

Personal Statement

Dear Admissions Committee of The University of Leeds.

Growing up in Indonesia as part of the lower economic class, I realised the importance of entrepreneurship to embrace change. Through collaboration with a few friends, in 2023 I founded Metabharata, a startup focused on game development, where my role is as Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO). Personally, I have an affinity with human resource issues, triggered by the destructive impact of ineffective management of human resource diversity that I witnessed firsthand. While pursuing my undergraduate degree, I found several fellow students, including my seniors who were also trying to start a startup. Unfortunately, after one year of operation, these startups were forced out of business. The reason was not financial or market-related, but rather due to strong differences in organisational culture among the founders, which eventually had negative implications on team harmony, decision-making processes, and collective priorities. The failure to compromise and mediate led to repetitive internal conflicts that eventually led to the dissolution of the company.

Interestingly, the case I found is quite common in Indonesia. Digitaraya's research in 2018 revealed that startup activists in Indonesia are the subjects that are really affected by human resource conflicts, causing 65% of startups to be very difficult to grow, and 50% of them even fail in the first year of operation. Diversity is like a double-edged knife, fuelling the potential for creativity, but also threatening to divide. Human resource diversity makes the potential for conflict greater, and early-stage startups with limited resources, competitive markets, and high innovation challenges are the most vulnerable. This status quo encourages me to dedicate my life to the development of the human resource management sector, especially in an effort to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Indonesia.

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of independence, the Indonesian government has set the direction for the development of the Golden Indonesia 2045 with one of its priorities in the economic sector. At the same time, the population explosion, popularly known as the demographic bonus, means that Indonesia will need more young entrepreneurs by 2045. Currently, Indonesia has only reached an entrepreneurship ratio of 3.47%. In fact, to be categorised as a developed country in 2045, Indonesia must reach an entrepreneurial ratio of 12%. So in this context, the urgency of finding a strategic human resource management formula becomes very crucial as a key factor determining the success of the startup ecosystem in Indonesia.

The Master of Human Resource Management programme from The University of Leeds is strategic for me to realise the goal of sustainable human resource

development, as it is determined to create a generation of global leaders who are able to apply human resource management concepts in a culturally diverse business context, which is exactly the kind of ecosystem I want to research in the multicultural country of Indonesia. I also read an article by Dr Hugh Cook on the importance of oppositional engagement through partnerships with trade unions to support the implementation of more inclusive, equal and fair human resource management. The study is practically relevant to Indonesia, where to manage human resources in a multicultural landscape, partnership programmes with the opposition can help realise pluralism in the workplace. On the other hand, being the first person in the family to study abroad is an amazing opportunity, especially if it is at The University of Leeds.

I would like to bring a new perspective to the research at The University of Leeds, specifically on how early stage startups in multicultural developing countries like Indonesia are challenged when managing their human capital. In order to better understand the target entrepreneurial ecosystem, during my time as an undergraduate student I was active in the Entrepreneurial Student Development Programme of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia and the Hackathon programme of the Digital Forum of State-Owned Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, as an effort to learn practical knowledge, I participated in an internship at a startup called Includedia as a Technology Product Manager who develops products from upstream to downstream, and was active in the Startup Capacity Building programme of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises in 2024 to establish relationships with startups from all over Indonesia.

Post-graduation, in the short term I plan to develop human resource management at Metabharata startup based on the new knowledge and relationships I have gained. In the long term, I aim to become an academic who bridges the interests of workers in startups in Indonesia with policy makers through scientific research and publications. In welcoming the demographic bonus, Indonesia needs an entrepreneurial ecosystem with better human resource management in the future, and I want to be part of the fighters who strive to make it happen.

Sincerely,
Cahyo Febri Wijaksono

