

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND PAY EQUITY ON INTENTION TO STAY AMONG GENERATION Z WORKERS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze the effect of perceived career development opportunities and pay equity on the intention to stay among Generation Z workers in Indonesia. It also examines the mediating role of perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in these relationships. The study employs a quantitative cross-sectional approach using a survey method, collecting online questionnaire responses from 370 respondents in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). Data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM method. The findings indicate that career development opportunities have the most significant impact on the intention to stay, both directly and through the mediation of organizational support and job satisfaction. Additionally, pay equity significantly influences job satisfaction and the intention to stay, although its contribution is smaller compared to career development opportunities. This study highlights the importance of organizational strategies that promote career development and fair compensation to enhance Generation Z worker retention.

Keywords: *Career Development Opportunities, Pay Equity, Intention to Stay, Generation Z*

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, as the youngest working age group in Indonesia, plays a strategic role in capitalizing on the demographic bonus. With better access to education and technology, Generation Z has the potential to accelerate digital transformation, create innovation, and improve industrial competitiveness. Their contribution is crucial to diversifying Indonesia's economy and maximizing the benefits of the demographic bonus period (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2023). However, if the Generation Z workforce is not managed well, the demographic bonus could turn into a "demographic burden". A mismatch of skills with labor market needs, high unemployment rates, or low productivity could result in a loss of potential economic growth (Alabdullah & Kanaan-Jebna, 2023). In addition, social problems such as increased social instability and criminality can also arise as a direct consequence of poor workforce management (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2023; Zhou & Zhou, 2023).

The challenges faced by the job market and companies in managing the Generation Z workforce in Indonesia are increasingly complex, as revealed in various surveys. In Indonesia, a similar phenomenon is recorded with 30% of Generation Z workers only lasting 1-2 years before deciding to resign (Goodstat, 2024). In this context, the opinion poll survey also revealed that

86% of Generation Z respondents in Indonesia prioritize salary when seeking a job, while 78% focus on work experience, and 61% seek knowledge development (Goodstat, 2024). These three reasons rank highest compared to other factors such as expanding connections, personal satisfaction, family pride, and self-actualization. In addition, a recent survey conducted by Goodstat in August 2024 identified that 41% of Generation Z respondents chose to leave their jobs due to inadequate salary, significantly more than the reasons of getting a better job offer, exploring career options, or lack of career path in the company (Goodstat, 2024).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains the relationship between individuals and organizations as a series of reciprocal exchanges involving mutual benefit and long-term commitment. This theory states that individuals tend to stay in a relationship or organization when they perceive fair benefits, both in material and non-material forms, such as support, rewards, and recognition. In the context of Generation Z workers, SET dynamics are particularly relevant as they are more likely to value organizations that provide career development opportunities, pay equity, and an inclusive work culture (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This generation known to have high expectations of fairness and transparency, will tend to increase their intention to stay with the

organization when they feel they are treated fairly and have the full support of the workplace. Conversely, if these expectations are not met, this exchange relationship may be disrupted, affecting their level of loyalty and intention to stay with the company.

Several studies have adopted the intention construct to understand employees' decisions to stay or leave a company. One of the most widely studied variables in this context is turnover intention, which reflects an employee's intention to leave the company. Numerous studies have shown that turnover intention can serve as a useful indicator for predicting employee resignation (Mobley, 1977; Tett & Meyer, 1993). However, further research shows that intention to stay is more powerful in detecting long-term intentions to stay (Griffeth et al., 2000). A metaanalysis conducted by Lee & Kang (2018) comparing these two constructs, researchers have found that intention to stay has a more consistent and significant relationship with various positive organizational outcomes, such as work performance and job satisfaction, compared to turnover intention. This study also highlights that intention to stay is more effective in reflecting employees' commitment to the organization and is more sensitive to factors influencing their long-term decision to remain in the company. Therefore, organizations seeking to retain top talent should focus on factors affecting intention to stay, including job satisfaction, career development, and employee well-being (Meyer & NJ, 1997).

Various studies have identified several antecedents that influence intention to stay. One of the main factors found in research is pay equity, which plays an important role in shaping workers' intention to stay. Based on data from polls showing that 41% of Generation Z respondents resigned due to inadequate pay, this factor is particularly relevant in understanding its influence on workers' decisions (Goodstat, 2024). Research shows that pay inequality or perceptions of unfair pay can worsen worker loyalty, which in turn decreases the intention to stay with the company (Colquitt et al., 2001). A metaanalysis by Finkelstein et al. (2000) shows that pay equity has a significant influence on intention to stay, especially among younger generations who are more sensitive to pay inequity compared to previous generations. This suggests that in the context of Generation Z, companies should pay more attention to pay equity to retain top talent.

In addition, perceived career development opportunities also proved to be a key factor driving workers' intention to stay. Generation Z,

who tend to be more focused on self-development and continuous learning, are very concerned about opportunities to grow in their careers. A study by Allen et al. (2003) revealed that workers who feel they have sufficient opportunities to develop and move up tend to have a higher intention to stay in the company. Metaanalysis by Hom et al. (2017) also confirmed that perceived career development opportunities have a strong correlation with intention to stay, with more significant results for younger workers. In the context of Generation Z, which demands transparency and opportunities for growth, companies that are able to provide clear career paths and effective development programs will be more successful in retaining workers.

Numerous research studies indicate that the concepts of perceived organizational support (POS) and job satisfaction are critical factors in understanding employees' determination to remain with the organization. Workers' perception of the support and concern shown by the organization towards their well-being, known as perceived organizational support, has been proven to be closely linked to their desire to remain with the company. A metaanalysis by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) revealed that POS is consistently positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and acts as a key predictor of intention to stay. Employees who believe their organization appreciates and backs them are more likely to remain motivated to stay, because they see a clear link between their efforts and the recognition they receive from the organization.

In addition, job satisfaction is also a highly relevant construct in predicting intention to stay. Research by Judge et al. (2001) shows that job satisfaction has a significant relationship with workers' intention to stay in their organization. Workers who are satisfied with their jobs, including with their tasks, coworkers, and overall work environment, are more likely to stay with the company. Metaanalysis by Harter et al. (2002) also confirmed that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of intention to stay, with a clear positive correlation between satisfaction and desire to remain with the organization. For Generation Z workers, who are more focused on work-life balance, mental well-being, and relationships with coworkers, POS and job satisfaction become more important. Generation Z tends to have higher expectations of a supportive organizational culture and an emotionally healthy work environment, so these factors have a major influence on their decision to stay.

Recent research shows that both POS and job satisfaction play an important role in linking

various predictor variables to the decision to stay. For example, research by Sarmad et al. (2016) shows that POS is not only directly related to intention to stay, but also serves as a mediator between organizational support and workers' intention to stay. The findings of this research indicate that employees who believe they have strong backing from the organization are likely to experience higher job satisfaction, leading to a greater inclination to remain with the company. This discovery aligns with research by Liu et al. (2012), which identified that POS and job satisfaction act as significant mediators in the relationship between organizational commitment and intention to stay.

In addition, job satisfaction also plays a strong mediating role between various factors, such as good leadership and intention to stay. Research by Ubaid et al. (2020) shows that job satisfaction can increase intention to stay, especially among the younger generation who are

more focused on self-development and work-life balance. POS and job satisfaction here not only strengthen the relationship between workers' perceptions of their organization and the decision to stay, but also mediate the influence of other variables such as organizational commitment, career development, and working conditions on intention to stay. In this case, companies that are able to create a supportive environment and increase job satisfaction can increase the likelihood of workers to stay in the long term.

There are still few empirical studies that can demonstrate the impact of career development opportunities and perceived pay equity on employees' intention to stay in a company. While the reciprocal relationship between employees and employers may seem intuitive, explanations of how individual motivation and evaluation levels are linked to perceptions of the organization remain underexplored and lack sufficient empirical evidence.

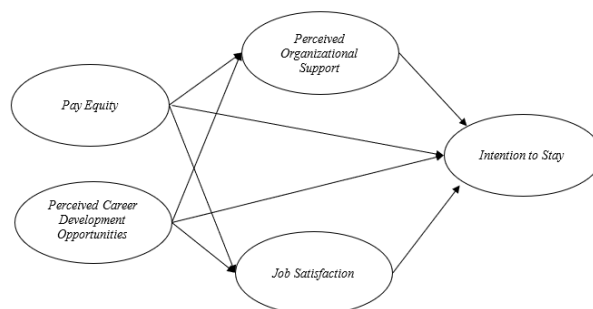


Figure 1. Research framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research is confirmatory in nature to test existing hypotheses or theories through quantitative data analysis. In addition, this research is also a cross-sectional study because research data collection is only carried out in one specific period. The sampling method used is non-probability sampling with a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling which the goal is to gather information from a wide range of participants. practically and quickly by utilizing online networks and references.

Research Population and Sample

The study's respondent population consists of Generation Z workers (born between 1997 and 2005) who are permanent employees at private companies in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek), have a minimum of two years of work experience, and have been employed at their current company for at least one year. The study initially collected 399 responses, but 29 were excluded for not meeting the eligibility criteria, resulting in a final sample of 370 respondents.

Data Collection Method and Questionnaire Design

Primary data collection was conducted using a web-based self-administrated questionnaire distributed through social media platforms. The research questionnaire consists of a statement of willingness, personal and occupational data of respondents, and questionnaire questions. This study used a total of 36 items (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.890). The personal data questions were categorical, while the questionnaire questions were measured using a Likert scale-7.

Data Analysis Method

The study will analyze the data in multiple phases, including readability testing, pre-test, and main test. The readability test was carried out with six respondents to make sure that the translated questions in the survey are clear and easy to understand. The pre-test confirmed that the questionnaire items were valid and reliable, allowing them to be used in the next stage, the main test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Demographic Data

A total of 370 respondents were obtained from the distribution of questionnaires. A total of 29 samples that did not meet the demographic

criteria were excluded from the research sample. Respondents' demographic data consisted of gender, age, length of work experience, employment level, and company sector.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Data

Gender			
Male 157 (42,4%)		Female 214 (57,6%)	
Age			
20–22 years old 30 (8,0%)	23–25 years old 162 (43,7%)		26–27 years old 179 (48,3%)
Length of Work Experience			
1–2 years 166 (44,8%)	3–4 years 154 (41,4%)	5–6 years 34 (9,2%)	7–8 years 17 (4,6%)
Position Level			
Entry Level 149 (40,2%)	Associate 179 (48,3%)	First Line Manager 34 (9,2%)	Middle Manager 9 (2,3%)
Company Sector			
Manufacturing 85 (22,9%)	Health & Education 42 (11,3%)	Retail & E-commerce 38 (10,2%)	Tech & Startup 30 (8,1%)
Logistics & Transportation 27 (7,3%)	Financial Services 26 (7,1%)	Mining 22 (5,9%)	Construction 20 (5,4%)
F&B 21 (5,6%)	Construction 20 (5,4%)	FMCG 18 (4,9%)	Creative & Media 17 (4,6%)

Source: Microsoft Excel output, reprocessed

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

All indicators have outer loading values ranging from 0.725 to 0.948, meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values for each construct range from 0.546 to 0.822, indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. In terms of reliability, the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values are both greater than 0.900, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), where all HTMT values were below the 0.850 threshold, verifying that the components in the model are unique from each other. Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test results indicate that the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than the correlations between constructs, further confirming strong discriminant validity. Based on these findings, the study's indicators demonstrate accuracy and consistency, leading to a valid and reliable conclusion, meeting the required convergent and discriminant validity criteria for the PLS-SEM model.

Model Fit Evaluation

Several indices used to assess model fit include R-squared (R^2) and Q-squared (Q^2). According to Chin (1998), the combined effect of

pay equity and perceived career development opportunities on perceived organizational support is very strong, at 70.9%. The combined effect of pay equity and perceived career development opportunities on job satisfaction is close to very strong, at 57.1%. Meanwhile, the combined effect of pay equity, perceived career development opportunities, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction on intention to stay is also close to very strong, at 60.1%. Based on the results, perceived organizational support has a near-strong predictive accuracy ($Q^2 = 0.387$), job satisfaction has a near-strong predictive accuracy ($Q^2 = 0.309$), and intention to stay has a near-strong predictive accuracy ($Q^2 = 0.491$). Therefore, after assessing the model's fit, it is apparent that the proposed research model has excellent quality in explaining and predicting the relationships between constructs, making it highly robust and valid for analytical purposes.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The multicollinearity test results show Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values that vary between 1.408 and 4.371. These results are still within the acceptable limits ($VIF < 5$), indicating a relatively low correlation between independent variables, which means that every variable in the model can be seen as its own predictor, ensuring that it does not affect the outcome of the analysis.

The processing results show that the relationship between the independent variables in the model is quite stable and does not interfere with the results of further analysis. Therefore, the analysis of direct and mediation effect hypothesis testing can be continued with the confidence that multicollinearity is not a significant problem in the model, and the model is robust or unbiased.

Hypothesis Test Results of Direct Effect and Mediation Effect

Confidence interval gives an idea of the accuracy of the path coefficient estimate with a certain level of confidence (generally 95%). If the interval does not include 0, then the relationship is considered significant (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

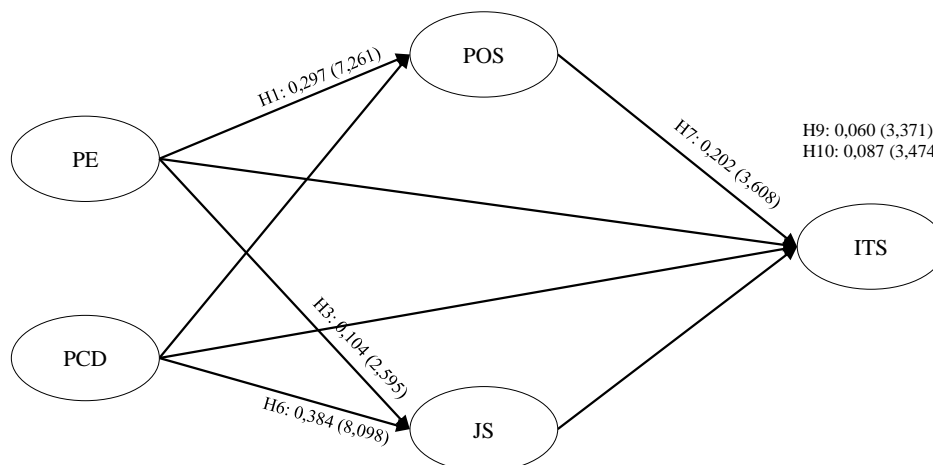


Figure 2. Inter-Variable Relationship Model

Note: PE = Pay Equity; PCD = Perceived Career Development Opportunities; POS = Perceived Organizational Support; JS = Job Satisfaction; ITS = Intention to Stay. The values presented represent path coefficients and f-square.

The Influence of Perceived Career Development Opportunities, Pay Equity, Perceived Organizational Support, and Job Satisfaction on Intention to Stay

This study found that pay equity has a significant influence on POS, job satisfaction, and intention to stay. The first finding shows that compensation equity contributes positively to perceived support from the organization. This is consistent with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which suggests that a positive reciprocal relationship between workers and organizations is created when organizations pay attention to the welfare of workers, one of which is through fair compensation. When workers feel they are treated fairly in terms of compensation, they tend to feel greater support from the organization, which in turn increases their commitment to the company (Liu et al., 2012).

Pay equity also has a significant effect on job satisfaction. The theory of justice put forward by Adams (1965) explains that workers who feel treated fairly in terms of compensation are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs. In addition, motivation theory Herzberg (1966) also stated that fair compensation is an important factor in increasing job satisfaction, because it provides a

sense of appreciation and reduces psychological tension due to injustice.

Research by Liu et al. (2012); Yusuf et al. (2020) confirmed that fairness in compensation contributes to job satisfaction, particularly among younger workers who are more sensitive to aspects of fairness and transparency in organizations. Furthermore, this study also found that pay equity affects the intention to stay with the organization. According to distributive justice theory (Adams, 1965), individuals are more likely to stay in the workplace when they feel fairly rewarded compared to their peers. Recent research has shown that workers who perceive fairness in pay distribution are more likely to have the intention to stay with the company (Cawley et al., 1998; Kaynak et al., 1996). For Generation Z, who have high expectations regarding fairness and transparency, the influence of pay equity on intention to stay is significant, as they want companies that compensate them according to their contributions (Choi et al., 2020; Twenge et al., 2010).

Perceived career development opportunities are shown to have a strong influence on perceived organizational support. For Generation Z, who are more connected to technology and have high expectations regarding career development, the opportunity to grow professionally is considered an important signal that the organization values and invests in their potential. Social organizational support theory (Blau, 1964) explains that workers

tend to perceive support for career development as a form of organizational investment, which increases their commitment and loyalty to the company. Research by Ahmad et al. (2022); Lee et al. (2021) found that career development opportunities play an important role in increasing perceptions of organizational support, especially for Generation Z, who value organizations that provide clear and supportive career development paths. Perceived career development opportunities also have a significant positive influence on job satisfaction. This suggests that the greater the career development opportunities perceived by workers, the higher their job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with motivation theory Herzberg (1966) which states that career development factors can increase job satisfaction because they provide a sense of achievement and growth. Study by Raza & Yousufi (2023) also supports this, stating that career advancement opportunities contribute to job satisfaction, especially in organizations that provide training and opportunities for growth. In addition, career development opportunities also have a positive effect on intention to stay. Generation Z, which is known for its high expectations of personal development opportunities, tends to be more loyal and committed to organizations that provide such opportunities. Organizational attachment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) supports this finding, stating that workers who feel they have opportunities to grow at work are more likely to stay. Liu et al. (2012) and Ng et al. (2021) shows that younger generations, including Generation Z, are more motivated to stay in organizations that offer clear career paths and opportunities for professional growth.

Furthermore, perceived organizational support is also shown to have a positive effect on intention to stay. Workers who feel supported and valued by the organization tend to be more committed and have a greater desire to stay. Organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) explains that perceived support from the organization strengthens workers' commitment and increases their intention to remain in the organization. Zhang et al. (2021) and Park et al. (2023) shows that Generation Z is very concerned about the support provided by the organization, especially those related to their career development and welfare. Finally, job satisfaction also has a significant effect on intention to stay. Workers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to have the intention to stay in the organization. Job satisfaction theory (Locke, 1976) supports this finding, which states that job satisfaction strengthens worker loyalty and commitment. Research by Lee et al. (2021) and Ng et al. (2021)

also confirmed that for Generation Z, satisfaction with various aspects of work, such as career development opportunities and work-life balance, increased their commitment to staying longer in the organization.

The Role of Mediating Effects on Generation Z Workers' Intention to Stay

In this study, it was found that perceived career development opportunities had the most significant influence on the intention to stay of generation Z workers, through the mediation of job satisfaction. These results suggest that when generation Z workers perceive opportunities to develop in their careers, they feel more satisfied with their jobs, which in turn increases their intention to stay in the company. Job satisfaction being a significant mediator is expected because it creates a positive environment for employees who feel valued and supported in their career development (Baker, 2022). In addition, the effect of perceived career development opportunities on intention to stay is also mediated by perceived organizational support, which shows that if workers feel they have sufficient support from the organization in terms of career development, they tend to stay longer.

This study also reveals that pay equity has a significant effect on intention to stay through two mediation paths, namely job satisfaction and perceived organizational support. Workers who feel that their pay is equal and fair tend to feel more satisfied with their jobs and more supportive of their decision to stay with the organization (Huang, 2021). This is closely related to social exchange theory, which states that individuals make decisions based on their perceptions of reciprocity in social relationships. In this context, workers feel that their contributions are valued with fair pay and opportunities for growth, which strengthens their ties to the organization and increases their intention to stay.

However, an interesting finding in this study is that the effect of pay equity on intention to stay is weaker than that of perceived career development opportunities, which contradicts the findings in several previous studies that emphasize the importance of the pay factor in employee retention. Although pay equity remains influential, these results suggest that for Generation Z workers, career development opportunities may be considered more important than pay equity in motivating them to stay in the organization. The findings also reinforce the importance of career development in the context of Generation Z, who tend to focus more on learning and development opportunities than financial incentives (Smith, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The goal of this research is to understand the impact of pay equity and perceived career development opportunities on intention to stay among Generation Z workers in Indonesia, as well as the mediating roles of perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in these relationships. The findings conclude that perceived career development opportunities have the most significant impact on Generation Z's intention to stay, particularly through the mediation of job satisfaction and organizational support. This highlights the importance of career development as a top priority for Generation Z, who tend to prioritize professional growth opportunities over financial incentives. On the other hand, pay equity also significantly influences intention to stay through the mediation of job satisfaction and organizational support, although its effect is relatively weaker compared to perceived career development opportunities. These results support social exchange theory and equity theory, suggesting that fair treatment and organizational support can enhance employees' loyalty to the organization. This study provides valuable insights for companies to develop generation-based retention strategies, emphasizing clear career development opportunities and fair compensation to enhance Generation Z workers' intention to stay.

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