

Analyzing the Effect of Compensation, Career Path, and Work Environment on Gen Z Employee Loyalty in Tangerang City with Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the frequent job-hopping behavior of Generation Z. Several surveys indicate that Gen Z tends to change jobs due to salary, opportunities for growth, and work environment. The aim of this research is to analyze the influence of compensation, career advancement, and work environment on the loyalty of Generation Z employees in Tangerang City, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This research employs a quantitative approach using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The sample consists of 187 respondents aged 15–27 years who work across various industry sectors in Tangerang City and were selected using purposive sampling. The results show that each independent variable—compensation, career advancement, and work environment—has a significant effect on both loyalty and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also has a significant influence on employee loyalty. However, job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of compensation, career advancement, and work environment on loyalty. This study highlights the importance of improving compensation packages, providing clear career paths, and fostering a supportive work environment to enhance the loyalty of Generation Z employees in Tangerang City. Future research is expected to explore other variables not measured in this study and to select respondents with experience in specific industry backgrounds.

Keywords: Career Path, Compensation, Gen Z, Job Satisfaction, Loyalty, Work Environment

INTRODUCTION

A company's growth cannot be separated from the loyalty of its employees who dedicate their time, thoughts, and energy to the company's progress over the years. Loyalty typically refers to an employee's commitment to staying with a company for a long period. According to a survey conducted by Robert Walters, a human resource consulting firm, 82% of professionals in Jakarta plan to look for a new job in 2024. Another survey by Deloitte Global in 2022 also revealed that 40% of Gen Z employees want to leave their current job within the next two years, and 35% of them are willing to resign even without securing a new job (Admin, 2023).

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, consists of individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Rosariana, 2021). Gen Z is often labeled as "job hoppers" (Nabahani & Riyanto, 2020). Jakarta Akurat.co outlined several reasons why Gen Z frequently changes jobs, including salaries that do not match job descriptions, irregular or excessive working hours, poor work culture, unclear company procedures, toxic coworkers, overwhelming job descriptions and workloads, lack of career advancement, and the absence of work-life balance (Doank, 2023). A survey by Jakpat in 2022 found that the leading factor for Gen Z employees resigning was inadequate compensation, with 64.9% citing a mismatch between salary and job responsibilities (Annur, 2023).

Another factor that contributes to Gen Z's resignation is the lack of development opportunities. This phenomenon also occurs in the United States, where a survey of 1,100 Gen Z employees indicated that their main motivation for working is self-development (Crist, 2023). A study in the UK also found that 80% of Gen Z employees left their jobs due to toxic work environments (Mayne, 2023). This suggests that the work environment is one of the key factors influencing employee retention. A study conducted by Matt explained that employees who are satisfied with the company's social and environmental impact and who perceive efforts to create a diverse and inclusive work environment tend to stay with the company for more than five years (Joffe, 2022).

Previous studies by Yasmin et al. (2022) revealed that changes in compensation have a positive and significant effect on employee loyalty. Their findings suggest that the higher the compensation provided by a company, the stronger the employee's loyalty. Work environment, compensation, and organizational culture were also found to simultaneously influence employee loyalty (Agmasari & Septyarini, 2023). Lubis and Adhitya (2024) stated that career advancement has a positive and significant impact on employee loyalty. Clear career paths lead to greater loyalty toward the company.

This study differs from previous research in terms of respondent location, company background, and research variables. It specifically targets Gen Z employees residing in Tangerang City, regardless of the industry. This means that respondents may come from various sectors, such as banking, manufacturing, hospitality, and others. Moreover, the combination of research variables used in this study is still relatively uncommon in previous studies.

The aim of this study is to identify the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, analyze the mediating role of job satisfaction between the independent and dependent variables, and examine the influence of job satisfaction on loyalty. This study observes employees aged 20 to 27 who reside in Tangerang City.

Loyalty is often associated with commitment, dedication, and mutual trust between individuals within communities, friendships, or organizations (Salim, 2022). According to Mowday, Porter, and Steers (in Yusuf, 2024), loyalty is a manifestation of organizational commitment reflected through identification, involvement, and the strength of individuals within the organization. Meanwhile, Siagian (in Abdullah et al., 2022) defines loyalty as an employee's tendency not to move to another company due to the comfort they feel in their current job. It can be concluded that loyalty is the commitment, dedication, and mutual trust of

employees toward the company, reflected in their involvement and tendency not to leave for another employer. Peloso (in Umar, 2019) outlines four indicators of loyalty: staying with the company, feeling proud, recommending the company as a workplace, and recommending its business.

It is common for employees to stay with a company due to compensation. According to Sastrohardiwiryo (in Winata, 2022), compensation is the reward given by an organization to workers for their contributions in terms of time and effort toward achieving organizational goals. Hasibuan (in Rahmat et al., 2020) defined compensation as all income in the form of money and goods, given either directly or indirectly, as a reward for services rendered to the company. Hatuwe (2022) added that compensation is the result of a worker's effort aimed at improving their standard of living. Badriyah (in Dharma et al., 2023) classified compensation into five categories: salary, incentives, bonuses, allowances, and facilities.

Many employees want to switch companies because they feel stuck in their current positions, holding the same role for an extended period without growth. Simonsen (in McDonald & Hite, 2023) explained that career advancement is a continuous process involving planning and deliberate actions to achieve goals related to work and personal life. Bairizki (2020) described career advancement as climbing the job ladder through promotions. It is also referred to as career planning. Career planning involves preparing for potential promotions or role upgrades based on an employee's abilities, which can lead to job satisfaction, improved performance, and personal development (Suprihanto & Putri, 2021). Based on the previous explanations, career advancement can be defined as the planning of rank or position promotions for capable employees to achieve both personal and job-related goals, including job satisfaction, improved performance, and personal growth. According to Cen (2022), eight indicators of career advancement include company policy, job performance, educational background, training, work experience, loyalty, competence and professionalism, and social relationships.

The work environment refers to the physical, social, and psychological conditions within a company that affect employee performance and productivity (Winata, 2022b). According to Nitisemito (in Amri et al., 2022), the work environment consists of everything surrounding the workers that influences how they perform their assigned tasks. In conclusion, the work environment encompasses all elements surrounding employees that may impact how they complete their tasks. The work environment is divided into two categories: physical and non-physical. The physical environment is influenced by six factors: lighting, workspace circulation, layout, decor, noise, and facilities. The non-physical environment includes relationships with supervisors, relationships with colleagues, and effective communication at work (Sedarmayanti in Yuliantini & Santoso, 2020).

Job satisfaction is defined as an employee's attitude toward their job, or the gap between the rewards they receive and the rewards they believe they should receive (Sinambela in Anwar et al., 2023). Saputra (2021) defined job satisfaction as a positive attitude that includes workers' feelings and behaviors related to their responsibilities, perceived as recognition for achieving significant work-related values. Ellys et al. (in Anwar et al., 2023) described job satisfaction as a psychological state and a relatively subjective perception of one's job or its aspects. In conclusion, job satisfaction is an individual's emotional, behavioral, and evaluative response to their job, depending on how they perceive the tasks or aspects of their work. The four indicators of job satisfaction include fair compensation, the work itself, coworkers, and opportunities for promotion and self-development (Setiawan, 2022).

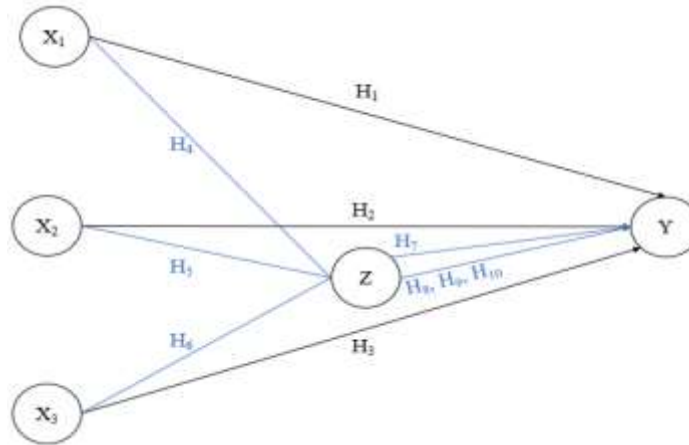
This study involves 187 employee respondents. The research phenomenon focuses on Gen Z employee loyalty and job satisfaction, often labeled as "job hopping," which will be

measured through the variables of compensation, career advancement, and work environment. This research uses a quantitative approach. Quantitative methods involve a systematic empirical investigation using statistical techniques to collect and analyze numerical data. The study emphasizes objectivity, replicability, and the application of statistical methods to generalize the conclusions (Ardyan et al., 2023).

Hypotheses

The research model consists of three independent variables: compensation, career advancement, and work environment. Job satisfaction serves as the mediating variable, and employee loyalty is the dependent variable. This model tests seven direct hypotheses and three indirect hypotheses.

Figure 1. Research Model



- X1 : Compensation
- X2 : Career Path
- X3 : Work Environment
- Y : Loyalty
- Z : Job Satisfaction

Based on the theoretical framework presented earlier, the researcher formulates the following research hypotheses:

- H1: Compensation has an effect on employee loyalty.
- H2: Career path has an effect on employee loyalty.
- H3: Work environment has an effect on employee loyalty.
- H4: Compensation has an effect on job satisfaction.
- H5: Career path has an effect on job satisfaction.
- H6: Work environment has an effect on job satisfaction.
- H7: Job satisfaction has an effect on employee loyalty.
- H8: Compensation affects employee loyalty through job satisfaction as a mediating variable.
- H9: Career path affects employee loyalty through job satisfaction as a mediating variable.
- H10: Work environment affects employee loyalty through job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this study is deductive research. Deductive research is an approach that begins with theory, hypotheses, and data collection to be empirically tested (Setyowati et al., 2021). The research method applied is a quantitative method. A quantitative method is a systematic empirical investigation using statistical techniques to collect and

analyze numerical data. This research emphasizes objectivity, replicability, and the application of statistical methods to generalize the conclusions obtained (Ardyan et al., 2023).

Population and Sample

The population is a generalization consisting of objects or subjects that possess certain qualities and characteristics defined by the researcher to be studied and concluded (Sugiyono in Poernomo, 2021). The population in this study consists of Generation Z, both male and female, born between 1997 and 2012 (Rosariana, 2021). According to Indonesian Law No. 20 of 1999 concerning the Minimum Age for Employment, the minimum legal working age is 15 years. The sample in this study comprises 165 individuals, both male and female employees aged 15 to 27 years, who live or reside in Tangerang City.

Data Collection

The data collection method uses a research questionnaire, which was developed based on indicators for each studied variable. Respondents' answers are measured using a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). This study employs the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis method, a statistical technique (Green in Zakrzewska-Bielawska et al., 2022) used to determine causal relationships between independent and dependent variables and present them graphically (Bowen & Guo in Zakrzewska-Bielawska et al., 2022).

The definitions of each variable are as follows, compensation is defined as rewards given to employees in the form of money or goods provided by the company in return for their contributions, aimed at improving their standard of living. Career path refers to the planning of promotions or job upgrades for employees, intended to achieve job satisfaction, improve job performance, and foster personal development. Work environment includes all conditions surrounding employees that may influence them in carrying out their tasks. Employee loyalty is the commitment, dedication, and mutual trust employees have toward their company, reflected in their involvement and tendency to remain with the company. Job satisfaction refers to an individual's emotional, behavioral, and evaluative responses to their job, which are relatively subjective and based on their perception of their work or its aspects.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The data analysis process consisted of several stages. First, the demographic statistics of the respondents were examined to identify the background characteristics of the research participants. Second, descriptive statistics were used to assess the research variables by identifying the minimum value, maximum value, mean, and standard deviation. Third, the outer model was tested to evaluate the validity and reliability of the data. This stage aimed to assess the quality of each questionnaire item and the consistency of respondents' answers. Fourth, the coefficient of determination (R Square) was analyzed to measure the extent to which the independent variables influence the dependent variable through the mediating variable. R Square values are categorized as follows: 0.67 indicates a strong effect, 0.33 indicates a moderate effect, and 0.19 indicates a weak effect (Musyaffi et al., 2022).

Fifth, hypothesis testing was conducted using t-tests in two ways: first, by comparing the t-statistic (t-count) with the t-table. If the t-statistic is greater than the t-table value, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected; if the t-statistic is less, H₀ is accepted. Second, by using the probability value (P Value), where a P Value of less than 0.05 indicates that H₀ should be rejected (Susanti et al., 2021). Sixth, regression equations were used to examine the magnitude of the coefficient effects of each independent variable and to assess the mediating effect on the dependent variable.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics is a method used to collect, describe, analyze, and interpret numerical data to draw conclusions (Selvia, 2020). The total number of respondents is 187 people. Of these, 52 respondents have a high school or equivalent educational background, and 136 respondents hold a bachelor's degree (S1). The majority of respondents work in the finance and banking industry, followed by the hospitality and tourism sectors, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Number of Respondents by Industry Type

Industry Type	Number of Respondents (people)
Information Technology (IT)	17
Finance & Banking	25
Manufacturing	17
E-commerce & Retail	17
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	8
Education	4
Hospitality & Tourism	20
Telecommunications	2
Energy & Natural Resources	13
Logistics & Transportation	19
Law	13
Agribusiness & Agriculture	0
Government & NGOs	3
Construction & Property	9
Media & Entertainment	18
Distribution	1
Facility Services	1
Total	187

The descriptive statistics of the research variable data are presented below:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Data

No.	Research Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Average	%
1	Compensation	1	5	3,93	78,57%
2	Career Path	1	5	3,96	79,12%
3	Work Environment	1	5	3,95	78,98%
4	Loyalty	1	5	3,97	79,36%
5	Job Satisfaction	1	5	3,92	78,49%

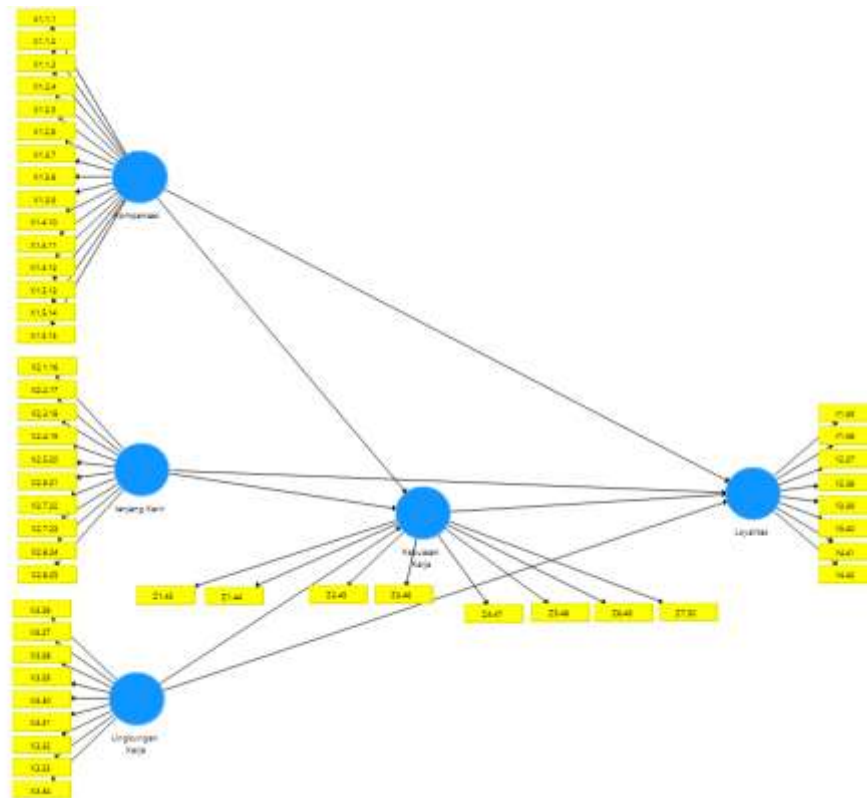
Source: Processed by the Author (2024)

The level of implementation for each variable ranges from a minimum of one to a maximum of five. The average implementation level of all variables is 3.9, which is equivalent to 78%, indicating that there is a need for an improvement of approximately 20%.

Outer Model Testing

The outer model is a measurement model that defines the relationship between each indicator and its latent variable. The purpose of the outer model test is to assess the validity and reliability of each indicator.

Figure 2. Outer Model



Source: Output SMART-PLS (2024)

To ensure convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test was conducted. An AVE value above 0.5 indicates that the construct in the study meets the validity criteria, as more than half of the variance of the indicators is successfully explained by the measured latent construct.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Compensation	0.769
Career Path	0.773
Work Environment	0.770
Loyalty	0.764
Job Satisfaction	0.766

Source: Output SMART-PLS (2024)

The next testing stage is to assess the reliability of the research constructs. Reliability is measured using two criteria: composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. A construct is considered reliable if the composite reliability score is greater than 0.7 and the Cronbach's Alpha score is greater than 0.6 (Kodarisman and Nugroho in Yuhana et al., 2024).

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Compensation	0.978	0.980

Career Path	0.967	0.971
Work Environment	0.962	0.968
Loyalty	0.956	0.963
Job Satisfaction	0.956	0.963

Source: Output SMART-PLS (2024)

Hypothesis Testing

In this study, T Statistics and P Values are used to test the hypotheses. If the T Statistics value is greater than 1.96 and the P Value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is considered accepted. The following are the results of the direct and indirect effect Path Coefficients:

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path			T-Statistics	T-Table	P Values	Result
	From	To	Through				
H ₁	CS	LY		2.417	1.96	0.001	Accepted
H ₂	CP	LY		7.269	1.96	0.000	Accepted
H ₃	WE	LY		6.443	1.96	0.029	Accepted
H ₄	CS	JS		5.035	1.96	0.000	Accepted
H ₅	CP	JS		3.375	1.96	0.016	Accepted
H ₆	WE	JS		2.898	1.96	0.004	Accepted
H ₇	JS	LY		2.187	1.96	0.000	Accepted
H ₈	CS	LY	JS	1.898	1.96	0.072	Rejected
H ₉	CP	LY	JS	1.784	1.96	0.058	Rejected
H ₁₀	WE	LY	JS	1.800	1.96	0.075	Rejected

Source: Output SMART-PLS (2024)

Note:

CS: Compensation; CP: Career Path; WE: Work Environment; LY: Loyalty; JS: Job Satisfaction

Based on the hypothesis testing results shown in Table 5, it can be concluded that seven hypotheses are accepted and three hypotheses are rejected. A hypothesis is accepted if the T-Statistics value is greater than 1.96 and the P-Value is less than 0.05. Conversely, a hypothesis is rejected if the T-Statistics is less than 1.96 and the P-Value is greater than 0.05 (Siturus & Tambun, 2023).

Coefficient of Determination (R Square)

To examine the effect of independent variables on dependent variables through a mediator, it is necessary to conduct a coefficient of determination test, also known as R-Square.

Table 6. R-Square Test

Variable	R Square	Note
Loyalty	0.995	High
Job Satisfaction	0.991	High

Source: Output SMART-PLS (2024)

In Table 6, the loyalty variable has an R-Square value of 0.995, which falls into the high category. This means the ability of compensation, career path, and work environment to influence loyalty is 99.5%. The job satisfaction variable has an R-Square value of 0.991, also categorized as high, indicating that job satisfaction influences loyalty by 99.1%.

Discussion

The first hypothesis is accepted. Based on the table, compensation has a significant effect on loyalty, with a T-Statistics value of $2.417 > 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.001 < 0.05$. This result is in line with the findings of Rizana (2020), which showed that compensation significantly affects employee loyalty. It can be said that the higher the compensation received, the higher the employee's loyalty. Other studies have also shown similar results, indicating that compensation influences employee loyalty (Ma'ruf, 2021).

The second hypothesis is accepted. Based on Table 6, career path has a T-Statistics value of $7.269 > 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning career path has a significant effect on employee loyalty. In line with these findings, previous studies have found that loyalty to the company should be accompanied by career advancement opportunities for employees (Utami & Dwiatmadja, 2020). Other studies also state that there is a positive and significant effect between career path and loyalty (Siregar et al., 2022).

The third hypothesis is accepted. The T-Statistics score for work environment in Table 6 is $6.443 > 1.96$ with a P-Value < 0.05 . It can be concluded that the work environment variable significantly affects employee loyalty. Safrida et al. (2023) stated in their research that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on loyalty. This aligns with Ratnasari et al. (2022), who found that loyalty is positively and significantly influenced by the work environment.

In Table 6, the T-Statistics score for the fourth hypothesis is $5.035 > 1.96$ and the P-Value is $0.000 < 0.05$. This means that compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction. This result is consistent with previous research, which showed that if compensation increases, job satisfaction will also increase (Hermingsih & Purwanti, 2020). Similarly, research by Tonnisen and Ie (2020) found that compensation affects job satisfaction.

The fifth hypothesis score in Table 6, namely T-Statistics $3.375 > 1.96$ and P-Value $0.016 < 0.05$, indicates that career path significantly affects job satisfaction. When career development exists, job satisfaction among employees increases significantly. This was also explained in previous findings by Rulianti and Nurlilah (2020). Other research also stated that career advancement affects job satisfaction (Sihotang, 2020).

The sixth hypothesis is accepted. The work environment has a T-Statistics score of $2.898 > 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.004 < 0.05$ in Table 6. This means that the work environment has a significant effect on job satisfaction. Previous research supports this result, stating that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Saputra, 2021). A comfortable work environment positively affects employees' job satisfaction (Indra & Rialmi, 2022).

In Table 6, job satisfaction has a T-Statistics score of $2.187 > 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.000 < 0.05$. From this score, it can be concluded that job satisfaction significantly affects employee loyalty. The more satisfied employees are with their jobs, the more loyal they become (Zein & Nirawati, 2023). Supporting this, other research has also revealed that job satisfaction positively and significantly influences employee loyalty (Sholihin & Arida, 2021).

The eighth hypothesis in this study has a T-Statistics score of $1.898 < 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.072 > 0.05$ in Table 6. Based on this result, it can be concluded that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between compensation and loyalty. This finding is supported by previous research that compensation does not affect employee loyalty through job satisfaction (Safrida et al., 2023). Widyastuti and Prabowo (2024) also stated that job satisfaction cannot mediate the effect of compensation on employee loyalty.

The ninth hypothesis is rejected. In Table 6, career path has a T-Statistics value of $1.784 < 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.058 > 0.05$. From these values, it can be concluded that job

satisfaction is not effective in mediating the effect of career path on employee loyalty. This result is consistent with previous findings, which indicated that the relationship between career development and loyalty should not be mediated by job satisfaction (Siregar et al., 2022).

The tenth hypothesis is rejected. Work environment does not have a significant effect on employee loyalty through job satisfaction as a mediator, based on Table 6, with a T-Statistics score of $1.800 < 1.96$ and a P-Value of $0.075 > 0.05$. This finding supports previous studies that state the work environment does not affect employee loyalty through job satisfaction (Safrida et al., 2023). Other research mentioned that job satisfaction weakens the influence of the work environment on employees' intention to leave or change companies (Kartika & Rezeki, 2024).

Out of ten hypotheses, it can be concluded that seven hypotheses were accepted and three were rejected. In this study, job satisfaction was found to be an ineffective mediator between the independent variables (compensation, career path, and work environment) and the dependent variable (loyalty).

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and interpretation in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that compensation has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. This result shows that satisfying compensation can increase employee loyalty. Career path has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. Clarity in career paths, promotions, and greater responsibilities will be followed by employee loyalty. Work environment has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. A comfortable workspace and positive relationships with superiors and colleagues can make employees stay and remain loyal to their companies. Compensation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. Employees with compensation packages that meet their needs tend to be more loyal. Employee job satisfaction is determined by the level of compensation provided.

Career path has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. The presence of training that supports career development and clarity in career direction affects employees' satisfaction at work. Work environment has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. Leadership that cares about the team, pleasant coworkers, and a comfortable workspace can make employees loyal to their company. On the contrary, an uncondusive workspace, irresponsible leaders, and toxic coworkers cause employees to be disloyal.

Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City. Gen Z employees who are satisfied with their work tend to be loyal and do not move to other companies. Compensation does not affect the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City when mediated by job satisfaction. Career path does not affect the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City when mediated by job satisfaction. Work environment does not affect the loyalty of Gen Z employees in Tangerang City when mediated by job satisfaction.

As this study inevitably has limitations that should be improved in future research, some of the limitations in this study include time constraints and the researcher's capabilities, respondents' limited understanding of the questionnaire statements, and honesty in filling out the questionnaire, which may lead to less accurate results. Another limitation is that this study only used a few variables that can affect employee loyalty, so future research may include other variables that were not measured in this study, such as turnover intention, work motivation, and others. In addition, this research only focused on Gen Z in Tangerang City with various industrial backgrounds. Future research may focus on specific industries to compare Gen Z loyalty levels across different sectors.

As a result of the research conducted, several recommendations can be proposed: companies located in Tangerang City should pay attention to factors that can make Gen Z employees feel satisfied with their work. The company's attention to these factors increases job satisfaction, which in turn affects employee loyalty, allowing companies to retain employees and minimize turnover. Future research can add interview methods as supporting arguments to strengthen the research results. Other variables not examined in this study, such as work-life balance, work flexibility, organizational culture, organizational commitment, leadership style, and others, can be used in future research.

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