



# HOW MEANINGFUL WORK REDUCES TURNOVER INTENTION THROUGH WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG GENERATION Z

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## ABSTRACT

The increasing phenomenon of turnover intention among Generation Z in Indonesia poses a challenge for organizations in retaining young and potential employees. This generation is known to be adaptive and critical, and to place work meaningfulness as an important factor in job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. This study aims to analyze the effect of meaningful work on turnover intention, with work engagement as a mediating variable among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. This research employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a survey method. The sample consisted of 387 respondents, determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan table through convenience sampling. The research instruments included the Meaningful Work Scale adapted from Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012), the Work Engagement Scale (UWES) from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), and the Turnover Intention Scale from Bothma and Roodt (2013). Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4.0. The results indicate that meaningful work has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.19$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ) and a positive and significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.77$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). Furthermore, work engagement has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.249$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ) and mediates the relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.192$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). These findings highlight the importance of creating a meaningful work environment to enhance engagement and reduce turnover intention among Generation Z employees.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of high turnover intention among Generation Z in the workplace has become a serious concern in recent studies. Indications of significant contributions to the increasing tendency of Generation Z to leave their jobs and certain organizational conditions can further intensify this tendency [1], [2]. Even within specific organizations, turnover intention remains high, reflecting a strong inclination among young workers to leave their positions [3]. This phenomenon is closely related to the developmental characteristics of Generation Z, who are in a young adulthood phase marked by identity exploration, instability, self-orientation, and openness to multiple life possibilities. At the age of 18-25, Generation Z is generally in the process of determining career paths and forming personal and professional identities [4]. Generation Z is often labeled as anxious and sensitive, particularly when facing modern economic and social challenges. In the workplace, Generation Z tends to

perceive situations that are misaligned with their personal conditions as stressful, which in turn increases the likelihood of turnover intention [5], [6].

Survey evidence and field findings reinforce the urgency of designing work conditions that foster strong employee attachment in order to reduce turnover intention. This urgency is supported by a study from Bankrate [7], which reports that as many as 78% of Generation Z employees express a desire to seek new jobs, a proportion significantly higher than that of other generations. These data strengthen the perception of Generation Z as a cohort that is more likely to resign when their work expectations are not fulfilled. Similar patterns have been observed in Indonesia, where a study in Bekasi City found that 265,784 individuals exhibited high levels of turnover intention [8], while research in Surakarta revealed that more than 55% of Generation Z respondents intended to leave their workplaces [9].

These findings indicate that the contemporary work environment presents unique challenges associated with Generation Z, whose members tend to be more restless and more inclined to change jobs, particularly when work-life balance is not achieved [10]. Moreover, a large proportion of Generation Z employees plan to leave their current organizations within two years, a figure considerably higher than that of older generations and indicative of relatively lower organizational loyalty. High employee turnover ultimately undermines organizational performance and stability, as companies incur additional costs for recruitment and training, lose accumulated experience and knowledge, and potentially face declining morale and weakened team cohesion when frequent employee departures occur [1].

One of the crucial factors contributing to high turnover intention is the experience of meaningful work, which occurs when employees perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with their life goals [11]. Meaningful work has been shown to directly confirm individuals' expectations of their jobs and subsequently reduce intentions to leave the organization [12]. It refers to employees' positive perceptions that their work is valuable, worthwhile, and consistent with their personal values or life purpose, encompassing the belief that daily work activities hold deep meaning, contribute to personal life goals, and create a positive impact on others or society at large [13]. For Generation Z, strong expectations regarding work meaning make work engagement a relevant bridge toward decisions to remain in an organization. This generation views work not merely as a source of income, but also as a medium for self-actualization and purpose fulfillment. Supporting this view, 89% of Generation Z consider a sense of purpose at work to be a critical factor for job satisfaction and well-being [14]. Cashin reports that more than half of young adults (58%) have felt a lack of meaning or clear life purpose in the past month, a condition associated with increased anxiety and depression. Consequently, Generation Z strongly aspires to work that aligns with their personal values and provides a sense of meaningfulness [15].

Meaningful work plays an important role in fostering work engagement, as employees who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to become fully involved both emotionally and cognitively [16]. The perception that work aligns with personal values, goals, and identity generates positive energy, dedication, and deep involvement, leading employees to feel more enthusiastic, motivated, and committed to their organizations [17]. Individuals who find meaning in their work tend to be more engaged, which in turn reduces their intention to leave the organization [18]. Work engagement itself is defined as a positive and fulfilling mental state related to work, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption [19]. When employees experience high levels of engagement in their work and emotions, their desire to leave the organization is reduced [20]. Therefore, work engagement is predicted to function as a mediating mechanism that links meaningful work to turnover intention. Meaningful work encourages employees to develop stronger emotional and cognitive attachment, increasing their likelihood of staying with the organization, whereas without strong work engagement, perceived work meaning alone may not be sufficient to effectively reduce employees' intentions to leave [21].

Several studies have documented the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. Muchtadin found a negative association between work engagement and turnover intention, indicating that higher levels of engagement are linked to lower turnover intention among millennial workers [19]. Similarly, Silviana and Cahyadi reported that work engagement contributes to turnover intention, where employees who are highly engaged tend to be more motivated and willing to continue working, thereby reducing the likelihood of resignation [22]. However, contrasting findings were reported by Malik who found that work engagement did not significantly contribute to turnover intention, highlighting the presence of inconsistencies and a clear research gap [23]. Drawing from these mixed findings, work engagement can be positioned as a mediating variable that explains how meaningful work influences turnover intention. This perspective is supported by Siahaan and Gatari who demonstrated that meaningful work has the potential to reduce turnover intention through increased work engagement [24]. This mediation pattern reflects an indirect effect, whereby meaningful work fosters engagement, which in turn suppresses intentions to leave. Consistent with this view, work engagement mediates the contribution of meaningful work to the reduction of turnover intention [25].

Based on the discussion above, several research gaps can be identified that underline the importance of this study. Although the concepts of meaningful work, work engagement, and turnover intention have been widely examined, research focusing specifically on Generation Z in Indonesia remains very limited. Most previous studies have concentrated on millennials or used cross-generational samples, despite evidence that Generation Z

possesses distinct characteristics and work behaviors that may differ fundamentally from other generations [12], [26]. In addition, inconsistencies in prior findings regarding the direct relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention raise unresolved scientific questions, as some studies report significant effects [11], [24] while others find no significant relationship [27]. Similar inconsistencies are also evident in the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention, where some studies demonstrate significant [19], [22], whereas others do not [23]. Based on these gaps and the theoretical framework presented, examining the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention among Generation Z in Indonesia is both timely and relevant. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of meaningful work on turnover intention through work engagement as a mediator among generation Z in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The instruments used in this study measure meaningful work, turnover intention, and work engagement, all of which were assessed using a Likert scale. The Likert scale operationalizes the variables into measurable indicators, which then serve as the basis for constructing instrument items in the form of statements or questions. This scale is designed to measure individual attitudes within the same dimension by allowing respondents to position themselves along a continuum represented by each item. To develop the instruments, a blueprint was first constructed to outline the variables and their indicators, providing a clear representation of the content and dimensional scope of the measurement. The blueprint included variable X (meaningful work), variable Y (turnover intention), and variable M (work engagement). The instruments employed an ordinal scaling and scoring model based on hierarchical response categories. The following are the measuring instruments used in this study:

**Table 1.** Variable Measurement

Variable	Dimension	Items	Total
Meaningful Work	Positive meaning	1, 2, 3, 4	4
	Meaning making through work	5, 6, 7	3
	Greater good Motivation	8, 9, 10	3
Turnover Intention	Thinking of quitting	1, 3*, 4, 5, 8*, 12, 13	7
	Intention to find another job	2, 6, 15	3
	Intention to quit	7, 9, 10*, 11*, 14*	5
Work engagement	Vigor	1, 2, 3	3
	Dedication	4, 5, 6	3
	Absorption	7, 8, 9	3

The population of this study consists of Generation Z in Indonesia, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who are currently within the productive age range. This generation is widely recognized as digital natives who have grown up alongside technological advancements and are characterized by being critical, adaptive, and inclined to seek meaning in their work. Generation Z has begun to dominate the Indonesian workforce, accounting for approximately 27.94% of the total population, or around 74.93 million people [6], making it a highly relevant population for investigation. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table to ensure representativeness; for populations exceeding one million, a minimum of 384 respondents is required at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error [28]. In this study data were collected from 387 Generation Z employees across Indonesia. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, a non-probability method in which respondents are selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate. This approach was chosen due to the extensive size of the Generation Z population, with questionnaires distributed through social media, professional communities, and the researcher's personal networks to obtain diverse data while meeting the required sample size.

Data analysis refers to the activities conducted after data from all respondents or other data sources have been collected. These activities include tabulating data according to variables across all respondents, grouping data based on respondent characteristics and variables, presenting the variables under study, and performing statistical calculations to test the proposed hypotheses [29]. In this study, data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares (PLS) and processed with SmartPLS 4.0. The PLS approach comprises the measurement model (outer model), goodness-of-fit criteria, and the structural model (inner model). PLS is employed to examine predictive relationships among constructs by assessing whether significant effects or associations exist between them.

### 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The demographic data of the study respondents is described descriptively, including age, gender, educational background, marital status, province of residence, and type of organization or company. This study was conducted on Generation Z in Indonesia, with a total sample of 387 subjects. The sample demographic data can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2.** Demographic Data

Descriptive		Frequently	Percentage
Gender	Male	125	32.3%
	Female	262	67.7%
Age	12-15 years old	2	0.5%
	16-18 years old	6	1.6%
	19-25 years old	258	66.7%
	26-30 years old	121	31.3%
Educational Background	High school	119	30.7%
	Diploma	28	7.2%
	Bachelor	227	58.7%
	Master	13	3.4%
Marital Status	Not married	319	82.4%
	Married	68	17.6%
Domicile of Residence	Sumatra Island	120	31%
	Java Island	196	50.7%
	Bali and Nusa Tenggara Islands	23	5.9%
	Kalimantan Island	14	3.6%
	Sulawesi Island	16	4.1%
	Maluku Islands	14	3.62%
	Papua Island	3	0.8%
Employment Status	Freelance	21	5.4%
	Permanent Employee	209	54.1%
	Contract	81	20.9%
	Internship	20	5.2%
	Outsourcing	7	1.8%
	Part-time	31	8%
	Self-Employment	18	4.7%

Based on the respondent data, the majority of participants in this study were female, totaling 262 individuals or 67.7%. This distribution may indicate that female members of Generation Z demonstrate higher participation in completing research questionnaires or show greater interest in topics related to meaningful work, work engagement, and turnover intention. In terms of age, most respondents were between 19 and 25 years old, accounting for 258 individuals or 66.7%, indicating that the sample largely represents early productive-age Generation Z who are actively participating in the workforce. Regarding educational background, the majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree, with 227 individuals or 58.7%, suggesting a predominantly medium to highly educated sample, which may influence how respondents perceive work meaningfulness, engagement, and intentions to leave. In terms of marital status, most respondents were unmarried (319 individuals or 82.4%), a pattern consistent with the early adulthood stage of Generation Z, which may be associated with greater career mobility and flexibility in considering job opportunities. Geographically, respondents were distributed across various regions in Indonesia, with the largest proportion residing on Java Island (196 individuals or 50.7%), indicating a fairly diverse geographic representation. Finally, based on employment status, most respondents were permanent employees (209 individuals or 54.1%), suggesting that the majority were engaged in formal employment relationships, which is relevant for examining the dynamics of meaningful work, work engagement, and turnover intention within organizational settings.

**Table 3.** Outer Loading

Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading
MW01	0.750	WE01	0.788	TOI01	0.815
MW02	0.748	WE02	0.740	TOI02	0.812
MW03	0.715	WE03	0.718	TOI03	0.783
MW04	0.738	WE04	0.737	TOI04	0.717
MW05	0.770	WE05	0.725	TOI05	0.754
MW06	0.725	WE06	0.796	TOI06	0.797

Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading	Item	Outer Loading
MW07	0.744	WE07	0.762	TOI07	0.841
MW08	0.764	WE08	0.733	TOI08	0.742
MW09	0.714	WE09	0.711	TOI09	0.850
MW10	0.724			TOI10	0.771
				TOI11	0.725
				TOI12	0.769
				TOI13	0.789
				TOI14	0.734
				TOI15	0.773

**Table 4.** Reliability dan AVE

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
MW	0.808	0.869	0.544
WE	0.898	0.926	0.522
TOI	0.872	0.878	0.596

This study aims to examine Work Engagement (WE) as a moderator in the relationship between Meaningful Work (MW) and Turnover Intention (TOI). The results of the outer model analysis indicate that all indicators forming the MW, WE, and TOI constructs meet the criteria for convergent validity. The outer loading values for each item consistently exceed 0.70, such as MW01 (0.750), WE06 (0.796), and TOI3 (0.789). These findings confirm that each indicator adequately represents its respective latent construct, indicating that no indicators needed to be removed from the model. Furthermore, the reliability testing produced highly satisfactory results. Both Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs were high, namely 0.808 and 0.869 for MW, 0.898 and 0.926 for WE, and 0.872 and 0.878 for TOI. These results demonstrate strong internal consistency within each construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also met the recommended thresholds, with values of 0.544 for MW, 0.522 for WE, and 0.596 for TOI. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the variance in the indicators is explained by their corresponding latent constructs.

**Table 5.** HTMT

	MW	TOI	WE
MW			
TOI	0.415		
WE	0.875	0.390	

**Table 6.** Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	MW	TOI	WE
MW	0.666		
TOI	-0.382	0.650	
WE	0.770	-0.395	0.704

Discriminant validity was also well established in this study. The results of the HTMT assessment indicate that the correlation values between constructs remained below the recommended threshold of 0.90, such as MW-TOI (0.415), MW-WE (0.875), and WE-TOI (0.390). These findings suggest that each construct is empirically distinct and that there is no substantial overlap in meaning among the constructs. The Fornell-Larcker criterion further supports this conclusion, as the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than its correlations with other constructs, for example, 0.704 for WE and 0.650 for TOI. This evidence confirms that the constructs in the model demonstrate adequate discriminant validity.

**Table 7.** SRMR

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.073	0.073
d_ULS	3.183	3.183
d_G	0.666	0.666
Chi-square	1380.577	1380.577
NFI	0.778	0.778

The next stage involved evaluating the goodness of fit of the measurement model, which yielded an SRMR value of 0.073, clearly below the recommended threshold of 0.08. This result was further supported by other fit indices, including  $d_{ULS}$  of 3.183,  $d_G$  of 0.666, and an NFI value of 0.778. The low SRMR value provides strong evidence that the proposed measurement model demonstrates a good fit with the empirical data. Overall, the results of the outer model assessment indicate that the MW, WE, and TOI constructs exhibit excellent validity and reliability. All indicators meet convergent validity requirements, the constructs show very strong reliability, discriminant validity is established, and the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory fit. Therefore, these constructs are deemed appropriate for subsequent inner model analysis and hypothesis testing.

**Tabel 8.** VIF Multicollinearity

Item	VIF	Item	VIF	Item	VIF
MW01	1.504	WE01	1.664	TOI01	2.608
MW02	2.026	WE02	1.874	TOI02	2.607
MW03	1.156	WE03	1.758	TOI03	1.299
MW04	1.468	WE04	1.818	TOI04	1.782
MW05	1.594	WE05	1.710	TOI05	2.052
MW06	1.854	WE06	1.579	TOI06	1.794
MW07	1.627	WE07	1.927	TOI07	1.721
MW08	2.210	WE08	1.345	TOI08	1.644
MW09	1.865	WE09	1.687	TOI09	1.331
MW10	1.768			TOI10	1.321
				TOI11	1.465
				TOI12	2.194
				TOI13	2.386
				TOI14	1.325
				TOI15	2.369

The results of the multicollinearity evaluation presented in Table 8 indicate that all indicators have Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below the threshold of 5, such as MW01 (1.504), TOI08 (1.644), and WE07 (1.927). These values suggest that no serious multicollinearity issues are present in the model. Therefore, all predictor variables can be simultaneously included in the structural model without causing estimation bias or instability

**Tabel 9.** F-Square & R-Square

Variable	R-Square (R <sup>2</sup> )	R-Square Adjusted	F-Square	
			TOI	WE
MW			0.018	1.458
WE	0.593	0.592	0.030	
TOI	0.171	0.167		

The R-square analysis shows that the Work Engagement (WE) construct has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.593 and an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.592, indicating that 59.3% of the variance in WE is explained by the exogenous variable Meaningful Work (MW). Meanwhile, Turnover Intention (TOI) has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.171 with an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.167, suggesting that 17.1% of the variance in TOI is explained by MW and WE. These results indicate that the model has strong explanatory power for WE and relatively moderate to low explanatory power for TOI, implying the presence of additional factors outside the model that influence turnover intention. According to Hair et al. (2022), this level of R-square for TOI can be categorized as weak, indicating limited explanatory strength of the structural model for this construct. Further analysis of effect size (F-square) reveals that the effect of MW on WE is very large (F<sup>2</sup> = 1.458), confirming MW as the primary predictor of WE. In contrast, the F-square values for MW on TOI (0.018) and WE on TOI (0.030) indicate small effect sizes, suggesting that although both relationships are statistically significant, their direct contributions to explaining turnover intention are relatively limited, highlighting the importance of mediation effects and other external variables.

**Tabel 10.** Path Coefficient Value

	$\beta$	STDEV	T-statistics	p-values	Decision
MW -> TOI	-0.190	0.083	2.291	0.022	Significant
MW -> WE	0.770	0.032	24.384	0.000	Significant
WE -> TOI	-0.249	0.081	3.059	0.002	Significant
MW -> WE -> TOI	-0.192	0.062	3.093	0.002	Significant

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, bias-corrected, and two-tailed at a 5% significance level. The results indicate that all main hypotheses are statistically supported. Meaningful work has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.19$ ,  $t = 2.291$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ), indicating that higher perceived work meaningfulness is associated with lower turnover intention. Additionally, meaningful work shows a positive and highly significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $t = 24.384$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), confirming that meaningful work is a strong predictor of employee engagement. Furthermore work engagement negatively and significantly affects turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.249$ ,  $t = 3.059$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), suggesting that higher engagement reduces employees' intentions to leave. Finally, mediation analysis reveals a significant indirect effect of meaningful work on turnover intention through work engagement ( $\beta = -0.192$ ,  $t = 3.093$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), indicating that the influence of meaningful work on reducing turnover intention occurs not only directly but is also strengthened through increased work engagement.

**Table 11. Descriptive Statistic**

Variable	Category	Frequently	Percentage
Meaningful Work	Very High	5	1.3%
	Hight	287	74.2%
	Average	83	21.4%
	Low	12	3.1%
	Very Low	0	0%
Work Engagement	Very High	2	5%
	Hight	187	48.3%
	Average	183	47.3%
	Low	15	3.9%
	Very Low	0	0%
Turnover Intention	Very High	0	0%
	Hight	108	27.9%
	Average	182	47%
	Low	97	25.1%
	Very Low	0	0%

Based on the categorization results of the meaningful work variable, most respondents were classified in the high category, with 287 individuals or 74.20% of the total 387 respondents. This distribution indicates that perceptions of work meaningfulness among Generation Z employees in this study are largely concentrated at a higher level, with a relatively even distribution around this category. Regarding the work engagement variable, the largest proportion of respondents was also found in the high category, comprising 187 individuals or 48.30% of the total sample. This distribution suggests that respondents' levels of work engagement tend to cluster between the moderate and high categories with relatively balanced proportions across these two levels. For the turnover intention variable, most respondents fell into the moderate category, totaling 182 individuals or 47.00% of the 387 respondents. This pattern indicates that turnover intention among respondents is relatively evenly distributed across the low, moderate, and high categories with the greatest concentration observed in the moderate range.

### Meaningful Work Effect on Turnover Intentino

The structural model results indicate that meaningful work has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.19$ ,  $t = 2.291$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ), supporting the hypothesis that higher perceived work meaningfulness is associated with lower intentions to leave the organization. This finding underscores the importance of meaningful work in reducing employees' withdrawal tendencies. Conceptually, when employees perceive their work as valuable, significant, and aligned with their personal values and identity, they develop stronger psychological bonds with the organization, which in turn reduces their inclination to seek alternative employment opportunities [25].

Descriptively meaningful work in this study was reflected by a relatively high empirical mean that exceeded the hypothetical mean, accompanied by a lower empirical standard deviation, indicating a generally positive and homogeneous perception among respondents. Most Generation Z employees viewed their work not merely as an economic activity, but as something meaningful and worthwhile. This perception provides a strong psychological foundation for emotional and cognitive attachment to the organization, which contributes to a reduced tendency to change jobs [26], [30]. From a dimensional perspective, positive meaning fosters pride and satisfaction in work, while meaning making through work allows individuals to construct and expand life meaning through their job roles, strengthening psychological connectedness and reducing thoughts of leaving [31], [32].

The greater good motivation dimension highlights the role of perceived social impact in strengthening organizational attachment, particularly among Generation Z, who tend to be sensitive to social and collective values. Feeling that one's work benefits others or society enhances responsibility and social bonding with the organization, thereby restraining turnover intention [33]. In terms of turnover intention dimensions, meaningful work helps suppress early cognitive stages such as thinking of quitting and reduces more advanced intentions like intention to find another job and intention to quit, as employees reconsider the personal and social value they would lose by leaving [11], [34]. Overall, these findings emphasize that meaningful work plays a strategic role in shaping Generation Z employees' attitudes toward job continuity, suggesting that organizations can effectively manage and reduce turnover intention by fostering personally relevant and socially impactful work experiences.

### Meaningful Work Effect on Work Engagement

The analysis reveals that meaningful work has a positive and highly significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $t = 2.384$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), confirming that work meaningfulness is a strong predictor of employee engagement. As employees perceive greater meaning in their work, they tend to display higher levels of energy, dedication, and involvement in their tasks. When individuals view their work as valuable and aligned with their personal goals and identity, they are more likely to invest themselves emotionally and cognitively in their work activities, resulting in stronger engagement [20].

Descriptive findings further support this relationship, as the empirical mean of work engagement exceeds its hypothetical mean, accompanied by a relatively low standard deviation, indicating consistent engagement levels among respondents. This pattern suggests that most Generation Z employees in the study demonstrate strong enthusiasm and commitment toward their work. Such consistency provides empirical support for the structural findings that meaningful work plays a crucial role in fostering positive and sustainable engagement [18], [30]. From a dimensional perspective, *positive meaning* cultivates pride and satisfaction at work, which enhances vigor, while *meaning making through work* enables employees to derive life meaning and professional identity from their roles, strengthening dedication and emotional attachment [35], [36].

Moreover, the *greater good motivation* dimension highlights the importance of contributing to broader organizational or societal goals, which reinforces employees' sense of purpose and deepens their involvement. This orientation enhances *absorption*, whereby individuals become fully immersed in their work and maintain sustained cognitive focus. For Generation Z employees, whose work preferences emphasize personal relevance and social impact, meaningful work serves as a source of intrinsic motivation that drives long-term engagement. Overall, these findings underscore that meaningful work is a strategic element in cultivating high work engagement among Generation Z, suggesting that organizations should prioritize creating work environments that emphasize personal value, purpose, and social contribution to strengthen employee engagement.

### Work Engagement on Turnover Intention

The analysis demonstrates that work engagement has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.249$ ,  $t = 3.059$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), indicating that higher levels of engagement are associated with lower intentions to leave the organization. This finding highlights the critical role of engagement in reducing employees' withdrawal tendencies. When employees exhibit high energy, dedication, and cognitive involvement in their work, their psychological attachment to the organization strengthens, making them feel more connected to their roles and responsibilities and less inclined to seek alternative employment [37].

Work engagement represents a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and full immersion in work activities. Engaged employees do not merely perform tasks mechanically; rather, they develop strong emotional and cognitive bonds with their work [2]. As a psychological resource, engagement enhances individuals' resilience in coping with job demands and uncertainty [23], thereby reducing the likelihood of considering organizational exit even when facing challenging work conditions. This mechanism helps explain why engagement serves as an important buffer against turnover intention.

From the perspective of turnover intention dimensions, high work engagement suppresses early cognitive stages such as thinking of quitting by fostering satisfaction, focus, and personal growth, which limit employees' mental space to contemplate leaving [38]. It also reduces more advanced stages, including intention to find another job and intention to quit, as engaged employees tend to perceive greater psychological and professional benefits in their current positions compared to potential gains elsewhere [19], [39]. For Generation Z, whose work preferences emphasize meaningful experiences, development opportunities, and active contribution, engagement plays an increasingly vital role in encouraging long-term commitment and mitigating turnover intention.

### Meaningful Work Effect on Turnover Intention through Work Engagement

The mediation analysis reveals a significant indirect effect, with a path coefficient of  $\beta = -0.192$ , a t-value of 3.093, and a p-value of 0.002, indicating that work engagement significantly mediates the relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention. This finding suggests that the influence of meaningful work on reducing

turnover intention does not occur solely through a direct pathway, but is also strengthened through increased levels of employee engagement. In other words, meaningful work becomes more effective in lowering turnover intention when it is translated into a higher degree of engagement in daily work activities [24].

This result indicates that meaningful work operates through an internal psychological mechanism, whereby the perceived meaning of work encourages greater emotional and cognitive investment in one's job. Work engagement thus functions as a critical bridge linking employees' perceptions of work meaning with their attitudes toward remaining in the organization. When employees perceive their work as meaningful, they tend to allocate more energy, attention, and commitment to their roles, which is reflected in higher vigor, dedication, and absorption. This heightened engagement strengthens psychological attachment to the organization and reduces the likelihood of contemplating exit [20], [40].

The mediating role of work engagement can also be understood through the dimensions of meaningful work, particularly positive meaning and meaning making through work. Experiencing pride, satisfaction, and a sense of personal growth through work fosters deeper engagement that is not only affective but also cognitive and behavioral in nature [18]. Additionally, the greater good motivation dimension reinforces this mechanism by introducing a social orientation to work experiences. When employees perceive that their work contributes positively to others or society, they develop a stronger sense of responsibility and social connectedness, which further enhances engagement and diminishes intentions to leave [36], [41].

The stronger indirect effect compared to the direct effect suggests that meaningful work does not automatically translate into retention decisions. Instead, work meaning must first be psychologically internalized through engagement before it can effectively reduce turnover intention. This mechanism is particularly relevant for Generation Z, whose career decisions are strongly influenced by meaningful and participative work experiences. When meaningful work fosters engagement by fulfilling needs for purpose, contribution, and self-actualization, Generation Z employees are more likely to remain committed and build longer-term relationships with their organizations. Consequently, work engagement serves as a key internal mechanism that transforms work meaning into a more concrete intention to stay, exerting a stronger influence than meaningful work alone.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study lead to several important conclusions. First, meaningful work has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention among Generation Z employees in Indonesia ( $\beta = -0.19$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ), indicating that higher perceptions of work meaningfulness are associated with a lower tendency to leave the organization. Second, meaningful work has a positive and highly significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.77$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), demonstrating that employees who perceive greater meaning in their work exhibit higher levels of energy, dedication, and involvement. Third, work engagement negatively and significantly affects turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.249$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ), suggesting that stronger engagement reduces employees' intentions to resign. Finally, work engagement significantly mediates the relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.192$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). This indicates that the impact of meaningful work on reducing turnover intention occurs not only directly, but is also strengthened through increased levels of work engagement.

The findings of this study emphasize that creating a meaningful work environment plays a crucial role not only in shaping employees' positive perceptions of their jobs but also in strengthening work engagement among Generation Z employees. Organizations are encouraged to design human resource management practices that clearly link individual roles to broader organizational values and goals, enabling employees to recognize the significance of their contributions. Practices such as constructive feedback, performance recognition, and employee involvement in decision-making processes can enhance employees' sense of ownership and dedication to their work.

Furthermore, the implications of this study suggest that strategies for managing Generation Z employees should extend beyond structural aspects such as compensation and work policies. Greater emphasis should be placed on enhancing psychological work experiences. Career development programs, mentoring, and continuous learning opportunities can help employees find meaning in their roles while simultaneously increasing emotional and cognitive engagement. Through a holistic and value-oriented approach, organizations can foster more sustainable employment relationships and effectively reduce turnover intention.

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