

Organizational Commitment Among Civil Servant: The Role of Work Meaningfulness

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ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment and work meaningfulness are very important for employees to have, but research related to this is still limited, especially on civil servants. This research aims to investigate the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment of civil servants of East Kalimantan Province. A total of 72 civil servants participated in this study. Data is collected using a scale Organizational Commitment Questionnaire dan Work and Meaning Inventory. The result revealed that work meaningfulness significantly contributes to organizational commitment with an R² value of 0.708, p <0.01.

Keywords: organizational commitment; work meaningfulness, civil servants

INTRODUCTION

Arguably, Organizational Commitment serve an important role to organizational performance, especially for government organization. Indeed, previous studies shown that organizational commitment only loosely correlated with performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Riketta, 2002), it doesn't necessarily suggests that organizational commitment it's not important. Authors argue that considering the job characteristics on Civil Servant, organizational commitment is still crucial. On their oaths, as stipulated in the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia number 21 in 1975 concerning the Oath/pledge of Civil Servants, Civil Servants promise to be loyal and committed to their organization. In addition, a part of their obligation to provide services to the community, civil servants are also given certain authorities to make a far-reaching decision to the community. Therefore, they should be highly committed to their organization to be able to carry out their duties properly and correctly. Employees who have high organizational commitment will actively participate and willingly exert considerable effort to achieve organizational goals (Mowday et al., 1979). Therefore, authors suggest that organizational commitment, especially for public servant is crucial.

Employee who perceives their job as meaningful tend to have a high organizational commitment. As stated by Victor Frankl (1946), human's source of energy is to seek meaning

in his life. In similar vein, as reviewed by Chalofsky and Christina (2009), humans have inherent need to find meaning in what they do, including work. In fact, humans cannot achieve their optimal potential if they are not driven by higher cause, which is meaning and purpose. Thus, people who finds their work as meaningful become more motivated. This view is supported by meta-analysis which demonstrates that workers with meaning are more motivated (Hu & Hirsh, 2017). Furthermore, they are intrinsically motivated to maintain their membership in the organization as a means to achieve their meaning and purpose. They also are more likely to experience positive emotion related to their job and have emotional attachment to their organization (Allan et al., 2019; Mowday et al., 1979). Taken together, there seems to be some support to indicate that meaningful work is positively corelated to organizational commitment.

Previous research has shown a significant positive correlation between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment. There is a moderate correlation between all subscales in work meaningfulness and organizational commitment (Steger et al., 2012). Similarly, meta-analytic research shows a moderate correlation (Hu & Hirsh, 2017) and even a high correlation (Allan et al., 2019) between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment. Overall, these studies support the notion that there are positive correlation between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment.

The present study aims to verify the relation between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment. Indeed, there have been numerous empirical evidence regarding the relationship between these two variables. However, research conducted in the public sector, to the best of the author's knowledge, is still lacking. On the other hand, workers in the public sector have specific job characteristics, which demand high organizational commitment from their workers. Therefore, this research will not only have theoretical impacts, but also practical ones on antecedent of organizational commitment and possible intervention to improve it.

METHOD

Participant

There were 72 respondents consist of 56 male and 16 female with age range of 30-50 years old participated in this study who work on one of the agencies of Kalimantan Timur Province. Since there were only 72 civil servants who work for the agency, no sampling was employed.

Instrument

The data collection technique used two scales, consist of organizational commitment scale and the work meaningfulness scale.

1. Organizational Commitment

To measure organizational commitment, modified version by Suherlan (2017) of Organization Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979) was employed. The scale consists of three aspects, namely identification, involvement and loyalty. Total items were 24 items. The scale used Likert model, with 5 response options, namely strongly agree (score 5), agree (score 4), neutral (score 3), disagree (score 2) and strongly disagree (score 1). The validity

test used CFA with an RMSEA value of 0.071 and reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.821.

2. Work Meaningfulness

To measure work meaningfulness, The Work as Meaning Inventory scale (Steger et al., 2012) which was adapted by Sungkit (2015) was utilized. The work meaningfulness consist of three aspects, namely positive meaning, meaning making through work and greater good motivation. Total items were 24 items. The scale used Likert model, with 5 response options, namely very appropriate (score 5), appropriate (score 4), neutral (score 3), inappropriate (score 2) and very inappropriate (score 1). The validity test used CFA with an RMSEA value of 0.075 and reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.912.

Data Analysis

Simple linear regression was used to analyse data. Before testing the hypothesis, normality tests and linearity tests were carried out to the data. The normality test uses the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results found that the data in the study were normally distributed, $p \text{ value} > 0.05$. The results of the linearity test found that the variables of organizational commitment and work meaningfulness have a linear relationship ($p \text{ value} > 0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that the data met the requirements for parametric statistical tests using simple regression analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1
Simple Regression Test Result

Variable	N	R	R Square	Sig
Work Meaningfulness	72	.841	.708	.001
Organizational Commitment				

Tabel 1 demonstrated that there is a positive and strong correlation ($R = 0.841$, $p < 0.01$) between the two variables, and $R^2 = 0.708$ indicated that work meaningfulness contributed 70.8% to organizational commitment.

Discussion

This research was conducted on 72 civil servants in East Kalimantan Province to investigate the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment. The results of this study indicate that there is a positive and strong correlation (0.841) between the two variables, with 70.8% variation in the scores of organizational commitments are determined by work meaningfulness. Hence, it can be concluded that the meaning of work contributes

greatly to organizational commitment of civil servants in East Kalimantan Province.

The results of this study are in line with previous studies which show that work meaning contributes significantly to organizational commitment (Allan et al., 2019; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Steger et al., 2012). Presumably, the meaning of work provides positive experiences, internal motivation, and the desire to remain part of the organization that makes employees committed to their organization. In fact, the present study finds correlation coefficient that was higher than previous research.

A possible explanation for the high correlation coefficient might be due positive attitude toward work that underlie the meaning of work and organizational commitment (Steger et al., 2012). In other words, people with high work meaningfulness also tend to have organizational commitment because they have a general positive attitude toward their work. Another possible explanation for this is due to the job characteristics of civil servant. Civil servants are required to provide services to the community. Jobs providing services are prone to experience emotional exhaustion which can lead to burnout (Hsieh, 2014), which characterized by cynicism and withdrawal from organization, also sense of ineffectiveness (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In contrast, when civil servants evaluate their work positively, they tend to have positive emotions that may protect them from burnout (Kim & Wang, 2018). . The evidence reviewed here seems to suggest that job characteristics of civil servant makes the meaning of work crucial in determining organizational commitment.

The results of this study indicate that the meaning of work contributes greatly to the organizational commitment of PNS of East Kalimantan Province. These results would seem to suggest that improving work meaningfulness will result in an increase in organizational commitment. Previous studies suggest that there are several approaches that can be done to achieve this, from individual intervention such as mentoring (Lin et al., 2021), training (Thory, 2016), and through organizational intervention such as change in job design (Geldenhuis et al., 2021) and leadership (Chaudhary, 2022)

While our analysis showed the significant contribution of work meaningfulness to organizational commitment, it has limitations. First, the generalisability of these results is subject to certain limitations because the sample were taken in one department and only with small sample size. Thus, future research should increase the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the present study. Second, although the relation between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment is confirmed, it should be noted that this is a correlational study, thus not imply any causation relationship between the two variables. The present study also does not provide mechanism of how these two variables are related. Thus, future study is needed to investigate the relation mechanism of the variables.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between meaningful work and organisational commitment can be viewed as advantageous to organizational performance. Especially to government organization, organizational commitment plays an important role in achieving developmental goals and community well-being. According to the result of this study, it is evident that meaningful work can lead to more committed civil servants. Hence, efforts to improve organization commitment

should take meaningful work into consideration. However, due to limitation of this study further research is needed with bigger and more representative sample. In addition, further research is also needed to understand the mechanism of how work meaningfulness can lead to organizational commitment.

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