote work, such signals require greater effort because the physical interaction that naturally signals organizational attention and care is lost.

The application of a reward system in a remote work environment raises questions about the effectiveness of traditional incentives in maintaining employee commitment and engagement. Shaheen et al. (2020) examined the relationship between extrinsic rewards and creative performance while considering the mediating mechanisms and interaction effects involved. This study is relevant because remote work demands higher creativity and adaptability from employees. Darmaki et al. (2019) reviewed the role of reward in driving innovation, which has become an urgent need in the era of digital transformation. Sustainable human resource management practices also play a role here, since organizational commitment and employee innovative behavior tend to grow together when HRM policy is designed with long-term consistency rather than short-term response (Mardikaningsih, 2024). A reward system that is not aligned with the demands of virtual work can produce counterproductive effects, such as declining intrinsic motivation and a growing perception of unfairness. Osman et al. (2016) found that innovation contributes to employee performance, although innovation itself requires a supportive environment and an adequate incentive system. The absence of direct social interaction in remote work requires a redesign of the reward system that can accommodate employees'

need for recognition and appreciation without relying on physical observation.

The main problem arises from the mismatch between conventional reward system design and the characteristics of remote work, which demand greater autonomy and flexibility. Organizations often retain reward systems designed for a physical work environment even as employees move to a virtual work model without adequate adjustment. This mismatch reflects a broader need to reconfigure HRM practice itself, since flexibility and employer branding have become central considerations for organizations operating in the digital era, including in how rewards are structured (Mardikaningsih, 2025). Shalini (2020) observed the impact of reward and recognition on employee commitment in the banking sector and found that certain types of reward have different effects on the affective and continuance dimensions of commitment. This study indicates that not all forms of reward are effective in increasing commitment, especially when working conditions change fundamentally. Kase et al. (2025) highlighted the impact of wage dispersion and relative wage position on employee mobility, which becomes a critical issue when remote work allows employees to compare their compensation with a broader labor market. Unclear reward criteria in a virtual setting can trigger a perception of unfairness that damages employee trust in the organization.

Konovalova (2021) discussed employee recognition programs in the new reality and highlighted the need for an innovative approach to giving appreciation in the hybrid work era. Mngomezulu et al. (2015) found that recognition has a significant impact on talent retention, although the mechanism for giving recognition requires transparency and consistency to be effective. In a virtual environment, managers lose the opportunity to observe day-to-day contributions that were previously visible through direct interaction. This creates a risk that rewards are given based on narrowly measured output, overlooking prosocial behavior and collaboration that are equally important for team success. Nasir (2022) highlighted the importance of building a culture of appreciation even in the manufacturing industry, where physical work dominates production activity. The gap between what can be observed and what actually contributes to organizational success becomes a serious challenge in designing a reward system that is fair and effective for remote work.

Oorschot et al. (2021) examined the relationship between leadership style and psychological contract, which forms the foundation of the working

relationship in a complex setting. The psychological contract covers the unwritten reciprocal expectations between employee and organization, which are strongly affected by changes in how work is carried out. Youssef and Kadry (2024) studied the impact of leadership style on employee retention and performance, showing that leadership approaches require adjustment when working conditions change. A flexible and adaptive situational leadership style has been shown to strengthen employee engagement and support team development, an approach that becomes especially relevant when direct supervision can no longer be relied upon as before (Rojak & Darmawan, 2023). Qin (2024) analyzed the influence of corporate culture on employees' sense of belonging and found that cultural elements require a different communication strategy in a virtual environment. Organizations that manage HR policy with attention to environmental sustainability also tend to build a more sustainable organization overall, since HR strategy and sustainability considerations reinforce company performance together (Hariani et al., 2022). Organizations that fail to adjust their reward system to the reality of remote work risk losing their best talent and experiencing a long-term decline in productivity.

The purpose of this writing is to systematically examine the relationship between the reward system and employee engagement and organizational commitment among remote workers. This writing aims to build theoretical understanding regarding reward mechanisms in influencing the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of organizational commitment when physical interaction is limited and direct supervision is minimal. Through a comprehensive literature review, this research seeks to identify the elements of the reward system most relevant to the dynamics of remote work and explain the causal pathways connecting rewards to employee engagement and commitment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative literature study approach with a systematic conceptual analysis design. This method was chosen because the research aims to understand theoretical relationships between variables through the synthesis of knowledge already documented in scientific publications. The literature study approach allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and interpret findings from various previous studies without collecting primary data. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that qualitative literature studies provide a foundation

for the development of a robust conceptual framework through the integration of diverse theoretical perspectives. The data sources of this research consist of scientific journal articles, textbooks, and conference proceedings relevant to the topics of reward systems, employee engagement, and organizational commitment in remote work settings. The selection of sources is carried out through searches of leading academic databases using predetermined keywords. Inclusion criteria encompass publications that explicitly discuss the relationships between the research variables as well as publications presenting empirical findings from various organizational contexts.

The analysis procedure in this research follows a systematic workflow consisting of data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing from the gathered literature. Fink (2005) elaborates that a quality literature study requires clear search protocols and transparent selection criteria to minimize bias in decision-making. The initial stage of the research includes identifying primary keywords such as reward system, employee engagement, organizational commitment, remote work, and work from home. Searches are conducted on Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases with relevant publication year limitations to ensure the currency of information. Following the initial collection, a screening process is conducted based on the relevance of titles and abstracts to the research topic. Hart (2007) states that a good literature study must be able to map the field of knowledge being investigated and identify gaps that require further research. This research performs thematic analysis on the content of selected literature to identify patterns of relationships between the variables discussed. The validity of research findings is maintained through source triangulation and comparisons between findings from various studies with different designs and populations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The reward system in a remote work setting shows characteristics that differ from a conventional work environment. Kuai et al. (2025) proposed a configurational approach to total rewards, recognizing that combining various types of rewards produces different effects on employee motivation. This principle of resource allocation echoes the idea that organizational resources are managed more effectively when a reward system is structured around clear, sustainable principles rather than distributed on an ad hoc basis (Mardikaningsih & Nuraini, 2022). This approach is highly relevant for

remote work because employees hold varying preferences toward certain forms of reward. Some employees may value flexible working hours as a form of non-financial reward, while others prioritize financial incentives that can be felt directly. Ma and Lee (2025) found that perceptions of pay for performance influence innovative behavior through the mediation of work engagement. A structured reward system of this kind also tends to strengthen organizational performance overall, since practices built on clear operational principles are more likely to be sustained over time (Barzani et al., 2022). This finding indicates that the reward system does not directly influence employee behavior but works through complex psychological mechanisms. In remote work, employee perceptions of the fairness of the reward system become a key determinant, because minimal direct supervision reduces the validity of managers' subjective assessments. Technology plays an ambiguous role in this fairness, since the digital tools used to measure and distribute reward can either promote equal treatment or reinforce hidden bias depending on how they are designed and applied (Darmawan, 2024). Employees who perceive unfairness in reward distribution tend to show a decline in motivation and commitment toward the organization.

Employee engagement in a remote setting requires special attention because of the loss of social interaction elements that naturally foster engagement. Littleton (2023) highlighted the importance of mentoring in developing and preparing millennial leaders for succession, which is relevant to remote employees' need for guidance and professional support. Without a mentor's physical presence, the process of knowledge transfer and career development becomes more challenging and requires a structured approach. Ozkeser (2019) examined the impact of training on employee motivation in human resource management and found that investment in competency development correlates positively with the level of engagement. Structured efforts to build employee knowledge remain necessary even as routine tasks become increasingly automated, since automation alone does not guarantee sustained engagement without deliberate knowledge development (Darmawan, 2024). Yıldız and Topaylı (2024) examined positive psychological capital and academics' problem-solving ability, indicating that psychological dimensions such as self-efficacy and optimism play a role in maintaining engagement when working conditions change. A reward system designed with attention to career development and professional

growth can be an effective mechanism for maintaining the engagement of remote employees. Rewards in the form of training opportunities and certification demonstrate organizational commitment to individual growth beyond direct contribution to work.

Organizational commitment, as a multidimensional construct, shows varying degrees of vulnerability to changes in the work environment. Allen and Meyer (1990) defined affective commitment as an emotional attachment to the organization that depends heavily on the quality of interpersonal relationships and positive work experience. In a remote setting, building emotional attachment faces obstacles because of limited social interaction and a reduction in the collective rituals that reinforce organizational identity. Youssef and Kadry (2024) found that leadership style has a significant impact on employee retention and performance, showing that leader behavior becomes increasingly critical as face-to-face interaction decreases. A transformational leadership style has been shown to strengthen organizational commitment and job performance directly, suggesting that leaders who can inspire and connect with employees at a distance are better positioned to sustain this commitment (Al Hakim & Hariani, 2021). Oorschot et al. (2021) examined the psychological contract in working relationships and showed that the reciprocal expectations between employee and organization must be managed carefully under changing working conditions. A reward system consistent with organizational promises can strengthen normative commitment, which binds employees through a sense of reciprocal obligation. Conversely, inconsistency between promised and received rewards can erode trust and significantly reduce affective commitment.

The continuance commitment dimension, based on considerations of the cost of leaving the organization, is also affected by the reward system in remote work. Kase et al. (2025) studied the impact of wage dispersion and relative wage position on employee mobility, which becomes a critical issue as the labor market grows more transparent and competitive. Employees who work remotely have broader access to information about job opportunities in other organizations, which can influence their perception of the cost of leaving their current job. Devi et al. (2025) explored the impact of compensation and benefits on employee retention, emphasizing that financial factors remain an important consideration in the decision to stay or move. Coordination among team members also

matters here, since clear communication strategies for managing disagreement in geographically dispersed and culturally varied teams can reduce the friction that often pushes employees to consider other opportunities (Marsal & Darmawan, 2022). However, continuance commitment based solely on financial incentives has a weakness, because employees can easily move to another organization offering higher compensation. Vandenberghe (2021) discussed the moderators of affective organizational commitment and showed that contextual factors can strengthen or weaken the relationship between work experience and commitment. In remote work, a reward system that relies only on financial incentives without attention to psychological and social aspects may not be sufficient to maintain long-term commitment.

Normative commitment, which refers to a sense of obligation toward the organization, also shows a connection with the reward system in a remote setting. Newman and Ford (2022) argued that organizations can build employee loyalty through clear and consistent signals of commitment to worker welfare. These signals can take the form of fair and transparent reward policies, structured recognition programs, and attention to work-life balance in remote work. Youssef and Kadry (2024) found that inspiring transformational leadership can increase employee retention through the reinforcement of shared values. The way leaders uphold ethical standards also shapes this dynamic, since a leadership approach grounded in ethical principles tends to produce a more sustainable organizational culture, one where employees are more likely to trust that reward decisions reflect the values the organization claims to hold (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Qin (2024) analyzed the impact of corporate culture on employees' sense of belonging and emphasized the importance of consistently communicating organizational values. A reward system aligned with organizational values can strengthen normative commitment, because employees feel that their contributions are valued according to the principles the company upholds. Mngomezulu et al. (2015) found that recognition has a significant impact on talent retention, indicating that the non-financial aspects of the reward system play an important role in building long-term loyalty.

Innovation and creativity, as important elements in remote work, show an interesting relationship with the reward system and employee engagement. Shaheen et al. (2020) examined the mediating mechanisms and interaction effects in the relationship between extrinsic reward and creative

performance. Their findings show that extrinsic reward can drive creative performance when combined with internal factors such as intrinsic motivation and autonomy. Speckbacher and Wabnegg (2020) emphasized the role of knowledge exchange and deep knowledge-seeking behavior in motivating innovation, which requires specifically designed incentives. In a remote setting, innovation often emerges from virtual collaboration that requires effective coordination and information exchange. The process by which individual contributions are brought together into shared decisions also matters here, since the way ideas are mapped and organized within a team shapes how well collective input translates into innovative outcomes (Darmawan, 2024). Stawicki et al. (2022) showed that emotional intelligence contributes to performance and creativity in knowledge-based work, which is a defining characteristic of remote workers in the digital era. A reward system that encourages knowledge-sharing behavior and collaboration can increase engagement because employees feel that their contribution to team innovation is properly valued. Darmaki et al. (2019) emphasized the role of reward in driving innovation and found that appropriate rewards can stimulate innovative behavior at various levels of the organization.

Recognition, as an element of the reward system, plays a crucial role in maintaining the engagement and commitment of remote employees. Konovalova (2021) discussed employee recognition programs and the new reality, highlighting the need for an innovative approach to giving appreciation in the hybrid work era. An effective recognition program must take into account the characteristics of remote work, such as limited physical interaction and dependence on digital communication. Miller and Hill (2017) asserted that organizational involvement in employee success at a fundamental level is a prerequisite for an emotionally engaged workforce. Nasir (2022) discussed the importance of building a culture of appreciation and showed that public recognition of employee achievement can increase motivation and job satisfaction. In a virtual environment, recognition must be communicated through adequate digital channels so that all team members can see and celebrate their colleagues' achievements. A positive work climate built through authentic leadership tends to reinforce this pattern of recognition, since leaders who act consistently and genuinely encourage employees to display similar citizenship behavior toward one another (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). Hariani and

Mardikaningsih (2021) examined the implementation of value-based management in multinational organizations, showing that appreciation for individual contribution must be aligned with the collective values of the organization. A reward system that combines public recognition and personal appreciation can create an environment that supports emotional engagement and affective commitment.

Training and competency development, as a form of non-financial reward, show a significant impact on the engagement of remote employees. Ozkeser (2019) found that training contributes positively to employee motivation, especially when training programs are designed according to individual needs and job demands. Littleton (2023) highlighted the importance of mentoring in developing millennial leaders, which is relevant to remote employees' need for career guidance and professional support. Fared and Darmawan (2021) discussed the design and implementation of cross-functional training to improve team collaboration, an urgent need in remote work that demands high flexibility and adaptability. Training also carries broader value when it strengthens employees' capacity for creativity and innovation, since competency development that only targets task completion without cultivating creative thinking tends to produce limited gains in productivity (Darmawan, 2023). Yıldız and Topaylı (2024) examined positive psychological capital and found that competency development through training can increase employee self-efficacy and optimism. Sahoo et al. (2026) explored the enhancement of employee skills through artificial intelligence in organizational training, pointing to a new direction in human resource development in the digital era. The support employees receive through training also needs to be adjusted to the diversity of the workforce itself, since a support strategy that ignores differences in employee background tends to leave certain groups underserved despite the training being formally available to all (Hariani et al., 2021). Organizations that integrate training into the reward system show a commitment to employees' long-term growth, which in turn strengthens normative and affective commitment.

Financial compensation, as a component of the reward system, still carries influence over engagement and commitment, especially in remote work that demands additional investment from employees. Devi et al. (2025) explored the impact of compensation and benefits on employee retention and found that financial factors are an important

consideration in the decision to stay with an organization. Angelova et al. (2018) showed that increasing short-term incentives can significantly drive performance, though this effect may be temporary if not supported by other motivational factors. Ma and Lee (2025) examined the influence of pay-for-performance perceptions on innovative behavior through the mediation of work engagement, indicating that financial incentives require a clear and transparent framework. A clear framework of this kind is difficult to build without adequate data support, since compensation decisions made without proper analysis of employee performance and market position tend to produce inconsistent and hard-to-justify outcomes (Khairi & Darmawan, 2022). Kase et al. (2025) highlighted wage dispersion and relative wage position, which can influence employee mobility, especially as access to information about market compensation becomes easier for remote workers. When compensation is perceived as unfair or poorly explained, the resulting tension between employee and organization can escalate into disputes that require a clear legal or procedural mechanism to resolve, a risk that grows once employees work outside direct organizational oversight (Khayru, 2024). A competitive and fair financial reward system can reduce the perceived cost employees associate with leaving the organization, thereby strengthening continuance commitment. However, excessive dependence on financial incentives without attention to psychological and social aspects can result in shallow engagement that is vulnerable to changes in market conditions.

Organizational justice in reward distribution is an important moderating factor in the relationship between the reward system and the commitment of remote employees. Qin (2024) analyzed the impact of corporate culture on sense of belonging and showed that fairness in human resource policy is an important foundation for employees' psychological engagement. Mngomezulu et al. (2015) found that unfair or inconsistent recognition can damage employee trust and reduce talent retention. Darmawan et al. (2020) examined the relationship between the quality of human resources and employee loyalty, indicating that fair treatment in the reward system increases sense of belonging and commitment. Shalini (2020) observed the impact of reward and recognition on employee commitment in the banking sector and found that procedural fairness in reward distribution significantly influences affective commitment. This concern with fairness becomes sharper when the reward in

question is non-material, since employees tend to judge the fairness of recognition not only by whether it is given but by whether the criteria behind it are clear and consistently applied (Fared, 2025). In a remote setting, procedural fairness becomes more important because limited direct supervision makes employees more sensitive to potential bias in performance assessment. A transparent and consistent reward system can reduce perceptions of unfairness and strengthen employee trust in the organization. A well-integrated information system also supports this transparency, since decisions about reward tend to be perceived as fairer when the data and process behind them are traceable rather than left to individual managerial judgment (da Silva & Darmawan, 2023). Eddine et al. (2023) found that knowledge management and quality of work life influence employee commitment, showing that the reward system must be integrated with other human resource policies.

Organizational culture and collective values moderate the effectiveness of the reward system in shaping the engagement and commitment of remote employees. Hariani and Mardikaningsih (2021) examined the implementation of value-based management in multinational organizations and showed that a reward system aligned with cultural values can strengthen organizational identity. Darmawan (2024) studied the distribution of factors that improve organizational effectiveness and found that a culture supporting innovation and collaboration strengthens the impact of the reward system on performance. Putra et al. (2021) discussed organizational social capital and team collaboration as supports for total quality management, indicating that interpersonal relationships strengthen the effectiveness of the reward system. This cultural foundation also needs to account for the composition of the remote workforce itself, since a reward system that overlooks the position of older workers within digital-first arrangements risks leaving part of the workforce disconnected from the collective values it is meant to reinforce (Darmawan, 2023). In remote work, organizational culture must be actively communicated through various digital channels so that collective values remain embedded in employees' daily behavior. Darmawan et al. (2025) studied the influence of cultural values and work motivation on organizational citizenship behavior, showing that cultural values affect employees' prosocial behavior. This challenge of maintaining collective values at a distance is, in fact, part of a broader set of concerns already documented in

remote work research, covering how the arrangement affects work dynamics, psychological well-being, and social relationships among employees more generally (Darmawan, 2023). A reward system that recognizes and appreciates behavior aligned with the organization's cultural values can strengthen normative and affective commitment. Kurniawan and Darmawan (2021) studied the effects of adaptive learning, showing that the ability to adapt to changes in work culture becomes important in a dynamic environment.

Organizational citizenship behavior, as a form of voluntary contribution, shows a positive relationship with a well-designed reward system. Darmawan et al. (2025) examined the influence of cultural values and work motivation on organizational citizenship behavior in manufacturing companies. Their findings show that employees who feel valued and recognized tend to display extra-role behavior that goes beyond formal job duties. In a remote setting, organizational citizenship behavior becomes more important because coordination and collaboration require voluntary initiative from employees. Arifin and Mardikaningsih (2021) studied the influence of employability and organizational climate on employee performance, indicating that an environment supporting prosocial behavior increases overall productivity. Voluntary behavior of this kind tends to grow more consistently when human resource practice itself is organized around clear quality principles, since a workforce managed with attention to total quality tends to internalize standards of contribution rather than simply following instructions (Arifin et al., 2022). Shalini (2020) found that reward and recognition influence employee commitment, which in turn drives organizational citizenship behavior. This voluntary contribution is also easier to sustain in a culture that keeps pace with technological change without losing its human dimension, since innovation pursued purely for speed tends to crowd out the reflective space where prosocial behavior is formed (Darmawan, 2023). A reward system that recognizes collaborative contribution and helping behavior among coworkers can strengthen social bonds within virtual teams. Mardikaningsih and Darmawan (2021) discussed business sustainability strategy in facing regulatory uncertainty and highlighted that organizational citizenship behavior becomes an important resource in adapting to environmental change. Leadership grounded in ethical conduct and social responsibility further reinforces this pattern, since employees are more likely to extend voluntary effort when they see the organization itself acting

responsibly beyond formal obligation (Rojak & Darmawan, 2021).

Employee loyalty, as a consequence of an effective reward system, shows a complex relationship with engagement and commitment. Dutta and Dhir (2021) developed a measure of employee loyalty covering interrelated affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Newman and Ford (2022) argued that organizations can build loyalty through consistent signals of commitment to employee welfare, including fair and transparent reward policy. Tarihoran and Harsono (2025) explored the dynamics of employee loyalty in construction companies and found that a comprehensive reward system increases talent retention. Darmawan (2020) examined the retention and career mobility of senior employees within modern organizational dynamics, showing that loyalty is influenced by various factors including reward and recognition. Loyalty of this kind also depends on how well knowledge is retained and shared within the organization, since knowledge treated as a source of competitive advantage tends to keep experienced employees more attached to the organization holding it (Darmawan, 2023). In remote work, loyalty becomes more fragile because employees have greater access to labor market opportunities and social ties to the organization become looser. Mardikaningsih and Darmawan (2022) discussed digital human resource practices in remote work systems and highlighted that the reward system must adapt to digital realities. The stories and shared symbols an organization builds around its identity also play a part in this loyalty, since employees tend to stay attached longer when they see themselves reflected in a narrative larger than their individual role (Kurniawan et al., 2021). A reward system that preserves elements of personal appreciation and sincere recognition can act as a safeguard against rising employee mobility in the era of remote work. This safeguard is strengthened further when reward decisions are visibly grounded in ethical principle, since employees who trust that decisions follow a consistent ethical standard are less inclined to question the organization's intentions (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022).

The psychological contract, as the basis of the working relationship, offers an important lens for understanding the effectiveness of the reward system in remote work. Oorschot et al. (2021) examined leadership style and psychological contract, finding that responsive leadership

strengthens employees' positive expectations of the organization. Leadership style adapted to the situation at hand appears especially relevant here, since a leader who adjusts their approach to a multicultural or dispersed team tends to sustain these expectations more consistently than one applying a single fixed style (Gardi et al., 2024). The psychological contract covers implicit beliefs about the reciprocity between employee contribution and the reward the organization provides. In a remote setting, the psychological contract is more easily broken because of limited communication and minimal interpersonal interaction that would otherwise reinforce shared understanding. Mardikaningsih and Darmawan (2022) discussed digital human resource practices in remote work systems and showed that digitalized human resource practice requires special attention to the psychological contract. Vandenberghe (2021) emphasized that moderators of affective commitment include employees' perception of how well the organization keeps its promises. Part of what the organization implicitly promises now extends to employee well-being itself, since treating mental health as a legitimate organizational concern, rather than a private matter, has become part of how the psychological contract is understood in workplace design (Issalillah & Khayru, 2025). A reward system consistent with employees' psychological contract can strengthen affective and normative commitment, while violations of this contract can result in a significant decline in engagement. Eddine and Darmawan (2021) discussed professional, manual, and informal workers in achieving work-life balance, indicating that the psychological contract varies across worker groups.

The shift in work paradigm toward a remote model demands a transformation in the approach to the reward system and human resource management as a whole. Darmawan (2021) examined the implementation of agile project management in a dynamic business environment, relevant to organizations' need to adapt to changing work patterns. Mardikaningsih and Darmawan (2021) discussed business sustainability strategy in facing uncertainty and managerial challenges, which includes adjusting the reward system to new operational realities. This adjustment is easier to carry through when the change itself is communicated deliberately, since a reward system redesign tends to be accepted more smoothly when employees understand the reasoning behind it rather than experiencing it as an abrupt shift (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). Alcover et al.

(2021) proposed a framework of worker vulnerability to aging and technology, showing that demographic factors influence responses to changes in the work system. Employees' confidence in their own capacity to handle technological change also shapes this response, since a stronger sense of self-efficacy tends to make adaptation to new digital work arrangements feel less threatening (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). In remote work, the reward system must account for the diversity of worker characteristics, including age, experience, and individual preference toward certain forms of reward. Putra et al. (2022) discussed employee experience in the digital workplace and highlighted that work design attentive to employee experience increases engagement and commitment. Adapting to a changed environment is not unique to organizational settings; a similar pattern of adjustment grounded in social and cultural context has been observed when groups respond collectively to external disruption, suggesting that adaptation itself follows recognizable patterns regardless of setting (Oluwatoyin & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Vlasov (2025) proposed an adaptive algorithm for project management in dynamic environments, which can be applied in designing a flexible reward system. Coordinating this adjustment becomes more demanding once teams span different cultural backgrounds, since communication practice suited to a single cultural context often fails to carry the same meaning across a geographically and culturally mixed team (Sajjapong & Irfan, 2022). Organizations that successfully adjust the reward system to the characteristics of remote work will be able to maintain employee engagement and commitment over the long term.

The synergy between the reward system, employee engagement, and organizational commitment in remote work requires an integrated and sustained approach. Kuai et al. (2025) proposed a configurational approach to total rewards, recognizing that combining various types of reward produces a synergy greater than the individual effect of each component. This approach is relevant for remote work because employees have diverse needs and different preferences toward certain forms of reward. Ma and Lee (2025) found that perceptions of pay for performance influence innovative behavior through the mediation of work engagement, indicating that the reward system must be designed to encourage desired behavior. Littleton (2023) highlighted the importance of mentoring in developing leaders, showing that the reward system must include career development opportunities as a

form of non-financial reward. Ozkeser (2019) found that training increases employee motivation, indicating that investment in competency development is an effective form of reward. Training delivered through more interactive methods appears to reinforce this effect further, since approaches that make learning feel engaging rather than obligatory tend to produce stronger participation and retention of what is learned (Eddine & Darmawan, 2022). Konovalova (2021) discussed recognition programs in the new reality and emphasized that sincere and timely appreciation has a significant impact on engagement. The value of any reward ultimately depends on the employee's actual capability and effort behind the outcome being rewarded, since performance itself has been shown to result from the interplay of experience, ability, and motivation together, not from any single factor in isolation (Sinambela & Ernawati, 2021). A reward system that combines financial incentives, recognition, training, and career development opportunities will be more effective in maintaining the engagement and commitment of remote employee.

CONCLUSION

The reward system has a significant influence on employee engagement and organizational commitment in remote work settings. This influence occurs through a multidimensional mechanism involving financial and non-financial aspects of rewards, perceptions of organizational justice, and the alignment of rewards with cultural values and employee psychological contracts. The dimensions of affective, continuance, and normative commitment show different vulnerabilities to changes in the work environment, with affective commitment being the most affected by reduced social interaction in remote work. An effective reward system in a virtual environment must be designed by considering the limitations of direct observation and employees' needs for transparent and consistent recognition and appreciation. The combination of financial incentives, public recognition, training, and career development opportunities shows synergy in building engagement and maintaining long-term commitment. Procedural and distributive justice in reward allocation serve as important moderating factors to prevent perceptions of unfairness that can erode employee trust in the organization.

Organizations need to develop objective and measurable performance evaluation criteria without ignoring collaborative contributions and prosocial behaviors that are difficult to observe directly. Training programs and competency development

need to be integrated as part of the reward system to meet employees' needs for career growth and skills enhancement.

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