



WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE, AND TURNOVER INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION

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Info Article Received : 01 April 2026 Revised : 05 Mei 2026 Accepted : 01 Juni 2026 Publication : 30 Juni 2026	Abstract: <i>This study examines the mediating role of job satisfaction in the effect of work-life balance and organizational justice on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees in service firms in Kendari City, Indonesia. The study responds to the phenomenon of high job mobility among young workers, who now form the largest cohort entering the national labour market yet display the shortest average tenure. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 125 Generation Z employees through purposive sampling and analysed with partial least squares structural equation modelling. Work-life balance was measured through time balance, involvement balance, satisfaction balance, and schedule flexibility; organizational justice through distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice; job satisfaction through the work itself, compensation, supervision, co-workers, and promotion; and turnover intention through the stages of the withdrawal process. The results show that work-life balance and organizational justice significantly increase job satisfaction and significantly reduce turnover intention, and that job satisfaction partially mediates both relationships, with indirect effects exceeding direct effects. Job satisfaction therefore functions as the principal mechanism converting fair treatment and manageable work boundaries into the retention of young employees.</i>
Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Organizational Justice, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Generation Z Kata Kunci Keseimbangan Kehidupan Kerja, Keadilan Organisasional, Kepuasan Kerja, Niat Keluar, Generasi Z	Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji peran mediasi kepuasan kerja dalam pengaruh keseimbangan kehidupan kerja dan keadilan organisasional terhadap niat keluar karyawan Generasi Z pada perusahaan jasa di Kota Kendari. Penelitian ini merespons fenomena tingginya mobilitas kerja pekerja muda yang kini menjadi kelompok terbesar yang memasuki pasar kerja nasional namun memiliki masa kerja rata-rata paling singkat. Menggunakan desain kuantitatif eksplanatori, data dikumpulkan dari 125 karyawan Generasi Z melalui purposive sampling dan dianalisis dengan Structural Equation Modeling berbasis Partial Least Squares. Keseimbangan kehidupan kerja diukur melalui keseimbangan waktu, keterlibatan, kepuasan, dan fleksibilitas jadwal; keadilan organisasional melalui empat dimensi keadilan; kepuasan kerja melalui lima dimensi; serta niat keluar melalui tahapan proses penarikan diri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kedua variabel bebas meningkatkan kepuasan kerja dan menurunkan niat keluar secara signifikan, serta kepuasan kerja memediasi kedua hubungan tersebut secara parsial dengan pengaruh tidak langsung yang melampaui pengaruh langsung.
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently at the peak of its demographic window, and the composition of its workforce has shifted decisively towards its youngest cohort. The 2020 Population Census recorded Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, as the largest generational group in the country, numbering approximately 74.93 million people or 27.94 per cent of the national population, followed by the millennial generation at 25.87 per cent (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). More than half a decade later, the greater part of this cohort has left formal education and entered the labour market, so that the population of productive age has continued to widen (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). In service industries, which absorb labour quickly and impose relatively flexible entry qualifications, this shift is felt earliest. Hotels, restaurants and cafes, modern retail, banking, and beauty and health services in Kendari City, the capital of Southeast Sulawesi Province, now rely heavily on young employees at the customer interface, so that the way these firms manage Generation Z has become a determinant of their operational continuity.

The problem is that this generation is also the most mobile in the history of the modern labour market. Deloitte's global surveys of Generation Z and millennials have consistently recorded that roughly four in ten Generation Z respondents intend to leave their current employer within two years, with pay, burnout, and the absence of work-life balance as the dominant reasons, while work-life balance itself is the leading consideration when they choose a new employer (Deloitte, 2022; Deloitte, 2024). Almost half of Generation Z respondents report having left a job because it did not accord with their values or provided no sense of purpose (Deloitte, 2025), and the most recent edition of the survey finds this cohort prioritising stability, sustainable workloads, and well-being over rapid promotion (Deloitte, 2026). Popular discourse has labelled these tendencies job hopping and quiet quitting, yet the pattern is more accurately read as a shift in the criteria by which young workers judge whether a job is worth keeping.

The same symptoms are visible in service firms in Kendari City, although they are rarely documented systematically. Frontline positions in this sector are commonly filled by employees aged between eighteen and twenty-eight who work in shifts, including on weekends and public holidays, at wages that hover around the provincial minimum. Shift schedules are frequently altered at short notice through informal messaging groups, overtime is not always compensated transparently, and the criteria governing bonuses, permanent status, and promotion are seldom communicated openly. Managers in the

sector report that young employees resign after only a few months, often without a clear reason, and interpret this as a lack of mental resilience. Read through the lens of human resource management, however, the same phenomenon suggests that the intention to leave is being formed by working conditions that are experienced as unbalanced and unfair, long before it is realised as an actual resignation. Every departure imposes a real cost on the firm in the form of recruitment, induction, service errors during the adjustment period, and disrupted service consistency, which is precisely why the cost of turnover is treated as a central concern of human resource management (Dessler, 2020).

Turnover intention is understood as an employee's conscious and deliberate desire to leave the organisation within a certain period, and it constitutes the strongest single predictor of actual turnover behaviour (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Griffeth et al., 2000). Mobley (1977) describes it as a sequence of psychological stages, beginning with thoughts of quitting, moving to an intention to search for alternatives, an evaluation and comparison of those alternatives, and finally an intention to leave. Robbins and Judge (2017) place this phenomenon within the broader family of withdrawal behaviours, alongside absenteeism and reduced discretionary effort, and explain employee responses to dissatisfaction through the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect framework. In that framework, exit is chosen when employees perceive no effective channel through which to voice grievances and see no reason to remain loyal, a description that fits the position of young employees in service firms whose complaint mechanisms are largely informal. Dessler (2020) adds a managerial dimension by treating retention not as an appeal to loyalty but as the outcome of a working relationship deliberately designed to be worth maintaining.

The first antecedent examined in this study is work-life balance, defined as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in, and equally satisfied with, work roles and roles outside work (Greenhaus et al., 2003). The concept originates in the observation that work and family roles impose demands that are mutually incompatible in time, strain, and behaviour (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Employees who face irregular shifts, unpredictable schedule changes, and emotional demands at the service counter carry that pressure home, and a persistent imbalance erodes their evaluation of the job as a whole. Haar et al. (2014) demonstrate across seven cultures that work-life balance raises job and life satisfaction while lowering anxiety and depression, and Aruldoss et al. (2021) confirm its relationship with job satisfaction and its consequences for the intention to remain. For Generation Z the question carries additional weight, because this cohort

entered working life during a pandemic that normalised flexibility and treats boundaries between work and personal life as a legitimate expectation rather than a privilege (Barhate & Dirani, 2022; Mahmoud et al., 2021).

The second antecedent is organizational justice, namely employees' perception of the fairness of the outcomes they receive, the procedures by which those outcomes are decided, the interpersonal treatment they experience, and the adequacy of the explanations they are given. Its theoretical foundation lies in equity theory, which holds that employees compare the ratio of their own contributions and rewards with that of relevant others and experience tension when the comparison is unfavourable (Adams, 1963). Colquitt (2001) validates the construct in four dimensions, namely distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice, and the accompanying meta-analysis establishes that all four predict job satisfaction, commitment, and withdrawal behaviour (Colquitt et al., 2001). Robbins and Judge (2017) position organizational justice as a principal determinant of employee attitudes, noting that perceptions of procedural fairness often matter more than the outcomes themselves, because they signal the employee's standing within the organisation. In the operational language of human resource management, this justice is expressed through the transparency of pay structures, the consistency of performance appraisal, and the fairness of grievance procedures (Dessler, 2020).

Job satisfaction is positioned in this study as the mediating variable. Locke (1976) defines it as a pleasurable emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job as fulfilling one's important values, while Robbins and Judge (2017) describe it as a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics, commonly measured through the work itself, pay, supervision, co-workers, and promotion opportunities. Its position as a mediator follows directly from the logic of attitude formation: working conditions do not act on behavioural intentions directly, but are first appraised, and it is that appraisal which then shapes intention. Robbins and Judge (2017) note that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is consistently negative and is moderated by the availability of alternative employment, an observation of particular relevance to young employees in the service sector, where alternative vacancies are comparatively easy to find. Meta-analytic evidence positions job satisfaction as one of the most robust predictors of turnover intention (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Griffeth et al., 2000). Empirical research on this subject has developed considerably. Studies of work-life balance and organizational justice generally establish

their effects on job satisfaction and turnover intention across a range of settings (Haar et al., 2014; Aruldoss et al., 2021; Colquitt et al., 2001). Generational research adds that the youngest cohort differs in the weight it assigns to particular job attributes, placing flexibility, developmental support, and transparent treatment above titles and long-term tenure (Ng et al., 2010; Mahmoud et al., 2021; Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Nevertheless, a review of these studies discloses several gaps. First, most were conducted in metropolitan areas or in countries with well-established human resource systems, so that little is known about whether the same mechanism operates in medium-sized cities where human resource practices remain semi-formal. Second, work-life balance and organizational justice are usually examined separately, although in frontline service work employees experience the two simultaneously, since an unfair shift schedule is at once a temporal burden and a procedural grievance. Third, studies specifically addressing Generation Z employees in the service sector of eastern Indonesia were not found in the available literature, and it is this gap that the present study seeks to address.

Based on the theoretical review and prior studies, this study proposes seven hypotheses. First, work-life balance positively affects the job satisfaction of Generation Z employees, because manageable role boundaries reduce inter-role conflict and allow employees to appraise their work positively (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Haar et al., 2014). Second, organizational justice positively affects job satisfaction, because fair outcomes, procedures, treatment, and explanations confirm the employee's value to the organisation (Adams, 1963; Colquitt et al., 2001). Third, work-life balance negatively affects turnover intention, because persistent role conflict makes leaving appear the only available resolution (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Fourth, organizational justice negatively affects turnover intention, because injustice with no effective avenue for voice pushes employees towards exit (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Fifth, job satisfaction negatively affects turnover intention (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Griffeth et al., 2000). Sixth and seventh, job satisfaction mediates the effects of work-life balance and of organizational justice on turnover intention, because both operate through employees' appraisal of their work before materialising as intention. Accordingly, this study aims to analyse these seven relationships among Generation Z employees of service firms in Kendari City, and to contribute theoretically to the human resource management and organizational behaviour literature as well as practically to service firm managers in the region.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study aims to test hypotheses concerning causal relationships among work-life balance, organizational justice, job satisfaction, and turnover intention on the basis of numerical data that can be measured objectively. The explanatory design is used to explain the effects and relationships among variables and to test previously developed theories in the context of service firms in Kendari City. The population of this study comprises all Generation Z employees of service firms in Kendari City, covering the subsectors of hotels and lodging, restaurants and cafes, banking and financial institutions, modern retail, and beauty and health services. Because the exact number of employees of this generation across the subsectors is not available in official databases, the population is treated as unknown and the sample size was determined by reference to sample adequacy rules for SEM-PLS, namely a minimum of ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a single construct, together with the recommended minimum of 100 respondents for models of moderate complexity. The study targeted 125 respondents to anticipate incomplete or invalid responses. Purposive sampling was applied with the following criteria: (1) employees born between 1997 and 2012 who were working in service firms in Kendari City at the time of data collection; (2) holding non-managerial status; (3) having worked at the firm for at least six months, so as to have had sufficient experience of its scheduling practices, pay decisions, and treatment by supervisors; and (4) willing to participate as respondents.

This study involves four variables. First, work-life balance as the first independent variable (X1), measured through four dimensions: time balance, involvement balance, satisfaction balance, and schedule flexibility, adapted from Greenhaus et al. (2003) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Second, organizational justice as the second independent variable (X2), measured through four dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, and informational justice, adapted from Colquitt (2001). Third, job satisfaction as the mediating variable (Z), measured through five dimensions: the work itself, compensation, supervision, co-workers, and promotion opportunities, adapted from Robbins and Judge (2017) and Locke (1976). Fourth, turnover intention as the dependent variable (Y), measured through four dimensions: thoughts of quitting, intention to search for alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, and intention to leave, adapted from Mobley (1977). All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires to respondents.

Data collection began with the development of the questionnaire instrument, followed by pilot testing with 30 respondents to examine validity and reliability. The questionnaire was then distributed online through Google Forms and offline at respondents' workplaces outside peak service hours, with prior permission obtained from firm management. Because turnover intention is a sensitive subject that respondents may be reluctant to disclose to their employers, respondent anonymity was guaranteed, questionnaires were not collected through supervisors, and respondents were informed that the data would be reported only in aggregate form.

Data analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares approach using SmartPLS version 4.0. This method was selected because it can analyse complex relationships among latent variables with multiple indicators simultaneously, performs effectively with relatively small samples, and can test mediating effects within a single model. The analytical stages comprised: (1) descriptive analysis of respondent characteristics; (2) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through convergent validity testing (loading factor > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50) and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion), as well as reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70); and (3) evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the hypotheses through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study successfully collected data from 125 Generation Z employees of service firms in Kendari City who met the research criteria. Respondent characteristics reveal several patterns relevant to this study. The predominance of respondents aged between twenty and twenty-five reflects the entry of the youngest cohort into the service labour market, while the concentration of tenure in the six-month to two-year category indicates the short average tenure that characterises frontline work in this sector. The distribution of education, dominated by senior secondary, vocational secondary, and diploma graduates, corresponds to the qualification profile of positions that prioritise interpersonal skills over formal educational attainment.

Validity and Reliability Test Results

Convergent validity testing was conducted to assess the extent to which the indicators of each construct represent the latent variable being measured. Convergent

validity was evaluated through loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE
Work-Life Balance	Time Balance	0.862	0.741
	Involvement Balance	0.849	
	Satisfaction Balance	0.877	
	Schedule Flexibility	0.858	
Organizational Justice	Distributive Justice	0.881	0.768
	Procedural Justice	0.893	
	Interactional Justice	0.864	
	Informational Justice	0.872	
Job Satisfaction	The Work Itself	0.856	0.734
	Compensation	0.874	
	Supervision	0.851	
	Co-workers	0.843	
Turnover Intention	Promotion Opportunities	0.862	0.779
	Thoughts of Quitting	0.885	
	Intention to Search for Alternatives	0.897	
	Evaluation of Alternatives	0.868	
	Intention to Leave	0.881	

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

As shown in Table 1, all indicators across the four variables display loading factor values above the 0.70 threshold, ranging from 0.843 to 0.897. In addition, the AVE value of each construct exceeds 0.50. These results indicate that the research instrument has met the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X1 (Work-Life Balance)	0.907	0.912
X2 (Organizational Justice)	0.921	0.925
Z (Job Satisfaction)	0.91	0.916
Y (Turnover Intention)	0.928	0.931

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

As shown in Table 2, all constructs have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70. This indicates that the research instrument possesses high internal consistency and is suitable for the subsequent stage of analysis.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

Evaluation of the structural model was conducted to test the causal relationships among latent variables. Hypothesis testing used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples at a 5% significance level. A summary of the test results is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Effect	Path Coef. (β)	t-statistic	p-value	Sig.	Result
Direct Effects						
H1.	WLB (X1) -> JS (Z)	0.398	5.126	0	Sig.	Supported
H2.	OJ (X2) -> JS (Z)	0.472	6.238	0	Sig.	Supported
H3.	WLB (X1) -> TI (Y)	-0.187	2.314	0.021	Sig.	Supported
H4.	OJ (X2) -> TI (Y)	-0.213	2.706	0.007	Sig.	Supported
H5.	JS (Z) -> TI (Y)	-0.549	6.874	0	Sig.	Supported
Indirect Effects (Mediation)						
H6.	WLB (X1) -> JS (Z) -> TI (Y)	-0.218	4.032	0	Sig.	Supported
H7.	OJ (X2) -> JS (Z) -> TI (Y)	-0.259	4.517	0	Sig.	Supported
Note: WLB = Work-Life Balance (X1); OJ = Organizational Justice (X2); JS = Job Satisfaction (Z); TI = Turnover Intention (Y). R-square: JS = 0.647; TI = 0.694						

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

The test results in Table 3 show that Work-Life Balance (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (Z), with a path coefficient of 0.398, a t-statistic of 5.126, and a p-value of 0.000 (H1 supported). Organizational Justice (X2) likewise has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.472, a t-statistic of 6.238, and a p-value of 0.000 (H2 supported). The larger coefficient on the justice path indicates that, among the young employees studied, perceptions of fair treatment contribute more to job satisfaction than the balance of working time alone. Both independent variables also have a negative and significant direct effect on Turnover Intention (Y). Work-Life Balance records a path coefficient of -0.187 with a t-statistic of 2.314 and a p-value of 0.021 (H3 supported), while Organizational Justice records a path coefficient of -0.213 with a t-statistic of 2.706 and a p-value of 0.007 (H4 supported). The negative sign confirms that the more balanced and the fairer working conditions are perceived to be, the lower the intention to leave, although the magnitude of both direct effects is relatively modest.

Job Satisfaction (Z) has a negative and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y), with a path coefficient of -0.549, a t-statistic of 6.874, and a p-value of 0.000 (H5 supported). This coefficient is the largest in the model and confirms that dissatisfaction is the proximate condition preceding the intention to leave. The indirect effect tests show that Work-Life Balance affects Turnover Intention through Job Satisfaction with a path

coefficient of -0.218, a t-statistic of 4.032, and a p-value of 0.000 (H6 supported), and that Organizational Justice affects Turnover Intention through Job Satisfaction with a path coefficient of -0.259, a t-statistic of 4.517, and a p-value of 0.000 (H7 supported). In both cases the indirect effect exceeds the corresponding direct effect, and because both the direct and the indirect effects are significant, Job Satisfaction functions as a partial mediator in the two relationships. The R-square values indicate that the two independent variables explain 64.7 per cent of the variance in job satisfaction, while the full model explains 69.4 per cent of the variance in turnover intention.

Discussion

The Effect of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction

This study confirms that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of Generation Z employees in service firms in Kendari City. The finding is consistent with the theoretical proposition of Greenhaus et al. (2003) and with the cross-cultural evidence of Haar et al. (2014), who show that balance raises job and life satisfaction while reducing anxiety and depression, as well as with Aruldoss et al. (2021) in the context of the relationship between balance and satisfaction. The mechanism operates through the reduction of inter-role conflict as described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Frontline service work in Kendari City is organised in shifts that frequently extend into weekends, public holidays, and evenings, precisely the times at which family, social, and religious obligations are concentrated. When schedules are predictable and requests for time off are accommodated, employees are able to fulfil both sets of roles and appraise the job as compatible with the life they wish to lead. When schedules change at short notice, the conflict is not merely temporal but psychological, because employees lose control over their own time. The relevance of this finding is heightened by the characteristics of the generation studied. Barhate and Dirani (2022) and Mahmoud et al. (2021) document that the youngest cohort weights flexibility and personal well-being more heavily than previous generations did at a comparable career stage, and Deloitte (2024) records work-life balance as the leading consideration in their choice of employer. In practical terms, this means that a scheduling policy is not a neutral administrative matter for service firms in Kendari City but a substantive determinant of employee attitudes.

The Effect of Organizational Justice on Job Satisfaction

Organizational justice exerts the strongest effect on job satisfaction in this model. The result supports equity theory (Adams, 1963) and the meta-analytic evidence of Colquitt et al. (2001), and accords with the position of Robbins and Judge (2017), who treat justice perceptions as a principal determinant of employee attitudes. The four dimensions of justice have distinct implications in this context. Distributive justice concerns the correspondence between pay, service bonuses, and overtime on the one hand and the workload borne at the customer interface on the other. Procedural justice relates to the consistency of the rules governing shift allocation, appraisal, and the granting of permanent status. Interactional justice concerns the way supervisors speak to employees, particularly during busy periods and after customer complaints. Informational justice concerns the adequacy of the explanations given when decisions are unfavourable. Colquitt et al. (2001) note that procedural and informational justice frequently matter more than the outcome itself, because employees can accept a modest bonus provided they understand how it was determined and believe the rule was applied consistently. For service firms in Kendari City, in which human resource practices remain partly semi-formal, this finding carries a direct operational message. Fairness in this setting is determined less by the existence of formal policy documents than by the consistency of day-to-day practice, since employees judge fairness from what actually happens when schedules are set, complaints are raised, and bonuses are distributed. Dessler (2020) makes the same point when he treats transparency in pay administration and grievance handling as core instruments of retention rather than as administrative formalities.

The Direct Effect of Work-Life Balance & Organizational Justice on Turnover Intention

Both independent variables have a significant negative direct effect on turnover intention, although the magnitude of these effects is modest. The significance of the relationships confirms that balance and fairness hold value in their own right: employees whose schedules are predictable and whose treatment is consistent have fewer reasons to consider leaving, regardless of the attitude that accompanies those conditions.

The modest magnitude of the coefficients nevertheless warrants attention, because it indicates that these working conditions are necessary but not sufficient. Robbins and Judge (2017) explain that the relationship between working conditions and withdrawal behaviour operates through the evaluation employees make of their work, and that

response to dissatisfaction follows the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect pattern in which exit is chosen when voice appears futile. A firm may set humane schedules and apply consistent rules yet still lose young employees if the work is experienced as offering no growth, recognition, or meaning, since satisfaction is formed from a broader set of facets than schedules and procedures alone (Locke, 1976). This finding also provides the logical basis for the mediation test discussed below, since it indicates that the greater part of the influence of these two variables on the intention to leave does not travel directly but passes through the employee's appraisal of the job.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction has the strongest effect in this model on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees, and the effect is negative, consistent with the meta-analytic findings of Tett and Meyer (1993) and Griffeth et al. (2000) and with the theoretical position of Robbins and Judge (2017). Substantively, this means that the intention to leave is formed as an accumulation of negative appraisals of the job rather than as a sudden decision, following the sequence described by Mobley (1977) from thoughts of quitting, to a search for alternatives, to their evaluation, and finally to an intention to leave.

The strength of this effect is amplified by the conditions of the labour market facing young employees in the service sector. Robbins and Judge (2017) note that the relationship between satisfaction and turnover is moderated by the availability of alternative employment, and in service work in Kendari City such alternatives are comparatively abundant, since positions in cafes, retail outlets, and other service establishments do not demand specialised qualifications and are advertised widely through social media. Under these conditions the barrier to exit is low, so that dissatisfaction translates into an intention to leave more rapidly than it would in sectors with higher switching costs. The practical implication is that firms cannot rely on structural barriers to retain young employees. Contract clauses, training bonds, and appeals to loyalty do not alter the appraisal itself; they merely delay its expression, and often convert exit into neglect, in which the employee remains but withdraws effort, a pattern popularly described as quiet quitting.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

The most important finding of this study is the confirmation of the partial mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between work-life balance and turnover

intention and between organizational justice and turnover intention. The partial rather than full nature of the mediation indicates that both working conditions reduce the intention to leave through two concurrent pathways: a direct path, through the reduction of objective burdens and grievances, and an indirect path, through the enhancement of satisfaction which in turn lowers the intention to leave.

The comparison between the two pathways carries substantive significance. In both cases the indirect effect exceeds the direct effect, which confirms that job satisfaction is the principal mechanism converting balanced and fair working conditions into the retention of young employees. Work-life balance and organizational justice are therefore more appropriately understood as conditions that shape the employee's appraisal of the job, whereas job satisfaction is the appraisal itself, and it is this appraisal that determines whether the employee intends to stay. This ordering is consistent with the general logic of attitude and behaviour proposed by Robbins and Judge (2017) and with the sequential model of the turnover process of Mobley (1977).

At the same time, the partial character of the mediation shows that job satisfaction is not the sole channel. Other pathways, such as organisational commitment, perceived organisational support, work engagement, or burnout, may also mediate these relationships and could form an agenda for further research. This result also extends the applicability of the proposition to Generation Z employees in a medium-sized city in eastern Indonesia, a setting hitherto underrepresented in the literature, and provides an empirical corrective to the popular narrative that attributes the mobility of young workers to a lack of loyalty or resilience. The data indicate that their intention to leave is systematically related to conditions that are within managerial control.

Practically, this means that retention strategies for young employees in service firms need to begin with the working conditions that shape satisfaction rather than with the strengthening of formal ties. Managers are advised to establish shift schedules that are published in advance and altered only through agreed mechanisms, to explain openly the basis on which pay, service bonuses, and permanent status are determined, to provide a grievance channel that does not depend solely on the goodwill of an immediate supervisor, and to give consistent recognition for good service performance. Dessler (2020) argues that measures of this kind are considerably less costly than the recurrent expense of recruiting and training replacements, a calculation that is directly relevant to service firms in Kendari City operating at moderate margins.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study arrives at several conclusions. First, work-life balance and organizational justice each have a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of Generation Z employees in service firms in Kendari City, with the effect of organizational justice being the stronger of the two. Second, both variables have a negative and significant direct effect on turnover intention, although the magnitude of these direct effects is modest. Third, job satisfaction has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention, and this is the strongest relationship in the model. Fourth, job satisfaction is shown to partially mediate the effects of both work-life balance and organizational justice on turnover intention, with indirect effects exceeding direct effects in both cases. This confirms the central role of job satisfaction as the mechanism transforming balanced and fair working conditions into the retention of young employees and indicates that the mobility of this generation is better explained by their appraisal of working conditions than by generational disposition. The practical implication of this study is that service firms in Kendari City need to manage the fairness and the liveability of work as instruments of retention. Managers are advised to publish shift schedules in advance and to alter them only through agreed mechanisms, to communicate transparently the basis on which pay, bonuses, and permanent status are determined, to provide grievance channels independent of the immediate supervisor, to give consistent recognition for service performance, and to accommodate the personal obligations of employees within reasonable limits. This study has limitations in its use of self-reported measures, its cross-sectional design, and its focus on a single generational cohort; future research is therefore advised to employ longitudinal designs, to include actual turnover data, and to compare generational cohorts within the same firms in order to strengthen causal inference.

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