

The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Work Engagement Mediated by Job Burnout

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Abstract

Work engagement has become a critical issue in the manufacturing sector, particularly among Generation Z employees who tend to prioritize work-life balance, psychological well-being, and supportive work environments. High production targets, shift work systems, and demanding workloads may increase job burnout, thereby reducing employees' work engagement. This study aims to examine the effect of the quality of work life on work engagement, with job burnout serving as a mediating variable, among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed. The study involved 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS version 4. The findings reveal that quality of work life has a significant negative effect on job burnout, indicating that a better work environment, balanced workload, and supportive social relationships reduce employees' burnout levels. Job burnout also has a significant negative effect on work engagement, whereas quality of work life has a significant positive effect. Furthermore, job burnout significantly mediates the relationship between quality of work life and work engagement, suggesting that improvements in employees' quality of work life enhance work engagement both directly and indirectly by reducing burnout. These findings support the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory and highlight the importance of developing organizational strategies that improve employees' quality of work life, thereby reducing burnout and strengthening sustainable work engagement among Generation Z employees in the manufacturing sector.

Keywords: Generation Z; Job Burnout; Productivity; Quality of Work Life; Work Engagement.

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I. Introduction

The increasingly dynamic world of work demands that companies focus not only on productivity but also on employees' psychological well-being (She et al., 2024). Global industrial competition, accelerated technological advancements, and high-performance targets pose challenges for organizations in retaining productive, highly engaged human resources (B. Sun et al., 2022). In these conditions, work engagement becomes a crucial factor in determining organizational success, as employees with high work engagement tend to be more enthusiastic, dedicated, productive, and loyal to their companies (B. Sun et al., 2022). However, low work engagement is currently a serious global issue (Global Reporting Initiative, 2023). Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report shows that only around 23% of global workers are truly engaged in their jobs, while the remainder are disengaged or lack emotional attachment to their organizations. Gallup also estimates that low employee engagement causes global economic losses of up to USD 8.9 trillion, or approximately 9% of global gross domestic product (Barkhowa & Yudhatama, 2023).

This phenomenon demonstrates that low work engagement is no longer an individual issue but rather a strategic organizational one (Al-Jaifi, 2020). This situation is further complicated by the entry of Generation Z into the workforce. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is currently dominating the workforce across various industrial sectors (Fulaedzah et al., 2022). This generation is known for prioritizing *work-life balance*, mental health, a supportive work environment, work flexibility, and respect for psychological well-being (Indrianingsih & Riani, 2024). However, Generation Z also tends to experience work stress, *burnout*, and loss of motivation when organizations fail to meet these expectations. A Gallup survey showed that young workers under 35 experienced the largest decline in employee engagement among age groups.

The phenomenon of low work engagement can also occur in the manufacturing sector, which is characterized by production target pressure, fast-paced work rhythms, shift work systems, and demands for high work quality (Zhang et al., 2026). The manufacturing work environment often requires employees to perform repetitive tasks under tight time pressures, which can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion (Salsabila & Irawati, 2026). These conditions have the potential to lead to job *burnout*—a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged work stress that is not managed properly (Bottini et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of workplace *burnout* is currently increasing significantly. Research by Bottini et al. (2025) explains that the prevalence of *burnout* in various job sectors ranges from 2% to 28%, while in the service and healthcare sectors, it can reach over 50%. Furthermore, research by Jo and Shin (2025) shows that high workloads (*workload overload*) and low organizational support lead to increased *burnout* and decreased employee engagement (Nugraha & Suhariadi, 2021). These conditions demonstrate the need for organizations to consider factors that can maintain employees' psychological well-being and high levels of work engagement. PT XYZ, a multinational manufacturing company specializing in children's toys, is characterized by high production targets and stringent work quality requirements. As a global manufacturing company, PT XYZ employs a large working-age workforce, including Generation Z (Sukandar Nur et al., 2025). Shift work conditions, production targets, repetitive tasks, and product quality pressures can potentially lead to work stress and job *burnout* among employees. On the other hand, Generation Z tends to be more sensitive to work environments that are perceived as unsupportive of their psychological well-being, potentially leading to decreased work engagement (Ferreira & Zaia, 2025).

In this context, companies need to consider quality of work life (QWL) as a strategy to increase employee engagement (Saputro, 2023). Quality of work life is an employee's perception of the quality of the work environment that is able to meet their personal, social, and psychological needs while working (Qatrunnada et al., 2025). In research by B. Sun et al. (2022), quality of work life is explained through four main indicators: *work-family balance*, workload, work environment, and social needs. *Work-family balance* refers to an employee's ability to manage work and personal life. Workload refers to the amount of work an employee experiences while working. Work environment refers to the conditions and comfort of the workplace, while social needs relate to interpersonal relationships in the workplace (Fajarwati, 2023). These four indicators are important for Generation Z because this group tends to prioritize *work-life balance*, a comfortable work environment, and social relationships within the organization (DJKN, 2021).

In addition to the quality of work life, another factor influencing work engagement is job *burnout*.

In research by [B. Sun et al. \(2022\)](#), job *burnout* is measured through three main indicators: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to a state of being depleted due to high work pressure. Depersonalization indicates the emergence of a negative, cynical, or disinterested attitude toward work and the work environment. Meanwhile, reduced personal accomplishment reflects a decline in self-confidence and individual achievement at work. In manufacturing environments, high production targets and monotonous work systems can increase these three dimensions of *burnout*, especially among Generation Z employees, who are more vulnerable to workplace psychological stress ([Nasharudin et al., 2026](#)).

Meanwhile, work engagement in this study is described through three main indicators: vigor, dedication, and absorption, using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) from [Schaufeli et al. \(2006\)](#) in [B. Sun et al. \(2022\)](#). Vigor reflects high energy, enthusiasm, and mental resilience at work. Dedication indicates pride, enthusiasm, and emotional involvement in work. Absorption refers to the state in which employees are fully engaged and immersed in their work. These three indicators reflect the level of employee engagement with the organization. The higher the vigor, dedication, and absorption, the higher their level of work engagement.

Research by [B. Sun et al. \(2022\)](#) shows that work-life quality is positively related to work engagement and negatively related to *burnout*. The study found that a good quality of work life can increase work motivation while reducing employee emotional exhaustion. Research by [Indrianingsih and Riani \(2024\)](#) also shows that quality of work life has a positive effect on work engagement and a negative effect on *burnout*. Furthermore, research by [Fajriawan and Dewi \(2025\)](#) found that *work-life balance* has a positive effect on work engagement by reducing work frustration.

Theoretically, the relationship among quality of work life, job *burnout*, and work engagement can be explained by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory. This theory explains that high job demands, such as work pressure, workload, and emotional demands, can lead to stress and *burnout*, while job resources, such as a supportive work environment, organizational support, and *work-life balance*, can increase employee motivation and work engagement ([Bottini et al., 2025](#)). In the context of this research, quality of work life is viewed as a job resource that can reduce job *burnout* and increase work engagement among Generation Z employees.

Although numerous studies have examined quality of work life, job *burnout*, and work engagement, most prior research has focused on the healthcare and service sectors. Research specifically examining the effect of quality of work life on work engagement, with job *burnout* as a mediating variable, among Generation Z employees in the Indonesian manufacturing sector is still limited. Furthermore, the characteristics of Generation Z differ from those of previous generations, rendering the results of prior research inaccurate for describing the current workforce. Based on this description, this study is crucial for analyzing the effect of quality of work life on work engagement, with job *burnout* as a mediating variable, among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management studies, particularly regarding the application of the Job Demands-Resources Theory to Generation Z employees in the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to inform companies in designing strategies to improve the quality of work life, reduce job *burnout*, and sustainably increase employee work engagement.

II. Method

This study used a quantitative survey approach to examine the effect of quality of work life on work engagement, with job *burnout* as a mediating variable among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. The research design employed was causal research, which aims to analyze causal relationships between variables through hypothesis testing ([Ghozali & Latan, 2016](#)). The study population included all Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Generation Z in this study refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2012 ([Kristia et al., 2026](#)). The sampling technique used was non-probability purposive sampling, with respondents selected based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives ([Ghozali & Latan, 2016](#)). The sample size was determined based on the guidelines of [Hair et al. \(2021\)](#), which state that research using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach requires a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators used in the research model. This study used 10 indicators; based on the upper limit of these guidelines (10× the number of indicators), a sample size of 100 respondents was calculated. The data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM approach with SmartPLS version 4. The analysis was carried out to test the measurement and structural models,

as well as the direct and indirect influences through mediating variables.

III. Results and Discussion

1. Analysis of Respondent Characteristics

Based on data collected from 100 Generation Z employees at PT XYZ, 52 respondents, or 52%, were female (F), while 48 respondents, or 48%, were male (M). These results indicate a slight preponderance of female respondents compared to male respondents. This composition illustrates that the Generation Z workforce at PT XYZ is relatively balanced between men and women. Based on income level, respondents with monthly incomes of 3–5 million rupiah dominated the sample, accounting for 51%. Furthermore, 24 respondents with incomes of less than 3 million rupiah accounted for 24%, while 25 respondents with incomes of more than 5 million rupiah accounted for 25%. These results indicate that the majority of respondents fall into the middle-income category, reflecting the characteristics of the Generation Z workforce at the entry-level to mid-level in manufacturing companies.

Based on the field of work or position, most respondents came from the Production and Operations field, as many as 18 people, or 18%. Next, respondents from the finance field numbered 15 people (15%); marketing, as many as 13 people (13%); human resources (HR), as many as 12 people (12%); legal compliance, as many as 11 people (11%); executive level, as many as 10 people (10%); corporate social responsibility (CSR), as many as 9 people (9%); and other fields, as many as 12 people (12%). The dominance of respondents in the Production and Operations field shows that this study involved many employees who were directly involved in the operational activities of manufacturing companies, so it was relevant to working conditions that had production target pressure and high work rhythm.

2. Outer Model Analysis

Based on the results in Table 1, all indicators for the job *burnout*, quality of work life, and work engagement variables had outer loading values above 0.70. The outer loading values for the job *burnout* variable ranged from 0.898 to 0.911, the quality of work life variable ranged from 0.811 to 0.863, and the work engagement variable ranged from 0.878 to 0.900. All outer loading values exceeded the recommended minimum threshold, thus demonstrating convergent validity. These results indicate that each indicator adequately reflects the construct being measured and is worthy of being retained in the research model.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Results

Indicator	Job Burnout	Quality of Work Life	Work Engagement
JB1	0.904		
JB2	0.911		
JB3	0.898		
QWL1		0.857	
QWL2		0.856	
QWL3		0.811	
QWL4		0.863	
WE1			0.878
WE2			0.882
WE3			0.900

3. Discriminant Validity

Based on the test results in Table 2, all constructs in this study met the reliability criteria. Cronbach's alpha values for the variables job *burnout* (0.889), quality of work life (0.869), and work engagement (0.864) were all above the threshold of 0.70. Similarly, the ρ_A and composite reliability values for each construct also exceeded 0.70, with composite reliability values of 0.931, 0.910, and 0.917, respectively. These results indicate that all constructs have a good level of reliability, consistently

measuring the variables.

Construct validity was further evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered to have adequate convergent validity if the AVE value exceeds 0.50. The test results showed that all constructs met these criteria, with AVE values of 0.818 for job *burnout*, 0.717 for quality of work life, and 0.786 for work engagement. These findings indicate that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators, thus meeting the criterion for convergent validity.

Table 2. Results of Discriminant Validity and Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Burnout	0.889	0.893	0.931	0.818
Quality of Work Life	0.869	0.871	0.910	0.717
Work Engagement	0.864	0.866	0.917	0.786

4. R-squared

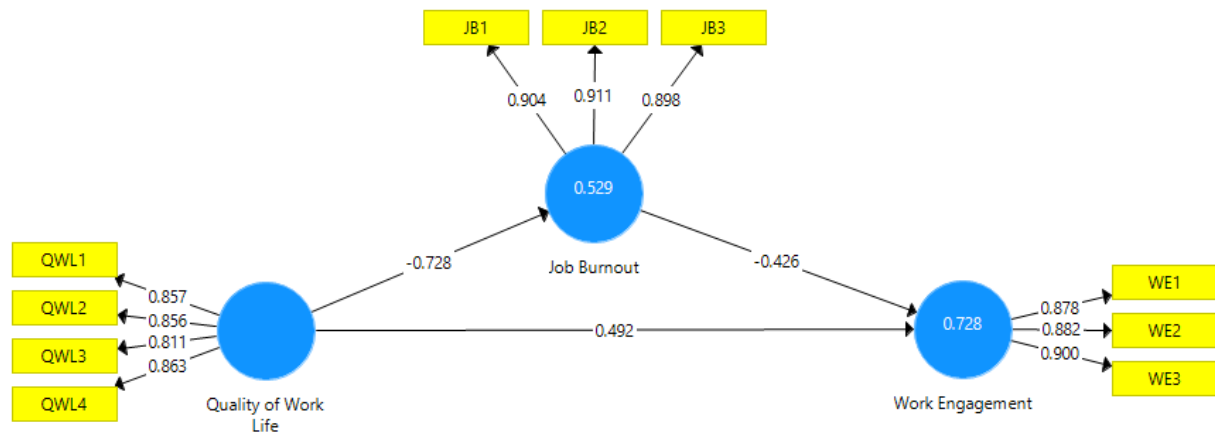


Figure 1. R-squared (Coefficient of Determination)

The R-Square (R^2) value measures the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable in a research model. According to Hair et al. (2021), an R-squared value of 0.75 is categorized as strong, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak. Based on the results of the structural model test in Figure 1 above, the work fatigue variable has an R-squared value of 0.529. This indicates that the Quality of Work Life variable can explain 52.9% of the Work Fatigue variable, while the remaining 47.1% is explained by other variables outside the research model. This value is considered moderate, indicating that work-life quality has a fairly strong influence on work fatigue among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Meanwhile, the work engagement variable has an R-squared value of 0.728. This indicates that the Quality of Work Life and Job Fatigue variables jointly explain 72.8% of the Work Engagement variable, with the remaining 27.2% explained by other variables outside the research model. This value is considered strong, indicating that the research model has good predictive power in explaining work engagement among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ.

5. Inned Model Analysis

An inner model analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the variables in the study. This test was conducted by examining the path coefficient, *t*-statistics, and *p*-values. According to [Hair et al. \(2021\)](#), a relationship between variables is considered significant if the *t*-statistic is > 1.96 and the *p*-value is < 0.05 .

According to [Table 3](#), the relationship between job *burnout* and work engagement has a coefficient value of -0.426 , with a *t*-statistic of 5.700 and a *p*-value of 0.000 . These results indicate that job *burnout* has a significant negative effect on work engagement. This means that the higher the level of job *burnout* experienced by employees, the lower the level of work engagement among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Therefore, the hypothesis that job *burnout* negatively affects work engagement is accepted.

The relationship between quality of work life and job *burnout* has a coefficient value of -0.728 , with a *t*-statistic of 16.904 and a *p*-value of 0.000 . These results indicate that work-life quality has a significant negative effect on job *burnout*. This means that the better the perceived quality of work life among employees, the lower the level of job *burnout* among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Therefore, the hypothesis that work-life quality negatively affects job *burnout* is accepted.

Furthermore, the relationship between quality of work life and work engagement has a coefficient value of 0.492 , with a *t*-statistic of 6.542 and a *p*-value of 0.000 . These results indicate that work-life quality has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. This means that the better the perceived quality of work life among employees, the higher the level of work engagement among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Therefore, the hypothesis that work-life quality positively affects work engagement is accepted.

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Relationship between variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Job Burnout → Work Engagement	-0.426	-0.432	0.075	5.700	0.000
Quality of Work Life → Job Burnout	-0.728	-0.733	0.043	16.904	0.000
Quality of Work Life → Work Engagement	0.492	0.484	0.075	6.542	0.000
Quality of Work Life → Job Burnout → Work Engagement	0.310	0.317	0.059	5.241	0.000

The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Job Burnout

Based on the results of the inner model test, the coefficient for the relationship between Quality of Work Life and Job *burnout* was -0.728 , with a *t*-statistic of 16.904 and a *p*-value of 0.000 . A *t*-statistic > 1.96 and a *p*-value < 0.05 indicate that Quality of Work Life has a negative and significant effect on Job *burnout*. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study indicate that the higher the perceived quality of work life among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ, the lower the level of job *burnout*. This condition indicates that a comfortable work environment, *work-life balance*, strong social relationships, and an appropriate workload can reduce employees' emotional and psychological exhaustion. These results align with the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R Theory), which explains that job resources, such as quality of work life, can reduce work pressure and the risk of *burnout* in employees. The results of this study also support the research of [Zhang et al. \(2026\)](#), which stated that quality of work life has a negative effect on *burnout*. Furthermore, research by [Indrianingsih and Riani \(2024\)](#) also found that a good quality of work life can significantly reduce employee fatigue levels.

The Effect of Job Burnout on Work Engagement

Based on the results of the inner model test, the coefficient value of the influence of job *burnout* on work engagement was -0.426 , with a *t*-statistic of 5.700 and a *p*-value of 0.000 . A *t*-statistic value > 1.96 and a *p*-value < 0.05 indicate that job *burnout* has a negative and significant effect on work

engagement. Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study indicate that the higher the level of job *burnout* experienced by employees, the lower the level of work engagement among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. High levels of emotional exhaustion, negative attitudes toward work, and a decreased sense of self-accomplishment cause employees to lose enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in their work. These conditions indicate that *burnout* can reduce employee work engagement in manufacturing workplaces.

The results of this study align with the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R Theory), which posits that high job demands can lead to *burnout*, thereby reducing employee motivation and work engagement (Liu et al., 2024). Furthermore, research by B. Sun et al. (2022) also found that *burnout* negatively impacts work engagement. Research by Zhang et al. (2026) also explains that increased work pressure and emotional exhaustion lead to decreased employee work engagement (Nasharudin et al., 2026).

The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Work Engagement

Based on the results of the inner model test, the coefficient value of quality of work life on work engagement was 0.492, with a *t*-statistic of 6.542 and a *p*-value of 0.000. A *t*-statistic > 1.96 and a *p*-value < 0.05 indicate that Quality of Work Life has a positive and significant effect on Work Engagement. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study indicate that the higher the perceived quality of work life among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ, the higher their level of work engagement. A comfortable work environment, strong social relationships, *work-life balance*, and an appropriate workload can increase employee enthusiasm, dedication, and engagement. This indicates that work-life quality is a crucial factor in increasing work engagement among Generation Z employees in manufacturing companies.

These results align with the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R Theory), which explains that job resources, such as quality of work life, can increase intrinsic motivation and employee work engagement. Research by X. Sun (2024) also found that quality of work life has a positive effect on work engagement. Furthermore, research by Indrianingsih and Riani (2024) found that the better the quality of work life provided by a company, the higher the employee's work engagement with the organization.

The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Work Engagement, Mediated by Job Burnout

Based on the results of the indirect effect test, the coefficient value for the influence of Quality of Work Life on Work Engagement through Job *burnout* was 0.310, with a *t*-statistic of 5.241 and a *p*-value of 0.000. A *t*-statistic > 1.96 and a *p*-value < 0.05 indicate that job *burnout* significantly mediates the effect of quality of work life on work engagement. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study indicate that a high-quality work life can increase work engagement by reducing job *burnout* among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. A comfortable work environment, *work-life balance*, good social relationships, and an appropriate workload can reduce emotional and psychological exhaustion, making employees more enthusiastic, dedicated, and engaged in their work. In other words, the better the perceived quality of work life among employees, the lower the level of job *burnout* and the higher the level of work engagement.

The results of this study align with the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R Theory), which explains that job resources, such as quality of work life, can mitigate the negative impact of job demands, thereby reducing *burnout* and increasing employee engagement. Furthermore, these results also support the research of B. Sun et al. (2022), which found that *burnout* mediates the relationship between quality of work life and work engagement. This study explains that a good quality of work life can create a healthier psychological state, resulting in employees having stronger work engagement with the organization.

IV. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that quality of work life has a significant negative effect on job *burnout* and a significant positive effect on work engagement among Generation Z employees at PT XYZ. Furthermore, job *burnout* has a significant negative effect on work engagement and acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between quality of work life and work engagement. These findings suggest

that improving the quality of work life can increase work engagement, both directly and through reducing levels of job *burnout*. This study contributes by demonstrating that job *burnout* serves as a mechanism explaining the influence of quality of work life on work engagement among Generation Z employees. These findings complement previous research, which generally focuses only on the direct relationship between these two variables, and imply that companies need to improve quality of work life by creating a supportive work environment, fostering *work-life balance*, positive social relationships, and effective workload management to increase employee engagement. This study is limited to a single company with a relatively limited number of respondents. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a broader sample across various organizations and industry sectors and to include other relevant variables, such as perceived organizational support, leadership style, or psychological well-being, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing work engagement.

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Declaration

The first author, as a university student, conducted the data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. The second author, as the supervising lecturer, contributed to the research design, provided academic guidance throughout the study, and reviewed and revised the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

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