

The Effect of Work Flexibility and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement in Generation Z Employees Deepublish Publisher

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Abstract

The phenomenon of generation Z employees who change jobs because they are not sure about their work for a long time or do not want to be involved in an organization. This research aims to find out: 1). The effect of Work Flexibility and Emotional Intelligence simultaneously on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees; 2). The effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees; 3). The effect of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees. The subjects in this study were generation Z employees. Sampling using purposive sampling technique with a total of 178 generation Z employees. Data collection in this study used three scales, namely the Employee Engagement Scale (EES), Flexible Work Arrangement Scale (FWAS), and Emotional Intelligence scale. This type of research is quantitative, using the statistical test method of simple linear regression and multiple linear regression tests. The results of this study indicate that: 1). There is a positive influence of Work Flexibility and Emotional Intelligence simultaneously on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees with a sig value of $p=0.000$ ($p<0.01$) and a correlation coefficient of 0.350. 2). There is no effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees with a sig value of $p=0.057$ ($p<0.01$) and a correlation coefficient of 0.143. 3). There is a positive influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement in generation Z employees with a sig value of $p=0.001$ ($p<0.01$) and a correlation coefficient of 0.255. The results of this study are expected to help organizations by implementing a work flexibility system, employees can motivate themselves to improve emotional intelligence so that they can foster work engagement with the company.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Work Flexibility, Emotional Intelligence, Generation Z Employees

Introduction

The position of generation Z employees plays an important role in the development of entrepreneurship in the era of Society 5.0 (Putri, 2024). Advances in technological innovation have significantly facilitated the development of scientific inquiry, one of which

has driven progress in the field of publishing and bookkeeping in Indonesia. (Ningsih, 2019). Book publishing companies are at the forefront of developing, producing, and distributing various written works from talented writers (Wahidah, 2021). In recent years, the world of work has been filled with three generations working side by side, namely generation X, generation Y, and generation Z (Putra, 2017). Generation Z employees are expected to dominate Indonesia's total workforce by 2025, reaching 77% (Utami & Siswanto, 2021). The characteristics and competencies demonstrated by generation Z employees have a major influence on organizational sustainability in various domains, including technological adaptation, work-life balance, independence and entrepreneurial efforts, social awareness, and collaboration and teamwork (Anita et al., 2024).

The background of the researcher making generation Z employees as research subjects, because the characteristics of generation Z employees are not sure they will have a job for a long time or do not want to be involved in the organization (Ramadhani & Nindyati, 2022). Lack of employee engagement not only reduces performance but also reinforces the tendency to seek relocation, creates dissatisfaction in customer service, and contributes to absenteeism (Cataldo, 2011). Based on the results of the survey in 2023 in 166 countries with 313 million employees, it shows that only 23% of employees in the world are engaged and only 26% of employees are engaged in the Southeast Asia region. While data in Indonesia from 791 people only about 25.28% are engaged, 68.78% are not engaged, and 5.93% are actively not engaged. The results show that only a few employees are engaged, while most employees choose not to be involved and even actively not engaged with the company. This is in line with Suhaini and Yuniasanti's research (2024) which states that work engagement tends to be higher in older age groups compared to younger age groups, because older individuals have more work experience, resulting in stronger engagement with their work.

In order for organizations to increase employee engagement, it is necessary to understand the various influencing factors. According to Susanto et al. (2016), an external factor that affects employee engagement is work flexibility. Positive events in the workplace produce positive moods and increase work engagement, while negative events are associated with negative moods and decrease work engagement (Bledow et al., 2011). Flexible work arrangements can serve as a determinant that allows employees to understand organizational support (Simanjuntak et al., 2019). Work flexibility has the potential to significantly influence an employee's comfort level in his or her role, thus allowing employees to work more freely and effectively, which can lead to improved performance outcomes (Setyawan, 2020). This makes work flexibility important to be applied to the work system in an effort to increase employee engagement with the company.

Based on previous research from Kiran and Khurram (2018) shows that employees who are given flexibility in the workplace have a higher level of employee engagement, compared to employees who are not given work flexibility. This is indicated by the condition of employees having affective organizational commitment, employee engagement, job satisfaction and thus employee happiness at work is increasing. This research is strengthened based on research by Lubis and Ishak (2023) showing that work flexibility has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement in employees. In his research shows that freedom to determine working time will be more significant in increasing employee engagement with the company.

In addition to work flexibility, an internal factor that affects employee engagement is emotional intelligence (Bazla, 2022). A comprehensive understanding of the emotions of others, coupled with the ability to manage those emotions, can facilitate the achievement of individual success and fulfillment in their professional endeavors (Huda & Ekhsan, 2023). Emotional intelligence plays an important role in shaping attitudes and managing emotions in the workplace, thereby contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. In addition, high levels of emotional intelligence equip individuals to make appropriate and accurate decisions, even in the midst of challenging emotional circumstances (Wandasari & Setyaningrum, 2023). Given the positive correlation between emotional intelligence and employee engagement, higher emotional intelligence in individuals correlates with increased levels of employee engagement (Shafa et al., 2022). So it is very important to understand the internal aspects of emotional intelligence to foster employee personas, encourage the development of positive attributes and increase positive emotional interactions with others, including peers and superiors (Pratama & Suhaeni, 2017).

Based on the results of the study of the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement, Hardianti (2022) in his research shows that emotional intelligence and employee engagement have a positive relationship, so the better the emotional intelligence of employees, the better the level of employee engagement produced. Supported by research by Anzani (2022) which states that emotional intelligence partially has a significant effect on employee engagement. Research findings show that individuals who have emotional intelligence tend to embody characteristics associated with high levels of compliance in the workplace and demonstrate accountability for professional responsibilities.

Based on the background of the problems described above, the formulation of the problem in this study "How is the Effect of Work Flexibility and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement in Generation Z Employees?"

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This type of research is quantitative, using simple linear statistical test methods and multiple linear regression tests. The independent variables in this study are work flexibility and emotional intelligence, while the dependent variable in this study is employee engagement.

Subject

The subjects in this study amounted to 178 generation Z employees of with criteria, namely the year of birth 1996-2010 and a minimum of 1 year of work. Sampling was done using purposive sampling technique.

Table 1.

Respondent Demographics (178 people)

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	19 Years (2005) – 28 Years (1996)	178	100%
	Sum	178	100%
Gender	Man	52	29%
	Women	126	71%
	Sum	178	100%
Last Education	High School/Vocational School	51	28%
	Diploma	19	11%
	Bachelor	108	61%
	Master	0	0%
	Sum	178	100%
Lenght of Work	1 Years	106	60%
	1.5 Years	4	2%
	2 Years	40	22%
	3 Years	13	7%
	4 Years	3	2%
	5 Years	11	6%
	6 Years	1	1%
	Sum	178	100%
Choice of Workplace	Work from Home	75	42%
	Work from Office	103	58%
	Sum	178	100%
Choice of Working Time	Partime	86	48%
	Fulltime	92	52%
	Sum	178	100%

Based on table 1. above, it can be described as follows:

The age range of subjects who contributed to this study was the age group of 19 years born in 2005 and 28 years born in 1996 as many as 178 people (100%). The gender of the subjects

who contributed to this study was dominated by 126 women (71%), followed by 52 man (29%). The latest education of the subjects who contributed to this study was dominated by bachelor as many as 108 people (61%), and high school/vocational school as many as 51 people (28%). Meanwhile, the least recent education group is Diploma graduates as many as 19 people (11%) and there are no master (0%). The working period of the subjects who contributed to this study was dominated by employees who worked for 1 year as many as 106 people (60%), 2 years as many as 40 people (22%), followed by 3 years as many as 13 people (7%), and 5 years as many as 11 people (6%). Meanwhile, employees with the least length of service are 1.5 years and 4 years, totaling 4 people (2%), followed by 6 years, totaling 1 person (1%). The choice of workplace of the subjects who contributed to this study was dominated by employees who worked from the office as many as 103 people (58%), while those who worked from home were 75 people (42%). The choice of working time of the subjects who contributed to this study was dominated by employees working fulltime as many as 92 people (52%), while employees who worked part-time were 86 people (48%).

Measure

The measuring instrument used to measure employee engagement in this study is the Employee Engagement Scale (EES) scale adapted into Indonesian by Astari et al. (2022) based on three aspects of Employee Engagement proposed by Shuck et al. (2016), namely cognitive involvement, emotional involvement, and behavioral involvement with a total of 12 items and a reliability value of 0.0881 and the coefficient of differentiation of items moving from the range of 0.522-0.726. Work flexibility in this study was measured using the Flexible Work Arrangement Scale (FWAS) which was adapted to Indonesian by Lubis and Ishak (2023) based on two aspects of work flexibility proposed by Hyland (2000), namely flexibility of time and flexibility of place with a total of 8 items and a reliability value of 0.0881 and the coefficient of variability of items moving from a range of 0.557-0.728. Emotional intelligence in this study was measured using the Emotional Intelligence scale compiled by Syawali et al. (2021) based on the five aspects of Emotional Intelligence proposed by Goleman (2016), namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills with a total of 23 items and a reliability value of 0.847 and the coefficient of variability of the items moving from a range of 0.185-0.643. The stages of research implementation consist of four stages, namely, the research preparation stage, the scale trial stage, the data collection stage and the data analysis stage.

Results and Discussion

Result

Descriptive analysis of research data is presented through grouping research variables by referring to the average value of the variables tested in this study, which are displayed in the following table.

Table 2

Empirical and Hypothetical Description of Research Data

Variable	Hypothetical				Empirical			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Maks</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Maks</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Employee Engagement</i>	12	60	36	8	34	60	47,25	6,053
Work Flexibility	8	40	24	5	11	40	24,89	5,605
Emotional Intelligence	23	115	69	15	58	109	80,85	10,893

The results of the assumption test show that the research data is normally and linearly distributed, free of multicollinearity, and there is no heteroscedasticity between independent variables, so data analysis for hypothesis testing in this study can be continued using multiple linear regression correlation analysis for hypothesis testing 1 and simple linear regression analysis for hypothesis testing 2 and 3. The following are the results of the multiple linear regression analysis test of work flexibility variables and emotional intelligence on employee engagement research can be seen in table 3:

Table 3.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Test Results

Value R Square	F	P
0,123	12,243	0.000

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis to test the first hypothesis, the effect of work flexibility and emotional intelligence simultaneously with employee engagement of generation Z employees of Deepublish Publishers obtained F of 12,243 and a p value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), then the first hypothesis is accepted. The effective contribution of work flexibility and emotional intelligence to employee engagement of generation Z employees is 12.3%, while the remaining 87.7% is influenced by other factors.

Table 4

Test Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Work Flexibility Against Employee Engagement

t	Significance
1,915	0.057

The results of testing the second hypothesis, the effect of work flexibility on employee engagement of generation Z employees, obtained a regression value of 1.915 with a p value of 0.057 ($p < 0.01$), so the second hypothesis is rejected. This value shows that there is a significant influence between the work flexibility variable on employee engagement with a coefficient of determination of 0.020, an effective contribution of 2%.

Table 5.

Test Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement

t	Significance
3,502	0.001

The results of testing the third hypothesis, the effect of emotional intelligence on employee engagement of generation Z employees, obtained a regression value of 3.502 with a p value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), so the third hypothesis is accepted. This value shows that there

is a significant influence between emotional intelligence variables on employee engagement with a coefficient of determination of 0.65, an effective contribution of 65%.

Discussion

Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis test of work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement found the calculated f value of 12.243 with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$) which means that there is a significant positive influence between work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement. The correlation coefficient value of work flexibility and emotional intelligence with employee engagement is 0.350, if adjusted to the table of interpretation of the correlation coefficient value shows that the value ($rx2y$) is in the interval 0.21 - 0.40 so that between work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement there is a weak correlation.

The other results of the study show that work flexibility on employee engagement found a t value of 1.915 with a significance value of $p = 0.057$ ($p < 0.01$) which means that there is no significant influence between work flexibility and employee engagement. The correlation coefficient value of work flexibility with employee engagement is 0.143, if adjusted to the table of interpretation of the correlation coefficient value, it shows that the value ($rx2y$) is in the interval 0.00 - 0.20 so that between work flexibility and employee engagement there is a very weak correlation. Based on the results of the simple regression analysis test, emotional intelligence on employee engagement found a t value of 3.502 with a significance value of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.01$) which means that there is a significant positive influence between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. The correlation coefficient value of emotional intelligence with employee engagement is 0.255 if adjusted to the table of interpretation of the correlation coefficient value shows that the value ($rx2y$) is in the interval 0.21 - 0.40 so that between work flexibility and employee engagement there is a weak correlation.

In this study, the level of employee engagement of generation Z employees in the "high" category was 121 people (68%), the "medium" category was 57 people (32%), and the "low" category was none (0%). This means that employee engagement in generation Z employees is in the high category. Low employee engagement makes it difficult for employees to commit, is not enthusiastic about working, work performance decreases, and has no awareness of the importance of business continuity which is increasingly competitive. Vice versa, employees with high employee engagement will be involved in work and committed to the company will work to achieve the company's competitive advantage by achieving high productivity, good customer service, and reducing employee turnover rates.

In the work flexibility of generation Z employees in the "high" category as many as 24 people (13%), the "medium" category as many as 120 people (67%), and the "low" category as many as 34 people (20%). It can be concluded that work flexibility in generation Z employees is in the medium category. The low application of work flexibility in the company has an impact between social life and work begins to blur, which leads to an intensification of conflicts that can affect employee welfare. On the other hand, high work flexibility reduces the problems that occur in the world of work such as increasing potential problems that can occur in the world of work such as increasing labor congestion, increasing female labor

participation with family responsibilities, expanding the working hours of manufacturing plants, reducing high unemployment rates, and reducing company costs.

In the emotional intelligence of generation Z employees in the “high” category as many as 62 people (35%), the “medium” category as many as 116 people (65%), and the “low” category does not exist (0%). This means that emotional intelligence in generation Z employees is in the medium category. Employees who have poor emotional intelligence will act following their feelings without thinking about the consequences, are angry, act aggressively and impatiently, have unclear life goals and ideals, are easily discouraged, are less sensitive to the feelings of themselves and others, cannot control negative feelings and moods, are easily affected by negative feelings. Vice versa, employees with a good level of emotional intelligence will have high self-awareness and better in dealing with others which makes employees have the ability to increase their own motivation and enthusiasm.

Based on the *r* square table of work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement, the r^2 value of 0.123 means that the effective contribution value of work flexibility and emotional intelligence to employee engagement is 12.3% while the remaining 87.7% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied. In the *r* square table of work flexibility with employee engagement, the r^2 value of 0.020 means that the effective contribution of work flexibility with employee engagement is 2% while the remaining 98% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied. And in the *r* square table of emotional intelligence with employee engagement, the r^2 value is 0.65, meaning that the effective contribution value of emotional intelligence with employee engagement is 65% while 35% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied.

Based on the results of data analysis, the research can be explained through social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The basic principles of social exchange theory provide the basic reason why individuals show varying levels of engagement, depending on the perception of the exchange of resources between the employee and those offered by the organization. Social exchange theory explains that engagement is developed through interactions that occur between employees and the organization where they work. According to Vera et al. (2022) social exchange theory, if employees are satisfied with the work flexibility policy, this satisfaction results in employees thinking that the company pays special attention to their welfare. As a result, employees feel that they must show work engagement to the company. Work flexibility also has the potential to significantly influence employees' comfort level in their roles, thus allowing employees to work more freely and effectively, which can lead to improved performance outcomes (Setyawan, 2020).

Social exchange theory in the context of emotional intelligence refers to how individuals build their social and emotional relationships based on mutually beneficial exchanges, where each party gives and receives various forms of emotional and social resources (Gultom & Mujiono, 2020). In this case, emotional intelligence influences how a person manages and responds to their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, which in turn affects the quality and sustainability of their social relationships. Overall, social exchange theory and emotional intelligence are interconnected in the context of social interactions, where emotional intelligence helps individuals to make relationships healthier, mutually supportive, and produce favorable outcomes for both parties. The application of

social exchange theory is anticipated to foster employee personas, encourage the development of positive attributes and enhance positive emotional interactions with others, including peers and superiors (Pratama & Suhaeni, 2017).

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion of the research results, it can be concluded that there is a simultaneous influence of work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement in generation Z employees. This means that the higher the flexibility of work and emotional intelligence together shows the higher the employee engagement in generation Z employees. Conversely, the lower the work flexibility and emotional intelligence together, the lower the employee engagement of generation Z employees. In terms of work flexibility, the results of the study state that there is no effect of flexibility on employee engagement in generation Z employees. In terms of emotional intelligence, the results of the study state that there is a positive influence of emotional intelligence on employee engagement in generation Z employees.

Implications

This research contributes theoretically to the science of psychology, especially in the field of industrial and organizational psychology in relation to the influence of work flexibility and emotional intelligence on employee engagement in generation Z employees. Practically, the results of this study for companies by providing information about the importance of work flexibility and emotional intelligence for employees. Employee engagement is important in relation to flexibility in the workplace because the goal is to achieve a balance between work obligations and personal obligations that allow employees to remain engaged in their work. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence plays an important role in shaping attitudes and managing emotions in the workplace, thus contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. In addition, a high level of emotional intelligence equips individuals to make appropriate and accurate decisions, even in the midst of challenging emotional circumstances. By implementing a work flexibility system, employees can motivate themselves to improve emotional intelligence so that this can foster work engagement with the company.

Companies can engage in various initiatives, including development training, recognition awards, and team building retreats, to foster positive relationships and collaboration among employees. So that employees are more engaged with work and become part of the organization. When employees feel positively supported by the organization, they will exhibit behaviors that help achieve organizational goals.

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