

# IDENTIFYING THE PERSONAL KEY FACTORS OF LOW ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT WHICH AFFECT ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN COURSE-BASED STUDENT-COMPOSED BUSINESS TEAM

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## Abstract

*Studies showed that human resource is the key driver of the industry, especially in small businesses like start-ups. As a type of company that embodied a rapid disruption strategy, each member has their own paramount value to the team. To maintain a high-performing effective team, each member is required to have high organizational commitment, especially when the members are university students as there are plenty of self-development choices ahead. Therefore this research was conducted to find out what key factors that may decrease the level of organizational commitment. This research used a qualitative phenomenological approach where three informants from a course-based start-up were interviewed, in which the results were further analyzed through coding procedures. The analysis showed that (1) Industry interest; (2) Purpose of joining the company; and (3) Internalization of the company's value are responsible to drive down members' commitment, either directly affecting, or through mediating and/or moderating variables of personal and/or organizational conditions*

### Keyword :

*Organizational Commitment,  
Organizational Performance,  
Startup, University Students*

## 1. BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, start-ups have emerged and developed sporadically in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has participated in addressing this phenomenon with much attention. There have been many government statements, policies, and facilities that continue to provide support for start-up growth, ranging from workshops, bootcamp, incubation, to new satellites preparation as Base Transceiver Stations to cover blackspots (Indonesiainside.id, 2019; KOMPAS.com, 2020).

However, along with the government's efforts to build a favorable ecosystem for start-up growth in Indonesia, there are still many start-ups' needs that have not been fulfilled, thus increasing the likelihood of start-up failure (Zaky et al., 2018). According to the head of the Indonesian Start-up

Foundation, Enda Nasution, the two problems that often occur at start-ups in Indonesia are searching for digital talents and financial needs (Paramaesti, 2018). This statement is in line with the Indonesian Information and Communication Technology Creative Industry Society (MIKTI) report, which states that the main problem is the capital issue (38.82%) and is followed by human resource problems as much as 29.41% (Zaky et al., 2018).

Human resources itself is the key driver of the industry (Imamoglu et al., 2019; Wright et al., 1994), especially in small businesses like start-ups. As a type of company that embodied a rapid disruption strategy, each member has their own paramount value to the team which made individual responsibility, initiative, innovation, and growth mindset crucial to support the team. To maintain these factors' coherence and existence

through professional activity and work behavior, each member is required to have an organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1993). By having the members identify themselves with the company's values and goals, it will certainly create employee effectiveness in delivering organizational vision and mission (Singh & Gupta, 2015) in which the short-term milestones are detailed in the Key Performance Indicators.

Throughout the years, entrepreneurship has become extensively perceived as a paramount element of economic growth (Nabi & Liñán, 2013; Powers & McDougall, 2005). Therefore, entrepreneurship education programs in universities have been fostered by the government, including by the Indonesian government (Kemendikbud, 2020) to increase students' entrepreneurial capabilities and intentions (Belitski & Heron, 2017) which eventually raises the number of student-composed startups.

It has been a particularly usual phenomenon where each individual in a team has their own personal activities. However, the constant degradation of team effectiveness such as unresponsive group chats, imbalance workloads due to priority issues, and postponed progress, eventually slows the development of the business. These symptoms of communication quality issues, performance issues, and absence issues lead to unaccomplished organizational targets which, according to Watson and Papamarcos (2002), Rafiei et al (2014), and Woods et al (2012), might relate to degrading organizational commitment among the team members (Rafiei et al., 2014; Watson & Papamarcos, 2002; Woods et al., 2012). based on the studies in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, organizational commitment has been proven to have a strong positive relationship in increasing the company's work performance (Habib et al., 2010; Hettiararchchi & Jayarathna, 2014). However, these studies only cover a general view of a more established organization, not specifically from the perspective of the startup in the context of Indonesian university students, especially a course-based business.

Based on these phenomena, it is necessary to understand the key factors that are responsible for driving down the members' commitment which will eventually lead to optimized business performance.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Overview of Startup**

Start-up is a company phase in the earlier stage of the company's maturity (Nurcahyo et al., 2018) which, unlike traditional business, highlights

fast innovation creation in the business model (Herte, 2017; Paoloni & Modaffari, 2018) through quick-responsive development (Blank, 2013) to address customer's problem (Reichmuth & Ewald, 2022) and embodies the great potential of scalability and fast growth (Hernández & González, 2017; Krejčí et al., 2015).

As early starters that since the beginning of their path deal with uncertainties (Cho & McLean, 2009; Ries, 2011), start-ups face four common challenges in maintaining their existence and development: Financial Challenges, Human Resources, Support Mechanisms, and Environmental Elements (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita Kesim, 2015). The need for funds, experts for developments, and a supportive environment --that includes market trends, legal terms, regulations, etc, is getting critical in every stage of the business and keeps on snowballing to hinder the chance of devastating failure (Colombo & Piva, 2008; Salamzadeh, 2015). Therefore, support mechanisms like start-up incubators, venture capitals, and accelerators are paramount actors in a start-up's lifecycle (Boeker, 1988).

### **2.2 Start-Up Trend in Indonesia among University Students**

As entrepreneurship plays a vital role in growth and productivity in economic building (Baumol, 1993; Kirzner, 1999), especially in developing countries (Dhahri & Omri, 2018), Indonesia is pursuing to increase the mindset of job creators to hopefully increase the employment rate (Bosma et al., 2021) due to the fact that the entrepreneurship index in Indonesia is still low, only 3.1%, and placing 94<sup>th</sup> rank out of 137 countries, based on Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index 2018 (Ács et al., 2018). Due to this situation, entrepreneurship curriculums are sporadically implemented in universities (Ghina, 2014; Tedjakusuma et al., 2019), and business competitions are held in universities to trigger the development of the rise of start-up growth (Hasanah & NG Ratumbusang, 2017; Humaidi et al., 2020; Jaharuddin et al., 2019), creating an abundance of the student-composed start-up team in Indonesia (Jati, 2021; Kominfo, 2019; Prastiwi, 2021). As the university is one of the final milestones before entering the professional industry, the number of students' motivation to study university turn to vary, ranging from the desire to develop skills and abilities to the urge to gain professional development (Safranková & Sikyr, 2016) which could be acquired from joining various activity involvement chances during the period (Schulz, 2008).

This situation thus creates a dilemmatic situation within a team of student-composed business team wherein one hand, in order to maintain the business running organizational commitment is highly required (Habib et al., 2010), however, individually, each student has their own motives and target to be pursued while still being a university student.

### 2.3 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the strength of relationships felt by the employees as well as the feeling of identifying themselves with the organization they are in (Steers, 1977). Furthermore, organizational commitment among team members in an organization is important to achieve organizational success because commitment is a force that encourages and pushes a person to move and reach for certain targets (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) so they may give contributions to the organization (Rita Silva & Caetano, 2014). This is in line with what is being defined by Mowday and Porter that organizational commitment is “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization” (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226).

Meyer and Allen identified organizational commitment into three components: *affective* (the desire to remain in the organization), *continuance* (the need to remain in the organization), and *normative commitment* (the mindset of an obligation to remain in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Each of the commitment forms is identified by specific antecedent variables that are grouped into several categories. In terms of affective commitment (AC), the antecedents are classified into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics, and work experiences (Mowday et al., 1982). In terms of continuance commitment (CC) investments (side-bets) and alternatives are the main antecedents (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). Lastly, in terms of normative commitment (NC), the antecedents are classified into two categories: Socialization and Organizational Investments (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

### 2.4 Organizational Performance

Performance is the state of fulfilling the objectives set forth in the convergence of the

enterprise orientations (Noyé & ETIENNE, 2002). Therefore, both the objective and output are important in the matter of performance. Lebas further pinpoint the characteristics of performance as a future-oriented reflection of an organization that is based on causal relationship of components and products (Lebas, 1995). In terms of business-based performance, Folan highlights three main priorities of performance: (1) Is, by no exception, be analyzed by the relevant stakeholders in the environmental range they are operating in; (2) Is always connected with the entity’s objective(s); and (3) is narrowed into pertinent and identifiable features (Folan et al., 2007). However, since performance are highly dependent with its criterias: effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, quality of work, innovation, and profitability, the exact emphasized comprehension of performance could not be intelligibly defined.

In the dynamic competitive market, maintaining the company’s pace in adapting is paramount to face rapid changes, therefore monitoring performance is highly important, moreover in the comparison with other companies’ achievement (Silva & Borsato, 2017). Therefore, as a hustling innovative company, it is important for startup to concern on their performance. To manage organizational performance, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been used as the tool to measure the company’s performance in several dimensions, ranging from financial aspects, customer satisfaction aspects, and operational aspects, to internal satisfaction aspects (Ishaq Bhatti et al., 2014).

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

To obtain broad and in-depth findings on the key factors of low organizational commitment that affect negatively organizational performance in the student-composed business team, this research will use a qualitative approach. Qualitative research enables the researchers to learn and comprehend how specific circumstances molded the occurrence of events according to the experiences of various individuals’ viewpoints (Kalra et al., 2013; Maxwell, 2012) The researchers will specifically use transcendental phenomenology.

Phenomenology is a research method that studies a particular phenomenon from the experience perceived by the participants. Edmund Husserl points out that the reality of a phenomenon occurs due to an individual’s *consciousness* about the subject (Creswell, 2007). As the key element of this type of research is the essence (Creswell, 2007) the data collection process in the phenomenological approach usually conducted through interviews with individuals who

experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) which the results later be described by the *what* and *how* did the informants experience it and the meanings of it are further interpreted to acquire the searched essence (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994)

However, to attain, understand, and interpret the meaningful essence accurately, there should be no outside perspectives and points of view by the researcher towards the participant's experience, instead exploring it as it is (Raco & Semiawan, 2010). This is align with Husserl's phenomenology philosophy which believes a researcher must be neutral in spectating an object by suspending any preconceptions, presuppositions, and prejudice. By Husserl, this principle of judgment suspension is regarded as "epoche" (Moustakas, 1994).

The researchers interviewed three informants who have been working together and co-founded the same university-course-based start-up company for at least a year and have experienced low organizational commitment in the company which led to bad organizational performance. This selection strategy is done to obtain informants who experienced the same phenomenon, hence having the same understanding of the research problem, which helps them share their experiences of the studied phenomenon meaningfully (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Result

After the interviews with three informants, open and selective coding, as well as result mapping were conducted, the researchers found four key factors that were responsible for the low level of organizational commitment in the company based on the informants' experiences.

#### 4.1.1 Personal Interest

Based on the interview result, the informant explained that although he felt aligned with the company's values, the strong interest in the different industry interest made the informant commit the company as a mere academic focus.

*"Frankly, at the start, it was only just to fulfill the academic requirements because before, I really wanted to be more into the fashion industry. So, since this company is very different from the industry I'm into, I'd rather regard this as the university course focus only."*

It is also found that a technical-based interest would is not strong enough to boost ones' organizational commitment.

*"I'm very interested in digital things at that time, and so I thought I could get aligned with the company through it..."*

The finding from this result mapping further showed that this factor not only directly drives down the commitment level, but also indirectly increases the value of academic priority that the informant is seeking during the university years, which promotes the academic-oriented focus and purpose as will be explained in the following section.

#### 4.1.2 Purpose of Joining the Company

All three informants stated that since the start their main purpose in joining and/or creating the company is to fulfill academic requirements purposes.

*"To be frank, my commitment here is so that I could submit courses' assignments and university requirements, so the commitment is not to really realize this into a real company. Therefore, the motivation is not that high. ... As long as it paid off academically, it's adequate enough."*

*"The first and foremost factor is my intention, that this company is a stepping stone for my academic activities... therefore my commitment is degrading as the time goes by since I'm already a part of this, so, I just can't let this go on its own. And yes, eventually the commitment decreases.."*

Even though this made them stick with the company until the end of the academic program, it made the commitment level low, making the company's OKR and work trigger only to meet the academic expectation, minimizing the willingness to develop the company into a real business.

*"Previously, when we joined a business competition, the deadline was in parallel with other academic activities. So, since it's outside of the academics, it's kind of burdensome at that time..."*

*"At the same time I feel that to make something big, we really need more effort, we can't just only follow the course demands.."*

From the result mapping, it is figured out that the academic-based OKR created a loop that led to bad performance and less active business activities, hence creating a longer-term of service

development period that extends more than the academic period. Due to the moderating factor of the realistic entrepreneurial mindset, this, again, lower the level of commitment and starts the loop over again.

#### 4.1.3 Internalization of the Company's Value

From the analysis result, it is identified that the lack of internalization of the company's value, such as being impactful and iterative, by not concerning business impact value and regarding the company's vision as "others' vision" promotes a self perceive of ownself role in the company as "a follower", hence creating a reactive attitude towards the job instead of being proactive. This, added to adequate standard work ethics and low conscientiousness level emerges slack attitude.

*"Honestly, back in the day during the ideation step, this idea isn't originally derived from me. I actually joined you guys in the first place. And I, honestly at that time I haven't got any idea to do anything, so I was like, 'Okay, I can go with the flow, perhaps this could teach me something or create something in my university days.'*

*".. When I first joined the company, and if I am going to build a business, I don't really care enough for the impacts. So, even though being impactful is good, it's just a stepping stone for the business. I'm more into the digital things."*

*"In doing the business activities, everything is relatively similar. Keep on iterating and repeating. Sometimes it makes me lazy... lazy to iterate... even though as a startup we are required to iterate."*

Furthermore, the mapping result shows that the slack attitude highly affects the other team members' commitments and drives it low, creating an influential loop.

*"Like, the other member is being a slacker, and it influence others to do the same as well, it's just like a culture now. Members are waiting for each others' contribution and get lazy... It really affects me because even if I'm very committed, but if the other members are slacker, it decreases my commitment, because I felt like I'm stuck with this team."*

Eventually, these conditions made the informant decide to involve in other exciting beneficial alternatives that may cater the interest

of gaining network opportunities, collaborations, etc.

## 4.2 Discussion

This research studies the personal key factors of low organizational commitment that leads to low organizational performance in course-based student-composed business team. It has been confirmed by Rafiei et al. that organizational commitment had a significant positive effect on the company's job performance. Therefore, enhancing organizational commitment in the company is a crucial factor to boost betterments in performance (Rafiei et al., 2014). Based on our result, we are able to find three personal key factors that lower organizational commitment.

Point 4.1.1 stated that interests affect the level of organizational commitment. If the interest is not towards the business, then the level of commitment is low. This finding is related to the prior study by Champoux et al. that states *"workers with a central life interest in work have a high level of commitment to their work organization"* and vice versa (Dubin et al., 1975).

As far as the literature read by the researchers for point 4.1.2, the factor of purpose in joining a company is still invisible. However, this is still related to the continuance commitment as it is derived from the need of a person to stay in the organization and the alternatives available to cater to the need (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

As far as the literature read by the researchers for point Point 4.1.3 the factor of internalization of the company's value is still not visible. However, the term "others' vision" may indicate the low level of organizational citizenship behavior in the organization, in which, according to Adjei et al. study, organizational citizenship behavior when combined with organizational commitment may improve performance significantly (Adjei et al., 2014).

## 5. CONCLUSION

From the results, it could be summarized that there are three identified personal key factors of low organizational commitment that affects organizational performance in the course-based student-composed business team. The factors are: (1) Personal interest; (2) Purpose of joining the company; and (3) Internalization of the Company's Value. Each of these factors may directly or indirectly affect to the level of organizational commitment in which it may be mediated or moderated by other personal factors or institutional factors.

Therefore, it is recommended that the future research may further elaborate how low organizational commitment may occur to pin point a more specific factors and how it affect each other as well as quantitative method research to identify the significant value of the factors towards organizational commitment.

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