

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z is a generation known as digital natives, prioritizes value and career development in the workplace, and is in transition. There is a crucial phenomenon in Generation Z employees, where 69% of Generation Z employees in Indonesia show high exit intentions. Exit intention can be influenced by organizational commitment (OC). There are several things related to the level of individual OC, one of which is impostor phenomenon (IP). Research on the relationship between IP and OC has been conducted, but there are inconsistencies in the results. Therefore, this study aims to see more detailed results with the specific participant on Generation Z. The method used is quantitative non-experimental, with data collection techniques in the form of purposive sampling. This study uses measuring instruments in the form of Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) and Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). Participants in this study totaled 312 employees from the Jabodetabek area. The results of the main data analysis were processed with the Pearson Correlation test and showed that there was a significant positive and significant correlation between IP and OC. Further analysis shows that IP was significantly correlated with the dimensions of continuance commitment and normative commitment. However, no relationship was found between IP and the affective commitment.

Keywords: impostor phenomenon, organizational commitment, employees

1. PREFACE

Generation Z is a group of individuals born in 1995 – 2012 that can be categorized as late adolescents and young adults (Moon & Kim, 2023). However, many individuals from generation Z are still experiencing major challenges during the transition to adulthood in the professional world, as a result of the COVID-19 events that led to layoffs of some workers and the sudden digitization of jobs (Xueyun et al., 2023). In fact, in the next 10 to 20 years, generation Z is predicted to have a significant role in the world of work compared to previous generations. Therefore, it is important for them to recognize their strength and maximize their work potential.

Generation Z, also known as the “digital natives” generation, is a generation born and raised in an environment facilitated by technological sophistication (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). In their daily lives, generation Z makes maximum use of technology to facilitate their social interaction, information, and entertainment needs, especially during COVID-19. Therefore, generation Z use technology for 24/7 and often are considered as addicted to technology (Magano et al., 2020). However, they can maximize technology for their work to increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency to achieve company goals than other generations. In addition, generation Z also shows its strengths in the workplace, such as being creative, multitasking, flexible, and more open to diversity (Magano et al., 2020).

On the other side, Generation Z is also more individualistic, so they expect a balance between work and life, such as the form of flexible working hours and the opportunity to work from anywhere (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Furthermore, Generation Z has a strong desire to find their dream job to develop their career and life meaning and explore their skills (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). In addition, Barhate & Dirani also stated that generation Z expects benefits, recognition, and career development opportunities in the world of work (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). When the work doesn't provide satisfaction and support their career journey, it will lead to the idea of turnover intention.

In a survey conducted by GoodStats, it was found that 69% of generation Z workers showed high turnover intentions (Salsabilla, 2024). Turnover intention is a conscious and voluntary individual consideration to decide whether to leave their job or not (Shen et al., 2022). Turnover intentions are correlated with job factors, such as workload, job demands, job satisfaction, and job stress; and individual factors, such as organizational commitment (Pratama et al., 2022).

Organizational commitment (OC) is a crucial quality that affects the sense of responsibility and discipline of individuals towards their work. OC can be defined as a sense of individual attachment and loyalty that makes individuals stay in the organization (Fadila, 2024). Individuals with high commitment will feel attached to the organization, and this can predict turnover intention and the desire to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in their performance (AlKahtani et al., 2021). Therefore, OC plays a significant role in the work environment by affecting work attitudes and behaviors, performance and productivity, relationships with colleagues, and other psychosocial aspects of individuals (Hngoi et al., 2023).

When individuals show low OC, they are unlikely to maximize their potential to achieve organizational goals and experience disengagement (Ramli et al., 2024). OC in generation Z is often questioned due to its flexible personality and is more open to various opportunities that are aligned with values and are considered to bring more satisfying results (Moon & Kim, 2023). Generation Z shows low commitment that leads to negative impacts on their work attitudes and behaviors (Xueyun et al., 2023).

OC consists of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). These three aspects provide different explanations for why individuals stay in their work environment. Affective commitment states that emotional bond with the work environment makes individuals unite themselves with the work environment. Continuance commitment shows individuals the financial and non-financial costs in a new work environment. Normative commitment explains self-awareness and obligation to social norms or a sense of indebtedness, so that individuals remain. Allen & Meyer argue that every individual has these three types of commitment to their work environment, but there are different levels of commitment in each type (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Research found that OC is more influenced by individual characteristics than organizational characteristics (Afshari et al., 2020). One of the individual factors that have an impact on the level of commitment is impostor phenomenon (IP) (Gullifor et al., 2024). IP is a condition of individual doubts about their achievements because they feel intellectually and professionally incapable and inappropriate (Clance & Imes, 1978). Despite tangible evidence of individual achievement, such as professional recognition, awards, promotions, and positive reviews, individuals remain unable to internalize their experiences and achievements. They often attribute their success to external factors such as accident, luck and mis-attribution (Haar & De, 2024).

This phenomenon was found to occur not only among women, but also among men and aren't limited to age and ethnicity.

The correlation of IP and OC can be explained theoretically through Affective Event Theory (AET), which individual personality and work characteristics can trigger individual emotional responses (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The responses can affect work attitudes and behaviors, thus indirectly impacting the output of a job. Individuals with IP do not develop self-efficacy and self-esteem when they gain success (Wang et al., 2024). Instead, they will experience the fear that their coworkers will consider them as 'cheaters' if they can't complete the job well. The negative emotions towards themselves can make them feel indebted to the opportunities that have been given by the organization and their coworkers (Wang et al., 2024). In addition, they also tend to have a perception of a lack of other job alternatives. Therefore, individual with high level of IP might have high level of OC as well.

Previous study has been conducted to find out the relationship between IP and OC. However, there are inconsistencies in the results of each study. The first study by Grubb & McDowell focused on university workers showed that IP was significantly negatively correlated with affective commitment and positively with continuance commitment (Grubb & McDowell, 2012). Vergauwe et al. conducted a study on workers in general with the results that IP is found positively and significantly correlated with continuance commitment, but not correlated with affective commitment (2015). Finally, study by Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch shows that IP isn't directly correlated with affective commitment and continuance commitment (2016).

The inconsistencies of the research gap showing that further research has to be conducted to examine the relationship between IP and OC. In addition, prior research does not include normative commitment, so it has not discussed OC aspects thoroughly. Besides, previous research also does not focus on employees from generation Z, so that it can also be a novelty in this study. Thus, this study is expected to show more consistent and clear results regarding the relationship between IP and OC in generation Z.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Samples

This study used a quantitative non-experimental approach through Google Form. The sample in this study has the characteristics (a) aged 20 - 27 years; (b) at least 1 year of work experience; (c) at least graduated from high school education level; (d) working at the Jabodetabek area. In this study, researchers used purposive sampling technique, where participants are selected based on criteria that are in accordance with the research objectives.

This study used a sample of 312 employees (247 women and 65 men) aged 20-27 years from various industrial fields and domiciled at Jabodetabek. The most participants were 25 years old (26.9%) and least were 20 years old (2.6%). The majority of participants domiciled in Jakarta with a total of 115, while the fewest was Depok with 27 participants. Then, the education level of the participants in this study were high school (N=240), bachelor degree (N=67), master degree (N=4), and associate degree (N=1) levels

Measurements

This study uses the Indonesian version of Organizational Commitment Scales (OCS) by Patricia to measure an individual's OC level (2023). OC is individuals' attachment and loyalty toward their workplace (Allen & Meyer, 1990). OCS consists of 18 positive statement items

representing three dimensions with six items for each dimension, which is affective commitment (e.g., I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization), continuance commitment (e.g., Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire), and normative commitment (e.g., I owe a great deal to my organization). The subjects evaluate the items on the basis of a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”. The reliability test shows an excellent Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.933. Each dimension has a good reliability value, the Cronbach Alpha was 0.901 for affective commitment, 0.822 for continuance commitment, and 0.922 for normative commitment. In addition, the corrected item-total correlation demonstrated good discriminant result with a range of 0.476 - 0.776.

The Indonesian version of Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) by Nurdhikma was used to measure an individual's impostor phenomenon level (Ula et al., 2023). IP is a maladaptive experience of individuals who perceive themselves as frauds and are unable to internalize success objectively (Clance & Imes, 1978). The CIPS consists of 20 items that can be answered by participants on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = “does not apply at all” to 5=“exactly applies”. One example of an item from CIPS is sometimes I am afraid that others will realize how little I actually know and can". The corrected item-total correlation test on the first, second, and fifth item showed a result of less than 0.2, so the item was eliminated to retest the reliability, and it showed that CIPS had a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.913. The other 17 items have a corrected item-total correlation value that exceeds 0.2, which is in the range of 0.479 - 0.730. Therefore, it can be concluded that the other 17 items in CIPS can be used..

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted by distributing Google Forms consisting of informed consent, personal identity, and CIPS and OCS items. Participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any time without giving reasons. Google Forms was distributed online through social media, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. After data collection was complete, researchers conducted data testing on the IBM SPSS Statistic 25. Validity and reliability tests were carried out to ensure that each item was valid and reliable. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method showed that the data was normally distributed, so the so the hypothesis was tested by the parametric test methods.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Normality test was conducted with the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to see the distribution of research data. The normality test results show that the $p = 0.06 < 0.05$, so it implies that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, the correlation test between IP and OC was analysed by the Pearson technique. The correlation test results show that $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, so there is a positive and significant correlation between the two variables. It implies that individuals with a high level of IP tend to show a high OC level.

Table 1

The correlation result of IP and OC

<i>Correlation Test</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IP and OC	0.205	0.000	Positive and significantly correlated

Additional data analyses were also carried out based on each dimension of organizational commitment. The data portrays that among the three dimensions, affective commitment is the only dimension that does not have a significant relationship with impostor phenomenon ($r = 0.077$ and $p = 0.174 > 0.05$). While the continuance commitment and normative commitment was found positively correlated with impostor phenomenon. The detailed result of the analysis can be seen in the table below.

Table 2

The correlation result of IP and each dimension of OC

Dimension	r	Sig. (2 tailed)	Interpretation
Affective Commitment	0.077	0.174	Not correlated
Continuance Commitment	0.255	0.000	Positive and significantly correlated
Normative Commitment	0.195	0.001	Positive and significantly correlated

Result shows that IP is positively correlated with OC. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This is because when individuals doubt themselves, there are negative perceptions that make individuals unable to internalize their competencies, achievements, and rewards (McDowell et al., 2007). This can lead to individuals' cognitive dissonance because they feel guilty due to the sense of not being as competent as believed by others (Wang et al., 2024). In addition, individuals also tend to have a perception of lack of other alternatives, whether emotionally, financially, socially, and others. Guilt and the perception of no alternatives will make individuals stay in the organization and develop high OC as well.

Further research shows that the IP does not correlate with affective commitment. This finding is similar to Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch and Vergauwe et al. This is because emotional attachment to the organization is not only related to individual internal perceptions, such as the impostor phenomenon. It was related to external factors, such as social support, career development, and individual evaluation of experiences and workplace (Vergauwe et al., 2015). However, these results contradict research conducted by Grubb & McDowell (Grubb & McDowell, 2012). This is probably due to differences in the characteristics of the industrial sector of the research, where the study only involved employees from the industrial sector. Meanwhile, other studies have participants from various industrial sectors. Differences in industry characteristics can bring diverse pressures, demands, and work expectations and affect the relationship between IP and affective commitment in the work environment.

Furthermore, the IP was found to be positively correlated with continuance commitment, where this result is in line with the research of Grubb & McDowell and Vergauwe et al. This indicates that the higher the level of individual IP, the higher the level of continuance commitment to the work environment. Individuals with high levels of impostor phenomenon tend to feel they are in an inappropriate work position, because they consider themselves incompetent (Pannhausen et al., 2022). In addition, individuals often feel insecure and pessimistic about whether they can survive elsewhere (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2016). As a result, they consider their achievements and jobs as luck and think that they will not find another job comparable to their current position. The perception of the lack of other favorable alternatives leads individuals to continue to develop attachment to the work environment and increase continuance commitment.

Then, the IP was found to be positively correlated with normative commitment. This dimension has not previously been studied simultaneously with the IP. However, the correlation is caused by individuals with high levels of IP feeling indebted to the organization for the opportunities and achievements that have been given (Wang et al., 2024). This sense of indebtedness gives rise

to individual responsibilities and obligations to contribute further to the organization, in order to reduce guilt (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Thus, there will be an increase in the commitment of individuals with high levels of IP to the organization as an obligation and social norm. Therefore, the IP is said to correlate with normative commitment.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has two main conclusions. IP is found positively correlated with OC on Generation Z employees. Each dimension of OC is also found positively correlated with impostor phenomenon, except for affective commitment. This is because emotional attachment to the organization is not only related to individual internal perceptions, such as the IP. In addition, this study has several limitations that can be considered in future research. Future studies should research other important resources to learn the mechanism of impostor phenomenon and organizational commitment to see if there's any underlying factors which might mediate and moderate the relationship of these variables. Future research can also control the sector of industry in participants, because each industry has its own characteristics and pressures that can affect an individual's level of IP and OC. As for the practical suggestions, companies should conduct counselling, coaching, and mentoring sessions to reduce employee problems, which might affect their IP and OC issues. Companies should also provide professional development career paths and constructive support for each employee.

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