

# The influence of reward, work-life balance on employee retention: The mediating effect of Job satisfaction Generation Z employees in West Kalimantan

Adrian Syal<sup>1</sup>, Titik Rosnani<sup>2</sup>, Ilzar Daud<sup>3</sup>, Maria Christiana Iman Kalis<sup>4</sup>, M. Irfani Hendri<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT**

Generation Z is a generation that is dominating the working world at this time, Generation Z is known as a generation that shows low loyalty and retention. Some studies prove that Gen Z tends to leave the company because they feel dissatisfied with the job and want to explore their career. This study examines and analyzes the relationship and influence between rewards and work-life balance on employee retention with job satisfaction as a mediating relationship. The type of research is explanatory quantitative research, this research was developed using structural equation modeling (SEM) and its implementation using AMOS 24. The population in this study were generation Z employees in private trade organizations in West Kalimantan. A total of 219 people were sampled by the purposive sampling method with the following criteria: Employees working in private organisations in the field of trade in West Kalimantan, minimum age criteria of 18-26 years with a working period of more than 6 months in West Kalimantan. The results of the study supported the hypothesis that was constructed by stating that there is an influence between the independent variable, mediating variable and the dependent variable. This study found that rewards and work-life balance have a positive and significant effect on employee retention and job satisfaction of the employees. The research also shows that job satisfaction is able to significantly mediate between either rewards or work-life balance on employee retention.

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**Corresponding Author:**

Adrian Syal,  
Faculty of Economics and Business,  
Universitas Tanjungpura,  
Prof. Dr. H. Hadari Nawawi Street, Pontianak 78124, Indonesia.  
Email: adrian.syal05@gmail.com

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**1. Introduction**

Employee retention has long been a crucial issue and critical to the life of an organization or company. Employee retention has always been a perennial problem for organizations, and it will continue to be a lively and enduring attraction for scientific investigation (Hom et al., 2020). Retaining employees is an essential agenda because employees become a tool or one of the factors that affect the company's productivity; employees become a factor that drives success and a tool to develop the company (Ghani et al., 2022). Employee retention refers to a strategy or approach aimed at motivating employees to remain with the company for an extended duration (Tirta & Enrika, 2020). A research study conducted in Indonesia from August 2015 to January 2017, involving 93,450 participants across 34 provinces, revealed that in contrast to Generation X (Gen X) and Generation Y (Gen Y), Generation Z (Gen Z) employees displayed the least amount of job loyalty and tenure. The study discovered that 57.3% of the overall Gen Z respondents opted to switch jobs within the first year of their employment (Job Planet, 2017). It is essential to pay attention to strategies that match the character of Generation Z to retain Generation Z employees. Generation Z has a different view in interpreting loyalty or retention, and a study states that they will stay in a job if there is meaningfulness or satisfaction in their work (Achmad et al., 2023; Popaitoon, 2022).

One of the elements influencing employee retention within a company is the employee's sense of contentment with their work, commonly referred to as job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is referred to as a worker's feeling of pleasure towards his/her job, and it is said that if job expectations match the actual results, there will be satisfaction in workers, which will be shown by positive attitudes from workers (Nguyen & Duong, 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Satisfaction is a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure if the reality is met or exceeds what is expected (Qalby & Rosnani, 2023). Job satisfaction can be achieved if the company's work aspects can support individuals, and job satisfaction can be obtained from how individuals feel about their jobs (Daud & Afifah, 2021). Satisfied employees perform better in their jobs, feel more engaged, and are more likely to stay in their jobs (Koo et al., 2019). Employees who experience job satisfaction are inclined to remain in their positions, and this assertion is substantiated by research indicating that individuals content with their work are more likely to be retained and actively engaged, a research also states a positive connection between job satisfaction and employee retention in a company (Ashraf & Siddiqui, 2020). Job satisfaction created in the workplace significantly affects employee retention (Antony et al., 2023). Generation Z tends to capitalize on their work experience, prioritize job satisfaction, and leave their jobs to prioritize working conditions over salary (Calk & Patrick, 2017; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

However, in creating employee job satisfaction within the company, other factors are needed to make it happen. Many factors influence employee retention through job satisfaction, but this research focuses on employee rewards and work-life balance. A study states that reward practices and work-life balance are among the strongest influences in retaining employees or creating job satisfaction (Shanani et al., 2020; Too & Kwasira, 2017). A study states that employee rewards are essential in retaining employees (Batool et al., 2023; Frye et al., 2020). Rewards are an essential aspect of human resource management, which motivates employees to show desired behaviour and results in the workplace or to retain workers (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021). Rewards are important in a company that significantly motivates employee retention (Close & Martins, 2015; Starecek et al., 2023). This study uses reward as an independent variable with grouped indicators consisting of Intrinsic rewards, namely rewards felt by the individual or employee, then extrinsic rewards, namely rewards that come from outside (colleagues, managers or companies) and social rewards, namely rewards related to the social life of employees (Alhmod & Rjoub, 2020).

Another factor examined in this research contributing to job satisfaction and employee retention is work-life balance. Challenges with work-life balance arise from the necessity to harmonize an employee's personal and professional life. Work-life balance can be defined as individuals' ability to balance work demands and responsibilities with their personal lives outside of work (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2021). Research has indicated that maintaining a work-life balance is an important thing in reducing employees' inclination to quit their jobs (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). Generation Z has different work-life balance preferences; Generation Z prefers flexible work (Suslova & Holopainen, 2019). Workplace flexibility as a form of work-life balance has become a significant consideration in how younger generations choose where they work. Generation Z chooses a workplace with a flexible environment and implements a work-life balance without excessive pressure at work (Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020).

The explanation above shows that rewards and work-life balance are essential for job satisfaction or employee retention. Generation Z employees are fearless in looking for organizations that adhere to their work-life balance, and they will prefer fierce competition for a more relaxed lifestyle than intense competition within the company (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Besides balancing personal and professional life balance, rewards also play a role in influencing Generation Z employees' intention to leave the company, where good rewards will increase retention or reduce employees' intention to leave the company (Xueyun et al., 2023). Reward and work-life balance have their respective roles in creating a sense of satisfaction and a desire to stay longer in the company for Generation Z employees.

Generation Z is the population that will be studied in this research. Generation Z is defined as those born around 1997-2012 which was according to the 2020 population census, Generation Z constitutes the largest segment of Indonesia's total population, accounting for 27.94% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). The dominance of Generation Z in work of world also spreading in private and government organizations and in various fields, including trade, banking, finance, and many others. West Kalimantan province also shows the dominance of Generation Z. The West Kalimantan Central Bureau of Statistics recorded in the 2020 population census that Generation Z is the largest generation, namely 29.95% in West Kalimantan (BPS Kalimantan Barat, 2021). Based on these several points of explanation, the researcher makes Generation Z the subject to be studied in this study. This research provide a novelty by focuses on the object of Generation Z workers who work in private organizations in the field of trade that exist and work in West Kalimantan

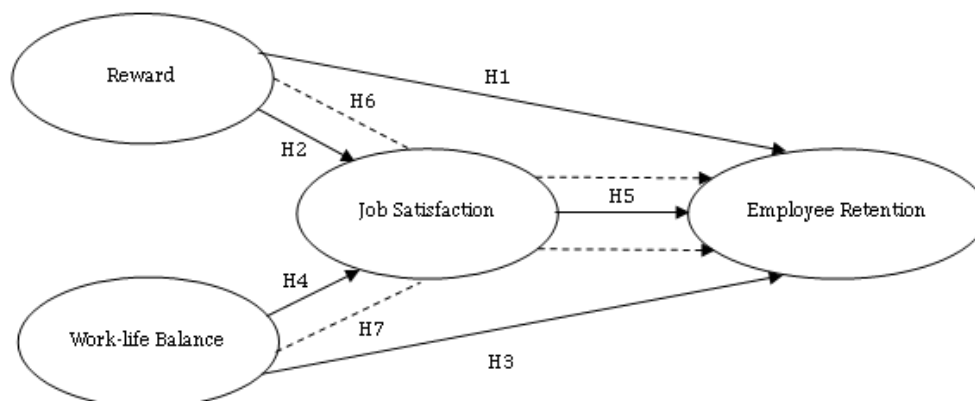
which still rarely discussed object. This study aims to offer insights derived from tests and analyses concerning the impact of rewards and work-life balance on employee retention, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. Based on the research objectives, this research is important to expand and create credibility in previous research then this research can provide new insights to all companies in West Kalimantan that have employees from generation Z that it is essential to pay attention to the reward and work-life balance strategies implemented to create employee satisfaction and retention.

## 2. Research Method

In This research is an explanatory quantitative study included in the causal associative research category, with data collection using a questionnaire with a Likert scale as a measurement. This study uses a five-point Likert scale to show respondents' agreement or disagreement with questions. In making questionnaire questions, variable indicators are used based on the theory from previous research; the reward variable consists of three indicators, namely: 1) extrinsic reward, 2) intrinsic reward, 3) social reward (Alhmod & Rjoub, 2020; Morgan et al., 2013; Twenge et al., 2010). Work-life balance variable questions are formed from indicators: 1) schedule flexibility, 2) job autonomy, and 3) manager's support (Abdien, 2019; Anderson et al., 2002; Hyland, 1999; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). The job satisfaction variable consists of indicators as follows: 1) characteristics of own work, 2) supervisor relations, 3) support of colleagues, 4) promotion of position, and 5) salary/wages (Basalamah & As'ad, 2021). The independent variable, namely employee retention, consists of questions from indicators, namely as follows: 1) intrinsic factors, 2) extrinsic factors, and 3) general satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006; Fahim, 2018; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). This study was formulated employing structural equation modeling (SEM), a multivariate analysis technique employed to examine and estimate intricate causal relationships among diverse variables (Williams et al., 2009).

This study uses the AMOS 24 application to conduct SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) analysis. The population of this research is all Generation Z workers or employees in private companies in the field of trade who are located and working in West Kalimantan. Data will be obtained from Generation Z employees in the field of trade, and the sample that was successfully obtained in this study was 219 people; the sampling technique was non-probability sampling using purposive sampling method with respondent criteria, namely: 1) employees who work in private organizations in the field of trade in West Kalimantan; 2) minimum age criteria of 18-26 years; 3) working period above 6 months in West Kalimantan.

Based on the explanation that has been conveyed and looking at the relationship between one variable and another, the following is the conceptual framework formed:



**Figure 1.** Research framework

Based on the explanation of the conceptual framework, the following are the hypotheses formed in the study, namely as follows:

- H1: Reward has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.
- H2: Reward has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.
- H3: Work-life balance has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.
- H4: Work-life balance has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H5: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.
- H6: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between rewards and employee retention.

H7: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention.

### 3. Results And Discussions

#### Results

##### Respondent Characteristics

A summary of the respondent profiles presented include gender, age, domicile and work period of the respondents in this study can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of respondents

Category	Item	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	100	45,7
	Female	119	54,3
	Total	219	100
Age	18-20	67	30,6
	21-23	104	47,5
	24-26	48	21,9
	Total	219	100
Domicile	Bengkayang	8	3,7
	Kapuas Hulu	5	2,3
	Kayong Utara	6	2,7
	Ketapang	8	3,7
	Kubu Raya	30	13,7
	Landak	8	3,7
	Melawi	11	5,0
	Mempawah	10	4,6
	Sambas	4	1,8
	Sanggau	10	4,6
	Sekadau	3	1,4
	Sintang	9	4,1
	Pontianak	80	36,5
Singkawang	27	12,3	
Total	219	100	
Work Period (Month)	6-12	77	35,2
	13-18	57	26,0
	19-24	38	17,4
	More than 24 month	47	21,5
	Total	219	100

#### Measurement Models

The following is a table that shows the results of the measurement model for each indicator on the 4 variables used.

**Table 2.** Measurement model results

Variable	Items	SLF	CR	AVE
Reward	The wages I get match my expectations	0,809	0,952	0,767
	I am satisfied with the opportunity to increase my salary during my work.	0,867		
	I feel satisfied learning something new at the company.	0,828		
	I feel satisfied that I can develop my skills and abilities while working at the company.	0,861		
	I had the opportunity to make more friends while working.	0,86		
	I get the opportunity to create healthy and good relationships with my coworkers.	0,893		
Work-Life Balance	I consider that the schedule I have is very flexible.	0,833	0,945	0,743
	I can ask for permission to change the schedule if there is a problem in my personal life.	0,78		
	I have the freedom to do my work.	0,8		
	I am successful in balancing my personal and work life.	0,815		
	The boss know the boundaries between employees' personal and work lives.	0,857		
Job Satisfaction	Boss provides support such as permission when there are problems in personal life.	0,865	0,978	0,745
	My work is interesting	0,777		
	I found I was in a healthy work environment.	0,753		
	The work I do is in line with my abilities.	0,785		

Variable	Items	SLF	CR	AVE
	I have a good relationship with my boss.	0,751		
	I feel appreciated for good work by my boss.	0,813		
	I am satisfied with the performance of my superiors in the company.	0,768		
	I enjoy working with my coworkers.	0,8		
	There is a caring and reciprocal relationship between me and my coworkers.	0,795		
	I feel motivated by the presence of my coworkers.	0,827		
	I was satisfied with the promotion opportunity.	0,787		
	I enjoyed the elevation of my position within the company.	0,798		
	Workers who perform well have the opportunity to get a position upgrade.	0,802		
	I am satisfied that there is an opportunity to increase my salary.	0,778		
	I am satisfied with my current base salary.	0,787		
	The salary received is in accordance with my duties and responsibilities.	0,8		
	<i>Employee Retention</i>	I like my job at the company	0,77	0,945
I have the opportunity to engage in activities that can enhance my professionalism and performance development.		0,771		
The company has fair policies and procedures while ensuring job security.		0,801		
The company has supportive leaders.		0,823		
I want to continue working at this company for many more years.		0,769		
The company managed to motivate me to stay in this company.		0,814		

According to the information presented in Table 2, all indicator variables in the measurement model exhibit standardized loading factor (SLF) values exceeding 0.5. The indicators associated with the four variables are confirmed as valid and are deemed suitable for measuring the constructs within the entire model. The reliability test for the constructed variables also demonstrates positive outcomes, as evidenced by the average variance extracted (AVE) value surpassing 0.50 and the construct reliability (CR) value exceeding 0.70. Consequently, the overall model construct is deemed reliable and can consistently measure the outcomes of the research.

### Goodness of Fit Index

The following table shows the value of the Goodness Of Fit (GOF) measurement as follows:

**Table 3.** The goodness of fit index

Index	Cut off value	Results	Model Evaluation
CMIN/DF	≤ 2,00	1,696	Good Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,057	Good Fit
GFI	≥ 0,90	0,817	Marginal Fit
AGFI	≥ 0,90	0,791	Marginal Fit
TLI	≥ 0,90	0,947	Good Fit
CFI	≥ 0,90	0,951	Good Fit

Based on the results of the Goodness of Fit (GOF) measurement or model fit test in Table 3, it can be asserted that the model fit criteria meet acceptable standards. If there are 3-4 measurements with a good level of fit or above the cut-off value, then the configuration of the research model can be declared adequate and acceptable because there are 4 measurements achieving good fit, which means that the model used is adequate and acceptable.

The data indicates that four measurements are deemed favorable, specifically, the CMIN/DF = 1.696 (≤ 2.00) and RMSEA = 0.057 (≤ 0.08) values, which are considered indicative of a good fit. Additionally, the values of TLI = 0.947 and CFI = 0.951, both exceeding 0.90, lead to the conclusion that the model employed in the study is sufficient and acceptable.

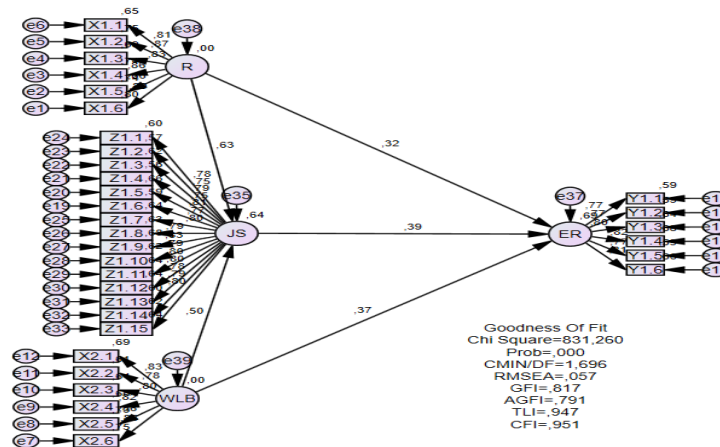


Figure 2. Full model testing

**Hypothesis Testing**

The outcomes of assessing the impact of the relationships between variables in the constructed research model can be outlined as follows.

**Table 4. Hypothesis testing**

Hypothesis	Path	$\beta$	S.E.	C.R.	P	Conclusion
H1	R → ER	0,22	0,051	4,297	0,000	Positive, significant
H2	R → JS	0,448	0,044	10,283	0,000	Positive, significant
H3	WLB → ER	0,297	0,054	5,472	0,000	Positive, significant
H4	WLB → JS	0,405	0,047	8,675	0,000	Positive, significant
H5	JS → ER	0,375	0,086	4,365	0,000	Positive, significant

The investigation or testing of the formulated hypothesis has been executed, as evidenced by the data provided in Table 4. In assessing the influence of rewards on employee retention, the acquired t-value is 4.297, exceeding the critical t-value of 1.96 based on the t table. Moreover, the p-value is below 0.001, which is less than the predetermined significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The results outlined here relate to the initial hypothesis asserting that rewards do have an impact, specifically a positive and statistically significant one, on employee retention. Transitioning to the second hypothesis, the t-value for the impact of rewards on job satisfaction is 10.283, with a p-value below 0.001, highlighting the statistically significant and positive effect of rewards on job satisfaction. The third hypothesis indicates a positive and statistically significant association between work-life balance and employee retention. This is evidenced by a t-score value of 5.472 and a p-value below 0.001, which is less than the predetermined significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that work-life balance positively and substantially affects employee retention. In the fourth hypothesis, the t-value for the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction is 8.675, with a p-value below 0.001, signifying statistical significance at a significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The study's outcomes imply a notable and statistically significant correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction. The fifth hypothesis proposes a link between job satisfaction and employee retention, with a t-value of 4.365 and a p-value below 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating that job satisfaction has a statistically significant and positive influence on employee retention.

**Table 5. Sobel test-significance of mediation**

Hypothesis	Path	Sobel Test		Conclusion
		t-Stat	P Value	
H6	R → JS → ER	4,008	0,00006	Significant
H7	WLB → JS → ER	3,891	0,00009	Significant

The indirect impact of the mediating factor, specifically job satisfaction, is illustrated in Table 5 via the Sobel test results. According to the Sobel test outcomes presented in Table 5, the statistical value for the

Sobel test evaluating the connection between rewards and employee retention through job satisfaction is 4.008, with a p-value below 0.001. This finding indicates that the Sobel test's statistical value exceeds the t-table value of 1.96. Similarly, the obtained p-value is less than 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). This outcome suggests significant mediation in the relationship between rewards and employee retention through job satisfaction. A comparable result is evident in the seventh hypothesis, where the Sobel test's statistical value of 3.891 surpasses 1.96, and the p-value is below 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, it can be inferred that job satisfaction effectively serves as a mediator in the association between work-life balance and employee retention.

### Discussions

The research that has been conducted shows that hypothesis one is accepted with a positive and significant relationship between rewards and employee retention. This shows that the provision of rewards by the company can create good retention of Generation Z employees. The results of this study are supported by previous research, which shows a positive relationship between rewards and employee retention (Hassan, 2022; Oyoo et al., 2016; Sarkar et al., 2021; Yeswa & Ombui, 2019). The second hypothesis for the relationship between the reward variable and employee job satisfaction is also accepted, with the results showing a significant and positive effect, which shows that giving good rewards will result in a feeling of satisfaction of Generation Z employees towards their work. Previous research also supports the positive effect of rewards on employee retention (Abbas et al., 2021; Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2019; Tarigan et al., 2022). The third hypothesis is also accepted based on research and data processing results, which state that improving work-life balance positively and significantly increases employee retention in organizations (Sánchez et al., 2020; Shanani et al., 2020). This means that the ability of a person and the system implemented in the company to balance personal and work-life responsibilities creates good retention of Generation Z employees. Based on the research results, the fourth hypothesis shows that abilities and opportunities in employee work-life balance positively and significantly affect job satisfaction in Generation Z employees, especially in the West Kalimantan region. This result is under previous research, which shows a positive relationship between work-life balance and employee job satisfaction (Arunashantha, 2019; Tirta & Enrika, 2020).

The research results for the fifth hypothesis also show that the hypothesis is accepted, which states that employee job satisfaction can encourage employee retention. This means that workers who already have good job satisfaction will succeed in the employee retention strategy in a company; job satisfaction makes employees feel confident to continue working in the company (loyal). This is supported by previous research, which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention (Biason, 2020; Pradipta & Suwandana, 2019). The sixth hypothesis states that job satisfaction is able to mediate rewards on employee retention, and based on the measurement results, significant results were found for job satisfaction to mediate between reward variables and employee retention. Based on this statement shows that giving good rewards to the company will create good job satisfaction so that the job satisfaction felt by employees increases the retention of Generation Z employees in the company. The results are supported by previous research, which proves that job satisfaction can have a significant effect in mediating rewards and employee retention (Alrazehi et al., 2021; Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). The seventh hypothesis is also accepted, which shows that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention. This shows that a person's ability and the system implemented in the company in balancing personal and work-life responsibilities will create job satisfaction in employees, and the job satisfaction created will increase employee retention so that they want to stay for a longer time in the company. Previous research also states that job satisfaction can significantly mediate work-life balance on employee retention (Silaban & Margaretha, 2021; Sudibjo & Suwarli, 2020).

### 4. Conclusion

The results showed that each hypothesis built in this study was accepted and showed significant results. Researchers successfully tested and analyzed the relationship between rewards and work-life balance on employee retention with job satisfaction as mediation in this study. This shows that it is essential for companies to pay attention to facilities or strategies related to rewards and work-life balance in order to increase employee retention, especially Generation Z employees who dominate the world of work today through employee job satisfaction by strategies implemented in the company. The results showed that creating a reward strategy and work-life balance in the company became a critical agenda to increase job satisfaction and produce employee resilience within the company.

This research serves as a valuable resource as contribution for companies in West Kalimantan seeking to improve employee retention and job satisfaction, particularly among Generation Z employees, by emphasizing the crucial role of rewards and work-life balance. The findings of this research may serve as a practical tool for companies and their stakeholders aiming to improve employee retention and mitigate turnover; practical implications that can be suggested by the researcher are the making of policies regarding rewards such as the provision of rewards in both financial and non-financial forms as well as policies that facilitate work-life balance such as in terms of more flexible schedules, work autonomy, and supportive managers that can be applied to create job satisfaction and job retention in generation Z employees. It is important in a business to improve employee retention considering the company can operate and develop because of human resources, the efforts made to retain employees will help reduce recruitment costs and other costs. An employee not only sees rewards in a job, but this research also proves the importance of quality of life, such as the existence of work-life balance facilities to increase their satisfaction at work so that they want to stay longer in the company.

This study also has limitations, such as a relatively small sample; it is hoped that in the future, there will be research that uses a larger sample because it will better represent Generation Z employees. Another limitation is that the sample in the study is only limited to Generation Z workers in private organizations in the trade sector, so it needs to find out whether other fields, generations, or business sectors also have the same results as the research conducted. The research was also only conducted in the West Kalimantan region due to time constraints so the research area could have been more extensive. So, with the limitations that exist in research, it is hoped that in the future, it will be able to expand the sample area both in regions and fields of work such as banking, services, and mining and can also expand research on other organizational workers such as government-owned enterprises, MSMEs and others. In the future, this research can be a reference for other authors who may want to conduct research, and there is hope to expand the research by adding variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, and employee performance.

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