

## THE EFFECT OF WORK DISCIPLINE AND GENERATION Z WORK BEHAVIOR ON EMPLOYEE WORK MOTIVATION AT A RAILWAY COMPANY IN THE EAST JAVA REGION

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the effect of Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior on Employee Work Motivation at a railway company in the East Java region. The study employed a quantitative approach with a causal-associative design, involving all 90 Generation Z employees as respondents through a saturated sampling technique (census). Data were collected using a four-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS through validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, multiple linear regression analysis, and hypothesis testing (t-test and F-test). This study was motivated by the fluctuating dynamics of young employee work motivation in the railway sector, which strictly demands operational compliance and high discipline, contrasted with Generation Z's characteristics that emphasize flexibility and technological adaptability. The results demonstrate that both Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior partially have a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation, with Generation Z Work Behavior being the most dominant factor. Simultaneously, both independent variables have a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation, explaining 71.4% of the variance in employee work motivation. The findings contribute theoretically to Human Resource Management and practically assist management in managing young workforce effectively.*

**Keywords:** Work Discipline, Generation Z Work Behavior, Work Motivation, Railway Company.

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In modern organizational management, human resources represent the primary strategic asset determining the success of organizational goal achievement. Organizational success is driven not merely by capital, advanced technological infrastructure, and operational systems, but predominantly by the quality, professionalism, and psychological engagement of the workforce (Dessler, 2020). Consequently, effective human resource management is imperative to cultivate an adaptive, highly disciplined, and strongly motivated workforce capable of sustaining

organizational performance amid rapid global and digital transformations (Siagian, 2024; Heryanto & Chalimah, 2025).

The transportation and railway industry represents a vital public service sector characterized by high mobility, strict safety regulations, and absolute demands for punctuality and service excellence. The railway company operating in the East Java region serves as a strategic transportation hub with extensive operational and administrative activities. In supporting sustainable operations, the company relies heavily on diverse generations of employees, with Generation Z emerging as a growing demographic segment across critical divisions, including Human Capital & General Affairs, Internal Audit, Corporate Secretary, and Engineering Development Center.

However, empirical observations and discussions with management mentors at the railway company in East Java revealed dynamic challenges regarding employee work motivation among Generation Z. While young employees demonstrate commendable competence in executing routine tasks according to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and adopting modern digital tools, variations remain in their internal drive, initiative in problem-solving, willingness to assume extra-role responsibilities, and proactivity during operational coordination. Generation Z possesses distinct generational traits: they are digital natives, highly collaborative, and innovative, yet they place strong emphasis on workplace flexibility, continuous feedback, and work-life balance (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Faqih, 2025). When these preferences interact with the railway industry's rigorous work discipline, strict hierarchical attendance schedules, and structured shift systems, tensions may emerge that influence their underlying work motivation. A review of previous literature reveals significant research gaps regarding the interplay between Work Discipline, Generation Z Work Behavior, and Work Motivation. On the relationship between Work Discipline and Work Motivation, established studies generally affirm a positive relationship among general workforces (Rosento et al., 2019; Hayat et al., 2024; Nurlina & Yulianti, 2023). However, in the context of younger cohorts, overly rigid disciplinary enforcement without adequate autonomy has

been argued to induce workplace fatigue and diminish intrinsic drive. Regarding Generation Z Work Behavior, empirical findings exhibit notable divergence: while studies by Malt and Nasution (2025) and Somantri et al. (2025) demonstrate that Gen Z's technological adaptability and collaborative tendencies elevate motivation, other findings (Prabowo et al., 2025) highlight that their demand for flexibility frequently clashes with formal organizational structures. Furthermore, existing studies within the railway sector have predominantly utilized qualitative descriptive designs (Lazuardi & Hartono, 2025). Therefore, comprehensive quantitative research integrating Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior simultaneously to predict Work Motivation in the railway enterprise is essential to bridge these empirical, contextual, and methodological gaps.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in Human Resource Management Theory (Dessler, 2020) and Organizational Behavior Theory (Robbins & Judge, 2022) as grand theories. Dessler (2020) posits that comprehensive HRM processes—encompassing policy enforcement, behavioral development, and employee relations—are foundational to fostering a motivated and productive workforce. Complementarily, Organizational Behavior Theory explains that individual workplace behavior and subsequent psychological outcomes are shaped by a dynamic synergy between organizational structure/regulations (such as work discipline) and individual characteristics (such as generational work behavior) (Robbins & Judge, 2022).

Work Discipline is conceptualized as an employee's conscious willingness and readiness to comply with organizational rules, operational procedures, and social norms (Hasibuan, 2021; Afandi, 2018; Rivai, 2019). In this study, work discipline is measured through five core indicators adapted from Hasibuan (2021): attendance, obedience to organizational regulations, punctuality, task responsibility, and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Generation Z Work Behavior reflects the behavioral patterns, attitudes, and digital competencies exhibited by individuals born between 1997 and 2012 within the organizational environment (Bencsik et al., 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Based on the synthesis of generational literature (Faqih, 2025;

Bencsik et al., 2016), Generation Z work behavior encompasses seven dimensions: technological adaptation, collaborative capability, flexibility, communication openness, creativity and innovation, problem-solving ability, and work-life balance. Work Motivation is defined as the internal and external psychological drive that energizes, directs, and sustains an employee's enthusiasm, effort, and commitment toward achieving organizational objectives (Hasibuan, 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2022; Mangkunegara, 2021). In accordance with McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory (McClelland, 1987), work motivation is measured across three primary dimensions: Need for Achievement (n-Ach), Need for Affiliation (n-Aff), and Need for Power (n-Pow).

## **Research Objective**

This study aims to: (1) provide empirical evidence regarding the effect of Work Discipline on Employee Work Motivation at a railway company in the East Java region; (2) provide empirical evidence regarding the effect of Generation Z Work Behavior on Employee Work Motivation at a railway company in the East Java region; and (3) provide empirical evidence regarding the simultaneous effect of Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior on Employee Work Motivation at a railway company in the East Java region.

## **Research Hypotheses**

- a. H<sub>1</sub>: Work Discipline affects Employee Work Motivation at the railway company in East Java.
- b. H<sub>2</sub>: Generation Z Work Behavior affects Employee Work Motivation at the railway company in East Java.
- c. H<sub>3</sub>: Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior simultaneously affect Employee Work Motivation at the railway company in East Java.

## **B. METHOD**

This research employed a quantitative approach with a causal-associative design to examine the empirical influence of Work Discipline (X1) and Generation Z Work Behavior (X2) on Work Motivation (Y) (Sugiyono, 2023). The target population comprised all Generation Z employees

across four operational and administrative divisions at the railway company in the East Java region, totaling 90 employees. Using the saturated sampling technique (census), all 90 Generation Z employees were selected as active research respondents (Sugiyono, 2023). Primary data were gathered via structured questionnaires utilizing a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree) to minimize central tendency bias (Joshi et al., 2015). The instrument comprised 30 operational items: Work Discipline (10 items across 5 indicators), Generation Z Work Behavior (14 items across 7 indicators), and Work Motivation (6 items across 3 McClelland need dimensions). Instrument feasibility was verified through Pearson Product-Moment correlation for validity (threshold:  $r\text{-calculated} > r\text{-table} = 0.207$  at  $df = 88$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) and Cronbach's Alpha for reliability (threshold:  $\alpha > 0.60$ ) (Ghozali, 2018). Classical assumption tests were conducted prior to regression modeling, comprising the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test (Sig.  $> 0.05$ ), the Glejser heteroscedasticity test (Sig.  $> 0.05$ ), and multicollinearity diagnostics (Tolerance  $> 0.10$ , VIF  $< 10$ ). Hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression analysis ( $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$ ), partial t-tests, simultaneous F-tests, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) processed via IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (Ghozali, 2018).

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Instrument Evaluation and Classical Assumption Test Results**

The sample of 90 Generation Z employees comprised 66 male respondents (73.33%) and 24 female respondents (26.67%). Based on tenure, 15 respondents had worked for  $< 1$  year (16.67%), 48 respondents for 1–3 years (53.33%), and 27 respondents for  $> 3$  years (30.00%). By division, respondents were distributed across Human Capital & General Affairs (30 respondents, 33.33%), Corporate Secretary (24 respondents, 26.67%), Engineering Development Center (23 respondents, 25.56%), and Internal Audit (13 respondents, 14.44%). Validity testing across all 90 respondents confirmed that all 10 items of Work Discipline ( $r = 0.542$  to  $0.705$ ), all 14 items of Generation Z Work Behavior ( $r = 0.477$  to  $0.749$ ), and all 6 items of Work Motivation ( $r = 0.625$  to  $0.660$ )

exceeded the critical r-table value of 0.207 with significance values of  $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$ , proving all instrument items valid. Reliability testing demonstrated high internal consistency across all constructs, exceeding the 0.60 threshold as summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Instrument Testing Results**

| Variable                   | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items | Description |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Work Discipline            | 0.828            | 10              | Reliable    |
| Generation Z Work Behavior | 0.873            | 14              | Reliable    |
| Work Motivation            | 0.714            | 6               | Reliable    |

Source: SPSS 25 Output

Classical assumption testing fully satisfied all required econometric prerequisites. The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test generated a Test Statistic of 0.084 with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.140 ( $> 0.05$ ), confirming that the regression residual values are normally distributed. Multicollinearity diagnostics yielded a Tolerance value of 0.247 ( $> 0.10$ ) and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 4.055 ( $< 10$ ) for both independent variables, proving the absence of multicollinearity. Furthermore, the Glejser heteroscedasticity test produced significance values of 0.083 for Work Discipline and 0.088 for Generation Z Work Behavior, both exceeding 0.05, establishing homoscedasticity. Consequently, the empirical data are robust and fully viable for multiple linear regression modeling.

## 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was executed to evaluate the functional parameters and relative contribution of Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior in predicting Work Motivation, as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results**

| Model               | B     | Std. Error | Coeff. Beta | T-statistic | Sig.  |
|---------------------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| (Constant)          | 2.775 | 1.189      | -           | 2.334       | 0.022 |
| Work Discipline     | 0.145 | 0.066      | 0.254       | 2.198       | 0.031 |
| Gen Z Work Behavior | 0.268 | 0.050      | 0.615       | 5.322       | 0.000 |

Source: SPSS 25 Output

Based on the empirical coefficients in Table 2, the multiple linear regression equation is formulated as:  $Y = 2.775 + 0.145X_1 + 0.268X_2 + e$ . The constant value of 2.775 indicates the baseline level of employee work motivation when both independent variables are held constant. The positive regression coefficient for Work Discipline ( $b_1 = 0.145$ ) indicates that each unit increase in work discipline increases work motivation by 0.145 units. Similarly, the positive coefficient for Generation Z Work Behavior ( $b_2 = 0.268$ ) indicates that each unit improvement in Gen Z work behavior increases work motivation by 0.268 units. The standardized Beta coefficient for Generation Z Work Behavior ( $Beta = 0.615$ ) is considerably higher than that of Work Discipline ( $Beta = 0.254$ ), demonstrating that Generation Z Work Behavior exerts the primary, dominant influence on employee work motivation.

### 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses were tested using partial t-tests for direct effects and an ANOVA F-test for the simultaneous effect, using a critical threshold of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Table 3 summarizes the partial hypothesis testing results

**Table 3. Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing Results**

| Hypothesis     | Path                                  | Coefficient (Beta) | t-statistic | p-values |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| H <sub>1</sub> | Work Discipline > Work Motivation     | 0.254              | 2.198       | 0.031    |
| H <sub>2</sub> | Gen Z Work Behavior > Work Motivation | 0.615              | 5.322       | 0.000    |

Source: SPSS 25 Output

As detailed in Table 3, Work Discipline yielded a calculated t-statistic of 2.198 ( $p = 0.031 < 0.05$ ), exceeding the critical t-table value of 1.987 ( $df = 87, \alpha = 0.05$ ). Thus, H1 is accepted: Work Discipline has a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Work Motivation. Generation Z Work Behavior yielded a calculated t-statistic of 5.322 ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), also exceeding the critical t-table value. Thus, H2 is accepted: Generation Z Work Behavior has a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Work Motivation. The substantially larger

t-statistic and Beta coefficient for Generation Z Work Behavior confirm its dominant role in shaping employee motivation.

**Table 4. Simultaneous Effect Hypothesis Testing Results**

| Hypothesis     | Path                                                     | F-statistic | F-table | p-values |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| H <sub>3</sub> | Work Discipline, Gen Z Work Behavior<br>>Work Motivation | 108.381     | 3.10    | 0.000    |

Source: SPSS 25 Output

Table 4 reveals a calculated F-statistic of 108.381 with a significance value of  $p = 0.000$  ( $< 0.05$ ), which substantially surpasses the critical F-table value of 3.10 ( $df_1 = 2$ ,  $df_2 = 87$ ). Therefore, H<sub>3</sub> is accepted: Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior simultaneously exert a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Work Motivation.

**Table 5. Coefficient of Determination Results**

| R     | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 0.845 | 0.714    | 0.707             |

Source: SPSS 25 Output

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.845 in Table 5 reflects a very strong relationship between the independent variables and Work Motivation. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.714 indicates that 71.4% of the variance in Employee Work Motivation is explained by Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior. The remaining 28.6% is attributable to unexamined organizational factors such as transformational leadership, compensation systems, corporate culture, work environment, and job satisfaction.

## Discussion

The empirical acceptance of H<sub>1</sub> confirms that Work Discipline exerts a positive and statistically significant partial effect on Employee Work Motivation. This finding aligns solidly with Human Resource Management Theory (Dessler, 2020) and Hasibuan's compliance framework (Hasibuan, 2021), demonstrating that organizational rules, punctuality standards, and SOP adherence provide clear operational boundaries that foster psychological safety and internal responsibility. In high-risk railway operations, structured discipline creates a predictable work

climate wherein employees recognize expectations and derive greater satisfaction from timely, compliant task completion. This result corroborates earlier empirical evidence by Rosento et al. (2019), Arifa and Muhsin (2018), and Nurlina and Yulianti (2023), confirming that consistent disciplinary standards reinforce employee motivation across organizational settings. The acceptance of H2 proves that Generation Z Work Behavior exerts a positive, highly significant, and dominant effect on Employee Work Motivation ( $t = 5.322$ ,  $Beta = 0.615$ ). This finding resonates with Organizational Behavior Theory (Robbins & Judge, 2022) and McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory (McClelland, 1987). When young employees are empowered to utilize their innate digital fluency, engage in collaborative teamwork, exercise cognitive flexibility, and maintain healthy work-life integration, their psychological needs for achievement (n-Ach) and affiliation (n-Aff) are fulfilled, triggering heightened enthusiasm and dedication. This dominant effect corroborates previous findings by Malt and Nasution (2025), Somantri et al. (2025), and Agustina and Febrian (2025), demonstrating that accommodating generational behavioral strengths is far more influential in galvanizing Gen Z's motivation than relying solely on formal compliance mechanisms. Furthermore, this resolves the research gap by demonstrating that when given supportive organizational channels, Gen Z's pursuit of adaptability enhances rather than hinders operational motivation. Simultaneously, the acceptance of H3 demonstrates that Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior jointly exert a substantial and statistically significant effect on Employee Work Motivation ( $F = 108.381$ ,  $R^2 = 0.714$ ). This synergy validates the core premise of Organizational Behavior Theory: optimal employee drive emerges when organizational structural control (work discipline) operates in harmony with individual behavioral expression (generational work behavior). Rigid discipline without behavioral accommodation induces resistance and disengagement; conversely, behavioral freedom devoid of disciplined structure leads to operational inconsistency in high-precision railway environments. The balanced integration of clear operational discipline and supportive, tech-enabled generational practices

establishes an optimal work environment that maximizes motivation, echoing the empirical conclusions of Sadat et al. (2020) and Trisandri and Iskandar (2024).

## **D. CONCLUSIONS**

This study demonstrates that Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior each have a positive and statistically significant partial effect on Employee Work Motivation at the railway company in the East Java region, with Generation Z Work Behavior emerging as the most dominant determinant. Simultaneously, Work Discipline and Generation Z Work Behavior exert a strong and statistically significant joint effect, explaining 71.4% of the variance in employee work motivation. These findings confirm that in safety-critical transportation industries undergoing generational transitions, cultivating employee motivation requires a dual strategy: upholding rigorous operational discipline while actively embracing the collaborative, digital, and adaptive work behaviors of Generation Z. This study is contextually bounded by its focus on 90 Generation Z employees at a specific railway regional enterprise, and future studies are encouraged to expand across wider multi-regional transportation networks.

## **E. SUGGESTIONS**

For the management of the railway company in East Java, it is recommended to maintain transparent and objective operational disciplinary standards while adopting supportive and persuasive supervision approaches. Given the dominant influence of Generation Z work behavior, management should modernize operational workflows through collaborative digital platforms, provide structured two-way feedback channels, support professional development, and accommodate sustainable work-life balance to sustain long-term engagement. For Generation Z employees, it is advised to actively align personal preferences for workplace flexibility with professional accountability and strict adherence to railway safety SOPs, leveraging digital tools and collaborative spaces to drive innovation. For future researchers, it

is recommended to examine additional variables influencing work motivation such as transformational leadership, digital organizational culture, non-financial compensation, and job stress and expand empirical investigations to broader transportation and public service sectors.

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