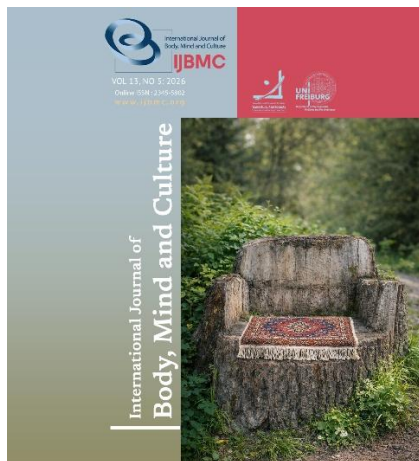


Article type:
Original Research

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Article history:

Received 17 Feb 2026
Revised 22 Mar 2026
Accepted 01 Apr 2026
Published online 01 May 2026

How to cite this article:

Njoto, H. H., Suryanto, & Fajrianti. (2026). Transformational Leadership and Affective Commitment Among Local Legislators: Mediating Roles of Social Identity and Social Exchange. *International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture*, 13(5), Article e2026-1329. <https://doi.org/10.61838/ijbmc.v13i5.1329>



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Transformational Leadership and Affective Commitment Among Local Legislators: Mediating Roles of Social Identity and Social Exchange

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examined the effect of transformational leadership on affective commitment among district- and city-level Regional People's Representative Council members in East Java, Indonesia, with social identity and social exchange as mediating variables.

Methods and Materials: This quantitative cross-sectional survey included 287 DPRD members from political party organizations in East Java Province, recruited through snowball sampling via WhatsApp distribution. Data were collected using adapted scales measuring affective commitment, transformational leadership, social identity, and social exchange. The measurement and structural models were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling.

Findings: The model showed acceptable fit and predictive relevance, with SRMR = 0.072 and Q² values of 0.29 for social identity, 0.34 for social exchange, and 0.43 for affective commitment. Transformational leadership directly predicted affective commitment ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.42$), social exchange ($\beta = 0.59$, $p = 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.47$), and social identity ($\beta = 0.64$, $p = 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.52$). Social identity ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.21$) and social exchange ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.18$) also significantly predicted affective commitment. Indirect effects through social identity ($\beta = 0.203$, $p < 0.001$) and social exchange ($\beta = 0.168$, $p = 0.001$) were significant, indicating partial mediation.

Conclusion: Transformational leadership strengthens affective commitment among DPRD members both directly and indirectly through social identity and social exchange.

Keywords: Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Social Identification, Social Support, Politics, Organizational Culture.

Introduction

Post-reform, political party life in Indonesia continues to exhibit institutional dynamics that require improvement. This is evident in member transfers between parties. Beyond the grassroots level, member transfers are also carried out by political party members who hold positions and influence. Member transfers also occur not only in small parties but also in large, established parties in Indonesia, such as the Golongan Karya Party and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) (Hermanto et al., 2024). This phenomenon of political party transfer is known as the *Kutu Joncat*, namely the process of moving from one party to another (Udayana, 2014). Furthermore, there is a phenomenon of massive party switching among legislative members in the lead-up to elections, known as legislative candidate hijacking. The transfer of political parties by members currently holding office, especially those in the DPRD, has broader negative impacts (Fadli et al., 2018). Committed members of political parties must have a sense of identification, involvement, and loyalty. Low affective commitment among political party members makes them less inclined to fulfill their primary duties and functions, thereby contributing to poor party performance.

Affective commitment is also an essential determinant of organizational members' dedication and loyalty. (Maltin, 2011; Meyer et al., 2002) explain that of the three types of commitment, affective commitment has proven most beneficial in organizations. A member with high affective commitment can show a sense of belonging to the organization, increased involvement in organizational activities, a desire to achieve organizational goals, and a desire to remain in the organization (Postmes et al., 2001). Based on the results of the preliminary study and the previously reviewed SLR, it can be concluded that political party member turnover is a form of organizational commitment problem, particularly regarding members' affective commitment to the organization. Commitment to political parties is also influenced by transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 2004; Budiharto & Koentjoro, 2004; Gulluce et al., 2016; Nugroho, 2011; Shrestha & Mishra, 2011). Transformational leadership can bring about changes in the organization's vision, strategy, and culture. This leadership encourages leaders to both

appreciate and challenge their members in problem-solving, so members feel more attached to their organization. In this case, the leader's role is essential because they ensure goals and values, set direction, foster community, and manage change.

Today's leaders must possess adaptive skills to changes both within and outside the organization they lead (Budiharto & Koentjoro, 2004). A leader's leadership must adapt to the conditions of the organizational environment. Organizations that can survive these rapid changes must have leaders who can balance internal and external changes. Transformational leadership is most suited to a climate of rapid change (Demirtas, 2020). In a political context, for aspiring leaders and politicians, especially those who will become regional leaders, possessing a transformational character is crucial to driving a leap forward for the areas they lead (Adriansyah et al., 2025). Even large parties need to implement internal reforms to enhance party stability (Budiharto & Koentjoro, 2004). Transformational leadership was studied because it was deemed most appropriate to the context in this study, namely, leadership in political parties.

In addition to transformational leadership factors, commitment to political parties is also influenced by social identity (Curtis & Eby, 2010; Matherne et al., 2017; Postmes et al., 2001). Social identity is part of a person's self-concept that arises from their knowledge of belonging to a social group, along with the value and emotional significance of that membership. Social identity is related to involvement, a sense of caring, and a sense of pride from membership in a particular group (Tajfel, 2010). Social identity in the context of leadership holds that leaders are also part of the group they lead.

Members' affective commitment to the organization, as explained previously, has yielded inconsistent results across studies (research gap), particularly regarding the factors of transformational leadership and social identity. Likewise, with transformational leadership, some studies state that transformational leadership has a significant effect on organizational commitment (Avolio et al., 2004; Budiharto & Koentjoro, 2004; Gulluce et al., 2016; Nugroho, 2011; Shrestha & Mishra, 2011), but in other studies, it states that transformational leadership has no significant effect on organizational

commitment (Mitonga-Monga, 2020; Nugroho, 2011). Research on social identity has found that organizational commitment is significantly influenced by it (Curtis & Eby, 2010; Haslam et al., 2006; Matherne et al., 2017). Differences in the research context may explain discrepancies in Nugroho's (2011) results. One study in the education sector showed a significant effect of transformational leadership on organizational commitment, while another study in the local government sector found no significant effect. This difference is likely due to variations in sample characteristics, measurement instruments, and cultural and organizational conditions. Therefore, the inconsistent results indicate the need for further research in a political context, particularly among members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD).

The review of the research gap above shows that differences remain in the effects of transformational leadership and social identity on members' commitment to the organization. Therefore, this study re-examines the influence of these factors on member commitment to the organization in a different research context, namely, political parties, to determine whether the results are similar or different. Based on the research gap review above, the novelties of this study include: first, the research context is political parties, specifically political party members, namely the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Research on organizational commitment in the context of political parties in Indonesia has been conducted previously (Budiharto & Koentjoro, 2004; Udayana, 2014). However, these three studies focused on partisans and party functionaries, not specifically targeting party members who already hold positions as council members. Council members are political party members who hold positions in government agencies and can exert significant influence on public political participation. Therefore, if members of a political party are highly committed to it, the public will have greater trust in and support for the party. The affective bond between individuals and political parties encourages defense mechanisms that uphold values and prejudices against political opponents. In contrast, partisans and functionaries with a high level of commitment to political parties cannot influence public political participation. Based on this review, it is necessary to conduct research

with political party members, namely, council members, as subjects.

Based on the aforementioned research gap, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on DPRD members as the research sample. The dynamics of DPRD members' commitment differ from those of ordinary functionaries or partisans because they are officeholders with formal positions within government institutions. This difference arises from greater political incentives stemming from direct access to resources, funds, and strategic positions; higher career risks, as switching parties directly affects the sustainability of political positions; more complex switching costs encompassing social, political, and reputational aspects; and more complex patronage relationships with party elites and political networks. Therefore, DPRD members' affective commitment has broad implications for local political stability and public trust in parties. Thus, this study makes a substantive contribution by extending the study of organizational commitment into a political context and highlighting how transformational leadership, social identity, and social exchange interact to shape DPRD members' loyalty.

Social exchange is a mediating variable because its benefits are often reciprocal (Mitonga-Monga, 2020). For example, when a leader displays high levels of respect, honesty, and altruism (concern for others), individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment (Hansen et al., 2013), better performance (Shafique et al., 2018), and reduced absenteeism and turnover intentions (Lin & Liu, 2017). To enhance individual commitment, organizations should direct leadership development programs to focus, in part, on understanding how perceptions of social exchange and leadership qualities shape it. For example, human resource practices might focus on fair transactions that foster interpersonal connections (social exchange relationships) between superiors and subordinates. These interactions can have consequences for the organization, including reduced turnover (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Research hypotheses: Transformational leadership has a direct effect on affective commitment (H1). Social identity directly affects affective commitment (H2). Social exchange directly affects affective commitment (H3). Transformational leadership has a direct effect on social exchange (H4). Transformational leadership directly affects social identity (H5). Social identity

mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and affective commitment (H6). Social

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. It focused on testing theoretically hypothesized associations, namely the mediating role of social identity and social exchange in the relationship between transformational leadership and affective commitment.

Participants

The sample in this study consisted of members of political parties currently serving in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) at the City and Regency levels in East Java Province. The sample was collected using a snowball sampling method. The survey was conducted among members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) at the Regency and City levels in East Java Province, which is divided into five regional coordination bodies. 350 were invited to fill positions with a minimum term of one term, and 287 responded, resulting in a total sample of 287.

Instruments

The fourth variable was measured using a measuring instrument adapted by the researcher, namely the 8 indicator affective commitment scale (ACS) (Allen & Meyer, 1990); transformational leadership using a commitment measuring instrument using the 5 namely attributional idealized influence (AII), behavioral idealized influence (BII), intellectual stimulation (IS), inspirational motivation (IM), individualized consideration (IC), Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) compiled by Bass & Riggio (2006) which was further developed by Batista-Foguet et al., (2021); social identity using *Three-Factor Model of Social Identity* with 3 indicator namely ingroup ties (IT), centrality (cnt), ingroup affect (InA) Cameron (2004); social exchange using *Amalgamated Measure of Social Exchange* Colquitt et al., (2014) 3 indicator (direct measures, affect-based trust, exchange quality). The responses were structured with four choices: 1. "Strongly disagree" 2. "Disagree" 3. "Neutral" 4. "Agree" 5. "Strongly agree".

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used is partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), a

exchange mediates the transformational leadership on affective commitment (H7)

multivariate technique for examining complex relationships among latent variables (Hair et al., 2021). The stages in SEM analysis are the evaluation of the measurement model and the passing of the assumption tests, namely normality, with the provision that the critical ratio (cr) value is used. If the CR value exceeds ± 2.58 , the data distribution is not normal, and the outlier test passes.

Research Procedure

This research was conducted in three stages: the first stage, with members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) at the City/Regency level, focused on political parties. Next, initial interviews were conducted with several members of the DPRD at the City/Regency level to identify factors influencing affective commitment to their political parties. The second stage was the adaptation of the measurement instruments. This study used four measurement instruments adapted to the Indonesian context and language. The adaptation process used by the International Test Commission (Meyer et al., 2017) in the Test Adaptation Guidelines. The original draft measurement instrument was translated into Indonesian, then reviewed by three expert reviewers, after which a convergent validity index was applied, until finally the measurement instrument was finalized. The third stage was the research stage. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms from September to October 2025. The online research questionnaire, available at <http://s.id/penelitianherlina>, was distributed through a WhatsApp group in a chain to respondents. The author requested that other respondents also distribute the questionnaire. A total of 287 respondents met the research criteria.

Findings and Results

Evaluation of measurement models. The criteria for testing a fit SEM model are evaluated by comparing. Hair et al. (2021) stated that the evaluation of the reflective measurement model consists of a loading factor ≥ 0.70 , Composite reliability ≥ 0.70 , average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50), and an evaluation of discriminant validity using HTMT, Fornell, and Lacker criteria ≥ 0.400 . The results are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1*Loading Factor, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted Measurement Model*

No.	Konstruk (Latent)	Indikator (Observed)	Loading faktor	Average Variance Extracted (Lisak & Harush)	Composite Reliability (CR)
1	Social Exchange	Z_DM	0.8	0.52	0.75
		Z_AbT	0.81		
		Z_EQ	0.5		
2	Commitment Affective	Y_AC1	0.59	0.52	0.89
		Y_AC2	0.77		
		Y_AC3	0.61		
		Y_AC4	0.68		
		Y_AC5	0.94		
		Y_AC6	0.93		
		Y_AC7	0.62		
		Y_AC8	0.51		
3	Transformational Leadership	X_AII	0.78	0.57	0.86
		X_BII	0.57		
		X_IS	0.78		
		X_IM	0.56		
		X_IC	0.99		
4	Social Identity	XI_nT	0.53	0.62	0.82
		X_Cen	0.99		
		X_InA	0.77		

Validity testing shows that the loading factor values for all indicators meet the minimum requirement of 0.5. When the loading factor values range from 0.53 to 0.99, it is concluded that all indicators are valid for measuring or explaining the construct variables. Furthermore, the reliability test results, as shown in the table above,

indicate AVE values ranging from 0.52 to 0.62 and CR values ranging from 0.75 to 0.89. All AVE and CR values obtained have met the criteria. The conclusion is that the factor variables (constructs) in the measurement model are reliable.

Table 2*Discriminant Validity HTMT*

	Social exchange (Z)	Social identity (M)	Transformational leadership (X)
Social exchange (M)			
Social identity (M)	0.742		
Transformational leadership (X)	0.793	0.733	
Commitment affective (Y)	0.587	0.641	0.514

Based on the analysis above, the HTMT values for each pair were less than 0.90, indicating that the discriminant validity requirement was met. To strengthen the results

of the discriminant validity analysis, the researcher conducted a Fornell-Lacker discriminant analysis. The results are as follows:

Table 3

Discriminant fornell lacker

	Social exchange (Z)	Social identity (M)	Transformational leadership (X)	Commitment affective (Y)
Social exchange (M)	0.763			
Social identity (M)	0.531	0.785		
Transformational leadership (X)	0.438	0.673	0.854	
Commitment affective (Y)	0.454	0.515	0.689	0.714

Discriminant validity evaluation needs to be conducted using the Fornell-Lacker criteria. Discriminant validity is a form of evaluation to ensure that variables are theoretically distinct and empirically proven/statistically tested. Based on the results, discriminant validity has been met because the researcher used the Fornell-Lacker criterion, which requires each pair of constructs to be greater than 0.400.

Next, an evaluation of the structural model was conducted.

Evaluation of the structural model. The evaluation of the structural model was conducted by examining multicollinearity among variables using the Inner VIF value. An Inner VIF value below 5 indicates the absence of multicollinearity among variables (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4

Multicolinierity

Variabel	VIF
Transformational leadership → Affective commitment	1.700
Social identity → Affective commitment	1.500
Social exchange → Affective commitment	1.300
Transformasional leadership -> Social exchange (Me)	1.285
Transformational leadership -> social identity (Me)	1.110

The analysis results show that the inner VIF is <5, indicating low multicollinearity among variables. This result confirms the robustness of the parameter estimation results in SEM PLS, particularly in the mediator analysis (unbiased).

The SRMR value of 0.072 indicates that the model has an acceptable fit. Meanwhile, social identity $Q^2 = 0.29$, social exchange $Q^2 = 0.34$, and affective commitment $Q^2 = 0.43$, indicating that the model has predictive relevance.

Table 5

Direct hypothesis

Hypothesis	β	p-value	95% CI		F ²
			CI Lower	CI Upper	
H1. Transformational leadership → Affective commitment	0.29	0.001	0.19	0.39	0.42
H2. Social identity → Affective commitment	0.31	0.000	0.21	0.41	0.21
H3. Social exchange → Affective commitment	0.27	0.000	0.17	0.37	0.18
H4. Transformasional leadership -> Social exchange (Me)	0.59	0.001	0.49	0.69	0.47
H5. Transformational leadership -> social identity (Me)	0.64	0.001	0.54	0.74	0.52

Based on the analysis that has been done, it was found that (H1) is accepted, namely transformational leadership can directly influence the affective commitment of members of the regional representative council from political parties, as evidenced by a p value <0.05 ($p = 0.001$; $\beta = 0.29$), the contribution of

transformational leadership can predict affective commitment is classified as high ($f^2 = 0.42$). Meanwhile, (H2) is accepted, namely, social identity can influence the affective commitment of members of the regional representative council from political parties, as evidenced by a p-value <0.05 ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.31$). Social

identity contributes to predicting affective commitment with a moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.21$). In addition, (H3) is accepted: social exchange influences affective commitment, as evidenced by a p -value < 0.05 ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.27$). The contribution of social exchange to affective commitment is classified as moderate ($f^2 = 0.18$). Then (H4) is accepted: transformational leadership can influence social exchange, as evidenced by a p -value < 0.05 ($p = 0.001$; $\beta = 0.59$). The contribution of

transformational leadership in predicting social exchange is relatively high ($f^2 = 0.47$). (H5) accepted transformational leadership can influence social identity as evidenced by the p -value < 0.05 ($p = 0.001$; $\beta = 0.64$). Transformational leadership contributes to predicting social identity, which is classified as high ($f^2 = 0.52$). Furthermore, Hair et al. (2021) explained that the contribution of influence in a model can be seen in F^2 values of 0.02 (low), 0.15 (moderate), and 0.35 (high).

Table 6

Indirect hypothesis

Mediation Pathway	β	p-value	95% CI		
			t value	CI Lower	CI Upper
H6. Transformational leadership → Social identity → Affective commitment	0.203	0.000	3.981	0.115	0.291
H7. Transformational leadership → Social exchange → Affective commitment	0.168	0.001	3.217	0.082	0.254

Based on the analysis, transformational leadership influences affective commitment through social identity, as evidenced by a p -value < 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). The mediating effect of social identity is partial. Furthermore, transformational leadership influences affective

commitment through the social exchange of regional representative council members from political parties, as evidenced by a p -value < 0.05 ($p = 0.001$). The mediating effect of social exchange is partial.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research results show that transformational leadership significantly influences the affective commitment of members of the regional representative council from political parties. This finding indicates that when leaders inspire, provide a clear vision, and foster trust, individuals within the organization tend to feel a strong emotional attachment to shared tasks and goals (Canterino et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2025). The affective commitment that emerges is not simply a response to formal rules, but rather a reflection of a sense of belonging and belief in the values espoused by the organization (Ameer et al., 2025).

Psychologically, transformational leadership creates conditions that support the internalization of organizational values through identification (Azinga et al., 2023). Leaders who demonstrate personal attention, provide support, and encourage visionary thinking can generate intrinsic motivation. This triggers feelings of appreciation and recognition, so that individuals are not only contractually but also emotionally bound (Iqbal et al., 2023). Therefore, it can strengthen the perception

that organizational success, in this case a political party, is part of personal success, thereby ultimately increasing affective commitment (Fitriiningrum et al., 2025). The contribution of transformational leadership to a relatively high level of affective commitment indicates that this influence is not merely symbolic but substantive in shaping attitudes and behavior. When individuals perceive leadership that inspires and provides meaning, they are encouraged to participate actively and maintain loyalty (Fitriiningrum et al., 2025; Jan et al., 2025). Thus, transformational leadership serves not only as a structural driver but also as a psychological catalyst, fostering deep emotional attachment to political parties.

Social identity significantly influences the affective commitment of political party representatives to regional representative councils. This finding indicates that a strong social identity can foster emotional attachment to the political organization they represent (Latif et al., 2025). When individuals feel part of a group, an internal drive arises to maintain that relationship (Alya et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2025). This aligns with

social identity theory, which emphasizes that group membership provides individuals with a sense of security, recognition, and meaning (Wang & Binti Omar, 2023). This attachment is not only cognitive but also emotional. Internalized social identity fosters pride and loyalty toward the political group represented (Xie & Ma, 2026). These feelings trigger affective commitment, namely the desire to remain in the organization because of an emotional bond, not solely due to obligation or instrumental gain. In other words, individuals with a strong social identity will more easily develop deep commitment because they feel their presence makes a real contribution to achieving shared goals.

The contribution of social identity to affective commitment in this study was moderate, indicating its significant influence in shaping members' attitudes toward the organization. This can be explained by the psychological dynamics of group self-identification, which, in turn, strengthens the sense of belonging (Zhang et al., 2024). When individuals internalize a political party's values as part of their identity, their emotional commitment strengthens. This process creates a reciprocal relationship between identity and commitment, where strengthening one aspect strengthens the other (Mittal et al., 2022). Strategies that emphasize strengthening shared values, symbols, and collective narratives can deepen members' emotional attachment to the organization. Psychologically, this not only builds loyalty but also creates intrinsic motivation and a readiness to contribute more (Adriansyah et al., 2025; Rahayu et al., 2025). Thus, social identity serves as a foundation that connects individuals to the organization through strong emotional bonds.

The results of the study indicate that social exchange has a significant influence on affective commitment. This finding indicates that reciprocal relationships within an organization can create stronger emotional attachments in individuals (Canterino et al., 2024). Psychologically, when individuals perceive fairness, support, and appreciation in social interactions, a deep sense of belonging and connectedness to the organization emerges. This influence can be explained by social exchange theory, which posits that individuals tend to reciprocate positive treatment with greater commitment. When organizations provide support and meet expectations, individuals interpret this as a valuable form of social investment (Mittal et al., 2022; Xie

& Ma, 2026). This cognitive process leads to the perception that the organization is worth maintaining, and affective commitment develops as an emotional response to consistent positive experiences. The contribution of social exchange in predicting affective commitment is classified. This indicates that, although its influence is not dominant, social exchange remains an important factor in the formation of emotional attachment (Zhang et al., 2024). Overall, these findings confirm that affective commitment is not simply a result of formal contracts but rather is influenced by the quality of established social relationships. Social exchange acts as a psychological mechanism that strengthens feelings of connectedness through positive experiences and perceptions of fairness. Therefore, organizations that foster healthy and supportive social interactions will be more successful in creating sustained affective commitment (Won et al., 2025).

Mediation analysis indicates that social identity partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and affective commitment. This means that some of the influence of transformational leadership on affective commitment occurs directly, while others are mediated through social identity. This finding indicates that while social identity is important (Huang et al., 2021), transformational leadership still has direct power in building council members' emotional commitment to a political organization. This confirms that leadership characteristics such as inspiration, a clear vision, and personal support can create a sense of belonging without relying entirely on group identification (Waqas et al., 2025). The partial mediation role of social identity also suggests that psychological processes within board members are influenced not only by interpersonal relationships with leaders but also by perceptions of shared values and goals within the political group (Jinghe, 2023). Social identity strengthens a sense of belonging, making individuals more willing to invest energy and commitment to organizational success (Mittal et al., 2022; Wang & Binti Omar, 2023). However, due to its partial nature, the influence of transformational leadership remains dominant, meaning leaders can directly shape affective commitment through effective communication, motivation, and the creation of a supportive work environment. These findings imply that strategies for strengthening social identity must go

hand in hand with the development of transformational leadership qualities to create optimal synergy.

High affective commitment among council members arises not only from internal factors but also from social identification processes. Transformational leadership fosters a strong social identity in which individuals feel vital to the political group. This social identity strengthens a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization, thus increasing affective commitment (Li et al., 2023). Thus, transformational leadership serves as a catalyst for the formation of emotional bonds through social identification mechanisms. Leaders who inspire, motivate, and foster a sense of community will be more effective at increasing council members' affective commitment. Furthermore, social identity management strategies should be considered to ensure members feel connected to the organization's values and goals (Lisak & Harush, 2021). By combining these two factors, political organizations can build a strong foundation for sustainable and effective performance.

Mediation analysis indicates that social identity partially mediates the effect of transformational leadership on affective commitment, meaning that the influence of transformational leadership on affective commitment does not flow entirely through social identity. Some influence remains direct; thus, transformational leadership has intrinsic power in shaping affective commitment. This indicates that although social identity is important, leadership qualities that inspire and provide vision remain key to fostering members' emotional attachment to the organization. This partial mediation also confirms that the formation of social identity is not the sole mechanism linking transformational leadership to affective commitment. Other factors such as perceptions of fairness, trust in the leader, and experiences of interactions within the organization can also influence this process (Ghasemi et al., 2025; Majali et al., 2025). Thus, political organizations need to pay attention to broader social dynamics to optimize the influence of transformational leadership through various psychological pathways.

These findings align with social identity theory, which states that individuals tend to internalize group values and norms when they feel part of a group (Mittal et al., 2022; Wang & Binti Omar, 2023). Transformational leadership, in which leaders emphasize a collective vision and shared values, strengthens members' social

identity. However, because mediation is partial, strategies to strengthen social identity must be combined with consistent leadership practices that foster positive interpersonal relationships to foster a more comprehensive affective commitment. The link between transformational leadership and affective commitment is explained through social exchange mechanisms. Leaders who demonstrate concern, support, and appreciation for members' contributions create positive reciprocal relationships (Won et al., 2025). This relationship encourages members to demonstrate greater loyalty and dedication to the organization (Hardiansyah et al., 2025), thereby fostering a stronger affective commitment. These findings have practical implications: strengthening transformational leadership should be accompanied by strategies that support the formation of social identity (Asif et al., 2025). These efforts can be achieved through inclusive communication, the creation of shared values, and the recognition of individual roles within the group (Dongrey & Rokade, 2024). Thus, political organizations can sustainably enhance members' affective commitment, ultimately positively impacting organizational performance and stability.

This study provides some important theoretical implications. First, this study extends the literature on transformational leadership to the context of political organizations, particularly at the local legislative level, an area that remains relatively underexplored empirically. Second, the findings of this study confirm the relevance of Social Identity Theory and Social Exchange Theory as complementary theoretical frameworks in explaining affective commitment. Third, by examining the dual mediation model, this study contributes to the development of leadership theory by offering an integrative approach that simultaneously explains psychological and relational pathways.

Despite its important contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional research design limits long-term causal inference. Second, the use of perceptual data may introduce subjective bias among respondents, as the sampling method used WhatsApp chat. Third, the study's focus on a single province limits the generalizability of the findings to broader political contexts. Fourth, there are gaps in the control variables (age, tenure, education, party size, and party switching history).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the influence of transformational leadership on the affective commitment of DPRD members within political party organizations, with social identity and social exchange as mediating mechanisms. The results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on affective commitment, either directly or indirectly through social identity and social exchange. Strengthening the collective identity and quality of the reciprocal relationship between leaders and members has proven to be an important pathway that strengthens affective loyalty. Thus, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership process in complex and dynamic political organizations. Further research is recommended to adopt a longitudinal design, expand the regional scope to include multiple provinces, and consider additional variables, such as organizational party culture, internal conflict, and external political pressures, to enrich our understanding of the dynamics of leadership and commitment in political organizations.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude and appreciation to all participants.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently, with personal funding, and without financial support from any governmental or private institution or organization.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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