

Career Motivation as a Barista (Starbucks Yogyakarta Baristas)

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Abstract

Yogyakarta's status as a student there is one industry that benefits from the city's image as a student city: the coffee shop business, in which the cafes that are sprouting across Yogyakarta provide an option for students to do homework or simply hang out and relax with their friends, even became the place for earning more allowance. The findings indicate that the primary reason someone chooses to become a barista is to meet financial demands, get experience, and open up prospects for advancement in their field. This study also demonstrates that for some people, working as a barista is not only a transitory employment, but also part of their professional progression.

Keywords: Barista, Student, Coffee Shop, Work Motivation, Career Development, Working Experience,

INTRODUCTION

Coffee is the most traded global commodity after oil (Kuçukkumurler & Ozgen, 2009). Over time, the culture of coffee consumption has shaped the cafe industry ecosystem, including the emergence of the barista profession as the frontline service provider. In Indonesia, this phenomenon has been reinforced by the expansion of global brands like Starbucks, which have brought with them structured work systems, corporate cultures, and career paths (Nurhasanah & Dewi, 2019).

In Yogyakarta, a student city, coffee shops have seen rapid growth. Many students work part-time as baristas to gain additional income, gain experience, or even launch their careers. Starbucks, with eight outlets in the city, has become a highly sought-after workplace due to its competitive salaries, professional training, and career advancement opportunities (Starbucks Indonesia, 2024). The barista profession is no longer merely a

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part-time job; it can also serve as a stepping stone to a professional career. In the context of human resources, understanding the work motivations and career dynamics of baristas is crucial for managing and developing the potential of young workers.

This study aims to explore the work motivations and career dynamics of Starbucks baristas in Yogyakarta in depth. Through a qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the human resource management literature and serve as a reference for managing young workers in the service sector.

OBJECTIVES

This article intends

1. To understand how a barista works
2. To understand what motivates baristas in their work and their careers.

LITERATUR REVIEW

The Meaning of Work and Career Choice

The meaning of work is influenced by personal values, perceptions, and experiences (Gaggiotti, 2016). Individuals can interpret work as a means of financial gain, self-development, or actualization. Krumboltz (1996) states that career choice is influenced by learning experiences, social influences, and external factors such as opportunity and luck. Meanwhile, Luthans (2011) emphasizes that work motivation is the process that causes, directs, and maintains goal-oriented behavior. Students working as baristas exhibit both intrinsic (self-actualization, work experience) and extrinsic (wage, time flexibility) motivation.

Profession of Barista

According to Lee and Ruck (2022), in their ethnographic work entitled "Barista Diary," baristas are professionals who prepare coffee according to customer orders. They also serve customers and take orders. A true barista is one who values the manual craftsmanship of the coffee-making process and takes pride in their profession. As explained by E. Centaka (2022), baristas are divided into two types: part-time and full-time. The difference is that full-time employees have fixed weekly working hours that vary according to store policy, while part-time employees have more flexible working hours.



Work Motivation Theory

According to Herzberg (1959), work motivation is influenced by intrinsic factors (achievement, responsibility) and extrinsic factors (salary, working conditions). Maslow (1954) emphasized hierarchical needs, ranging from basic needs to self-actualization. Luthans (2011) defines motivation as a psychological process that directs behavior toward achieving specific goals.

Khanady et al. (2021) stated that motivation is influenced by two factors: internal and external. Internal factors include the desire to survive, the desire to possess something, the desire for recognition, and the desire for power. External factors include the work environment, adequate compensation, a good supervisor, job security, status, and responsibility.

Dynamics of Career

According to Super (1990), a career is a combination of life roles played by an individual during his/her life, which are shaped by personal choices, education, and experience. Schein (1978) explains that a career is a series of positions occupied by a person during his/her life, which are influenced by their values, motives, and competencies.

According to Payaman (2011), factors that determine an individual's career are the attitude of superiors and colleagues, work experience, education and training, work performance, and other factors. From the internal factor side, it comes from the individual himself, according to Schein (1978), lack of competence and skills, comfort zone and lack of motivation are factors that can hinder a person's career. In addition, according to Goleman (1998), limited soft skills such as communication, leadership and teamwork will also hinder a career because the three abilities above are very important for career success.

Career Management

According to Gutteridge (1983), career management is an ongoing process in which individuals set career goals, assess their abilities, and take action to achieve these goals within or outside the organization. Meanwhile, according to Rivai and Sagala (2009), career management includes career planning, self-development, career counseling, and career decision-making.

RESEARCH METHODS



This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study strategy to explore in-depth the work motivations and career dynamics of Starbucks baristas in Yogyakarta. This approach allows researchers to understand the subjective meanings and personal experiences of individuals within their social context (Creswell, 2014). The research location was several Starbucks outlets in Yogyakarta. The subjects consisted of six baristas, both part-time and full-time, who were purposively selected based on work experience and status as students or recent graduates.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of Work for Baristas

This research revealed that for the majority of respondents, particularly part-time baristas, work is understood as a means to meet financial needs. This is evident in statements from two baristas who work to help their parents and meet their personal needs as students from out of town. These findings compare favorably with the findings of Ario (2019), who found that the meaning of work stems from the motivation to live independently and earn an income.

On the other hand, full-time baristas perceive work as a means of self-development and professionalism. They view their barista experience not only as a means of generating income but also as part of the process of developing long-term work skills and competencies. This contrasts with research by Ayu (2019), which highlighted the meaning of work as developing potential, building relationships, and adding meaning to life. Overall, baristas perceive their profession as having goals that each respondent aims to achieve, such as meeting financial needs, productively filling their free time, and developing themselves.

Factors in Choosing a Barista Career

Flexible Working Hours, The shift schedules offered by barista jobs allow students to balance their studies and work. Baristas cited this flexibility as a primary reason for choosing this profession. This is similar to previous research conducted by Pratiwi (2023), which found that students who work part-time tend to seek jobs with flexible working hours to fill their free time productively and also provide additional income.

Opportunities to Develop Skills, Other baristas stated that this profession provides them with learning experiences about coffee, customer service, communication, and even business. This aligns with Fachri's (2017) findings, which state that the barista profession



is not just a means of earning income but also a space for learning and developing one's potential.

Reasons for Choosing Starbucks

Five of the six interviewees cited Starbucks' promotion system as their primary reason for joining. This finding aligns with previous research by Fransiska & Lais (2023), which found that Starbucks prioritizes employees from the lowest to the highest levels within its scope. In other words, Starbucks' career path guarantees its baristas. Starbucks is considered to provide decent salaries and benefits, including BPJS (Social Security) and THR (Holiday Allowance). This was reinforced by interviewees who stated that compensation serves as a form of appreciation for their work. This finding is consistent with research by Yanuresta (2021), which found that employee compensation positively impacts employee loyalty.

Career Journey as a Starbucks Barista

Some part-time interviewees considered their barista position a stepping stone or transitional phase in their careers. Meanwhile, full-time interviewees described a gradual career path, from trainee (Green Bean) to Coffee Master, then moving up to full-time and managerial positions such as shift supervisor.

This dynamic demonstrates that Starbucks provides more than just temporary employment, but also a structured career growth mechanism. This aligns with previous research by Putri (2025) that assessed career success based on achieving a desired position, achieving optimal work performance, increasing income, and achieving positive change.

Career Satisfaction as a Starbucks Barista

Five out of six interviewees stated that they were satisfied with their careers as baristas at Starbucks. This satisfaction was based on achieving their goals. This is consistent with previous research by Yudhan & Sasana (2022), which found that recognition for one's work is important because creating a comfortable and conducive work environment influences barista satisfaction.

Meanwhile, only one barista stated that he was dissatisfied because he had not yet achieved his career goals at Starbucks. Promotion to the next level was a goal he desired as a barometer of his career success. This is consistent with findings by Chrispian et al.



(2014), which found that dissatisfaction with salary or career achievements can reduce work motivation.

Problems in a Career as a Barista at Starbucks

As a service-oriented profession, baristas naturally encounter problems with customers, such as miscommunication, perceived unfriendly service, or errors in customer orders. Previous research by Hilmi (2019) found that challenges as a barista include perceived inadequacy in customer service and frequent miscommunication regarding promotions.

Furthermore, as a team working together, baristas inevitably face potential conflict within the team. This occurs when work visions differ, leading to miscommunication between individuals, leading to team problems. These findings align with previous research by Lee, Lisa, & Anggraini (2022), which found that workplace stress can be caused by differences of opinion with both coworkers and superiors.

How Do They Resolve These Problems?

Starbucks baristas have a guideline called L.A.T.T.E (Listen, Apologize, Take Action, Thank You, Ensure Satisfaction), where when dealing with customer complaints, baristas take these ultimate steps to resolve the issue. Research by Rahman & Putri (2020) explains that poor service can lead to complaints and must be addressed appropriately.

When discussing problems with the team, baristas share a commonality of immediately resolving them face-to-face, discussing the cause of the problem and finding a solution to resolve the conflict. As explained in Nasution's (2022) research, conflict within a team typically arises from issues such as communication and personal relationships. However, all problems must be resolved quickly to prevent disruption to the organization's operations.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the barista profession, particularly at Starbucks Yogyakarta, is chosen by individuals with diverse motivations, ranging from financial needs, seeking work experience, to the desire for professional development. Part-time baristas often associate their work with financial independence, while full-time baristas view their profession as a means of self-actualization and career development.



Starbucks choice of employment is influenced by its clear career ladder structure, organized training system, and competitive compensation and benefits. This strengthens Starbucks' position as a company capable of attracting and retaining young talent, particularly students and recent graduates.

Thus, baristas not only perform routine operational tasks but also play a role in the long-term career development process, in line with theories of motivation and career development in human resource management literature.

SUGGESTIONS

For Starbucks and other coffee shop managers, these findings highlight the importance of providing transparent career paths, providing fair compensation, facilitating training and skills development, and maintaining work flexibility, especially for part-time workers who are also studying. This combination of factors can increase employee loyalty, performance, and motivation, while reducing turnover.

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