

## The Role of Calling on Work Engagement: A Study on Generation Z

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### Abstract

The current workforce comprises several generations, one of which is Generation Z. As the newest generation to enter the workforce, Gen Z exhibits distinct attitudes and values related to work, which can impact their level of work engagement. This study aims to determine the role of calling on work engagement among Gen Z. The population in this study consisted of Gen Z individuals aged 18–27 from all over Indonesia, with a sample size of 150 participants and 50 participants for trials with the same characteristics as the research sample. The measuring instrument used was a work engagement scale arranged based on aspects of vigor, dedication, and absorption ( $\alpha = .951$ ), and a calling scale arranged based on dimensions of identification and person-environment fit, sense-meaning and value-driven behavior, and transcendent guiding force ( $\alpha = .811$ ). Hypothesis testing was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis techniques. The results revealed the role of calling in work engagement among Gen Z. The effective contribution of the calling variable to work engagement was 69.4%, while the remaining influence was attributed to other factors.

### Abstrak

Dunia kerja saat ini terdiri dari beberapa generasi yang salah satunya adalah Generasi Z. Sebagai generasi terbaru yang masuk dalam dunia kerja, Gen Z menunjukkan sikap dan nilai terkait pekerjaan yang berbeda, yang dapat memengaruhi tingkat work engagement mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran calling terhadap work engagement pada Gen Z. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah Gen Z berusia 18–27 dari seluruh wilayah Indonesia, dengan jumlah sampel sebanyak 150 orang dan 50 orang untuk uji coba dengan karakteristik yang sama pada sampel penelitian. Alat ukur yang digunakan adalah skala *work engagement* yang disusun berdasarkan aspek semangat (*vigor*), dedikasi (*dedication*), dan penyerapan (*absorption*;  $\alpha = 0,951$ ), serta skala *calling* yang disusun berdasarkan dimensi *identification* dan *person-environment fit*, *sense-meaning* dan *value-driven behavior*, dan *transcendent guiding force* ( $\alpha = 0,811$ ). Pengujian hipotesis dilakukan menggunakan teknik analisis regresi linier berganda. Hasil menunjukkan adanya peran *calling* terhadap *work engagement* pada Gen Z. Sumbangan efektif variabel *calling* terhadap *work engagement* sebesar 69.4% sedangkan sisanya dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor yang lainnya.



## INTRODUCTION

The world of work encompasses several generations, each with its unique characteristics. Schewe et al. (2000) explain that a generation group is greatly influenced by external events that they experience over the years, so that each group will show different values, beliefs, and attitudes. There may be

gaps and differences between generations or age groups in the workforce that can lead to disputes, dissatisfaction, and conflict in the work environment. This diversity between generations is something that is particularly important today, given the presence of Generation Z in the work environment. Berkup (2014) explained that Generation Z, or Gen Z, consists of individuals born in 1995 and beyond. Basra (2020) stated that the presence of Gen Z in the workplace is likely to bring specific characteristics that can support or conflict with work, so the sooner the organization knows the characteristics of the workforce of Gen Z, the greater the opportunity for them to work better. On the other hand, Carver and Candela (2008) said that Gen Z could make a positive contribution to different generations, namely ideas, views, innovation and creativity, but can also lead to differences and conflicts in the workplace, such as miscommunication, balance in work life, differences in the use of technology so that the characteristics of different generations can have an impact on the level of work engagement.

Gen Z has less attention, is impatient, and easily feels anxious (Berkup, 2014). Furthermore, Levickaitė (2010) stated that Gen Z is more focused on speed than accuracy, which impacts the risk of workplace injuries and accidents. This condition, of course, leads to a decrease in performance, service, and quality of work. Early detection of these Gen Z traits will help businesses better understand their productivity, performance, and sustainability. Gen Z is characterised by their propensity for multitasking, which involves the completion of numerous tasks simultaneously and prioritising the pace of completion over the accuracy of the work, and they are prone to anxiety, impatience, and low attention (Berkup, 2014). This is obviously at odds with the part of work engagement that affects productivity and leads to low levels of focus. Furthermore, Gen Z is well-versed in modern technology advancements like social media and cellphones (Hampton & Keys, 2016; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Overuse of this could easily divert their attention at work. Basra (2020) said that the differences in perceptions, values, needs, and attitudes of Gen Z can affect the level of work engagement, so that it can identify the profile of Gen Z and measure their level of work engagement, which can help organizations in making decisions and policies to increase work engagement. Based on some of the explanations above, we can see that Gen Z is the latest working age group to enter the workforce, so organizations need to consider the characteristics, expectations, and requirements that impact Gen Z's work engagement in the workplace.

Work engagement is the positive involvement of the mind that is satisfied with work, characterized by vigor, absorption, and dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Schaufeli et al. (2002) explained that vigor is a characteristic of mental endurance, energy, effort, and persistence. Dedication is characterized by a strong sense of significance, inspiration, pride, enthusiasm, and challenge. In contrast, absorption is marked by full concentration and a state of being, where individuals feel immersed in their work, making time pass quickly and making it difficult to break away. Bakker and Demerouti (2014) explained that work engagement is an individual's mental state, where they have a feeling full of physical energy (vigor), have enthusiasm for work (dedication), and are deeply involved in work activities (absorption). In addition, Utami and Mardiawan (2022) also explained that work engagement is a condition in which individuals feel effectively motivated, positive, satisfied, and well-being, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Work engagement is a significant issue that warrants further research in industrial and organizational psychology. Seppälä (2013) explained that work engagement is an individual's construct or positive mindset towards work. Landy and Conte (2016) explained that employees with a sense of work engagement tend to have a high level of energy, enthusiasm, and identification with work, so

employees who have work engagement will grow to enjoy the demands of their work and not feel fatigued because they can identify with it.

One of the factors that supports work engagement is calling (Puspita, 2012). Individuals with a calling will view work as something significant and will have a higher purpose as part of their identity and moral character. Thus, individuals will have higher engagement at work if they have a calling (Kolodinsky et al., 2018). Rothmann and Hamukang'andu (2013) said that calling directly and strongly influences work engagement, as calling encourages individuals to be more involved with their work. Individuals with a calling will work not solely for material things, but because they see their work as a goal. The concept of calling is among the elements that can enhance work engagement (Cao et al., 2019). Dik and Duffy (2009) defined calling as the individual's conviction that their current activity is the primary objective and imparts significance to their existence. Kubátová (2016) stated that the research on Gen Z indicates they are motivated by the desire to earn substantial income, seek meaningful employment, and pursue prospects for advancement and development. Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2018) elucidates the importance of having a meaningful job for Gen Z and understanding what exactly can make a job meaningful and enjoyable for them to understand their career patterns in the future better. Based on these references, there is a necessity for meaningful work among Gen Z, serving as an internal motivator that enhances work engagement and understanding of their future career patterns.

According to Hagmaier and Abele (2015), calling is a state in which individuals achieve a perfect fit between their abilities and the demands of their work. Calling has three dimensions: (1) identification with one's work and person environment-fit; (2) sense-meaning and value-driven behavior; and (3) transcendent guiding force. The identification with one's work and personal environment-fit refers to the fact that individuals do work as part of themselves so that they can maximize their potential, and regarding the compatibility between individual abilities, talents, and qualifications and the job requirements. Sense and meaning, and value-driven behavior refer to the individual's state regarding the significance of oneself in work as a source that provides purpose and meaning in an individual's life, and refer to moral and ethical values that influence employee behavior related to work. A transcendent guiding force refers to the individual's perceived call from a greater power (e.g., the voice of God) or an internal calling (e.g., intuitive knowledge) that guides the individual in their actions, providing a sense of security and certainty about what to do. Ulfa et al. (2021) explained that employees who consider their work a calling will focus on appreciation, fulfillment, and benefits obtained from their work.

Based on the phenomenon, theories, and research described above, it can be concluded that calling plays a role in work engagement. Therefore, researchers are interested in investigating whether calling also plays a role in work engagement among Gen Z.

## **METHODS**

This study examines two variables: work engagement as the dependent variable and calling as the independent variable. The operational definition of work engagement is the state of affection felt by Gen Z employees, where they can think positively, motivate others, and feel satisfied, characterized by high levels of mental and physical energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to work, and are fully engaged in work activities. Furthermore, the operational definition of the calling variable is a psychological condition in which Gen Z employees feel interested and suitable for their work, consider their work as meaningful and purposeful, and feel called to carry out their work out of a desire to obtain satisfaction, not just for financial benefits.

The measuring tools in this study were a work engagement scale and a calling scale. The calling scale was compiled based on the calling dimensions of Hagmaier and Abele (2015), i.e., identification and person-environment fit, sense-meaning and value-driven behavior, and a transcendent guiding force. Furthermore, the work engagement scale is compiled based on the work engagement aspects of Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. The calling and work engagement scale was developed using the Likert scale methodology, comprising four response categories.

Validity and reliability assessments were conducted for the scale used in this study. Sugiyono (2018) stated that a validity test is the first step used to determine the extent to which data measurement instruments accurately measure what they intend to measure. Azwar (2021) stated that validity testing is necessary to determine whether a scale can produce accurate data and accurately align with its measurement objectives. The validity of the item in the study is affirmed if the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between items greater than .30 and is deemed invalid if  $r$  is less than .30. The validity test in this study utilizes corrected item-total correlation, examining the correlation between items based on the total score. Then, a reliability test is carried out specifically to assess the consistency or reliability of the measuring instrument, which refers to the accuracy of the measurement (Azwar, 2016). Reliability has a score range of 0 to 1, where a reliability value is considered good if it is close to 1 (Periantalo, 2016).

In the analysis of the work engagement scale, four items were excluded because their coefficient values were below .30 ( $r < .30$ ), while the remaining 34 items had acceptable coefficient values ( $r \geq .30$ ). Furthermore, 14 items were removed to match the target items, resulting in 18 items with item-total correlations ranging from .577 to .747. The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient for this scale was .951, with 18 items used in the study.

The analysis of the calling scale revealed that, in the identification and person-environment fit dimensions, one item with a coefficient value below the threshold ( $r < .30$ ) was excluded. Six items that correspond to the target item were taken by sorting from the highest so that the total-item correlation value was obtained in the range between .468 and .588, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value ( $\alpha$ ) was obtained at .803. In the sense-meaning and value-driven behavior dimensions, two items were discarded because they had a total correlation value below the threshold ( $r < .30$ ). Six items were selected that corresponded to the target item, sorted from the highest, with a range of item-total correlation values between .464 and .635 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value ( $\alpha$ ) of .803. In the transcendent guiding force dimension, two items were discarded because they had a total correlation value below the threshold ( $r < .30$ ). The remaining items were then selected, resulting in six items ranked from highest to lowest, with values ranging from .446 to .709. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was .811 after the items were removed.

The population in this study consists of Gen Z employees, a subset of the overall population. The participants in this study were Gen Z individuals aged 18–27 from various locations in Indonesia, including Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and Papua. The participants from Gen Z in this study are employed in private retail enterprises, state-owned enterprises (*Badan Usaha Milik Negara* or BUMN), and government agencies. Azwar (2021) mentioned the Roscoe theory, which states that the number of samples in a study should range from 30 to 500, which is already considered sufficient for a study. This is due to the unknown population in the research and the limitations of researchers in conducting research, such as energy, time, cost, and various other resources. Based on this theory, the researcher determined that the sample size for this study was 150 people, with 50 individuals included as a trial (tryout) sample. Then, the sampling technique used in

this study is nonprobability sampling. Sugiyono (2018) explained that nonprobability sampling is a sampling technique that provides different opportunities for each member of the population or element to be selected as a sample. The sample characteristics in this study are based on Gen Z, as defined by the Statistics of Indonesia (*Badan Pusat Statistik* or BPS) in 2020. Gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012, so the current age range is 11–26 years.

## RESULTS

The results of categorization in each of the work engagement and calling variables are as follows. The calling variable is determined based on the total score of the participant on the calling scale. The total number of items on the calling scale is 18, with a mean of 46 and a standard deviation of 13.14. Based on this data, it was obtained that the categorization of the calling variable was has medium categorized with a total of 96 people (64%), high categorized with a total of 51 people (34%), and the rest were classified as low, with a total of 3 people (2%; Table 1).

Table 1.  
Description of Categorization of Calling Variables of Research Participants

Formulation	Category	Frequency	Percentage
$X < 32.86$	Low	3	2%
$32.86 \leq X \leq 59.14$	Medium	96	64%
$X > 59.14$	High	51	34%

Furthermore, the results of categorizing the work engagement variable are determined based on the participant's overall score on the work engagement scale. The total number of items on the work engagement scale is 18, with a mean of 46, and standar deviation of 13.14. Based on these data, it can be concluded that there are 139 people (92.67%) in the medium work engagement category, 10 people (6.67%) in the high work engagement category, while the remaining one person (0.66%) is in the low work engagement category (Table 2).

Table 2.  
Description of Categorization of Work Engagement Variables of Research Participants

Formulation	Category	Frequency	Percentage
$X < 32.86$	Low	1	0.66%
$32.86 \leq X \leq 59.14$	Medium	139	92.67%
$X > 59.14$	High	10	6.67%

This study conducted an assumption test, including normality and linearity tests, to evaluate the role of calling on work engagement. Sugiyono (2018) stated that the purpose of the normality test is to determine whether the sample data originates from a normally distributed population. In this study, normality tests, linearity tests, and linear regression tests were carried out. According to the results of the normality test, the data are normally distributed, with significance values of .059 for work engagement and .152 for calling ( $p > .05$ ; Table 3).

Table 3.  
Results of the Normality Test of Research Variables

Variable	K-SZ	Sig.	Conclusion
Work Engagement	1.327	.059	Normal
Calling	1.135	.152	Normal

Then, a linearity test was conducted on the research variables, and the relationship between the calling variable and work engagement in the research variable was found to be linear, with a significance value of .000 ( $p < .05$ ). A linearity test is conducted to assess whether the relationship between the variables is linear or not significantly so (Sugiyono, 2018).

Table 4.  
Results of the Linearity Test of Research Variables

Variable	Linearity		Information
	F	Mr	
Calling – Work Engagement	315.633	.000	Linear

A hypothesis test was conducted using simple regression analysis to determine if the independent variable significantly influenced the dependent variable (Sugiyono, 2018). Then, in linear regression test, it can be concluded that there are role of calling towards work engagement is an *R*-value of .833, with a significance value of .000 ( $p < .05$ ) for the calling variable on work engagement, so that hypothesis in this study can be accepted, namely calling plays a role in work engagement in Gen Z employees. This indicates that the contribution of calling to work engagement is 69.4%, while the remaining 30.6% is attributed to other factors (Table 5).

Table 5.  
Results of the Linearity Test of Research Variables

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Calling – Work Engagement	.833	.694	335.080	.000

## DISCUSSION

This study shows a positive relationship between calling and work engagement. This finding is in accordance with research by Irina and Riasnugrahani (2022), namely that there is a direct relationship between calling and work engagement. Pangesti and Riasnugrahani (2022) also found a relationship between calling and work engagement, where individuals who have confidence in their work as a calling tend to experience increased work engagement. Hirschi (2012) also stated that there is a relationship between calling and work engagement and found that calling can significantly predict work engagement. Furthermore, Xie et al. (2016) also found that calling is significantly related to work engagement.

The percentage of influence of calling on work engagement was 69.4%, while the remaining 30.6% was attributed to other factors. Rakhim (2020) explained the factors that can affect work engagement, namely job resources and personal resources, related to which job resources themselves consist of career opportunities, work environment, work atmosphere, experience, awards, and challenges from work. Meanwhile, personal resources are the self-efficacy of employees.

Christian et al. (2011) stated that work engagement is a distinctive and significant framework for individuals and organizations regarding well-being and development in the workplace, which influences the outcome, namely performance. In theory, individuals who have a sense of calling in their career and work experience will have a sense of meaning, dedication, and individual involvement in the workplace (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; Elangovan et al., 2010). The concept is relevant to work engagement.

The study's results showed that most participants (92.67%) had a moderate level of work involvement. Field and Buitendach (2011) stated that individuals who have high work engagement will be better able to express themselves mentally, physically, cognitively, and emotionally during work.

Schaufeli et al. (2008) described employees with high work engagement will have an energetic sense and being effectively connected to their work activities. As a result, they will also perceive themselves as well-equipped to meet the job's demands. The results of this study indicate that Gen Z's work engagement level falls into the moderate category, suggesting that Gen Z has not yet fully maximized its ability to express job satisfaction, both mentally, physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Additionally, Gen Z is not always well-suited to meet the demands of work properly. Furthermore, based on the results of this study's analysis, the majority of participants (64%) have a calling that is classified as moderate. Jeon et al. (2016) found that employees with a high sense of calling tend to have better performance, as they also experience a sense of meaning in their work, which leads to their interests, values, and activities aligning with the job. Gagné and Deci (2005) stated that individuals with a high sense of calling will have the motivation to achieve what they individually want himself or herself to do in the job. Cardador et al. (2011) also said that individuals who have a high sense of calling will invest and engage more in the work, even if the conditions of support from others are limited. If viewed from some of the theoretical opinions above, this study suggests that Gen Z has a sense of calling in the medium category, which means that Gen Z does not fully find meaning in their work, resulting in suboptimal motivation and work involvement. There is a possibility that they still need support from others.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that calling plays a role in work engagement among Gen Z. The calling variable in this study falls into the high category. The work engagement variable falls into the high category, indicating that calling and work engagement among Gen Z are at a high level. This study demonstrates that a sense of calling enhances work engagement, suggesting that Gen Z individuals with such a sense will experience increased work engagement. This circumstance will also affect the organization's performance and productivity. This research can be further developed by examining the work environment conditions of Gen Z that can increase work engagement, such as the abilities, talents, and qualifications of individuals in relation to job demands. Furthermore, it may also take into consideration the characteristics of Gen Z that can influence work engagement in both positive and negative ways. A characteristic that can be developed in the study is the multitasking ability of Gen Z in achieving job targets.

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