



The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Controlling Work Stress to Improve Work Performance in Generation Z

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Abstract: *Important factors for improving performance include emotional resilience, sensitivity to stress related to work, and a need for a supportive work environment, all of which are exhibited by the increasingly visible Generation Z in the workforce. The purpose of this study is to investigate, among Generation Z employees in the Greater Jakarta area, the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance, with a focus on the mediating role of stress on the job. This study uses a quantitative approach based on surveys to gather data from Generation Z employees in various industries. The analysis of the data was carried out using PLS-SEM, which was made possible by the SmartPLS software. Evidence from this study suggests that emotional intelligence has a favorable effect on productivity in the workplace and a negative effect on stress levels there. However, there is no correlation between emotional intelligence and performance on the job, and stress at work has no bearing on either. These results indicate that the enhancement in the performance of Generation Z workers is more affected by a person's skill in handling emotions than by work stress factors.*

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence; Work Stress; Work Performance; Generation Z*

Introduction

The dominance of the global labor market is currently dominated by Generation Z born between 1996–2015, with a projection of reaching 27% by 2025 (Katsaros, 2025). The phenomenon of Quiet Quitting reflects a shift in Generation Z's work paradigm that prioritizes work-life balance over traditional commitments. In the context of work performance, Generation Z faces significant challenges including 62% disengagement in the global workforce, excessive workload and stress, and inconsistencies in welfare policies. There are main factors that affect Generation Z's motivation and performance, namely work appreciation, skill development, organizational welfare, stress and job recognition with very high appreciation as the strongest predictors (Surugiu et al., 2025). In today's industry, the workforce is predicted to retire by 2031, making Generation Z retention crucial. The urgency of this research is important because data shows that 41% of Generation Z intend to stay only 1–3 years in an organization in 2025 and

increase from the previous year, which creates a retention challenge for companies (Surugiu et al., 2025).

Individuals with greater levels of emotional intelligence tend to produce better work outcomes and make more valuable contributions to their business, making emotional intelligence a strong predictor of work performance. There is strong and widely acknowledged evidence linking emotional intelligence to work performance. This suggests that employees who are able to understand and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of those around them tend to have better outcomes in their work. There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance across the board, according to a comprehensive study. This includes self-emotion appraisal, evaluation of others' emotions, application of emotions, and control of emotions. Moreover, this relationship is gender-specific as emotional intelligence explains 35% of the variance in male work performance, but only 24.1% in

females, suggesting that this relationship has different effects across gender (Carrillo et al., 2020; Chong et al., 2020; Ishak & Jamian, 2021; Smash Bros & Vela, 2023).

Another factor impacting the performance of Generation Z is work stress. High job demands, high expectations, and the impact of ubiquitous technology can result in stress, which can in turn affect their performance. Additionally, stress is also evident among Generation Z due to pressure from the organisation to keep up with technological advancements. If left unchecked, stress may affect psychological and physical well-being, as well as performance and productivity. This situation poses a significant challenge given the important position of Generation Z as the catalyst for the future economy, particularly as they are expected to lead the workforce in Indonesia by 2030 (Kutebayev & Lloyd., 2025; Deng et al., 2019). As a result, they are more inclined to look for a workplace that fosters a balance between work and personal life along with mental health (Ari, 2025).

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been linked to better work performance in a number of studies conducted across different types of organizations. The capacity to control one's emotions is associated with higher levels of academic success, according to research by Altaras et al. (2025), which shows that EQ significantly affects student performance. Similarly, Carrillo et al. (2020) found that people who are emotionally intelligent are more productive and have a bigger impact on their organizations. King et al. (2026) corroborate these results by demonstrating a strong inverse correlation between EQ and stress levels in the workplace. Emotional intelligence is positively associated with work performance in the Saudi Arabian environment, according to Alsufyani et al. (2022). In Saudi Arabia, Alonazi (2020) found the same thing: that EI accounted for substantial differences in the way government workers performed their jobs. Emotional intelligence, according to Al-Hamdan et al. (2017) and other Middle Eastern research (Altaras et al., 2025; Cheraghi et al., 2025),

increases job satisfaction and decreases the intention to quit employment.

Although studies have shown a positive relationship between EI and performance on the job, they have mostly ignored the specific traits of Generation Z, who currently makes up the majority of the world's workers. Despite research showing that psychological capital mediates the relationship between EI, burnout, and performance, no studies have specifically looked at how work stress affects the involvement of Generation Z. Methodological gaps were also identified in most studies using cross-sectional designs, which did not allow causal inferences about how EI dynamically reduced work stress to improve Generation Z's adaptive performance. In addition, there has been no research that integrates the attitude-behavior gap of Generation Z in a predictive model of performance stress EI. The novelty of this study lies in testing the EI Work stress stress work performance model specifically in Generation Z by considering the cultural context and typical generational characteristics (Carrillo et al., 2020; Mehralian et al., 2025; Nogueiro, 2025; Gong et al., 2019; Katsaros, 2025; Minazzi & Grechi, 2025).

This study aims to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence on Generation Z's Work Performance in Jakarta by considering the role of work stress mediation in these relationships. Special objectives include measuring the level of emotional intelligence of Generation Z who work in the formal sector of Jakarta, including the ability to recognize self-emotions, understand the emotions of others, utilize emotions constructively, and regulate emotional responses in work situations. The study also assessed the intensity of work stress experienced by Generation Z in response to the tension between job demands and available resources in a competitive metropolitan work environment. Furthermore, the study examined the direct influence of emotional intelligence on Work Performance, both in terms of task performance and contextual performance. An analysis of the mediating role of work stress was carried out to test the hypothesis that high emotional intelligence reduces the perception of work

stress which ultimately improves adaptive performance. Finally, the study identified contextual factors typical of Jakarta such as cost-of-living pressures, daily commuting patterns, and the dynamics of a hybrid work culture that moderates the relationship between variables, as well as formulating strategic recommendations for organizations in managing Generation Z talent through the development of emotional intelligence as an effort to mitigate stress and improve sustainable performance.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence

The ability to think better in light of one's emotions and to reason about one's emotions is what's known as emotional intelligence (EI). Among these skills is the capacity for correct emotional perception, the ability to access and generate emotions to facilitate thinking, the ability to comprehend and make use of emotional knowledge, and the capacity for reflexive regulation of emotions to foster intellectual and emotional development. Being emotionally intelligent is being able to read and manage your own and other people's emotions, and also knowing how to utilize your emotions to your advantage in making good decisions and moving closer to your goals. Emotional intelligence, in the context of organizations, is the social intelligence that enables individuals to have productive interactions with others, know how to control their own emotions as well as others, and use this knowledge to succeed professionally. In its most basic form, emotional intelligence encompasses the following four areas: self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, emotion usage, and emotion management. The research conducted by Carrillo et al. (2020), Smash Bros & Vela (2023), Chong et al. (2020), Ishak & Jamian (2021), and Chong et al. (2020) all point to a strong correlation between EI and work performance. Specifically, those with greater levels of EI tend to display stronger work outcomes.

Work Performance

Work performance is how well an employee does their job to help an organization succeed. Task performance refers to the execution of core tasks directly related to job responsibilities, while contextual performance involves supportive behaviors that improve the organization's social and psychological environment (Ishak & Jamian, 2021). In the younger age, work performance involves adaptive performance, or how well people adjust to workplace changes. Change initiatives can prompt cognitive, emotional, and behavioral adaptations throughout organisational transition (Ishak & Jamian, 2021; Katsaros, 2025).

Total anticipated value for the arrangement of discrete behavioral episodes produced by persons over a regular time period is another way to look at work performance. From Generation Z's point of view, there are several elements that impact work performance. The most important of these is having a high level of work appreciation, followed by developing one's skills. Organizational well-being and job recognition are also significant factors. Gen Z workers' productivity in the construction sector is affected by aspects including respect, work-life balance, job stability, scheduling flexibility, and hybrid work settings. Nogueiro (2025), Surugiu et al. (2025), and Hatoum and Nassereddine (2025) all agree that when employees lose interest, motivation, and involvement in their jobs, it has a detrimental effect on work performance.

Work Stress

According to Dogru (2022), when an employee's regular psychological state is disrupted due to variables relating to their employment, this is called work stress. A multi-faceted view supports this concept by demonstrating that stress at work is affected by a web of interplay between elements in the workplace, personal traits, and how employees perceive their own role in the situation. Workplace stress is heavily influenced by employees' emotional state, perceptions of their own abilities, and character traits. Reduced productivity (poor performance) (Siu, 2003), lack of drive (Luo, 1999), dissatisfaction

with one's job (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983), extreme emotional weariness (Griffin et al., 2010), and high intentions to leave one's current position (high turnover intentions) are all negative effects of workplace stress on organizational performance. Dogru's (2022) meta-analysis likewise found a negative correlation between EQ and stress on the job, indicating that workers who are adept at controlling their emotions are less likely to feel overwhelmed by their jobs. These results (Alayoubi et al., 2022; Lawal & Idemudia, 2017) highlight the significance of developing emotional capacities as a technique to mitigate stress in today's workplace.

Emotional Intelligent Against Work Stress

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognise, understand and regulate own and others' emotions to respond to job challenges. Employees with high emotional intelligence can better control their job stress, negative feelings and psychological well-being to achieve better performance. Managing and controlling emotions helps employees better cope with work issues, build positive relationships and remain motivated for better work performance. Emotionally intelligent people can also manage work stress, to avoid it impacting performance. Emotional intelligence enables employees to remain focused and motivated, and work to their full potential in a changing work environment.

The research of several previous studies demonstrates that emotional intelligence and job stress are related. Because being able to control one's emotional state lets one deal with stressful work situations in a more creative way, King et al. (2026) found that EQ has a significant correlation with EQ and stress in the workplace. Further support for the findings comes from the work of Gilar-Corbi et al. (2025), who found that people with high EQ have lower levels of stress at work than those people with low EQ. Emotional intelligence is important in handling psychological stress at work, according to studies by Lea et al. (2019) and Schumann et al. (2025). This, in turn, contributes to their emotional stability and productivity. Those with high emotional intelligence are more capable of coping with

workplace stress (Lawal & Idemudia, 2017). This implies that EQ plays a part in reducing work stress. There have been both theoretical and empirical studies to support the hypotheses presented in this study, which are:

H1: Emotional intelligence positively impacts work stress.

Emotional Intelligent Towards Work Performance

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognise, understand and regulate one's own and others' emotions in different work situations to adapt and perform work tasks. People with high emotional intelligence can control their emotions, remain psychologically stable, and build a rapport with their colleagues and managers to enhance performance. Managing emotions also enables people to manage work stress, conflict, and motivation, to improve performance. So, people with high emotional intelligence can adapt to work situations, improve communication and achieve peak performance (Carillo et al., 2020; Alonazi, 2020; Al-Hamdan, 2017; Alsufyani, 2022).

Many studies have found emotional intelligence enhances performance. Mehralian et al. (2025) reported that emotional intelligence boosts work performance by enabling people to control their emotions. Some found that employees with high emotional intelligence can manage their emotions and work well with the organisation to enhance skills. Research also demonstrates that emotional intelligence improves communication, decision-making, and relationship management, which boosts work performance. Other research demonstrates that emotional intelligence improves employee performance because it helps people handle job pressure and finish tasks well (Alsufyani et al, 2022). The study also found that emotional intelligence improves work performance by helping people manage their emotions (Carrillo et al., 2020; Kaur & Chauhan, 2025; Lu & Chen, 2024; Alonazi, 2020). This study proposes the following hypothesis based on theoretical description and empirical evidence from earlier research:

H2: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on work performance.

Work Stress on Work Performance

According to King et al. (2026), workers experience work stress when the demands of their jobs surpass their capacity to manage. This, in turn, impacts their emotional well-being, cognitive functioning, and behavioral patterns as they carry out their obligations. High levels of work stress can interfere with concentration, reduce work motivation, and weaken an individual's ability to make decisions, potentially reducing work performance (Deng et al., 2019). In addition, excessive work stress can also lead to emotional fatigue, decreased productivity, and increased work mistakes which ultimately negatively impact the quality of employee performance (Alayoubi et al., 2022). This condition shows that when individuals experience continuous high work pressure without adequate support or coping strategies, their ability to complete work optimally will decrease (Ari, 2025).

Numerous studies have shown that work stress lowers performance. Merkusy and Aini (2020) discovered that work stress lowers employee productivity and effectiveness. Deng et al. (2019) found that high work stress lowered work performance because people struggled to manage work demands and organizational pressure. Ari (2025) found that work stress causes psychological tiredness and decreased work motivation, which lowers performance. Alayoubi et al. (2022) also

observed that work stress negatively impacts work performance since it reduces employee productivity and efficiency. This study proposes the following hypothesis based on theoretical descriptions and empirical evidence from earlier studies:

H3: Work stress has a negative effect on work performance.

Mediation of Work Stress on the Relationship of Emotional Intelligent to Work Performance

Emotional intelligence helps people detect, comprehend, and control their own and others' emotions to better handle job demands. High-EQ people have stronger emotional regulation skills to control work stress and reduce workplace stress (Udin et al., 2025). Stress management improves work performance by maintaining focus, emotional stability, and productivity (Cheraghi et al., 2025). Thus, emotional intelligence promotes work performance directly and indirectly by reducing work stress (Alayoubi et al., 2022; Demirel, 2022).

Several research have indicated that work stress mediates the association between emotional intelligence and work performance. Ali Alayoubi et al. (2022) and Udin et al. (2025) found that work stress is a mechanism by which emotional intelligence affects employee performance. High-EQ individuals can reduce work pressure to improve performance. Cheraghi et al. (2025) found that work stress management links emotional intelligence to increased work performance. The study also indicated that work stress

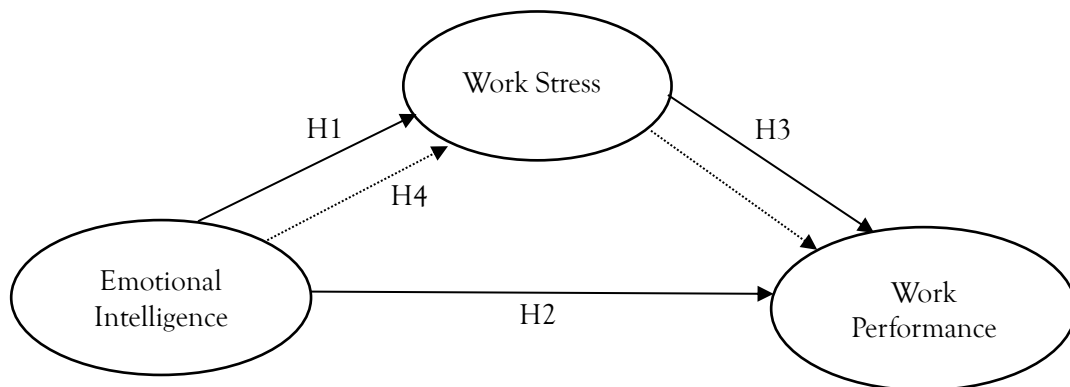


Figure 1. Research Framework

mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on work performance by affecting work pressure management. Other research demonstrates that emotional intelligence indirectly improves work performance by reducing employee stress (Demirel, 2022; Aldhafeeri et al., 2025). This study proposes the following hypothesis based on theoretical description and empirical evidence from earlier research:

H4: Work stress mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance.

Based on the results of the initial hypothesis, the following is the framework of this study:

Methods

This study measured emotional intelligence, work stress, and work performance. The research instruments were questionnaires provided online to eligible respondents. Six statements from Widiastuti et al. (2024) measured occupational stress, while

four statements measured emotional intelligence (Musonda et al., 2023). Four statements assess work performance (Zulkifli & Hamzah, 2024). All research variables were measured with 14 indicators. Generation Z employees were given questionnaires and interviewed briefly to better understand their working situations.

The demographic in this study is Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, who work full- or part-time in Greater Jakarta. Purposive sampling is used to choose respondents based on Generation Z age and active work status. There are standards that say the minimum sample size in Structural Equation Model analysis is five times the number of research indicators. Minimum sample size is 70 based on 14 indications. This study received 101 respondents, meeting the sample size requirement (Hair, et al., 2019).

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the research hypothesis that emotional

Table 1. Demographic of Respondents

No	Category	Percentage	Number of Respondents
1	Domicile	Jakarta	52,5
		Tangerang	38,6
		Bogor, Depok, Bekasi	3
2	Working Period (years)	1-3	69,6
		4-6	27,5
		7-10	2
		>10	1
3	Gender	Female	70,3
		Male	29,7
4	Age (years)	21-24	61,4
		25-28	23,8
		>28	1
5	Education Level	High School	59,4
		S1	37,6
		S2	3
6	Marital Status	Unmarried	91,1
		Married	8,9
7	Employment Status	Permanent	65
		Contract	35,6
8	Position	Staff	93,1
		Supervisor	4
		Director	3
9	Income Level (IDR)	5,000,000 -8,000,000	50,5
		<5,000,000)	40,6
		8,000,000 -12,000,000	5
		>12,000,000	4

intelligence affects Generation Z work stress and performance. Researchers tested measurement and structural models using Smart-PLS 4 software. This method was chosen because it can simultaneously investigate causal links between latent variables and is suitable for small to medium sample sizes. This method can reveal the relationship between emotional intelligence, work stress, and work performance among Generation Z employees in Greater Jakarta (Hair, et al., 2019).

Results and Discussions

Table 1 displays the results of the demographic data collected from the respondents.

Outer Loading

Based on the data in Table 2, it is clear that all of the emotional intelligence, work performance, and work stress assessment indicators satisfy the convergent validity criteria according to the external content analysis.

Table 2. Outer Loading

Indicator	EI	WP	WS
EI15	0,778		
EI17	0,715		
EI19	0,784		
EI21	0,747		
EI27	0,742		
EI4	0,797		
WP1		0,868	
WP3		0,936	
WP4		0,930	
WP6		0,831	
WS1			0,857
WS2			0,882
WS3			0,783
WS4			0,752
WS6			0,885

Abbreviations: EI = Emotional Intelligence; WP = Work Performance; WS = Work Stress

The loading factor was greater than 0.7, which is consistent with the suggestion made by Hair et al. (2019) that, in variance-based Structural Equation Model, a loading factor of at least 0.7 is a sufficient criterion to guarantee sufficient indicator reliability. There is little room for error in the research instrument's

measurements of theoretical constructs, since loading values are highly consistent across all dimensions. According to Henseler et al. (2016), who stressed the importance of a high-quality measurement model for drawing valid causal conclusions in modern HRM studies, this metric validation provides a solid foundation for testing structural hypotheses about the impact of EQ on productivity and stress on the job.

Validity & Reliability

Analyses of reliability and construct validity show that the measurements are of high enough quality to satisfy the methodological requirements of PLS-SEM-based research. Table 3 displays the results of the tests for validity and reliability.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
EI	0,855	0,867	0,892	0,579
WP	0,914	0,936	0,940	0,796
WS	0,891	0,916	0,919	0,695

Abbreviations: EI = Emotional Intelligence; WP = Work Performance; WS = Work Stress

Analyses of reliability and construct validity show that the measurements are of high enough quality to satisfy the methodological requirements of PLS-SEM-based research. Table 3 displays the results of the tests for reliability and validity. Emotional Intelligence, Work Performance, and Work Stress all have Cronbach's alpha values that are higher than the suggested criterion of 0.7, which means that they have good internal consistency. In addition, the measurement reliability is strengthened because the composite reliabilities (CR) for all three constructs are greater than or equal to 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). All constructs' average variance extracted (AVE) is more than or equal to 0.5, proving that they are valid and convergent in explaining the observed variation in the indicators (Henseler et al., 2016). These findings confirm that the research instrument is not only capable but also convergently valid, making it suitable for testing structural hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables. Thus, the measurement model in this study meets the strict methodological

requirements for generating credible theoretical conclusions.

Discriminatory Validity

Table 4. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	HTMT
Work Performance <-> Emotional Intelligence	0,409
Work Stress <-> Emotional Intelligence	0,357
Work Stress <-> Work Performance	0,114

Tabel 5. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	EI	WP	WS
EI	0,761		
WP	0,366	0,892	
WS	-0,341	-0,095	0,834

Abbreviations: EI = Emotional Intelligence; WP = Work Performance; WS = Work Stress

Two influential methods, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), were used to analyze discriminant validity. According to the HTMT matrix, all of the construct ratio values were below the critical threshold of less than 0.85, as suggested by Henseler et al. (2016). The measuring identities of the various conceptions are distinct from one another and do not overlap. Moreover, according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, it has been verified that the AVE value for each construct always surpasses the squared correlation between them. These results are in line with the methodological guidelines of Hair et al. (2019) who emphasized that discriminant validation is an absolute prerequisite for ensuring construct uniqueness in SEM-based research. By fulfilling these two criteria, the measurement model in this study has been verified to have adequate discriminant validity, thus allowing for testing of structural hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables with a high level of reliability.

Inner Model

In structural models (Table 6), path coefficient analysis shows strong construct correlations. Emotional Intelligence positively

influenced Work Performance with a coefficient = 0.378, statistical T = 3.870, and p value = 0.000, supporting the hypothesis that managing emotions improves work performance. The result shows that people with high emotional intelligence have less work stress. These data meet Hair et al. (2019) statistical significance standards, including a p-value < 0.05 and a T-value > 1.96 at 95% confidence. Work Stress had no significant effect on Work Performance, rejecting the associated hypothesis. Henseler et al. (2016) recommend hypothesis validation using rigorous statistical testing in PLS-SEM, which supports these findings. This structural model reveals that Emotional Intelligence is a key predictor of work Performance through stress reduction, but work stress does not directly affect performance in this study.

The total indirect impact showed that Emotional Intelligence did not mediate Work Stress on Work Performance, imply that Work Stress does not mediate these connections (Hair et al., 2019). In this structural model, Emotional Intelligence directly affects Work Performance and negatively affects Work Stress, however the mediational mechanism through Work Stress is not verified. Thus, Emotional Intelligence directly affects Work Performance without Work Stress mitigation. These findings show that emotional intelligence development can improve work performance without reducing work stress, enriching organizational psychological systems.

R Square

A determination coefficient analysis (R-square) result of 0.135 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.118 were found for the work performance variable. The results demonstrate that a combination of emotional intelligence and work stress accounts for 13.5 percent of the variance in performance on the job, while other factors impact the remaining 86.5 percent. The work stress variable also had an R-squared value of 0.116 and an adjusted R-squared value of 0.107, indicating that emotional intelligence could only account for 11.6% of the variance in work stress; the remaining 88.4% was accounted for by factors outside the scope of this study.

F Square

The f-square effect size study revealed that emotional intelligence had a minor to medium influence on work performance, with a value of 0.146. At the same time, the f-square value of 0.131 for the impact of EQ on stress at work falls into the small influence category. However, with an f-square value of 0.001, we can see that work stress had a negligible impact on the changes in performance that were simulated in this study. According to these results, emotional intelligence is a more important factor in explaining the variance in both work performance and stress at work than the impact of stress on performance at work itself.

Model Fit

The structural model fulfilled the criteria for a sufficient level of fit according to the fit model evaluation. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) index was 0.074, which was lower than the critical threshold of 0.08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). This number suggests that the model adequately depicts the empirical data, since there is little discrepancy between the observed and projected covariance matrices. Even though it falls short of the ideal threshold of 0.90, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.840 still passes the minimum condition of 0.80 in the context of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the Chi-square value (150,880) was not a major consideration in the evaluation of the PLS-SEM model because this approach did not assume a normal distribution and did not test the model's suitability statistically as in CB-SEM (Henseler et al., 2016). Thus, based on the SRMR and NFI criteria, the measurement and

structural models in this study have met the standards of conformity required to produce valid theoretical inferences regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence, work stress, and Work Performance in an organizational context.

Hypothesis Test

The results of the hypothesis testing in this study were based on the PLS-SEM method, which yielded many discoveries regarding the relationships between the variables. The test findings demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly and positively affected work performance. Based on these findings, we can conclude that workers' emotional intelligence directly correlates to their level of productivity on the work (H1). In addition, the second hypothesis test verified that emotional intelligence significantly reduced work stress and an overall negative effect. These results provide credence to the second hypothesis (H2), which states that workers report less stress on the work when their emotional intelligence is strong.

The third hypothesis test demonstrated that work stress did not significantly impact work performance. The third hypothesis (H3) cannot be accepted with this evidence. This proves that the amount of stress that workers in this study endured had no discernible impact on their productivity on the work. Work stress also failed to mediate the connection between emotional intelligence and performance on the work, according to the results of the fourth hypothesis test. There is therefore no evidence to support the fourth hypothesis (H4). These results disprove the idea that stress at work mediates the

Table 6. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Remarks
H1: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on work performance.	0,378	3,870	0,000	Supporting the Hypothesis
H2: Emotional intelligence has a negative effect on work stress.	-0,341	4,263	0,000	Supporting the Hypothesis
H3: Work stress has a negative effect on work performance.	0,034	0,350	0,363	Does not support the hypothesis
H4: Work stress mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance.	-0,012	0,317	0,376	Does not support the hypothesis

relationship between emotional intelligence and productivity on the work.

Discussion

The results of the study show that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on work performance. The ability to understand other people's non-verbal messages and recognize emotions through facial expressions helps individuals adjust their responses in work interactions, reduce miscommunication, and build more effective coordination. Meanwhile, the ability to motivate oneself through an orientation to good results contributes directly to the discipline of completing tasks. In the context of work performance, this capacity appears in the ability to plan work, set priorities, and complete work efficiently. So, emotional intelligence in this study does not only serve as an affective attribute, but as a psychological resource that underpins structured and productive work behavior. Consistent with earlier studies (Alonazi, 2020; Alsufyani et al., 2022; Carrillo et al., 2020b; Kaur & Chauhan, 2025; Lu & Chen, 2024; Mehralian et al., 2025), this one also finds that emotional intelligence positively and significantly affects work performance.

Emotional intelligence significantly reduces stress at work, according to results from hypothesis 2. These results show that Gen Z workers report less stress at work when their emotional intelligence is high. Workers' ability to regulate their emotions declines when they endure toxic or unsafe working conditions, believe that their jobs negatively affect their mental and physical health, are overburdened with work, have trouble expressing their thoughts to their bosses, and believe that they lack sufficient control over their tasks. Emotional intelligence is defined in this study as the capacity to read facial expressions, comprehend non-verbal cues from others, and inspire oneself to work hard by visualizing positive outcomes. These results are in line with earlier studies that demonstrated emotional intelligence as a psychological mechanism that aids workers in dealing with stress on the job and meeting organizational expectations. This study's findings corroborate those of other studies showing that EQ

significantly reduces stress at work (Corbi et al., 2025; King et al., 2026; Lawal & Idemudia, 2017; Lea et al., 2019).

The results of hypothesis 3 test showed that work stress did not have a significant effect on work performance. In this study, work stress is represented through unpleasant or unsafe working conditions, the impact of work on physical and emotional well-being, unreasonable workload and deadlines, difficulty conveying opinions to superiors, and low control over work tasks. Meanwhile, work performance is measured through the ability to plan work, set priorities, and complete work efficiently. Substantively, this shows that the work pressure felt by respondents does not necessarily automatically decrease their ability to prioritize and complete tasks efficiently. In other words, even if employees feel pressure in the work environment, they may still maintain task performance at a certain level. This pattern is still logical, especially if the individual still has a good enough work strategy, experience, or task discipline to maintain his work output. These findings suggest that other factors such as intrinsic motivation, organizational support, or adaptability to technology likely have a greater role in influencing Generation Z's performance compared to work stress itself. Work stress does not necessarily have a negative impact on employee performance in all situations, as these findings demonstrate that the correlation between the two is not necessarily linear. Previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence significantly reduces occupational stress (Alayoubi et al., 2022; Ari, 2025; Deng et al., 2019; Merkusi & Aini, 2020), but our study contradicts those findings.

Work stress cannot mediate the connection between emotional intelligence and performance on the job, according to the findings of the fourth hypothesis in the mediation effect test. This explains why the insignificant indirect effect is stated. Based on these findings, we can conclude that emotional intelligence is more likely to directly influence work performance rather than to influence work performance through the mechanism of

reducing work stress. For Generation Z employees in the Greater Jakarta region, this can be justified by a generation that is relatively flexible to work stress, used to a fast-paced work environment, and has good multitasking skills. Therefore, while emotional intelligence can alleviate work stress, it is not a direct pathway to explain the improvement in work performance. This indicates that Generation Z's performance is more likely to be explained by other factors like intrinsic work motivation, the ability to adapt to technology and support from a good work environment. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that for Generation Z employees in Greater Jakarta, work stress is not a significant mediator that explains the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance. This study found no effect of emotional intelligence on work performance, unlike previous studies that showed the impact of emotional intelligence on work performance (Alayoubi et al., 2022; Aldhafeeri et al., 2025; Cheraghi et al., 2025; Demirel, 2022).

Conclusions and Future Research

According to the research, emotional intelligence affects Generation Z employees' performance in Greater Jakarta. Analysis shows that emotional intelligence positively and significantly affects work performance, meaning that the better an employee can understand, manage, and control emotions, the better their performance. Emotional intelligence also has a negative and significant effect on work stress, as those with high emotional intelligence may better manage work pressure and reduce stress. In this study, Generation Z employees' work stress did not impair their performance because work stress has not been found to affect performance. The mediation effect test indicated that work stress did not mediate emotional intelligence and work performance. Emotional intelligence improves employee performance directly rather than by reducing work stress among Generation Z employees in Greater Jakarta.

The research results from this study must be interpreted with numerous restrictions. First, this study exclusively uses Generation Z employees in Greater Jakarta, thus its results

cannot be generalized to other generations or regions. Second, this study may not adequately represent Generation Z employees across different industries due to its small sample size. Third, this research model only includes emotional intelligence, work stress, and work performance, so work motivation, organizational support, job satisfaction, and work environment may also affect employee performance. Fourth, this study employs a survey using self-questionnaire that may bias respondents' view. This study, therefore, requires further research to broaden the research region, sample size, and other factors to gain insight into Generation Z employees' work performance.

In terms of the restriction of the current research, future research should increase the geographical area of the study to increase the representativeness of the study areas, which is not only Generation Z employees in Greater Jakarta. Future research should increase the number of respondents and include samples from other industries to understand performance dynamics in the workplace of younger generation employees. To gain a better understanding of determinants of performance, future research should include other variables, such as work motivation, job satisfaction, organisational support, leadership, and work engagement in a model. Furthermore, longitudinal or mixed methods approaches might offer a more comprehensive view of the relationship between emotional intelligence, work stress, and work performance in the dynamic work environment of Generation Z.

The findings of this study indicate that companies should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence to improve work performance, especially in Generation Z in Greater Jakarta. Organisations should develop training and development programs to enhance emotional management, interpersonal skills and empathy so employees can manage work stress. Supervisors should also give positive feedback, managerial support, and an open and supportive organisational culture to improve employees' mental health. The findings show that work stress does not

have a negative effect on work performance, but companies should manage work stress by maintaining a healthy workload and providing flexible work arrangements and employee welfare programs. Thus, companies can motivate Generation Z employees to maintain high performance, flexibility and productivity in complex work environments.

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