

The Influence of Workplace Environment and Work Motivation on Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Commitment Among Generation Z Workers

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of workplace environment and work motivation on job performance among Generation Z employees within Indonesia's food and beverage (F&B) sector, with a particular focus on the mediating role of employee commitment. Employing a quantitative research approach, data were collected through structured online surveys and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings reveal that both workplace environment and work motivation significantly enhance employee commitment and directly improve job performance. Furthermore, employee commitment was found to partially mediate the relationships between workplace environment, motivation, and job performance, indicating its crucial role in sustaining organizational outcomes despite Generation Z's typically lower organizational loyalty. The research highlights the importance of fostering flexible, supportive, and inclusive work environments tailored to the unique preferences of Generation Z employees. Additionally, intrinsic motivators such as personal growth opportunities and recognition were identified as key drivers of commitment and performance. This study contributes to the literature by integrating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the Job Demands-Resources Model, and Social Exchange Theory to provide a comprehensive framework for managing Generation Z in high-turnover service industries. Practical recommendations are offered for human resource strategies, while suggestions for future research call for exploration across broader industrial and cultural settings.

Keywords: Generation Z, Workplace Environment, Work Motivation, Employee Commitment, Job Performance

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INTRODUCTION

Employees play a pivotal role in the success of organizations and are instrumental in achieving a competitive advantage in the modern business landscape (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). Effective employee management necessitates a profound understanding of individual characteristics shaped by personal experiences, unique needs, and adaptability to various situations. With the entrance of Generation Z into the workforce, organizations face novel challenges distinct from those posed by previous generations such as Generation X and Y (Dangmei & Singh, 2016; Geiger, 2024). Generation Z, generally defined as individuals born after 1995 (Cilliers, 2017), now represents a significant and growing demographic within the global and Indonesian labor force, with approximately 75 million individuals recorded in Indonesia's 2020 census. As of February 2024, around 39 million individuals aged 15–29 years comprising late millennials and Generation Z participated in Indonesia's workforce (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2024). Their impending dominance underscores the urgent need for a deeper understanding of their workplace behavior and expectations.

The professional commitment of Generation Z has become a popular yet contentious topic, particularly on social media platforms where they are often associated with traits such as laziness, lack of loyalty, and poor work etiquette. However, positive attributes are also recognized, including their creativity, technological savviness, and early proficiency with digital devices (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). These dual perceptions fuel continuous debates regarding the factors influencing Generation Z's workplace commitment. As Hoa et al. (2024) observe, Gen Z employees' proclivity to voice dissatisfaction through social media reflects a heightened sense of self-realization and confidence in their value to organizations. Nevertheless, generational conflicts persist, with older generations perceiving Gen Z's performance as inferior due to their frequent public expressions of dissatisfaction and lower organizational loyalty.

Older generations often criticize Generation Z for demonstrating behaviors such as "quiet quitting," feigning illnesses to evade work responsibilities, and adopting opportunistic attitudes toward employment (Mishra & Pandey, 2024; Xueyun et al., 2023; Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2018). Furthermore, workplace dynamics reveal that Gen Z employees are more self-centered and pragmatic compared to their predecessors, who traditionally displayed stronger organizational commitment (Putu et al., 2024). Gen Z's openness to technology fosters a flexible, innovation-driven mindset, contrasting with the conservative and cautious technological attitudes of earlier cohorts. This divergence accentuates the need for organizations to recalibrate management strategies to accommodate Gen Z's distinct approach to work and career development.

Socialization patterns among Generation Z employees further differentiate them from previous generations, particularly in their preference for transactional work relationships confined to professional settings (Bulut, 2021). Survey data from GoodStats reveal that Gen Z favors Work From Anywhere (WFA) arrangements due to their discomfort in traditional hierarchical, in-person interactions. Growing up in a digital environment has conditioned them to prefer virtual communication, posing challenges in workplace environments that prioritize physical collaboration. Companies must therefore balance the flexibility Gen Z desires with initiatives aimed at developing their interpersonal and soft skills to support long-term career success (GoodStats, 2024).

The perception of workplace friendships as strictly professional is reinforced by findings from Septiawan and Masrunik (2020), who note Generation Z's inclination to maintain a clear boundary between work and personal life. This behavioral tendency aligns with technological mediation of their social interactions, as explained by Yawson and Yamoah (2020) and Kristina and Harris (2020), who argue that Gen Z's heavy reliance on digital platforms fosters a more transactional and pragmatic approach to relationships, both inside and outside the workplace. Consequently, their preference for functional over emotional work relationships affects not only their workplace behavior but also their overall commitment to organizational objectives.

Despite high turnover rates, commitment remains a vital component of organizational performance, particularly within service industries like the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector, where employee-customer interactions are critical (Tansky & Cohen, 2001; Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Studies indicate that even short-term commitment significantly enhances service quality, customer satisfaction, and operational stability. Research conducted by Yavas, Karatepe, and Babakus (2018) confirms that employees with emotional attachment to their roles exhibit resilience and superior performance even in high-pressure, temporary employment contexts. Thus, fostering even a transient but high level of employee commitment among Gen Z workers is essential for optimizing organizational outcomes and sustaining competitive advantage in industries heavily populated by this demographic.

Given the emerging dominance of Generation Z in the workforce and the dual perceptions of their professional behavior, this study seeks to examine the underlying factors influencing their organizational commitment. Specifically, it aims to answer the research question: What are the key factors that influence the organizational commitment of Generation Z employees in the contemporary workplace, particularly in service-oriented industries? By identifying these factors, this study contributes to the development of more adaptive human resource strategies tailored to this generation's unique work values and behavioral patterns.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with causal design to examine the relationship between work environment, work motivation, employee commitment, and work performance in Generation Z employees in the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector in Indonesia. Data collection was conducted cross-sectionally through an online survey that was purposively distributed to respondents aged 18–28 years, with a minimum of six months of work experience in the F&B industry, especially in cafes with at least 10 employees. Operational positions such as baristas, cashiers, and waitresses were chosen to represent the interaction and performance dynamics typical of Generation Z in the service sector. The total number of respondents in this study was 339 respondents consisting of 243 males and 96 females. This approach allows researchers to obtain relevant data from populations that are geographically dispersed but have demographic characteristics that are appropriate to the focus of the study.

The main instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire based on a six-point Likert scale, as shown in Table 1. The questionnaire was compiled based on verified indicators from previous research (e.g., Chandrasekar, 2011; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Meyer & Allen, 1997), including work environment variables (physical condition, managerial support, work culture), work motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation), employee commitment (affective, normative, and continuum), and work performance (task completion, customer service, and organizational civic behavior).

Table 1. Likert Scale

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it has advantages in handling small sample sizes and abnormal data distribution. In addition, this method is effective in handling multicollinearity between independent variables and is able to estimate complex relationships between latent constructs and their indicators simultaneously (Kifor et al., 2022).

In the context of this study, the validity test of the indicator was carried out by referring to the loading factor value of at least 0.7 as the acceptable limit (Hair et al., 2019). Loading factor measures the strength of the relationship between the indicator and the latent construct. Indicators with a loading value below 0.7 may be considered for elimination, unless their

contribution is theoretically significant. The validity of the construct is also assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which must be more than 0.5 to indicate that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. Internal reliability is evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, where the minimum ideal value is 0.7.

To test the significance of the relationships between variables in the structural model, a bootstrapping technique was used with 5000 replication samples, according to the standards in the PLS-SEM analysis. This analysis allows the testing of the direct and indirect effects (mediation) of work environment variables and motivation on performance, with affective commitment as the main mediator.

The main advantage of PLS-SEM is its ability to support predictive and exploratory studies, which is in line with the objectives of this study to understand behavioral patterns and influencing factors on the performance of Generation Z. In addition, the PLS approach is more tolerant of models that have an unbalanced number of indicators between constructs, as in this study: work motivation has six dimensions, three-dimensional work environment, and affective commitment are just one key dimension (Hair, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

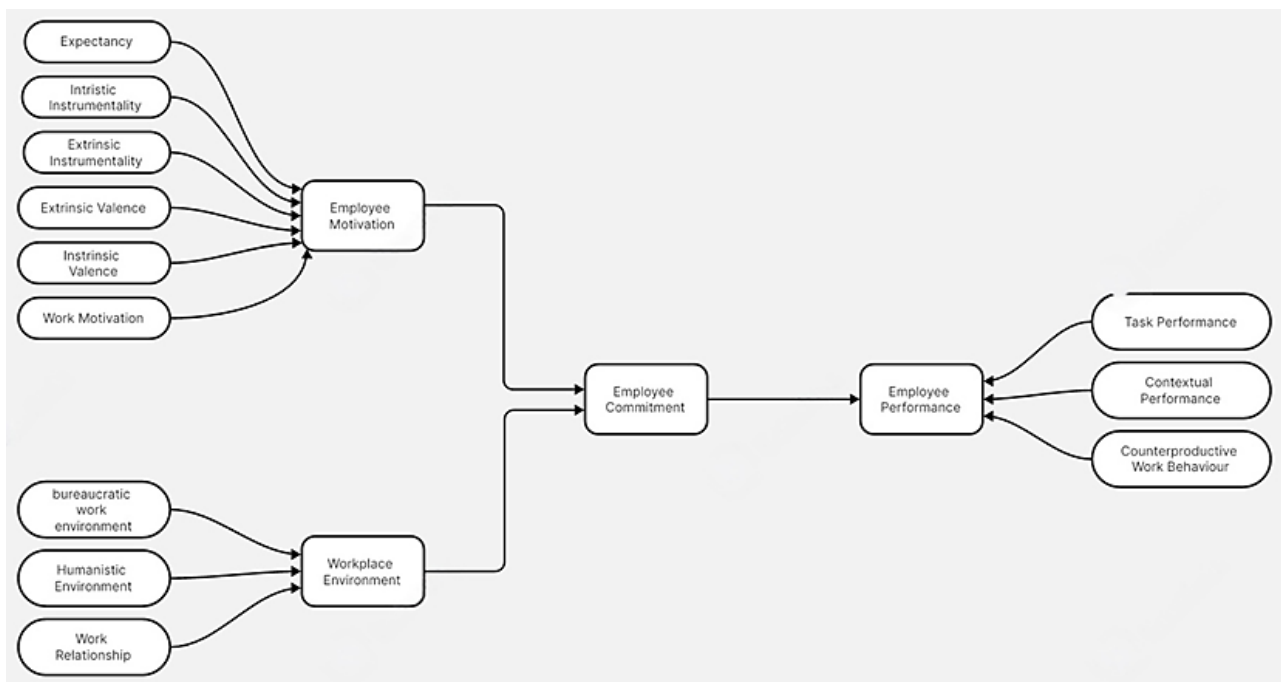


Figure 1. Operational Development Model of Research Variables
Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The descriptive statistics of the sample revealed that the majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 25 years, aligning with the target Generation Z demographic. Most respondents had worked in the F&B sector for periods ranging from 6 months to 2 years, a pattern that reflects the high turnover tendency among Gen Z workers as indicated by previous studies (Rice & Potts, 2024). Baristas and café servers comprised the largest occupational group among participants, followed by cashiers and kitchen staff. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, though slightly skewed towards female respondents, consistent with employment patterns in urban café settings (Mutiarra & Hermiati, 2023). The findings support the relevance of selecting the café industry as a focal sector for examining Gen Z work behaviors and commitment levels. Moreover, the majority of respondents indicated part-time employment status, highlighting the flexible work patterns preferred by Generation Z employees. Figure 2 represents the First Order Model (First Level or Dimension). At this initial stage, the evaluation

focuses on the first-level constructs or model dimensions. The First Order Model is analysed using PLS-SEM, where each indicator is tested for its validity and reliability before being used further.

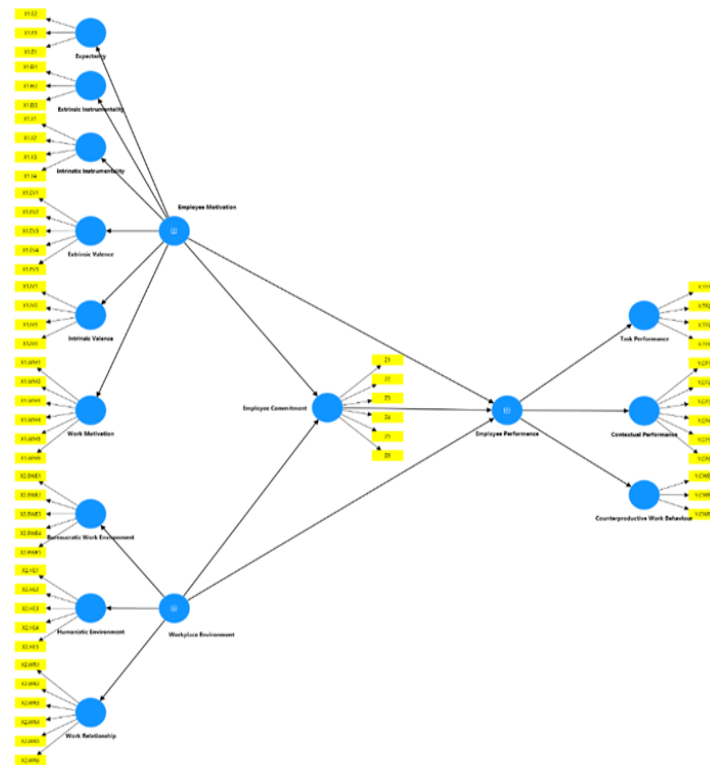


Figure 2. First Order Model

Measurement model evaluation confirmed that all constructs demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency across all measurement items. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was greater than 0.50, affirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity was also established, as the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than the inter-construct correlations. These results support the robustness of the measurement instruments used in assessing work environment, work motivation, employee commitment, and job performance among Generation Z employees. Consequently, the structural model evaluation could proceed with confidence in the measurement model's integrity.

The structural model analysis revealed that workplace environment significantly influenced employee commitment among Generation Z workers ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$). This finding corroborates previous studies that emphasize the importance of supportive, flexible, and inclusive environments in fostering commitment among younger employees (Hakim, 2023; Leslie et al., 2021). Elements such as managerial support, flexible scheduling, ethical practices, and a modern physical environment were positively associated with stronger affective and normative commitment among Gen Z employees. These results suggest that Generation Z values a workplace that accommodates both their personal needs and ideals about ethical operations. Consequently, organizations aiming to enhance Gen Z employee commitment must prioritize environmental factors that align with their expectations for flexibility and psychological safety. Figure 3 represents a Second-Order Model, where the second-stage evaluation focuses on the second-level construct, which is a latent variable. The second-order construct is formed using first-order factor scores (dimensions) that have undergone the SEM-PLS evaluation process and were extracted in the first stage.

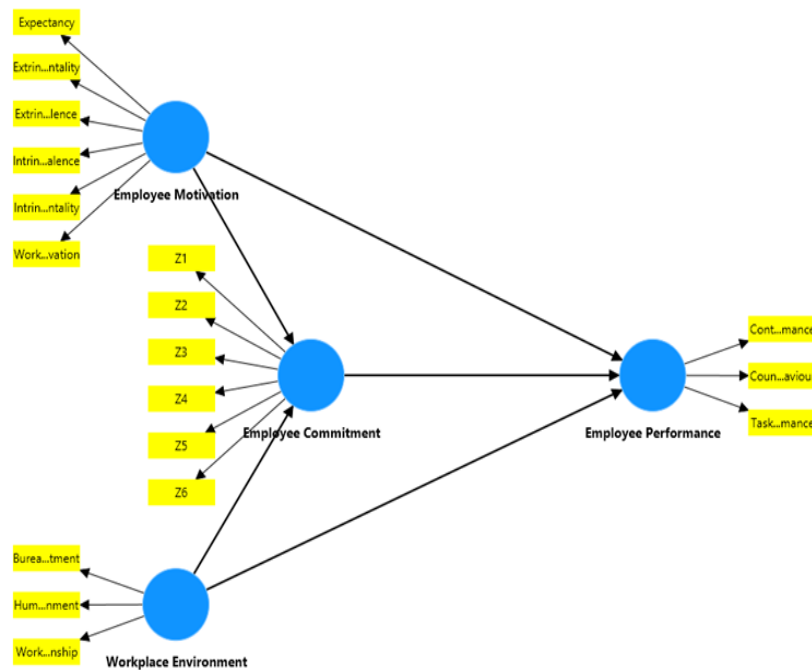


Figure 3. Second Order Model

Work motivation also demonstrated a positive and significant effect on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.01$). This outcome is consistent with research highlighting that Generation Z employees are primarily driven by intrinsic motivators such as personal growth, recognition, and meaningful work (Wennqvist, 2022; De Boer et al., 2021). Financial incentives, while important, were found to be secondary to opportunities for career advancement and workplace flexibility. Respondents expressed stronger commitment when they perceived their roles as contributing to personal development and professional fulfillment. These results emphasize the critical role of designing jobs that not only offer extrinsic rewards but also foster intrinsic motivation among Gen Z employees. Thus, work motivation plays a key role in shaping organizational loyalty within this generation.

In examining direct effects on job performance, the results showed that work environment significantly influenced job performance ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.01$). A supportive work environment facilitated better task completion, enhanced customer service quality, and promoted organizational citizenship behaviors (Tansky & Cohen, 2001). Respondents who perceived their work settings as comfortable, supportive, and ethically aligned exhibited higher levels of engagement and productivity. This finding affirms previous research suggesting that Generation Z employees are particularly sensitive to their physical and social environments (Hakim, 2023). Therefore, creating a conducive workplace environment is crucial for optimizing performance outcomes among young service workers. Organizations must recognize the interplay between environmental factors and employee performance.

Similarly, work motivation had a significant direct effect on job performance ($\beta = 0.274$, $p < 0.05$). Generation Z employees who reported higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation exhibited stronger work performance outcomes, including superior customer interactions and higher task efficiency (Sobaih et al., 2024). Motivation acted as a catalyst for enhancing employee engagement and perseverance, even within the relatively high-stress conditions typical of café work. These results further validate the relevance of motivation theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory in explaining Generation Z work behaviors. Motivation thus serves as an essential lever for boosting individual performance among young service workers. Companies that can tap into both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are likely to see improved employee outcomes.

Employee commitment significantly influenced job performance ($\beta = 0.388$, $p < 0.001$), acting as a strong predictor of work behaviors among Generation Z employees. Respondents

with higher levels of affective commitment exhibited better task performance, were more willing to go beyond basic job descriptions, and demonstrated higher levels of loyalty to their organization (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Even in a sector characterized by high turnover, short-term emotional attachment to the organization contributed positively to daily operational stability and service quality. This finding supports the importance of fostering employee commitment, even among part-time or temporary workers in industries like F&B (Yavas et al., 2018). Thus, commitment serves not only as a mediating variable but also as a key driver of employee performance outcomes.

Mediation analysis confirmed that employee commitment partially mediated the relationship between workplace environment and job performance. The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.138$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that a positive work environment not only directly enhances performance but also does so indirectly by strengthening employee commitment. These results echo findings from Meyer and Allen (1997), who posited that affective commitment enhances employees' willingness to exert discretionary effort. The mediation effect underscores the necessity of fostering emotional attachment to maximize the benefits of a positive work environment. Managers should thus view employee commitment as a strategic outcome influenced by environmental management.

Employee commitment also partially mediated the relationship between work motivation and job performance. The indirect effect ($\beta = 0.113$, $p < 0.05$) suggests that work motivation enhances performance both directly and through its influence on commitment. Motivated employees are more likely to form psychological attachments to their workplace, which, in turn, drives improved work outcomes (Baldonado, 2018; Hidayati et al., 2021). These findings are particularly important given Generation Z's tendency toward low organizational loyalty (Davis & Needham, 2023; Ochis, 2024). Enhancing work motivation, therefore, not only improves performance but also bolsters employee commitment, further enhancing long-term organizational outcomes.

Additional analysis indicated regional differences among respondents from Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Medan in terms of work motivation and commitment levels. Employees from Jakarta, characterized by a more competitive and fast-paced environment, reported slightly higher extrinsic motivation levels compared to their counterparts in Bandung and Surabaya (Septiawan & Masrunik, 2020). Conversely, respondents from Bandung and Surabaya placed greater emphasis on work-life balance and intrinsic motivation factors. This regional variation underscores the need for localized human resource strategies that consider the socio-cultural context in motivating and retaining Generation Z employees. Understanding these differences is critical for tailoring workplace policies and management practices to different urban settings within Indonesia.

Finally, the overall model demonstrated good explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.44 for employee commitment and 0.52 for job performance. These values suggest that the independent variables explained a substantial proportion of the variance in the mediating and dependent variables. The model fit indices further supported the adequacy of the hypothesized model structure, confirming its theoretical and practical relevance. The findings collectively highlight the intricate relationships among work environment, work motivation, employee commitment, and job performance within the Generation Z workforce in Indonesia's F&B sector. These results offer valuable insights for organizations seeking to optimize Gen Z employee management strategies through evidence-based interventions.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that workplace environment significantly impacts employee commitment and job performance among Generation Z workers. Consistent with previous research by Hakim (2023) and Leslie et al. (2021), a supportive and flexible work environment fosters stronger emotional attachment and enhances employee engagement. Generation Z employees, who place a high premium on autonomy, inclusion, and ethical work

cultures, are particularly responsive to positive environmental factors. This sensitivity underscores the importance of workplace design, management support, and organizational ethics in retaining and motivating young employees. Organizations operating in service sectors like cafés must thus prioritize environmental factors to stabilize operations and enhance service quality. Without a conducive environment, businesses risk higher turnover rates and diminished employee performance.

Moreover, work motivation was shown to exert a significant influence on both employee commitment and job performance. These results are aligned with motivational theories proposed by Wennqvist (2022), De Boer et al. (2021), and Baldonado (2018), emphasizing that Generation Z employees are predominantly driven by intrinsic factors such as personal growth, recognition, and meaningful contributions. Although financial incentives remain important, intrinsic motivators were found to have a more substantial effect on commitment and performance outcomes. This suggests that organizations must move beyond traditional extrinsic reward systems and invest in personal development opportunities, recognition programs, and meaningful work experiences. A nuanced understanding of what drives Gen Z employees will enable businesses to design more effective motivation strategies. Failing to meet these motivational needs could result in disengagement and increased turnover.

Employee commitment emerged as a powerful predictor of job performance, supporting the assertions of Meyer and Allen (1997) and Wong and Laschinger (2013) that emotional attachment enhances work behaviors. The significant mediating role of employee commitment in this study echoes the arguments of Tansky and Cohen (2001) and Yavas et al. (2018), who emphasized that even short-term affective commitment can stabilize service quality and operational performance. Despite Generation Z's reputation for lower organizational loyalty (Davis & Needham, 2023; Ochis, 2024), this study reveals that when commitment is cultivated, it translates into tangible performance benefits. These insights stress the need for managers to prioritize building emotional bonds with employees through supportive leadership, fair practices, and career development pathways. Such strategies can transform Generation Z's pragmatic work attitudes into organizational advantages.

The results further highlight that the effects of work environment and work motivation on job performance are partially mediated by employee commitment. This partial mediation model supports previous research by Hidayati et al. (2021) and demonstrates that commitment serves as a vital psychological mechanism linking external and internal work factors to behavioral outcomes. Workplace interventions aiming to improve Generation Z performance should therefore simultaneously target both environmental improvements and motivational enhancements, while also building commitment. Ignoring the mediating role of commitment could limit the effectiveness of strategies aimed at boosting productivity. Consequently, organizations should adopt a holistic human resource management approach that addresses all three variables simultaneously. This model is especially critical in high-turnover industries such as the F&B sector.

Regional differences uncovered in the analysis further suggest that Generation Z's work behaviors and motivational drivers are not homogeneous across Indonesia. Respondents from Jakarta exhibited stronger extrinsic motivations, whereas those from Bandung and Surabaya demonstrated a greater emphasis on intrinsic factors such as work-life balance. These findings are consistent with research by Septiawan and Masrunik (2020) and Nurhasanah et al. (2023), emphasizing the role of socio-economic and cultural contexts in shaping workplace expectations. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to managing Generation Z may be ineffective, and organizations should tailor their human resource practices to reflect regional variations. Localized strategies can enhance both motivation and commitment by aligning better with employees' lived realities and cultural expectations. Future research should explore these regional nuances in greater depth to inform more customized HR interventions.

This study provides robust empirical support for the critical role of workplace environment, work motivation, and employee commitment in shaping the job performance of

Generation Z employees in Indonesia's F&B sector. These findings contribute to both theoretical frameworks and practical strategies for managing young service workers in dynamic, customer-facing industries. By emphasizing flexible environments, intrinsic motivation, and commitment-building practices, organizations can better engage and retain Generation Z talent. Furthermore, recognizing and accommodating regional differences can enhance the effectiveness of HR strategies. Future research could extend this model by incorporating additional variables such as leadership styles or organizational culture to further enrich the understanding of Generation Z workforce dynamics. Such extensions would provide even deeper insights into optimizing employee engagement and performance in diverse service contexts. Figure 3 shows Final Conceptual model or path diagram.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that work environment and work motivation play a crucial role in determining the performance of Generation Z employees in the food and beverage (F&B) sector. The findings show that a supportive, flexible, and innovative work environment can significantly increase employee commitment and ultimately positively impact their performance. Both forms of motivation, intrinsic, such as opportunities for self-development and meaningful work, and extrinsic, such as fair compensation and forms of recognition, have been shown to have a significant influence on Generation Z's work engagement. Although Generation Z is often associated with low loyalty to the organization and high turnover rates, this study shows that efforts to cultivate commitment, even if they are short-term, can still have a major impact on service quality, operational stability, and positive workplace behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior.

Typical characteristics of Generation Z, such as a tendency to maintain work-life balance, proficiency in digital technology, and a pragmatic career orientation, must be deeply understood by organizations in order for human resource management strategies to be more adaptive and effective. Based on these findings, it is recommended that organizations build flexible and collaborative work environments, provide clear career development pathways, and create an inclusive work culture that supports mental health. Providing leadership training to managers is also important to facilitate more effective communication with Generation Z employees. However, this study has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design used does not allow observation of behavioral changes or commitments over time. Second, geographical coverage is limited to major cities in Indonesia, so generalization to other sectors or different regions needs to be done carefully. Third, the use of self-report-based questionnaire instruments can cause subjective bias from respondents. Finally, the focus of research on only a few key psychological variables, such as motivation and work environment, has the potential to ignore other external variables that also affect performance, such as leadership style or organizational structural factors.

Nevertheless, this research makes an important contribution in enriching the literature and practices of human resource management, particularly in the service sector. By integrating theoretical frameworks such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Job Demands-Resources Model, and Social Exchange Theory, this article presents a comprehensive perspective on the mechanisms that affect the performance of Generation Z. The findings and recommendations can serve as practical references for industry players and policymakers in designing workforce management strategies that are more relevant to the dynamics the current young generation. The emphasis on the importance of building short-term commitments as a foundation for performance in the service sector is this article's unique contribution in bridging the gap between theoretical approaches and practical needs in the field.

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