

## The Role of Career Plateau as a Mediating Variable between Work Ethics and Organizational Commitment of Administrative Staff at One of Regional Hospitals in Jakarta

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### Abstract

Organizational commitment is an important factor in determining whether someone will be actively involved in carrying out their work duties and also helps determine the achievement of the organization. However, not all employees of the organization have high organizational commitment, including administrative staff at the Regional General Hospital (RSUD). This study aims to see the organizational commitment influenced by the career plateau and work ethic of administrative staff at one of the RSUDs in the Jakarta area. This study uses a quantitative approach with 62 participants ( $n = 62$ ) and data analysis techniques using mediator regression analysis. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire accessed via the google form link. This study was conducted at one of the RSUDs in the Jakarta area. The results of the analysis show that work ethic has a more dominant direct effect on the organizational commitment of administrative staff at the RSUD ( $\beta = .271$ ), rather than its indirect effect through career plateau ( $\beta = .089$ ). This shows that work ethic has a more consistent impact on the loyalty of administrative staff at the RSUD.

**Keywords:** organizational commitment, career plateau, work ethic, administrative personnel, hospital

### Abstrak

Komitmen organisasi merupakan faktor yang penting dalam menentukan apakah seseorang akan terlibat aktif dalam melaksanakan tugas pekerjaannya dan juga ikut menentukan capaian organisasi. Namun demikian, tidak semua karyawan organisasi memiliki komitmen organisasi yang tinggi, termasuk juga para tenaga administrasi di Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah (RSUD). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat komitmen organisasi yang dipengaruhi oleh career plateau dan work ethic para tenaga administrasi di salah satu RSUD di wilayah Jakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan teknik analisis data menggunakan analisis regresi mediator. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan kuesioner yang diakses melalui tautan google form. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada salah satu RSUD di wilayah Jakarta. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa work ethic berpengaruh langsung lebih dominan terhadap komitmen organisasi tenaga administrasi RSUD, daripada pengaruh tidak langsungnya melalui career plateau. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa etika kerja memiliki dampak lebih konsisten terhadap loyalitas tenaga administrasi di RSUD.

**Kata kunci:** komitmen organisasi, career plateau, work ethic, tenaga administrasi, rumah sakit

## Introduction

Competition in the world of work today opens up opportunities for employees to move from one company to another. Companies also often show various efforts in ensuring the achievement of employee welfare. Therefore, it is not surprising that companies are competing to carry out various strategies to make employees feel their needs are met, so that in turn they choose to stay with the company. Based on a survey conducted by Mercer ([Mason & Sardone, 2024](#)), 97% of executives said they anticipate increased competition for talent, with the number of employees leaving the organization reaching a record high. This shows that currently the desire of employees to stay with their company is decreasing along with competition and increasingly competitive offers from various other companies.

The desire of employees to stay with this company describes a condition called organizational commitment. In addition, Greenberg and Baron also interpret organizational commitment as the extent to which employees feel attached to their organization, show loyalty, and are willing to stay as part of it ([Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021](#)). Strengthening organizational commitment also involves developing a stable mentality and fostering long-term attachment to the organization, while minimizing the influence of negative factors and opportunistic behaviors in the workplace ([Nguyen et al., 2020](#)). Meyer and Allen ([Noraazian & Khalip, 2016](#)) define organizational commitment as the desire of employees to continue working in their organization. This is definitely very dependent on how the company treats these employees. [Simonson et al. \(2017\)](#) states that retaining committed, ethical, and independent employees will significantly increase business success. High employee commitment to a job position can increase the work rewards they receive, grow opportunities for promotion, and increase opportunities to claim retirement benefits ([Kulicki, 2011](#)). As for the company, high commitment can help the company reduce the time, effort, and cost spent on finding and training new employees.

Research on organizational commitment has gained significant attention over the years. Several studies have examined how various factors, such as leadership style, job satisfaction, and work engagement, contribute to organizational commitment ([Meyer et al., 2012](#); [Kholiq & Miftahuddin, 2017](#)). [Katper et al. \(2020\)](#) stated that organizational culture significantly affects organizational commitment. According to the results of the study, organizational culture should be supportive and innovative for the highest impact on organizational commitment ([Katper et al., 2020](#)). Similarly, [Pham et al. \(2024\)](#) highlight that organizational culture also plays a remarkable role in promoting employee performance from a sustainability approach and contribute to shaping a work environment that enhances employee performance. Furthermore, [Mowday et al. \(1979\)](#) emphasized that employees who feel valued and supported by their organization are more likely to develop a strong sense of commitment and remain with their employer for a longer period. The above exposure and conditions occur in various types of companies, including companies that focus on providing services such as hospitals. As an institution engaged in the service sector, hospitals are highly dependent on the quality of work of their employees so that consumers, in this case patients, feel satisfied with the service. Not only medical professionals such as doctors and nurses, administrative personnel who are directly dealing with patients certainly need to feel attached to the hospital where they work in order to show optimal performance. Unfortunately, administrative personnel are often considered as support employees so that their welfare is put aside. As in one of RSUD in Jakarta, most administrative staff have more than 5 years of service in the same position and without any meaningful career development from the company. In an initial survey conducted by researchers, some samples even showed that they had been in the same position and job for more than 10 years. As a result, boredom and demotivation increase and affect their performance.

This condition illustrates the phenomenon of career stagnation, also known as career plateau. This condition can lead to feelings of anxiety in individuals because they doubt their competence in the tasks they carry out. According to Stout [Farooq and Tufail \(2017\)](#) employees who feel their careers are stagnating have levels of commitment and performance compared to those who do not experience stagnation. Career plateau also impact job burnout and turnover intention, employees at career plateaus have less space for promotion, lack lateral mobility, and lack experience in fulfillment and career

development, so they have turnover intention (Bai et al., 2023). Employees in career plateaus feel that the input and reward are not proportional, they assess their situation in the organization in a negative direction and compare their gains and losses with a negative mindset, resulting in a sense of unfairness (Lo et al., 2024). Furthermore, organizational support and career development opportunities play a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of career plateauing (Chay & Aryee, 1999). When employees perceive a lack of growth, they are more likely to disengage and display reduced organizational loyalty (Allen et al., 2003). These uncomfortable conditions, if left unchecked, can reduce or even eliminate employees' positive feelings towards the company. This can lead to unsocial behaviors that are detrimental to the company. Conversely, if organizational commitment is widely and clearly accepted by employees, then this can create a work environment that encourages social processes, work rules and ethical behavior in an organization (Kaptein, 2008). Therefore, work ethics need to be developed by companies in order to control employee behavior, which in turn will increase employee loyalty (hamihn, 2009). Hamid et al. (2021) emphasized that individuals who demonstrate a strong work ethic are more likely to develop a higher level of commitment to the organization. Ethical leadership and a culture of integrity within organizations have been found to significantly contribute to employee commitment and trust in the workplace (Treviño et al., 2006). An ethically oriented approach in leadership bestows many benefits on organizations, the importance of which is manifested in the health care management system and in the relationships between colleagues (Aloustani et al., 2020). This study aims to look at the picture of organizational commitment in RSUD administrative staff and examine the effect of career plateau and work ethic on organizational commitment at the hospital.

In addition, this study fills the gap of previous research that is less focused on the factors that influence organizational commitment in administrative staff in hospitals. Existing research in Indonesia has not yet examined career plateau as a mediator in the relationship between work ethics and organizational commitment. To date, studies have primarily focused on its role as a direct predictor of organizational commitment. It is hoped that this research can provide practical solutions that can be applied by hospitals in improving the welfare and commitment of their employees.

## Methods

This research uses a non-experimental quantitative approach. The research method uses cause-and-effect relationship analysis or regression analysis, but not based on experimental data collection. This research used inferential statistics analysis to answer the problem formulation and examined the research hypothesis. It is not possible to collect the data with experimental approaches, due to the predictor variables in this study cannot be manipulated.

The participants in this study are administrative staff at Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah (RSUD) in Jakarta. This study uses saturated sampling because the number of administrative staff at the RSUD is not more than 150 people. The author has contacted the Human Resources (HR) bureau at the RSUD to conduct this research and has received verbal permission. Furthermore, the author sent a letter to the Head of the RSUD regarding this research permit and the questionnaire will be entrusted to the HR of the RSUD in the form of a google form link.

The data collection technique will use a *self-report* questionnaire distributed via a google form link. There are three questionnaires, namely organizational commitment (20 items) which is adapted from Allen & Meyer's (1990) Organizational Commitment Scale, *work ethic* (20 items) derived from adaptation of the short version of the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP-SF) scale by Meriac et al. (2013) and career plateau (20 items) that modified from Career Plateau Measurement Scales by Chitsuko and Azuma (2022). Each scale has four (4) answer responses that is "very unsuitable"; "unsuitable"; "suitable"; and "very suitable". In addition, there are also participant identity fields such as gender, age, length of service, employment status (permanent / contract / daily).

The data analysis technique that will be used is moderator and mediator regression, to see the role of two independent variables in influencing the dependent variable. The author has not yet determined

which independent variable will be used as a mediator or moderator, so this will be determined based on the empirical model of multiple regression at the beginning of the analysis. For things that need to be reported from this statistical analysis, namely the Rsquare ( $R^2$ ) value, then the simultaneous effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (F test) and finally the partial effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (T test).

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Results

Based on the data collection, there were 62 participants ( $n = 62$ ) administrative staff involved in this study. This is about 50% of the total participants. The main obstacle in collecting data is the busy work agenda of administrative staff. However, the number of participants has represented all the demographic characteristics of administrative staff. The following table presents a descriptive table of participant demographics.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

Demographics	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Man	26	41.9
Woman	36	58.1
Lama Bekerja (tahun)		
1 – 3 tahun	1	1.6
> 3 tahun	61	98.4
Tingkat Pendidikan		
SMA / Sederajat	6	9.7
Diploma (D1 / D2 / D3)	5	8.1
Sarjana (S1 / D4)	51	82.2
Status Pegawai		
Honorer	2	3.2
Kontrak	2	3.2
Tetap	58	93.6

Based on **Table 1.** gender, the majority of participants were female, 36 (58.1%), while 26 (41.9%) were male. Furthermore, based on length of work, the majority of participants have worked for more than three (3) years ( $n = 61 / 98.4\%$ ) at RSUD. When viewed from the level of education, the majority of participants had a Bachelor's degree (S1 / D4) with a total of 51 people (82.2%), the rest were almost equally divided between high school / equivalent education ( $n = 6 / 9.7\%$ ) and Diploma (D1 / D2 / D3) ( $n = 5 / 8.1\%$ ). Furthermore, based on employment status, the majority are dominated by permanent employees with a total of 58 people or around 93.6%. The remaining honorary and contract employees are 2 people each (3.2%).

### Reliability Test Results

In this section, the authors report on the results of the research instrument test. There are three research instruments used according to the number of research variables. The analysis technique used is Alpha Cronbach's internal consistency reliability using SPSS software. The ideal criteria for the reliability value is above .8 and internal consistency for items or items above .2 (Kline, 1999). The results of the reliability test can be seen in **Table 2.** below.

**Table 2.** Reliability Test Results of Research Instruments

Instrument	Alpha Cronbach	Internal Consistency	Description
Work Ethic	.868	.351 - .742	Reliable
Organizational Commitment	.879	.260 - .803	Reliable
Career Plateau	.956	.412 - .830	Reliable

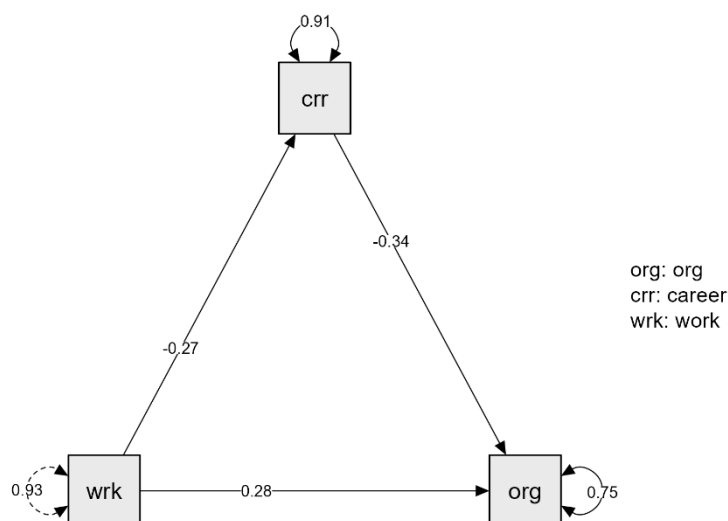
Based on table 2 above, it can be seen that all research instruments are declared reliable or can be trusted to measure research variables. The lowest reliability value is in the work ethic variable of .868 ( $\alpha = .868$ ), and the highest is in the career plateau reliability value of .956 ( $\alpha = .956$ ).

### Hypothesis Test Results

The author uses Hayes moderator mediator analysis to test the relationship between research variables. The mediator variable is career plateau (carr), while the dependent variable is organizational commitment (orga), and the independent variable of this study is work ethic (work). The author uses SPSS to test the model. The results of the hypothesis test are presented in **Table 3.** and **Figure 1.** below.

**Table 3.** Mediator Analysis Results

Path	Deskripsi	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Keterangan
a	Work -> Carr	-.268	-2.13	Significant
b	Carr -> Orga	-.333	-2.87	Significant
c'	Direct effect	.271	2.31	Significant
a*b+c	Total effect	.361	3.01	Significant
a*b	Indirect effect	.089	1.30	Not significant

**Figure 1.** Path Model of Mediation Analysis

Based on **Table 3.** above, it can be said that work ethic indirectly affects organizational commitment through career plateau. Arrow a shows the effect of work ethic on career *plateau* with a regression coefficient of  $-.268$  ( $\beta = -.268$ ;  $t > 1.96$ ). Likewise, in arrow b where career plateau affects organizational commitment ( $\beta = -.333$ ;  $t > 1.96$ ). The negative regression coefficient indicates that the higher the career stagnation of administrative staff, the lower the organizational commitment experienced by these employees. Furthermore, the direct impact of work ethics on organizational commitment is significant ( $\beta = .271$ ;  $t > 1.96$ ). This means that a person who has good work ethics in RSUD, will affect his organizational commitment in RSUD, even though the person has a feeling of career stagnation.

In the total effect, work ethics affects organizational commitment indirectly through the career plateau variable. This means that work ethics variables only affect organizational commitment through the perception of career stagnation. In other words, if RSUD employees have good work ethics, it will increase the employee's organizational commitment, and ultimately reduce the perception of career stagnation. This is also evident from the insignificant indirect effect regression coefficient of work ethics on organizational commitment ( $\beta = .089$ ;  $t < 1.96$ ). Thus, career plateau acts as a mediator for the effect of work ethic on organizational commitment of employees at the hospital.

## Discussion

The findings of this study offer important contributions to the theoretical understanding of organizational commitment, particularly within the context of administrative staff in the healthcare sector. The significant relationship between work ethic and organizational commitment aligns with [Meyer and Allen's \(1991\)](#) three-component model of organizational commitment, which emphasizes affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The study reinforces the idea that ethical behavior at work is not only a personal virtue but also a pivotal factor influencing employees' attachment to their organization.

Additionally, the mediating role of career plateau introduces an intriguing nuance to organizational behavior literature. This study demonstrates that while work ethic can directly enhance organizational commitment, perceptions of career stagnation act as a dampening factor. This supports [Farooq \(2017\)](#) assertion that career stagnation erodes employee morale and performance. These findings extend theoretical models by integrating career plateau as a critical variable moderating the relationship between individual traits (work ethic) and organizational outcomes (commitment).

The study also highlights the interplay between personal and organizational factors, reinforcing [Kaptein's \(2008\)](#) model of ethical culture in organizations. The results suggest that while individual work ethic is vital, its positive effects can be undermined by systemic issues such as lack of career growth opportunities. This dual perspective advances a more holistic understanding of organizational commitment, emphasizing the need to address both individual and structural factors.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the broader discourse on employee commitment by highlighting the nuanced interaction between individual and organizational factors. The confirmation that work ethic positively impacts organizational commitment supports theories emphasizing the value alignment between employees and organizations. According to [Robbins and Judge \(2013\)](#), individuals with strong work ethics are likely to internalize the goals of the organization, fostering a sense of loyalty and purpose. This study extends these concepts into the healthcare sector, illustrating how administrative staff with high ethical standards remain committed even in challenging work environments.

The role of career plateau as a mediating factor also opens avenues for exploring employee perceptions of professional growth. Previous research, such as that by [Greenhaus et al. \(2000\)](#), has emphasized career development as a core driver of job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. This study adds empirical evidence to suggest that career stagnation undermines the motivational potential of intrinsic factors like work ethic. It challenges organizations to consider not only the ethical frameworks they encourage but also the structural barriers employees perceive within their career trajectories. [Elsayed & Khalaaf \(2021\)](#)

found from their research that career plateau had statistically significant negative correlation with work engagement. Relatively similar results also found by [Abideen et al., \(2021\)](#), they found that career plateau had negative correlation with organizational commitment and moderated by islamic work ethic. Moreover, the moderation between career plateau and islamic work ethic could reduce the negative effect on the organizational commitment.

Even though some studies found that the career plateau worked as a mediating variable, other studies found conversely. For example, a study by [Almaamari & Almeer \(2021\)](#) found that that work ethics had a direct and strong effect on organizational commitment among healthcare workers, with no significant mediation by career plateau. Employees with high work ethics remained committed regardless of career stagnation. Also [Khan et al. \(2002\)](#) found that in dynamic work environments (e.g., hospitals), career plateau had minimal mediating effect on commitment. Instead, factors like job autonomy and recognition played stronger roles.

Additionally, this research provides a context-specific exploration of commitment theories in a service-intensive environment like hospitals. The unique pressures faced by administrative staff, who balance high workloads with limited career advancement opportunities, create a distinct dynamic that may not fully align with conventional corporate environments. This reinforces the need to adapt organizational behavior theories to sector-specific realities, offering a more nuanced understanding of how commitment operates in diverse settings.

However, main limitation of this study was a number of participants. In this hospital, the administrative employee was less than 70, due to medium size of hospital. Another limitation is the indirect effect of mediator variable was not fully mediated. It could be related to the misspecification of the theory, or limited participants. In future directions, other research should address the number of participants and solid theoretical framework of the relationships between variables.

## Conclusion

This study shows that work ethic has a significant influence on organizational commitment at the hospital, both directly and through the mediator variable career plateau. Directly, high work ethic is associated with increased organizational commitment, indicating that employees who have high dedication and integrity at work are more likely to be committed to the organization. Indirectly, career plateau plays a role as a mediator that weakens the effect of work ethics on organizational commitment, although this mediating effect is not significant. This means that work ethics plays an important role in maintaining employees' organizational commitment, but perceptions of career plateau can reduce this commitment indirectly, although the effect is weak.

Thus, career plateau can influence organizational commitment through employees' perceptions of available career opportunities. Employees who perceive their careers to be stagnant tend to have lower commitment, even though they have good work ethics. This result supports previous research which states that the perception of career stagnation can affect organizational commitment, especially when employees feel there are no developmental opportunities ([Allen & Meyer, 1990](#)).

Based on these findings, the hospital manager is recommended to: (1) increase career development opportunities, including training, job rotation, and promotion pathways, to reduce perceptions of *career plateau* and strengthen employee commitment; (2) build a culture that values work ethics by rewarding dedicated employees, thereby increasing loyalty to the organization; and (3) implement a career management program that explains career pathways and skills needed for advancement, helping to reduce perceptions of career stagnation and increase motivation ([Greenhaus et al., 2000](#); [London, 1993](#); [Robbins & Judge, 2013](#)). This strategy is expected to help the hospital increase employee commitment and reduce the impact of perceived career plateau, resulting in a more engaged and energized workforce. Future research can explore other factors that may influence the relationship between work ethic and organizational commitment.

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