

The Influence of Workload Towards Burnout Among Generation Z Employees in Indonesia: The Mediation Role of Work Stress

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between workload and burnout, with work stress acting as a mediating variable among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The research employs a non-probability sampling method, utilizing the Hair formula to determine the sample size. Data were collected through a questionnaire, resulting in a sample of 210 Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout. Additionally, workload significantly and positively impacts work stress, which, in turn, significantly and positively influences burnout. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that work stress mediates the relationship between workload and burnout among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. These findings offer valuable insights for companies in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of managing workloads in alignment with employees' capacities to reduce stress levels and prevent burnout. This is particularly critical for Generation Z employees, who may be more vulnerable to stress in the workplace.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara beban kerja dan burnout, dengan stres kerja bertindak sebagai variabel mediasi di antara karyawan Generasi Z di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sampling non-probabilitas dengan menerapkan rumus Hair untuk menentukan ukuran sampel. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, menghasilkan sampel sebanyak 210 karyawan Generasi Z di Indonesia. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beban kerja memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan dan positif terhadap burnout. Selain itu, beban kerja juga secara signifikan dan positif memengaruhi stres kerja, yang pada gilirannya secara signifikan dan positif memengaruhi burnout. Lebih lanjut, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa stres kerja memediasi hubungan antara beban kerja dan burnout di kalangan karyawan Generasi Z di Indonesia. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan yang berharga bagi perusahaan di Indonesia, dengan menekankan pentingnya pengelolaan beban kerja yang sesuai dengan kapasitas karyawan untuk mengurangi tingkat stres dan mencegah burnout. Hal ini terutama penting bagi karyawan Generasi Z, yang mungkin lebih rentan terhadap stres di lingkungan kerja.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to projections, Indonesia is expected to achieve developed nation status by 2045, driven largely by the potential demographic dividend anticipated between 2030 and 2040 (Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, 2021). However, if this demographic advantage is not effectively utilized, it could pose significant challenges for Indonesia, particularly in terms of developing a skilled workforce.

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In preparation for the digitalization era and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Indonesia requires skilled and adaptable human resources, especially from the younger generation, such as Generation Z, who are now entering the workforce. Generation Z is characterized by high technological literacy, multitasking abilities, and rapid adaptability (Wijoyo et al., 2020). To remain competitive, Indonesian companies must focus on improving employee quality, particularly among Generation Z employees, by addressing factors that influence their performance and productivity.

One of the most common issues observed among employees due to prolonged workplace stress is work fatigue, commonly referred to as burnout. Burnout has become a critical issue that demands attention from companies in Indonesia, particularly concerning Generation Z employees. Globally, burnout has gained significant media attention and public awareness as a pressing social issue affecting employees across various industries (Bocerean et al., 2019). In Indonesia, burnout has been reported in numerous professions, including office workers (Hasanah et al., 2022). Research suggests that Generation Z employees may be more vulnerable to psychological challenges compared to other generational cohorts (Chen et al., 2023). Burnout is a psychological condition caused by chronic stress, characterized by physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion, as well as reduced self-esteem, which can lead individuals to feel disconnected from their surroundings (Purwanti et al., 2022). A significant proportion of Indonesians, particularly 77.3% of those working from home, have reported experiencing burnout due to work-related demands (CNN Indonesia, 2021). Persistent workplace challenges and demands create emotionally taxing conditions over time, resulting in physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, which ultimately leads to burnout (Wijaya & Prastuti, 2020).

Burnout is often caused by various factors, with work stress being one of the most significant contributors (Shah et al., 2021). Work stress refers to the pressure or strain employees experience while managing their job responsibilities (Nasrul et al., 2023). This stress can affect an individual's emotions, cognitive functions, and physical well-being, often stemming from the work environment (Purwanti et al., 2022). Employees experiencing work stress may exhibit symptoms such as worry, anger, and mood swings, often without recognizing the negative emotions they are undergoing (Hasanah et al., 2022). Work stress can arise from workplace-related factors, external issues brought into the workplace, or work-related problems carried home (Saputro et al., 2020). Chronic exposure to job stressors can lead to burnout (Kumareswaran, 2023). As work stress increases, the likelihood of experiencing burnout also rises (Cha et al., 2022). This suggests that higher levels of work stress among Generation Z employees are associated with increased burnout. Numerous studies have confirmed that work stress significantly and positively impacts burnout (Saputro et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021).

Prolonged work stress leading to burnout can be attributed to several factors, with workload being a primary contributor. An excessive workload can trigger emotional strain and contribute to work-related stress (Saratian et al., 2019). Workload refers to the extent to which an employee's capacity is utilized to complete assigned tasks (Weni et al., 2023). A heavy workload can lead to decreased performance and increased job stress (Florenta, 2022). One common type of workload experienced by employees is mental workload. Office employees, for instance, often face diverse tasks, such as administrative duties, which contribute to high mental workloads and elevated stress levels (Akrimah et al., 2023). Stress from workload arises when job demands exceed an employee's abilities, with excessive workloads causing stress symptoms, while insufficient workloads may lead to boredom (Budiasa, 2021). Excessive workloads can include long working hours, overwhelming responsibilities, and tasks that surpass an individual's capacity (Dewi & Riana, 2019). As workload increases, stress levels also tend to rise (Setiawati et al., 2022). This indicates that as workload increases for Generation Z employees, their work stress levels also increase. Numerous studies have demonstrated that workload significantly and positively impacts work stress (Arifiani et al., 2019; Saratian et al., 2019; Simanjorang & Wahyanti, 2021).

In addition to contributing to work stress, workload can also directly lead to burnout. When employees are assigned tasks that exceed their abilities, their physical and mental conditions may deteriorate, resulting in burnout (Soelton et al., 2020). Burnout can occur when workloads are not prioritized effectively, leading to task backlogs that make it difficult for employees to determine which tasks to address first (Weni et al., 2023). Employees engaged in repetitive and routine tasks are particularly vulnerable to burnout, as they may perceive their work as less meaningful or challenging (Alam et al., 2023). Employees often feel overwhelmed when they believe they cannot manage tasks that exceed their capacity (Soelton et al., 2020). When job demands surpass employees' abilities, they are more likely to experience fatigue and burnout (Sinambela, 2020). Research indicates that as workload increases, burnout levels also rise among employees

(Florenta, 2022). This suggests that higher workloads among Generation Z employees are associated with increased burnout. Numerous studies have confirmed that workload significantly and positively impacts burnout (Jomoad et al., 2021; Purwanti et al., 2022; Weni et al., 2023).

This study aims to explore the relationships among workload, work stress, and burnout in Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for companies across Indonesia regarding the interplay between workload, work stress, and burnout in Generation Z employees. Additionally, the study seeks to examine the role of work stress as a mediating variable in the relationship between workload and burnout. By addressing gaps in previous research, this study aims to advance theoretical frameworks and contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing burnout among office employees, particularly those from Generation Z.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Attribution Theory

Attribution theory seeks to explain the reasons behind one's own behavior and the behavior of others, determining whether actions are influenced by internal factors (such as personal traits) or external factors (such as environmental conditions) (Heider, 1958). The theory posits that individuals strive to understand why others act in certain ways, attributing behavior to specific causes (Safira et al., 2023). Furthermore, attribution theory suggests that both environmental factors and personal characteristics can directly or indirectly influence an individual's risk-related behaviors (Hewett et al., 2017). This theory is particularly relevant for understanding the causes of burnout, as it helps identify whether internal factors, such as personal traits, or external factors, such as workload and work stress, contribute to the condition.

2.2 Burnout

Burnout is defined as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by work conditions that are unsupportive or misaligned with expectations. It manifests as physical, mental, and emotional fatigue (Soelton et al., 2020) and may be more prevalent among Generation Z employees, who are particularly vulnerable to psychological challenges (Chen et al., 2023). Burnout often results from excessive workloads, leading to decreased productivity, mental strain, reduced concentration, and increased absenteeism (Kusumawati & Dewi, 2021). When employees are required to work under constant pressure, they may reach a point where they experience burnout (Alam et al., 2023). This condition can result in a loss of motivation and a sense of helplessness, further intensifying stress levels. Burnout frequently presents with physical symptoms such as chronic fatigue, headaches, and insomnia, which can negatively affect overall health. Moreover, burnout can directly harm organizational performance, reducing productivity and hindering success (Kumareswaran, 2023). Its impact is detrimental not only to the individual but also to the overall work environment and organizational outcomes. Therefore, recognizing early signs of burnout and implementing strategies to manage it is crucial.

Maslach et al. (1996) identified three key dimensions of burnout. The first dimension, *exhaustion*, refers to emotional and physical depletion caused by workplace stress. It reflects an individual's feelings of being overworked and drained of the emotional and physical resources needed to perform their job. The second dimension, *cynicism*, is characterized by a sense of detachment and indifference toward work, leading to disengagement and a lack of connection with one's job. The third dimension, *professional efficacy*, involves an individual's self-assessment of their professional competence, measuring the extent to which they feel a loss of confidence in their ability to contribute effectively at work. Together, these three dimensions shape the overall experience of burnout.

2.3 Workload

Workload refers to the number of activities or tasks assigned to an employee within a specific period, requiring the use of their knowledge and skills (Nasrul et al., 2023). It encompasses both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Quantitative workload relates to the number of tasks, which may be either excessive or insufficient, while qualitative workload refers to tasks that employees feel unqualified to perform or that fail to fully utilize their skills and potential (Susiarty et al., 2019). Workload can also be categorized into physical and mental forms. Physical workload involves tasks requiring muscular effort, whereas mental workload pertains to tasks that demand cognitive or mental effort (Dewi & Riana, 2019; Purwanti et al., 2022). Excessive physical workload can lead to fatigue and musculoskeletal issues, while an overwhelming mental workload

can result in cognitive overload and stress.

The workload of each employee plays a critical role in the overall functioning of an organization, as its smooth operation depends on employees' ability to manage their assigned tasks effectively (Setiawati et al., 2022). Therefore, analyzing workload is essential to evaluate the quantity, primary responsibilities, and functions assigned to each employee, ensuring that their workload remains manageable. A well-balanced workload significantly impacts employee productivity and performance (Setyanti et al., 2022). To manage workload effectively, organizations should regularly assess and adjust task distribution, ensuring that employees have the necessary resources and support to perform their duties efficiently.

Rubio-Valdehita et al. (2017) identified four key dimensions of workload. The first dimension, *cognitive demands*, involves the processing of complex information and decision-making required by the job. The second dimension, *temporal demands*, refers to the pace or speed of work and the time-related pressures associated with completing tasks. The third dimension, *performance demands*, relates to the expectations and responsibilities associated with job performance. Finally, the fourth dimension, *emotional demands*, includes the emotional challenges of work, such as feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or stress, as well as physical health consequences like exhaustion. These four dimensions collectively influence employees' well-being and productivity in the workplace.

2.4 Work Stress

Work stress is the body's response to pressure resulting from a workload that cannot be sustained continuously over a specific period of vulnerability (Febryanti et al., 2023). It arises from the interaction between individuals and their environment, reflecting the dynamic interplay between external stimuli and internal responses. Work stress occurs when actions and environmental conditions place excessive psychological and physical demands on individuals (Saratian et al., 2019). It is often characterized by symptoms such as emotional instability, difficulty sleeping, feelings of anxiety, tension, and nervousness (Saputro et al., 2020).

This type of stress can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, reduced productivity, heightened anxiety, depression, and a weakened immune system. Both internal and external factors contribute to work stress. Internal factors are related to an individual's mindset, attitudes, and coping mechanisms, while external factors involve organizational elements, such as workload, management practices, and workplace culture, that can negatively impact performance (Salama et al., 2022). Work stress can significantly affect employees' emotions, cognitive functions, and overall well-being (Adiguna & Suwandana, 2023). To mitigate work stress, companies must create a supportive work environment, provide adequate resources, and encourage healthy coping strategies among employees.

Parker and DeCotiis (1983) identified two key dimensions of work stress. The first dimension, *time stress*, refers to the constant pressure associated with tight deadlines and time constraints. The second dimension, *anxiety*, relates to specific work conditions that create stress. These two dimensions play a critical role in shaping an individual's experience of stress within the workplace.

2.5 Workload and Burnout

Burnout is a psychological condition that arises from high work demands, leading to physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. It has detrimental effects on both employees and organizations (Darydzaky & Desiana, 2023). Employees often experience burnout as a result of increased workloads (Dewi & Riana, 2019). Burnout occurs when individuals work excessively, prioritizing their job responsibilities over their personal needs and well-being (Adiguna & Suwandana, 2023). Workload is not simply defined by the completion or adaptation to tasks; rather, it becomes a burden when employees are unable to complete or adapt to their assigned tasks (Purwanti et al., 2022). When employees face persistently high demands without sufficient support or recovery time, their ability to cope diminishes, resulting in chronic stress and eventual burnout. Tasks that are mismatched with an employee's skills or capabilities can also contribute to burnout. Similarly, excessive workloads, including long working hours and numerous responsibilities, exacerbate the risk of burnout (Wijaya & Prastuti, 2020).

Burnout is further aggravated when workloads are poorly organized, making it difficult for employees to prioritize tasks effectively (Weni et al., 2023). This observation is consistent with findings from previous studies (Khan et al., 2019; Wijaya & Prastuti, 2020; Jomud et al., 2021; Purwanti et al., 2022; Weni et al., 2023). Based on this framework, we propose that workload has a significant influence on burnout among Generation Z employees. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H1. Workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout.

2.6 Workload and Work Stress

Work stress refers to the pressure or strain employees experience while managing their job responsibilities (Nasrul et al., 2023). Stress is closely associated with exhaustion or chronic fatigue, which is often triggered by high workload demands (Wulandari et al., 2023). As an employee's workload increases, stress levels tend to rise correspondingly, which can negatively affect their performance (Setiawati et al., 2022).

Evaluating workload within an organization is crucial to assess the quantity, primary duties, and roles assigned to each employee. Ensuring that workloads remain manageable is essential, as it significantly influences employee productivity and performance (Setyanti et al., 2022). Increasing work demands can exacerbate mental health challenges, such as anxiety and fatigue, ultimately leading to higher levels of stress (Siswadi et al., 2024). These findings are consistent with previous studies (Arifiani et al., 2019; Susiarty et al., 2019; Kokoroko & Sanda, 2019; Saratian et al., 2019; Simanjorang & Wahyanti, 2021). Based on this framework, we propose that workload has a significant impact on work stress among Generation Z employees. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H2. Workload has a significant and positive effect on work stress.

2.7 Work Stress and Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical and mental exhaustion that occurs when an individual is exposed to prolonged and severe stress (Adiguna & Suwandana, 2023). It often arises as a stress response in individuals who frequently engage in direct and intense interactions with others (Salama et al., 2022). Burnout highlights the psychological, physical, and social consequences of chronic workplace stress (Gaur & Jindal, 2023). When employees face significant pressure in the workplace, work stress can directly contribute to the development of burnout (Hu et al., 2021).

Employees experiencing work-related stress and emotional exhaustion are more likely to exhibit an increased intention to leave their organization (Kashfitanto & Febriansyah, 2023). Promoting a healthy work-life balance through initiatives such as flexible working hours and regular breaks can help reduce stress levels. However, higher levels of work stress are strongly associated with increased levels of burnout among employees (Febryanti et al., 2023). These findings are consistent with previous studies (Saputro et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021; Cha et al., 2022; Weni et al., 2023). Based on this framework, we propose that work stress has a significant impact on burnout among Generation Z employees. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3. Work stress has a significant and positive effect on burnout.

2.8 The Mediation Role of Work Stress

Burnout resulting from excessive workload often occurs through the indirect or mediating effects of work-related stress. A heavy workload characterized by a rapid pace, high levels of expertise, and numerous responsibilities can create tension among employees. This tension may lead to stress, overreactions, confusion, and reduced performance. Such outcomes are frequently caused by a mismatch between an individual's capabilities and the demands of their job, thereby increasing the likelihood of burnout (Simanjorang & Wahyanti, 2021; Weni et al., 2023; Purwanti et al., 2022).

Moreover, sustained high workloads can contribute to chronic stress and fatigue, negatively impacting employees' health and performance. This may result in unmet work targets and a heightened risk of burnout, particularly when employees face critical levels of workplace pressure (Arifiani et al., 2019; Hasanah et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2021). When work demands exceed an individual's capacity, it can lead to anxiety and psychological pressure. If these feelings persist and develop into depression, they can escalate into stress and, ultimately, burnout (Kusumawati & Dewi, 2021).

This evidence suggests that increased workloads among Generation Z employees are strongly associated with elevated stress levels, which, in turn, may lead to higher rates of burnout. These findings are consistent with prior research (Wirman et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2024). Based on this framework, we propose that workload, burnout, and work stress are significantly interconnected for Generation Z employees. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

H4. Workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout through work stress.

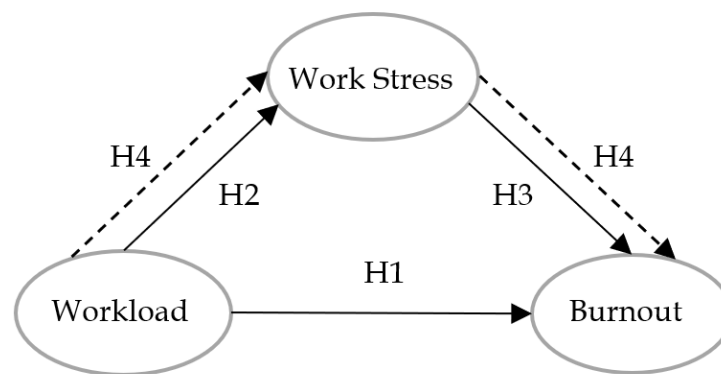


Figure 1. Research Model

In summary, and in alignment with previous studies, the relationship between workload and burnout, with work stress serving as a mediating variable, is illustrated in Figure 1.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs quantitative methods, specifically focusing on descriptive-causal analysis. The primary objective is to examine the relationship between workload and burnout, with work stress serving as a mediating variable, among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The research process is based on three key stages. First, the outer model is evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement tools used in the study. Second, the inner model is analyzed to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, ensuring the structural model's accuracy. Finally, hypothesis testing is conducted using bootstrapping methods, with a focus on t-statistics, p-values, and path coefficients.

The study population consists of all Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Since the exact population size is unknown, a non-probability sampling method was employed, specifically using a purposive sampling approach. This method was chosen because only respondents meeting specific criteria could provide relevant information for addressing the research problem. The sample size was determined using the Hair formula, which is recommended for studies with an unknown population size. According to Hair et al. (2014), the minimum sample size can be calculated by multiplying the number of indicators by a factor of 5 to 10. With 15 indicators in this study, the recommended minimum sample size is 150 respondents (15 indicators \times 10). Ultimately, 210 respondents were included in the sample. The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) permanent employment status, (2) age between 18 and 29 years, and (3) employment at companies based in Indonesia.

Data collection was conducted online over a period of one month and one week, from February 6, 2024, to March 13, 2024. A questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed to respondents via social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Additionally, the researchers sought assistance from friends and relatives working in Indonesian companies to share the questionnaire link through WhatsApp. The questionnaire was designed to gather responses on workload, burnout, and work stress.

The measurement of variables was based on established instruments, modified for the purposes of this study. Workload was assessed using the Carga Mental Questionnaire, which evaluates dimensions such as cognitive demands, temporal demands, performance demands, and emotional demands (Rubio-Valdehita et al., 2017). Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey, adapted by Bravo et al. (2021), which includes dimensions such as exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1996). Work stress was evaluated using the Job Stress Scale, which measures dimensions such as time stress and anxiety (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983).

The analytical technique employed in this study is Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), conducted using SmartPLS software version 4.0.9.7. This method was chosen because it is suitable for studies with relatively small sample sizes, supports predictive modeling, and is effective for testing relationships between variables. The analysis aimed to explore the relationships and impacts among workload, work stress, and burnout, in line with the study's objectives. A modified four-point Likert scale was used as the measurement instrument to quantify respondents' agreement with statements related to the variables' indicators (Sanusi, 2017). The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), with

the "Neutral" option excluded to minimize biased responses and ensure clarity in the choices provided.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, length of employment, and educational background. Screening questions were used to ensure that respondents met the study's population criteria: permanent employment status, age between 18 and 29 years, and employment at a company based in Indonesia. In the gender category, female respondents constituted the majority, representing 72.4% of the sample. Regarding age, the largest group of respondents was between 23 and 25 years old, accounting for 42.9% of the sample. In terms of work experience, respondents with 1 to 5 years of tenure were the most prevalent, comprising 63.3% of the sample. Finally, in the education category, the majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree (S1), making up 71.4% of the sample. Overall, the majority of respondents were female, aged 23 to 25, with 1 to 5 years of work experience and a bachelor's degree. These findings provide valuable insights for Indonesian companies, highlighting the need to address the issue of burnout among this demographic group.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis provided an overview of the levels of workload, burnout, and work stress among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Workload was analyzed using four dimensions: cognitive demands, temporal demands, performance demands, and emotional demands, comprising 24 statement items (see Appendices). Based on the questionnaire results, the average workload percentage was 77.5%, which falls into the "High" category. This indicates that Generation Z employees in Indonesia experience a high level of workload in their jobs. Among the dimensions, cognitive demands had the highest contribution to workload, with a percentage of 83.6%. This suggests that these employees frequently face tasks requiring complex information processing, accurate decision-making, and sustained high levels of concentration. Burnout was analyzed using three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy, comprising 13 statement items (see Appendices). The results showed an average burnout percentage of 70.1%, also categorized as "High." This indicates that Generation Z employees in Indonesia experience a high rate of burnout at work. The dimension with the greatest impact on burnout was professional efficacy, with a percentage of 75.03%. This finding suggests that burnout among these employees is strongly influenced by self-assessments of professional competence, particularly a loss of confidence in their ability to make effective contributions at work. Work stress was analyzed using two dimensions: time stress and anxiety, comprising 13 statement items (see Appendix 1). The results revealed an average work stress percentage of 68.8%, which is categorized as "High." This indicates that Generation Z employees in Indonesia experience high levels of work-related stress. Among the dimensions, anxiety had the most significant impact, with a percentage of 69.05%. This suggests that work stress among these employees is primarily driven by stressful workplace conditions that provoke feelings of anxiety.

Table 1. Demographic of respondents

	Category	Nominal	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	58	27.6
	Woman	152	72.4
Age	17-19	2	20.9
	20-22	2631	14.8
	23-25	9090	42.9
	26-29	87	41.4
	< 1 years	45	21.4
Working Period	1 - 5 years	133	63.3
	> 5 - 10 years	30	14.3
	> 10 years	2	1
	SMA/Sederajat	29	13.8
Recent Education	Diploma	26	12.4
	S1	150	71.4
	S2	5	2.4
	S3	0	0

In summary, the descriptive analysis highlights that Generation Z employees in Indonesia face high levels of workload, burnout, and work stress, with cognitive demands, professional efficacy, and anxiety being the most influential dimensions in each respective category.

4.3 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

4.3.1. Validity Test

Validity tests are conducted to determine whether the measurement instruments accurately assess the intended constructs. These tests include convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity refers to the extent to which items measuring the same construct are highly correlated. It is evaluated using loading factor values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as shown in Table 2. A construct is considered valid if each item has a loading factor greater than 0.7 and an AVE value greater than 0.5 (Rahadi, 2023). As presented in Table 2, all items have loading factor values exceeding 0.7, confirming their validity. Additionally, all variables have AVE values greater than 0.5, indicating strong convergent validity.

The next phase involves testing discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Discriminant validity ensures that measures of different constructs are not highly correlated. A construct is considered valid if the square root of its AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs, and if the HTMT ratio is less than 0.9 (Rahadi, 2023). As shown in Table 3, all variables meet the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, as the square root of each construct's AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs. Additionally, Table 4 demonstrates that all variables have HTMT ratio values below 0.9, confirming strong discriminant validity.

Table 2. Convergent validity & reliability test results

Variable	Items	Loading Factors	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Workload	WL1	0.825	0.660	0.978	0.979
	WL2	0.811			
	WL3	0.795			
	WL5	0.799			
	WL6	0.798			
	WL9	0.826			
	WL10	0.787			
	WL11	0.825			
	WL12	0.793			
	WL13	0.842			
	WL14	0.820			
	WL15	0.822			
	WL16	0.851			
	WL18	0.787			
	WL20	0.794			
	WL21	0.799			
	WL22	0.795			
	WL23	0.837			
	WL24	0.837			
	WL25	0.784			
	WL26	0.827			
	WL27	0.810			
	WL28	0.836			
	WL29	0.800			
Burnout	BO1	0.796	0.601	0.945	0.951
	BO2	0.795			
	BO3	0.784			
	BO4	0.801			
	BO5	0.812			
	BO6	0.768			
	BO7	0.769			
	BO9	0.729			

Variable	Items	Loading Factors	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Work Stress	BO10	0.771	0.564	0.935	0.944
	BO12	0.744			
	BO13	0.764			
	BO14	0.777			
	BO15	0.763			
	WS1	0.763			
	WS2	0.742			
	WS3	0.816			
	WS4	0.714			
	WS5	0.758			
	WS6	0.730			
	WS7	0.792			
	WS8	0.739			
	WS9	0.738			
	WS10	0.740			
	WS11	0.731			
	WS12	0.742			
	WS13	0.750			

Table 3. Discriminant validity - fornell-larcker criterion results

	Workload	Burnout	Work Stress
Workload	0.813		
Burnout	0.465	0.775	
Work Stress	0.648	0.580	0.751

Table 4. Discriminant validity - HTMT results

	Workload	Burnout	Work Stress
Workload			
Burnout	0.462		
Work Stress	0.662	0.588	

4.3.2. Reliability Test

The stability, consistency, and dependability of a measurement instrument are evaluated through reliability testing. This process typically involves assessing Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. A construct is considered reliable if both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.7 (Rahadi, 2023). As shown in Table 2, all variables have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values greater than 0.7. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests, it can be concluded that all variables meet the required criteria for validity and reliability, indicating a robust measurement model.

4.4 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

4.4.1. R Square (R²)

R-squared (R²) represents the coefficient of determination for the dependent variable, indicating the proportion of variation explained by the independent variables. R² values are typically categorized as weak (0.19), medium (0.33), and strong (0.67) (Duryadi, 2021). As shown in Table 5, workload accounts for 34.3% of the variation in the burnout variable, indicating a medium level of influence. The remaining 65.7% of the variation is explained by other external factors. Similarly, workload and burnout together explain 41.7% of the variation in work stress, which is also classified as a medium level of influence. The remaining 58.3% is attributed to factors outside these variables.

4.4.2. Q Square (Q²)

Q Square is used to evaluate the predictive relevance of a model by measuring the accuracy of observations based on parameter estimation and model results. A model is considered to have predictive relevance if the Q² value is greater than 0 (Duryadi, 2021). As shown in Table 5, the burnout variable has a Q² value of 0.202, and the work stress variable has a Q² value of 0.411. Since both values are greater than 0, this indicates that the model has predictive relevance.

Table 5. R square & Q square results

Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Q-Square
Burnout	0.350	0.343	0.202
Work Stress	0.420	0.417	0.411

Table 6. Model fit results

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.087	0.087

Table 7. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	T Statistic	P Values	Hypothesis Results
Direct Effect					
H1	Workload -> Burnout	0.154	2.175	0.015	Accepted
H2	Workload -> Work Stress	0.648	17.553	0.000	Accepted
H3	Work Stress -> Burnout	0.480	7.073	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effect					
H4	Workload -> Work Stress -> Burnout	0.311	6.691	0.000	Accepted

4.4.3. Model Fit

Henseler, as cited in Ghozali (2021), stated that the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is a measure of goodness of fit in PLS-SEM, designed to minimize errors in model specification. The SRMR evaluates the average difference in magnitude between the observed correlations and the expected correlations, serving as an absolute measure of model fit. An SRMR value of less than 0.10 indicates that the model has a good fit (Ghozali, 2021). As shown in Table 6, the SRMR value is less than 0.10, indicating that the model meets the criteria for a good fit.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method following the evaluation of the inner model. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to assess the validity of a statement, determine whether it is accepted or rejected, and evaluate the significance of the relationships between variables. The results of the bootstrapping analysis, performed using SmartPLS software version 4.0.9.7, are as follows. The analysis revealed that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 2.175 (greater than the critical value of 1.65), a p-value of 0.015 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.154, which demonstrates a positive relationship. Similarly, workload was found to have a significant and positive effect on work stress, supported by a t-statistic value of 17.553 (greater than 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.648, indicating a strong positive relationship. Furthermore, the results showed that work stress has a significant and positive effect on burnout, as evidenced by a t-statistic value of 7.073 (greater than 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.480, confirming a positive relationship. Finally, workload was found to have a significant and positive effect on burnout through work stress, with a t-statistic value of 6.691 (greater than 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.311, indicating a positive mediating relationship. These findings provide strong evidence supporting the acceptance of all four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4).

4.5.1 The Effect of Workload on Burnout

The first hypothesis of this study posits that workload significantly and positively affects burnout among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout. This conclusion is supported by the statistical findings, which show a t-statistic value of 2.175 (greater than the critical t-table value of 1.65), a p-value of 0.015 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.154, indicating a positive relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted, confirming that workload significantly and positively influences burnout in Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

This finding aligns with several previous studies, which have consistently demonstrated that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout (Jomud et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2019; Purwanti, Suyanto, Abadi, Darianto, & Liliana, 2022; Sari & Johansyah, 2020; Weni, Kawiana, & Astrama, 2023). These studies

suggest that an increase in workload experienced by employees leads to a corresponding increase in burnout. Similarly, Florenta (2022) and Wijaya and Prastuti (2020) found that higher workloads significantly exacerbate burnout levels. This relationship is also consistent with the theory proposed by Maslach and Leiter, as cited in Muizu and Priansa (2022), which identifies workload as one of the primary factors contributing to burnout. Thus, the findings of this study indicate that the higher the workload of Generation Z employees, the greater their likelihood of experiencing burnout.

To quantify the magnitude of this relationship, the path coefficient indicates that workload directly influences burnout by 15.4%. This means that 15.4% of the variation in burnout can be attributed to workload, while the remaining 84.6% is influenced by other factors. These factors may include the work environment (Muizu, Zulaikha, & Hilmiana, 2021), work-life balance (Lestari & Purba, 2019), social support (Trimulatsih & Appulembang, 2022), and other variables not examined in this study.

4.5.2 The Effect of Workload on Work Stress

The second hypothesis of this study posits that workload significantly and positively affects work stress among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that workload has a significant and positive effect on work stress. This conclusion is supported by the statistical findings, which show a t-statistic value of 17.553 (greater than the critical t-table value of 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.648, indicating a positive relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is accepted, confirming that workload significantly and positively influences work stress in Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

This finding is consistent with several previous studies, which have demonstrated that workload has a significant and positive effect on work stress (Kokoroko & Sanda, 2019; Mardiani & Dudija, 2021; Ridhayanti, Suwarsi, & Handri, 2022; Rizki et al., 2022; Susiarty et al., 2019). These studies suggest that as employee workload increases, stress levels also rise, which can negatively impact performance and increase the risk of health problems (Setiawati, Brahmasari, & Ratih, 2022; Ridhayanti et al., 2022). This relationship aligns with the theory proposed by Ivancevich et al., as cited in Muizu and Priansa (2022), which states that excessive workload is a key factor contributing to work stress. Thus, the findings of this study indicate that the higher the workload of Generation Z employees, the greater the work stress they experience.

To quantify the magnitude of this relationship, the path coefficient indicates that workload directly influences work stress by 64.8%. This means that 64.8% of the variation in work stress can be attributed to workload, while the remaining 35.2% is influenced by other factors. These factors may include work conflict (Stanley & Syahrian, 2021), the work environment and leadership (Puspitasari, Indriati, & Basri, 2021), compensation (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2020), and other variables not examined in this study.

4.5.3 The Effect of Work Stress on Burnout

The third hypothesis of this study posits that work stress significantly and positively affects burnout among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that work stress has a significant and positive effect on burnout. This conclusion is supported by the statistical findings, which show a t-statistic value of 7.073 (greater than the critical t-table value of 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.480, indicating a positive relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is accepted, confirming that work stress significantly and positively influences burnout in Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

This finding is consistent with several previous studies, which have demonstrated that work stress has a significant and positive effect on burnout (Parashakti & Ekhsan, 2022; Saputro, Aima, & Elmi, 2020; Shah et al., 2021; Weni et al., 2023; Yusuf, Widawati, & Utami, 2024). These studies suggest that an increase in work stress levels is directly related to an increase in burnout, meaning that as work stress intensifies, burnout also rises (Febryanti et al., 2023; Cha et al., 2022). This relationship aligns with the theory proposed by Maslach and Leiter, as cited in Muizu and Priansa (2022), which states that excessive and prolonged stress caused by work demands can lead to burnout. Thus, the findings of this study indicate that the higher the work stress experienced by Generation Z employees, the greater the burnout they are likely to feel.

To quantify the magnitude of this relationship, the path coefficient indicates that work stress directly influences burnout by 48%. This means that 48% of the variation in burnout can be attributed to work stress, while the remaining 52% is influenced by other factors. These factors may include personality type (Taolin, Suharmanto, & Sutarto, 2022), perceptions of organizational support (Yusuf et al., 2024), the non-physical

work environment (Sari & Johansyah, 2020), and other variables not examined in this study.

4.5.4 The Effect of Workload on Burnout through Work Stress

The fourth hypothesis of this study posits that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout, mediated by work stress, among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that workload significantly and positively affects burnout through work stress. This conclusion is supported by the statistical findings, which show a t-statistic value of 6.691 (greater than the critical t-table value of 1.65), a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), and a path coefficient of 0.311, indicating a positive relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is accepted, confirming that workload significantly and positively influences burnout when mediated by work stress in Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

This finding is consistent with several previous studies, which have demonstrated that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout when mediated by work stress (Busti et al., 2023; Kusumawati & Dewi, 2021; Putri et al., 2024; Wirman et al., 2022). Excessive workload can create tension in employees, leading to stress due to the need for quick decision-making, high-level skills, and the completion of multiple tasks within tight deadlines (Simanjourang & Wahyanti, 2021). Stress caused by excessive workload can negatively impact an individual's physical condition, interfere with work performance, and reduce productivity, ultimately preventing employees from meeting expected work targets (Hasanah et al., 2022). Work stress often arises when there is a mismatch between an individual's abilities and job demands, or when critical pressure in the workplace exceeds an employee's capacity to manage stress effectively. This can result in high levels of burnout (Purwanti et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2021). Similarly, research by Kusumawati and Dewi (2021) found that higher workloads lead to increased work stress, which in turn raises the level of burnout experienced by employees. These findings indicate that as workload increases for Generation Z employees, the resulting stress also increases, ultimately leading to higher levels of burnout.

To quantify the magnitude of this relationship, the path coefficient shows that the effect of workload on burnout mediated by work stress is 0.311, or 31.1%. This indicates that work stress mediates 31.1% of the relationship between workload and burnout, while the remaining 68.9% is influenced or mediated by other variables not examined in this study. Examples of such variables include the effect of workload on turnover intention mediated by work stress (Arifiani et al., 2019), the effect of workload on work stress mediated by work-family conflict (Setiyawan & Rimadiaz, 2021), the effect of organizational culture on burnout mediated by work stress (Wirman et al., 2022), the effect of work ambiguity on burnout mediated by work stress (Putri et al., 2024), and the effect of workload on burnout mediated by role stress (Suardiningsih & Surya, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

Generation Z employees in Indonesia face significant challenges related to workload, burnout, and work stress. Cognitive demands, such as the complexity of information processing and the need for accurate decision-making, contribute substantially to their perceived workload. Additionally, the professional dimension of efficacy, which involves self-assessment of professional competence, plays a critical role in increasing burnout levels. These findings highlight the need for companies to pay special attention to creating a more supportive work environment to safeguard employee well-being.

The results of this study indicate that workload significantly and positively influences burnout, workload significantly and positively influences work stress, work stress significantly and positively influences burnout, and workload significantly and positively influences burnout when mediated by work stress among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. These findings suggest that work stress amplifies the relationship between workload and burnout in this demographic. Workload, work stress, and burnout are pressing issues, particularly for Generation Z employees, who are expected to constitute a significant portion of the workforce in the coming years. Addressing these challenges is essential, as Generation Z has the potential to drive Indonesia's progress toward becoming a developed nation.

The study further confirms that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout when mediated by work stress among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. This conclusion aligns with previous studies, which have consistently shown that workload significantly and positively affects burnout through work stress (Kusumawati & Dewi, 2021; Putri et al., 2024; Wirman et al., 2022). Excessive workload can create tension in employees, leading to stress due to the need for quick decision-making, high-level skills, and the completion of multiple tasks within tight deadlines (Simanjourang & Wahyanti, 2021). Stress caused by excessive workload can negatively impact an individual's physical condition, interfere with work performance,

and reduce productivity, ultimately preventing employees from meeting expected work targets (Hasanah et al., 2022). Work stress often arises when there is a mismatch between an individual's abilities and job demands or when critical workplace pressures exceed an employee's capacity to manage stress effectively. This can result in high levels of burnout (Purwanti et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2021). Research by Kusumawati and Dewi (2021) also supports this finding, stating that higher workloads lead to increased work stress, which, in turn, raises burnout levels. These findings indicate that as workload increases for Generation Z employees, the resulting stress also increases, ultimately leading to higher levels of burnout.

To quantify the magnitude of this relationship, the path coefficient shows that the effect of workload on burnout mediated by work stress is 0.311, or 31.1%. This indicates that work stress mediates 31.1% of the relationship between workload and burnout, while the remaining 68.9% is influenced or mediated by other variables not examined in this study. Examples of such variables include the effect of workload on turnover intention mediated by work stress (Arifiani et al., 2019), the effect of workload on work stress mediated by work-family conflict (Setiyawan & Rimadiaz, 2021), the effect of organizational culture on burnout mediated by work stress (Wirman et al., 2022), the effect of work ambiguity on burnout mediated by work stress (Putri et al., 2024), and the effect of workload on burnout mediated by role stress (Suardiningsih & Surya, 2021).

To address these challenges, companies should aim to provide a manageable workload that aligns with employees' capabilities and enforce regular working hours to prevent employees from working late into the night and feeling overwhelmed by their tasks. As Generation Z is expected to dominate the workforce in the coming years, it is crucial to prevent and mitigate burnout to protect both employees and the future of the companies that will rely on them. This issue should be a top priority for organizations in Indonesia to ensure that Generation Z employees can work in a healthy manner, both physically and psychologically. A proactive approach is necessary to prevent a decline in employee performance and productivity, which could have detrimental effects on the company. Therefore, companies must carefully manage workloads to prevent prolonged work stress, which can lead to burnout and negatively impact employee performance and organizational sustainability.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study enhances our understanding of the interplay between job demands and individual well-being. It highlights that workload is a critical factor in the onset of burnout and underscores the importance of personal and organizational resources in mitigating the effects of stress. Practically, the findings have significant implications for workplace policies and interventions. Organizations can benefit from reassessing workload distribution, implementing regular stress assessments, and providing resources such as employee assistance programs and mental health support. By fostering a supportive work environment and encouraging work-life balance, employers can reduce burnout rates, enhance employee well-being, and ultimately improve productivity and job satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics allows organizations to take a proactive approach to managing workplace stress and creating healthier organizational cultures.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, which limits the generalizability of the findings and may not fully capture the actual situation. Second, the scope of the research was too broad, which may have hindered the ability to gather in-depth information and maintain a focused research approach. Future research should aim to expand the sample size and refine the focus of the study to improve its quality and effectiveness. By addressing these limitations, future studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between workload, work stress, and burnout among Generation Z employees.

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Appendix 1. Research instruments

Variable	Items
Workload	<p>I need the ability to process quite complex information at work.</p> <p>I need the ability to choose from a wide variety of alternatives to work.</p> <p>I needed the ability to make decisions that were quite difficult at work.</p> <p>I need the ability to understand information which is quite difficult to work with.</p> <p>I need the ability to handle information that is not easy to understand at work.</p> <p>I feel that my energy is mentally drained at work.</p> <p>I need the ability to gather information well at work.</p> <p>I feel like I work constantly so I can't have enough rest hours.</p> <p>I feel that the work rhythm set is too fast so it is difficult to follow.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel like I'm working in less conducive situations.</p> <p>I find it difficult to stop my work when I need a break.</p> <p>I feel faced with a work rhythm that is too fast.</p> <p>I had to get the job done quickly.</p> <p>I need a fairly high concentration in work.</p> <p>I need the ability to give the right response at work.</p> <p>I feel that the mistakes I make can have quite serious consequences.</p> <p>I feel that my job has a lot of responsibility.</p> <p>I find it difficult to forget the problems that arise in my work.</p> <p>I feel like my job makes me nervous.</p> <p>I feel like my work affects my personal relationships.</p> <p>I feel like my job is physically exhausting me.</p> <p>I feel like my work affects me emotionally.</p> <p>I felt very tired after finishing my work.</p> <p>I feel like my work affects my health.</p>
Burnout	<p>I feel like my energy is emotionally drained because of my job.</p> <p>I feel tired after finishing my work.</p> <p>I feel tired when I wake up in the morning because I have to face the next working day.</p> <p>I feel pressured because I have to work all day.</p> <p>I feel tired of my work.</p> <p>The longer I worked, the less I felt my interest in work.</p> <p>I felt like I had lost my passion for my work.</p> <p>I felt less concerned about whether my work was still worthwhile.</p> <p>I felt like I was beginning to doubt the meaning or value of my work.</p> <p>I feel that I have not made an effective contribution to my company.</p> <p>I feel that I am not good enough in doing my job.</p> <p>I feel dissatisfied with my work achievements.</p> <p>I feel like I haven't done much valuable in my work.</p>
Work Stress	<p>I find it difficult to spend time with the people closest to me because of my job.</p> <p>I feel so focused on my work that I forget the little things.</p> <p>I feel like I don't have enough time to do other activities because of my job.</p> <p>I feel attached to the company.</p> <p>I had to get a lot of work done, but didn't have enough time to get it done.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel scared if my phone rings because the call may be related to my work.</p> <p>I feel like I don't have enough days off.</p> <p>I feel that many colleagues at my level are exhausted due to the demands of work.</p> <p>I feel like my job makes me restless or nervous.</p> <p>I feel that the work given is too much.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel like my job irritates me.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel anxious when I think about my work.</p> <p>I feel guilty when I don't go to work outside of my vacation time.</p>