

## Psychological capital and work engagement among strawberry generation employees

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### ABSTRACT

Organizations require energetic and dedicated employees to achieve their goals through work engagement. Work engagement can be influenced by the unique characteristics of the strawberry generation, especially when combined with psychological capital. This study aims to determine the impact of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency) on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. The research employs a quantitative method, measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire 24 (PCQ-24) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale 17 (UWES-17). The population used in this study consists of employees in Indonesia, from which 227 samples were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression analysis. The results of this study are: (1) there is no effect of self-efficacy on work engagement among strawberry generation employees, (2) there is a positive effect of optimism on work engagement among strawberry generation employees, (3) there is a negative effect of hope and resiliency on work engagement among strawberry generation employees, and (4) there is a positive effect of psychological capital on work engagement among strawberry generation employees.

Keywords: Psychological capital, Strawberry generation, Work engagement

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## INTRODUCTION

An organization can be defined as an entity comprising a group of individuals working together to achieve goals. Organizational structure usually consists of clearly structured hierarchical levels, where each individual has specific roles and responsibilities [1]. The success of an organization in achieving its goals is greatly influenced by its resources, especially employees as human resources [2]. Organizational success requires

energetic and dedicated employees, meaning employees who have work engagement in performing their tasks [3].

Work engagement is a motivational construct, a state of mind related to well-being at work and self-fulfillment, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Work engagement describes the relationship between employees and their work, where employees have a positive mindset and can commit by contributing their best to their work [4]. High work engagement is positive motivation and mindset related to work, marked by high vigor, dedication, and absorption [5].

Vigor refers to the psychological aspect of energy, mental and physical strength, and high enthusiasm in performing tasks [6]. Individuals with high vigor tend to feel enthusiastic and active at work. They possess good physical and mental fitness and are able to make decisions to overcome challenges in the work environment to deliver effective and efficient results [7].

Dedication relates to aspects of care, loyalty, and passion for one's work [8]. Individuals with high levels of dedication in their work engagement are responsive to their work environment and always strive to deliver their best performance. They enjoy and feel happy because they feel useful and contribute positively to the organization [9]. This not only makes performance faster and more efficient but also inspires team members to give their best in their work as well [4].

Absorption encompasses aspects of focus, the tendency to become deeply involved in work, and feeling connected to the tasks at hand [10]. Individuals with high levels of absorption tend to be more productive and experience a sense of satisfaction when they see the results of their work [4].

Contrary to the ideal condition, a survey conducted in 2017 found that 85% of employees from 155 countries worldwide did not have work engagement in their jobs. The study also measured the level of work engagement among employees in Indonesia, showing that only 13% of employees were engaged, while the rest felt disengaged with their jobs [11].

Disengaged employees will impact the quality and reputation of the organization. Disengaged employees tend to show a lack of care for their work, difficulty in concentrating, lack of enthusiasm, and a tendency to spend work time on unproductive activities. Another

adverse effect of disengagement is the high turnover rate or employees leaving their jobs [12].

In 2021, the phenomenon of turnover occurred in America under the term "the great resignation," predominantly involving Generation Z and millennials. Initially, this phenomenon was triggered by the cessation of business sectors due to lockdown policies and activity restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over time, Generation Z and millennial employees voluntarily resigned from their jobs [13].

Generation Z and millennials are generally included in the context of the strawberry generation. This generation is described as unique, being innovative with out-of-the-box ideas, but also having a tendency to be easily disappointed, fragile, and emotionally hurt [14]. Therefore, employees of the strawberry generation consider several factors in their decision-making about whether to stay or leave. These factors include company stability, a conducive and conflict-free work environment, guidance and protection from superiors, and welfare guarantees [15]. Additionally, generational characteristics, particularly those of the strawberry generation, can also affect the level of work engagement when receiving other predictors such as the dimensions found in psychological capital [16].

Psychological capital tends to be more flexible and can change throughout a person's life. This depends on situational factors, such as the effects of certain changes or experiences of undergoing extensive psychotherapy. Psychological capital is a positive psychological concept comprising four main dimensions: self-efficacy (an individual's belief in their ability to motivate themselves, utilize cognitive resources, and successfully complete tasks), optimism (the ability to think positively and have expectations of good outcomes), hope (positive motivation based on a sense of achievement and energy to plan steps to achieve goals), and resiliency (an individual's capacity to recover after facing difficulties or problems with a positive attitude, values of self-improvement, and personal responsibility) [17].

Employees with high self-efficacy have confidence that they have control over achieving success through their efforts and endeavors. On the other hand, individuals with low self-efficacy tend to doubt themselves, receive negative feedback, be influenced by social criticism, and frequently experience repeated failures [18].

Employees with high levels of optimism have confidence in their ability to overcome challenges and face obstacles that may arise in the workplace [19]. They view life positively and remain optimistic even when confronted with negative circumstances. In contrast,

pessimistic individuals tend to overlook positive aspects of their lives and focus solely on their own mistakes [20]. Employees with high levels of hope have the ability to develop strategies and apply efforts to achieve their goals [21]. These employees expect a better future, are confident, and are persistent in overcoming difficulties [22].

Employees demonstrating high levels of resiliency have the capacity to recover quickly after experiencing setbacks [23]. Resiliency enables individuals to become more resilient in addressing specific problems. In the organizational context, resilience is crucial for employees to solve problems effectively, allowing them to maximize their potential [24].

Therefore, this study highlights the influence of psychological constructs within the dimensions of psychological capital, such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency, on work engagement for further investigation. High levels of psychological capital indicate that individuals tend to have a positive mindset, are capable of handling various pressures, are hopeful for the future, and are confident in their own abilities. This has the potential to increase employee engagement and productivity in the work environment [25].

Unlike previous studies, this research utilizes a unique sample. The researcher selected the strawberry generation as the sample because this generation has unique characteristics that will influence the study's results. This can provide new insights for the organizational world in enhancing work engagement among strawberry generation employees, enabling organizations to achieve their goals optimally. Therefore, this study is titled “Psychological capital and work engagement among strawberry generation employees.”

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is quantitative. The population in this study consists of employees in Indonesia, totaling 152.7 million people. To determine the sample size, the researcher used an approach that requires a minimum of 5 observations and a maximum of 10 observations for each research indicator [26]. This study employs 41 indicators, thus the minimum number of respondents needed is 205, while the maximum number is 410.

The sampling was conducted online through a questionnaire using a Likert scale. These instruments were distributed via various digital platforms, and the data were then refined using purposive sampling techniques, resulting in 227 valid samples. The criteria for

determining the data to be analyzed included employees born between 1981 and 2004 and having worked for at least one year in an organization.

The measurement of work engagement in this study uses the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale 17 (UWES-17) by Schaufeli & Bakker, adapted by Aulia [27], consisting of 23 statements. The reliability of this scale is indicated by a Composite Reliability coefficient of  $CR = 0.96$  and a Variance Extracted of  $VE = 0.58$ . The measurement of psychological capital in this study uses the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) by Luthans et al., adapted by Manurung [28], consisting of 18 statements. The reliability of this scale is indicated by a Composite Reliability coefficient of  $CR = 0.94$  and a Variance Extracted of  $VE = 0.57$ .

The data analysis technique used in this study is multiple linear regression analysis. The purpose of multiple linear regression analysis is to determine the influence of the dimensions of psychological capital on work engagement, tested partially (t-test) and simultaneously (F-test). Before being analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis, assumption tests are conducted, including normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the normality test results using Chi-Square, it is evident that the residual data significantly follow a normal distribution, with a Chi-Square significance value of 1.000, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed and the regression model meets the normality assumption.

The linearity test in this study was conducted by examining the significance values of linearity  $\text{sig.}(p) < 0.05$  and deviation from linearity  $\text{sig.}(p) > 0.05$ . The results of the linearity test are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Linearity Test

Variable	Linearity (p)	Deviation from Linearity (p)	Description
Self-efficacy	0.000	0.378	Linear
Optimism	0.000	0.067	Linear
Hope	0.000	0.279	Linear
Resiliency	0.000	0.152	Linear

Based on the analysis results in Table 1, it was found that the p (sig) values for linearity of all variables are  $< 0.05$ , and the p (sig) values for deviation from linearity of all variables are  $> 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that the obtained data have a linear relationship with their criteria.

The multicollinearity test in this study was conducted by examining the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of each independent variable. If the Tolerance value is greater than 0.10 and the VIF value is less than 10, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity problem in the data. The results of the linearity test can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Description
Self-efficacy	0.301	3.323	No Multicollinearity
Optimism	0.273	3.664	No Multicollinearity
Hope	0.234	4.265	No Multicollinearity
Resiliency	0.380	2.634	No Multicollinearity

From the analysis results in Table 2 above, it can be concluded that all independent variables in this research model show Tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values less than 10. These findings indicate that there are no significant multicollinearity symptoms in the regression model used.

The heteroscedasticity test in this study uses scatterplot analysis. The scatterplot graph shows a random pattern and an even distribution of points around the value of 0 on the Y-axis. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant evidence supporting the presence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

The t-test conducted in this study also found several confirmations of the proposed hypotheses: (1) there is no significant effect of self-efficacy on work engagement among strawberry generation employees with a t coefficient of 1.066 and a significance level (p) of 0.288 ( $p > 0.01$ ), (2) there is a significant positive effect of optimism on work engagement among strawberry generation employees with a t coefficient of 11.486 and a significance level (p) of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ), (3) there is a significant negative effect of hope on work engagement among strawberry generation employees with a t coefficient of -0.982 and a significance level (p) of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ), and (4) there is a significant negative effect of

resiliency on work engagement among strawberry generation employees with a t coefficient of -27.998 and a significance level (p) of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). The t-test results can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3 T-Test Results

Variable	Beta	t	Sig	Description
Self-efficacy	0.048	1.066	0.288	No Effect
Optimism	0.510	11.486	0.000	Positive Effect
Hope	-0.395	-7.982	0.000	Negative Effect
Resiliency	-1.136	-27.998	0.000	Negative Effect

The F-test conducted in this study provides evidence for the hypothesis proposed simultaneously in Table 3. It shows a highly significant effect of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency, which are dimensions of psychological capital, on work engagement among strawberry generation employees with an F coefficient of 2520.63 and a significance level (p) of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This proves that the researcher's hypothesis is accepted. It means that the higher the level of psychological capital possessed by strawberry generation employees, the higher their work engagement, and vice versa.

The results of the determination coefficient test can be seen from the R square value. The determination coefficient is used to determine the percentage of influence of the independent variables (X) on the dependent variable (Y). Therefore, the determination value is determined by R<sup>2</sup> (R Square). The calculation results show a determination coefficient value of  $R^2 = 0.978$ . This indicates that 97.8% of the independent variable (psychological capital) can explain the dependent variable (work engagement). Meanwhile, the remaining 2.2% is influenced or explained by other variables not included in this study.

The categorization in this study is based on the mean and standard deviation values calculated from the empirical research data, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4 Categorization of Work Engagement

Category	Score	N	%
Low	$X < 44.248$	39	17.2%
Medium	$44.248 \leq X < 66.732$	183	80.6%
High	$X \geq 66.732$	5	2.2%
Total		227	100%

Table 4 above shows that the majority of the research sample falls into the medium category of work engagement.

Psychological capital represents the development of positive psychological aspects possessed by individuals, characterized by self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency [29]. This psychological capital provides motivation, perceptions of challenges, stress management capabilities, and confidence in personal abilities [30].

The strawberry generation is a creative generation but tends to give up easily and is pessimistic about everything [31]. Therefore, strawberry generation employees consider several factors when deciding whether to stay or leave. These factors include company stability, a conducive work environment, guidance and protection from supervisors, and welfare guarantees [32]. Additionally, generational characteristics, particularly those of the strawberry generation, can also influence the level of work engagement when combined with other predictors such as psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency) [16].

Every employee is characterized by their ability to perform their job effectively [33]. Self-efficacy in employees reflects their ability to direct motivation, utilize their knowledge, and take necessary steps to complete tasks in their work [34]. Employees with high self-efficacy can independently develop themselves and effectively complete tasks, thereby being more motivated to actively engage in their work [35].

In this study, it was found that self-efficacy did not have a significant impact on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. This may be due to other factors, such as a lack of work ethic and a tendency among the strawberry generation to avoid hard work and seek comfort [36].

These findings reinforce previous research indicating that self-efficacy does not significantly affect work engagement [37]. This previous study concluded that other factors, such as the work environment and organizational support, positively influence work engagement among employees at the Regional Drinking Water Company (PDAM) Tirta Khyangan, Sungai Penuh City. Similar findings were reported in earlier research, which found no significant effect of self-efficacy on work engagement [38]. Therefore, these results contrast with previous studies that found a positive effect of self-efficacy on work engagement [39].



On the other hand, this study reveals that optimism, hope, and resiliency have a significant impact on work engagement. However, not all of the effects observed are positive. In this study, the researcher found a negative impact of hope and resiliency on work engagement.

Optimism reflects how employees interpret positive events as results of their own actions, thereby helping them view problems as opportunities for growth [40]. The results of this study are consistent with previous research that found optimism to have a positive effect on work engagement [41]. Higher levels of optimism among employees are associated with greater work engagement. This is further supported by the positive characteristics of the strawberry generation in this study, such as creativity, innovation, and a willingness to take risks, suggesting that high levels of optimism can further enhance their involvement in work tasks [42].

Hope emerges as a result of the interaction between the strength of desire and goal-directed planning [43]. Generally, this can positively affect work engagement levels. Employees with high levels of hope will have strong motivation, which can foster a high commitment to their work [44]. This is consistent with previous research on plantation company employees, which found that varying levels of hope positively influence work engagement [45].

However, this study presents a different finding from previous research. In this study, excessively high levels of hope can have a negative impact on work engagement. This is evidenced by the calculated t-value of -7.982 and a beta coefficient of -0.395. Strawberry generation employees with very high hopes and expectations for immediate results may experience disappointment and loss of enthusiasm when their expectations are not met, potentially leading to a decrease in work engagement [46].

Resiliency reflects the ability to recover and handle challenges and failures with composure and balanced emotions [47]. Generally, this can positively influence work engagement levels. Employees with high levels of resiliency can manage stress effectively, maintaining focus and full engagement in their work [48]. Conversely, employees with low resiliency may struggle to bounce back from failures or difficult periods [49].

Previous research has also shown that resiliency significantly impacts work engagement [41]. In those studies, the influence was positive, whereas in this study, the opposite was observed.

This is evidenced by the t-test results in this study, which show a calculated t-value of -27.998 and a beta coefficient of -1.136. This indicates that the observed effect is negative. For strawberry generation employees, high levels of resiliency actually have a negative impact on work engagement. These employees may downplay potential significant difficulties and become too relaxed, assuming that their familiarity with handling challenging situations might hinder their performance [50].

Thus, the characteristics and cultural preferences of the strawberry generation play a crucial role in the findings of this study. Strawberry generation employees with strong psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency) tend to manage stress well, allowing them to remain focused and engaged in their work. As a result, these employees are highly motivated to achieve goals, perceive challenges positively, and have confidence in their own abilities. This positively affects work engagement levels, where employees feel emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally involved in their work.

In this study, it was found that psychological capital contributes 97.8%. This indicates that the psychological capital variable explains the majority of the variation in work engagement. Thus, high levels of psychological capital among employees can help them stay focused and more engaged in their work.

These findings align with research that concludes psychological capital positively affects work engagement levels among employees [51]. Other similar studies have also highlighted the significant impact of psychological capital on work engagement levels [52]. This implies that higher levels of psychological capital in employees correlate with higher levels of work engagement, and vice versa. This influence refers to an individual's ability to enhance motivation in performing tasks, seek alternatives to achieve goals, and persevere during difficult times.

Based on the categorization results of work engagement variables from 227 study samples, the average work engagement level among strawberry generation employees falls into the moderate category, with 80.6%. This indicates that most strawberry generation employees perceive their work as relatively significant, feel they enjoy being part of the organization, and are committed to achieving at least some organizational goals and vision. Additionally, employees are willing to make efforts in their work, meeting the expectations set in terms of time.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is no significant effect of self-efficacy on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. The level of self-efficacy does not influence the level of work engagement among these employees. On the other hand, optimism has a positive effect on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. Higher levels of optimism in strawberry generation employees are associated with higher levels of work engagement, whereas lower levels of optimism correspond with lower levels of work engagement. Hope and resiliency exhibit a negative effect on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. Higher levels of hope and resiliency among these employees actually result in lower work engagement. Conversely, lower levels of hope and resiliency are associated with higher work engagement. However, when self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency are combined into a single variable, psychological capital shows a very significant positive effect on work engagement among strawberry generation employees. Higher levels of psychological capital in these employees are associated with higher levels of work engagement, while lower levels of psychological capital correspond with lower levels of work engagement.

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