

Fostering Organizational Commitment in Indonesian Startups: The Mediating Role of Work Productivity

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of Indonesian startups has intensified the need for organizations to sustain employee productivity and organizational commitment in increasingly dynamic and competitive business environments. Despite this growth, empirical evidence explaining how internal organizational factors influence employee outcomes within Indonesian startups remains limited. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of leadership style, career development, and work environment on work productivity and organizational commitment among employees in Indonesian startups. A quantitative approach was employed using survey data collected from 211 respondents through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). The findings indicate that all proposed relationships are positive and statistically significant. Career development demonstrated the strongest direct organizational factor influencing organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.357$), while work productivity exerted the largest direct effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.385$). Furthermore, work productivity significantly mediated the relationships between leadership style, career development, work environment, and organizational commitment. The structural model explained 55.5% of the variance in work productivity and 60.3% of the variance in organizational commitment. The study extends organizational behavior literature by demonstrating the mediating role of work productivity in connecting leadership style, career development, and work environment with organizational commitment in the context of Indonesian startups, while also providing practical guidance for startup managers seeking to strengthen employee performance and long-term organizational commitment.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Career Development, Work Environment, Work Productivity, Organizational Commitment

Abstrak

Pesatnya perkembangan startup di Indonesia telah meningkatkan kebutuhan organisasi untuk mempertahankan produktivitas karyawan dan komitmen organisasi dalam lingkungan bisnis yang semakin dinamis dan kompetitif. Terlepas dari pertumbuhan ini, bukti empiris yang menjelaskan bagaimana faktor internal organisasi memengaruhi hasil kerja karyawan di startup Indonesia masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyelidiki pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan, pengembangan karir, dan lingkungan kerja terhadap produktivitas kerja dan komitmen organisasi di antara karyawan startup Indonesia. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan menggunakan data survei yang dikumpulkan dari 211 responden melalui kuesioner skala Likert terstruktur. Data dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua hubungan yang diusulkan bersifat positif dan signifikan secara statistik. Pengembangan karir menunjukkan faktor organisasi langsung terkuat yang memengaruhi komitmen organisasi ($\beta = 0,357$), sedangkan produktivitas kerja memberikan pengaruh langsung terbesar terhadap komitmen organisasi ($\beta = 0,385$). Lebih lanjut, produktivitas kerja secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan, pengembangan karir, lingkungan kerja, dan komitmen organisasi. Model struktural menjelaskan 55,5% varians dalam produktivitas kerja dan 60,3% varians dalam komitmen organisasi. Studi ini memperluas literatur perilaku organisasi dengan menunjukkan peran mediasi produktivitas kerja dalam menghubungkan gaya kepemimpinan, pengembangan karier, dan lingkungan kerja dengan komitmen organisasi dalam konteks startup Indonesia, sekaligus memberikan panduan praktis bagi manajer startup yang ingin memperkuat kinerja karyawan dan komitmen organisasi jangka panjang.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepemimpinan, Pengembangan Karir, Lingkungan Kerja, Produktivitas Kerja, Komitmen Organisasi

INTRODUCTION

The growth of startups in Indonesia has been remarkable in recent years, fueled by innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, and the increasing adoption of technology. These startups face numerous challenges, ranging from competition in a fast-paced market to the need to maintain a motivated workforce (Kurniadi et al., 2022; Simanjuntak et al., 2025). The ability to maintain high levels of work productivity and organizational commitment has become pivotal for their success. In this context, understanding the factors that influence employee performance and loyalty to the organization is crucial for startup leaders.

Indonesia has become one of the largest digital economies in Southeast Asia, with startups operating in highly competitive environments characterized by rapid technological change, talent shortages, and increasing pressure to sustain innovation. Despite strong market growth, many startups continue to face substantial human resource challenges, including high employee turnover, difficulties in retaining skilled talent, and maintaining employee commitment under dynamic and often less-structured organizational systems. These challenges suggest that organizational sustainability depends not only on technological capability but also on effective human resource management practices that can simultaneously enhance employee productivity and organizational commitment.

Work productivity and organizational commitment are two of the most significant elements that determine the effectiveness of employees within any organization. Work productivity refers to the efficiency with which employees complete their tasks and contribute to the overall objectives of the organization, while organizational commitment reflects the level of attachment and loyalty employees feel towards the company (Pandey et al., 2022; Saroja, 2023). Both are essential in fostering long-term sustainability and growth within organizations, particularly in the dynamic and competitive environment that characterizes startups.

Numerous factors have been identified as influencing work productivity and organizational commitment, with leadership style, career development, and work environment standing out as primary drivers. Leadership style, which encompasses the ways in which leaders interact with their teams, make decisions, and motivate employees, has been shown to play a significant role in shaping both employee productivity and organizational commitment. The leadership approach adopted within a startup can directly impact employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and willingness to stay with the organization (Ishak & binti Mansor, 2024).

Leadership style is particularly important in startup organizations because employees frequently operate under conditions of uncertainty, rapid decision-making, and evolving job responsibilities. In such environments, leaders are expected not only to coordinate work but also to inspire adaptability, foster trust, and maintain employee engagement. Consequently, leadership is likely to influence employees' productivity while simultaneously strengthening their commitment to organizational goals (Hochreiter et al., 2023; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2013). Transformational leadership, for instance, is characterized by leaders who inspire, motivate, and encourage employees to prioritize the collective good of the organization over their self-interest (Suwandana & Dwipayanti, 2021), while transactional leadership focuses on the exchange relationship between leaders and employees, rewarding those who meet specific targets and imposing penalties for failure (Lusianti et al., 2024). Previous studies have highlighted the significant role that leadership style plays in shaping employees' work productivity, with transformational leaders, in particular, positively influencing job satisfaction and motivation, thereby leading to higher productivity (Mayangsari, 2022). In contrast, transactional leadership, although effective in certain contexts, may not foster long-term commitment or significantly improve work productivity in dynamic, innovative environments like startups (Thanh et al., 2022). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Leadership style has a positive effect on work productivity in Indonesian startups.

Organizational commitment refers to the psychological attachment and loyalty that

employees feel towards their organization, encompassing three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (cost-based attachment), and normative commitment (obligation-based attachment) (Jannah & Hazriyanto, 2019; Pandey et al., 2022). The leadership style adopted within an organization significantly influences employees' levels of commitment, with transformational leadership being particularly effective in enhancing affective commitment by fostering trust, respect, and admiration among employees (Caillier, 2015). On the other hand, transactional leadership tends to affect continuance commitment, as employees may remain with the organization due to the rewards and penalties tied to their performance (Norawati & Alkudri, 2023). In the context of startups, where employees often face uncertainty and high work demands, a transformational leadership style can help cultivate a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the organization. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Leadership style has a positive effect on organizational commitment in Indonesian startups.

Career development is another crucial factor that affects work productivity and organizational commitment. Employees who feel that their professional growth is supported are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and loyal to the organization. In startup environments, where resources may be limited, offering opportunities for skill development and career advancement can enhance employee morale and commitment, ultimately contributing to improved productivity (Christy et al., 2022; Lo Presti et al., 2022).

Career development becomes increasingly important in startups where formal organizational structures and promotion systems are often still evolving. Employees who perceive opportunities to develop new competencies and advance their careers are more likely to invest greater effort in their work because they view the organization as supporting their long-term professional growth. Employees who perceive that their organization is invested in their professional growth are more likely to be engaged and productive (Suprayitno, 2024). In startups, where attracting and retaining talent is critical, career development is often seen as a key factor, as employees are more likely to stay with organizations that provide opportunities for growth and advancement. Several studies have shown that career development has a positive relationship with work productivity, with employees who engage in skill development activities reporting higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Suhairi & Nurbaiti, 2024). Therefore, the third hypothesis is:

H3: Career development has a positive effect on work productivity in Indonesian startups.

Career development opportunities are closely linked to employees' organizational commitment, as employees who perceive that their career aspirations can be achieved within their current organization are more likely to develop a sense of loyalty and attachment to the company (Ali et al., 2019). Career development programs also signal that the organization values employees' contributions and is committed to their long-term success, which ultimately fosters stronger organizational commitment (Duffy & Dik, 2009). In the context of startups, where the absence of structured career paths may create feelings of job insecurity, providing clear career development opportunities can significantly strengthen employees' affective commitment to the organization. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Career development has a positive effect on organizational commitment in Indonesian startups.

The work environment, including both physical and organizational conditions, also significantly influences employee outcomes. A supportive, collaborative, and inclusive work environment fosters positive attitudes, enhances job satisfaction, and encourages employees to be

more productive. Moreover, work environments that are conducive to creativity and innovation can lead to higher performance levels, which is particularly important in the fast-paced, high-risk world of startups (Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021; Theodoridis et al., 2024).

The work environment within startups extends beyond physical workplace conditions to include collaborative culture, communication quality, autonomy, and psychological support. Because startup employees commonly experience high workloads and rapid organizational change, a supportive work environment becomes an important organizational resource that encourages productive work behavior and strengthens employees' psychological attachment to the organization. (Herlina et al., 2023). In startup organizations, where employees frequently work under high pressure and within less structured systems, a supportive work environment becomes increasingly important. Previous research has shown that work environments characterized by open communication, teamwork, and autonomy contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and employee productivity (Ahmad, 2024). Consequently, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5: Work environment has a positive effect on work productivity in Indonesian startups.

The work environment also influences employees' organizational commitment, as a positive work environment that supports employees' psychological and emotional needs can strengthen their attachment to the organization. Employees who feel comfortable, valued, and supported in their workplace are more likely to develop strong affective commitment, which is reflected in their emotional attachment to the company (Ichdan, 2024). In startup organizations, where the work environment is often fast-paced and less formal, creating a work atmosphere that prioritizes employee well-being and fosters a sense of community can significantly enhance organizational commitment. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Work environment has a positive effect on organizational commitment in Indonesian startups.

Work productivity and organizational commitment are closely related, as employees who consistently meet or exceed performance expectations are more likely to feel valued and committed to the organization (Amabile et al., 1996). In addition, highly productive employees tend to receive greater rewards and recognition, which can further strengthen their organizational commitment (Bhaskara et al., 2024). In the context of startups, where organizational success often depends heavily on the contribution of each employee, maintaining high levels of work productivity becomes essential for fostering stronger organizational commitment. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Work productivity has a positive effect on organizational commitment in Indonesian startups.

Although previous studies have established that leadership style, career development, and work environment influence organizational commitment, most have examined these relationships independently and within relatively stable organizational settings. Limited attention has been given to understanding the mechanism through which these organizational factors translate into stronger commitment in startup environments characterized by rapid change, flexible structures, and uncertain work conditions. In particular, the mediating role of work productivity remains insufficiently explored. In dynamic startup organizations, productivity may function as a behavioral mechanism through which favorable organizational practices are transformed into stronger psychological attachment to the organization. By examining work productivity as a mediating construct, this study extends existing organizational behavior literature beyond direct-effect models and provides a more comprehensive explanation of employee commitment within Indonesian startups.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze how leadership style, career development, and work environment contribute to work productivity and organizational commitment within the context of Indonesian startups. Specifically, this study seeks to examine how leadership style influences employees' work productivity and organizational commitment, how career development plays a role in enhancing employee performance and commitment, and how the work environment affects employees' productivity and attachment to the organization. By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide valuable insights for startup leaders in improving organizational performance through effective leadership practices, structured career development strategies, and a supportive work environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among leadership style, career development, work environment, work productivity, and organizational commitment in Indonesian startups. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed, whereby data were collected at a single point in time using a structured questionnaire. This design is appropriate for testing the proposed hypotheses and examining both direct and indirect relationships among the research variables through Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The unit of analysis in this study is the individual employee working in Indonesian startup companies rather than the startup organization itself. The study focuses on employees' perceptions of leadership style, career development, work environment, work productivity, and organizational commitment because these constructs represent individual-level psychological and behavioral responses. Consequently, each observation in the dataset represents one startup employee, making the individual employee the appropriate unit for statistical analysis.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of employees working in Indonesian startups across various industries. Startups were selected as the focus of the study due to their dynamic and fast-paced working environment, making the examination of factors influencing work productivity and organizational commitment highly relevant. The rapid growth and competitive nature of startups require organizations to maintain productive and committed employees in order to sustain organizational performance and business development. This study uses a non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, to select participants. This technique allows researchers to collect data from individuals who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. Although convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, it is commonly applied in studies involving specific populations, such as startup employees, where obtaining a comprehensive sampling frame can be difficult. The final sample consisted of 211 respondents, which was considered adequate for conducting statistical analysis using SEM-PLS 3. The respondents represented employees from different departments and organizational levels, thereby providing diverse perspectives relevant to the study objectives.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed to participants via online survey platforms. The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement. The measurement scales for each construct were adapted from previous studies and had been validated within the context of Indonesian organizations to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

Definition and Variable Operationalization

Table 1. Definition and Variable Operationalization

Construct	Indicator
Leadership Style	LS1: Inspirational LS2: Motivates LS3: Encourages Creativity
Career Development	CD1: Training Opportunities CD2: Promotion Prospects CD3: Career Growth Support
Work Environment	WE1: Collaborative Culture WE2: Comfortable Workplace WE3: Supportive Atmosphere
Work Productivity	WP1: Task Completion WP2: Meeting Targets WP3: Contribution to Goals
Organizational Commitment	OC1: Emotional Attachment OC2: Loyalty OC3: Commitment to Stay

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). SEM-PLS is a statistical technique used to analyze complex relationships between observed variables and latent constructs. This method is considered suitable for research models involving multiple dependent variables and relatively limited sample sizes, as applied in this study. In addition, SEM-PLS allows researchers to simultaneously evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model while testing the relationships proposed in the structural model. The analysis process was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved the evaluation of the measurement model by assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability to ensure that the indicators accurately measured their respective constructs. The second stage focused on evaluating the structural model by testing the hypothesized relationships between variables through path coefficients, R-squared values, and significance levels. Furthermore, the bootstrapping procedure was employed to determine the statistical significance of the path coefficients and to obtain confidence intervals for each relationship in the model.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Sample

The demographic profile of the sample provides important context for understanding the characteristics of the respondents.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24 years	52	24.64%
	25-34 years	88	41.67%
	35-44 years	47	22.29%
	45-54 years	20	9.47%

Gender	55 years and above	4	1.89%
	Male	125	59.24%
Education Level	Female	86	40.76%
	High school	9	4.27%
	Bachelor's degree	143	67.74%
	Master's degree	55	26.06%
	Doctorate	4	1.89%
Tenure in Organization	Less than 1 year	31	14.69%
	1-3 years	92	43.55%
	4-6 years	56	26.54%
	More than 6 years	32	15.23%
Job Position	Entry-level	45	21.33%
	Mid-level	122	57.81%
	Senior-level	44	20.85%

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 2. shows that the majority of respondents were employees aged 25–34 years (41.67%), indicating that Indonesian startups are largely dominated by young and productive workers who are generally adaptable to dynamic and fast-changing work environments. Male respondents accounted for 59.24% of the sample, slightly exceeding female respondents (40.76%), reflecting the workforce composition commonly found in startup companies. In terms of educational background, most respondents held a Bachelor's degree (67.74%), suggesting that startups tend to recruit employees with relatively high educational qualifications to support innovation and organizational performance. Regarding tenure, the majority of employees had worked in their organizations for 1–3 years (43.55%), indicating moderate employee retention and the relatively fluid nature of startup employment. Furthermore, most respondents occupied mid-level positions (57.81%), demonstrating that the sample primarily consisted of employees directly involved in operational and managerial activities within the organization. Overall, these demographic characteristics indicate that the respondents were representative of the typical workforce profile found in Indonesian startups.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the key characteristics of the data, offering an overview of the responses from the 211 participants.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Range
Leadership Style	3.89	0.84	1.00	5.00	4.00
Career Development	4.12	0.79	1.00	5.00	4.00
Work Environment	4.05	0.76	1.00	5.00	4.00
Work Productivity	3.95	0.82	1.00	5.00	4.00
Organizational Commitment	4.10	0.77	1.00	5.00	4.00

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 3. presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables, showing that all constructs

obtained relatively high mean scores, indicating positive perceptions among employees toward the variables examined. Career Development recorded the highest mean value (4.12), followed by Organizational Commitment (4.10) and Work Environment (4.05), suggesting that respondents generally perceived that their organizations provided adequate career growth opportunities, supportive working conditions, and fostered strong employee commitment. Leadership Style obtained a mean score of 3.89, indicating that employees viewed leadership practices within startups positively, although there was still some variation in perception among respondents. Meanwhile, Work Productivity showed a mean value of 3.95, reflecting that employees considered themselves productive and capable of meeting organizational expectations. The standard deviation values ranging from 0.76 to 0.84 indicate moderate variability in responses, while the minimum and maximum values demonstrate that all response categories on the Likert scale were represented in the dataset. Overall, the descriptive statistics indicate that the respondents tended to provide favorable evaluations regarding leadership, career development, work environment, productivity, and organizational commitment within Indonesian startups.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which indicators measure the same construct and is assessed in SEM-PLS through factor loadings, where values above 0.70 indicate good validity (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability reflects the consistency of the measurement model and is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha and CR values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), while AVE values above 0.50 confirm that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. The results showed that all indicators met the required thresholds, confirming that the measurement model had good reliability and convergent validity.

Table 4. Measurement Model

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Leadership Style	LS1: Inspirational	0.856	0.876	0.903	0.726
	LS2: Motivates	0.814			
	LS3: Encourages Creativity	0.783			
	CD1: Training Opportunities	0.826			
Career Development	CD2: Promotion Prospects	0.807	0.855	0.883	0.704
	CD3: Career Growth Support	0.833			
	WE1: Collaborative Culture	0.795			
	WE2: Comfortable Workplace	0.763			
Work Environment	WE3: Supportive Atmosphere	0.774	0.836	0.872	0.694

Work Productivity	WP1: Task Completion	0.836	0.866	0.892	0.714
	WP2: Meeting Targets	0.812			
	WP3: Contribution to Goals	0.791			
Organizational Commitment	OC1: Emotional Attachment	0.853	0.846	0.882	0.703
	OC2: Loyalty	0.846			
	OC3: Commitment to Stay	0.823			

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 4. shows that all indicators in the measurement model achieved factor loading values above 0.70, indicating that each indicator was able to measure its respective construct effectively. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values ranged from 0.836 to 0.876 and the Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.872 to 0.903, both exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, which confirms strong internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables were above 0.50, ranging from 0.694 to 0.726, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity. These findings indicate that the measurement model used in this study was valid and reliable for evaluating the relationships between leadership style, career development, work environment, work productivity, and organizational commitment in Indonesian startups.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs in the model. In this study, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, where the square root of the AVE for each construct must be higher than its correlations with other constructs to confirm adequate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5. Fornell Larcker

Construct	Leadership Style	Career Development	Work Environment	Work Productivity	Organizational Commitment
Leadership Style	0.854				
Career Development	0.672	0.841			
Work Environment	0.653	0.634	0.832		
Work Productivity	0.585	0.603	0.583	0.843	
Organizational Commitment	0.621	0.642	0.615	0.682	0.847

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 5. demonstrates that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was greater than the correlations with other constructs, indicating that the model met the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity. For example, Leadership Style had a

square root AVE value of 0.854, which was higher than its correlations with Career Development (0.672), Work Environment (0.653), Work Productivity (0.585), and Organizational Commitment (0.621). Similar patterns were found across all constructs, confirming that each variable was empirically distinct and measured different concepts within the model. Therefore, the results indicate that the constructs used in this study possessed satisfactory discriminant validity.

Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation aims to examine the relationships between latent constructs and test the proposed hypotheses in this study. The analysis focuses on the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships using path coefficients, while the explanatory power of the model is assessed through R^2 values. The significance of each relationship was evaluated using bootstrapping results, where a t-value greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 indicate statistically significant relationships.

Table 6. Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value
H1: Leadership Style → Work Productivity	0.287	3.125	0.002
H2: Leadership Style → Organizational Commitment	0.223	2.873	0.004
H3: Career Development → Work Productivity	0.325	3.566	0.001
H4: Career Development → Organizational Commitment	0.357	4.047	0.000
H5: Work Environment → Work Productivity	0.241	3.013	0.003
H6: Work Environment → Organizational Commitment	0.302	3.452	0.001
H7: Work Productivity → Organizational Commitment	0.385	4.127	0.000

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 6. shows that all direct effects are positive and statistically significant, as each t-value exceeds 1.96 and each p-value is below 0.05. Career Development has the strongest direct effect on Organizational Commitment ($\beta = 0.357$; $p = 0.000$), followed by Work Productivity on Organizational Commitment ($\beta = 0.385$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that employee growth opportunities and productivity are key factors in strengthening commitment. Leadership Style, Career Development, and Work Environment also significantly influence Work Productivity, with Career Development showing the highest effect ($\beta = 0.325$; $p = 0.001$). Overall, these results confirm that all proposed hypotheses are supported.

Indirect effects represent the influence of one variable on another through a mediating variable. In this study, work productivity functions as the mediator between leadership style,

career development, work environment, and organizational commitment, with indirect effects calculated by multiplying the related path coefficients.

Table 7. Indirect Effect

Indirect Effect Path	Path	t-value	p-value
Leadership Style → Work Productivity → Organizational Commitment	0.192	3.153	0.002
Career Development → Work Productivity → Organizational Commitment	0.232	3.585	0.001
Work Environment → Work Productivity → Organizational Commitment	0.180	3.102	0.003

Source: Data Analyzed (2026)

Table 7. indicates that all indirect effects are positive and statistically significant, as evidenced by t-values above 1.96 and p-values below 0.05. Career Development demonstrates the strongest indirect effect on Organizational Commitment through Work Productivity ($\beta = 0.232$; $p = 0.001$), followed by Leadership Style ($\beta = 0.192$; $p = 0.002$) and Work Environment ($\beta = 0.180$; $p = 0.003$). These findings confirm that Work Productivity successfully mediates the relationships between leadership style, career development, work environment, and organizational commitment, suggesting that improvements in these organizational factors can enhance employee commitment indirectly through increased productivity.

R^2 values represent the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the model, where higher values indicate greater explanatory power. As shown in the table, the model explains 55.5% of the variance in Work Productivity ($R^2 = 0.555$) and 60.3% of the variance in Organizational Commitment ($R^2 = 0.603$). These results indicate that leadership style, career development, and work environment provide a moderate to substantial contribution in explaining employees' work productivity and organizational commitment within Indonesian startups.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that leadership style plays a strategic role in improving both work productivity and organizational commitment among employees in Indonesian startups. A positive and significant relationship indicates that leadership is not merely a managerial function, but also a behavioral mechanism that shapes employee motivation, work direction, and psychological attachment to the organization. In startup contexts, where organizational structures are often flexible and work demands are highly dynamic, leaders are expected to provide clarity, inspiration, and emotional support. This finding is consistent with transformational leadership theory, which argues that leaders who are able to inspire, motivate, and build a shared vision can encourage employees to work beyond formal job expectations and contribute more actively to organizational goals (Caillier, 2015; Mudd-Fegett & Mudd, 2024). Therefore, leadership style becomes a key factor in strengthening employee productivity while simultaneously fostering organizational loyalty.

The positive effect of leadership style on work productivity is also consistent with

findings reported in broader organizational settings across different countries. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that transformational leadership enhances employee motivation, knowledge sharing, innovative behavior, and job performance because leaders create a shared vision and encourage employees to exceed formal job expectations. In startup organizations, this relationship becomes even more important because employees frequently perform multiple roles, adapt to rapid organizational changes, and operate with limited supervision. Consequently, transformational leadership not only directs employee performance but also helps maintain productivity under conditions of uncertainty and continuous organizational change.

Career development also shows a strong influence on work productivity and organizational commitment, suggesting that employees are more likely to perform effectively and remain attached to the organization when they perceive clear opportunities for growth. In startups, career paths are often less formalized than in established corporations, which may create uncertainty regarding employees' future roles and advancement. However, when startups provide training, mentoring, skill development, and promotion opportunities, employees tend to interpret these practices as organizational support for their long-term professional growth. This perception can increase motivation, job engagement, and willingness to contribute to organizational success. The result supports previous studies stating that career development enhances employee performance and strengthens commitment because employees feel valued and see the organization as a place where their career aspirations can be achieved (Lo Presti et al., 2022; Suhairi & Nurbaiti, 2024; Suprayitno, 2024).

The work environment was also found to positively affect work productivity and organizational commitment. This finding indicates that employees in startups require not only challenging work but also a supportive atmosphere that enables them to perform optimally. A work environment characterized by collaboration, open communication, autonomy, and psychological support can reduce work pressure and encourage employees to become more engaged in their tasks. In highly competitive startup settings, where employees often face uncertainty, workload intensity, and rapid organizational change, a positive work environment becomes essential for maintaining morale and productivity. This result is in line with the view that workplace conditions influence employee attitudes and behavior, as a comfortable and supportive environment can improve job satisfaction, productivity, and emotional attachment to the organization (Goni & Van Looy, 2022; Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021; Theodoridis et al., 2024).

Another important finding of this study is the mediating role of work productivity in the relationship between leadership style, career development, work environment, and organizational commitment. The significant indirect effects indicate that organizational commitment is not only shaped directly by leadership, career development, and work environment, but also strengthened through improved employee productivity. This means that when employees experience effective leadership, meaningful career development, and a supportive work environment, they are more likely to become productive; in turn, this productivity enhances their sense of value, achievement, and attachment to the organization. In startup organizations, where individual contribution is highly visible and often directly linked to business outcomes, productive employees may develop stronger psychological ownership and commitment because they perceive themselves as important contributors to organizational growth.

An important contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the mediating role of work productivity. Rather than functioning merely as an organizational outcome, work productivity serves as a behavioral mechanism through which favorable organizational practices are translated into stronger organizational commitment. Employees who experience supportive leadership, meaningful career development, and a positive work environment are more likely to perform effectively. These positive performance experiences subsequently strengthen employees' sense

of competence, organizational value, and psychological attachment, ultimately reinforcing their commitment to remain with the organization. This finding extends previous organizational behavior research by explaining not only whether organizational factors influence commitment, but also how these influences are transmitted through employees' productive work behavior.

The startup context provides a distinctive explanation for these findings. Unlike established organizations, startups generally operate with limited financial resources, relatively flat organizational structures, flexible work arrangements, and a workforce dominated by younger employees. Under these conditions, employees often rely more heavily on intrinsic motivation, learning opportunities, and collaborative work environments than on formal organizational systems. Therefore, work productivity becomes an important indicator through which employees evaluate both their individual contribution and the organization's future prospects. When employees perceive themselves as productive contributors within a dynamic startup environment, they are more likely to develop stronger organizational commitment despite the uncertainty commonly associated with startup employment.

The findings provide several practical implications for startup founders and human resource managers. First, startup leaders should adopt transformational leadership behaviors by providing clear direction, continuous feedback, and recognition to maintain employee motivation in highly dynamic work environments. Second, although startups commonly operate with relatively small organizational structures, they should establish transparent career development pathways through competency-based promotion criteria, mentoring programs, job rotation, and continuous learning opportunities. Third, founders should prioritize creating collaborative work environments that encourage knowledge sharing, open communication, and psychological safety, as these conditions contribute to higher productivity and stronger organizational commitment. Finally, startup managers should regularly monitor employee productivity not merely as a performance indicator but also as an early signal of employee engagement and long-term organizational commitment.

Overall, this study provides evidence that employee commitment in Indonesian startups is built through an integrated mechanism involving leadership quality, career development opportunities, work environment, and work productivity. The findings suggest that startups should not rely solely on financial incentives or informal work culture to retain employees. Instead, they need to develop leadership practices that inspire employees, provide structured opportunities for career growth, and create a work environment that supports both performance and well-being. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends organizational behavior research by showing that work productivity functions as an important pathway linking organizational factors to commitment in the startup context. From a practical perspective, the results imply that startup leaders should treat productivity and commitment as interconnected outcomes that can be strengthened through consistent managerial and organizational support.

CONCLUSION

Rather than functioning solely as an employee performance outcome, work productivity emerges as the key behavioral mechanism that connects organizational practices with stronger organizational commitment in Indonesian startups. This finding suggests that leadership style, career development, and work environment do not automatically strengthen employee commitment unless they are first translated into productive work behavior. In the context of startups—where organizations operate under rapid change, high uncertainty, and a workforce dominated by young professionals work productivity becomes the "bridge" through which employees develop a stronger sense of contribution, organizational value, and long-term commitment. Accordingly, enhancing productivity should be viewed not merely as a short-term performance objective but as a strategic pathway for building employee loyalty and

organizational sustainability.

For startup leaders and managers, the results highlight the importance of creating a supportive and motivating organizational environment that encourages employee growth, productivity, and long-term commitment. By implementing transformational leadership practices, investing in career development programs, and fostering a positive work environment, startups can improve employee engagement, reduce turnover intention, and enhance overall organizational performance. These findings contribute to the organizational behavior literature within the startup context and provide practical recommendations for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Future studies are encouraged to expand the research scope by involving startups from different regions or industries and incorporating additional variables such as organizational culture and work-life balance.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for both managerial practice and future research.

From a managerial perspective, startup founders and human resource managers should recognize that employee productivity is not merely an operational performance indicator but also an important pathway for strengthening organizational commitment. Therefore, leadership practices should emphasize continuous communication, empowerment, and constructive feedback to maintain employee motivation in dynamic work environments. Furthermore, startups—particularly those in the early stages with limited financial resources—should not postpone career development initiatives. Instead of relying solely on formal promotion systems, organizations can implement cost-effective strategies such as mentoring, job enrichment, cross-functional project assignments, internal knowledge-sharing sessions, competency-based learning, and transparent career discussions. In addition, creating a collaborative and psychologically supportive work environment should become a strategic priority because such conditions encourage employees to remain productive and committed despite organizational uncertainty.

From a research perspective, future studies are encouraged to examine the proposed model using longitudinal research designs to better capture changes in employee productivity and organizational commitment over time. Future research may also extend the model by incorporating additional variables, such as organizational culture, employee engagement, psychological empowerment, work-life balance, or perceived organizational support, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee behavior in startup organizations. Finally, comparative studies involving startups at different stages of organizational development or across different countries would provide deeper insights into whether the mediating role of work productivity varies across organizational contexts.

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