

Perceptions of Generation Z About Work Life Balance, Managerial Support and Workplace's Stress Level: A Literature Review

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Abstract. Generation Z who are entering the workforce today have different characteristics and expectations from previous generations, especially in terms of work-life balance, managerial support, and stress levels in the workplace. This study aims to examine Generation Z's perceptions of work-life balance, managerial support, and stress levels in the workplace. This research uses the literature review method using Sinta and Scopus indexed journals from 2018-2024 with as many as 20 journals. The results showed that a good work-life balance plays an important role in reducing stress levels, while responsive managerial support can strengthen feelings of comfort and reduce work pressure. The findings highlight the importance for organisations to understand and meet Generation Z's expectations by developing policies that support work-life balance and managerial approaches that are supportive and empathetic. As such, this research provides insights for organisations in designing appropriate strategies to enhance Generation Z's well-being and productivity, and create a healthy and sustainable work environment.

Keywords: Generation Z, Work-Life Balance, Managerial Support, Stress Level

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly dynamic changes in the world of work have brought new challenges for the younger generation, especially generation Z (Gen Z) who are just entering the professional world. According to Tasikmalaya statistics, Gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012. According to Huwaida et al. (2024) Gen Z is an individual who from an early age has been familiar with technology and digital media, has high technological skills and feels comfortable in using various digital platforms. The estimated age of Gen Z ranges from 12-27 years and has different characteristics from previous generations, including in terms of expectations and preferences for the work environment. This is because Gen Z was born in the midst of the digital revolution, threats due to climate change, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and financial pressures. This has led to a record number of around 9.9 million Gen Z with an age range of 15 to 24 years not working.

According to data from the *American Psychological Association* (2023) more than 70% of gen Z members experience significant levels of stress with 61% of the data results stating that this stress comes from job demands and pressure to excel. In Indonesia, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Manpower (2023) showed that around 65% of gen Z employees feel stressed due to career uncertainty and intense competition in the workforce. In this context, managerial support is a key factor in creating a conducive work environment. Responsive and supportive managers can help employees manage their workload and provide the necessary guidance to overcome workplace challenges. Such support can also have an impact on the level of stress experienced by employees. Workplace stress if not managed properly can affect employee productivity and mental

health. Therefore, it is important to understand how gen Z perceives work-life balance, managerial support, and how it relates to the level of stress they feel at work.

The role of work-life balance in reducing employee stress levels is becoming an increasingly researched topic. Gen Z tends to not only prioritise career but also wants sufficient time for family, hobbies, and self-development. An imbalance between work and personal life can lead to high levels of stress, ultimately affecting employees' mental health and productivity. Therefore, it is important for companies to understand Gen Z's expectations of work-life balance in order to create a work environment that supports their well-being.

In addition to work-life balance, managerial support is also an important factor that affects stress levels in the workplace. Managerial support takes many forms, from guidance and constructive feedback to emotional support and flexible policies. Gen Z has a tendency to look for managers who can provide support not only in the context of work, but also as mentors who care about their personal development. However, many companies still use a more traditional managerial approach, which may be less effective for Gen Z in reducing work stress. Stress levels in the workplace are an issue that cannot be ignored, as high stress can negatively impact employees' mental well-being, work engagement and productivity. Studies show that gen Z is prone to experiencing higher levels of stress than previous generations, largely due to the pressure to fulfil professional expectations and high productivity demands. Poorly managed stress is not only detrimental to individuals but also to companies, as it can result in high employee turnover and lower organisational performance.

The issue raised in this study is that most Gen Zs find it difficult to manage their work-life balance and are often stressed and decide to quit their jobs. In this context, understanding Gen Z's perceptions of work-life balance, managerial support, and workplace stress levels is becoming increasingly important. This research aims to review the relevant literature to understand how these three variables are interrelated and how organisations can adapt to meet the needs of this new generation. A deeper understanding of this topic can assist organisations in developing effective management policies and strategies, which can not only improve the well-being of Gen Z employees but also increase their productivity and job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Life Balance (WLB)

According to Lingard and Turner (2021) *work-life balance* is the ability of individuals to regulate stability between work and personal life in order to remain dynamic and competitive at work while maintaining a cheerful and healthy home life with the necessary ease, regardless of work stress and endless actions that require time and consideration. According to (Buchanan et al., 2024) *work-life balance* is one of the important things in a good, healthy work environment, and mutual care between organisations and employees who are loyal to the demands of completing tasks both at work and not in order to meet job satisfaction. So the author can conclude that *work-life balance* (WLB) is the balance of a person's life between personal life and work. In addition, jobs that offer high salaries and various additional benefits or can be referred to as rewards at work, are ideal criteria for gen Z (Tanaka et al., 2020). This is because they are not only focused on income, but also value personal and professional well-being. This generation

prioritises a work environment that supports life balance, such as flexibility, access to mental health services, and personal development opportunities. As such, the reward aspect of work is important to fulfil their diverse expectations and needs.

Managerial Support

Managerial support refers to the extent to which employees get support from their superiors, which includes aspects such as feedback, recognition, rewards, and opportunities for growth. Solid support from managers can boost motivation, increase commitment, and provide greater job satisfaction for employees. (Agarwala et al., 2014a)). According to (Agarwala et al., 2014b) Managerial support is the actions taken by management to provide the assistance, resources, and facilities necessary for employees to perform their duties properly. This includes the provision of training, guidance, and emotional support.

Stress Level in The Workplace

Workplace stress has become a significant concern, particularly in recent years. Research shows that work stress often stems from excessive workload, role vagueness and lack of social support in the work environment. The construction industry, for example, was identified as one of the sectors with the highest stress levels. Contributing factors include tight deadlines, job complexity and safety concerns. Office workers also face stress from organisational pressures and task complexity, which impacts overall performance and well-being. Interventions such as stress management strategies, co-worker support, and setting work-personal boundaries are important to mitigate their impact Alosaimi et al. (2018).

Other studies have shown that stress can affect productivity and emotional balance. Based on the Yerkes-Dodson law, optimal performance occurs at moderate levels of stress, while too high or too low stress can reduce productivity. Therefore, approaches that focus on balanced stress management, including wellbeing programmes and coping training, are increasingly valued by younger generations of workers such as Generation Z. The use of technology, such as physiological data analysis, is also being utilized to understand and manage stress responses more effectively Morgenshtern and Schmid (2023b), Sipilä et al. (2008b).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method that aims to understand phenomena in depth through non-numerical data analysis. The data used are 30 journals indexed by SCOPUS and SINTA using the keywords *work-life balance*, *managerial support* and *stress level at work* from 2018 to 2024.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The literature shows that work-life balance plays a significant role in reducing Generation Z's work stress levels. They tend to want work flexibility that allows them to manage their time well between work and personal life. Studies by Drewery, Truong, and Fannon (2023) and (Drewery et al., 2023) show that remote work policies and flexible

schedules have become major factors in improving Generation Z's well-being. With a good work balance, employees can focus more on their tasks without excess pressure, thus contributing to higher productivity.

The literature reviewed highlights the relationship between a good work-life balance and reduced employee stress levels. Flexible policies, such as remote working and customisable working hours, were shown to help Generation Z manage work pressure and improve their well-being (Alosaimi et al., 2018; De Boer & Bordoloi, 2022). Other studies reveal that poor work-life balance often leads to burnout, which negatively impacts employee productivity and mental health (Morgenshtern & Schmid, 2023a; Sipilä et al., 2008b). Therefore, it is important for organisations to support employees in achieving this balance.

Literature also suggests that empathic and responsive managerial support is critical in lowering work stress and increasing employee comfort (Contreras, Soria-Barreto, & Zuniga-Jara, 2021; Hatmaker & Hassan, 2021). Research by (Agarwala et al., 2014b) shows that managers who actively listen, provide constructive feedback, and acknowledge employee contributions create a conducive work environment. Generation Z, in particular, values positive interpersonal relationships with their managers, which can increase job satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 1. Research Results Related to the Topic

No	Title and Authors	Research Results
1	The Actual-ideal gap in work-life balance and quality of life among acute care ward nurses Joshua Wilcox (2020)	The findings indicated that nurses living alone had considerably greater work gap scores and lower family gap scores than nurses living with family. Furthermore, when nurses' work-life balance gap widened, their quality of life score declined.
2	Work-life balance in medical students: self-care in a culture of self-sacrifice Alec Picton (2021)	Result shows The concept of work-life balance has become complex and multifaceted. In their definitions, survey participants most commonly mentioned time management, satisfaction, and fulfilling job obligations. 42% of students reported that friends and family had helped them maintain a healthy work-life balance during their training. The majority of students reported that neither hospital nor university personnel had offered them assistance or guidance on work-life balance.
3	The work of midwives: The socio-institutional theory of the meaning of midwives' work-life balance, Kate Buchanan; Kate Dawson; Jacqueline Taylor et al in Midwifery (2024)	The results were categorized into three themes: "finding harmony: midwifery agency fosters presence and joy," "tipping the balance: the socio-institutional factors that shape midwives' work-life balance," and "taking it home: the unique occupational characteristics of midwifery emotion work." Together, these account for the macro-, meso-, and micro-level elements that define the work-life balance of midwives.
4	The Effect Of Non-Physical Work Environment And Workload On Job Satisfaction Mediated By Reward	The study's findings indicated that: Non-Physical Work Environment has no effect on Job Satisfaction; Workload has no effect on Job Satisfaction; Reward

	At Pt Module Intracs Yasatama Cikarang, Sri Wahyuningsih, Fitri Rezeki (2024)	affects Job Satisfaction; Non-Physical Work Environment has no effect on Reward; and Workload affects Reward. While it cannot be said to have a significant effect, Reward as a mediating variable helps to strengthen the effect of Workload on Job Satisfaction.
5	Lived experiences of work-life balance among doctoral nursing students: a qualitative descriptive study, Ji Yeon Lee; Yong Sook Yang; Gi Wook Ryu et al (2024)	This study examined how multi-role doctorate nursing students manage their work and personal lives and interact with others in various settings. We disclosed the issues and challenges they deal with on a daily basis as well as the focal points and driving forces in their life. Support from employers, colleges, and families is required to continue the doctoral program, which will ultimately guarantee the discipline's quality.
6	Feeling Supported as a Remote Worker: The Role of Support from Leaders and Colleagues and Job Satisfaction in Promoting Employees' Work-Life Balance, Buonomo, De Vincenzi, Pansini, D'Anna, and Benevene (2024)	The findings indicated that job satisfaction had a complete mediation influence on the relationship between work-life balance and colleague support. highlighting how human connections at work can improve remote workers' job happiness and, in turn, their work-life balance. The study did not find a significant direct or indirect relationship between work-life balance and leader support, which was unexpected.
7	Role Saliency and the Growth Intention of Women Entrepreneurs: Does Work-life Balance Make a Difference? Brownhilder Ngek Neneh in The Spanish (2021)	The results of this study showed that women entrepreneurs' growth goals are positively impacted by work role saliency and work-life balance. Furthermore, work-life balance influenced the connection between growth intention and job role saliency, strengthening the favorable association at high work-life balance levels.
8	Understanding the efficacy of leadership communication styles in flex work contexts Renee Mitson; Hao Xu; Jay Hmielowski (2024)	The findings suggest that the benefits of demonstrating leadership communication strategies can be extended from physical environments into online spaces.
9	Managerial support and innovative work behaviour in B corps: Examining the effect of female employee work engagement and corporate Reputation Françoise Contreras, Karla Soria-Barreto & Sergio Zuniga-Jara (2022)	The study discovered that female employees' innovative work practices are greatly influenced by managerial assistance. A strong corporate reputation amplifies the beneficial effects of managerial support on innovative behaviors, implying that workers in reputable organizations may feel more inspired to innovate. High levels of engagement also result in an increase in innovative behaviors, suggesting that engaged employees are more likely to contribute creatively to their organizations.
10	When do women receive managerial support? The effects of gender congruence and the manager-employee Relationship	The result shows that women with female managers tend to report receiving more supportive leadership than those with male managers. Research found positive correlation between the quality of the

	Deneen M. Hatmakera and Shahidul Hassan (2023)	manager-employee relationship and the extent of supportive leadership behavior exhibited by managers
11	Enhancing Job Performance: The Critical Roles of Well-Being, Satisfaction, and Trust in Supervisor Yiting Yang; Bojan Obrenovic; Daniel W. Kamotho (2024)	The research findings indicate a positive influence of psychological well-being on both job satisfaction and job performance. Notably, job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between psychological well-being and job performance.
12	Exploring the relationship between bodily pain and work-life balance among manual/non-managerial construction workers, Helen Lingard; Michelle Turner (2021)	The findings imply that work-life conflict may have a physical capacity component in addition to time, stress, and behavior for employees in physically demanding occupations. The study also suggests a novel way that pain might impede time spent on non-work-related activities, leading to a new type of time-based work-life conflict.
13	Work-Life Conflict among U.S. Long-Haul Truck Drivers: Influences of Work Organization, Perceived Job Stress, Sleep, and Organizational Support, Adam Hege; Michael Lemke; Yorghos Apostolopoulos (2019)	The findings indicated that the only statistically significant predictor of work-life balance was perceived job stress. Perceived job stress was predicted by a fast-paced work environment, sleep length, and sleep quality. further clarified that stress acts as a mediator between the effects of inadequate sleep duration, a rapid work pace, and support from coworkers and supervisors on each of the distinct work-life balance indicators. To better assist LHTDs' health, well-being, and work-life balance, it is imperative that their working circumstances be addressed.
14	The relationship between perceived organizational support and insomnia in Chinese nurses: The Serial multiple mediation analysis, Mei-Fang Wang; Qing He; Zhuo Liu et al (2022)	Nurses' perceived organizational support was positively correlated with psychological capital, and was significantly negatively correlated with effort-reward ratio, overcommitment and insomnia; Psychological capital was negatively correlated with effort-reward ratio, overcommitment and insomnia, respectively; effort-reward ratio and overcommitment were significantly positively correlated with insomnia
15	Work-related stress among financial professionals: The impact of age, work experience and education, Talgat Kutebayev; Zhanna Utaliyeva; Marina Sautenkova et al (2024)	According to the findings, the lack of opportunities for promotion caused younger financial professionals to feel more stressed than their more experienced counterparts. According to the study's findings, meeting deadlines and resolving issues with other departments caused less experienced financial professionals to report higher levels of stress than more experienced professionals. Additionally, according to major JSS scales, financial professionals with postgraduate degrees reported higher levels of stress than those with undergraduate degrees.
16	Educational needs of employees in work-related stress management	Employees exhibit a desire to learn in order to avoid stress at work, according to the report. In this sense,

	Aleksandra Ilić Petković; Vesna Nikolić (2020)	the manager's legally enforceable support is required in order to carry out work-related stress management activities. Interventions should target work-related stress at its source with a focus on prevention rather than an individual approach whose long-term benefits are uncertain.
17	Occupational stress management in managerial employees: an analysis of level and source of work stress Nindria Untarini; Sayyida Sayyida; Sanju Kumar Sing (2020)	The findings indicate that managers in the two groups of nations encounter various sources of workplace stress. At the managerial level, however, the effects of job stress are nearly the same across the two sets of nations. strong absenteeism rates, strong intention to resign, mental and physical health, and job satisfaction are all impacted by job stress. Creating a stress-free work environment through work balance initiatives, counseling, stress auditing, education and training, and supportive organizational systems is the strategy to guarantee employee health and well-being.
18	Nationality differences in Gen Z work values: an exploratory study Peter de Boer; Prantik Bordoloi (2022)	The results show that nationality is a significant factor in determining choices for job values. Only two of the examined values—learning and visible results—were shown to be universally appealing across nationality groups, which calls into question the idea of a global Gen Z. The findings indicate considerable statistical disparities in labor values according to the respondents' nationality, despite rising levels of global interconnection and the corresponding cross-vergence of values.
19	Gen Z students' work-integrated learning experiences and work values David Drewery; My Truong; Anne-Marie Fannon (2023)	The results deepen our understanding of how work-integrated learning (WIL) equips students to make career selections in the workplace of the future and offer solutions to the scaling dilemma. The study, however, only uses cross-sectional data from a single Canadian university and skips over important events like the COVID-19 epidemic or time itself, which could introduce confounding variables. Implications for practice: WIL teachers can use these results to better understand how students' work values change as they progress through WIL.
20	Understanding the work values of Gen Z business students, Michael Maloni; Mark S. Hiatt; Stacy Campbell (2019)	According to the findings, Gen Z and the previous Gen Y generation share many characteristics, but there are also some notable differences. The findings, which corroborate and expand on previous research, show a typical business student who prioritizes a secure future by building strong skill sets that enable them to progress swiftly in the field.

Discussion

Generation Z tends to pay more attention to work-life balance than previous generations. This is due to their high awareness of the importance of mental health and well-being (Drewery, Truong, & Fannon, 2023). Gen Z also shows a preference for inclusive

and flexible work environments. This finding is consistent in several studies which show that Gen Z is more likely to prefer organisations that offer work flexibility and pay attention to the individual needs of employees (De Boer & Bordoloi, 2022).

In the literature on the topic of the role of work-life balance in reducing stress, it was found that flexible policies such as remote working and customisable working hours were found to help Generation Z manage work pressure and improve well-being (Picton, 2021; Tanaka, Koga, Nagashima, & Kuroda, 2020)). Another study revealed that poor work-life balance often leads to burnout, which negatively impacts employee productivity and mental health (Wilcox, 2020). Therefore, it is important for organisations to support employees in achieving this balance.

Empathetic and responsive managerial support is critical in lowering work stress and increasing employee comfort. Research by (Agarwala et al., 2014a) shows that managers who actively listen, provide constructive feedback and recognise employee contributions create a conducive work environment. Generation Z, in particular, values positive interpersonal relationships with their managers, which can increase job satisfaction and loyalty.

From the 20 journals reviewed, there is a consensus that the focus on employee well-being has become more prominent post-COVID-19 (Contreras et al., 2021b). However, there are still research gaps regarding the specific impact of flexible policies on different industry sectors. Some studies also noted the need to develop training programmes for managers to improve their interpersonal skills to meet the management challenges of Generation Z.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Generation Z has unique needs and expectations in the workplace, especially regarding work-life balance, managerial support and stress levels. A good work-life balance has been shown to play a significant role in reducing stress and improving mental well-being. Work flexibility policies such as remote working or customisable working hours are highly valued by this generation as it allows them to better manage their time. In addition, responsive and empathetic managerial support is a key factor in creating a comfortable work environment. Managers who are able to listen, provide constructive feedback, and value employee contributions can increase job satisfaction and reduce psychological stress. The combination of good work-life balance and managerial support forms an effective synergy in reducing stress levels and increasing work motivation. The research also highlights that organisations need to adopt strategic approaches that support work-life balance and strengthen managerial support to create healthy and sustainable workplaces. The implementation of such policies not only improves employee well-being, but also contributes to long-term productivity and talent retention, particularly from Generation Z.

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