



Work Engagement as a Mediator between Workload, Work Environment, and Generation Z Job Performance

Akbar Fahrurrohman Fiqanda Cuseno Romi, Mariana Puspa Dewi*

Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Asia Malang, Indonesia

Email : akbarfcr7@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i2.1882>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Work Environment,
Work Engagement,
Generation Z
Performance

*Corresponding Author

This study aims to examine the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between workload, work environment, and Generation Z employee performance. A quantitative approach was employed using purposive sampling, involving 100 Generation Z employees working in the service sector. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The analysis procedures included tests of construct validity and reliability, structural model evaluation, and mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method. The results indicate that workload and work environment have positive and significant effects on Generation Z employee performance. The work environment also shows a significant positive effect on work engagement, whereas the effect of workload on work engagement is moderate. Furthermore, work engagement partially mediates the relationship between work environment and employee performance but does not mediate the effect of workload on performance. The R^2 value of 0.649 demonstrates that the proposed model explains 64.9% of the variance in Generation Z employee performance. These findings highlight the importance of fostering a supportive work environment and managing workload effectively to enhance work engagement and performance among Generation Z employees.

Article History:

Received: November 2025; Revised: December 2025; Accepted: January 2026

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Romi, A. F. F. C., & Dewi, M. P. (2026). Work Engagement as a Mediator between Workload, Work Environment, and Generation Z Job Performance. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(2), 1323-1340.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the labor market in Indonesia has accelerated alongside the increasing dominance of Generation Z as a productive workforce cohort. Born between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z currently represents approximately 30% of the national labor force, indicating a significant demographic shift with broad social and economic implications (BPS, 2025). This generational transition is important for society because Generation Z brings distinct work values, expectations, and behavioral patterns that differ markedly

from previous generations. They emphasize meaningful work, psychological well-being, flexibility, and a supportive work environment, which challenge traditional organizational practices. Failure to adapt to these characteristics may lead to decreased productivity, higher turnover, and weakened organizational sustainability. Empirical evidence suggests that misalignment between job demands and employee expectations often results in stress, disengagement, and performance decline, particularly among younger workers. Therefore, understanding the determinants of Generation Z performance is not merely an organizational concern but a societal necessity. This study contributes to broader workforce sustainability by examining how workload and work environment influence Generation Z performance through work engagement as a psychological mechanism.

Despite the growing presence of Generation Z in the workforce, many organizations continue to apply management approaches designed for earlier generations, resulting in structural and psychological mismatches (Dewi & Manshur, 2026; Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Holidi, 2025; Khofsah & Rozi, 2025). One major societal problem is the increasing prevalence of work-related stress, burnout, and job mobility among young workers, driven by excessive workloads and unsupportive work environments (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). These issues not only affect individual well-being but also reduce organizational productivity and increase recruitment and training costs. National labor reports indicate that Generation Z workers exhibit higher job-switching intentions compared to older cohorts, often citing work pressure, lack of engagement, and poor workplace climate as primary reasons. Such conditions undermine long-term workforce stability and economic efficiency. Furthermore, organizations often focus on tangible outcomes such as compensation while neglecting psychological factors that sustain performance. As a result, employee performance is frequently treated as an output problem rather than a systemic issue rooted in work design and environment. Addressing this problem requires empirical investigation into how external job conditions interact with internal psychological states to shape Generation Z performance outcomes.

In practice, the contemporary work landscape reveals a noticeable shift in Generation Z employment preferences toward flexible, non-formal, and psychologically comfortable work settings (Khusnuridlo & Fauzi, 2024; Putri et al., 2024; Sain et al., 2024). Many Generation Z workers favor service-sector jobs such as coffee shops, retail outlets, and creative spaces, which are perceived as offering a more relaxed and dynamic work environment. Statistical data indicate that the service sector absorbs over 70% of Generation Z workers, reflecting their preference for flexibility over rigid organizational structures (BPS Kota Malang, 2025). Although manufacturing sectors may offer higher financial compensation,

younger workers often prioritize work-life balance and emotional comfort. Reports from Disnaker PMPTSP (2025) further show that Generation Z workers are drawn to environments that minimize hierarchical pressure and allow social interaction. However, these settings frequently involve fluctuating workloads, extended working hours, and emotional labor, which can trigger stress and performance inconsistency. This phenomenon illustrates a paradox in which flexible environments simultaneously attract Generation Z workers while exposing them to new forms of work pressure, highlighting the need to examine how engagement mediates these conditions.

Previous studies have extensively examined the influence of workload and work environment on employee performance, emphasizing their role as critical organizational determinants. Wibowo et al. (2023) demonstrated that work pressure and environmental conditions exert differentiated effects on employee attitudes, indicating that responses to job demands are highly contextual. Similarly, Wati and Dewi (2025) found that organizational factors, including human resource competence and communication quality, significantly shape employee performance. These findings suggest that performance outcomes are inseparable from the systems and environments in which employees operate. Focusing on Generation Z, Andriyanto and Fadilla (2024) reported that both workload and work environment positively and significantly affected performance, provided that job demands were managed proportionally. Their study highlights that supportive environments combined with balanced workloads can enhance productivity among young workers. However, excessive pressure or environmental mismatch often leads to stress and reduced motivation (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Ramadhan & Shudiq, 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). While these studies contribute valuable insights, they predominantly emphasize direct relationships between job conditions and performance without sufficiently addressing underlying psychological mechanisms.

Recent scholarship has begun to acknowledge work engagement as a crucial psychological factor linking organizational conditions to performance outcomes. Ansari (2024) emphasized that employee engagement plays a mediating role between leadership style, organizational culture, and Generation Z performance in Indonesia. Supportive leadership and inclusive cultures were found to strengthen emotional attachment and work dedication. Likewise, Permata Sari and Aliya (2025) revealed that workload and work environment significantly influence Generation Z performance, with work engagement acting as a reinforcing variable. Rais and Mardalis (2025) further highlighted the mediating role of emotional involvement in enhancing employee productivity. Despite these advances, most prior studies remain concentrated on formal organizational settings and metropolitan contexts. Moreover, empirical research

that explicitly positions work engagement as a mediating mechanism between workload, work environment, and Generation Z performance remains limited. This gap is particularly evident in medium-sized urban contexts dominated by service and creative sectors, where job characteristics differ substantially from conventional office environments.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative examination of workload, work environment, and work engagement within the specific context of Generation Z employment. Unlike previous studies that primarily test direct causal relationships, this research emphasizes work engagement as an internal psychological mechanism that mediates the influence of external job conditions on performance. This approach advances the state of the art by shifting analytical focus from structural factors alone to the interaction between job design and employee psychological states. Additionally, the study extends empirical investigation to a medium-sized urban labor market characterized by the dominance of creative, educational, and service industries, which remains underrepresented in human resource research. The application of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with bootstrapping techniques further strengthens the methodological rigor, enabling robust mediation analysis. By combining contextual specificity with advanced analytical methods, this study offers a novel contribution to understanding Generation Z performance dynamics beyond traditional organizational frameworks.

Based on the observed workforce phenomena and gaps in existing literature, this study addresses the question of how workload and work environment influence Generation Z employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work engagement. The central argument is that while workload and work environment function as external determinants of performance, work engagement operates as an internal psychological bridge that shapes how these factors are experienced and translated into performance outcomes. Excessive workload may weaken engagement and reduce productivity, whereas a supportive work environment is expected to foster emotional attachment, responsibility, and sustained performance. This study hypothesizes that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between work environment and performance, while its mediating role in the workload performance relationship may be limited. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by enriching engagement-based performance models and practically by informing human resource strategies aimed at creating sustainable, healthy, and engaging work conditions for Generation Z employees in the service sector.

RESEACH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design aimed at examining the causal relationships among workload, work environment, work engagement, and Generation Z employee performance. The quantitative approach was selected because it allows objective measurement of variables and statistical testing of hypothesized relationships based on numerical data. According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative research is appropriate when the objective is to test theories, examine relationships among variables, and generalize findings from a sample to a population. In line with this perspective, the present study sought to evaluate both direct and indirect effects among variables using a structured analytical model. The use of a causal research design enables the identification of how external factors (workload and work environment) influence internal psychological conditions (work engagement) and subsequently affect performance outcomes. Therefore, a quantitative approach was deemed suitable to ensure empirical rigor, objectivity, and replicability of findings.

The research was conducted in Malang City, Indonesia, which represents a medium-sized urban area with a high concentration of Generation Z workers. Malang is widely recognized as an educational hub and a growing economic center, attracting young workers from various regions. The city's labor structure is dominated by the service sector, particularly flexible and non-formal employment settings such as coffee shops, retail, and creative industries. These characteristics make Malang an appropriate context for examining Generation Z work behavior. Specifically, respondents were concentrated in areas known for high youth employment activity, reflecting environments that emphasize flexibility and dynamic work arrangements. The selection of this location was based on its relevance to the research objectives, as it provides a realistic representation of Generation Z employment conditions in urban service-oriented labor markets.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents who met the research criteria. The questionnaire was designed based on established indicators for each variable, including workload, work environment, work engagement, and employee performance. All items were measured using a Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions in a systematic and quantifiable manner. This technique was chosen because questionnaires allow efficient data collection from a relatively large number of respondents and provide standardized responses suitable for statistical analysis. The target population consisted of Generation Z employees working in the service sector with flexible work arrangements. A purposive sampling technique was applied, in which respondents were selected based on specific criteria, namely individuals belonging to Generation Z and actively employed at the time of the study. A total of 100 respondents were included, which is considered adequate for Partial Least

Squares analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the support of SmartPLS software. This method was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing complex models involving latent variables and relatively moderate sample sizes. The analysis process consisted of two main stages: outer model and inner model evaluation. The outer model assessment focused on measuring construct validity and reliability through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Subsequently, the inner model evaluation was performed to examine the structural relationships among variables by analyzing path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and significance levels using the bootstrapping method. In addition, mediation analysis was conducted to assess the role of work engagement in mediating the effects of workload and work environment on Generation Z employee performance.

Based on the framework of thought that has been prepared and the results of theoretical and empirical studies from previous studies, the hypothesis proposed in this study is formulated as follows:

H1: Workload has a significant influence on employee work engagement.

Generation Z

H2: Workload has a significant influence on the performance of Generation Z.

H3: The work environment has a positive and significant influence on the work engagement of Generation Z employees.

H4: The work environment has a positive and significant influence on the performance of Generation Z employees.

H5: Work engagement has a positive and significant influence on the performance of Generation Z employees.

H6: Work engagement mediates the influence of work environment and workload on the performance of Generation Z employees.

To ensure the robustness and credibility of the research findings, several procedures were applied to assess data validity and reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed to confirm that each construct was empirically distinct. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values to ensure internal consistency of measurement items. Only indicators meeting the recommended threshold values were retained for further analysis. Furthermore, the use of bootstrapping in PLS-SEM enhanced the reliability of hypothesis testing by providing stable estimates of standard errors and significance levels. These procedures ensured that the data met the

minimum requirements for validity and reliability, thereby supporting the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Before testing the measurement model (outer model), a general overview of the characteristics of the respondents in this study is presented. Based on the results of data collection on 100 respondents, 58 were female respondents (58%), while 42 were male respondents (42%). All respondents were within the Generation Z age range in accordance with the established research criteria. In terms of employment sector, the majority of respondents work in the service sector, particularly in coffee shops and retail stores, which are characterized by a flexible work environment and direct interaction with consumers. In addition, the average length of service of respondents was in the range of 1-6 months, indicating that some respondents were still in the early phase of work. These characteristics reflect the suitability of respondents to the research focus which examines the work environment, work engagement, and performance of Generation Z employees.

Table 1: Outer Loading Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
bk1 <- Workload	0,956	0,954	0,012	77,954	0,000
bk2 <- Workload	0,863	0,854	0,040	21,421	0,000
bk3 <- Workload	0,964	0,962	0,010	99,195	0,000
kk1 <- Work Engagement	0,895	0,894	0,024	36,867	0,000
kk2 <- Work Engagement	0,901	0,893	0,031	29,073	0,000
kk3 <- Work Engagement	0,833	0,822	0,054	15,308	0,000
kk4 <- Work Engagement	0,929	0,929	0,014	67,346	0,000
lk1 <- Work Environment	0,842	0,835	0,044	19,152	0,000
lk2 <- Work Environment	0,915	0,911	0,024	37,953	0,000
lk3 <- Work Environment	0,910	0,902	0,027	33,201	0,000

y1 <- Employee Performance	0,860	0,844	0,045	19,138	0,000
y2 <-Employee Performance	0,856	0,851	0,031	28,067	0,000
y3 <- Employee Performance	0,847	0,839	0,043	19,492	0,000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Measurement model analysis was conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the constructs. Based on the test findings using SmartPLS, all indicators in the Workload, Work Environment, Work Engagement, and Performance variables showed outer loading scores of >0.70, thus meeting the requirements for convergent validity. The highest outer loading value was shown by the BK3 indicator at 0.964, while the lowest score was found in the KK3 indicator at 0.833. Therefore, all indicators can be considered suitable for use in evaluating the research constructs.

Table 1: Discriminant Validity

	workload	work engagement	Performance	work environment
workload	0.929			
work engagement	0.611	0.890		
Performance	0.709	0.664	0.854	
work environment	0.663	0.705	0.741	0.890

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker Criterion test showed that the square root of the AVE of each variable was greater than the correlation between the other variables. This indicates that each construct in this study has clear conceptual differences and there is no overlap between variables .

Table 3: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_ A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
workload	0.919	0.920	0.950	0.863
work engagement	0.912	0.913	0.938	0.793
Performance	0.815	0.818	0.890	0.730

work environment	0.868	0.870	0.919	0.792
------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The construct reliability values, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, were also >0.70. The Workload variable produced a Composite Reliability score of 0.950, Work Environment of 0.919, Job Engagement of 0.938, and Performance of 0.890. These data confirm that all variables have very accurate and consistent reliability in measuring their constructs.

Table 4: R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
work engagement	0.533	0.524
Performance	0.649	0.639

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The structural model evaluation was conducted by examining the R-Square score and the significance test results for each relationship between variables. The R-Square score for the Job Engagement variable, 0.533, indicates that Workload and Work Environment can explain 53.3% of the variation in work engagement. Meanwhile, the R-Square score for the Performance variable, 0.649, indicates that the Workload, Work Environment, and Work Engagement variables explain 64.9% of the variation in the performance of Generation Z in Malang City.

Table 5: Direct Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
workload -> work engagement	0.255	0.261	0.078	3,262	0.002
workload -> performance	0.387	0.374	0.094	4,106	0,000
job engagement -> performance	0.186	0.200	0.086	2,158	0.033
work environment -> work engagement	0.536	0.524	0.087	6,176	0,000
work environment -> performance	0.484	0.490	0.088	5,512	0,000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The findings of the hypothesis test show that Workload has a significant

effect on Work Engagement ($t = 3.262$; $p = 0.002$), Workload has a significant effect on Performance ($t = 4.106$; $p = 0.000$), Work Environment has a significant effect on Work Engagement ($t = 6.176$; $p = 0.000$), and Work Environment has a significant effect on Performance ($t = 5.512$; $p = 0.000$). In addition, Work Engagement also has a significant effect on Performance ($t = 2.158$; $p = 0.033$).

Table 6: Specific Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
workload -> work engagement -> performance	0.047	0.053	0.029	1,614	0.110
work environment -> work engagement -> performance	0.099	0.105	0.049	2,011	0.047

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

In the analysis of the mediation effect in the Specific Indirect Effects test, it was found that work engagement did not mediate the impact of Workload on Performance ($p = 0.110$), but significantly mediated the relationship between Work Environment and Performance ($p = 0.047$). These findings indicate that the mediating variable only formed in the relationship between Work Environment and Performance.

Discussion

The Effect of Workload on Work Engagement

The study findings show that workload has a positive and significant impact on work engagement, albeit with a relatively moderate influence. This study shows that proportionally managed workload can encourage Generation Z workers' engagement in their jobs. A clear, structured, and capacity-appropriate workload allows workers to feel challenged without experiencing excessive pressure, thus maintaining psychological engagement. However, the large, non-dominant influence coefficient suggests that Generation Z does not consider workload a primary factor in building work engagement. This can be explained by Generation Z's characteristics, which place greater emphasis on psychological comfort, meaningful work, and a supportive work environment than simply task intensity. Thus, although workload plays a role in shaping work engagement, its influence tends to be limited compared to work environment

factors.

A structured workload can foster a strong sense of responsibility and focus. This condition aligns with the findings of a study Ratna & Saputra, (2024) showing that workload has a significant influence on the behavioral responses of Gen Z employees, where increased workload can affect their levels of concentration, motivation, and psychological responses at work. The study confirms that workload is a significant factor in the dynamics of the younger generation's work behavior. This finding is reinforced by Bimaputra & Parwoto, (2020) those explaining that perceptions related to workload significantly determine how employees interpret their roles in the workplace. Although in certain contexts the influence is not significant, workload remains a crucial element that influences employees' psychological reactions. Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with the literature emphasizing that workload is a factor that not only impacts performance but also the level of employee engagement in carrying out their duties.

The Effect of Workload on Performance

Workload has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on the performance of Generation Z workers. This shows that as long as the workload is realistic and in line with individual abilities, employees are able to optimize their work performance. Workload in this context functions as a work stimulus that encourages focus, discipline, and target achievement. However, the significant direct effect of workload on performance, accompanied by the lack of a mediating effect through work engagement, indicates that workload is more of a technical-operational factor than a psychological one. This means that Generation Z can still produce good performance even though their level of emotional engagement does not increase significantly. This finding indicates that performance resulting from workload tends to be instrumental and oriented towards task completion, rather than long-term psychological attachment.

These results align with studies Ratna & Saputra, (2024) that show that workload has a strong impact on the responses and performance of Gen Z employees across various job sectors. The higher the workload, the greater the potential for decreased work quality. Research results Ratioktavia Kusumawardani et al., (2024) show that workload has a significant negative impact on employee performance. The heavier the workload, the lower the

performance tends to be, proving the hypothesis that workload directly affects employee output. These findings reinforce the idea that workload is a significant predictor of performance improvement or decline, particularly among productive age groups like Generation Z, who are highly sensitive to work pressure.

The Influence of Work Environment on Work Engagement

The study's findings show that the work environment exerts the strongest influence on work engagement. This means that the work environment is a key factor in triggering the psychological engagement of Generation Z. A conducive work atmosphere, both physically and non-physically, can foster a sense of calm, comfort, and positive social relationships, thereby encouraging employee engagement in work. The strong influence of the work environment can be explained by the characteristics of Generation Z, who are highly sensitive to the work atmosphere, social support, and organizational values. This generation tends to be more easily emotionally engaged when they feel appreciated, supported, and work in an environment that aligns with their personal values. Thus, the work environment serves not only as a physical setting for work activities, but also as a primary source of psychological engagement for Generation Z.

This is in line with Octavia & Anggarani, (2022) the assertion that the work environment has a direct impact on motivation and work performance. A good work environment creates a more positive psychological condition so that workers can be more involved in daily work activities. And research Octavia & Anggarani (2022) also shows that the more conducive a work environment is, both physically and in terms of inter-employee relationships, the greater the employee's involvement in completing their responsibilities. Research Zebua et al., (2025) reveals that a conducive work environment has a positive influence on employee engagement, because a good environment increases employee comfort, motivation, and involvement in daily tasks. Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with various previous findings that show the work environment is a major determinant in shaping employee engagement.

The Influence of Work Environment on Performance

The work environment has also been shown to have a positive and

significant impact on performance. The findings show that a comfortable and supportive work atmosphere directly increases the effectiveness and productivity of Generation Z workers. Several factors, such as work facilities, relationships between colleagues, open communication, and a fair work climate, directly contribute to performance achievement. In addition to its direct impact, the work environment also has an indirect influence through work engagement, strengthening its role as a strategic factor in human resource management. This indicates that the work environment serves a dual function: as an operational factor that supports performance and as a trigger for sustained psychological engagement.

The findings of this study support the findings of a previous study conducted by (Nuryana, 2025), which emphasized the importance of the role of the work environment and psychological factors in shaping employee performance. Although the focus and research variables were different, the similarity in the direction of the findings indicated that conducive working conditions remained an important factor in improving employee work results . . The study findings Dinda Thalia et al., (2024) showed that the work environment had a significant and positive impact on employee performance, because conducive aspects such as lighting and atmosphere influenced work productivity. Therefore, this study emphasized that the work environment is a crucial factor that can directly strengthen the performance of Generation Z workers.

The Influence of Work Engagement on Performance

Job engagement has a positive and significant impact on the performance of Generation Z workers. Employees who have high contributions show greater enthusiasm, dedication, and targets when carrying out tasks, resulting in more optimal performance. This finding strengthens the view that job engagement is an important psychological resource in improving individual performance. In the context of Generation Z, job engagement reflects the alignment between personal values and organizational values. When employees feel engaged, they also work to meet job demands, but show a greater commitment to the quality of work results. Therefore, job engagement acts as an internal factor that strengthens the link between working conditions and performance.

This is consistent Wiguna et al., (2019) with the finding that work engagement has a significant positive relationship with worker performance, where high levels of engagement result in better work performance, because conducive aspects such as lighting and atmosphere affect work productivity. These data findings further strengthen Rohana Manalu et al., (2021) the evidence that work engagement has a positive and significant impact on the performance of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan employees. This means that the higher the employee's work engagement, the higher their performance, which is consistent with the theory that employee psychological engagement increases productivity and work outcomes.

The Mediating Role of Work Engagement

The analysis results show that job engagement mediates the impact of the work environment on performance, but not the impact of workload on performance. This finding has crucial theoretical implications. Significant mediation in the relationship between the work environment and performance indicates that a conducive work atmosphere first increases employee psychological engagement, which then impacts performance improvement. Conversely, the lack of mediation in the relationship between workload and performance indicates that the impact of workload is direct and does not occur through the mechanism of work engagement. This condition indicates that workload is perceived more as a task demand that must be completed, rather than as a factor that builds emotional attachment. This finding confirms that in the context of Generation Z, work environment factors are more effective in building work engagement than workload.

The significant mediation results for the relationship between work environment and performance align with studies Octavia & Anggarani (2022) showing that a positive work environment increases motivation and psychological well-being, which then improves performance through indirect pathways. Conversely, the insignificant mediation results for workload on performance are consistent with research Bimaputra & Parwoto, (2020) explaining that in some contexts, the influence of workload is often direct and does not occur through psychological variables such as work engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study provides important insights into how workload and work environment shape work engagement and performance among Generation Z

employees. The findings demonstrate that a proportional workload can enhance performance, while the work environment emerges as the most influential factor affecting both engagement and performance. Work engagement plays a critical role by directly improving performance and partially mediating the relationship between work environment and performance, highlighting its function as a psychological mechanism that translates external working conditions into productive outcomes. However, the absence of a mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between workload and performance suggests that workload exerts a more immediate and direct influence on performance outcomes. These results underline the importance of designing realistic workloads and fostering supportive, comfortable, and psychologically safe work environments to sustain optimal performance among Generation Z employees. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by strengthening engagement-based performance models and clarifying the differential pathways through which workload and work environment affect employee performance.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that open avenues for future research. First, the sample size and focus on a single urban context may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or organizational settings. Second, the study did not differentiate specific job sectors in detail, even though Generation Z employment conditions vary substantially across industries. Future research is therefore encouraged to examine particular sectors such as food and beverage services, retail, and creative or digital industries to capture sector-specific dynamics. Additionally, incorporating other psychological and organizational variables, including work motivation, work stress, and work-life balance, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z performance. Expanding methodological approaches and research contexts will further enrich empirical insights into sustainable human resource management for younger generations.

REFERENCES

- Andriyanto, M. R., & Fadilla, A. (2024). *Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja dan Beban Kerja terhadap Kinerja Karyawan pada Generasi Z di Kabupaten Karawang*. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(4). <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i4.13720>
- Ansari. (2024). *Prestasi Kerja di Lingkungan Kerja Gen-Z di Indonesia: Gaya Kepemimpinan, Keterlibatan Karyawan, dan Budaya Organisasi*. *Kolaboratif Sains*, 7(7). <https://doi.org/10.56338/jks.v7i7.5807>

- Bimaputra, A., & Parwoto. (2020). *Pengaruh Beban Kerja, Kepuasan Kerja, dan Motivasi Kerja terhadap Turnover Intentions (Studi Kasus pada PT ABC)*. Indikator: *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 4(1). <https://publikasi.mercubuana.ac.id/index.php/indikator/article/view/10003>
- Dewi, A. T. A., & Manshur, U. (2026). *Madrasah vision management strategy in realizing superior educational quality*. *Educare: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.71392/ejip.v5i1.122>
- Dinda Thalia, R., Aliya, S., Gunarto, M., & Helmi, S. (2024). *The Influence of Employee Engagement and Work Environment on Employee Performance at PT Agronusa Alam Perkasa*. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.54209/ekonomi.v13i01>
- Hefniy, H., & Alwahedi, M. A. A. (2025). *Virtual school tours: Boosting community interest and attracting prospective students*. *Evaluasi: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 340–353. <https://doi.org/10.32478/3gtzvf72>
- Hikmah, U., & Mudarris, B. (2026). *A strategic plan for high quality and effective madrasah management in realized quality superior education*. *Journal of Education Management and Policy*, 2(1), 39–49.
- Holidi, M. (2025). *CBT exam implementation guidance for students in facing digital-based assessments*. *Communautaire: Journal of Community Service*, 4(3), 297–312.
- Khofsah, S., & Rozi, F. (2025). *Management of the habit of reading the Qur'an as an effective memorization strategy for tahfidz class students at madrasahs*. *Journal of Education Management and Policy*, 1(3), 198–207.
- Khusnuridlo, M., & Fauzi, I. (2024). *Optimizing the quality of Islamic senior high school graduates through curriculum management of vocational programs based on pesantrens in East Java, Indonesia*. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), Article 2423437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2423437>
- Kusumawati, I. (2025). *AI-based human capital as a catalyst for increasing the strategic agility of educational organizations*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(5), 239–245.
- Mustafa, M., & Maulana, M. Z. (2024). *Learning innovation: Improving educational effectiveness in the digital age*. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Education, Society and Humanity (Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 720–726)*.
- Nuryana, I. (2025). *Discipline, Infrastructure, and Work Motivation on Employee Performance at Spectrum Billiard & Cafe Malang*. *IJBAMS: International Journal of Business, Accounting, Management, and Social Science*, 1(1), 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.64530/ijbams.v1i1.6>

- Octavia, D., & Anggarani, W. P. T. (2022). *Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja terhadap Prestasi Kerja di Mediasi oleh Motivasi*. *Sibatik Journal: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Sosial, Ekonomi, Budaya, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan*, 1(12), 2849–2862. <https://doi.org/10.54443/sibatik.v1i12.460>
- Permata Sari, S., & Aliya, S. (2025). *Pengaruh Beban Kerja, Lingkungan Kerja, dan Self-Efficacy terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Gen Z PT Telang Agro Mandiri (TAM) Desa Telang Sari Kabupaten Banyuwasin*. *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen dan Bisnis (JEMB)*, 4(2), 459–470. <https://doi.org/10.47233/jemb.v4i2.3377>
- Putri, D. F., Qushwa, F. G., Putri, D. M. S., & Zahro, F. (2024). *Behaviour management in the classroom: Improving the quality of education through systematic optimization of the learning environment*. *Falasifa: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 15(1), 35–47. <https://doi.org/10.62097/falasifa.v15i1.1787>
- Rahmadan, I., & Shudiq, W. J. (2024). *Increasing student interest in learning through the implementation of the K-nearest neighbor algorithm in classifying learning preferences at SMAN 1 Kraksaan*. *Journal of Computer Networks, Architecture and High Performance Computing*, 6(4), 1851–1862. <https://doi.org/10.47709/cnahpc.v6i4.4526>
- Rahman, A. Z., Bahri, S., & Mukhalik, A. (2024). *Productive and safe use of mobile phone technology for TPQ students under the guidance of the development bureau of PP Nurul Jadid*. *Babakti: Journal of Community Engagement*, 1(2), 42–48. <https://doi.org/10.35706/babakti.v1i2.56>
- Ratioktavia Kusumawardani, D., Setyanti, S. W. L. H., & Mirzania, A. (2024). *The Influence of Workload, Motivation, and Work Environment on the Performance of Employees*. *Spectrum Journal of Social Science*, 1(2), 61–66. <https://doi.org/10.61552/sjss.2024.02.003>
- Ratna, N. D., & Saputra, F. E. (2024). *Faktor-Faktor Penentu Turnover Intention: Studi Kasus Lingkungan Kerja, Beban Kerja, dan Work-Life Balance di Kalangan Karyawan Gen Z di Bandar Lampung*. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen, Ekonomi, dan Akuntansi (MEA)*, 8(3), 1912–1931. <https://doi.org/10.31955/mea.v8i3.4695>
- Rohana Manalu, A., Thamrin, R., Hasan, M., & Syahputra, D. (2021). *Effect of Work Engagement on Employee Performance of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan*. *Journal of Economics and Management (JECMA)*, 1(2), 42–49. <https://doi.org/10.46772/jecma.v1i02.376>
- Sain, Z. H., Thelma, C. C., & Pigesia, A. C. (2024). *ChatGPT for positive impact? Examining the opportunities and challenges of large language models in education*. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 1(3), 87–100. <https://doi.org/10.61132/ijed.v1i3.75>
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Syafiih, M. (2025). *The future of education in the digital era: Between technological innovation and equitable access*. In *Proceedings of the International*

- Conference on Education, Society and Humanity (Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 737–741).
- Wati, A. K., & Dewi, M. P. (2025). *Pengaruh Kompetensi Sumber Daya Manusia, Kemampuan Komunikasi, dan Budaya Organisasi terhadap Kinerja Karyawan PT Gayatri Lintas Nusantara Kabupaten Tulungagung*. *Jurnal Ekuilnomi*, 7(1), 129–138. <https://doi.org/10.36985/3wn3z291>
- Wibowo, D. S., Ruspitasari, W. D. R., & Handoko, Y. (2023). *Pengaruh Kepuasan Kerja, Stres Kerja, dan Lingkungan Kerja terhadap Turnover Intention pada Karyawan Operator PT Berkat Citra Lestari Samarinda*. *Bursa: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 2(1), 101–113. <https://doi.org/10.59086/jeb.v2i1.237>
- Wiguna, B. (2019). *Pengaruh Work Engagement, Work–Life Balance, dan Work Overload terhadap Produktivitas Kerja Karyawan: Peran Kepuasan Kerja sebagai Variabel Mediasi pada Karyawan Perbankan*. *Kabilah: Journal of Social Community*.
- Zebua, A. I., Halawa, F., & Waruwu, E. (2025). *Analisis Lingkungan Kerja terhadap Employee Engagement: A Literature Review*. *Likuid: Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.70404/likuid.v1i03.451>