

## THE RELATIONSHIP PATTERN OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE, SOCIAL STATUS AND BUSINESS LONGEVITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Employees of tobacco companies are faced to a prolonged cognitive dissonance condition in their life. This is caused by, until today Tobacco Company is stigmatized negatively by society. On the other side, a tobacco company gives a large revenue contribution to the country and reduces unemployment. This research wants to test and analyze the correlation of cognitive dissonance-social status-employee longevity of tobacco companies in one city in Special Region of Yogyakarta. The type of the research is a survey with a sample of 65 respondents. The statistic technique is using correlation. The research result concludes that there is a pattern of correlated relationship among cognitive dissonance-social status-employee longevity.*

**Key words:** cognitive dissonance, social status, business longevity

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesian government sees potential in the development of tobacco companies. Tobacco Company in Indonesia has been developed; either operates for international, national, or local scale. Tobacco production is one of the contributors of Indonesian economy that can give large revenue to the country. The excise receipts from tobacco companies until May 2017 reach 30, 8 rupiahs (<http://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/bea-masuk-cukai-rokok-kontrol-penerimaan-mei-2017>, accessed on September 16, 2017). Also, tobacco companies can absorb labor in large numbers, so that it can reduce the amount of unemployment in Indonesia.

Besides giving positive impacts, tobacco companies also perceived by society that it has produced a product that can damage people health and mental health, especially to young people. Smoking can interfere with health and become the main cause of high deaths level from heart attack. Some warning for not to smoke also actively delivered by mass media and it is legalized by the government. Besides that, the government also has policy and regulation that tend to burden Tobacco Company, such as increasing custom duty so that the tobacco price is more expensive. The impact is employee will feel worry because they are afraid that work termination could happen. This problem caused cognitive dissonance to the employees of Tobacco Company. Cognitive dissonance happens because the employees of tobacco companies have uncomfortable feeling that caused by attitude, thought, and behavior that are conflicted. This is able to motivate someone to take a step to reduce the inconvenience (West and Turner, 2010). They tend to do certain action so that their attitude, thought, and behavior is comfortable and not restless.

Their attitude and behavior is followed up by keeping their work as an employee in the tobacco company in order to accept the social status in society. They do not care about all the inherent stigma and negative perception that arise in society. By working in Tobacco Company, they have a good social status and they think that the company has give large

revenue to the country. This social status is maintained by the employee of Tobacco Company because having high social status affects to the attitude and high sense of appreciation from the society. That is why employee of Tobacco Company is trying hard to achieve higher social status. They will work hardly and productively, so hopefully it can improve the business longevity of Tobacco Company in the future. This research wants to fulfill the gap of the previous research by test and analyze the relationship pattern of cognitive dissonance, perceived social status, and business longevity of Tobacco Company.

### **The Relationship Pattern of Cognitive Dissonance, Perceived Social Status, and Business Longevity**

Behavioral approach that is the most important to someone is often done using Cognitive Dissonance Theory. This theory is using consistency principal. Someone will try to reduce uncomfortable attitude and behavior (negative condition) by doing positive attitude and behavior. Condition of one's cognitive is mostly affected by his surroundings and it is able to reduce, increase, and even replace the cognitive condition to feel comfortable and calm (Chang et al., 2014; Festinger, 1957). Cognitive dissonance will happen when someone is doing an action that is inconsistent with their attitude, behavior, and belief. Festinger (1957) added that; (1) someone is tend to consequent with their cognition and does not like being inconsistent in their thought, belief, emotion, value, and attitude; (2) cognitive dissonance can be formed by psychological incompatibility and not only logical incompatibility. If there is an increase of this incompatibility, then it will increase someone to have higher dissonance; (3) dissonance is a psychological concept that pushes someone to act besides one still expects a measureable consequence. Oxoby (2004) found a result that cognitive dissonance can affect one's social status.

“Status is defined as the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others” (Anderson et al., 2015). Indonesia Dictionary (1988) defined status as “state or status (person or body) in relation to the surrounding community”. Gerungan (1991) also added that social status is every status where connect one human being to another human. Individual social status will determine one's right and habits in a society. People who have high social status will tend to interact with others who have the same social status. The difference of social status reflects a striking difference, and as the impact, it will affect the interaction and communication in the social environment of society, especially its community group (Henslin, 2006). Employee of Tobacco Company can have good reputation in front of his unemployed colleague. This high social status makes them feel comfortable and have pride in front of their other colleagues. In this research study, social status is seen from economic status, level of education, job, income, residence, and possessed wealth.

Employee who works in a tobacco company will try hard to maintain that social status. This is reflected with working as good as they can to improve their productivity. They have a big responsibility to support their big family. This will affect towards company performance that keep increasing so that the company can lasts on a long term or have long business longevity (Unger et al., 2011). Social status is become one's fundamental motivation to reflect individual positive behavior at work (Anderson et al., 2015).

### **HYPOTHESIS**

- H1. There is positive correlation between cognitive dissonance and perceived social status.
- H2. There is positive correlation between cognitive dissonance and business longevity.
- H3. There is positive correlation between perceived social status and business longevity.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research was done using survey method by giving an open questionnaire to the employee of hand-rolled tobacco companies. The population of this research is all employees of hand-rolled tobacco companies in one city in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Sample of this research is 65 respondents and was done using purposive sampling technique. The validity and reliability test result of questionnaire is valid and reliable. Meanwhile, the statistic technique is using correlation with SPSS.

## **RESEARCH RESULT, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATION**

The correlation coefficient of cognitive dissonance and perceived social status has the value of 0,218. This means that between cognitive dissonance and perceived social status there is a significant and positive relationship. The correlation coefficient of cognitive dissonance and business longevity has the value of 0,241. This means that between cognitive dissonance and business longevity there is a significant and positive relationship. The correlation coefficient of perceived social status and business longevity has the value of 0,312. This means that between perceived social status and business longevity there is a significant and positive relationship. So, it means that all these result is accepting the entire hypothesis.

Although the employee of Tobacco Company has cognitive dissonance with a good score, it seems that it was realized by their motivation to do something so that they can feel comfortable and unworried because of working in a tobacco company. Even if satire and polemic keep happening in the society to avoid cigarettes because it is damaging health, they still work hard and productive because they want to maintain their social status and fulfill their family needs. This turned out to have an impact to company performance. The existence of tobacco companies in Indonesia even if it has negative impact, on the other side it give financial benefits to the country and able to absorb the labor.

The theory implications that can give there is positive correlation between cognitive dissonance, social status, and business longevity. Also, for the manager or leader of tobacco company should pay attention to the psychological aspect of their employee, especially the one that is related to cognitive dissonance, so it can create high employee perception about the importance of high social status which will affect the high business longevity of the company. Future research should pay attention to other factors out of those three variables, for example spiritual value, employee spiritual motivation, and other factors that can integrate to become new model of the research. In the future, it is better to add the amount of sample and expand the research area so it can represent the population.

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