

Career Growth and Organizational Commitment in the Healthcare Sector: An Empirical Study in North Sulawesi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: In efforts to enhance the quality of human resources in the healthcare sector, understanding the factors influencing nurses' organizational commitment has become increasingly important. This study examines the connection between career growth and organizational commitment among nurses in private hospitals in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, using a quantitative approach. Data were acquired through an online survey conducted to 391 nurses and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings indicate that career growth is significantly correlated with organizational commitment and its three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. These results underscore that nurses' perceptions of opportunities for competency development, promotion, and remuneration play a critical role in strengthening their organizational attachment. Furthermore, this study highlights the need for sustained interventions, such as career counseling services, professional mentoring, and structured social support programs, to optimize career development, foster a sense of organizational belonging, and reduce disparities in commitment levels among nurses.

KEYWORDS: Career growth, organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, hospital

I. INTRODUCTION

Nurses constitute the frontline of healthcare services and represent the largest group within hospital human resource structures (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2017 ; Holland et al., 2019). Their role is crucial in determining productivity, operational effectiveness, and the quality of patient care (Al-Haroon & Al-Qahtani, 2020). However, numerous studies have highlighted low degrees of organizational commitment among nurses in private hospitals across different countries, which contribute to increased turnover intentions. Low organizational commitment is often associated with decreased job satisfaction and motivation, ultimately leading to a decline in service quality and an increase in patient complaints (Sepahvand et al., 2019). Therefore, maintaining and enhancing nurses' organizational commitment is a strategic aspect of ensuring the sustainability and quality of hospital services.

In Indonesia, attention to organizational commitment among nurses in private hospitals has increased in recent years, although research findings remain mixed. Studies conducted in Jakarta have linked low organizational commitment and high turnover rates to limited autonomy and insufficient feedback (Rindu et al., 2020). Research in Malang reported turnover rates ranging from 12% to 35%, driven by personal considerations such as pursuing further education, external job opportunities, and inadequate working conditions, including low salaries (Dewanto & Wardhani, 2018). Another study documented turnover intentions reaching 20.8% (Susanti et al., 2020). In contrast, higher dimensions of organizational commitment were observed amid nurses in Metro Lampung and Makassar, primarily due to satisfaction with rewards (Suprihanto et al., 2018) and alignment between personal and organizational values (Mardiana et al., 2012). Nevertheless, empirical evidence on nurses' organizational commitment in rural areas remains limited.

The literature underscores the importance of considering factors that influence organizational commitment, one of which is career growth. Opportunities for professional development and advancement are widely regarded as key determinants of nurses' decisions to remain within an organization. Gunawan (2016) reported that nurses in Indonesia tend to migrate to large urban areas in search of more promising career opportunities, higher salaries, better facilities, and greater prospects for promotion. In contrast, nurses who continue to work in regional hospitals often face lower wages, limited facilities, and uncertainty regarding employment status.

Theoretically, career growth is specified as employees' perspectives of opportunities for enhancement and progression within an organization (Weng et al., 2010). This concept is considered central to career development and serves as a strategic instrument for organizations to retain high-performing employees (Okurame, 2012; Karavardar, 2014) ; Nawaz & Pangil, 2016).

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Prior studies suggest that when organizations provide career growth opportunities, employment relationships become more positive, and employees' commitment and loyalty tend to increase. Accordingly, career growth practices warrant serious attention from managers (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Nevertheless, empirical findings remain inconsistent. While Weng et al. (2010) reported a direct effect of career growth on all components of organizational commitment, Karavardar (2014) found a positive relationship only with affective commitment. This inconsistency indicates that the impact of career growth may not be uniform across all dimensions of organizational commitment, underscoring the need for further empirical investigation. To date, research examining the relationship between career growth and the components of organizational commitment among nurses in private hospitals in Indonesia remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the tie between career growth and organizational commitment among nurses working in private hospitals in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This study is expected to contribute to theory development and to enhance understanding of how career growth opportunities can strengthen nurses' organizational commitment within the context of private hospitals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPHOTESIS

Career Growth

Career growth (CG) refers to the degree to which individuals perceive that their institution produces a supportive atmosphere for meeting career aspirations and strengthens this development through promotion opportunities and fair compensation practices (Weng & McElroy, 2012). This concept comprises four dimensions: (1) career goal progress, referring to the extent to which an individual's current job contributes to the achievement of long-term career goals; (2) professional capacity development, which reflects opportunities to gain skills and knowledge development; (3) promotion speed, defined as perceptions of opportunities and the pace of promotion; and (4) remuneration growth, which encompasses perceptions of increases in compensation over time (Weng et al., 2010; Weng & McElroy, 2012). Prior studies have demonstrated that career growth contributes positively to organizational commitment (Amah & Oyetuunde, 2020). Accordingly, career growth represents a critical factor in employee retention and in strengthening employees' relationships with their organizations (Nouri & Parker, 2013; Karavardar, 2014; Zhou et al., 2015), while simultaneously reducing employees' turnover intentions (Amah & Oyetuunde, 2020).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment (OC) is a crucial work-related attitude for both employees and organizations (Lambert et al., 2020). Emotional attachment to the organization and understanding in its values are often regarded as key indicators for assessing an worker's level of commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Meyer & Allen (1991) describe organizational commitment as a psychological condition that reflects an individual's connection to their organization and affects their choice to hold part of or abandon the organization. Meyer & Allen (1991) propose that organizational commitment comprises three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment (AC) represents an employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization, leading them to persist because they desire to. Continuance commitment (CC) engages awareness of the costs or losses of departing the organization, so employees stay because they require to. Normative commitment (NC) contemplates a sense of moral duty to stay, whereby employees continue with the organization because they consider they should. Together, these components offer a thorough framework for exploring the psychological motivations behind employees' decisions to maintain their organizational membership.

Career Growth and Organizational Commitment

Career growth is widely recognized as a strategic approach to enhancing organizational commitment. The stronger the perceived support for career development, the higher the level of employees' organizational commitment (Mudzakir et al., 2025). Employees who feel the need to remain in an organization due to emotional attachment or accumulated dependence tend to view the organization as an integral part of their identity and long-term future. Consequently, they hold strong expectations that the organization will also acknowledge and support their career development (Batmomolin et al., 2024). Empirical evidence further indicates a positive correlation between CG and OC (Weng et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2019; Adhikari & Thapa, 2025).

H1: CG is positively related to nurses' OC.

Career Growth and Affective Commitment

Affective commitment develops when organizations fulfill employees' needs (Meyer et al., 1993). Previous studies suggest that when organizations support employees in achieving career objectives, acquiring new skills, and accessing promotion opportunities along with fair compensation, employees tend to develop stronger emotional attachment and engagement with the organization (Bai & Liu, 2018). According to Weng et al. (2010), career growth involves meeting employees' professional needs, indicating a positive relationship between CG and AC to the organization.

H2: CG is positively related to nurses' AC.

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Career Growth and Normative Commitment

Employees who exhibit strong normative commitment perceive staying with the organization as the ethically or morally appropriate choice (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Accordingly, employees who perceive that they receive various benefits from the organization such as enhanced skills and knowledge, promotion opportunities, and adequate compensation and who believe that their career development is supported by the organization are likely to improve a sense of moral accountability to match these benefits by remaining committed to the organization (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011; Wang et al., 2017).

H3: CG is positively related to nurses' NC.

Career Growth and Continuance Commitment

Workforces who regard that their organization helps them achieve their career goals generally exhibit higher levels of continuance commitment, as leaving the organization would entail substantial costs for them (Weng et al., 2010). Prior studies also indicate that the enhancement of skills and knowledge is a key factor influencing private hospital nurses' decisions to remain in or leave their organizations (Dewanto & Wardhani, 2018; Vázquez et al., 2021), highlighting the significant role of professional development in shaping commitment. In addition, clear promotion opportunities (Khan & Jan, 2015) and adequate compensation (Belaïd et al., 2017; Lwin et al., 2017) have been shown to strengthen continuance commitment. The greater the promotion opportunities and the more competitive the compensation, the stronger workers' plan to continue with the organization.

H4: CG is positively related to nurses' CC.

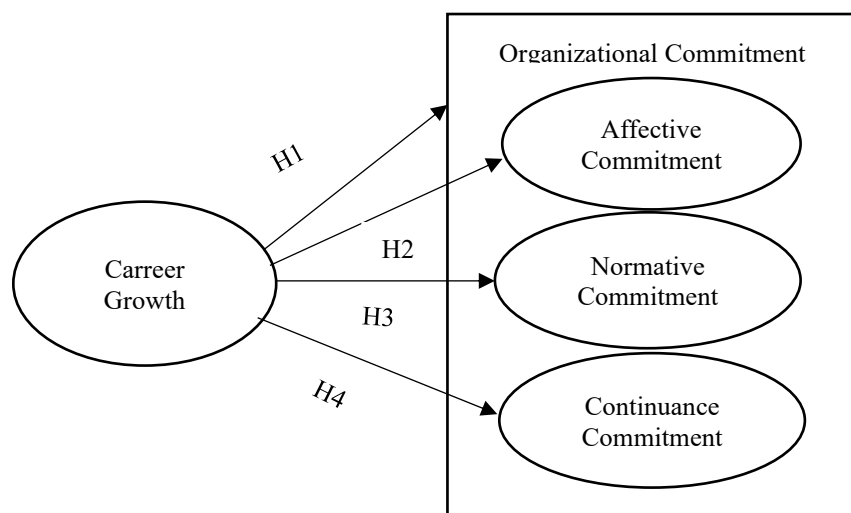


Figure 1. Research Model

III. METHODS

This quantitative study employed a cross-sectional design using an online survey and involved 391 nurses from five private hospitals in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling due to ease of access and participant availability over the data gathering. The inclusion norms comprised male and female nurses aged 21–60 years, including both early-career nurses (work experience < 3 years) and experienced nurses (work experience ≥ 3 years), thereby allowing comparisons of perceptions based on length of work experience. Nurses who were pursuing formal education and staff members on leave during the data collection period were excluded to ensure consistency in working conditions and active engagement in nursing duties. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of respondents along with their frequency distribution. A total of 270 nurses (69.2%) were aged between 21 and 30 years, 317 participants (81.1%) were female, 228 nurses (58.3%) had more than three years of work experience, and 132 nurses (33.8%) were employed in Tomohon.

Since this study involved human participants, ethical procedures were followed. Participants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose and objectives of the study and were ensured that their participation in completing the questionnaire was voluntary and free from coercion. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N=391)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
21 – 30	270	69.2
31 – 35	55	14.0
36 – 40	31	7.9

> 40	35	8.9
Gender		
Male	74	18.9
Female	317	81.1
Years of service		
< 2 years	163	41.7
> 3 years	228	58.3
Work location		
Tomohon	132	33.8
Lembean	90	23.0
Bitung	85	21.7
Langowan	59	15.1
Tompasobaru	25	6.4

Career growth was measured utilizing the Career Growth Scale (CGS) established by Weng and Hu (2009). The scale consists of 15 items across four dimensions: career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth. Organizational commitment was assessed using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) produced by Meyer et al. (1993), which has been cross-culturally validated Meyer et al. (2012). The questionnaire comprises six items for each component of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Responses to all items were ranked on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The collected data were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The interpretation of correlation coefficients followed Cohen (1988) guidelines, with values of 0.10–0.23 indicating weak correlations, 0.24–0.37 indicating moderate correlations, and 0.37 or higher indicating strong correlations. Following Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002), statistically significant corrected correlations below 0.10 were interpreted as very weak. This interpretation has also been applied in the meta-analytic study by Ng & Feldman (2010). Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to identify the strength of the associations between career growth and overall organizational commitment, as well as each of its components.

IV. RESULTS

The mean score for career growth was 3.83 (SD = 0.52), demonstrating that respondents' perceptions of career opportunities and development were at a high level. This suggests that most nurses were generally satisfied with opportunities for competency development, career advancement, and organizational support for their professional growth. The relatively low standard deviation further indicates that respondents' experiences of career growth were fairly consistent.

The mean score for organizational commitment was 3.16 (SD = 0.49), reflecting a moderate level of commitment among nurses. When examined by dimension, affective commitment had a mean score of 3.02 (SD = 0.56), highlighting a moderate level of emotional attachment to the organization. Continuance commitment, with a mean score of 3.38 (SD = 0.55), indicates that nurses tended to remain with the organization due to perceived costs or consequences associated with leaving. Normative commitment exhibited the highest mean score at 3.52 (SD = 0.53), reflecting a stronger sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization compared to the other two dimensions. Overall, these findings suggest that normative considerations represent the most salient driver of organizational commitment among the respondents. As shown in Table 2, career growth was strongly and positively correlated with organizational commitment ($r = .45$, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Career Growth and Organizational Commitment

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
Career Growth	3.83	.52	1.00	
Organizational Commitment	3.16	.49	.45**	1.00

Note: ** $p < .01$.

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis presented in Table 3, affective commitment had a mean score of 3.02 (SD = 0.561), indicating a moderate level of affective commitment among respondents. In contrast, career growth demonstrated a higher mean score ($M = 3.83$; $SD = 0.524$), suggesting that respondents perceived their career growth at a high level.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Career Growth and Affective Commitment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Affective Commitment	3.02	.561	1.00					
Career Growth	3.83	.524	.26**	1.00				

Note: ** $p < .01$

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate that career growth has a positive and statistically significant relationship with affective commitment ($r = 0.26$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that higher perceptions of career growth are associated with higher levels of affective commitment to the organization. A correlation coefficient of 0.26 reflects a weak but statistically significant relationship, indicating meaningful practical and theoretical implications.

As presented in Table 4, career growth exhibits a strong positive correlation with normative commitment ($r = 0.53$, $p < .001$). This finding suggests that greater perceptions of career growth are linked to higher levels of normative commitment.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Career Growth and Normative Commitment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Normative Commitment	3.52	.536	1.00					
Career Growth	3.83	.524	.53**	1.00				

Note: ** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 5, career growth demonstrates a strong positive correlation with continuance commitment ($r = 0.45$, $p < .001$). This result indicates that more favorable perceptions of career opportunities are linked to a greater tendency to remain with the organization due to the potential costs or losses associated with leaving.

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Career Growth and Continuance Commitment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Continuance Commitment	2.38	.55	1.00					
Career Growth	3.83	.52	.45**	1.00				

Note: ** $p < .01$

The regression analysis results (Table 6) indicate that career growth has a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.450$, $B = 0.425$, $SE = 0.043$). The R^2 value of 0.202 recommends that 20.2% of the variance in organizational commitment is demonstrated by career growth. The F-test indicates that the model is statistically significant ($F = 98.533$, $p < .001$). The results suggest that employees who perceive higher career growth tend to exhibit greater organizational commitment.

Table 6. Linear Regression on the Relationship of Career Growth on Organizational Commitment

<i>Variable</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Intercept	.202	.200	1.539			98.533**	0.00
Career Growth			.425	.043	.450		

Note: ** $p < .001$.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the statistical analyses, all hypotheses proposed in this study were supported. The regression analysis demonstrates that career growth significantly predicts organizational commitment. These findings indicate that nurses in private hospitals in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, perceive meaningful opportunities to enhance their professional skills, obtain promotions and adequate compensation, and achieve their desired career goals. Such positive perceptions of career growth opportunities ultimately strengthen their commitment to the organization. This outcome supports the results reported by Weng et al. (2010) and Bai & Liu (2018), which suggest that alignment between individual and organizational values, along with the availability of career

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development opportunities, enhances employees' psychological attachment and promotes better performance. Furthermore, Zhou et al. (2015) emphasize that career growth is a critical antecedent of employee commitment.

This study further demonstrates that career growth has a specific effect on affective commitment. Nurses reported satisfaction with their career progress, which, as explained by Okurame (2012) and Bai & Liu (2018), is reflected in promotion opportunities and adequate compensation as forms of recognition of employees' self-worth. Consistent with Meyer et al. (1993), the fulfillment of these professional needs strengthens employees' emotional attachment to the organization. These findings also support previous studies by Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) and Ba & Liu (2018), which indicate that positive perceptions of task identity and recognition of performance contribute to higher levels of affective commitment.

The contribution of career growth to affective commitment, which accounts for 7.2 percent of the variance, indicates that other factors beyond this variable also influence nurses' affective commitment. Length of tenure may play a reinforcing role in this relationship. The longer nurses remain in their positions, the more career development opportunities they are likely to experience, which in turn strengthens their emotional attachment to the organization. This finding is consistent with Ferreira (2015), who emphasizes that work experience is a significant factor in the development of affective commitment.

Empirical evidence indicates that employees' emotional attachment encourages greater involvement in organizational activities, supports goal achievement, and contributes to a positive organizational image (Anggraeni et al., 2017). In the current research, the majority of nurses had more than three years of work experience and held permanent employment status, which may explain the relatively higher level of affective commitment observed. The findings also reveal that career growth significantly predicts normative commitment. This suggests that nurses perceive adequate opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies, as well as to benefit from promotion opportunities and fair compensation. Such conditions foster loyalty to the organization and motivate nurses to maintain optimal performance. These results confirm previous studies (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011; Wang et al., 2017), which emphasize that employees who receive organizational benefits and perceive their career growth to be supported by the organization are more likely to foster a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate this support.

Regression analysis indicates that career growth Clarifies 28.3% of the variance in normative commitment, a contribution that is higher than its effects on affective and continuance commitment. Logically, when hospitals demonstrate attention, support, and commitment to employees' career development, employees tend to feel a moral obligation to reciprocate through loyalty, responsibility, and sustained efforts to support organizational goals. This interpretation is consistent with Weng et al. (2010), who claim that career growth opportunities constitute a fundamental basis for the development of normative commitment. Furthermore, this finding supports the meta-analytic evidence reported by Meyer et al. (2012), which suggests that normative commitment tends to be stronger in collectivist cultures, where values such as loyalty, obligation, and a sense of duty are highly emphasized.

The findings indicate that career growth significantly predicts continuance commitment. This result extends previous research (Al-Ahmadi, 2002; Khan & Jan, 2015), which indicated that continuance commitment is shaped by different dimensions of career growth, including promotion prospects. Other studies (Belaid et al., 2017; Lwin et al., 2017; Tikare, 2017; Weer & Greenhouse, 2017; Wang & Yuan, 2018; Suprihanto et al., 2018) have similarly found that remuneration growth and other aspects of career development are closely associated with continuance commitment. Overall, these findings suggest that the greater the career development opportunities provided by an organization, the higher the level of employees' continuance commitment. When employees see clear career advancement opportunities, they are less inclined to leave the organization, as they consider long-term benefits such as financial stability, accumulated professional experience, and future promotion opportunities.

Several factors may explain this finding. First, nurses' understanding of the consequences of leaving the organization significantly influences their decisions. Nurses in this study perceived meaningful career development opportunities, including skill enhancement, access to further education, relatively fast promotion, and adequate compensation. This finding is consistent with Weng et al. (2010) and Efendi et al. (2014), who argued that employees who perceive their jobs as supportive of career growth are more likely to recognize the high costs of leaving the organization. This interpretation is also supported by statements from several nurses during focus group discussions, who reported that they had invested substantial time, energy, professional skills, and social relationships within the hospital, making departure feel disadvantageous. In addition, participants expressed concerns about the challenges of adapting to new workplaces with different regulations and social environments.

Another factor underlying continuance commitment is the limited availability of job opportunities and the inadequate medical equipment in some hospitals. Many nurses are aware that leaving their current positions may expose them to difficulties in securing alternative employment that can adequately meet their career needs or offer comparable development opportunities. These structural constraints encourage nurses to remain in their current hospitals, as staying is perceived as a more secure and rational choice in light of uncertain external labor market conditions.

VI. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings show that organizational commitment and all of its components are significantly predicted by career growth. This suggests that hospital management has provided support and opportunities for nurses to develop their skills and

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knowledge, access promotion opportunities, and receive adequate remuneration. However, given that overall organizational commitment is at a moderate level, affective commitment remains moderate, and continuance commitment is relatively high, hospital management should consider targeted interventions, including organizational counseling, to prevent potential psychological and behavioral consequences arising from imbalances among the different components of commitment.

This study has several limitations. First, all respondents were drawn from private hospitals in a single province, which confines the generalizability of the discoveries to the broader population of nurses in Indonesia. Future research should apply this model to private hospitals in other provinces in order to compare the dynamics of career growth and organizational commitment across diverse regional contexts. Second, although this study found a positive relationship between career growth and organizational commitment, career growth was treated as a unidimensional construct. Future studies employing longitudinal and qualitative approaches are needed to explore nurses' experiences more deeply, particularly with regard to specific dimensions of career growth and how each dimension influences organizational commitment and its components over time.

Third, social support from leaders, supervisors, and colleagues is an important factor influencing nurses' career growth. Therefore, hospital management should consider developing programs that foster and strengthen social support among nurses, as such initiatives have the potential to enhance career growth and, ultimately, increase nurses' loyalty and commitment to the hospital.

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