

Job Stress and Burnout as the Predictors of Work Disengagement Among Generation Z Employees in Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Based on the JD-R and COR theories, this research examines the impact of work-related stress (specifically, work disengagement) and work-life balance on Generation Z employees in Jakarta, using burnout as a mediating variable. In this research, burnout serves as the variable linking these two factors. "Quiet quitting" is the main phenomenon that will be studied; it is the type of psychological withdrawal from work with a very low level of engagement among employees in general. The primary data were gathered through an explanatory quantitative design via the use of an online survey involving 100 Generation Z employees born between 1997 and 2005 from various industries based in the Jakarta area. The participants of the study were chosen using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. For the analysis of the data gathered, the researcher used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method in SmartPLS 4.0, where bootstrapping was used in order to determine the statistical significance of the findings. The measurement model yielded satisfactory results regarding the convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity. As for the structural model results, it can be stated that the work-life balance does not have any significant effects either directly or indirectly on the burnout and work disengagement. Nevertheless, the burnout has a significant effect on the work disengagement. In addition, the findings suggest that the job stress is the key factor that causes burnout. These findings suggest that, for Jakarta's Generation Z workforce, disengagement from work is driven predominantly by the health-impairment pathway of job demands rather than by work-life imbalance. Organizations are recommended to prioritize proactive workload management and burnout-prevention programs over generic work-life balance initiatives. This study contributes empirical evidence on quiet quitting in an under-researched, cross-sectoral, urban Southeast Asian youth-labor context.

Keywords: quiet quitting; work disengagement; job stress; burnout; work-life balance; Generation Z

INTRODUCTION

One of the key challenges that organizations have to face in current times is low employee engagement. Kahn (1990) describes this condition as one where the person mentally, emotionally, and physically disengages from their work role and performs only the minimum formalities required for that role. Quiet quitting is what people use to refer to the phenomenon of making efforts just to the extent required for the job specification without any voluntary effort or extra initiative.

There is sufficient evidence which proves the extent of this phenomenon to have reached an important stage. As per the Gallup study entitled "State of the Global Workplace 2025," where more than 128,000 people participated from 160 different countries, the percentage of globally engaged employees declined from 23% to 21% from 2023 to 2024. It was found that 62% were "not engaged," whereas 17% were "actively disengaged". In Indonesia, employee engagement stood at only 27%, trailing the Philippines (38%) and Thailand (33%) within Southeast Asia (Gallup, 2025), implying that roughly three-quarters of the national workforce is partially or fully disengaged. This is particularly consequential in Jakarta, Indonesia's largest economic hub, where the labor force comprises 5.44 million workers and Generation Z alone accounts for more than 2.6 million employees (BPS Provinsi DKI Jakarta, 2025). Nationally, Generation Z makes up 27.94% of the Indonesian population (BPS,

2021), underscoring its growing weight in the country's workforce. Jakarta's combination of traffic congestion, long working hours, high-performance pressure, and elevated cost of living creates conditions that are especially conducive to work-life imbalance, job stress, and, ultimately, disengagement among its youngest workers.

Despite growing scholarly interest in quiet quitting, prior studies remain fragmented: many examine burnout and work-life balance as isolated predictors of quiet quitting without jointly testing burnout's mediating mechanism (Nguyen & Vu, 2025), several focus on non-Indonesian or single-industry samples such as banking (Thu Trang & Thi Thu Trang, 2024), hospitality (Prabandhinil & Widyatmoko, 2025), or education (Dilekçi et al., 2025), and evidence specific to Indonesian, cross-sectoral, urban Generation Z employees remains scarce. Findings about the effects of work-life balance are inconsistent as well. Some researchers reported a significant negative correlation with "quitting" (Nazhir Akbar & Ika Mariyati, 2026), while other researchers found no such correlation when adjusting for job burnout (Atqakum et al., 2025). All these inconsistencies, together with the lack of an integrated body of literature and the specific location of the study in Jakarta, constitute the research gap this study addresses.

Thus, this research will examine the effect of work-life balance and work stress on work detachment for Generation Z workers in Jakarta using an integrated approach. In addition to this, this research will also analyze the mediating role of burnout in the abovementioned relationship. More precisely, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

RQ1. Does work-life balance significantly effect work disengagement among Generation Z employees in Jakarta?

RQ2. Does job stress significantly effect Jakarta's Generation Z employees' disengagement from their jobs?

RQ3. Does work-life balance significantly effect Jakarta's Generation Z employees' burnout?

RQ4. Is there any significant effect of job stress on burnout among Generation Z employees in Jakarta?

RQ5. Does burnout have any significant effect on the degree of work disengagement among Generation Z employees in Jakarta?

RQ6. Does work-life balance play a role in how burnout affects work disengagement in Generation Z employees in Jakarta?

RQ7. Is there a role of job stress in the connection between burnout and work disengagement in Generation Z workers in Jakarta?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two theories that complement each other in explaining how work-related factors cause work disengagement. The first theory is known as the "Job Demands-Resources" (JD-R) model, which posits that when there are more demands than resources in relation to work stress and work-life balance, a process of health impairment takes place, which results in psychological resource loss, causing negative effects on worker performance and health. The second theory known as conservation of resources theory explains how resource depletion affects human behavior. The JD-R model explains the depletion of resources due to work pressure and work-life imbalance that eventually causes burnout among employees. Conversely, the COR model explains how burnout eventually results in work disengagement.

The capability of an individual to reconcile the needs of his work and personal life without having to give up one to the other is termed as work-life balance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work-life balance is considered an essential criterion by members of Generation Z while selecting their employers (Deloitte, 2023). In terms of empirical research about the effect of work-life balance on withdrawal behaviors, it can be seen that it generates mixed findings. The studies conducted by Saraiva and Nogueiro (2025) and Nguyen and Vu (2025) revealed that work-life imbalance makes Generation Y and Z employees feel detached mainly because of burnout.

Job stress happens when the demands of the work are greater than the individual's coping mechanisms (Beehr

& Newman, 1978). Symptoms of work stress are workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, time pressure, and emotional exhaustion (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983). Among many factors that predict burnout among Gen Z employees in Indonesia, stress due to workload is one of the key ones, Dudija and Putri (2025). On the other hand, Rahmawati and Liswandi (2022) discovered that the workplace environment, salary, and stress from work affect employee performance. Job stress does not only affect burnout but also affects another problem known as “quiet quitting”. According to Attamimi et al. (2025), work stress predicts quiet quitting among Indonesian employees, while Galanis et al. (2023) developed and validated Quiet Quitting Scale and found out that it causes job stress.

It is argued that work-related stress is among the primary reasons for work-related exhaustion, which is a special work-related condition that can manifest itself through fatigue, irritability, and decreased professional efficiency (World Health Organization, 2019). According to Maslach et al. (2001), the burnout concept can be described as the experience that includes three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization/cynicism, and low feelings of personal accomplishment. Conceptually, burnout is a notion that can be viewed as a separate issue from the work-related stress. As a result, research has shown a connection between burnout and disengagement/quiet quitting. For example, Thu Trang and Thi Thu Trang (2024) discovered that burnout predicted quiet quitting among Vietnamese bank employees through the mediating effect of optimism, while Prabandhinil and Widyatmoko (2025) found the same among Generation Z workers in Yogyakarta's hospitality sector, using turnover intention as an intervening variable. Furthermore, Dilekçi et al. (2025) discovered that burnout acted as a mediator between teachers' silent quitting and occupational stress.

In order to analyze the direct impact of work-life balance and work-related stress on the outcomes of burnout and work disengagement and the mediating effect of burnout, this study has formulated seven hypotheses according to the theoretical framework and prior research literature.

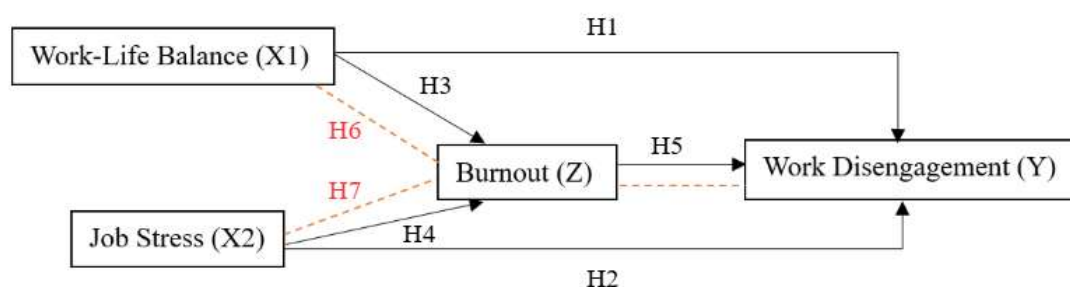


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesized Relationships

H1: Work-life balance has a significant influence on work disengagement.

H2: Job stress has a significant influence on work disengagement.

H3: Work-life balance significantly influence on burnout.

H4: Job stress has a significant influence on burnout.

H5: Burnout has a significant influence on work disengagement.

H6: The relationship between work-life balance and work disengagement is mediated by burnout.

H7: The relationship between workplace stress and work disengagement is mediated by burnout.

METHOD

Utilizing an explanatory quantitative research design (Sugiyono, 2013), this research examines the causality of work-life balance, job stress (which is also known as burnout), and work disengagement as four conceptually and statistically distinct constructs. This research is conducted on Generation Z workers who operate in different sectors in the DKI Jakarta area. To make sure that there was an adequate level of professional maturity and psychological maturity for dealing with full-time work, the participants of this research were selected from those born from 1997 to 2005. Utilizing purposive and snowball sampling techniques, the participants were selected

through certain criteria, including Generation Z, at least six months of full-time employment in Jakarta. The minimum sample size needed is 97 people, computed from the formula for a population which is not known (Lwanga & Lemeshow, 1991), using 95 percent level of confidence and a 10 percent margin of error, taking into account the expected rate of attrition. In testing the reliability of the instrument, a pretest of 35 subjects was done; after that, one problematic measure was eliminated. The data were collected through an independent sample where 112 questionnaires were returned and 100 of these were qualified respondents.

The primary data were collected using an online questionnaire survey conducted via Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised of two main parts: constructs measurement and demographic variables. All measurement items were evaluated using five-point Likert Scale where 1 to “Strongly Disagree” and 5 indicated “Strongly Agree”. Participants gave an electronic consent prior to participating in the experiment and the collected answers were anonymous. Psychometric measures that have been validated before were used in the study to measure research constructs. Work-life balance and work stress were measured using six items taken from Greenhaus et al. (2003). Work stress scale by Parker & DeCotiis (1983) is comprised of such dimensions as workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, time pressure, and emotional exhaustion. Burnout was measured using six items which were adapted from the Burnout Inventory-General Survey by Maslach et al. (2001). The inventory includes such dimensions as emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. For the measurement of work disengagement, six indicators that were adapted from Kahn (1990) conception of psychological engagement and disengagement were used. They comprised cognitive, affective, and behavioral disengagement from assigned roles. Before testing the measurement model on the actual sample ($n=100$), one problematic indicator was dropped after conducting a pilot test on 35 respondents. In evaluating the measurement model using the actual data sample, other indicators that had external loadings lower than 0.70 were also dropped from all constructs. The remaining items in Table 1 include: two items of work-life balance (WLB5, WLB6); three items of job stress (JS2–JS4); four items of job burnout (BO1–BO4); and four items of work disengagement (WD1–WD4).

The statistical data were analyzed using PLS Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the software package SmartPLS 4.0. The method of analysis was chosen due to the capability to test direct and indirect relationships, which includes mediation, for reflective measurement model without imposing many distributional assumptions like covariance-based SEM (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity criteria for the measurement model (outer model) were estimated according to the criteria described by Henseler et al. (2015): the outer loadings should be more than 0.70, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) – not less than 0.50, composite reliability – not less than 0.70 and HTMT – below 0.90. The criteria for structural model assessment included the coefficient of determination (R^2) with low (0.19), moderate (0.33), and high (0.67) explanatory power (Chin, 1998). The effect size was estimated using f^2 : small (0.02), medium (0.15) and large (0.35) effects (Cohen, 1988). Predictive relevance was evaluated using Q^2 : the value should be positive, more than zero. It can be measured using the blindfolding procedure. These seven hypotheses have been tested using bootstrapping method with 5,000 samples at 5% level of significance through two-tailed test. The relationship specified in a particular hypothesis is said to be statistically significant if its t -statistic is greater than or equal to 1.96 and/or its p -value is less than 0.05. In case of H6 and H7, the mediating effect of exhaustion has been evaluated considering the indirect effects derived from bootstrapping method.

The f^2 effect size approach by Cohen (1988) was used to conduct a post-hoc statistical power analysis for both structural regression equations. This improves the adequacy of the sample size beyond the formula for an unknown population. The statistical power obtained at $n = 100$ and $\alpha = 0.05$ exceeded 0.999 for the burnout equation (two predictors: work-life balance and work stress; $R^2 = 0.468$) and the job disengagement equation (three predictors: work-life balance, job stress, and fatigue; $R^2 = 0.583$). This indicates that the collected sample size was sufficient to identify the observed effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The 100 respondents were Generation Z employees born between 1998 and 2005 (aged 21–28 in 2026),

predominantly female (75%), and mostly employed for 1–2 years at their current organization (51%). Contract employees comprised the largest employment-status group (53%), followed by permanent employees (31%) and regular freelancers (16%). Respondents were drawn from diverse sectors, led by retail and e-commerce (29%), finance and banking (21%), and technology and startups (16%), confirming the intended cross-sectoral composition of the sample.

Measurement Model Evaluation

As seen in (Table 1), the value of each outer loading of the indicators is more than the required minimum threshold of 0.70, showing the reliability of the indicators. The findings of (Table 2) also confirm the fact that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all the constructs is greater than 0.50, thereby validating the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). However, the value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for Balance of Work (0.574) is lower than the required minimum threshold, this is a direct consequence of the small number of retained indicators for this construct (only two), since Cronbach's Alpha is known to be sensitive to scale length. The discriminant validity was also supported, as all HTMT ratios were found below the 0.90 threshold set by Henseler et al. (2015) (Table 3). In particular, the construct of Work-Life Balance is found significantly different from the other three constructs, with HTMT ratio varying between 0.33 to 0.45. On the other hand, the HTMT ratio of Burnout, Job Stress, and Work Disengagement is relatively high (0.81–0.83).

Table 1. Indicator Outer Loadings

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Remark
Work-Life Balance	WLB5	0.785	Valid
	WLB6	0.883	Valid
Job Stress	JS2	0.848	Valid
	JS3	0.900	Valid
	JS4	0.736	Valid
Burnout	BO1	0.731	Valid
	BO2	0.739	Valid
	BO3	0.868	Valid
	BO4	0.836	Valid
Work Disengagement	WD1	0.860	Valid
	WD2	0.793	Valid
	WD3	0.798	Valid
	WD4	0.805	Valid

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Reliability

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Remark
Work-Life Balance	0.698	0.574	0.822	Reliable
Job Stress	0.691	0.774	0.869	Reliable
Burnout	0.634	0.810	0.873	Reliable
Work Disengagement	0.663	0.832	0.887	Reliable

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	BO	JS	WD	WLB
BO	—			

	BO	JS	WD	WLB
JS	0.827	—		
WD	0.815	0.813	—	
WLB	0.350	0.327	0.447	—

Structural Model Evaluation

From the structural model, we observe that there is an acceptable amount of variation in the endogenous constructs, as illustrated in Figure 2 (Table 4). $R^2 = 0.468$ for burnout and $R^2 = 0.583$ for work disengagement. According to Cohen (1988), work-life balance does not contribute substantially to either endogenous construct, but job stress contributes to burnout the most ($f^2 = 0.748$, large), followed by burnout influence on work disengagement ($f^2 = 0.247$, medium) and job stress influence on work disengagement ($f^2 = 0.158$, medium). Predictive relevance was established using blindfolding technique; $Q^2 = 0.270$ (medium) for Burnout and $Q^2 = 0.352$ (large) for Work Disengagement was above zero (Hair et al., 2019).

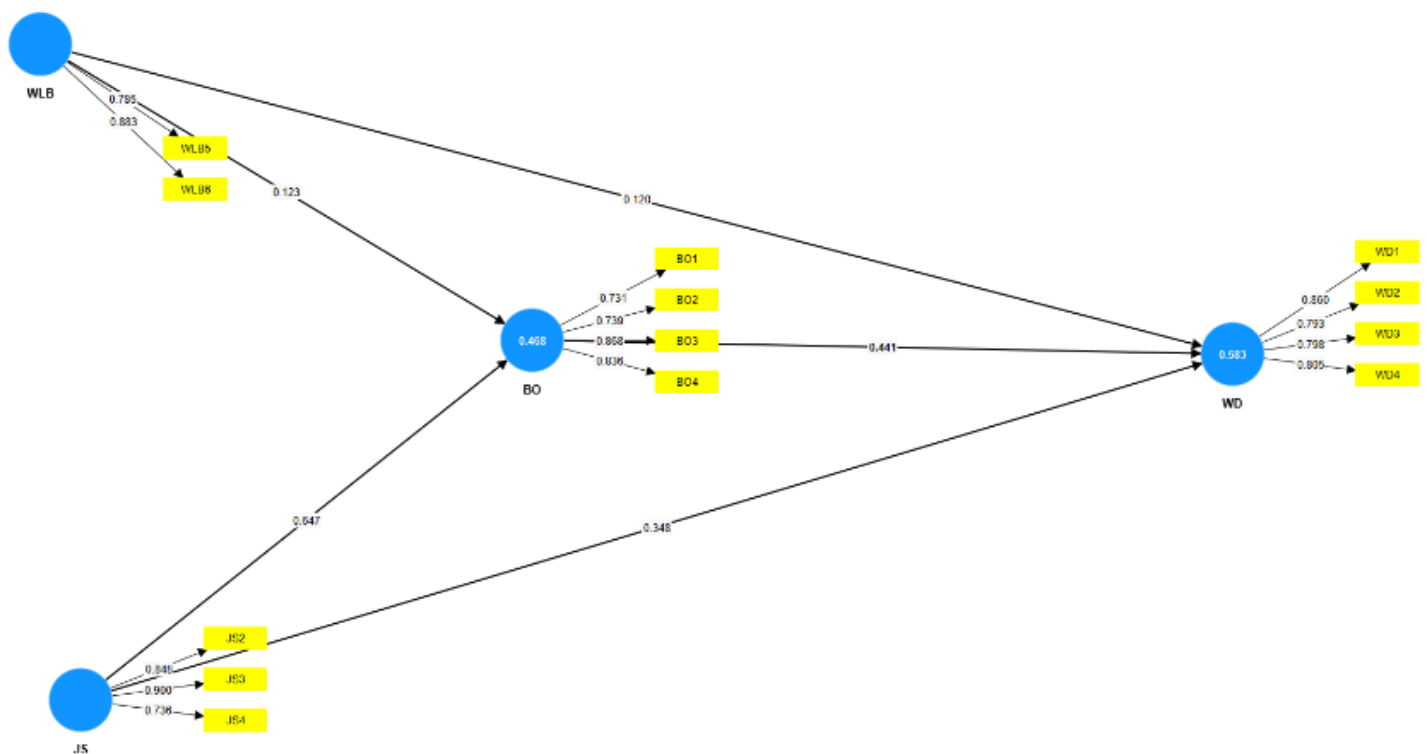


Figure 2. PLS-SEM Structural Model Results

Table 4. Structural Model Summary (R^2 , f^2 , Q^2)

Construct / Path	Value	Category
R^2 – Burnout (BO)	0.468	Moderate
R^2 – Work Disengagement (WD)	0.583	Moderate
f^2 – JS → BO	0.748	Large
f^2 – BO → WD	0.247	Medium
f^2 – JS → WD	0.158	Medium
f^2 – WLB → WD	0.032	Small
f^2 – WLB → BO	0.027	Small
Q^2 – Burnout (BO)	0.270	Medium
Q^2 – Work Disengagement (WD)	0.352	Large

Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

Table 5 summarizes the results of the direct- and indirect-effect hypothesis tests, obtained through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct and Indirect Effects)

Hyp.	Relationship	Path Coef. (O)	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	WLB → WD	0.120	1.543	0.123	Rejected
H2	JS → WD	0.348	4.011	0.000	Accepted
H3	WLB → BO	0.123	1.258	0.209	Rejected
H4	JS → BO	0.647	9.923	0.000	Accepted
H5	BO → WD	0.441	3.942	0.000	Accepted
H6	WLB → BO → WD (indirect)	0.054	1.167	0.243	Rejected
H7	JS → BO → WD (indirect)	0.285	3.644	0.000	Accepted

No significant influence of work-life balance was noted for work disengagement (H1 rejected) and for burnout (H3 rejected); neither was burnout found to mediate the link between work-life balance and work disengagement (H6 rejected). This result contrasts with the findings of Saraiva and Nogueiro (2025) and Nguyen and Vu (2025) that work-life imbalance leads to work disengagement for Generation Y and Z employees mainly due to burnout. One possible explanation is that the work-life balance for Generation Z employees in Jakarta in this study was rather good and hence could not explain the effect as strongly as job demands; this is in line with Atqakum et al. (2025), WHO also did not find any significant impact of work-life balance on quiet quitting in the presence of burnout. From the perspective of theory, this would mean that in urban labor markets characterized by high job demands like Jakarta, the motivational process of the JD-R model can be structurally overridden by the health-impairing process in terms of the importance of the explanatory power.

Job stress, by contrast, significantly and positively predicted both work disengagement (H2 accepted) and burnout (H4 accepted, the strongest path in the model), consistent with Attamimi et al. (2025) on quiet quitting among Indonesian workers, Galanis et al. (2023) on the job stress–quiet quitting relationship, and Dudija and Putri (2025) on workload-driven burnout among Indonesian Generation Z employees. Practically, this indicates that in Jakarta’s high-pressure, fast-paced labor market, chronic exposure to workload, role conflict, and time pressure erodes psychological resources at a rate that outweighs whatever buffering effect work-life balance might otherwise provide, a pattern also echoed in the compensation-and-performance findings of Rahmawati and Liswandi (2022) within a comparable Indonesian organizational setting.

The burnout was also found to predict significantly work disengagement (H5 is confirmed), which corroborates the findings of Thu Trang and Thi Thu Trang (2024) and Prabandhinil and Widyatmoko (2025), and supports the COR-theory assumption (Hobfoll, 1989) that resources depleted employees’ distance themselves from their jobs in order to protect the remaining resources. Finally, the burnout significantly and partially mediated the influence of job stress on work disengagement (H7 is confirmed), which replicates the same mediation mechanism discovered by Dilekçi et al. (2025) and Galanis et al. (2023) and confirms the JD-R health impairment path where job demands lead to burnout, which in turn leads to disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The partial (rather than full) nature of this mediation further indicates that job stress also erodes engagement through channels other than burnout alone, such as direct role dissatisfaction or diminished perceived organizational support, an avenue not captured by the present model.

Combined, all seven hypotheses reveal that job stress and burnout at work and not work-life balance drive work disengagement of Generation Z workers in Jakarta. There are two implications of this study, both of which have theoretical relevance. First, it implies that in an urban labor market characterized by high job demands and high cost of living, the health impairment process of the JD-R theory prevails over the resource-based and work-life balance-related processes, which is different from results obtained from other industries/regions but is justifiable

considering the high work-life balance scores of the sample and job demand predominance in Jakarta's urban labor market. Practically, it implies that employer interventions narrowly focused on flexible schedules or leave policies, without addressing the underlying volume and intensity of job demands, are unlikely to meaningfully reduce quiet quitting among this cohort.

CONCLUSION

In this research, job stress and work-life balance have been assessed with respect to their effects on work disengagement of Gen Z employees in Jakarta through the mediating effect of burnout. The findings revealed that work disengagement is related significantly to job demands rather than to job resources. On the other hand, there is no significant relationship between work-life balance and work disengagement as well as burnout, and there is no significant indirect effect of burnout as well. This demonstrates that the Gen Z employees of Jakarta are able to keep a good work-life balance, which implies that work-life balance is not an important determinant of work disengagement in this situation. In contrast, the main variable in the model is job stress. Job stress has been found to have considerable predictive power for burnout and work disengagement, and job stress's effect on burnout constitutes the strongest connection in the structural model. Burnout turns out to be a powerful determinant of work disengagement and acts as a partial mediator between job stress and work disengagement, revealing that job stress impairs workers' cognition. In general, it may be argued that the discrepancy between one's personal and professional life stems from work-related stress and burnout, and not from the disparity between work and one's personal life. This study brings into light the prevalence of "health impairment path" in JD-R model in an extremely competitive labor market environment.

Recommendations for Practice

For organizational practice, these findings suggest that reducing quiet quitting among Generation Z employees requires proactive workload management, including regular workload assessments and realistic performance expectations; early-detection and burnout-prevention programs, such as employee assistance programs and manager training to recognize burnout symptoms; strengthened frontline-manager capability in team stress management and communication; and employee recognition and career-development initiatives that help offset unavoidable work pressure. Because work-life balance did not significantly predict disengagement in this sample, flexible-work policies remain worth offering as a broader wellbeing measure but should not be treated as a substitute for addressing job stress directly.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In employing a cross-sectional study, this paper aims to specifically examine the work-life balance of Generation Z employees in different sectors in Jakarta. In addition, it may not be easy to apply the results of this study to the general population that is more equally balanced between men and women and to the particular industries because of the very feminine nature of the population (75% of the total sample) and its focus on the retail/e-commerce, financial, and technology industries. This study recommends that there be a use of bigger sample sizes, conduct a longitudinal study, consider work engagement and organizational support as moderating variables, and study motivational processes through JD-R model.

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