Stress to Departure: Performance and Engagement Mediation in Toxic Workplaces

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This study aims to analyze the effect of job stress and toxic workplaces on the intention to leave Gen Z employees directly and through the mediation of employee performance and engagement in Indonesian Startups. The population of this study is Startup employees in Indonesia, with a sample of 202 respondents. The data analysis method uses CB-SEM with AMOS software version 26. The study's results prove the existence of a significant negative effect of job stress and a toxic workplace on employee performance and engagement and a significant positive effect on Intention to Leave. Employee performance and engagement have a significant negative effect on intention to leave, and employee engagement has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Employee engagement significantly and positively mediates the relationship between job stress and a toxic workplace on Intention to leave. Still, employee performance only significantly and positively mediates the relationship between a toxic workplace and intention to leave, not job stress. Employee performance significantly and negatively mediates employee engagement in the intention to leave. This study is expected to contribute to startup management to pay attention to job stress and toxic workplaces to minimize the emergence of intention to leave among employees.

Keywords: Job Stress; Toxic Workplace; Employee Performance; Employee Engagement; Intention to Leave.

1. Introduction

The employee turnover rate in a company can be one way to see indications of underlying problems within the organization. A high employee turnover rate can negatively impact the company as it creates instability in the workforce, making it ineffective in managing its human resources. This results in the loss of experienced employees, necessitating the training of new hires, which requires additional time and costs for the company (Samašonok, 2024). Companies must understand the needs of their employees, who are an essential asset, in various ways to improve employee performance and reduce resignation rates (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). Before an employee decides to leave, it is typically preceded by the emergence of an intention to leave the company (Ong et al., 2023).

Indonesia is the country with the highest startup growth in Southeast Asia. As of February 2024, the number of startups in Indonesia reached 2,593 companies, which is the highest figure compared to other ASEAN countries: Singapore with 1,183 startups, the Philippines with 348 startups, Malaysia with 331 startups, Vietnam with 286 startups, Thailand with 194 startups, Myanmar with 47 startups, Brunei Darussalam with 9 startups, Cambodia with 7 startups, and Laos with 2 startups. A startup is a newly established company that utilizes technological innovation to solve existing societal problems (Karina et al., 2021). Gen Z dominates startups because they prefer a less formal work environment that startups offer, allowing them to express themselves freely. Additionally, startups have fewer hierarchies (Hanifah, 2023).

According to a report released by the Growth & Scale Talent Playbook, 91% of employees working in startups consider resigning from their jobs (Alpha JWC Ventures, 2023) More than 600 employees of Startups in six Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines) were involved in the survey. According to the survey report, three reasons are present: compensation, misalignment of vision and company culture, and limited opportunities for self-development. If these factors are not fulfilled, they can cause an individual to intend to leave.

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Job stress is related to a person's emotional energy, manifested as pressure that can affect an individual's emotions, thinking processes, and physical condition (Manoppo et al., 2018). As a result of job stress experienced by an individual, it can lead to a decrease in employee performance if the level of job stress is high (Assidiqi & Suryosukmono, 2023). High job stress can also diminish employees' emotional motivation and attachment to their work, colleagues, and company. The higher the stress experienced by employees, the more it will lead to a decrease in employee engagement (Kim et al., 2019).

The work environment is a severe concern for Gen Z because they will spend a significant amount of their working time there. A toxic work environment can negatively affect an individual's performance, so if a person is in a toxic work environment, it can impact their employee performance (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Additionally, a toxic work environment can lead to a decrease in an employee's emotional motivation towards their work, colleagues, and the company they work for, which can be referred to as employee engagement (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

If an employee's performance drops over time, they may plan to quit their jobs in pursuit of a better opportunity. (Widyanty & Prasetya, 2023). A high level of employee performance can lead to a decreased likelihood of employees intending to leave (Hidayat & Tannady, 2023). Good employee performance can be advantageous for organizations, as employees with a transparent system, a sense of responsibility toward their tasks, and a good attendance record are less likely to develop an intention to leave (Widyanty & Prasetya, 2023).

Employees who experience a decline in emotional motivation towards their work, colleagues, and the company they work for are likely to experience a decrease in performance (Ramdan et al., 2022). Additionally, employees whose engagement continuously declines are at risk of developing an intention to leave their jobs. When workers are enthusiastic about what they are doing for a living, they are more likely to put up their best effort, which in turn boosts productivity (Fithriyana et al., 2022). The intention to leave can increase when employee engagement decreases, leading to lower employee performance. Therefore, employee engagement affects the intention to leave through employee performance (Desiana et al., 2024).

This study aims to investigate the impact of job stress and a toxic work environment on an employee's intention to leave directly and through the mediation of employee performance and engagement. Management, especially in startups, should pay attention to these factors because when an employee decides to leave, it can harm the company due to the loss of experienced human resources and the need to find a replacement (Utama & Basri, 2023). Given Gen Z's high participation in the workforce, companies must understand this latest generation to meet the needs of Gen Z employees in the workplace.

Several research findings indicate that job stress significantly affects employee performance (Hakim et al., 2023; Suswati, 2020), job stress negatively impacts employee engagement (Muchtadin & Emmelya, 2023), job stress positively influences intention to leave (Basori et al., 2023; Sitohang & Tiarapuspa, 2023), Furthermore, employee performance mediates the relationship between job stress and intention to leave. (Suswati, 2020). Through employee involvement, job stress also influences the desire to leave (N. P. I. Sari et al., 2022). A toxic workplace negatively impacts employee performance (Balqist et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2023), a toxic workplace environment negatively affects employee engagement (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Rasool et al., 2021; Saleem et al., 2020), a toxic workplace environment significantly influences intention to leave (Iqbal et al., 2022; Vaid, 2023), and a toxic workplace environment negatively impacts intention to leave mediated by employee engagement (Monica & Megawati, 2021; Yasmin & Mubarak, 2021). Employee engagement significantly influences employee performance (Amanda Savitri et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Rahmawati, 2020), and there is a significant influence of employee engagement on intention to leave mediated by employee performance (Wiryadinata, 2023).

Some researchers have reported differing findings regarding job stress and employee engagement. Asya & Putri (2023) state that job stress does not influence the level of employee engagement, which contradicts the findings of Muchtadin & Emmelya (2023). Additionally, job stress does not significantly affect the intention to leave (Astuti et al., 2022). A toxic workplace environment does not directly impact employee performance (Tanoto, 2024), which is different from the findings of Balqist et al. (2023) and (Kurniawan et al., 2023), who states that a toxic workplace environment negatively influences employee performance. These differing research outcomes

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motivate the researcher to investigate whether job stress and a toxic workplace environment affect the intention to leave, with employee performance and engagement as mediating factors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Stress

Job stress is related to a person's emotional energy in the form of pressure that can affect their emotions, thought processes, and physical condition (Manoppo et al., 2018). According to Hidayat & Tannady (2023) three factors can trigger job stress: first, environmental stress, which is caused by uncertainty in the surrounding environment; second, organizational stress, which arises from pressure to complete tasks within a limited timeframe; and third, personal stress, which is caused by instability in one's personal life. Job stress may be defined in two ways: eustress and distress. This study focuses on distress, which has negative impacts that can continuously drain energy, affecting both individuals and organizations (D. L. Sari et al., 2021). Overburdening employees with work, implementing new systems without proper oversight, providing insufficient training, creating hostile work environments, and having trouble getting along with coworkers are all potential sources of stress in the workplace (D. L. Sari et al., 2021). Management should pay attention to individuals within the company and minimize the job stress experienced, as it can have negative effects on those individuals (Rahayu & Hidayat, 2021).

2.2 Toxic Workplace Environment

A toxic workplace environment is a state of discomfort that occurs within a work environment caused by individuals present in that environment, which can disrupt those within it Balqist et al (2023). According to Damaro (2023), a toxic workplace environment can lead to violence in the workplace, which may manifest as physical violence or threats directed at individuals in a workplace, as well as verbal violence such as verbal harassment, spreading rumors, and derogatory remarks that can psychologically affect individuals and disrupt their work. A toxic work environment is one in which employees are subject to hostile and offensive leadership, threats from superiors and peers, bullying, harassment, and social exclusion. (Rasool et al., 2021). Employees tend to spend a significant amount of time in their work environment, not only to perform tasks but also to socialize with other employees; therefore, it is essential to maintain good relationships among employees (Shabnam et al., 2020).

2.3 Employee Performance

Employee performance is the process demonstrated by an employee in achieving organizational goals, including achievements and work effectiveness (Widyanty & Prasetya, 2023). According to (Situmorang et al., 2023), employee performance can be a benchmark for making decisions about promotions, compensation, employee training, and employment relationships. Quality and quantity of outcomes, efficiency and collaboration, punctuality of results, and presence at work are all ways to measure an employee's success. (D. L. Sari et al., 2021). Companies need to enhance employee performance to achieve organizational goals because if the human resources within a company perform well, it will contribute to its success in achieving its objectives (Suswati, 2020).

2.4 Employee Engagement

When workers are engaged, they care deeply about the company's success and its principles, and they want to work hard not only for the paycheque but also to make a difference (Ramdan et al., 2022). According to Visco & Sen (2001) a sense of vigor can characterize employee engagement in performing organizational tasks, dedication to one's role, and absorption in one's work. The feeling of engagement possessed by an individual in an organization is crucial, as individuals with a sense of engagement can become loyal to the organization (Wicaksono & Rahmawati, 2020).

2.5 Intention to Leave

A person's intention to leave an organization or their employment may be defined as their conscious and intentional decision to do so (Basalamah et al., 2023). According to Salama et al (2022), an individual is said to have the intention to leave an organization if they have considered

resigning from their current job, are actively seeking new employment within a year, and if allowed to obtain a better job, they would accept it immediately. Organizations need to ensure that individuals within the organization feel valued and have the desire to stay longer with the organization (Putri & Ariyanto, 2023).

3. Relationship Between Variables

3.1 Job Stress and Employee Performance

One indicator of organizational and individual success is employee performance; however, there are several factors, including job stress, that can cause employees' performance to fluctuate rapidly (Rahayu & Hidayat, 2021). Since stress in the workplace may have both beneficial and bad effects, companies must consider it. According to Firtria & Sulastri (2019) job stress at low to moderate levels can motivate employees to improve their performance and complete tasks, resulting in a positive impact. However, if the job stress experienced is high, it can disrupt employees' work, resulting in decreased performance. Several researchers have found that job stress hurts employee performance (Rahayu & Hidayat, 2021; Suswati, 2020). The higher the job stress experienced by an employee, the more likely it is to affect their performance decline, and the lower the job stress experienced by an employee, the more stable their performance will be, and may even experience an increase (Suswati, 2020).

H1: Job Stress significantly negatively affects Employee Performance.

3.2 Job Stress and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an essential aspect for organizations to consider because low employee engagement can lead to significant problems for the organization, resulting in losses in workforce, time, and resources (Suswati, 2020). The job stress experienced by an employee at the workplace can disrupt their comfort in working, thereby affecting their level of engagement (Asya & Putr, 2023). Previous researchers, such as Subiantoro & Lataruva (2022) have revealed that job stress harms employee engagement. If employee engagement within the organization is good, employees will consistently strive to ensure the organization's progress by giving their best efforts (Astuti et al., 2022).

H2: Job Stress significantly negatively affects Employee Engagement.

3.3 Job Stress and Intention to Leave

Intention to leave is essential for an organization to understand, as it can negatively impact the organization if that intention occurs (Sitohang & Tiarapuspa, 2023). Job stress can be an internal aspect that causes an employee to have the intention to leave the organization where they work (Thalia et al., 2024). Several previous researchers found research results indicating that job stress positively affects the intention to leave (Ning et al., 2023; Putri & Ariyanto, 2023; Salama et al., 2022). According to Basori et al. (2023), job stress and employee engagement are critical factors that should not be overlooked because these two factors can lead to employees' intention to leave. In addition, according to Paramarta & Darmayanti (2020); N. P. I. Sari et al. (2022), job stress and employee engagement are two important factors that can lead to employees' intention to leave.

H3: Job stress significantly negatively affects the intention to leave.

3.4 Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Performance

In order to reduce the likelihood of a hazardous work environment, management should keep an eye on the office setting (Tanoto, 2024). A toxic workplace manifested in the form of narcissistic behaviour, harassment, aggressive leadership, ostracism, and bullying can affect employee performance (Damaro, 2023). Previous researchers by Shabnam (2020), revealed that a toxic workplace harms employee performance. If employees feel uncomfortable in their work environment, their performance can be lower. Balqist et al. (2023) it was also stated that a toxic workplace will negatively impact employee performance.

H4: A toxic workplace environment significantly negatively affects employee performance.

3.5 Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Engagement

A toxic work environment results in lower employee engagement, which is bad for business and for the people working there if the toxicity level is too high (Rasool et al., 2021). A toxic

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workplace environment can pose a severe threat to both individuals and organizations, as continuously being in a toxic environment can result in reduced individual employee engagement, decreased motivation, and diminished efforts to contribute their best to the organization (Soqair & Gharib, 2023). Saleem et al. (2020) revealed that a toxic workplace can adversely affect employee engagement, necessitating the minimization of such environments. Research findings from Kurniawan et al. (2023); Rasool et al. (2021); Soqair & Gharib (2023) also indicate a negative impact of toxic workplaces on employee engagement.

H5: A toxic workplace environment significantly negatively affects employee engagement.

3.6 Toxic Workplace Environment and Intention to Leave

Positive feelings towards a good work environment significantly impact employee turnover; if there is a toxic workplace environment, it can lead to employee dissatisfaction with their workplace (Iqbal et al., 2022). This dissatisfaction resulting from a toxic workplace environment can become severe as it may trigger employees' intention to leave (Moffat et al., 2023). Research findings from Al Muala et al. (2022); Iqbal et al. (2022); Moffat et al. (2023) indicates that a toxic workplace environment positively affects employees' intentions to leave. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain a work environment free from toxic behaviours to minimize employees' intentions to leave.

H6: A toxic workplace environment significantly positively affects the intention to leave.

3.7 Employee Performance and Intention to Leave

Workers who are happy and fulfilled in their work are less likely to consider leaving (Situmorang et al., 2023). When employees exhibit good performance, it indicates their desire to remain longer within the organization, thus leading to a lower intention to leave (Aziz, 2021). Research findings from Suswati (2020) show that employee performance harms the intention to leave. Hidayat & Tannady (2023); Widyanty & Prasetya (2023) indicates that good employee performance can lead to rewards and benefits for the organization, as employees with good performance are likely to reduce their intention to leave.

H7: Employee performance significantly negatively affects the intention to leave.

3.8 Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

Employees with high employee engagement tend to show good employee performance (Ramdan et al., 2022). Employees with high levels of engagement tend to perform their best in carrying out their work and will do their work by trying to achieve the maximum to achieve organizational goals (Wicaksono & Rahmawati, 2020). Research by Amanda et al. (2023) shows a positive relationship between employee engagement and performance. Wicaksono & Rahmawati (2020) also revealed that employee engagement positively influences employee performance, which means that if employee engagement is higher, employee performance will also be high.

H8: Employee engagement significantly positively affects employee performance.

3.9 Employee Engagement and Intention to Leave

Intention to leave among employees can arise in those with low levels of employee engagement (Rahmadani et al., 2023). Employees with low employee engagement levels should be a concern for organizations as it can lead to the emergence of intention to leave (Adelia et al., 2024). Research by Lahat & Marthanti (2021); Paramarta & Darmayanti (2020); Utami & Siswanto, (2021) concerning the effect of employee engagement on intention to leave, it has been found that there is a negative correlation between the two. Additionally, Wiryadinata (2023) found that employee performance can mediate the relationship between employee engagement and intention to leave.

H9: Employee engagement significantly negatively affects the intention to leave.

3.10 Employee Performance as a Mediator of Job Stress and Intention to Leave

Employees' intentions to leave are positively correlated with their level of job stress Derrick (2022); Febrisi (2022); Paramarta & Darmayanti (2020), a direct relationship between the variable job stress and employee performance Hakim et al. (2023), and a direct relationship between the variable employee performance and intention to leave (Widyanty & Prasetya, 2023). In previous studies, there was a significant influence between the variable job stress and intention to leave that

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can be mediated by employee performance (Suswati, 2020). Employee performance mediates job stress and intention to leave, providing insight into the nature of the link between the two.

H10: Job stress significantly affects intention to leave, mediated by employee performance.

3.11 Employee Engagement as a Mediator of Job Stress and Intention to Leave

Employees' intentions to leave are positively correlated with their level of job stress (Febrisi, 2022), a direct relationship between the variable job stress and employee engagement (Asya & Putri, 2023; Muchtadin & Emmelya Sundary, 2023), and a direct relationship between the variable employee engagement and intention to leave (Paramarta & Darmayanti, 2020). Previous research has shown that employee involvement mediates the relationship between job stress and intention to leave (N. P. I. Sari et al., 2022). As a mediator, employee engagement will illuminate the connection between work stress (the independent variable) and intention to leave (the dependent variable).

H11: Job stress positively affects the intention to leave, mediated by employee engagement.

3.12 Employee Engagement as a Mediator of Toxic Workplace Environment and Intention to Leave

There is a direct relationship between the variable toxic workplace environment and the intention to leave (Xia et al., 2023), a correlation between the dependent variable of hazardous work environment and the dependent variable of employee engagement (Kurniawan et al., 2023), there is a clear correlation between employee engagement and intention to leave (Paramarta & Darmayanti, 2020). In previous studies, there was a negative influence between a toxic workplace environment and intention to leave that can be mediated by employee engagement (Monica & Megawati, 2021; Naeem & Khurram, 2020; Yasmin & Mubarak, 2021). Employee engagement will act as a mediator and illuminate the connection between the two variables, the toxic work environment as an independent variable and the intention to leave as a dependent one.

H12: Toxic Workplace Environment positively affects intention to leave, mediated by employee engagement.

3.13 Employee Performance as a Mediator of Employee Engagement and Intention to Leave

The likelihood that an employee would quit is proportional to their level of involvement with their work (Paramarta & Darmayanti, 2020), a direct relationship between the variable employee engagement and employee performance (Amanda et al., 2023; Wicaksono & Rahmawati, 2020), and a direct relationship between employee performance and intention to leave (Suswati, 2020; Widyanty & Prasetya, 2023). In previous studies, there was a significant influence between employee engagement and intention to leave that can be mediated by employee performance (Otoo, 2022). Employee performance is a mediator between employee engagement (the independent variable) and intention to leave (the dependent variable), providing insight into the link between the two.

H13: Employee engagement significantly negatively affects intention to leave, mediated by employee performance.

3.14 Conceptual framework

According to prior research, job stress affects workers' engagement, performance, and intention to leave their current positions. Employee engagement and performance are all negatively impacted by a toxic work environment. Both employee engagement and performance influence the intention to leave, and performance is influenced by employee engagement. Performance and engagement moderate the relationship between job stress and the intention to leave. When employees are engaged in their jobs, they are less likely to leave a toxic work environment, and when they are engaged, they are less likely to leave a poorly performing workplace. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is described in a conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1.

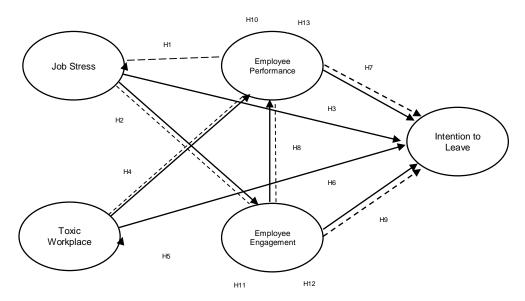


Figure 1. Research conceptual framework

4. Research Method

The researchers in this study employed quantitative methods and a causal associative research design. A Google Forms questionnaire was sent out to participants to gather the primary data for this study. In this study, we used a purposive sample strategy based on the following parameters, and our questionnaires were designed using a Likert scale with possible values between 1 and 5: 1) currently working in a startup in Indonesia; 2) employees aged 12 to 27 years (Gen Z) in Indonesia; 3) has been working in a startup for at least 6 months. The population in this study consists of employees working in startups in Indonesia. The sample size for this study is determined based on calculations using the Lemeshow formula ($n = \frac{Z^2 P (1-P)}{d^2}$) due to the total population being unknown, this study requires a minimum of 100 respondents as a sample for the research (Slamet & Aglis, 2020).

The data was examined by applying CB-SEM with AMOS Version 26, which stands for Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling, to analyze the study's relationships between latent and manifest variables. The instrument requirement test was conducted using validity tests to assess whether the statement items used as research instruments were appropriate, checking if the loading factor value was ≥ 0.70 , in which case the research instrument could be considered valid. Reliability was assessed through AVE > 0.5 and CR > 0.7. The reliability test was conducted to measure how well the questionnaire can be regarded as an indicator of the intended variable (Hair et al., 2021). The Goodness of Fit Index evaluation was performed to assess the feasibility of the constructed research model based on the results of CIMN/DF ≤ 3 , CFI ≥ 0.90 , TLI ≥ 0.90 , RMSEA ≤ 0.08 , and GFI ≥ 0.90 (Hair et al., 2021). Hypothesis testing was evaluated using the Critical Ratio (>1.96) or P-Value (<0.05) and the comparison of t-statistic and t-table to examine the correlation between variables through Sobel's calculation.

5. Results And Discussions

5.1 Characteristics of Respondents

This study involved 283 respondents; however, after conducting an outlier check, 202 respondent data were deemed suitable to be retained for hypothesis testing. Here are the characteristics of the participants in this study:

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Item	Frequency (N=202)	(%)
Gender	Man	127	62.87%
	Woman	75	37.13%

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Age	17 – 20 years	32	15.84%
-	21 - 24 years	133	65.84%
	25-27 years	37	18.32%
Education	Senior High School	133	65.84%
	Bachelor/Diploma	68	33.66%
	Postgraduate (S2/S3)	1	0.50%
Work Area	Eastern Indonesia	26	12.87%
	Central Indonesia	28	13.86%
	Western Indonesia	151	74.75%
Length of Work	< 1 years	80	39.60%
	1-2 years	92	45.54%
	> 3 years	30	14.85%

Source: Processed data (2024)

There are 202 total responders; 127 are men (37.13% of the total), and 75 are female (62.87%). Among those who took the survey, 133 (or 65.84%) were between the ages of 21 and 24, while 37 (18.32%) were between the ages of 25 and 27, and 32 (15.84%) were between the ages of 17 and 20. In terms of education, 133 respondents (65.84%) hold a Bachelor's/Diploma degree, 68 (33.66%) have a high school education, and 1 (0.50%) have a Master's degree. The majority of respondents work in Western Indonesia (151 individuals, 74.75%), followed by Eastern Indonesia (26 individuals, 12.87%) and Central Indonesia (28 individuals, 13.86%). Regarding work experience, 80 respondents (39.60%) have less than 1 year of experience, 92 (45.54%) have 1-2 years, and 30 (14.85%) have more than 3 years.

5.2 Validity and Reliability

Data validity was assessed based on the loading factor results, where if the loading factor value \geq 0.7, the research instrument can be considered valid (Hair et al., 2021). Reliability was assessed through AVE > 0.5 and CR > 0.7. There were 34 statement items in this study with the following loading factor results:

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Result

Variable	IC	Item		Validity Test		Reliability Test		
			LF	Decisisi	CA	\mathbf{AV}	Decisi	
				on		E	on	
Job Stress (JS)	JS1	I have limited time off at work and often work overtime.	0,89 9	Valid	_			
(D. L. Sari et al.,	JS2	I had trouble adapting to the new work system.	0,89 8	Valid				
2021)	JS3	I feel that leaders do not provide enough direction for improvement when I make work mistakes.	0,95 7	Valid	0,97 6	0,87 4	Reliabl e	
	JS4	I feel that the tasks given are not to my abilities.	0,94 4	Valid	_			
	JS5	I feel that my working conditions are not comfortable.	0,95 5	Valid	_			
	JS6	I find it difficult to solve problems with coworkers.	0,95 7	Valid	_			
Toxic Workplac	T W1	My leader/coworkers tend to ignore other people's opinions.	0,89 8	Valid				
e (TW)	T W2	I feel that my leader speaks in a high tone when giving directions.	0,94 4	Valid	0,97 6	0,87 3	Reliabl e	
(Rasool et al., 2021)	T W3	I have received direct threats from superiors/coworkers.	0,89	Valid	_			

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	T W4	I have seen bullying/social harassment at work.	0,95 2	Valid			
	T	I have seen unfair treatment in the	0,95	X 7 1' 1	-		
	W5	workplace.	6	Valid			
	T	I have felt neglected at work.	0,96	Valid	•		
	W6		1	Vana			
Employee	EP	I always complete work	0,88	Valid			
Performa	1	according to quality standards.	9		-		
nce (EP)	EP 2	I always achieve my work targets.	0,88 5	Valid			
(D. L.	EP	I strive to increase productivity at	0,93	Valid	0,96	0,84	Reliabl
Sari et al.,	3	work.	8	vanu	4	5	e
2021)	EP	I can complete my work on time.	0,94	Valid			
	4	X1 1 1 C	4		<u>-</u>		
	EP 5	I have never taken leave for no apparent reason.	0,94 9	Valid			
Employee	EE	I am always diligent and thorough	0,89				
Engagem	1	in my work.	1	Valid			
ent	EE	I am enthusiastic about my work.	0,88			0.01	D 11 11
(EE)	2	,	7	Valid	0,92	0,81 3	Reliabl
(Visco &	EE	I am always focused and	0,92		9	3	e
Sen,	3	passionate about my work.	8	Valid			
2001)	** 4						
Intention	IL1	Right now, I am seriously	0,86	X7 1' 1			
to Leave		considering resigning from my	7	Valid			
(IL) (Salama	IL2	job. Lately, I have been looking for	0,87		0,90	0.76	Reliabl
et al.,	IL2	information on job vacancies.	4	Valid	5	0,76 1	e Reliabl
2022)	IL3	I would consider the opportunity	0.97		-		
		to work elsewhere even if it is not	0,87 7	Valid			
		better than my current job.	,		<u>-</u> .		
M_{24} , $I E > 0$	70. 4	VE > 0.50, IC (Itam Codo), IE (I o	- 1: T	74	(C1-	1-1 1-	1. a). A X/II

Note: LF \geq 0,70; AVE \geq 0,50; IC (Item Code); LF (Loading Factor); CA (Cronbach's alpha); AVE (Average Variance Extracted)

The loading factor results of each statement all met the criteria (≥ 0.7), which proves that all items in this study are considered valid. The AVE values of the five research variables are above 0.5, and the CA values are above 0.7, demonstrating the consistency or stability of the measurement results from a research instrument.

5.3 Goodness-of-fit

Goodness-of-fit evaluation (Goodfit) assesses the suitability of the constructed research model. The model fit of this research is as follows:

Table 3. Goodness-of-Fit Results

Indicator	Match	Level	Estimation	References	Fit
	Target		Result		Measurement
CMIN/DF	≤ 3		$X^2/df = 2,725$		Fit
IFI	\geq ,90		,949		Fit
TLI	\geq ,90		,942		Fit
CFI	\geq ,90		,949		Fit
NFI	\geq ,90		,922	(Hair et al., 2021)	Fit
RFI	\geq ,90		,911		Fit
RMSEA	\leq ,08		,093		Bad Fit
RMR	≤,05		,918		Bad Fit
GFI	≥,90		,814	<u></u>	Bad Fit

Overall, this research model's goodness-of-fit results have met the model feasibility indices' standards. The CMIN/DF (Chi-Square/Degree of Freedom Ratio) value is used to assess whether the theoretical model constructed aligns with the obtained data. A CMIN/DF value of 2.725 (\leq 3) indicates that the model fit is quite good. The Incremental Fit Index (IFI) with a value of 0.949 (>0.90) signifies the fit of the research model compared to the baseline (null model). The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), with a value of 0.942 (>0.90), measures the model fit while considering the number of parameters used in the constructed research model. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), with a value of 0.949 (>0.90), assesses how well the proposed model fits the data compared to the independent model. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Relative Fit Index (RFI) also have values above 0.90, indicating they pass the fit index requirements. Values of IFI, TLI, CFI, NFI and RFI approaching 1 indicate that the model fits well. Almost all goodness-of-fit values meet the required criteria, with indicators that struggled to meet the targets being RMSEA, RMR, and GFI. However, the research model can be accepted because the other feasibility index standards are met by more than 3-4 with a "Fit" category (Hair et al., 2021).

5.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using CB-SEM analysis to determine the direct and indirect relationships between variables. There are 13 hypotheses in this study, with the following test results:

Hypoth	esis - Path	Estimate	CR	P-Value	Result				
Direct Effect									
H1 (-)	$JS \rightarrow EP$	-0,137	-2,431	0,015	accepted				
H2 (-)	$JS \rightarrow EE$	-0,397	-6,119	***	accepted				
H3(+)	$JS \rightarrow IL$	0,227	3,71	***	accepted				
H4 (-)	$TW \rightarrow EP$	-0,204	-3,2	0,001	accepted				
H5 (-)	$TW \rightarrow EE$	-0,557	-8,457	***	accepted				
H6 (+)	$TW \rightarrow IL$	0,214	3,085	0,002	accepted				
H7 (-)	$EP \rightarrow IL$	-0,276	-2,915	0,004	accepted				
H8 (+)	$EE \rightarrow EP$	0,524	7,3	***	accepted				
H9 (-)	$EE \rightarrow IL$	-0,214	-2,306	0,021	accepted				
Indirec	t Effect		t Statistic	t Table	-				
H10	$JS \rightarrow EP \rightarrow IL$	0,033	1,851	1,972	rejected				
(+)									
H11	$JS \rightarrow EE \rightarrow IL$	0,166	2,153	1,972	accepted				
(+)									
H12	$TW \rightarrow EE \rightarrow IL$	0,179	2,220	1,972	accepted				
(+)					-				
H13 (-	$EE \rightarrow EP \rightarrow IL$	-0,158	-2,698	1,972	accepted				
)					-				

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Note: JS (Job Stress); TW (Toxic Workplace); EP (Employee Performance); EE (Employee Engagement); IL (Intention to Leave); CR (Critical Ratio)

The hypothesis that Job Stress has a significant negative effect on employee performance (H1) is accepted with a p-value of 0,015, indicating that higher levels of job stress lead to lower employee performance. Job stress also significantly negatively impacts employee engagement (H2), with a strong p-value (p < 0.001). H3 shows that Job Stress has a significant positive effect on the intention to leave (p < 0.001), meaning higher job stress increases the likelihood of employees leaving the organization. Hypotheses related to toxic workplaces also yield significant results. H4 and H5 are accepted, with toxic workplaces having a significant negative effect on employee performance (p = 0.001) and employee engagement (p < 0.001). A toxic workplace (H6) is also a significant positive predictor of intention to leave (p = 0.002). H7 is accepted; employee performance significantly negatively affects the intention to leave (p = 0.004), meaning better performance reduces the intention to leave. H8 is accepted; employee engagement significantly positively affects

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employee performance (p < 0.001), indicating that higher engagement corresponds to higher performance. H9 is accepted, with employee engagement significantly negatively affecting Intention to Leave (p = 0.021).

In the mediation test, hypotheses H11, H12, and H13 are accepted because the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table (1,972), indicating that employee engagement significantly mediates between job stress and intention to leave and between toxic workplace and intention to leave. However, hypothesis H10, which states that employee performance mediates the relationship between job stress and intention to leave, is rejected because the t-statistic (1,851) is lower than the t-table (1,972). This indicates that in the context of this study, employee performance does not significantly mediate between job stress and the intention to leave.

6. Discussion

Based on the results of this research, job stress and toxic workplaces are serious concerns regarding intention to leave among Gen Z employees working in startup companies. High levels of job stress can lead employees to have an intention to leave, either as a self-protection measure to avoid over-stress or to seek jobs where job stress levels can be better managed. The higher the job stress felt by an employee, the greater the intention to leave, which aligns with findings from previous studies (Ning et al., 2023; Putri & Ariyanto, 2023; Salama et al., 2022). High job stress negatively impacts employee performance and engagement, consistent with earlier research indicating that high levels of job stress can reduce employee performance (Firtria & Sulastri, 2019; Rahayu & Hidayat, 2021; Suswati, 2020) and decrease employee engagement (Subiantoro & Lataruva, 2022). This indicates that companies should pay more attention to the factors causing work stress to maintain employee performance and engagement.

This study also found that a toxic workplace negatively impacts employee performance and engagement. Gen Z, known for their serious attention to their work environment, is vulnerable to increased Intention to leave when faced with toxic treatment at work. Intention to Leave emerges as employees seek to avoid a toxic environment. These results support previous research emphasizing that toxic workplace behaviours, such as bullying or ostracism, can reduce employee performance (Shabnam et al., 2020) and decrease employee engagement (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Rasool et al., 2021; Soqair & Gharib, 2023). A toxic workplace can lead employees to have an intention to leave if left unaddressed (Al Muala et al., 2022; Iqbal et al., 2022; Moffat et al., 2023). To keep its employees from wanting to quit, businesses can make the workplace healthier and more supportive.

Good performance demonstrated by employees indicates that they consistently strive to contribute maximally to the company. Similarly, when employees exhibit good engagement, evidenced by their vigour in completing organizational tasks, dedication to their roles, and absorption in their work, they contribute maximally to the company. Good employee performance can positively impact the company, leading to lower intention to leave among employees. This finding aligns with research by Hidayat & Tannady (2023); Suswati (2020); Widyanty & Prasetya (2023). Additionally, good employee engagement allows employees to enjoy their work, resulting in a lower intention to leave. This study supports findings from research conducted by Lahat & Marthanti (2021); Paramarta & Darmayanti (2020); Utami & Siswanto (2021). High levels of employee engagement can trigger higher performance levels among employees, as shown in studies by Amanda et al. (2023); Wicaksono & Rahmawati (2020). Companies must continuously maintain good performance and engagement among their employees, as this will have a positive impact on the organization.

Employee involvement significantly moderates the association between job stress and the desire to quit and between a toxic workplace and the intention to leave. This is one of the fascinating findings of the study. Employees are more likely to consider leaving a firm when their level of involvement drops due to factors like job stress or a hostile work environment. This study's findings align with research by Julianto et al. (2024); N. P. I. Sari et al. (2022), which states that employee engagement can mediate the impact of job stress on intention to leave, and also with studies by Naeem & Khurram (2020); Tricahyadinata et al. (2020); Yasmin & Mubarak (2021), which states that employee engagement can mediate the impact of a toxic workplace on the intention to leave. On the other hand, good employee performance will support employee engagement to minimize intention to leave, which is in line with research by (Otoo, 2022).

However, in this study, employee performance does not significantly mediate the relationship between job stress and intention to leave, which differs from previous research showing

a robust mediating relationship (Suswati, 2020). This may be due to various factors, such as the unique characteristics of Gen Z employees, who prioritize work-life balance over performance alone (Salama et al., 2022). This research provides insights for startup management to ensure that their employees do not experience excessive job stress and to minimize the likelihood of leaving by reducing toxic workplace occurrences. By maintaining employee performance and engagement, it is hoped that employees can maximize their potential and reduce turnover.

7. Conclusion

According to the results, Gen Z workers in Indonesian Startups are far less invested in their work and experience higher levels of stress as a result of working in toxic environments. The higher the job stress experienced and the presence of toxic behaviour in the workplace, the more significantly it can decrease the performance and engagement of Generation Z employees in Startups. This situation can also lead to a higher intention to leave, as employees strive to protect themselves to achieve a work experience that meets their expectations. When employee performance and employee engagement are high, their intention to leave is lower. Moreover, employees can demonstrate their best performance when engaging in highly engaging activities. High engagement can also mitigate job stress and the effects of a toxic workplace, resulting in lower Intention to Leave. Similarly, employee performance is crucial, but it has little bearing on the correlation between work stress and intention to leave. This may be due to other factors that Generation Z startup employees prioritize beyond their performance.

It should be mentioned that this study has limitations: although the results provide meaningful insights, a larger sample size may have influenced the level of generalization of the findings. Nevertheless, these findings still contribute to understanding the intention to leave Generation Z employees working in Indonesian Startup companies. Increasing the sample size is recommended for future research to provide more in-depth conclusions.

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