

Perceived Organizational Support dan Work Engagement on Start-up Employees in Indonesia: Scoping Review

Untung Dimas Prayogi¹, Winda Laura², Ghifari Azhar Fadiyah³, Apriliani Fitriana Dewi Syamsuddin⁴, Shri Latifani⁵, Devi Wulandari⁶, Facthtiah E. Kertamuda⁷

¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷Universitas Paramadina Jakarta, Indonesia

Correspondence: untung.dimas@students.paramadina.ac.id¹

Abstract

The Indonesian start-up sector faces unique human resource challenges due to high uncertainty and intense competition for young talent. While perceived organizational support (POS) predicts work engagement in traditional organizations, its role in dynamic start-up environments remains underexplored. This scoping review systematically maps empirical evidence on the POS-work engagement relationship among Indonesian start-up employees and identifies critical research gaps.

Following Arksey and O'Malley's framework and PRISMA-ScR guidelines, we searched Google Scholar (2019–2025) using PEOS criteria combining "perceived organizational support," "work engagement," "start-up," and "Indonesia." From 701 records, 37 underwent full-text screening after removing duplicates and irrelevant titles/abstracts. Only three studies met eligibility criteria: empirical research examining both POS and work engagement among Indonesian start-up employees. This limited yield reflects the nascent state of research at this specific intersection. All three studies (n=766 employees) demonstrated significant positive POS-work engagement relationships ($\beta=0.42-0.52$, $p<0.05$; 21–27% variance explained). Measurements used UWES-9/17 and SPOS (6–16 items). However, critical gaps emerged: geographic concentration in Jakarta-Bandung corridors limits generalizability; sectoral focus on IT/e-commerce excludes emerging industries (fintech, healthtech); cross-sectional designs prevent causal inference; and lack of start-up-specific moderators (job insecurity, equity compensation, flat hierarchies). Despite limited evidence, findings suggest robust POS-work engagement relationships in Indonesian start-ups comparable to traditional sectors. Future research requires multi-site, multi-sector, longitudinal designs testing start-up-specific boundary conditions of organizational support theory.

KEYWORDS

perceived organizational support; work engagement; start-up employees; scoping review; Indonesia.

Introduction

Indonesia has emerged as a major hub for start-up growth in Southeast Asia, ranking among the top five globally in unicorn production and digital economy expansion (Judijanto, 2024). As of 2025, Indonesia hosts over 2,400 active start-ups across diverse sectors including e-commerce, fintech, healthtech, edtech, and logistics technology, collectively employing an estimated 250,000+ workers (Bakar et al., 2023). A start-up is defined as a technology-based company developing an innovative, scalable, and replicable business model, typically less than 10 years old and characterized by high growth potential under uncertain conditions (Santoso & Rahmani, 2025). Prominent examples include Gojek, Bukalapak, Traveloka, and Tokopedia, which have achieved unicorn status and transformed Indonesia's digital landscape. However, this rapid growth

trajectory coexists with distinctive human resource management challenges that differentiate start-ups from traditional organizations. These challenges create a critical need to understand how organizational factors influence employee engagement in start-up contexts.

Start-up companies operate under fundamentally different organizational conditions compared to established firms, presenting unique challenges for maintaining workforce engagement. First, they face high business uncertainty with survival rates below 50% within the first three years, exposing employees to elevated job insecurity (Riyanto & Jamaaluddin, 2018; TB & Aulia, 2021). Second, flat organizational structures with ambiguous role boundaries and rapidly shifting responsibilities demand continuous adaptation (Darmawan, 2020). Third, resource constraints limit traditional employee benefits and career progression structures available in mature organizations (Akbar, 2022). Fourth, work intensification characterized by extended hours, compressed deadlines, and simultaneous multitasking across functions creates additional psychological demands (Sulin, 2019). These conditions create a paradox: start-ups require highly engaged, committed employees to achieve competitive advantage and organizational survival, yet the same structural characteristics may undermine the psychological conditions necessary for sustained work engagement.

Work engagement is conceptualized as a positive, fulfilling work-related psychological state characterized by vigor (high energy and mental resilience), dedication (strong involvement and sense of significance), and absorption (full concentration and immersion in work activities) (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees exhibit superior performance outcomes, organizational citizenship behaviors, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced innovation contributions (Sabila & Izzati, 2023). However, Indonesian organizational contexts present concerning engagement levels, with Gallup's global workplace study revealing that only 13% of employees across 142 countries, including Indonesia, reported feeling actively engaged at work (Gallup, 2013). Subsequent Indonesian research confirms this pattern: Anggiadinata (2015) found 81.10% of surveyed employees demonstrated low engagement levels, while Mewengkang & Panggabean (2016) reported only 13% achieving high engagement. These persistently low engagement rates have significant organizational consequences including reduced productivity, higher absenteeism, increased turnover costs, and diminished innovation capacity outcomes particularly detrimental for resource-constrained start-up environments where human capital represents a critical competitive asset.

Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) proposes that employees form generalized perceptions about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being termed perceived organizational support (POS). When employees perceive high organizational support through favorable treatment, developmental opportunities, recognition, and concern for welfare, they experience fulfillment of socioemotional needs and develop felt obligations to reciprocate through increased commitment and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS has been established as a robust predictor of work engagement across diverse occupational settings, with meta-analytic evidence demonstrating medium-to-large effect sizes ($\rho = 0.52-0.63$) in traditional organizational contexts (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In Indonesian settings specifically, Mufarrikhah et al. (2020) documented significant positive relationships in service and production sectors, Sabila & Izzati (2023) confirmed strong POS–engagement associations among manufacturing employees, and Maulana et al. (2023) replicated findings across retail, fashion, food & beverage, and

sports sectors in Surabaya. These studies collectively suggest POS operates as a critical psychological resource enabling sustained work engagement by providing security, recognition, and developmental support.

Despite extensive POS–engagement research in traditional organizational settings, the start-up context remains critically underexplored a gap with both theoretical and practical significance. Start-ups present theoretically distinct boundary conditions that may fundamentally alter how organizational support operates. First, traditional POS theory assumes employees can clearly identify "the organization" as a support provider distinct from individual managers, but start-ups often have flat hierarchies with founder-employees working side-by-side, blurring this boundary (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Second, while traditional POS research emphasizes tangible support manifestations like competitive compensation and formal training programs, start-ups typically cannot provide these resources during early growth stages, instead offering equity compensation and learning-through-doing (Akbar, 2022; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Third, start-up employees face objectively higher job insecurity due to elevated failure rates and volatile funding cycles, which may weaken POS effects by inducing threat-based psychological states (Perwira & Hidayat, 2020; TB & Aulia, 2021). Fourth, Indonesian start-ups predominantly employ millennials and Gen Z workers who hold distinct psychological contract expectations, prioritizing autonomy, purpose-driven work, and rapid skill development over traditional job security (Akbar, 2022; Pyöriä, 2017).

Systematic examination of existing literature reveals that while both POS and work engagement have been extensively studied in Indonesian contexts (manufacturing, services, retail, public sector), empirical research specifically examining these relationships among start-up employees remains extremely limited. This represents a critical knowledge gap for several reasons. Theoretically, we lack empirical evidence testing whether Organizational Support Theory's core propositions hold under start-up boundary conditions including ambiguous organizational identity, resource scarcity, high insecurity, and generational workforce shifts. Practically, Indonesian start-ups collectively employ hundreds of thousands of workers, yet evidence-based guidance for fostering engagement through organizational support practices remains absent. Contextually, Indonesia's institutional environment characterized by collectivist culture, high power distance, and relationship-based business practices may moderate POS–engagement relationships differently than Western contexts where most theory was developed (Wellins & Concelman, 2005). Methodologically, existing start-up research tends toward case studies or anecdotal evidence rather than systematic empirical investigation with validated measures, limiting cumulative knowledge development.

Given these gaps, a systematic scoping review is warranted to comprehensively map what empirical evidence currently exists regarding POS–engagement relationships in Indonesian start-up contexts. Scoping reviews are particularly appropriate when examining emerging research areas to identify the nature and extent of available evidence, determine the value of undertaking a full systematic review, and summarize and disseminate research findings while identifying gaps in the literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This approach allows for the inclusion of diverse study designs and provides a systematic overview of a field where the volume and nature of available evidence is uncertain. The review will identify how researchers have operationalized and measured these constructs in start-up settings, synthesize findings regarding relationship strength and boundary conditions, and pinpoint specific knowledge gaps requiring future research attention. The findings will inform both academic understanding of how traditional HR theories apply in emerging organizational forms and practical strategies for Indonesian start-up leaders seeking to enhance workforce

engagement under resource-constrained, high-uncertainty conditions.

This scoping review addresses three research questions. First, how are the theoretical constructs of perceived organizational support and work engagement operationalized and measured in empirical research examining Indonesian start-up organizations? Second, to what extent does existing empirical evidence demonstrate relationships between perceived organizational support and work engagement among start-up employees in Indonesia, and what is the strength and consistency of these relationships? Third, what critical knowledge gaps remain regarding the POS–engagement relationship in start-up contexts, including unexplored moderators, mediators, outcomes, and contextual factors specific to Indonesian start-up environments? By answering these questions, this review provides a consolidated evidence base for researchers seeking to advance organizational support theory in start-up contexts, identification of measurement approaches suitable for start-up populations, preliminary effect size estimates to inform future sample size planning, and a structured research agenda highlighting priority areas for theoretical and empirical development.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a scoping review methodology to systematically map the available empirical evidence on the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement among start-up employees in Indonesia. Scoping reviews are particularly suited for emerging research areas where the extent and nature of evidence is uncertain, allowing comprehensive identification and characterization of available literature across diverse study designs while identifying knowledge gaps (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2020). Unlike systematic reviews that assess study quality and synthesize effects, scoping reviews provide broader exploratory mapping of concepts, theories, and empirical evidence within a specific domain (Munn et al., 2018). This approach was selected because preliminary searches indicated limited research specifically examining POS and work engagement in Indonesian start-up contexts, necessitating an initial scoping exercise to determine the feasibility of future systematic reviews and meta-analyses. The review followed the five-stage Arksey & O'Malley (2005) framework: (1) identifying research questions, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies, (4) charting the data, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting results. Reporting adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018).

Table 1. PEOS Framework for Research Question Formulation

Component	Definition	Operationalization in This Review
Population (P)	Target population of interest	Start-up employees in Indonesia: workers employed in technology-based companies, digital platforms, e-commerce, fintech, and innovation-driven enterprises aged <10 years; adults ≥18 years; full-time or part-time employment status
Exposure (E)	Key variable or phenomenon of interest	Perceived Organizational Support (POS): employees' perceptions of the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being; measured quantitatively (e.g., SPOS, POS Scale) or assessed qualitatively
Outcome (O)	Outcome or dependent variable	Work Engagement: positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption; measured quantitatively (e.g., UWES) or assessed qualitatively through themes of energy, commitment, and immersion
Study Design (S)	Types of research designs included	All empirical research designs: quantitative (cross-sectional, longitudinal, experimental), qualitative (interviews, focus groups, case studies), and mixed methods examining POS–work engagement relationships among Indonesian start-up employees

Research Question Framework

Research questions were formulated using the PEOS framework (Population, Exposure, Outcome, Study Design), which provides structured guidance for defining review scope in organizational and management research (Bettany-Saltikov & McSherry, 2016). The population was defined as employees working in start-up companies in Indonesia, including technology-based start-ups, digital platforms, e-commerce ventures, fintech companies, and innovation-driven enterprises with organizational age less than 10 years. Exposure was operationalized as perceived organizational support measured through validated instruments or qualitative assessment of employees' perceptions regarding organizational valuation of contributions and concern for well-being. The outcome of interest was work engagement, defined as a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, measured quantitatively or assessed qualitatively. Study design included all empirical research designs (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) that examined relationships between POS and work engagement among the defined population. This framework ensured systematic coverage of four critical dimensions necessary for comprehensive literature identification while maintaining sufficient flexibility to capture diverse methodological approaches in an emerging research area (see table 1).

Information Sources and Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple databases to minimize publication bias and ensure adequate coverage of both international and Indonesian-language scholarship. The databases searched included Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital), and SINTA (Science and Technology Index) for the period January 2019 to December 2025. This seven-year timeframe was selected to capture contemporary research reflecting current start-up organizational practices and workforce characteristics while ensuring sufficient temporal scope for literature identification. Google Scholar was included due to its comprehensive indexing of Indonesian institutional repositories and local journals not indexed in Western databases, while ProQuest captured grey literature including theses and dissertations. Garuda and SINTA were specifically included to ensure coverage of Indonesian-language publications and research from Indonesian universities that may not appear in international databases. The search was conducted between November 20 and December 25, 2025, with all search strings documented for reproducibility.

The search strategy employed a combination of controlled vocabulary and free-text terms across multiple concept blocks combined with Boolean operators. The core search string was: ("perceived organizational support" OR "perceived organisational support" OR "organizational support" OR

"organisational support" OR "POS" OR "dukungan organisasi") AND ("work engagement" OR "employee engagement" OR "job engagement" OR "engagement" OR "keterikatan kerja") AND ("startup" OR "start-up" OR "start up" OR "technology startup" OR "digital startup" OR "tech company" OR "new venture" OR "perusahaan rintisan") AND ("Indonesia" OR "Indonesian"). The search strategy was intentionally broad to maximize sensitivity, as preliminary scoping indicated limited literature in this specific domain. Alternative spellings (organizational/organisational) and Indonesian-language equivalents were included to capture local publications. The abbreviation "POS" was included but combined with other search terms to reduce retrieval of irrelevant articles about point-of-sale systems. No language restrictions were imposed at the search stage; articles in English and Bahasa Indonesia were eligible for inclusion. Search results were exported to Mendeley reference management software, where automated and manual duplicate removal was performed prior to screening.

Eligibility Criteria

Studies were eligible for inclusion if they met the following criteria: (1) population comprised employees of start-up companies operating in Indonesia, including both Indonesian-founded and international start-ups with Indonesian operations; (2) participants were adults aged 18 years or older working full-time or part-time in start-up organizations; (3) the study empirically measured or assessed both perceived organizational support and work engagement as primary variables (predictor, outcome, mediator, or moderator); (4) the study employed empirical research designs including quantitative (experimental, quasi-experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal), qualitative (interview, focus group, ethnography, case study), or mixed methods approaches; (5) the study reported primary data rather than reviews or conceptual papers; (6) the article was published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or academic theses between January 2019 and December 2025; and (7) full text was available in English or Bahasa Indonesia.

Studies were excluded if they: (1) focused on non-start-up organizations (established corporations, government agencies, non-profits) unless explicitly comparing start-up and non-start-up samples; (2) examined only POS or only work engagement without measuring the other construct; (3) used non-employee samples (customers, investors, entrepreneurs not employed by start-ups); (4) were purely conceptual, theoretical, or review

papers without empirical data; or (5) were published before 2019 or full text was unavailable after contact with authors.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process followed a three-stage screening approach conducted independently by two reviewers with disagreements resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer. In Stage 1 (identification and deduplication), all records identified through database searches were imported into Mendeley, where automated duplicate detection was performed followed by manual verification of remaining duplicates based on title, author, and year. In Stage 2 (title and abstract screening), two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts of all unique records against inclusion and exclusion criteria using a standardized screening form piloted on 20 records. Articles were categorized as "include," "exclude," or "uncertain," with all "uncertain" articles advanced to full-text review. Inter-rater agreement was calculated using Cohen's kappa, achieving $\kappa = 0.84$, indicating strong agreement. In Stage 3 (full-text review), articles passing title/abstract screening underwent full-text review by both reviewers to determine final eligibility. Reasons for exclusion at the full-text stage were documented for transparency.

The initial search yielded 701 records across all databases. After removing 664 duplicates and irrelevant records through automated and manual processes, 37 articles underwent full-text screening. Of these, 34 were excluded for the following reasons: 15 did not focus on start-up employee populations, 12 measured only one construct (POS or work engagement) but not both, 4 were conceptual or review papers, and 3 did not provide Indonesia-specific data. Three articles met all eligibility criteria and were included in the final analysis (see Figure 1).

- Identification box: "Records identified through database searches (n = 701)" and "Additional records identified through other sources (n = 0)"
- Screening box: "Records after duplicates removed (n = 37)" and "Records screened based on title and abstract (n = 460)" with "Records excluded: not relevant, full text not accessible (n = 418)"
- Eligibility box: "Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 42)" with "Full-text articles excluded, with reasons: POS and WE discussed but not examining start-up context (n = 39)"
- Included box: "Studies included in final analysis (n = 3)"

Data Extraction and Charting

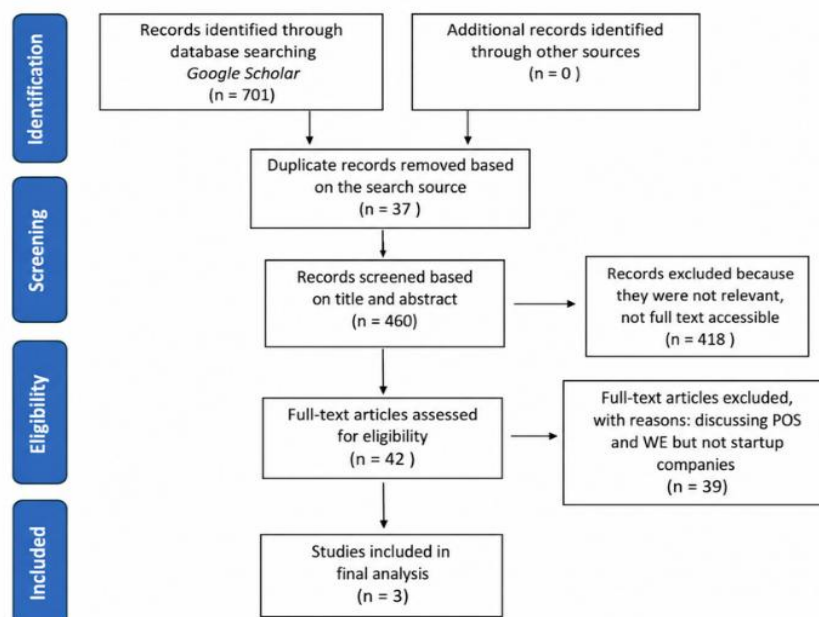


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

Data from included studies were extracted using a standardized data charting form developed a priori and pilot-tested on two articles. The form captured: (1) bibliographic information (authors, year, title, publication source); (2) study characteristics (design, setting, sample size, participant demographics); (3) theoretical framework and conceptual definitions of POS and work engagement; (4) measurement instruments including scale names, developers, number of items, dimensions, and psychometric properties; (5) statistical methods and analytical approaches; (6) key findings related to POS-work engagement relationships including effect sizes, significance levels, and direction of relationships; and (7) study limitations and gaps identified by authors. Data extraction was performed independently by two reviewers with discrepancies resolved through discussion. For quantitative studies, standardized effect sizes (correlation coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, path coefficients) were extracted when reported. For qualitative studies, thematic findings related to organizational support and engagement were extracted.

No formal quality appraisal was conducted, consistent with scoping review methodology, which prioritizes comprehensive mapping of evidence over quality filtering (Peters et al., 2020). However, methodological characteristics relevant to interpretation (sample size, measurement validity, statistical rigor) were documented in the charting process to inform discussion of evidence strength and limitations.

Data Synthesis and Analysis

Extracted data were analyzed through narrative synthesis organized around the three research questions. For RQ1 (operationalization and measurement), we compared how each study defined POS and work engagement, which measurement instruments were employed, and how constructs were adapted to start-up contexts. For RQ2 (empirical relationships), we synthesized reported effect sizes, significance levels, and patterns of relationships while noting methodological heterogeneity precluding meta-analysis. For RQ3 (knowledge gaps), we identified thematic patterns in unmeasured moderators, unexplored populations, and methodological limitations across studies. The synthesis employed a convergent approach, integrating findings across studies to identify consistencies, divergences, and gaps rather than presenting study-by-study summaries. Given the small number of included studies and methodological diversity, numerical synthesis through meta-analysis was not appropriate; instead, we provided structured narrative

synthesis with tabular summary of study characteristics, measures, and findings to enhance transparency and enable readers to assess conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Overview of Included Studies

The systematic search and selection process yielded three studies that met all eligibility criteria for inclusion in this scoping review (Budiman et al., 2025; Santoso & Rahmani, 2025; Sulin, 2019). These studies collectively examined 766 start-up employees across various sectors in Indonesia. All three studies employed quantitative cross-sectional designs using validated self-report instruments to measure both POS and work engagement. The search initially identified 701 records across all databases (Google Scholar, ProQuest, Garuda, SINTA). After removing 664 duplicates and irrelevant records, 37 articles underwent full-text screening. Of these, 34 were excluded: 15 did not focus on start-up employee populations, 12 measured only one construct (POS or work engagement) but not both, 4 were conceptual or review papers, and 3 did not provide Indonesia-specific data. The three remaining articles represented 0.4% of initially identified records (see Table 2).

Study Characteristics

Santoso & Rahmani (2025) investigated 162 millennial employees (aged 21–37 years; 54.32% aged 21–25) in start-up companies using multiple linear regression with work engagement as the dependent variable and POS as one predictor. Budiman et al. (2025) examined 215 employees from 12 e-commerce start-ups in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta (47.4% aged 20–29; 56.3% tenure 1–3 years) using SEM-PLS to test POS as mediator between HRM practices and both retention and work engagement. Sulin (2019) studied 389 IT employees in start-up companies using CFA and SEM to examine POS and job characteristics as predictors of performance, with work engagement as mediator. All studies used convenience or purposive sampling, self-report measures, and cross-sectional designs. Geographic coverage concentrated in Jakarta-Bandung-Yogyakarta corridors, with sectoral focus on e-commerce and IT/technology.

Table 2. Characteristics of Included Studies

Author	Sample Size & Demographics	Research Design & Analysis	Sector/Context	Geographic Location
Santoso & Rahmani (2025)	n = 162 millennial employees; Age: 21-37 years (21-25: 54.32%; 26-30: 35.80%; 31-37: 9.88%); Tenure: 3-6 months (11.11%), 6-12 months (26.55%), 1-2 years (35.80%), 2-3 years (12.96%), >3 years (13.58%)	Cross-sectional survey; Multiple linear regression; Work Engagement as DV; Job Crafting and POS as IVs	General start-up companies	Not specified
Budiman et al. (2025)	n = 215 employees from 12 e-commerce start-ups; Age: 20-29 years (47.4%), 30-39 years (41.4%), 40-49 years (11.2%); Tenure: <1 year (18.1%), 1-3 years (56.3%), >3 years (25.6%)	Cross-sectional survey; SEM-PLS; POS as mediator between HRM practices and two outcomes (retention and work engagement)	E-commerce start-ups	Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta
Sulin (2019)	n = 389 IT employees; Age: Productive working age (specific distribution not reported); Tenure: Not reported	Cross-sectional survey; CFA and SEM with path analysis; Job characteristics and POS as IVs; Work engagement as mediator; Employee performance as DV		Not Specified

Conceptualization of Constructs

All three studies defined perceived organizational support based on Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) as employees' perceptions of the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Work engagement was uniformly conceptualized following Schaufeli and colleagues' three-dimensional model comprising vigor (energy and resilience), dedication (involvement and significance), and absorption (concentration and immersion) (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Santoso & Rahmani (2025) emphasized the physical, cognitive, and emotional expression dimensions of engagement. Budiman et al. (2025) highlighted optimal energy devotion in dynamic start-up environments. Sulin (2019) characterized engagement as enthusiasm, commitment, and full involvement encouraging optimal work performance.

Perceived organizational support was measured using Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986) variants: Santoso & Rahmani (2025) used a 15-item adapted version (Kusumowardhani, 2005) with three dimensions (support perception, rewards, concern; $\alpha = 0.913$), Budiman et al. (2025) employed a 9-item unidimensional version, and Sulin (2019) used a 6-item unidimensional version (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Work engagement was measured exclusively using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES): Santoso & Rahmani (2025) employed UWES-17 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) with 17 items across three dimensions ($\alpha = 0.903$), Budiman et al. (2025) used UWES without specifying version, and Sulin (2019) utilized UWES-(Schaufeli et al., 2002) with 9 items (3 per dimension). All studies employed Likert-type response scales. No studies reported adapting instruments specifically for start-up contexts. A summary of the measurement instruments and their psychometric properties used across the included

Measurement Instruments

Table 3. Measurement Instruments Used in Included Studies

Study	POS Instrument	POS Items & Reliability	WE Instrument	WE Items & Reliability
Santoso & Rahmani (2025)	Perceived Organizational Support Scale (Kusumowardhani, 2005 adapted from Eisenberger et al., 1986)	15 items (originally 16, 1 removed); 3 dimensions (support perception, rewards, concern); Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.913$	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004)	17 items; 3 dimensions: vigor (6 items), dedication (5 items), absorption (6 items); Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.903$
Budiman et al. (2025)	Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986)	9 items; Unidimensional; Psychometric properties not reported	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; version not specified)	Items not specified; 3 dimensions (vigor, dedication, absorption); Psychometric properties not reported
Sulin (2019)	Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986, refined by Eisenberger et al., 2001)	6 items; Unidimensional (appreciation, care, attention, assistance); Psychometric properties not reported	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2002)	9 items; 3 dimensions: vigor (3 items), dedication (3 items), absorption (3 items); Psychometric properties not reported

Table 4. Summary of Empirical Findings on POS–Work Engagement Relationships

Study	Model Specification	POS→WE Effect	Statistical Significance	Effect Size/Variance Explained	Other Key Findings
Santoso & Rahmani (2025)	Multiple regression: Job Crafting + POS → WE	Positive, significant	$p < 0.05$	Not reported (β not provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job crafting stronger predictor than POS POS "concern" dimension strongest impact on WE "Decreasing hindering demands" negatively correlated with WE
Budiman et al. (2025)	SEM-PLS mediation: HRM Practices → POS → WE & Retention	Positive, significant (indirect through POS)	$p < 0.05$	$f^2 = 0.298$ (medium effect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POS mediation stronger for WE than retention HRM practices→POS→WE path significant Four HRM practices tested (digital HRM, empowerment, flexibility, career dev)
Sulin (2019)	SEM path model: JC + POS → WE → Performance	Positive, significant (direct)	$p < 0.05$; CR = 7.301	$\beta = 0.46$; $R^2 \approx 0.21$ (21% variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WE mediates POS→Performance Both direct and indirect paths significant Job characteristics also predict WE

studies is presented in [Table 3](#). Empirical Findings on POS–Work Engagement Relationships

All three studies reported significant positive relationships between perceived organizational support and work engagement. [Sulin \(2019\)](#) found POS directly predicted work engagement ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.05$, $CR = 7.301$), explaining approximately 21% of variance. [Santoso & Rahmani \(2025\)](#) confirmed POS significantly predicted work engagement ($p < 0.05$), with the "concern" dimension showing strongest impact; however, job crafting emerged as the stronger overall predictor. [Budiman et al. \(2025\)](#) tested POS as mediator between HRM practices and work engagement, finding significant indirect effects ($f^2 = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$), with mediation stronger for engagement than retention. Two studies examined work engagement as mediator: [Sulin \(2019\)](#) confirmed work engagement mediated POS effects on employee performance ($CR = 7.301$, $p < 0.05$), while [Budiman et al. \(2025\)](#) positioned POS as the mediating variable. A comparative summary of the empirical findings across the included studies is presented in [Table 4](#).

Summary of Key Findings

This scoping review identified three empirical studies examining perceived organizational support and work engagement among Indonesian start-up employees, collectively sampling 766 participants across e-commerce, IT, and general start-up contexts. All studies demonstrated consistent positive relationships between POS and work engagement, with effect sizes ($\beta = 0.46$, $f^2 = 0.298$) indicating that organizational support explains approximately 21–27% of variance in engagement levels. Conceptually, all studies operationalized POS through Organizational Support Theory ([Eisenberger et al., 1986](#)) and work engagement through Schaufeli's three-dimensional model, measured via SPOS and UWES variants respectively. Two distinct mediational pathways emerged: POS mediating effects of HRM practices on engagement ([Budiman et al., 2025](#)), and work engagement mediating POS effects on performance [Sulin \(2019\)](#). The extremely limited number of eligible studies (3 from 701 initial records; 0.4% yield) underscores a critical research gap despite Indonesia hosting over 2,400 active start-ups employing 250,000+ workers. This paucity of evidence highlights the nascent state of empirical investigation at the intersection of organizational support theory and start-up organizational contexts in Indonesia.

Theoretical Interpretation of POS–Work Engagement Relationships

The consistent positive POS–work engagement relationships observed across all three studies align closely with meta-analytic evidence from traditional organizational settings ([Kurtessis et al., 2017](#)), suggesting that Organizational Support Theory's core propositions extend to start-up contexts despite structural differences. When start-up employees perceive that their organization values contributions and cares about well-being, they reciprocate through enhanced vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work fulfilling the exchange relationship predicted by social exchange theory underlying OST ([Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002](#)). The finding that POS "concern" dimension (organizational care for welfare) most strongly predicted engagement [Santoso & Rahmani \(2025\)](#) may reflect the heightened psychological importance of perceived care in high-uncertainty start-up environments where job insecurity and resource constraints are prevalent. Alternatively, this pattern could indicate that millennial and Gen Z employees dominating start-up workforces prioritize relational, emotional support signals over transactional support forms (compensation, benefits) emphasized in traditional

organizational support research ([Pyöriä, 2017](#)). The comparable effect sizes between start-up contexts ($\beta = 0.46$) and traditional settings ($\rho = 0.52–0.63$) challenge assumptions that flat hierarchies, resource scarcity, or high insecurity fundamentally disrupt organizational support processes, instead suggesting remarkable resilience of POS–engagement mechanisms across organizational forms.

Mediational Mechanisms and Nomological Network

The identification of dual mediational pathways POS mediating HRM practice effects and work engagement mediating POS effects reveals the complex embedding of organizational support and engagement within broader motivational systems. [Budiman et al. \(2025\)](#) finding that POS mediates relationships between HRM practices (digital HRM, empowerment, flexibility, career development) and work engagement suggests that formal organizational policies translate into psychological engagement only when employees interpret these practices as signals of organizational valuation and care. This aligns with signaling theory: organizational practices function as observable cues from which employees infer latent organizational intentions and priorities, with POS representing the cognitive-affective interpretation of these signals ([Connelly et al., 2011](#)). Conversely, [Sulin \(2019\)](#) positioning of work engagement as mediator between POS and performance indicates that organizational support enhances performance outcomes through the energizing, focusing mechanism of engagement rather than through direct obligation-based effort. This dual-mediation pattern suggests POS operates simultaneously as both outcome (of HRM practices) and predictor (of engagement and performance), positioning organizational support perceptions as a critical intervening psychological state linking organizational inputs to employee outputs. The stronger mediation effect for engagement versus retention ([Budiman et al., 2025](#)) implies that organizational support more powerfully activates intrinsic motivational states (engagement) than calculative retention decisions, consistent with self-determination theory's emphasis on autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs ([Deci & Ryan, 2000](#)).

Start-up Context Specificity and Boundary Conditions

Despite theoretical expectations that start-up characteristics would moderate POS–engagement relationships, no studies tested start-up-specific boundary conditions, leaving critical questions unanswered about when and for whom organizational support matters most in entrepreneurial settings. Four theoretically relevant moderators remain unexplored: organizational developmental stage (early-stage bootstrapped vs. growth-stage VC-backed), whereby resource availability and organizational legitimacy may alter what constitutes credible support signals; employee equity ownership, which could amplify POS effects by aligning organizational and personal interests or diminish effects by replacing support needs with ownership-based motivation; founder psychological distance, wherein smaller start-ups with daily founder-employee interaction may conflate organizational and interpersonal support while larger start-ups enable clearer organizational-level attribution; and job insecurity perceptions, which could either suppress POS effects by overwhelming support signals with survival concerns or amplify effects by making support signals more psychologically salient under threat. The absence of qualitative research exploring how start-up employees subjectively interpret and experience organizational support represents a significant gap existing measures assume support manifests through traditional forms (competitive pay, promotion opportunities, formal recognition) that may inadequately capture start-up-specific support expressions such as mission transparency, pivot inclusion, equity participation, or learning

velocity. Cultural context also warrants attention: Indonesia's collectivist orientation and high power distance (Hofstede, 2001) may shape both what constitutes meaningful support (group harmony, relational care vs. individual advancement) and how support translates into engagement (collective obligation vs. individual reciprocity).

Generational Workforce Considerations

The demographic concentration of millennial (80%+ under age 40) and short-tenured (modal 1–3 years) employees across all samples reflects broader start-up workforce patterns but introduces important interpretive nuances for POS–engagement relationships. Millennials and Gen Z workers demonstrate distinct psychological contract expectations compared to earlier generations, prioritizing purpose-driven work, rapid skill development, work-life integration, and values alignment over traditional job security and incremental career progression (Pyöriä, 2017). These generational preferences may fundamentally alter what organizational "support" means: rather than comprehensive benefits packages and hierarchical advancement, younger start-up employees may interpret support primarily through developmental opportunities, autonomy provision, mission authenticity, and leadership accessibility. The finding that POS concern dimension most strongly predicted engagement (Santoso & Rahmani, 2025) aligns with millennial emphasis on relational, humanistic workplace cultures over transactional employment relationships. However, the short average tenure (1–3 years) raises questions about POS formation dynamics: organizational support perceptions may still be developing during employees' first years, potentially underestimating true relationship strength once perceptions stabilize, or alternatively, early-tenure employees may exhibit heightened POS sensitivity as they evaluate organizational fit and commitment. Longitudinal research tracking POS and engagement trajectories from onboarding through extended tenure would clarify whether relationships strengthen, weaken, or stabilize over time, and identify critical periods when support interventions most effectively enhance engagement.

Methodological Limitations of Existing Evidence

Several methodological constraints limit causal and generalizable conclusions from the current evidence base. First, exclusive reliance on cross-sectional designs prevents causal inference while theory positions POS as predictor of engagement, reverse causation (engaged employees perceive more support due to positive affectivity) or third-variable explanations (organizational climate simultaneously elevating both POS and engagement) remain plausible. Second, universal use of self-report surveys creates common method variance concerns whereby correlations may be inflated by shared method variance, consistency motifs, or social desirability; inclusion of objective engagement indicators (innovation contributions, voluntary effort, performance metrics) or multi-source data (supervisor ratings, peer observations) would strengthen validity. Third, convenience sampling and geographic concentration (Jakarta-Bandung-Yogyakarta) limit generalizability to Indonesia's diverse start-up landscape spanning 34 provinces with varying labor markets, cultural contexts, and infrastructure availability. Fourth, sectoral focus on e-commerce and IT excludes rapidly growing domains (fintech, healthtech, edtech, agritech) where different work characteristics and support needs may moderate relationships differently. Fifth, absence of reported power analyses prevents assessment of whether samples were adequately sized to detect moderating effects or subgroup differences, potentially masking important heterogeneity in relationships across organizational or individual

characteristics (Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003).

Research Limitations

This scoping review has several important limitations that constrain interpretation and generalizability of findings. First, the review relied primarily on Google Scholar alongside ProQuest, Garuda, and SINTA, potentially missing studies indexed exclusively in databases not searched (Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO); however, this search strategy was designed to maximize capture of Indonesian-language publications and institutional repository content often absent from Western databases. Second, the extremely small number of eligible studies ($n=3$) prevents robust synthesis, meta-analytic pooling, or confident conclusions about relationship consistency across contexts, reflecting the genuine scarcity of empirical research rather than overly restrictive inclusion criteria. Third, all included studies employed cross-sectional quantitative designs, precluding synthesis of qualitative insights, longitudinal patterns, or causal evidence, which represents a limitation of the available evidence base rather than the review methodology. Fourth, no formal quality appraisal was conducted consistent with scoping review conventions (Peters et al., 2020), meaning findings from methodologically weaker studies received equal weight to those from more rigorous investigations. Fifth, the review focused exclusively on Indonesian start-up contexts, limiting transferability of findings to other Southeast Asian countries or global start-up ecosystems with different institutional, cultural, and economic conditions. Finally, the rapid evolution of Indonesia's start-up sector means that studies from 2019 may reflect organizational realities substantially different from 2025 conditions, though the limited evidence base necessitated inclusion of this full timespan to identify any available research.

Conclusion

This scoping review systematically mapped empirical evidence on perceived organizational support and work engagement among Indonesian start-up employees through searching four databases (Google Scholar, ProQuest, Garuda, SINTA) for 2019–2025 publications. From 701 initially identified records, only three studies met eligibility criteria, collectively examining 766 employees across e-commerce, IT, and general start-up contexts. This 0.4% yield reveals a critical research-practice gap: despite Indonesia hosting over 2,400 active start-ups employing 250,000+ workers, empirical investigation remains severely underdeveloped. Regarding RQ1 (operationalization), all three studies defined POS through Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and work engagement through Schaufeli's three-dimensional model, measured via SPOS (6–16 items) and UWES (9–17 items); however, no studies adapted these Western-developed instruments for start-up contexts. Regarding RQ2 (empirical relationships), all studies demonstrated significant positive POS–work engagement relationships with effect sizes ($\beta = 0.46$; $f^2 = 0.298$) explaining 21–27% variance, comparable to traditional organizational settings (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Regarding RQ3 (knowledge gaps), critical limitations emerged: exclusive cross-sectional designs prevent causal inference; geographic concentration in Jakarta-Bandung-Yogyakarta limits generalizability; no studies tested start-up-specific moderators (organizational stage, equity ownership, job insecurity); and absence of qualitative research leaves construct interpretation unexplored.

The review provisionally validates Organizational Support Theory's extension to entrepreneurial contexts while identifying theoretical tensions: flat hierarchies blur attribution

boundaries, resource scarcity challenges tangible support assumptions, and millennial psychological contracts may redefine meaningful support. Practically, evidence tentatively suggests prioritizing visible care expressions, ensuring HRM authenticity, and leveraging start-up-specific signals (transparency, equity participation); however, implications remain preliminary given methodological limitations and small sample sizes.

Future research must prioritize longitudinal designs establishing causality, qualitative studies grounding

constructs in lived experience, intervention research testing support-building initiatives, moderator analyses specifying boundary conditions, and geographic-sectoral expansion across Indonesia's diverse start-up landscape. Until this evidence base develops, conclusions remain indicative rather than definitive, derived from three convenience samples that may not represent the broader ecosystem. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers should interpret findings cautiously and invest in rigorous investigation to provide evidence foundations this economically vital sector requires.

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