

# The Meaning of Work and Organizational Commitment of Generation Z Employees

Auradini Gagola<sup>1</sup>, Susana Prapunoto<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia

Email: [gagolaaura@gmail.com](mailto:gagolaaura@gmail.com)

## Abstract

This paper aims to determine the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational commitment. The subjects in this research were 52 participants. The measuring instruments used are The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) and the Organizational Commitment Scale. The collected data was processed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test. The results of hypothesis testing show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment, meaning that if employees have a higher work meaning value, the higher their organizational commitment, as well as if employees have a lower work meaning value, the lower their organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** *Meaningful Work, Organizational Commitment, Generation Z.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

In a company or organization, employees have a crucial role in determining the level of success in achieving the goals of the company and the organization itself. The process of achieving goals is, of course, influenced by many factors, one of which is the existence of adequate human resources. Employees are very valuable capital for an organization or company; therefore, perceptions of employees are starting to change. This can be seen from the perception that employees used to be resources to achieve their goals, but now this has changed, namely making employees into capital so that the organization can run, develop and achieve its goals. Therefore, companies must be able to provide good supporting facilities, create a comfortable working environment, and be able to explore and optimize the potential of each employee. This support allows employees to show maximum performance and create a positive ecosystem for the company and organization so that they will feel comfortable and contribute to their work.

Research conducted by Kuean et al. (2010) shows that employees are divided into two groups, namely those who have organizational commitment and those who do not. Employees who have organizational commitment can be seen in their performance better and will usually make a positive contribution and be able to stay in their jobs. Then employees who do not have organizational commitment usually tend to leave the workplace. In line with this, Memari et al. (2013) research result also show that there is a relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance both affectively, continuously and normatively. When employees feel comfortable in the work environment, and are accompanied by organizational commitment within them, they will be able to achieve optimal performance.

Nowadays, the world of work has a percentage of employees of various ages or who are usually classified using generations. One of the generations that will enter the world of work today is generation Z, or what is usually called gen Z. Then generation Z is defined as the working generation born between 1995 and 2012, also called the net generation or internet generation (Stillman et al., 2017).

Based on data from the 2019 national labor force survey (SAKERNAS), gen Z born after 1998 has filled approximately 12 million productive and work-ready positions in Indonesia. From the result of this data, it can be seen that generation Z plays an important role in the world of work today. However, the current problem is that there are so many employees, especially generation Z, who are not happy with their work, and tend to easily resign from a company. Employees can leave a company or organization due to various factors, such as their own wishes or the termination of their employment relationship. When an employee leaves a company, this is usually called turnover or resignation. Turnover that is caused by their own desires is the employee's decision to end the employee relationship, while turnover that is not based on their own desires is a managerial decision to end the employment relationship (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Based on the reason for resignation of their own accord and the existence of obstacles to employees who are actively working in completing their tasks, it seems that there are problems regarding the meaning of work and this also occurs at PT X.

According to the HR Manager at PT X, employee are not being enthusiastic because there is no commitment. From this, it is seen that the meaning of work is one aspect that influences a person when carrying out it. Employees who resign feel that they lack the commitment to be able to continue carrying out their duties with enjoyment or in other words are not enthusiastic because there is no commitment. From this, it can be seen that the meaning of work is one aspect that influences a person when carrying out their duties or work, even the meaning of work participates in forming commitment when working. Then, based on data from PT X's HR Manager, the main problem is turnover with separation types ranging from 5-10% per year. The meaning of work according to Geldenhuys (2014) is a feeling of meaning in work that makes meaning of work itself so that it can make an optimal contribution to the organization and is a work value or goal, assessed based on individual ideals or standards. To achieve this, positive social relations must be created within a company or by developing oneself with better abilities (Geldenhuys et al., 2014). When individuals are able to view their work as important thing, understand their duties, and have clear future goals regarding their work, they will tend to have a sense of attachment to their work and be able to see meaning un their lives ( Steger et al., 2012). This explains that the meaning of work is a person's perspective on assessing their work positively and having a tendency to show their best abilities to fulfill meaningfulness in their work. Research by Geldenhuys (2014) and research by Beukes & Botha (2013) found a correlation between the meaning of work and organizational commitment. The meaning of work has a role, namely as an incentive for individuals to make positive work contributions. If employees see work as meaningful to them,

then the company or organization benefits from this. This is in accordance with the statement by (Steger & Dik, 2010) which states that there is a relationship between work meaningfulness, work engagement, and organizational commitment. When an employee has meaning in his work, he will have a commitment to the organization or work, which means that increasing the meaning of work is a way for employees to be focused and more motivated. The meaning of work is something that is very important, considering that this is directly related to organizational attachment and commitment in the workplace. Employee involvement and commitment are important aspects of optimal work function (Geldenhuis et al., 2014). Then Cartwright & Holmes (2006) explained that when employees find meaning in their work, commitment and attachment to their workplace will emerge. The meaning of work will guide employees to work better so that there is increased engagement and organizational commitment (Steger & Dik, 2010; Steger et al., 2012).

Research conducted by Geldenhuis (2014) found that employees who experience meaning in their work, have goals and are more focused on carrying out their work will have a desire to be useful and also develop the qualities and expectations that the company desires, such as organizational commitment. This is in line with research results that show that high group commitment, especially in the form of affective commitment or positive feelings towards the group, influences the level of individual motivation to work better (Brown, 2019).

The result of research related to the meaning of work conducted by Widyastuti and Nugroho (2017) explains the correlation between the meaning of work and organizational commitment, where the meaning of work is significantly correlated and makes an effective contribution of 36.2 % to the creation of organizational commitment. Then the meaningfulness of work contributes 44.2% to organizational commitment, where the higher the meaningfulness of work, the higher the organizational commitment to employees (Irianto et al., 2021). However, there are gaps in the results of other research; for example, research conducted by Rachmat (2009) showed different results, where the result found that the meaning of work did not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment. This is in line with research conducted by Karinadewi & Martdianty (2020) on hotel employees in Jakarta and Bali. The results show that the meaning of work does not directly influence organizational commitment.

In this research, there is novelty in the population and sample, namely those who work in the retail industry. If previous research was carried out in the mining and automotive office industries, this research was carried out in the retail industry, because the turnover phenomenon that occurs currently occurs most often in retail companies. The problem phenomena that occur and the differences in research results make the author interested. The problem phenomena that occur and the differences in research result make the author interested in conducting research to see whether there is a relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment among retail company employees. This research needs to be carried out because, apart from looking at the current problem phenomena and the gaps in the result of previous

research, researchers also consider it necessary to find a relationship between the meaning of work and the work commitment of generation z employees at PT X, the principal of the company itself.

This research aims to determine the relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment among generation z employees at PT X. It is also hoped that the results of this research can become a reference for companies, especially PT X.

## **B. LITERATUR REVIEW**

### **1. Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment is defined as an employee's attitude of loyalty towards the organization by remaining in the organization, helping to achieve organizational goals, and not having the desire to leave the organization for any reason (Mardiana, 2017). Organizational commitment is also defined as the level of employee attachment to the organization where they work and their desire to remain in the organization in the long term. This includes employees' belief in the values, goals and mission of the organization and the desire to actively contribute to achieving these goals. A high level of organizational commitment can increase productivity, employee retention and job satisfaction.

So, it can be concluded that organizational commitment is an individual's sense of attachment to the organization, how the individual feels part of an organization, develops an attitude of loyalty, and a feeling of wanting to contribute to the organization so that it is expected to be able to achieve its goals. This research uses the theoretical definition from Allen and Meyer (1990) as a research reference. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organization consists of three aspects, namely affective commitment, continuity commitment and normative commitment.

### **2. Meaningfull Work**

The meaning of work is also defined as the attitude of an individual who sees his work broadly and positively. Steger and Duffy (2012) explain that the meaning of work is not only as work that is meaningful for the individual (meaning), but as work that is significant, provides a positive impact (meaningfulness) and is oriented towards growth and goals. When a job has clarity, a work environment that the individual understands, and goals, he is able to make sense of his work.

So, it can be concluded that the meaning of work is the employee's understanding of the work itself and the way the individual gives personal value to his work. With the meaning of work, individuals are better able to know the direction of the work they will do, and what the goals of their work are, this also helps make individual work more focused. Then, when individuals have a deep meaning about their work, positive feelings towards their work will be created, job satisfaction will decrease, and employee turnover rates will decrease. This research uses the definition of work meaning theory by Steger and Duffy (2012) as a research reference.

## C. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative design with a Pearson correlation design. The population in this study is generation Z employees who currently work at PT X. The sample was taken using a saturated sample of 60 generation Z people who are currently working at PT X with a minimum tenure of 0 months to twelve months, and a birth year range of 1995-2012 or an age range of 28-17 years. Data collection was carried out using the work as meaning inventory scale (WAMI) (Steger et al., 2012) and an organizational commitment questionnaire (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

## D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Reliability Test

Reliability testing was carried out using the Cronbach Alpha method to measure the consistency of measurement results. The results of measuring the reliability of the meaning of work scale can be seen in table 1

**Table 1. Reliability Test Result**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,919	9

Based on the measurement results, the results show a scale reliability of 0.919, which means this scale can be declared reliable.

### 2. Descriptive Statistical Results

#### a. Organizational Commitment

The amount of data (N) from 60 participants. The results of descriptive statistical testing can be seen in table 2 which summarizes of organizational commitment data and the meaning of work

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistical Measurement Results**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OC	60	39	65	51.33	5.830
MW	60	10	37	.00	5.816
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Based on the results of descriptive statistics in table 2 especially the Organizational Commitment variable, a maximum score of 65 is obtained, while the minimum score is 39 with mean 51.33 and standard deviation 5.830. To determine the level of the Organizational Commitment variable, five categories are used, namely Very High, High, Medium, Low and Very Low.

So, the high and low measurement results are categorized as follows:

**Table 3. Distribution of Organizational Commitment based on criteria**

Category	Criteria	N	Percentage
65-60	Exceedingly high	3	5 %
59-54	Elevated	18	30 %
53-48	Moderate	22	36,67 %
47-42	Subdued	15	25 %
41-36	Exceptionally low	2	3,33 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100 %</b>

From the description table for measuring Organizational Commitment above, it can be seen that there are 3 employees who have Organizational Commitment in the very high category with a percentage of 5%, in the high category there are 18 people with a percentage of 30%, in the medium category there are 22 people with a percentage of 36.67%, the low category is 15 people with a percentage of 25%, and the very low category is 2 people with a percentage of 3.33%. Thus, the majority of PT X employees' Organizational Commitment is in the medium category.

#### b. Meaningful work

The results of descriptive statistical testing can be seen in table 3 which summarizes the general picture of work meaning data.

**Table 4. Results of descriptive statistical measurements**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OC	60	39	65	51.33	5.830
MW	60	10	37	.00	5.816
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Based on the results of descriptive statistics in 4 especially the Organizational Commitment variable, a maximum score of 37 is obtained, while the minimum score is 10 with mean 0.00 and standard deviation 5.816. Then, categorization is used to determine the level of the variable Meaning of work, namely five categories, namely, Very High, High, Medium, Low and Very Low.

So, the high and low measurement results are categorized as follows:

**Table 5. Categorization of the Meaning of Work variable**

Category	Criteria	N	Percentage
37-32	Exceedingly High	1	1,67%
31-27	Elevated	-	0%
26-21	Moderate	19	31,67%
20-15	Subdued	26	43,33%
14-9	Exceptionally Low	14	23,33%
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the description table of the Meaning of Work measurement above, it can be seen that employees who have Meaning of Work in the very high category are 1 person with a percentage of 1.67%, in the high category there are 0 people or none and a percentage of 0%, in the medium category there are 19 people with a percentage 31.67%, the low category was 26 people with a percentage of 43.33%, and the very low category was 14 people with a percentage of 23.33%. Thus, the majority of PT X.

### 3. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis testing in this research uses the Pearson correlation test. The results of hypothesis testing can be seen in table 6.

**Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results**

		OC	MW
OC	Pearson Correlation	1	.998**
	Sig. (2 -tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
MW	Pearson Correlation	.998**	1
	Sig. (2 -tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the regression results in table 6 above, it can be seen that the value of  $r = 0.998$  with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.01$  which shows that there is a positive and very significant influence between the Meaning of Work and Organizational Commitment variables. The test results are in line with the hypothesis that has been made, where the influence of the meaning of work on organizational commitment is positive and very significant. This means that the greater the meaning of an employee's work, the greater the employee's organizational commitment. So, the hypothesis can be accepted.

This research aims to see the relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment among generation Z employees at PT X. Based on results of the data analysis, it can be seen that PT X. The results of the correlation analysis between the variables Meaning of Work and Organizational Commitment show a positive and very significant correlation. From this study, it can be stated that the higher the meaning of work, the higher the organizational commitment. Conversely, the lower the meaning of work, the lower the organizational commitment. The results of this research are in accordance with research by Widyastuti and Nugroho (2017) that there is a positive and significant relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment.

According to Steger, et al (2012) the meaning of work is an individual's personal assessment that their work has a significant and positive impact. Someone who has meaning in their work will be able to assess their work as a broader job, and make employees committed to the company. Employees who have meaning in their work will make themselves understand more and take the values of the company and this work into themselves and become something meaningful. Morin (2008) explains that employees who have a positive assessment of their work make them work not only as a routine but also as a form of developing themselves.

According to Morin (2008), employees who assess their work negatively tend not to interpret their work and have symptoms of stress, individuals will definitely look for ways to maintain attendance, commitment and performance at work, but when the individual feels tired and cannot maintain these methods, they can see declines such as performance and work being done that is not optimal, dissatisfaction and tend to have conflicts. Ways that can increase the meaning of work are by encouraging positive professional relationships, developing closeness with colleagues so as to produce a good work environment (Morin, 2008).

The results of the correlation test between the meaning of work and organizational commitment among generation Z employees at PT X. From the results of research conducted at PT X, the meaning of work is relatively low, and because the meaning of work is positively and very significantly correlated, so it is considered necessary for every employee to have an understanding of their work and it is also assessed that employees need to understand job characteristics and job significance in order to help foster meaning in work.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

There is a positive and very significant relationship between the meaning of work and organizational commitment among generation Z employees at PT X organizational commitment. The level of meaning of work of Generation Z employees at PT X is relatively low. This means that employees have not or do not have a positive assessment of their work, have not been able to see their work as something that enhances life goals and have not been able to see or do not consider that their work is useful for many people. The level of organizational commitment possessed by generation Z employees of PT X. This means that employees are quite capable of assessing that there is a match between personal goals and company goals, so that employees support the goals that have been agreed upon within the company.

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