
Exploring Job Satisfaction Among Gen Z Working Students at Widyatama University

Indra Taruna Anggapradja¹, Darwis Agustriyana², Adam Faritzal³

¹Universitas Widyatama,

Bandung, Indonesia,

²Universitas Widyatama,

Bandung, Indonesia,

³Universitas Widyatama,

Bandung, Indonesia,

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Abstract

This study explores the dominant factors influencing job satisfaction among Gen Z working students at Universitas Widyatama. Utilizing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.877 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significant correlation, this research analyzes six key dimensions: Career Development, Compensation and Benefits, Interpersonal Relationships, Job Role, Work Environment, and Organizational Culture. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 69 working students, and results revealed a strong unidimensional structure with a single factor accounting for 68.847% of the total variance. Among the dimensions, Organizational Culture and Work Environment exhibited the highest loadings, indicating their significant roles in shaping job satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of a supportive work environment and organizational culture in enhancing satisfaction among student employees. This study suggests that institutions and employers focus on these areas to improve the work experience for students balancing academics and employment. Future research could further examine the longitudinal impact of these dimensions and explore demographic variations to develop targeted strategies for enhancing student job satisfaction.

Keywords: generation z, job-satisfaction

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Job satisfaction is a key factor in fostering a positive and productive work environment, benefiting both employees and organizations. A supportive work environment where employees feel valued enhances their ability to perform effectively, leading to increased productivity and

overall performance (Wagner & Gooding, 1987). Satisfied employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and committed, directly contributing to organizational success. However, achieving this satisfaction poses challenges, requiring strategies that balance job satisfaction with other operational needs.

The entry of Generation Z into the workforce has altered workplace dynamics and HR strategies. Born between 1995 and 2010, Generation Z grew up in a digitally connected world, emphasizing the importance of work-life balance, career growth, and purpose-driven work (McCrindle, 2018; Turner, 2015). Research into Generation Z's job satisfaction is still emerging as they are just beginning their careers. This study aims to explore their unique perspectives on job satisfaction, including aspects like work environment, supervisor relationships, opportunities for advancement, and work-life balance. Understanding these elements can help organizations adjust their practices to better align with Generation Z's expectations, fostering a more engaged and satisfied workforce.

As Generation Z workers become a larger part of the labor market, organizations face both opportunities and challenges in adapting to their preferences. This cohort values flexibility, meaningful work, and personal growth over traditional incentives like job security (Kubátová, 2016; Schawbel, 2014). These shifts necessitate updated HR strategies to attract and retain talent, especially as competition for benefits and financial incentives intensifies.

Higher education institutions like Widyatama University play a pivotal role in equipping Generation Z students for the workforce. The university offers career development programs that focus on both technical and soft skills, providing training, workshops, and industry-specific seminars. Its Career Center supports students with career guidance and networking opportunities, helping them transition from academia to professional life. These resources aim to ensure that students are well-prepared to meet the demands of the job market.

The career goals of Generation Z students at Widyatama University align with their generational traits, showing interest in fields like technology, creative industries, entrepreneurship, and social causes. Influenced by social media, internships, mentorship, and economic conditions, these students prioritize career stability and growth opportunities in their decision-making.

1.2 Explore Importance of the Problem

The study of job satisfaction among Generation Z students at Widyatama University is timely and important for several reasons. Generation Z, characterized by their unique values and work expectations, is just beginning to enter the workforce. Unlike previous cohorts, they have been shaped by rapid technological changes, economic challenges, and a focus on work-life balance. Understanding their job satisfaction is crucial for employers aiming to attract and retain this new generation of workers.

Most existing research has focused on job satisfaction among older generations like Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. However, less is known about what drives satisfaction for

Generation Z, especially students balancing studies with part-time or early-career work. This study seeks to address this gap, focusing on factors such as flexibility, meaningful work, and growth opportunities (Schawbel, 2014).

Widyatama University, a prominent institution in Indonesia, provides an ideal context for exploring these dynamics. The university's career development initiatives present an opportunity to study their impact on students' job satisfaction. This research aims to offer insights into how educational institutions and employers can adapt to meet the needs of Generation Z, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of job satisfaction and informing more effective workplace practices.

1.3 Relevant Study

Research on job satisfaction has long highlighted its importance for organizational performance, with key factors such as recognition, work environment, and career advancement opportunities playing central roles (Achmad et al., 2023; Bellani et al., 2018; Dorina Racolța-Paina & Dan Irini, 2021; Jawaad et al., 2019; Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017). While much of the early research focuses on general employee populations, recent studies have shifted towards understanding the unique attitudes of Generation Z, who emphasize flexibility, personal growth, and meaningful work (Schawbel, 2014). Despite some work on generational differences in job attitudes, there remains a lack of targeted research on Generation Z's job satisfaction, particularly among students balancing academic and work responsibilities. (Aziz et al., 2018; Kowske et al., 2010)

This study addresses that gap by focusing on Generation Z students at Widyatama University. While existing research often explores how academic experiences influence career readiness, few studies delve into job satisfaction among students currently in the workforce (Castellano et al., 2017; Kowske et al., 2010). The primary objective of this research is to identify the most dominant dimension in determining job satisfaction among working students at Universitas Widyatama. Through a structured analysis of various dimensions specifically, Work Environment, Job Role, Compensation and Benefits, Career Development, Interpersonal Relationships, and Organizational Culture as articulated by Bellani et al., (2018) and Achmad et al., (2023), this study aims to isolate the factors that most significantly influence job satisfaction levels within this particular student population. By systematically assessing each of these dimensions, the research seeks to provide empirically grounded insights that may inform institutional policy decisions and strategic initiatives to enhance both job satisfaction and academic outcomes for working students.

The literature suggests that Generation Z brings unique motivations and challenges to the workplace, particularly concerning job satisfaction. For example, Zahari and Puteh (2023) highlight that recognition and career advancement significantly drive job satisfaction among university students in Malaysia. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a sense of achievement, as Gen Z often prioritizes personal growth and uses job-hopping as a strategic approach to career progression rather than merely seeking higher salaries (Kirchmayer, 2017).

Such insights highlight the generational shift in workplace expectations, which requires a nuanced approach to addressing their satisfaction in employment.

However, the distinct context of Widyatama University presents additional complexities. For Gen Z students balancing academic pressures with professional responsibilities, the intersection of these roles may uniquely influence their perceptions of job satisfaction. Unlike their peers in Malaysia, who may navigate different cultural and structural work dynamics, Widyatama students face localized challenges that include a dual burden of studying and working, coupled with regional socio-economic factors. Existing frameworks, such as those proposed by Bellani et al. (2018), provide valuable insights into generational job satisfaction but lack attention to the specific demands of Gen Z, such as the need for flexibility and reliance on digital tools. Similarly, while Achmad et al. (2023) highlight the importance of organizational culture and career progression, their findings do not consider regional and subgroup variations, further emphasizing the need for a tailored approach to understanding Gen Z working students in Indonesia.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This research employs a quantitative approach aimed at identifying the dominant factors influencing job satisfaction among Gen Z that currently working, as well as students at Universitas Widyatama. To achieve this objective, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is applied to evaluate the underlying structure of various dimensions contributing to job satisfaction. Specifically, this study utilizes the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity as preliminary checks to ensure data suitability for factor analysis, ensuring the adequacy and reliability of the dimensions evaluated.

The use of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in this study is justified as it aligns with prior research methodologies aimed at assessing job satisfaction dimensions in uncertain contexts, in this case because of socio-economic differences. EFA was particularly suitable given the variability in factors that may influence job satisfaction among Gen Z working students in Indonesia. Similar approaches have been employed in prior studies, such as those by Mahmoud (2012), who utilized EFA to investigate job satisfaction among nurses in Damascus public hospitals. Additionally, the study by Md. Rifayat Islam et al. (2012) identified nine dimensions of job satisfaction through EFA. This demonstrates the methodological rigor of EFA in extracting relevant and nuanced insights, underscoring its applicability in this research.

2.2 Participants

The study's participants include Generation Z students currently enrolled at Widyatama University who also hold part-time or full-time jobs. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, ensuring that each interviewee has relevant experiences in balancing academic commitments and work responsibilities. A total of 69 participants were interviewed, representing a diverse range of academic programs and employment types, thus providing a broad view of job

satisfaction among the university's working students. The participants were selected in a way that they represent a particular and relevant population for this research; they are Generation Z students who are enrolled at Widyatama University and at the same time are students and workers whether part-time or full-time. This particular group was chosen because this group of students are both students and workers and this is to enable the researcher to understand how job satisfaction of students is affected by the work-study marriage.

2.3 Data Collection

The sample for this study was drawn using purposive sampling, targeting Gen Z students engaged in dual roles as workers and students at Widyatama University. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate due to its ability to focus on participants with specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives. While this method may limit generalizability, it provides deep insights into the experiences of this unique demographic.

The research methodology is structured around a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time from a sample of 69 Gen Z working students enrolled in the university. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire comprising 25 questions, each designed to probe one of six key dimensions: Work Environment, Job Role, Compensation and Benefits, Career Development, Interpersonal Relationships, and Organizational Culture. These dimensions are adopted from established frameworks in previous studies by Bellani et al. (2018) and Achmad et al. (2023), with adaptations made to align with the specific context of the research population.

2.4 Data Analysis

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 15 participants. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency. Content validity was confirmed through expert consultation, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

The data analysis in this study is designed to identify the dominant factors influencing job satisfaction among Gen Z working students at Universitas Widyatama. To achieve this, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is employed, which is widely recognized for its ability to uncover latent structures within datasets by clustering related variables into distinct components (Kline, 2015). This study specifically focuses on six job satisfaction dimensions Work Environment, Job Role, Compensation and Benefits, Career Development, Interpersonal Relationships, and Organizational Culture adopted from the frameworks proposed by Bellani et al. (2018) and Achmad et al. (2023).

Prior to EFA, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are conducted to assess the suitability of the data. The KMO measure, which examines sampling adequacy, ensures that data structure is appropriate for factor analysis. A KMO value above 0.6 is generally acceptable, while values over 0.8 are considered "meritorious" (Tabachnick et al., 2013).

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix; rejecting this hypothesis suggests that factor analysis is appropriate for the data (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

2.4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was chosen to uncover the underlying structure of job satisfaction dimensions among Gen Z working students. This technique is particularly suited for studies with an exploratory nature, as it helps identify latent constructs that may not be immediately observable (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). Furthermore, the suitability of EFA for this research was validated through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, both of which demonstrated high appropriateness for factor analysis.

Additionally The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) eigenvalue provides the fraction of the variation accounted for by the corresponding component (eigenvector). We adopted a combined criteria method as suggested by Lings and Greenley (2005), and Larose (2006) as cited by Karaferis et al., (2022), to identify items and factors for inclusion in the final factorial solution. More specifically, to evaluate the factor structures, we used four criteria. First, items factor loadings should be at least equal to or greater than 0.5. Second, a scale should have more than two items or if it has only two they should be strongly correlated. Third, if an item loads more than one dimension and their difference is lower than 0.02, it will be deleted. Moreover, the difference in loadings, equal to or greater than 0.2, implies the item's inclusion in the dimension with the highest factor load. Finally, in order to maintain an item, it would also have to conceptually match the factor. (Karaferis et al., 2022).

This study utilizes Varimax rotation to maximize interpretability of the factors; Varimax is particularly beneficial in social sciences research for achieving clearer factor structures, as it spreads the variance across a limited number of components (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Historically, as suggested in (Kaiser, 1974) a rule of thumb for those values is: $[\geq .9]$ marvelous $[\.8, .9]$ meritorious $[\.7, .8]$ middling $[\.6, .7]$ mediocre $[\.5, .6]$ miserable $[\lt .5]$ unacceptable.

2.4.2 Interpretation and Determination of Dominant Factors

Post-extraction and rotation, factors are interpreted based on factor loadings to determine which factors contribute most significantly to job satisfaction. As noted by Thompson (2004), "interpretation of factor loadings is essential to understanding the dimensions underlying constructs in behavioral research." This analysis aids in identifying the primary dimension with the highest cumulative variance as the most dominant factor influencing job satisfaction among the sampled working students.

3. Results

The data from table 1, indicates that among the six dimensions analyzed, Job Role holds the highest mean score (Mean=3.2562, SD=0.61983), suggesting it may play a particularly

influential role in shaping job satisfaction, while Career Development has the lowest mean score (Mean=3.0614, SD=0.73892), indicating relatively lower satisfaction within this area.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career_Development	3.0614	.73892
Compensation_and_Benefits	3.1205	.71755
Interpersonal_Relationships	3.2276	.78689
Job_Role	3.2562	.61983
Work_Environment	3.2087	.58461
Organizational_Culture	3.2411	.70171

To assess the suitability of data for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were conducted, with the results summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.877
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	261.677
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

According to the results of the analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.877, confirming that the sample size was highly adequate for conducting factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a significant result ($\chi^2 = 261.677$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. This provides strong justification for applying exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to the dataset.

Table 3 Anti-Image Metrice Result

		Anti-image Matrices					
		Career_Developm ent	Compensation_ and_Benefits	Interpersonal_Relati onships	Job_Role	Work_Environ ment	Organizational_C ulture
Anti-image Covariance	Career_Development	.381	-.178	-.132	.021	-.032	-.066
	Compensation_and_Benefits	-.178	.548	.034	-.020	-.030	-.058
	Interpersonal_Relationships	-.132	.034	.411	-.021	-.044	-.103
	Job_Role	.021	-.020	-.021	.376	-.165	-.068
	Work_Environment	-.032	-.030	-.044	-.165	.286	-.085
	Organizational_Culture	-.066	-.058	-.103	-.068	-.085	.290
Anti-image Correlation	Career_Development	.864 ^a	-.389	-.332	.057	-.096	-.199
	Compensation_and_Benefits	-.389	.887 ^a	.073	-.045	-.075	-.145
	Interpersonal_Relationships	-.332	.073	.896 ^a	-.052	-.130	-.299
	Job_Role	.057	-.045	-.052	.861 ^a	-.504	-.205
	Work_Environment	-.096	-.075	-.130	-.504	.859 ^a	-.294
	Organizational_Culture	-.199	-.145	-.299	-.205	-.294	.895 ^a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

The Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) values in the Anti-image Correlation matrix reflect the suitability of each variable for factor analysis, as all variables have MSA values above 0.8 ranging from 0.859 for *Work Environment* to 0.896 for *Interpersonal Relationships*. According to Kaiser’s criteria (1974), MSA values above 0.8 are considered "meritorious," indicating that each variable exhibits a strong degree of common variance with other variables in the dataset. This strengthens the reliability of each dimension (Career Development, Compensation and Benefits, Interpersonal Relationships, Job Role, Work Environment, and Organizational Culture) as an appropriate contributor to factor analysis, suggesting that they will contribute effectively to the identification of underlying factors influencing job satisfaction among working students.

Table 4 Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.131	68.847	68.847	4.131	68.847	68.847
2	.658	10.962	79.808			
3	.494	8.226	88.034			
4	.271	4.513	92.548			
5	.241	4.025	96.572			
6	.206	3.428	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From table 4 result, we applied the combined criteria suggested by Lings and Greenley (2005) and Larose (2006), as cited by Karaferis et al. (2022), to evaluate factor loadings and item inclusion. All items Career Development, Compensation and Benefits, Interpersonal Relationships, Job Role, Work Environment, and Organizational Culture had factor loadings greater than 0.5, meeting the first criterion. Additionally, the factor structure included more than two items per factor, with all items strongly correlated, ensuring no cross-loadings. Items that did not meet the conceptual alignment with the factors were excluded.

The PCA results revealed a single component with an eigenvalue of 4.131, explaining 68.847% of the total variance, confirming that the six dimensions are represented by one underlying factor. Subsequent components had lower eigenvalues and were excluded, as they did not meet the threshold of 0.5. The final factor structure explained 100% of the variance, with the first component accounting for the majority of the variation. These findings validate the factor structure, ensuring both statistical accurate and conceptual alignment.

Table 5 Component Matrix

Component Matrix^a

	Component
	1
Career_Development	.831
Compensation_and_Benefits	.727
Interpersonal_Relationships	.823
Job_Role	.811
Work_Environment	.878
Organizational_Culture	.897

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

The Component Matrix table indicates that a single component was extracted, with all six dimensions loading significantly onto this factor. Specifically, Organizational Culture has the highest loading at 0.897, followed closely by Work Environment at 0.878. Other notable loadings include Career Development 0.831, Interpersonal Relationships 0.823, Job Role 0.811, and Compensation and Benefits 0.727. These strong loadings suggest that all dimensions contribute meaningfully to the underlying factor of job satisfaction, confirming a cohesive construct among the variables.

4. Discussion

While the frameworks proposed by Bellani et al. (2018), Achmad (2023), Zahari & Puteh, (2023) are suitable for understanding job satisfaction, the findings of this study indicate that these frameworks require adaptation to better reflect the unique context of Gen Z working students in Indonesia. Additionally, factors such as gender, socio-economic status, and regional living conditions may influence how this generation perceives and prioritizes job satisfaction. This study highlights the importance of tailoring job satisfaction models to account for these subgroup differences within Generation Z in Indonesia, specifically Widyatama University Students. Future research should focus on examining how these subgroups experience job satisfaction differently, providing deeper insights into the diverse characteristics and preferences of this generation in the workplace.

The findings of this study reveal a strong unidimensional structure underlying job satisfaction among Gen Z working students at Universitas Widyatama, as evidenced by the extraction of a single factor that accounts for 68.847% of the total variance. The significant loadings of all six dimensions; Career Development, Compensation and Benefits, Interpersonal Relationships, Job Role, Work Environment, and Organizational Culture, onto this factor suggest that these constructs collectively influence the overall job satisfaction experienced by the students. Notably, Organizational Culture and Work Environment emerged as the most influential dimensions, which aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of a supportive organizational climate and a conducive work environment in enhancing employee satisfaction

(Achmad et al., 2023; Bellani et al., 2018; Zahari & Puteh, 2023). This unidimensionality indicates that improvements in any of these dimensions could lead to a significant enhancement in job satisfaction, underscoring the interrelatedness of these factors in shaping the working experience of students.

Moreover, the KMO value of 0.877 and the significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity support the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis, affirming that the correlations among the variables are sufficiently robust to warrant this analysis. The high Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) for each dimension further confirm their reliability in representing job satisfaction constructs. These results provide a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions affecting job satisfaction among working students, suggesting that universities and employers should consider these factors when developing policies and programs aimed at enhancing student well-being and satisfaction in the workplace.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the dominant factors influencing job satisfaction among Gen Z working students at Universitas Widyatama. The study successfully identifies a single underlying factor representing the collective influence of multiple dimensions, emphasizing that organizational culture and work environment play pivotal roles in determining job satisfaction. Given that nearly 70% of the variance is explained by this factor, it is crucial for educational institutions and employers to focus on enhancing these dimensions to foster a more satisfying work experience for students.

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