

## The Influence of Psychological Capital and Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement of Generation Z Workers in Karawang

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### ABSTRACT

The changing composition of the workforce with the arrival of Generation Z brings new dynamics, making it important to study work engagement in this generation. This study aims to examine the influence of psychological capital and transformational leadership on work engagement among Generation Z employees in Karawang. This quantitative study used a causal design with 204 respondents selected through convenience sampling techniques. Data were collected using the UWES-9, PCQ, and MLQ questionnaires, then analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results showed that psychological capital significantly influenced work engagement, while transformational leadership did not. However, both variables simultaneously had a significant effect, contributing 32.6%. Overall, psychological capital was a stronger predictor of work engagement.

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### Introduction

The success of companies in various sectors is determined not only by technology, capital, and facilities, but also by the quality of human resources (HR). Employees are a vital human resource, playing a crucial role as the primary driving force of an organization in achieving its goals. Ishaya (2017) said that employees are workers who work according to their skills as a source of livelihood. Human resources are a vital element because they play a key role in driving the organization and development (Kusuma et al., 2013), as well as the determining factors for the success of achieving organizational goals (Susan, 2019). Therefore, human resources are seen as strategic assets that need to be maintained, managed, and developed sustainably (Susanto, 2022).

Data from the Central Statistics Agency quoted by Wibowo et al. (2024) this indicates a shift in the composition of the workforce over the past decade with the emergence of Generation Z, which brings new dynamics due to differences in characteristics, values, and work patterns. This generation is known for being self-confident, optimistic about their careers, and creative and innovative (Marji et al., 2021).

Generation Z tends to have lower levels of social participation, is more independent, and dislikes teamwork. In the workplace, this generation is often referred to as the "job-hopping generation" because of their tendency to change jobs in a relatively short time, influenced by various factors, such as an unhealthy work environment, a desire for freedom, an interest in entrepreneurship, a mismatch between work and interests, and the drive to seek new challenges (Mjamil, 2021).

Generation Z are individuals born between 1997 and 2012 and have now entered productive age and are active in the world of work (Andriyanto & Fadilla, 2024). In addition, this generation is a digital native group that has been accustomed to using technology since an early age, so they have different mindsets, work patterns, and work preferences compared to previous generations (Matczak in Nopiyanti et al., 2024).

2020 Population Census data cited by Andriyanto and Fadilla (2024) data shows that Generation Z occupies the largest position in the national demographic structure, accounting for 27.94%, or approximately 74.93 million people. At the regional level, data from the Karawang Regency Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020 shows that millennials dominate at 27.34%, followed by Generation Z at 27.15%. This indicates that the younger generation plays a significant role in the workforce structure, both nationally and regionally in Karawang.

Gallup Survey (in Saragi & Puspitadewi, 2025) research shows that only around 35% of Generation Z workers in Indonesia have work engagement. This low level of work engagement is influenced by various factors, such as a lack of appreciation, unclear tasks and responsibilities, and an inflexible work system. These conditions can lead to feelings of confusion, frustration, and underappreciation, indicating that Generation Z still faces challenges in building stable work engagement. Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that Generation Z employees face various problems related to work engagement, both emotionally and intellectually, within the organizational or company environment (Restiani & Puspitawati, 2024).

In line with pre-research on October 25, 2025, on 27 Generation Z workers in Karawang, the results showed that employees tend to have low energy and work enthusiasm with a percentage of 48.1%, easily feel tired at 44.4%, lack enthusiasm for work at 37%, and are not able to work focused and in-depth with percentages of 44.4% and 37%, respectively. These conditions indicate that employee work engagement is still not optimal.

Work engagement is a positive psychological state related to work, characterized by persistence and energy (vigor), strong involvement and attachment (dedication), and complete focus on work (absorption). This condition is relatively stable, encompasses all

affective and cognitive aspects, and is not tied to a specific object or situation (Schaufeli et al., 2001). Macey and Schneider (2008) states that work engagement is an ideal condition that has strategic value for an organization, reflecting high levels of involvement, passion, enthusiasm, concentration, and energy in work, encompassing both attitudinal and behavioral aspects. Furthermore Albrecht (2010) states that work engagement shows employees readiness to voluntarily contribute to achieving organizational success.

Factors that influence work engagement according to Prilestari and Purba (in Bismoko et al., 2023) job resources are divided into two categories, job resources and personal resources. Job resources encompass work support such as relationships with colleagues and superiors, opportunities for self-development, feedback, and skill variety. Personal resources relate to an individual's internal strengths, such as resilience and the ability to manage and positively influence the environment.

Study Hariyadi (2019) shows that psychological capital, which is included in the personal resource factor, plays an important role in increasing work engagement. High levels of psychological capital can encourage motivation, resilience, and goal achievement, while low levels reduce work engagement. This is supported by Restiani and Puspitawati (2024) as well as Astri and Purba (2024) who found that psychological capital has a positive effect on work engagement, so that employees become more energetic, dedicated, loyal, and able to contribute optimally to the organization.

Luthans et al. (2007) says that psychological capital is a positive psychological condition that reflects individual development, characterized by perseverance and the ability to adapt strategies (hope), self-confidence in facing challenging tasks (self-efficacy), the ability to survive and recover from difficulties (resiliency), and having positive beliefs about success in the present and future (optimism). Savio et al. (2023) states that psychological capital is a new concept in organizational behavior that is included in positive psychology, which describes the collection of individual psychological capacities to support self-development. In addition,Partama et al. (2025) explains that psychological capital is a psychological resource that plays an important role in improving individual performance and well-being.

Besides psychological capital, Restiani and Puspitawati (2024) stated that transformational leadership, which is included in the job resource factor, also influences work engagement, where employees who feel comfortable and suited to this leadership style tend to have a greater desire to remain with the organization. This finding is supported by Astri and Purba (2024), as well as Pratama et al. (2024) which shows that transformational leadership has a positive influence on work engagement because it can increase employee energy, dedication, and work involvement.

Burns (in Bass, 1990) explains transformational leadership as a leadership style that not only understands the needs of followers, but also meets higher-level needs to increase engagement and transform followers into leaders and leaders as moral agents. Bass (1990) added that transformational leadership style consists of four dimensions, namely idealized

influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Transformational leadership is a modern leadership that emphasizes charismatic and affective aspects, and is effective in increasing intrinsic motivation, individual development, and employee empowerment in facing uncertainty (Harsoyo, 2022). Besides that, Maghfirah et al. (2025) states that transformational leadership is the ability of a leader to inspire and motivate followers to exceed targets through a clear vision, which serves as a source of intrinsic motivation and encourages increased performance and self-achievement.

Based on the above description, low work engagement among Generation Z workers in Karawang is an important issue that organizations need to pay attention to. The novelty of this study lies in the combination of psychological capital and transformational leadership in explaining work engagement among Generation Z workers in Karawang, which is still rarely studied. This study is also strengthened by pre-research results that indicate low work engagement, making it relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z and employment conditions in industrial areas. This condition emphasizes the need to strengthen factors that can increase work engagement, namely psychological capital as a personal resource and transformational leadership as a job resource, both of which are believed to play a role in shaping positive attitudes, motivation, and employee engagement. Therefore, this study aims to determine "Do psychological capital and transformational leadership influence work engagement among Generation Z workers in Karawang?"

## Method

This research is a quantitative research with a causality design which aims to identify the causal relationship between variables through observing the impacts that have occurred and tracing the causal factors (Azwar, 2017). The variables studied included psychological capital and transformational leadership as independent variables, and work engagement as the dependent variable. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a convenience sampling method, which selects participants based on ease of access and availability.

The population in this study is generation Z workers in Karawang, even though the number of generation Z in Karawang is known to be 27.15% of the total population (Central Statistics Agency in Andriyanto & Fadilla, 2024), however the exact population of Generation Z workers in Karawang is unknown. The respondent criteria for this study are as follows:

- 1) Men and women
- 2) Generation Z (1997-2012)
- 3) Working in Karawang
- 4) Domiciled in Karawang

Based on Jacob Cohen's formula, the sample results were 204 (Abdullah, 2015). Data collection was carried out using an online scale distribution method. The instrument used in

this study was a psychological scale. All three psychological scales used a Likert-type measurement scale. The Likert scale is used to assess the views, attitudes and perceptions of individuals and groups regarding a social phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2013).

The Work Engagement scale is measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement scale Scale-9 (UWES-9) from Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) which was adopted from an adapted version developed by Kristiana et al. (2018), this scale consists of 9 statement items with 7 Likert-type choices. The results of the measurement tool trial showed a reliability value of 0.831 and has a validity in the range of 0.357 to 0.696. The Psychological Capital scale was measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) scale from Luthans et al. (2007) which was adapted by the researcher, this scale consists of 21 statement items with 6 Likert-type choices. The results of the measurement tool trial showed a reliability value of 0.933 and validity in the range of 0.406 to 0.737. The Transformational Leadership scale was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) scale from Bass and Avolio (2004) which was adopted from an adapted version developed by Putri (2024), this scale consists of 8 statement items with 4 Likert-type choices. The results of the measurement tool trial showed a reliability value of 0.837 and validity ranging from 0.304 to 0.736.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple regression analysis, with simultaneous testing to examine the effect of psychological capital and transformational leadership on work engagement, and partial testing to examine the effect of the variables separately, with a significance value of  $<0.05$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) analysis was used to determine the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables, with values ranging from 0 to 1 (Sugiyono, 2013). Categorization tests are conducted to group individuals based on the mean value, standard deviation, and respondent scores (Azwar, 2017). The entire data analysis process was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Data

Table 1. Respondent Description

| Characteristics  | Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Year of Birth    | 1997-2006 | 194       | 95%        |
|                  | 2007-2012 | 12        | 5%         |
| Gender           | Man       | 79        | 38%        |
|                  | Woman     | 127       | 62%        |
| Years of service | <1 Year   | 57        | 27%        |
|                  | 1-3 Years | 68        | 33%        |
|                  | 4-5 Years | 53        | 26%        |
|                  | >5 Years  | 30        | 14%        |

Respondents were 204 workers in Karawang from various types of jobs. Based on the characteristics of the respondents, the majority of respondents were individuals born between 1997 and 2006, with a total of 194 people (95%), while respondents born between 2007 and 2012 numbered 12 people (5%). In terms of length of service, the majority of respondents had a work period of 1–3 years, with a total of 68 people (33%), followed by respondents with a work period of less than 1 year, with a total of 57 people (27%), a work period of 4–5 years, with a total of 53 people (26%), and a work period of more than 5 years, with a total of 30 people (14%).

**Multiple Linear Regression Test  
 Partial Test**

Table 2. Partial Test

| Model |            | Coefficients     |                         |                                |       | Sig. |
|-------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|------|
|       |            | Unstandardized B | Coefficients Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | t     |      |
| 1     | (Constant) | 1,220            | 3,692                   |                                | .330  | .742 |
|       | PCQ        | .317             | .033                    | .557                           | 9,523 | .000 |
|       | TL         | .119             | .106                    | .066                           | 1,131 | .259 |

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression test, the psychological capital variable has a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . These results indicate that psychological capital significantly influences work engagement. This means that the higher an individual's psychological capital, the higher their level of work engagement. Individuals with high levels of personal resources tend to be more capable of demonstrating optimal vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work. As a form of personal resource, psychological capital plays a role in helping individuals maintain optimism, self-confidence, and resilience in the face of work pressure, thereby increasing work engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). This finding is in line with research conducted by Hariyadi (2019) which shows that psychological capital plays an important role in increasing work engagement, high psychological capital can encourage motivation, resilience, and goal achievement. Restiani and Puspitawati (2024) as well as Astri and Purba (2024) in their research, they found that psychological capital has a positive effect on work engagement, so that employees become more energetic, dedicated, loyal, and able to contribute optimally to the organization.

The transformational leadership variable has a significance value of  $0.259 > 0.05$ . This result indicates that transformational leadership does not significantly influence work engagement. Therefore, transformational leadership does not significantly contribute to increasing work engagement among respondents in this study. This condition may occur because work engagement is not only influenced by external organizational factors, such as leadership style, but also by internal individual factors. Employees who have positive

psychological conditions, such as self-confidence, hope for the future, the ability to withstand pressure, and optimism, tend to build work engagement more easily than employees who only receive support from their leaders (Luthans et al., 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2001). This finding is in line with research conducted by Dzulfikar et al. (2026) which states that transformational leadership has no direct effect on work engagement. This suggests that leadership style alone is not capable of increasing employee work engagement unless accompanied by a strong internal psychological state within the individual.

Partially, psychological capital, as an individual's internal resource, appears to have a stronger role than transformational leadership, as an external organizational factor. This finding aligns with theory Luthans et al. (2007) which states that psychological capital is a positive psychological condition possessed by an individual, consisting of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism that can increase motivation, perseverance, and individual engagement with their work. Individuals with high psychological capital tend to have confidence in completing tasks, optimism about work results, the ability to withstand pressure, and hope to achieve work goals, making it easier to demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption in work (Luthans et al., 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2001).

**Table 3. Partial Dimension Test *Psychological Capital***

|              |                           | <b>Coefficients</b>         |                                    |   |          |             |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------|-------------|
| <b>Model</b> |                           | <b>Unstandardized<br/>B</b> | <b>Coefficients<br/>Std. Error</b> | <b>Standardiz<br/>ed<br/>Coefficient<br/>s Beta</b> | <b>t</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
| 1            | (Constant)                | 2,538                       | 3,347                              |   | .758     | .449        |
|              | <i>Hope</i>               | .615                        | .172                               | .339  | 3,575    | .000        |
|              | <i>Self-<br/>Efficacy</i> | .253                        | .129                               | .165  | 1,959    | .052        |
|              | <i>Resilience</i>         | .392                        | .204                               | .146  | 1,921    | .056        |
|              | <i>Optimism</i>           | .024                        | .171                               | .012  | .138     | .890        |

Based on the results of the partial test analysis on the psychological capital dimension, it was found that only the hope dimension had an effect on the dependent variable, while the self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism dimensions did not have a significant effect. For the hope dimension, a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  was obtained. This result indicates that hope has an effect on the dependent variable. Thus, a high level of individual hope can increase perseverance and performance. Theoretically, hope is a motivational state consisting of the ability and drive to achieve goals (agency thinking) and the ability to design strategies to achieve goals (pathways thinking), which can increase individual perseverance and performance (Snyder, 2002). This finding is also consistent with the concept of psychological capital developed by Luthans et al. (2007), which emphasizes that hope is one of the main psychological resources that can encourage motivation and achievement of work goals.

In the self-efficacy dimension, a significance value of  $0.052 > 0.05$  was obtained. This result indicates that self-efficacy does not have a statistically significant effect. Conceptually, self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to organize and carry out the actions necessary to achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1997). Individuals with high self-efficacy are generally more confident in facing work demands and tend to be more motivated to complete tasks. However, the results of this study indicate that self-efficacy regarding one's abilities is not strong enough to directly increase work engagement. This may occur because work engagement is influenced not only by self-efficacy but also by other factors such as organizational support, working conditions, and other psychological resources.

Furthermore, in the resilience dimension, a significance value of  $0.056 > 0.05$  was obtained, meaning that resilience had no significant effect. Resilience is an individual's ability to survive, bounce back, and adapt when facing difficulties, conflict, or failure (Luthans et al. 2007). Individuals with high resilience tend to be able to manage work pressure and persist in challenging situations. However, in this study, resilience was not a dominant factor directly increasing work engagement. This indicates that the ability to persist under work pressure does not necessarily make individuals more enthusiastic and engaged in their work.

The optimism dimension obtained a significance value of  $0.890 > 0.05$ . This result indicates that optimism has no effect on the dependent variable. Optimism is an individual's tendency to view positive events as the result of internal and stable factors and to view negative events as temporary and influenced by external factors (Carver & Scheier in Luthans et al., 2007). Optimistic individuals generally have positive expectations for the future and are better able to face work challenges. However, this study shows that optimism alone is not enough to significantly increase work engagement. This condition can be influenced by other, more dominant factors, such as intrinsic motivation, the work environment, and the characteristics of the respondents' jobs.

### Simultaneous Test

Table 4. Simultaneous Test

|       |            | Anova          |     |             |        |       |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
| 1     | Regression | 4489.920       | 2   | 2244.960    | 48,595 | .000b |
|       | Residual   | 9285.708       | 201 | 46,198      |        |       |
|       | Total      | 13775.627      | 203 |             |        |       |

Based on the results of the ANOVA test in multiple linear regression analysis, a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  was obtained. This result indicates that the regression model used in this study is simultaneously significant, meaning that the psychological capital and transformational leadership variables simultaneously influence work engagement. Statistically, a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  indicates that  $H_0$ , which states there is no

simultaneous influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that psychological capital and transformational leadership simultaneously influence work engagement.

These results are in line with research by Prilestari and Purba (in Bismoko et al., 2023), which states that work engagement can be influenced by a combination of job resources such as transformational leadership and personal resources such as psychological capital. This means that both types of resources can work simultaneously to increase an individual's motivation, energy, and engagement with work. Theoretically, this condition can be explained through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which states that job resources and personal resources interact to shape work engagement. Transformational leadership, as a job resource, can play a more effective role when supported by an individual's personal resources, such as psychological capital (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

### Coefficient of Determination Test

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination Test

| Model Summary |       |          |                   |                                |
|---------------|-------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Model         | R     | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Standard Error of the Estimate |
| 1             | .571a | .326     | .319              | 6,797                          |

Based on the results of the summary model in the multiple linear regression analysis, the R Square value (determination coefficient) of 0.326 was obtained, indicating that 32.6% of the variation in work engagement can be explained by psychological capital and transformational leadership, while the remaining 67.4% is influenced by other variables outside this study. Innovative work behavior, work-related attitude, organizational atmosphere, and work ethics are other factors that can influence work engagement (Asmike et al., 2025). Overall, these results indicate that the research model has moderate explanatory power, so that psychological capital and transformational leadership are relevant variables, but are not yet fully able to explain all variations in work engagement in this study.

**Categorization Test**

**Table 6. Categorization Test**

| <b>Variables</b>                   | <b>Category</b> | <b>(n)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|
| <i>Work Engagement</i>             | Tall            | 27         | 13.2%             |
|                                    | Currently       | 148        | 72.5%             |
|                                    | Low             | 29         | 14.2%             |
| <i>Psychological Capital</i>       | Tall            | 132        | 64.7%             |
|                                    | Currently       | 70         | 34.3%             |
|                                    | Low             | 2          | 1%                |
| <i>Transformational Leadership</i> | Tall            | 75         | 36.8%             |
|                                    | Currently       | 118        | 57.8%             |
|                                    | Low             | 11         | 5.4%              |

In the work engagement variable, the majority of respondents were in the medium category, namely 148 people (72.5%), followed by the low category of 29 people (14.2%), and the high category of 27 people (13.2%). These results indicate that in general the level of work engagement of respondents is at a moderate level. In the psychological capital variable, the majority of respondents were in the high category of 132 people (64.7%), followed by the medium category of 70 people (34.3%), and the low category of only 2 people (1%). These results indicate that the majority of respondents have high psychological capital. Meanwhile, in the transformational leadership variable, the majority of respondents rated leadership in the medium category of 118 people (57.8%), the high category of 75 people (36.8%), and the low category of 11 people (5.4%), meaning that respondents' perceptions of transformational leadership style were at a moderate level.

The results of this study indicate that high personal resources are not fully matched by optimal job resources, resulting in moderate levels of work engagement. This situation indicates that improving work engagement depends not only on individual psychological resources but also requires strengthening the role of transformational leadership and other organizational factors.

This condition indicates that individual psychological resources alone are not enough to foster high levels of work engagement. Even if employees have good hope, self-confidence, resilience, and optimism, work engagement still requires support from organizational factors to enable employees to feel more enthusiastic, dedicated, and fully involved in their work. Therefore, increasing work engagement depends not only on strengthening personal resources but also requires optimizing job resources, such as implementing more effective transformational leadership, providing appreciation, a supportive work environment, clear communication, and a work system that suits the characteristics and needs of Generation Z.

**Conclusion**

This study aims to determine the effect of psychological capital and transformational leadership on work engagement. Based on the results of the study, psychological capital was

proven to have a significant effect on work engagement, both partially and simultaneously, while transformational leadership did not show a significant direct effect on work engagement. These findings indicate that internal individual factors, particularly psychological capital, have a stronger role in increasing work engagement than external organizational factors such as transformational leadership. Furthermore, the hope dimension was the most influential psychological capital dimension in increasing work engagement among study respondents.

Based on the research results, organizations are advised to improve employee psychological capital, particularly the hope dimension, through training, self-development, and providing clear and realistic work targets to increase work engagement. Although transformational leadership does not have a direct significant effect, organizations still need to create a supportive and conducive work environment. Generation Z is also advised to continue developing psychological capital, particularly the hope aspect, by improving their ability to set goals, develop strategies, and maintain motivation at work to optimize work engagement. For future researchers, it is recommended to add other variables related to work engagement and expand the number and characteristics of respondents to make the research results more comprehensive.

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