

DETERMINANTS OF GENERATION Z'S WORK COMMITMENT: THE ROLE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WORK ENVIRONMENT, AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract: The increasing participation of Generation Z in the workforce is prompting organizations to understand the factors that shape employees' commitment to work. This study aims to analyze the influence of work-life balance and the working environment on job satisfaction and commitment to work, as well as to test the mediating role of job satisfaction among Generation Z employees in Surabaya. This study employs a quantitative survey approach with 150 respondents selected via purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This study utilized Social Exchange Theory (SET) as the theoretical framework to explain the reciprocal relationship between organizational support and positive employee responses. The results indicate that work-life balance, the working environment and job satisfaction have a positive and significant effect on work commitment. However, job satisfaction was not found to mediate the relationship between work-life balance or the working environment and work commitment. These findings suggest that Generation Z's work commitment is largely shaped by direct work experiences, such as flexibility, organizational support and the quality of the working environment. This study contributes to the human resource management literature by providing a deeper understanding of how Generation Z's work commitment is formed through the interaction between organizational support factors and employee psychological evaluations, while demonstrating that direct organizational experiences may play a stronger role than indirect mechanisms through job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Work Commitment; Work Life Balance; Work Environment; Job Satisfaction*

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1. Introduction

The transformation of the workplace has altered the relationship between individuals and organizations, requiring organizations to provide not only financial compensation but also a work experience that meets employees' psychological needs. This change is increasingly evident in the increasing participation of Generation Z in the workforce. As a generation that grew up in a digital environment, Generation Z has distinct work characteristics and places

greater emphasis on work flexibility, work-life balance, opportunities for self-development, and the quality of social relationships within the organization (Waworuntu et al., 2022).

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) through SUPAS 2025 shows that Generation Z is the largest generation group in Indonesia, accounting for 24.93% of the total population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2026). This situation encourages organizations to create work environments that meet the needs of Generation Z to increase job satisfaction and commitment, as work commitment plays a crucial role in supporting employee loyalty and contributions to achieving organizational goals (Fitriani et al., 2025).

The entry of Generation Z into the workforce presents new challenges for organizations in maintaining employee commitment. Unlike previous generations, who placed greater emphasis on loyalty based on stability and tenure, Generation Z tends to assess work relationships based on the quality of the experience the organization provides. An organization's inability to meet the needs for flexibility, psychological well-being, and a supportive work environment can prompt younger employees to reevaluate the sustainability of their employment relationships (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Gunawan et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is important because work commitment is a key indicator of the sustainability of an organization's human resources. Employees with high commitment tend to have emotional attachments, a desire to stay, and a willingness to contribute to the organization (Noerchoidah et al., 2024).

One factor suspected of influencing work commitment is job satisfaction (Gunawan et al., 2024). Job satisfaction is an emotional state that reflects employees' positive feelings about their work. Employees with high levels of job satisfaction tend to exhibit better work motivation, lower absenteeism rates, and greater loyalty to the organization (Noerchoidah & Indriyani, 2025).

Furthermore, work-life balance plays a role in shaping Generation Z's work commitment. Work-life balance reflects an individual's ability to manage the demands of work and personal life. Organizational support for this balance can reduce work stress and foster positive employee perceptions of their work. Previous research has shown that work-life balance is positively related to job satisfaction because it helps employees maintain psychological resources, such as time, energy, and personal well-being (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Susanto et al., 2022).

In addition to work-life balance, the working environment also plays a key role in shaping employees' attitudes towards work. The working environment encompasses both physical and psychosocial aspects, such as organizational support, interpersonal relationships and support from supervisors. A positive work environment can enhance psychological well-being and reinforce the perception that the organization cares about employees' needs, thereby fostering greater job satisfaction and a positive work experience (Wagdi & Sayed, 2023; Dumitriu et al., 2025; Said & Muzakki, 2024).

However, the influence of organizational factors on work commitment is not always direct. Positive experiences provided by the organization can shape employees' internal evaluations through job satisfaction. Employees with high job satisfaction tend to demonstrate a stronger attachment to the organization because they view the employment relationship as providing personal benefits and value (Inegbedion, 2024).

Previous research has shown that work-life balance and the work environment play a role in increasing employee job satisfaction (Susanto et al., 2022; Dumitriu et al., 2025). However, most studies still focus on the direct relationship between these variables and have not fully explained the mechanisms for forming work commitment, particularly through the

role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the context of Generation Z (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Inegbedion, 2024). Therefore, this study develops a model that examines the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between work-life balance and the work environment and work commitment in Generation Z employees.

This study addresses a gap in prior research by explaining the mechanisms underlying the formation of work commitment, with job satisfaction mediating the relationship between work-life balance and the work environment. This research expands the empirical evidence on Generation Z, which has distinct work characteristics and expectations, and provides theoretical and practical contributions to the development of human resource management strategies.

This study uses Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed by Blau (1964) as a grand theory. SET explains that individual and organizational relationships are formed through a social exchange process based on the principle of reciprocity. When organizations provide support in the form of a positive work environment and work-life balance policies, employees will respond through positive work attitudes, such as increased job satisfaction and commitment Blau (1964).

This study aims to analyze the influence of work-life balance and the work environment on job satisfaction and job commitment, and to examine the role of job satisfaction as a mediator among Generation Z employees in Surabaya.

2. Literature Review

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Blau (1964), explains that relationships between individuals and organizations are formed through a social exchange process based on reciprocity. In an organizational context, employees and organizations provide each other with material, social, and emotional resources. Through this exchange process, both parties seek to gain benefits and maintain a valuable relationship.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance (WLB) is an employee's ability to manage the demands of work and personal life in a balanced manner without sacrificing either role (El-Qebaisi, 2025). WLB plays a role in reducing work stress, increasing job satisfaction, and strengthening employee loyalty. For Generation Z, work-life balance is crucial because they value greater flexibility in their work and daily lives (Aprilia et al., 2025; Anggraini & Izzati, 2026).

Work Environment

The work environment plays a crucial role in supporting employee productivity and performance. The work environment encompasses interacting physical and social aspects, such as workplace comfort, managerial support, social relationships, and job characteristics. A positive work environment can enhance employee well-being and contribute to employee satisfaction and performance (Jianchun, 2024; Dumitriu et al., 2025).

Work Commitment

Work commitment reflects an employee's attitude, dedication, and responsibility toward the organization, demonstrated through emotional attachment, a desire to remain with the organization, and a willingness to contribute to achieving organizational goals (Noerchoidah et al., 2023). From a SET perspective, work commitment is shaped by a reciprocal relationship between employees and the organization, in which support, rewards, and positive work relationships foster greater employee engagement and loyalty (Tan et al., 2025).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which an individual feels supported or dissatisfied with their job and their position as part of the organization (Noerchoidah & Indriyani, 2025). Job satisfaction is influenced not only by job factors such as workload and compensation, but also by social support, meaningful work, and perceptions of fairness and recognition (Deschênes, 2021). Monata & Yuliharsi (2024) conducted a study in the technology industry and found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and work commitment.

Hypothesis Development

Work-life balance (WLB) plays a crucial role in shaping employee work commitment. Research shows that improving the balance between work and personal life demands directly increases employee engagement with the organization (Inegbedion, 2024). Furthermore, WLB can also indirectly influence work commitment through job satisfaction, where employees who feel their WLB is maintained tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to the organization (Harjanti et al., 2025). Several factors such as gender, organizational support, and work culture can moderate the strength of this relationship (David et al., 2025). Therefore, effective WLB policies are key to increasing employee loyalty and commitment.

H1: Work-life balance influences work commitment.

A conducive work environment is a key determinant of employee work commitment (Yanti et al., 2025). Various empirical studies show that the work environment encompasses the physical, social, and psychological conditions of the workplace, which influence comfort, employee relationships, communication, and perceptions of fairness within the organization. A favorable work environment can facilitate positive interactions, improve psychological well-being, and strengthen employees' emotional attachment to their organization. Consequently, employees become more loyal and goal-oriented, and have a strong intention to remain with the organization, which is at the core of professional work commitment (Noerchoidah et al., 2023).

H2: The work environment influences work commitment.

Work-life balance (WLB) plays a crucial role in increasing employee job satisfaction. Employees who are able to manage their time and energy between work and personal life tend to have higher job satisfaction because they feel less stressed by work demands and can better enjoy their personal lives (Nurdina et al., 2024). Research shows that employees who maintain a good work-life balance tend to be more productive, more engaged in their work, and experience less stress. Therefore, companies that support WLB policies, such as flexible working hours or family leave, contribute to higher job satisfaction and ultimately improve organizational performance (Pushpa et al., 2024).

H3: Work-life balance influences job satisfaction.

The work environment is a crucial factor influencing employee job satisfaction within an organization. Job satisfaction refers to the level of positive or negative feelings an employee has toward their job, which is shaped by their perceptions of various aspects of the job, including the work environment. Usniarti & Nuvriasari (2024) found that a positive and conducive work environment can create a harmonious work atmosphere, thereby increasing job satisfaction. Good physical facilities, supportive leadership, and positive work

relationships are strongly correlated with increased job satisfaction (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

H4: The work environment influences job satisfaction.

Kepuasan kerja berpengaruh positif terhadap komitmen kerja (Alam et al., 2025). Karyawan yang merasa puas dengan pekerjaan mereka cenderung memiliki komitmen yang lebih tinggi terhadap organisasi. Kepuasan kerja mencakup berbagai aspek seperti kompensasi, hubungan dengan rekan kerja, dan kesempatan untuk berkembang, yang semuanya berkontribusi pada loyalitas dan keterikatan karyawan (Noerchoidah et al., 2022). Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karyawan yang puas lebih loyal dan berkomitmen untuk memberikan kontribusi yang lebih besar pada tujuan organisasi, yang akhirnya meningkatkan kinerja organisasi secara keseluruhan (Mangundjaya & Netty, 2024).

H5: Kepuasan kerja berpengaruh terhadap komitmen kerja.

In the research, job satisfaction serves as a mediator between work-life balance and work commitment. This means that work-life balance positively influences job satisfaction, and increased job satisfaction, in turn, leads to higher employee commitment to the organization (Rahmadina & Setyaningrum, 2023). This mediating role indicates that the impact of work-life balance on work commitment is not only direct but also occurs indirectly through increased job satisfaction. Therefore, employees who experience a balance between work and personal life typically feel more satisfied, and this condition strengthens their loyalty and commitment to the organization (Meisy & Putra, 2025)

H6: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of work-life balance on work commitment.

A positive work environment significantly influences job satisfaction, as supportive conditions such as good facilities, healthy social relationships, and superior support can increase employee comfort at work (Al-Amer et al., 2025). This job satisfaction, in turn, acts as a mediating variable linking the work environment and work commitment. This means that employee satisfaction will strengthen their commitment to the organization. Therefore, a conducive work environment will increase job satisfaction, which in turn will increase employee work commitment to the organization.

H7: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the work environment and work commitment.

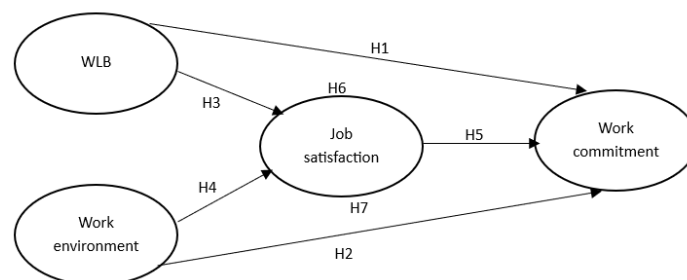


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Research Method

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to analyze the relationships between variables. Data collection was conducted through in-person and online questionnaires administered to selected respondents using Google Forms.

The study population was Generation Z employees in Surabaya. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, with respondents aged 18–25 years residing in Surabaya. The sample size was determined based on Hair et al. (2021), which is 5–10 parameters multiplied by the number of research indicators for structural model analysis. With 15 indicators, the minimum required sample size was 150 respondents.

The work-life balance instrument was adopted from Harjanti et al. (2025) with 4 items measuring time balance, work flexibility, organizational support, and satisfaction with work-life balance. The work environment instrument, as described by Wagdi & Sayed (2023), consists of 4 items: workplace comfort, inter-employee relationships, organizational support, and working conditions that support productivity. Work Commitment is based on Sina et al. (2025) and consists of 3 items: emotional attachment to the organization, consideration of benefits and costs when leaving the organization, and sense of obligation to remain in the organization. Job satisfaction was adopted from Irawanto et al. (2021) and consisted of 4 items that measured satisfaction with the job itself, rewards received, relationships with coworkers, and overall work conditions. Each item uses a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The collected data were then tabulated for analysis using SmartPLS software and the PLS-SEM approach.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Based on 150 Generation Z employee respondents, the majority were male (60%) and aged 24–25 (46%). In terms of length of service, the majority of respondents had 1–5 years of work experience (68%), followed by those with more than 5 years (27%) and those with less than 1 year (6%). This distribution indicates that respondents have varying levels of work experience and workplace involvement.

Outer Model

Outer model testing was conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the latent constructs. Convergent validity was assessed based on factor loading values > 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 , while construct reliability was tested using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 . Furthermore, discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criteria to ensure differences between constructs.

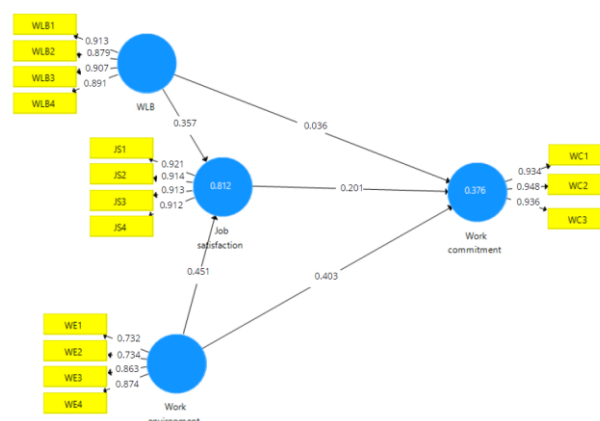


Figure 2. Outer Model Results

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Results

Variables and items	Loading Factor	Cronbach Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Work Life Balance				
WLB1	0.913	0.920	0.806	0.943
WLB2	0.879			
WLB3	0.907			
WLB4	0.891			
Work environment				
WE1	0.732	0.821	0.645	0.878
WE2	0.734			
WE3	0.863			
WE4	0.874			
Job satisfaction				
JS1	0.921	0.938	0.645	0.878
JS2	0.914			
JS3	0.913			
JS4	0.912			
Work commitment				
WC1	0.934	0.934	0.883	0.958
WC2	0.948			
WC3	0.936			

Based on Table 1, all indicators in the work-life balance, work environment, job satisfaction, and work commitment variables had factor loadings > 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values > 0.5 . These results indicate that all constructs met the criteria for convergent validity. Furthermore, reliability testing showed that each variable had a Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 ; thus, all constructs are considered to have a good level of internal consistency and reliability.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity –Fornell–Larcker

Variables	Job satisfaction	Work-life balance	Work commitment	Work environment
Job satisfaction	0.918			
Work-life balance	0.521	0.898		
Work environment	0.573	0.444	0.940	
Work environment	0.876	0.754	0.606	0.803

Based on Table 2, all constructs have met the discriminant validity criteria based on the Fornell-Larcker approach. The value of each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs, indicating that each construct has clear differences and does not experience measurement overlap.

Inner model

The inner model is used to analyze the structural relationships between latent variables in a research model. Evaluation of the inner model focuses on examining the relationships among constructs, including both direct and indirect influences among latent variables. Structural model testing is performed using path coefficient analysis to determine the

direction and strength of relationships between constructs, and the R-square (R^2) value to assess the ability of exogenous variables to explain variation in endogenous variables.

Table 3. R Square (R^2)

Variables	R Square
Job satisfaction	0.812
Work commitment	0.376

Based on Table 3, the job satisfaction variable has an R^2 of 0.812, indicating that work-life balance and work environment explain 81.2% of the variation in job satisfaction, suggesting the model has strong predictive ability. Meanwhile, the work commitment variable has an R^2 of 0.376, indicating that work-life balance, work environment, and job satisfaction explain 37.6% of the variation in work commitment, placing the model's predictive ability in the moderate category.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test of Direct and Indirect Effects

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	t-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values	Results
Direct Influence					
H1	WLB → Work commitment	0.036	3.309	0.000	accepted
H2	Work environment → Work commitment	0.403	4.283	0.000	accepted
H3	WLB → Job satisfaction	0.357	7.039	0.000	accepted
H4	Work environment → Job satisfaction	0.451	26.061	0.000	accepted
H5	Job satisfaction → Work commitment	0.201	3.648	0.000	accepted
Pengaruh Tidak Langsung					
H6	WLB → Job satisfaction → Work environment	0.064	1.331	0.184	rejected
H7	Work environment → Job satisfaction → Work environment	0.225	1.310	0.191	rejected

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in Table 4, H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted, while H6 and H7 are rejected. The analysis results show that WLB has a positive and significant effect on work commitment ($\beta = 0.036$; $t = 3.309$; $p < 0.05$), and the work environment has a positive and significant effect on work commitment ($\beta = 0.403$; $t = 4.283$; $p < 0.05$). In addition, WLB ($\beta = 0.357$; $t = 7.039$; $p < 0.05$) and the work environment ($\beta = 0.451$; $t = 26.061$; $p < 0.05$) are proven to have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on work commitment ($\beta = 0.201$; $t = 3.648$; $p < 0.05$). However, testing the mediation effect showed that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between WLB and work commitment ($\beta = 0.064$; $t = 1.331$; $p = 0.184$), nor the relationship between work environment and work commitment ($\beta = 0.225$; $t = 1.310$; $p = 0.191$), so H6 and H7 were rejected.

3.2. Discussion

Work-Life Balance on Work Commitment among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The results show that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on work commitment; thus, H1 is accepted. This finding proves that work-life balance can increase Generation Z employees' engagement with the organization through increased loyalty, emotional attachment, and a desire to maintain working relationships. This finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that organizational support for employee work-life balance will encourage a positive response in the form of increased work commitment. These results also support research by Inegbedion (2024) and Harjanti et al. (2025), which shows that work-life balance and work flexibility contribute to increased employee commitment and engagement. Therefore, organizations need to strengthen flexible work policies and manage balanced workloads to maintain the commitment of Generation Z employees.

Work Environment on Work Commitment of Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The results of this study indicate that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on work commitment; thus, H2 is accepted. This finding suggests that a supportive work environment, characterized by strong interpersonal relationships, superior support, open communication, and psychological safety, can increase Generation Z's engagement with the organization. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), positive working conditions are a form of organizational support that encourages employees to respond with increased commitment. This finding supports research by Noerchoidah et al. (2023) and Ong et al. (2021), which shows that organizational support, social relationships, and conducive working conditions strengthen employee commitment. Therefore, organizations need to build a collaborative work culture, strengthen supervisor-subordinate relationships, and provide an environment that supports the development of Generation Z employees.

Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The results of this study indicate that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction; thus, H3 is accepted. This finding suggests that Generation Z employees' ability to balance work and personal life demands contributes to increased job satisfaction. Aspects such as work flexibility, psychological well-being, and quality of personal life are important factors in shaping positive perceptions of work. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), organizational support for work-life balance is perceived as a form of concern that encourages positive employee responses, such as increased job satisfaction. This finding supports research by Susanto et al. (2022) and Pushpa et al. (2024), which shows that work-life balance contributes to increased job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations need to implement work flexibility, proportional workload management, and support for personal needs to improve job satisfaction among Generation Z.

The Work Environment on Job Satisfaction among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The results of this study indicate that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction; thus, H4 is accepted. This finding suggests that a comfortable work environment, positive social relationships, organizational support, and development opportunities contribute to increased job satisfaction among Generation Z employees. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), a supportive work environment is seen as a form of organizational investment that encourages employees to respond positively through increased job satisfaction. This finding aligns with those of Tripathi & Chaturvedi (2023) and Dumitriu et al. (2025) which show that a positive work environment contributes to employee

satisfaction and psychological well-being. Therefore, organizations need to create an adaptive, collaborative, and self-development-supportive work environment to increase job satisfaction among Generation Z employees.

Job Satisfaction and Work Commitment among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The results of this study indicate that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on work commitment; thus, H5 is accepted. This finding suggests that job satisfaction plays a significant role in building Generation Z's commitment to the organization. Employees who have positive work experiences, feel valued, and receive organizational support tend to demonstrate emotional attachment and a greater desire to stay. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), job satisfaction reflects a positive exchange between employees and the organization, where the fulfillment of needs such as meaningful work, recognition, healthy work relationships, and opportunities for development encourages increased work commitment. This finding supports Alam et al. (2025) and Mangundjaya & Netty (2024), who suggest that job satisfaction is a significant factor in increasing organizational commitment.

Mediation of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Work Commitment among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The test results indicate that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work-life balance and work commitment, thus rejecting H6. Although work-life balance influences job satisfaction, and job satisfaction influences work commitment, the indirect effect is not statistically significant. This finding suggests that for Generation Z, work-life balance plays a more direct role in building work commitment through perceived organizational support and attention to employee work-life balance. This finding differs from research by Inegbedion (2024) and Susanto et al. (2022), which found a mediating role for job satisfaction. This difference suggests that Generation Z's characteristics, which emphasize flexibility and work-life balance, allow for the direct formation of work commitment without relying entirely on job satisfaction.

Mediation of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Work Environment and Work Commitment among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

The test results indicate that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work environment and work commitment, thus rejecting H7. Although the work environment influences job satisfaction and job satisfaction influences work commitment, the indirect pathway through job satisfaction was not statistically significant. This finding indicates that, among Generation Z, the work environment can directly build commitment through organizational experiences, such as supervisor support, open communication, positive social relationships, and opportunities for development. Based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), a supportive work environment is a form of organizational investment that encourages employees to respond positively by increasing commitment. These results differ from those of Al-Amer et al. (2025), who found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between organizational factors and employee psychological well-being. This difference may be influenced by respondent characteristics and the work context, with Generation Z placing greater emphasis on direct work experiences and perceived organizational support in building commitment.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that work-life balance and work environment positively affect work commitment among Generation Z. Furthermore, both variables increase job satisfaction,

which in turn positively affects work commitment. These findings support the Social Exchange Theory (SET) that organizational support for employee needs will encourage positive responses in the form of job satisfaction and commitment. However, job satisfaction has not been shown to mediate the relationship between work-life balance and work environment on work commitment. This suggests that, among Generation Z, work commitment is shaped more by direct work experiences, such as flexibility, organizational support, and the quality of workplace social relationships.

This study is limited to Generation Z respondents in Surabaya, making the results not generalizable to broader regional and organizational contexts. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design cannot capture long-term changes in employee perceptions, and the research model is limited to a few factors that influence work commitment. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of respondents, use a longitudinal approach, and include other variables such as perceived organizational support, employee engagement, leadership, or organizational culture to deepen understanding of the factors shaping work commitment.

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