

# The Effect Of Stress And Work Environment On Generation Z Employee Performance With Job Satisfaction As An Intervening Variable

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## ABSTRACT

Using job happiness as an intervening variable, this study aims to determine how stress and the workplace environment impact Generation Z employees' performance. The research was conducted in the city of Semarang using a quantitative approach. A Google Form was used to collect data from 100 responders, and the results were examined using Smart PLS 3. The findings demonstrated that employee performance and job satisfaction are adversely and considerably impacted by work stress. Employee performance and job satisfaction are favorably and dramatically impacted by the workplace. Employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by job satisfaction. The relationship between stress and the work environment and performance may be mediated by job satisfaction.

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## ABSTRAK

Menggunakan kepuasan kerja sebagai variabel intervening, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan bagaimana stres dan lingkungan kerja memengaruhi kinerja karyawan Generasi Z. Penelitian dilakukan di kota Semarang dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Formulir Google digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dari 100 responden, dan hasilnya dianalisis menggunakan Smart PLS 3. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kinerja karyawan dan kepuasan kerja dipengaruhi secara negatif dan signifikan oleh stres kerja. Kinerja karyawan dan kepuasan kerja dipengaruhi secara positif dan dramatis oleh lingkungan kerja. Kinerja karyawan dipengaruhi secara positif dan signifikan oleh kepuasan kerja. Hubungan antara stres dan lingkungan kerja serta kinerja mungkin dimediasi oleh kepuasan kerja.

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## INTRODUCTION

An organization's or company's human resources are a vital resource for its long-term viability. The firm is greatly impacted by the performance of its personnel. The business, therefore, seeks to recruit individuals with exceptional skills and potential, as well as consistently improve the performance of its current workforce. These actions are taken to produce a competitive and productive workplace and to accomplish organizational objectives efficiently and effectively.

The workplace is undergoing major changes in the midst of growing globalization. These changes have a major impact on many things, including human resource management. With these changes, the work environment has become more complex and full of new problems. This situation becomes even more intriguing from the perspective of Generation Z, which consists of people born from 1997 to 2012. Generation Z grew up amidst rapid technological advancements and unlimited access to information. Not only do they have a new way of thinking, but they also have a different perspective on work-life balance and professional standards in the workplace.

The phenomenon of high work stress levels among Generation Z, as revealed in a Cigna International Health survey (2023), shows that this age group faces greater work pressure than other generations. With 91% of respondents aged 18-24 years reporting experiencing stress and almost a quarter of them claiming their stress is unmanageable. This reflects a very vulnerable psychological state of work. High levels of stress, if not handled appropriately, have the potential to reduce job satisfaction. Individuals who are constantly under stress tend to feel uncomfortable, dissatisfied, and unmotivated in their work. Furthermore, the symptoms of burnout experienced by almost all Gen Z respondents (98%) are also strong indicators that their job satisfaction is highly threatened. In this context, job satisfaction can be an important mediating variable in explaining how job stress negatively impacts employee performance. Currently, Generation Z is also in the early stages of career development and faces the dynamics of an unstable work environment.

In the workplace, one of the key determinants of a group's ability to successfully realize its strategic objectives is employee performance. The degree to which workers make contributions to the company is determined by their execution. The emphasis of initiatives to enhance organizational performance is to improve individual and group performance (Syahrial & Robica, 2014). Given how important employee performance is to the achievement of the company, it's really important for every business to ensure that the performance of employees is maintained and continues to increase in line with the objectives to be fulfilled. Suryawan & Salsabilla (2022) said employee performance is related to the desire to do work, the level of skill, and understanding of what needs to be done and how to do it. Employee performance, as defined by Mangkunegara (2016), is the sum and caliber of work finished by an employee in fulfilling his obligations.

Heriyanti (2007) states that if one of the elements is work satisfaction affecting performance, it could be built properly, and the quality of human resources will be completed. Contentment at work is defined as an emotional or effectiveness response to various factors related to work and employees' feelings about whether they are satisfied with their jobs or not. Generally toward one's work, demonstrating the distinction in between the number of incentives employees obtain and the number of rewards they expect (Afandi, 2018).

The fulfillment of job satisfaction does not occur automatically but is influenced by various interrelated factors. Job satisfaction will be easier to achieve if the supporting variables are in a conducive condition. These, the work environment and job stress, are variables.

Job anxiety is a psychological state that develops when perceived work demands exceed an individual's ability to cope. According to Rivai in Setyawati et al. (2018). Workplace stress is a tense situation that leads to a physical and mental imbalance that impacts an employee's feelings, thoughts, and overall health. Putri & Hamsal (2024) said that work stress can arise due to excessive task demands, tight time pressure, or lack of social support in the work environment.

Heriyanti (2007) states that companies consistently consider the environment in which employees perform their duties to ensure continued satisfaction among employees. Factors such as coworkers, supervisors, workplace environment, and additional elements that may impact an individual's capacity to perform their job are important considerations. The workplace, which includes physical and non-physical aspects, is so inherent in every employee that it cannot be separated from achieving optimal work. The work environment includes all

visible conditions in the area where tasks are performed. These physical elements can significantly affect how productive employees are. However, the absence of physical workspace involves everything related to the interactions and dynamics in the workplace. Employees will undoubtedly feel more at ease working in a suitable setting, so that there will be work enthusiasm and employee work enthusiasm in doing their duties, and worker productivity will rise.(Rasmuji & Putranti, 2017).

Job stress that cannot be controlled properly will result in a reduction in job satisfaction. The study supports this of Akbar & Troena (2016), Putry & Hamsal (2024), and Syohraeni et al. (2023) This demonstrates that stress at work has a detrimental and substantial impact about employment satisfaction, while the results of Adawiyah & Siswanto(2015) and Dahmir et al.,(2022) research found that job stress has a favorable and noteworthy impact.

A conducive workplace will increase job satisfaction. This is backed up by research by Rasmuji & Putranti (2017) and Fahira & Yasin (2021), which proves that job happiness is positively and notably impacted by the workplace, while the outcomes of Kosidin & Widjaja (2024) claims that employee job happiness is significantly and negatively impacted by the workplace.

High work stress can result in a decline in worker productivity. This is evidenced by the results of investigations by Sandiartha & Suwanda (2020), Syohraeni et al. (2023) and Muslim et al. (2023) proving that stress at work has a detrimental and substantial impact on employee performance, while the findings of the studies by Widyastuti (2015) and Shabrina et al. (2020) found that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by job stress.

Employee performance will rise in a positive work environment. This is corroborated by study findings by Daulay & Hikmah (2020), Yuningsih et al. (2022) and Mulyaningtyas & Soliha(2023) demonstrating that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by the workplace, whereas the findings of study by Hanafi & Yohana (2017) and Auliana & Achmad(2023) discovered that the workplace has a substantial and detrimental impact.

Well-fulfilled job happiness can boost worker productivity. This is corroborated by study findings by Adawiyah & Siswanto (2015), Muslim et al. (2023), and Syohraeni et al. (2023), proving that contentment at work has a favorable and significant impact on worker performance; however, the findings of a study by Hardiyanti (2021) and Bague et al. (2024) discovered that worker performance is much and negatively impacted by work satisfaction.

The results of various previous studies indicate differences or inconsistencies in identifying the influence between the variables studied, especially in relation to stress at work, work environment, worker satisfaction, and performance. The disparities in the outcomes show that there is still room for retesting to fill the gaps in the research, especially by involving different population groups. Based on this, the researcher is encouraged to conduct a follow-up study with a focus on Generation Z employees in Semarang City.

The hypotheses we propose for this study

H1: In Semarang City, job stress has a detrimental effect on Generation Z's level of job satisfaction.

H2: In Semarang City, the work environment significantly and favorably affects Generation Z's job satisfaction.

H3: The performance of Generation Z workers in Semarang City is significantly and negatively impacted by job stress.

H4: In Semarang City, the work environment has a favorable and noteworthy impact on Generation Z employees' performance.

H5: The performance of Gen Z workers in Semarang City is positively and significantly impacted by job satisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is categorized as behavioral research. Generally, research variables are qualitative in nature in order to conduct tests of research hypotheses through regression analysis, so these qualitative variables are converted into quantitative variables using a number of indicators on each variable. This study's research methodology is quantitative, which focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to test the influence of hypotheses. Semarang City was the site of this study. The implementation time was 4 months (April-July 2025). Semarang City's Generation Z population is the subject of this study. Purposive sampling in combination with non-probability sampling was the sample strategy used in this investigation. The purposive sampling technique means determining the sample with some consideration. This research uses the following criteria: 1. Generation Z is aged 17-27 years. 2. Generation Z who have worked. Sampling was done using the Lemeshow (1991) formula because the total population of Generation Z in Semarang City was unknown. Considering calculations with an error rate of 10%, the minimum sample size required was 96.04, which was rounded up to 100 respondents. This research instrument is a questionnaire through Google Forms and uses a Likert scale to measure the variables of each questionnaire answer. With the use of Smart PLS 3 software, this study employs route analysis approaches. Outer Model examines the results of the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests to determine validity and reliability. Inner Model using R-Square, F-Square, and GoF. Hypothesis testing using direct effect and examination of indirect effects. The following model is used in this study's route analysis technique:

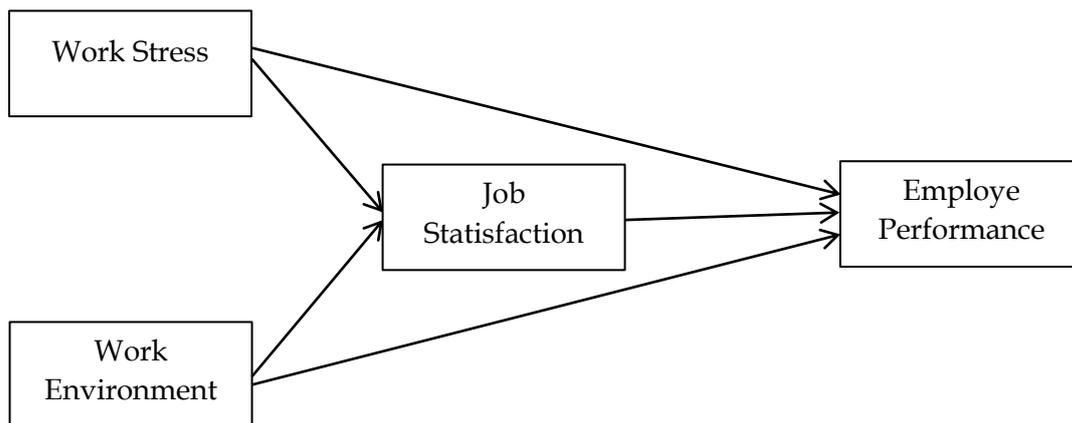


Figure 1. Research Model

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Description

The majority of research participants were guys., namely 89 people or 89%; the age range was 21-24 years for as many as 66 people or 66%; the last education of the respondents was mostly high school, namely 58 people or 58%; then the work range of most respondents was 1-3 years for as many as 47 people or 47%; and the majority of respondents' income was Rp 2,000,000-Rp 3,000,000 for as many as 38 people or 38%.

### Outer Model

#### Validity Test

**Table 1. Cornvergent Validity (Outer Loading)**

	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Work Environment	Work Stress
X1.1				0,839
X1.2				0,881
X1.3				0,905
X1.4				0,910
X1.5				0,901
X1.6				0,916
X2.1			0,847	
X2.2			0,741	
X2.3			0,798	
X2.4			0,716	
X2.5			0,733	
X2.6			0,786	
Y1.1		0,772		
Y1.2		0,788		
Y1.3		0,705		
Y1.4		0,811		
Y1.5		0,760		
Y2.1	0,864			
Y2.2	0,807			
Y2.3	0,794			
Y2.4	0,764			
Y2.5	0,752			

*Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025*

It is evident from table 1 that all outer loading Since each indicator's values exceed 0.7, it can be said that all indicators have fulfilled the requirements in this study and are declared valid.

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Lacker Criterion)**

	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Work Environment	Work Stress
Job Satisfaction	<b>0,768</b>			
Employee Performance	0,749	<b>0,797</b>		
Work Environment	0,618	0,743	<b>0,771</b>	
Work Stress	-0,524	-0,727	-0,477	<b>0,893</b>

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

Table 2 illustrates that the square root value of AVE is  $> 0.5$  and higher than the degree of association between the relevant constructs and other constructs, and it can be concluded that the criteria demonstrating the discriminant validity of the model's constructs have been satisfied by the data model examined in this investigation.

### Reliability Test

**Table 3. Composite Reliability**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Job Satisfaction	0,825	0,877
Employee Performance	0,856	0,897
Work Environment	0,864	0,898
Work Stress	0,949	0,959

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

It is evident from the above table that the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are  $> 0.7$  therefore, it may be said that any build is trustworthy. This suggests that every variable in this research has dependability and internal consistency.

### Inner Model

**Table 4. R-Square**

	R Square
Job Satisfaction	0,450
Employee Performance	0,791

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

Table 4 is what the R-square computation yielded with Smart PLS software showing that the job satisfaction variable's R-square value is 0.450. The findings of this value show that the amount of stress at work and work the surroundings variables impact the contentment at work variable by 45%, Thus, the model falls into the weak group, while 55% is influenced by factors not included in the research. Furthermore, the R-square value of the employee performance variable is 0.791. This demonstrates how the factors of job happiness, work environment, and stress at work effect the employee performance variable by 79.1%, This indicates that the model belongs to a robust category, while 20.9% is affected by factors not included in the research.

**Table 5. F-Square**

	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Work Environment	Work Stress
Job Satisfaction		0,280		
Employee Performance				
Work Environment	0,320	0,356		
Work Stress	0,123	0,491		

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 is the result of the F-square calculation showing that there is a moderate impact of the work stress variable on job satisfaction; the F-square value of this indicates 0.123. The work environment variable on the modest impact of work satisfaction is demonstrated by an F-square value of 0.320. The variable job satisfaction on employee performance has a moderate effect; this is indicated by an F-square value of 0.280. Employee performance is strongly impacted by fluctuating job stress; this is indicated by an F-square value of 0.491. The variable of the workplace on employee performance has a strong influence; The F-square value for this is 0.356.

### Goodnes Of Fit (GOF)

**Table 6. AVE and R-Square values**

	AVE	R-Square
Job Satisfaction	0,589	0,450
Employee Performance	0,635	0,791
Work Environment	0,595	
Work Stress	0,797	
Average	0,654	0,620

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

$$\text{GoF Value} = \sqrt{\text{Average AVE} \times \text{Average } R^2}$$

$$\text{Gof Value} = \sqrt{0.654 \times 0.620}$$

$$\text{Gof Value} = 0.637$$

According to the findings of the computation, the GoF value is 0.637, It suggests that the big Gof category may be used to describe the combined performance of the inner and outer models in this investigation.

### Hypothesis Test

#### Direct Effect

Direct effect analysis is used to evaluate hypotheses regarding the direct influence exerted by an independent factor influencing the dependent one. This approach aims to determine how much the direct donation from the independent variable is without going through a mediator or intermediate variable in a model of the relationship between variables.

**Table 7. Hypothesis testing results data (Direct Effect)**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0,327	0,334	0,062	5,279	0,000
Work Environment -> Job Satisfaction	0,477	0,490	0,075	6,372	0,000
Work Environment -> Employee Performance	0,357	0,344	0,119	3,000	0,003
Work Stress -> Job Satisfaction	-0,296	-0,285	0,081	3,653	0,000
Work Stress -> Employee Performance	-0,386	-0,390	0,095	4,057	0,000

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

#### **The effect of job stress on job satisfaction**

It is evident from the data in the table that the coefficient value is -0.296, the t-statistic value is 3.653, and the p-value is 0.000. The importance of the t-statistic (3.653) > t-table (1.960), and p-value (0.000) < sig (0.05); this indicates that H1 is accepted. These results indicate that job stress has a negative has a noteworthy impact on job contentment.

#### **Effect of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction**

From it is evident from the data in the table that the coefficient value is 0.477, the t-statistic value is 6.372, and the p-value is 0.000. The t-statistic value (6.372) > t-table (1.960), and p-value (0.000) < sig (0.05), then H2 is accepted. These findings suggest that job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by the workplace.

#### **The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Performance**

From the data presented, it can be seen that the coefficient value is -0.386, the t-statistic value is 4.057, and the p-value is 0.000. The t-statistic value (4.057) > t-table (1.960) and p-value (0.000) < sig (0.05); these results indicate H3 is accepted. This shows that work stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

#### **The Effect of Work Environment on Employee Performance**

It is evident from the data in the table that the coefficient value is 0.357, the t-statistic value is 3.000, and the p-value is 0.003. The t-statistic value (3.000) > t-table (1.960) and p-value (0.003) < sig (0.05), then H4 is accepted. This demonstrates that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by the workplace.

### The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

The table shows that the value of the coefficient is 0.327, the t-statistic value is 5.279, and the p-value is 0.000. The t-statistic value (5.279) > t-table (1.960) and p-value (0.000) < sig (0.05), then H5 is accepted. These findings suggest that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by work satisfaction.

### Indirect Effect Evaluation

By using intervening factors as a mediator, indirect effect analysis seeks to determine and evaluate the degree to which an independent variable influences the dependent variable.

**Table 8. Hypothesis testing results data (Indirect Effect)**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Work Environment -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	0,156	0,164	0,044	3,581	0,000
Work Stress -> Job Satisfaction -> Employee Performance	-0,097	-0,094	0,028	3,485	0,001

Source: Data processed by Smart PLS, 2025

### The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction

From the table presented, it can be seen that the coefficient value is -0.097, the t-statistic value is 3.485, and the p-value is 0.001. The t-statistic value (3.485) > t-table (1.960) and p-value (0.001) < sig (0.05). This shows that job stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction.

### The influence of the work environment on employee performance through job satisfaction

From the table presented, the coefficient value (0.156), t-statistic value (3.581), and p-value (0.000) can be seen. The t-statistic value (3.581) > t-table (1.960) and p-value (0.000) < sig (0.05). These results indicate that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

### The Influence of Work Stress on Job Satisfaction

Research shows that work stress has a negative and significant impact on contentment at work, with a coefficient of -0.296 as well as a significant value of 0.000 < 0.05. The results of this study indicate a significant negative relationship between Generation Z workers' job satisfaction and stress levels at work. This implies that the greater the amount of stress that individuals in this generation, whether from work pressure, excessive demands, or lack of

social support in the work environment, the lesser their degree of satisfaction in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. This phenomenon reflects that work stress plays a role as one of the psychosocial factors that can hinder the achievement of psychological well-being and emotional comfort in the workplace. The results align with earlier research, including those carried out by Akbar & Troena (2016), Putry & Hamsal (2024) and Syohraeni et al., (2023) Studies demonstrate that job satisfaction is significantly impacted negatively by work stress.

### **The Influence of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction**

Research findings indicate that job happiness is positively and significantly impacted by the workplace, use a coefficient value of 0.477 and a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . A well-managed work environment contributes significantly to the increase in employee job satisfaction. For individuals from Generation Z, who characteristically value a collaborative work atmosphere, transparency in communication, and flexibility in task execution, the quality of the work environment becomes one of the main determinants in shaping a positive perception of the job being undertaken. A work environment that aligns with the values and in addition to improving work satisfaction, generational preferences can also strengthen employee loyalty and engagement within the company. The results align with earlier studies carried out by Nugrahaningsih & Julaela (2017), Astuti & Rahardjo (2021), and Fahira & Yasin (2021), which show that the work environment has a favorable and noteworthy effect on job satisfaction.

### **The Influence of Work Stress on Employee Performance**

Employee performance is negatively and significantly impacted by job stress, according to the research, with a coefficient value of -0.386 and a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . These findings indicate a negative relationship between the degree of stress at work experienced by Generation Z employees and their performance level. The quality of performance decreases as the level of stress increases. Unmanaged stress conditions have the potential to decrease concentration levels, weaken critical thinking skills, and reduce motivation to complete tasks. Consequential impacts include a decline in work productivity, an increased risk of errors in task execution, and a rise in absenteeism behavior. The findings of this study are in line with other research, including that carried out by Akbar & Troena (2016), Syohraeni et al., (2023), and Muslim et al., (2023) which indicate that work stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

### **The Influence of Work Environment on Employee Performance**

The study's findings show that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by the workplace, with a coefficient value of 0.357 and a significance value of  $0.003 < 0.05$ . A positive Because they feel appreciated at work, people are more motivated to perform at their best, supported, and empowered. Generation Z values a work environment that is not only comfortable physically but also emotionally and in terms of values. They tend to perform better when given space for participation, recognition for achievements, and the availability of technology and resources that support their work effectiveness. These findings are consistent with previous research, such as that conducted by Rasmuji & Putranti (2017), Yuningsih et al.,

(2022), and Mulyaningtyas & Soliha (2023), which stated that the work environment has a positive and significant impact on employee performance.

### **The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance**

The study's findings show that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by work satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.327 and a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Individuals who feel satisfied with their work tend to have higher motivation and work commitment, which results in improved performance. For Generation Z, job satisfaction is often determined by the meaningfulness of the work, flexibility, recognition, and opportunities for development. Therefore, a personal and progressive approach in human resource management will be more effective in enhancing performance through increased job satisfaction. The results of this study are consistent with previous research, such as that conducted by Hanafi & Yohana (2017), Syohraeni et al., (2023), and Putry & Hamsal (2024), that states Job happiness significantly and favorably affects employee performance.

### **The Impact of Work Stress on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction**

The findings of the study demonstrate that work-related stress significantly and negatively affects employee performance as measured by job satisfaction, with a coefficient value of -0.097 and a significance value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ . High work stress not only directly decreases work performance but also indirectly through decreased job satisfaction. In Generation Z, known for its high sensitivity to pressure and the value of work-life balance, work stress often disrupts their motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm for work. When stress reduces job satisfaction, the effect is a decline in work engagement, productivity, and innovative spirit. These results align with earlier studies, including those carried out by Sandiartha & Suwandana (2020), which states that performance of employees is adversely and severely impacted by work stress, which is mediated by job satisfaction.

### **The Influence of Work Environment on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction**

The study's findings show that, through job satisfaction, the workplace significantly and favorably affects performance of employees, with a coefficient value of 0.156 and a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . In addition to directly enhancing performance, a positive work environment also indirectly boosts job happiness. Regarding Generation Z, a healthy, collaborative, open, and supportive work environment for personal growth is one of the important elements that shape their job satisfaction. This satisfaction then triggers higher performance because they feel emotionally connected and aligned with the organization. These results align with earlier studies carried out by Astuti & Rahardjo (2021), It claims that the relationship between the work environment and performance of employees is mediated by job satisfaction.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

According to a study on Generation Z in Semarang City titled the Impact of Work Stress and Work Environment on Employee Performance with Job Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, It is possible to infer the following conclusions: 1) Work stress has a negative and significant impact on job

satisfaction in Semarang City among Generation Z; 2) The work environment has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction among Generation Z in Semarang City; 3) In Semarang City, work-related stress significantly and negatively affects Generation Z employees' performance; 4) Employee performance is positively and significantly affected by the workplace among Generation Z in Semarang City; 5) Employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by job satisfaction among Generation Z in Semarang City; 6) Work stress has a negative and significant impact on employee performance through job satisfaction among Generation Z in Semarang City; 7) In Semarang City, the work environment significantly and favorably affects Generation Z employees' job happiness and performance.

Considering the results of the study, the relevant managerial implication is the importance of organizations in systematically designing work stress management strategies. Providing counseling services, arranging proportional workloads, and offering specialized training in managing job pressure are necessary efforts to prevent the decline of satisfaction and performance, particularly among workers from Generation Z. Additionally, organizations also need to create a supportive work environment, both physically and psychologically, by emphasizing values of collaboration, comfort, and open communication. Focusing on increasing job satisfaction is essential through the provision of adequate work facilities, opportunities for self-development, and an objective reward system.

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