

Career Dynamics of Open University Lecturers

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze lecturer career development with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. This study was conducted on lecturers at the Open University (UT). Data as of 2023, the number of lecturers at the Open University was 708 lecturers, with a breakdown of 430 lecturers assigned to the Central UT and 278 lecturers assigned to regional units (UT Daerah) (UT Personnel, 2023). In 2023, UT registered 525,419 students. Because UT students are spread throughout Indonesia in Regional UTs, lecturers are also placed in Regional UTs to assist in the implementation of education at Regional UTs. The implementation of education at UT also involves external parties as tutors. The role of lecturers at UT is slightly different from other conventional universities. Lecturers at UT, especially Lecturers at Regional UTs, participate more in administrative activities for distance learning. This results in a reduced academic atmosphere for lecturers. The problem faced by lecturers at UT is the less than optimal career development. This can be seen from the lecturer's rank and their activities and productivity. The functional position ratio of lecturers at UT is dominated by Lecturers (52.12%), followed by Assistant Experts (22.74%). Furthermore, lecturer activity and productivity at UT remain low, particularly those related to the Tri Dharma (Three Pillars of Higher Education), particularly those related to research and community service. In 2021, the number of funded research output articles was 246, with 60 community service outputs, and 80 independent research articles. These numbers are lower than the number of lecturers. This low career development can be caused by organizational support, work motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment for lecturers. This study uses primary data. Research on the determinants of lecturer careers at Universitas Terbuka is important because lecturer careers are one of the factors influencing lecturer activity and productivity in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which ultimately contributes to the institution.

Keywords

Dynamics; Lecturer Career; Open University



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INTRODUCTION

Human resources are a crucial element in achieving organizational goals (Julyadi et al., 2022). For educational organizations, lecturers are a key asset for future organizational development. Therefore, human resource development must

be aligned with the progress and development of the educational world, as well as a commitment to providing the best for the organization and its stakeholders. In line with the development of the educational world, there is a need for lecturers with strong performance and the ability to fully contribute to the organization. Furthermore, lecturers are required to keep abreast of scientific developments and innovate.

The Open University (UT) is a state-owned university in Indonesia. UT provides educational services using the Open and Distance Learning (PTJJ) system. As a distance learning institution, UT develops various learning media to facilitate student learning. UT students are widely spread throughout Indonesia. In 2023, UT enrolled 525,419 students. Because UT students are spread throughout Indonesia in regional UTs, lecturers are also placed in regional UTs to assist in the implementation of education at regional UTs.

Tabel 1. Profil Dosen berdasarkan Jabatan Fungsional di Universitas Terbuka

Jabatan Fungsional	UT Pusat	UT Daerah
Professor	24	3
Lektor Kepala	101	37
Lektor	184	185
Asisten Ahli	111	50
Tenaga Pengajar	10	3
Jumlah	430	278

Sumber: Kepegawaian UT, 2023

Tabel 2. Profil Dosen berdasarkan Tingkat Pendidikan di Universitas Terbuka

Jabatan Fungsional	UT Pusat	UT Daerah
S3	166	26
S2/Profesi	264	252
S1	-	-
Jumlah	430	278

Universitas Terbuka (Open University), as an open and distance learning institution, has its own characteristics in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education: education, research, and community service. However, one of the challenges faced by Universitas Terbuka is the low level of activity and productivity of lecturers in carrying out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. This is evident in the number of scientific publications, minimal research activities, and community service activities carried out by lecturers at Universitas Terbuka, which are still fewer than the total number of lecturers.

Benchmark results for 21 State Universities Legal Entities (PTN BH) by the Research and Technology Research and Development Agency (DRTPPM) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology for 2019-2022. UT ranks 21st in the categories of Number of BOPTN Research, Citations, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Research TKT, and Sinta Score for 3 Years. In 2021, the number of funded research output articles was 246, community service output articles were 60, and independent research articles were 80. This number is lower than the number of lecturers at UT. The budget available for research and community service at UT is very large. Furthermore, UT also offers rewards to lecturers for producing scientific articles and IPR. However, this does not seem to be able to increase lecturer productivity in the field of research and community service.

Low lecturer performance can also be influenced by a mismatch between the lecturer's competencies and the tasks assigned, suboptimal organizational support, inadequate supporting facilities, and an unsupportive academic atmosphere (Lestari, 2013). Career development is a process that encourages a person's capacity and directs them in choosing a career path (Neuenschwander & Kracke, 2023).

Career development is the process of improving individual performance in order to achieve a desired career level (Julyadi, et al., 2022). Career development is influenced by various factors. A lecturer's career at Universitas Terbuka can be defined as the process of self-development of a lecturer in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as a lecturer.

A lecturer's career at the Open University encompasses the development of academic competence, social competence, and managerial competence. Several factors influence a lecturer's career at the Open University, including motivation, competence, the work environment, and organizational support. Motivation is a crucial factor in a lecturer's career development at the Open University, as strong motivation encourages lecturers to develop themselves and improve their performance. Competence is also crucial in a lecturer's career development at the Open University, as lecturers with strong competence will find it easier to advance their careers at the Open University.

The work environment also influences the career development of lecturers at Universitas Terbuka. A conducive work environment will facilitate lecturers' personal development and improve their performance. Organizational support is also crucial for lecturers' career development at Universitas Terbuka, as strong organizational support facilitates personal development and enhances their performance. Research by Julyadi et al. (2022) states that career development is influenced by organizational culture, digital leadership, and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment also mediates the relationship between organizational culture and career development.

Research by Kasmari et al. (2022) shows that organizational support and work motivation have a positive and significant influence on employee career development. Komalasari (2022) examined women's career development using Maslow's Theory. The results of the study showed that self-actualization was the

most dominant factor influencing career development. Research on the determinants of lecturers' careers at Universitas Terbuka is important because lecturers' careers are one of the factors that influence their activities and productivity in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which ultimately contributes to the institution. Therefore, this study examines the influence of organizational support, work motivation, and job satisfaction on career development, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable..

METHODS

This research is quantitative and utilizes primary data. Primary data refers to information obtained firsthand by the researcher regarding the variables studied for the specific purpose of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The data in this study were obtained from questionnaires distributed to lecturers at the Open University, the subjects of this study. The sample selection technique for this study used saturated sampling. Saturated sampling is a sampling technique where all members of the population are used as samples. The data collection method in this study was a questionnaire, a list of pre-formulated statements from which respondents choose clearly defined alternative answers (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

Researchers developed a questionnaire model based on previous research. The organizational support and work motivation variables used a questionnaire model from Kasmari et al.'s (2022) research. Researchers used the Fanggidae et al.'s (2015) questionnaire model for job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the career development variable used a questionnaire model from Neunschwander and Kracke's (2023) research. Before distributing the questionnaire to respondents, a pilot test was conducted on potential respondents. The pilot test aimed to determine whether respondents understood the questionnaire's contents as expected. This study utilized respondent anonymity to minimize social desirability bias.

The data analysis used in this study employed the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. PLS is a variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) statistical method. PLS is designed to address multiple regression when specific data problems occur, such as small sample sizes, missing values, and multicollinearity. According to Hartono (2011), PLS is a variance-based SEM that can simultaneously test measurement models and structural models. The purpose of PLS is to assist researchers in predictive purposes. The model defines latent variables as linear aggregates of their indicators. The statistical application used to process the research data was SmartPLS 3.0. The results of hypothesis testing can be seen in the inner model testing using the bootstrapping procedure. To determine the significance level of the path coefficient and t-value using the bootstrapping procedure. This procedure is used to find the path coefficient and t-value, which indicate the level of significance in hypothesis testing. This study also interviewed lecturers to confirm the primary data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data used in this study is primary data obtained using a questionnaire distributed to lecturers at Universitas Terbuka. The survey was conducted over a four-month period, with the questionnaires distributed from July 2024 to October 2024. A total of 171 questionnaires were collected, with 11 incomplete, resulting in only 171 copies being usable for this study.

Table 3. Respondent Profile (N=171)

Information	Amount	Percentage
Gender		
1. Man	87	50.88%
2. Woman	84	49.12%
Last education		
1. S2	138	80.70%
2. S3	33	19.30%

Age		
1. 25-35 years	48	28.07%
2. 36-45 years	43	25.15%
3. >46 years	80	46.778%
Functional Position		
1. Instructor	3	1.75%
2. Expert Assistant	56	32.75%
3. Lecturer	85	49.71%
4. Associate Professor	27	15.79%
Length of work		
1. <2 years	5	2.92%
2. 2-5 years	56	32.75%
3. 6-10 years	3	1.75%
4. >11 years	107	62.57
Placement Unit		
1. Central UT	74	43.27%
2. Regional UT	92	53.80%
3. Not Mentioned	5	2.92%

Source: processed primary data, 2024

Table 3. above shows the profile of respondents in this study. This profile includes gender, education level, age, functional position, placement unit, and length of service. The number of respondents for male respondents was 87 respondents (50.88%), and the remaining 84 respondents were female (49.12%). The majority of respondents (138 respondents) had a master's degree (80.70%). Respondents with a doctoral degree (33 respondents) were 19.30%.

The majority of respondents were over 46 years old (46.78%), with 48 respondents (28.07%) aged 25 years and 43 respondents (25.15%) aged 36-45 years.

The majority of respondents held the functional position of Lecturer, 85

respondents (49.71%), while 3 respondents (1.75%) did not hold a functional position or were still teaching staff. 56 respondents (32.75%) held the position of Assistant Expert, and 27 respondents (15.79%) held the position of Associate Lecturer.

Most respondents have experience working at the Open University for more than 11 years (62.57%). Respondents with experience working for a period of 6-10 years were 3 respondents with a percentage of 1.75%, 56 respondents (32.75%) with experience working for a period of 2-5 years, and the remaining 5 respondents (2.92%) with experience working for less than 2 years. 92 respondents work at the Regional UT, 74 respondents work at the Central UT, and 5 respondents did not mention the placement unit.

Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity The correlation between item scores and construct scores can be seen from the measurement model with indicators. The purpose of convergent validity is to determine the validity of the relationship between indicators and their latent variables. An indicator is considered to have high validity if its loading factor value is greater than 0.50. The following are the outer loadings for each indicator belonging to the exogenous latent variable:

Table 4. Outer Loading

	Order	Information
CD1	0.800	Valid
CD2	0.817	Valid
CD3	0.790	Valid
CD4	0.762	Valid
CD5	0.783	Valid
CD6	0.815	Valid
CD8	0.807	Valid

Table 4. Outer Loading (continued)

	Order	Information
CD9	0.867	Valid
JS1	0.742	Valid
JS3	0.809	Valid
JS4	0.816	Valid
JS7	0.798	Valid
JS8	0.773	Valid
MW3	0.846	Valid
MW7	0.837	Valid
MW9	0.872	Valid
OC1	0.840	Valid
OC2	0.848	Valid
OC3	0.796	Valid
OC4	0.853	Valid
OC6	0.822	Valid
POS1	0.785	Valid
POS2	0.736	Valid
POS3	0.805	Valid
POS4	0.796	Valid
POS5	0.749	Valid
POS7	0.812	Valid

Source: Processed data, 2024

From Table 4 it is known that all indicators have a value *loading factor* greater than 0.50, so there is no need for re-estimation. These items are able to represent the variables well. This criterion is able to assess the validity of the variable indicators, which are proven to be valid variables. The method for assessing discriminant validity is by observing the AVE value for each construct, which has a value greater than 0.50. This means that 50% or more of the indicator's variance can be explained

(Ghozali and Latan, 2014). The AVE values are as follows.

Table 5. AVE

	AVE
CD	0.649
JS	0.621
MW	0.726
OC	0.693
POST	0.610

Table 5 shows that the AVE values for all constructs are above 0.50. This explanation suggests that all constructs have good validity.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Testing *inner model* This test was conducted to examine the relationship between constructs, significance values, and R-square of the research model. The inner model was evaluated using R-square for the dependent construct and the significance of the structural path parameter coefficients. Changes in R-square values were used to determine whether a particular exogenous latent variable had a substantive influence on the endogenous variable. According to Hair et al. (2011) in Ghozali (2014), R-square values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 indicate that the model is strong, moderate/sufficient, and weak, respectively.

In assessing a model with PLS, start by looking at *R-square* for the dependent latent variable. Table 4.10 displays the results of the R-square estimation using SmartPLS.

Table 6. R Square

	R Square
CD	0.499
OC	0.600

Source: Processed data, 2024

Table 4.10 shows the highest R-square value of 0.600, which is considered

strong, and the lowest R-square value of 0.499, which is considered adequate. R-square indicates that the independent variable can explain the dependent variable; the higher the R-square value, the better the structural equation.

Hypothesis Testing

In testing the hypothesis using the values contained in *output result for inner weight* obtained from the evaluation for the inner model used to see the path coefficient and t-statistic value. Table 4.11 provides the estimated output for testing the structural model.

Table 7 Results For Inner Weights

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STERR)
JS -> OC	0.550	0.551	0.088	6,280
MW -> OC	-0.054	-0.056	0.100	0.539
OC -> CD	0.709	0.712	0.040	17,577
POS -> OC	0.310	0.315	0.091	3,423

Source: Processed data, 2024

Table7 shows that the organizational support factor (POS) has a path coefficient value of 0.310 and a t-statistic value of 3.423. This indicates that the results are significant because the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96. Based on the SmartPLS data processing results, it can be concluded that H1 is empirically proven (H1 is accepted). *Motivation to Work*(MW) with a t-statistic value of -0.054 and a path coefficient of 0.539. This indicates that the results are not significant because the t-statistic value is less than 1.96, so it can be concluded that H2 is not empirically proven (H2 is rejected).

Job satisfaction (JS) has a t-statistic value of 6.280 and a path coefficient of -

0.550. This indicates that the results are significant because the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96, so it can be concluded that H3 is empirically proven (H3 is accepted). Organizational Commitment (OC) with t-statistic value 17,577 and a path coefficient of 0.709. This indicates that the results are significant because the t-statistic value is more than 1.96, so it can be concluded that H4 is accepted.

Based on the analysis results, 5 hypotheses were accepted and 1 hypothesis was not proven. The following table summarizes the results of the hypothesis testing:

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	Information
H1	Organizational support has a positive influence on the organizational commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment.	Accepted
H2	Work Motivation has a positive influence on the Organizational Commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment	Rejected
H3	Job satisfaction has a positive influence on organizational commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment.	Accepted
H4	Organizational commitment has a positive influence on the career development of lecturers in the Open University environment.	Accepted

Discussion

Organizational support has a positive effect on organizational commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment.

Organizational support has a positive effect on organizational commitment among lecturers at the Open University (UT). Organizational support can build organizational commitment in lecturers. Organizational commitment is related to the

level of loyalty and involvement of lecturers in the institution (Kasmari et al., 2022). This indicates that lecturers at the Open University feel that the organization cares about them and provides support for their career development (Saleeha et al., 2024). The results of this study align with those of Utami (2022) and Saleeha et al. (2024). Utami (2022) stated that organizational support positively influences organizational commitment, as employees perceive that the organization values their contributions to improving organizational performance. Saleeha et al. (2024) revealed that organizational support positively impacts employees. Strong organizational support increases employee confidence, leading employees to believe that the organization will assist them in completing their work and assist them in challenging situations. This aligns with the findings of research by Novitasari and Asbari (2024) that organizational support can improve lecturer performance.

This is supported by interviews with several UT lecturers. Mr. A, a lecturer at UT Regional Office, stated that since joining UT, he has felt adequate support from the institution regarding career development. This support, he said, includes scholarships for further study provided by UT. Several lecturers who have received funding for further study from UT have also felt the same.

Work motivation has a positive influence on organizational commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment.

The positive effect of work motivation on organizational commitment among lecturers at the Open University has not been empirically proven. This could be due to dissatisfaction with management policies, lack of appreciation, or inadequate support from the institution, which can reduce the positive impact of work motivation. An unsupportive work environment can prevent employees from feeling committed to the organization, even if they are motivated to work. Furthermore, individual characteristics of lecturers can also influence work motivation. For example, lecturers with high levels of intrinsic motivation may be more likely to remain committed to their work despite external challenges. However, if that

motivation is extrinsic (e.g., salary or rewards), their commitment may be more vulnerable to changes in working conditions (Putri, 2014).

Job satisfaction has a positive effect on organizational commitment of lecturers in the Open University environment.

Job satisfaction has a positive effect on organizational commitment among lecturers at the Open University, as empirically proven. Job satisfaction refers to the positive feelings individuals have about their jobs, which can be influenced by various factors such as the work environment, rewards, and relationships with coworkers. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is the level of attachment an individual has to the organization where they work, which includes a sense of responsibility and loyalty to the organization's goals. Job satisfaction is an aspect that influences organizational commitment. When employees are committed to the organization, they will be more productive. People who are relatively satisfied with their jobs will be more committed to the organization, and those who are committed to the organization tend to experience greater satisfaction. The results of this study align with research conducted by Muhammad and Eleswed (2013), which found that job satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on organizational commitment. This finding is also consistent with the results of interviews with several lecturers at UT. The lecturers stated that their work at UT fulfills primary, secondary, and tertiary needs.

Organizational Commitment has a positive influence on the career development of lecturers in the Open University environment.

Organizational commitment has been empirically proven to have a positive effect on the career development of lecturers at the Open University. Organizational commitment is a crucial factor in increasing employee and organizational productivity. Higher organizational commitment indicates better organizational performance in managing its human resources. Julyadi et al. (2022) revealed that an individual's career development is influenced by that individual's commitment to the

organization. This is in line with research by Triatmanto (2017) that individual career development is influenced by commitment to the organization. Research by Nurvitasari (2020) shows that organizational commitment mediates the influence of organizational culture on career development. Research by Sungu et al. (2019) shows that employees with high organizational commitment will build careers within the organization. This suggests that an organization must strive for organizational commitment to improve organizational performance. High organizational commitment encourages lecturers to develop their careers, in this case linked to the obligations of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Lecturers who have organizational commitment increase their productivity in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Productivity in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education will support lecturers in their career development.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study and discussion on the determinants of lecturers' career development at the Open University indicate several important conclusions. Organizational support, work motivation, and job satisfaction each have a positive influence on lecturers' organizational commitment within the Open University environment. In turn, organizational commitment also demonstrates a positive influence on lecturers' career development. These findings suggest that strengthening institutional support, enhancing motivation, and improving job satisfaction are essential factors in fostering stronger organizational commitment, which ultimately contributes to better career development outcomes for lecturers.

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