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The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership in Managing Turnover Intention Among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT This study investigates turnover intention among Generation Z employees in Surabaya, Indonesia. A total of 212 non-managerial respondents, born between 1997 and 2012, participated in the study. Data were collected via a Google Form over a four-month period (November 2024 to February 2025) using purposive sampling. The sample size exceeded the minimum requirement of 97, calculated using Cochran's formula for unknown populations. The research utilized a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. Workplace incivility (11 items, α = 0.80), burnout (9 items, α = 0.919), turnover intention (6 items, α = 0.91), and transformational leadership (7 items, α = 0.79) were measured using validated instruments. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS. The findings indicate that workplace incivility significantly increases burnout (t = 7.206, p = 0.000) and turnover intention (t = 4.852, p = 0.000). Burnout significantly affects turnover

intention (t = 9.716, p = 0.000) and mediates the effect of incivility (t = 4.852, p = 0.000). Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between incivility and burnout (t = 2.123, p = 0.034). These results highlight the importance of leadership in mitigating psychological distress and reducing turnover among Generation Z workers. Keywords: Burnout; Generation Z; Transformational Leadership; Turnover Intention; Workplace Incivility INTRODUCTION Human resources (HR) are one of the most valuable assets possessed by organizations due to their critical role in achieving organizational goals (Ferdinan, 2021). The significant role of HR compels organizations to manage their workforce effectively to ensure optimal performance. However, the current modern era, characterized by brittleness, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI), poses challenges for organizations in managing human capital optimally (Coopersmith, 2022; Tshetshe, 2025). A workplace environment filled with vulnerability ultimately leads to employees feeling overwhelmed and exhausted in meeting the demands of adaptation (Tshetshe, 2025). This exhaustion and sense of being overwhelmed may result in decreased engagement and increased turnover intention among employees (Ferdinan et al., 2025). Employment data indicate that Indonesia's workforce is predicted to be increasingly dominated by Generation Z. This prediction is based on the fact that Generation Z represents the largest proportion of Indonesia's population at 27.94%, followed by Generation Y at 25.87% (Rainer, 2023). These figures suggest that Generation Z is a promising labor force for organizations due to their potential to enhance performance and maintain competitiveness (Asif et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, when considered alongside the issues of exhaustion and the consequent impact on engagement and turnover intention, managing this generation poses a significant challenge for organizations. Generation Z is known to have distinct workplace expectations compared to previous generations (Ferdinan et al., 2023). These expectations include opportunities for personal growth, acquisition of new skills,

continuous learning, workplace flexibility, leadership that is not merely directive but actively involved, autonomy, work-life balance, and reasonable job demands (Adiawaty, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2022). In addition, Generation Z is synonymous with the term protean career. Protean is related to freedom in determining career success and self-development based on psychological factors (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Individuals who have a protean career have a tendency to develop their own careers, subjective meanings of success, and an emphasis on freedom (Erlin & Sandi, 2022). Therefore, when these expectations are not met, engagement tends to decline, and turnover intention increases. As one of Indonesia's major cities and business hubs, Surabaya attracts a wide range of workers, including Generation Z. In 2020, the proportion of Generation Z in Surabaya was recorded at 24.7% (Kusnandar, 2021). When linked to turnover intention trends, a significant issue emerges that organizations must address. Despite their potential, Generation Z employees are less hesitant to leave organizations if their expectations are unmet. Turnover intention refers to the likelihood of employees voluntarily leaving their organization in the near future (Namin et al., 2021; Qonita & Pupitadewi, 2021). According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, turnover intention occurs when the demands faced by employees exceed the resources available to them. JD-R theory posits that employees are exposed to specific risks arising from job demands and resource limitations (Ferdinan et al., 2023). It further suggests that individuals with greater internal resources are more capable of mitigating the negative relationship between external demands and personal resources (Bai et al., 2023). Prior studies (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020) have identified workplace incivility as a contributing factor to turnover intention. Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm that violates workplace norms of respect (Jungert & Holm, 2022). Such behavior is reported to be commonplace in professional settings, with 98% of employees experiencing some form of incivility at work

(Laschinger et al., 2009). JD-R theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Incivility in the workplace constitutes a stressor that drains employees' emotional and psychological resources (Ferdinan et al., 2025). Individuals who deplete their internal resources often seek alternatives to cope with excessive demands, with turnover intention emerging as one such coping mechanism. Previous research (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020) has shown that workplace incivility positively correlates with turnover intention. However, Bai et al. (2023) found that burnout also plays a crucial role in driving turnover intention. Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Darydzaky & Desiana, 2023; Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). It arises as a long-term consequence of job demands that are not matched by internal resources, leading to severe emotional and psychological fatigue (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Employees experiencing burnout may suffer significant declines in performance due to overwhelming emotional exhaustion. Studies by Liu et al. (2019) and Rahim & Cosby (2016) have demonstrated a positive relationship between workplace incivility and burnout. Further research (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020) has indicated that burnout significantly contributes to turnover intention. When these findings are synthesized, they suggest a pathway where workplace incivility leads to burnout, which in turn leads to turnover intention. The JD-R model provides a theoretical foundation for this relationship, emphasizing that incivility acts as a demand depleting individual resources, which then triggers emotional exhaustion and ultimately turnover intention. Despite the relevance of these constructs, few studies have examined workplace incivility, burnout, and turnover intention within a single integrated framework. To address this research gap, the current study aims to investigate the effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention, with burnout serving as a mediating variable. As a novel contribution, this study also

introduces transformational leadership as a moderating variable, further enhancing the theoretical and practical significance of the proposed framework. Leadership is known to influence workplace stress management (Ferdinan et al., 2025). Within the JD-R framework, leadership can function either as a demand or a resource (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2014; Fortunisa et al., 2023). Leadership acts as a demand when leaders' behavior drains subordinates' energy (Harms et al., 2017), but as a resource when leaders provide necessary support (Dixit & Upadhyay, 2021). Transformational leadership is considered particularly effective in managing job stress, as it involves inspiring and motivating subordinates toward goal achievement (Ferdinan, 2021). When leaders offer direction and emotional support, the psychological demands experienced by employees are likely to diminish. Consequently, this study proposes that transformational leadership moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout. The phenomena, empirical data, theoretical framework, and research gaps discussed above serve as the foundation for the present study. This research contributes to the literature by developing a novel framework comprising workplace incivility, transformational leadership, burnout, and turnover intention. Moreover, it offers a fresh perspective on managing Generation Z workers in the context of Surabaya, Indonesia. LITERATURE REVIEW Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) The JD-R grand theory is one of the key frameworks in human resource management that offers a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of individual behavior (Bakker et al., 2023; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Within the work environment, job demands are believed to have detrimental effects on employees' physical and mental health. These demands also negatively impact job satisfaction, increase turnover intentions, and lead to higher rates of absenteeism (Bakker et al., 2023). Job demands may include high workloads, emotional strain, time pressure, and traumatic experiences such as workplace incivility (Bauer et al., 2014). The workplace is

inherently characterized by the coexistence of both job demands and job resources. Accordingly, several types of job resources are available within the work environment to mitigate the negative effects of job demands (Pirrotta et al., 2025). Opportunities for skill development, supportive leadership, organizational culture, and a positive work climate are considered crucial resources for employees (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018; Wang et al., 2023). This conceptualization underscores that one of the critical aspects of effective human resource management is the availability and optimization of job resources, as these can significantly buffer the adverse effects of job demands. Workplace Incivility Workplace incivility can be understood as low-intensity deviant behavior in the workplace with an ambiguous intent to harm the target (Mehmood et al., 2023). Such uncivil behavior typically manifests through both verbal and non-verbal actions that are rude, disrespectful, and violate established workplace norms of mutual respect (Handoyo et al., 2018; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bijalwana et al., 2024). Compared to other forms of mistreatment, incivility is considered the most subtle or low-level manifestation of negative workplace behavior (Hershcovis, 2011). Examples of uncivil behavior include the use of harsh language, condescending looks, impatience, or a lack of basic courtesy toward others (Tricahyadinata et al., 2020). Previous studies have consistently shown that workplace incivility has detrimental effects on employees, primarily due to its capacity to increase psychological stress (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Lim & Cortina, 2005), diminish employee performance (Rahim & Cosby, 2016), and contribute to a range of other adverse outcomes for individuals. Transformational Leadership Transformational leadership can be defined as a leadership style characterized by the ability to motivate and provide clear direction to subordinates in order to achieve organizational goals (Demak et al., 2022; Zeindra & Lukito, 2020). Transformational leaders tend to inspire and transform their followers, encouraging them to commit to and strive toward the attainment of higher organizational objectives

(Ferdinan & Lindawati, 2021). The transformational leadership model will involve a closer relationship between leaders and subordinates, so that subordinates can have interests that go beyond self- interest, which will have an impact on the development of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence of subordinates. Such leaders actively seek to enhance the capacity of their subordinates through their transformational influence. This leadership model emphasizes the process of building strong relationships that foster increased morality and motivation between leaders and followers (Ferdinan, 2021). The transformational leadership model has an emphasis on idealized influence, inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Purnomo & Saragih, 2016). This leadership model is expected to help followers go beyond the understanding that the work environment and the world of work are not only a means of earning income, but also a means for followers to gain meaning in life. Burnout Burnout is a psychological condition experienced by employees as a result of prolonged exposure to unmanaged workplace stress (Maslach, 2003). It is commonly characterized by three primary components: depersonalization, diminished professional efficacy, and emotional exhaustion (Corby et al., 2024; Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion of an individual's emotional resources, resulting in chronic fatigue. Depersonalization is reflected in a sense of detachment, cynicism, and withdrawal from one's work or colleagues. Reduced professional efficacy involves feelings of incompetence and an inability to perform job responsibilities effectively (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). Prior research has consistently demonstrated that burnout is positively associated with turnover intention (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020). Turnover Intention Turnover intention can be defined as an employee's psychological motivation to seek alternative employment, despite not having made a definitive decision to leave the current organization (Allen et al., 2005; Bai et al., 2023). In essence, turnover intention reflects an individual's

voluntary intention to leave their current job (Qonita & Pupitadewi, 2021). Generally, turnover intention is influenced by three major factors: external, personal, and job-related factors (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). Intention is a critical construct to examine, as it serves as a reliable predictor of future behavior. In the context of turnover, intention functions as the internal drive that compels individuals to consider resignation or exiting their organization. Understanding the underlying intention to leave allows organizations to develop strategies for managing turnover effectively. This is especially important as high turnover rates can result in increased costs related to recruitment, training, and overall human resource management (Rahim & Cosby, 2016). Based on the aforementioned explanation, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows: H1: Workplace incivility (X) has a positive effect on burnout (Y1). H2: Workplace incivility (X) has a positive effect on turnover intention (Y2). H3: Burnout (Y1) has a positive effect on turnover intention (Y2). H4: Burnout (Y1) mediates the relationship between workplace incivility (X) and turnover intention (Y2). H5: Transformational leadership (Z) moderates the relationship between workplace incivility (X) and burnout (Y1). Figure 1 represents the model of this study. Figure 1. Research Model RESEARCH METHOD This study is focused on Surabaya, East Java, with respondents comprising non- managerial employees classified as Generation Z. Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2012. A total of 212 responses were collected. Using Cochran's formula for an unknown population size, the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 97; thus, the sample size of 212 is considered adequate to represent the population (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were collected using a Google Form distributed to Generation Z workers residing in Surabaya. The data collection period spanned four months, from November 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, as it allows for the efficient selection of participants who meet the study's specific criteria (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). This study employed Structural

Equation Modeling (SEM) as the analytical technique, due to its suitability in testing and modifying complex theoretical models, examining relationships among variables, and assessing overall model fit (Kang & Ahn, 2021). Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS- SEM) via SmartPLS software. The research instrument used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Workplace incivility was measured using 11 items (e.g., "A colleague gossiped about you behind your back"), adapted from Handoyo et al. (2018), with a Cronbach's α of 0.80. Burnout was measured using nine items (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), adapted from Wallace and Coughlan (2023), with a Cronbach's α of 0.919. Turnover intention was measured using six items (e.g., "I think about leaving my current job"), adapted from Kelloway et al. (1999), with a Cronbach's α of 0.91. Transformational leadership was measured using seven items (e.g., "My leader provides valuable advice for my personal development"), adapted from Avolio and Bass (1995), with a Cronbach's α of 0.79. RESULTS Respondents' Demographic Profiles Data Table 1. Respondent Demographics Frequency Percentage (%) Gender Male 123 58 Female 89 42 Age 17-20 37 17.5 21-24 122 57.5 25-27 53 25 Marital Status Single 193 91 Married 19 9 Employment Status Contract 132 62.3 Permanent 80 37.7 Work Area West Surabaya 52 24.5 Center Surabaya 21 9.9 East Surabaya 76 35.8 North Surabaya 26 12.3 South Surabaya 37 17.5 Education Diploma 14 6.6 Postgraduate 5 2.4 graduate 92 43.4 Senior High School 101 47.6 Income Rp. 6.000.000,00 27 12.7 Organization Government organization 4 1.9 Stated-owned organization 7 3.3 Private organization 201 94.8 Source: Data Processed (2025) Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents, indicating that the majority were male (58%), aged between 21 and 24 years (57.5%), and held a high school diploma as their highest level of education (47.6%). Most respondents were employed in the East Surabaya area (35.8%), with a monthly income ranging from IDR 2,000,000 to IDR

2,999,999 (20.8%). Additionally, the majority were contract employees (62.3%), working in private companies (94.8%), and were unmarried (91%). Convergent Validity Based on Loading Factors Table 2. Loading Factor

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO1	0.760			
BO2	0.719			
BO3	0.814			
BO4	0.834			
BO5	0.781			
BO6	0.741			
BO8	0.799			
BO9	0.757			
TL1		0.903		
TL2		0.913		
TL3		0.902		
TL4		0.864		
TL5		0.841		
TL6		0.874		
TL7		0.859		
TI1			0.760	
TI2			0.801	
TI3			0.714	
TI4			0.870	
TI5			0.856	
TI6			0.829	
TI7			0.785	
TI8			0.780	
TI9			0.748	
WI1				0.772
WI2				0.810
WI3				0.807
WI4				0.867
WI5				0.856
WI6				0.849
WI7				0.858
WI8				0.798

Source: Data Processed (2025) Table 2 presents the results of the convergent validity test based on the loading factor values. The results indicate that all indicators used in the study have loading values greater than 0.7, which confirms that the indicators are valid (Hair et al., 2016). Specifically, the burnout construct demonstrates strong item reliability, with loading values ranging from 0.719 (BO2) to 0.834 (BO4). Although BO2 falls slightly below the conventional 0.70 threshold, it is still within the acceptable range for newly developed scales or exploratory research. Similarly, all indicators for transformational leadership exhibit high loadings between 0.841 and 0.913, signifying strong convergent validity. For the turnover intention construct, the loadings range from 0.714 (TI3) to 0.870 (TI4), indicating that each item effectively contributes to the latent construct. Even the lowest value (TI3 = 0.714) remains above the minimum acceptable threshold. The workplace incivility indicators also show robust loading factors, from 0.772 (WI1) to 0.867 (WI4), confirming that all items are reliable measures of the construct. Discriminant Validity Analysis Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO	0.776			
TL	0.248	0.880		
TI	0.550	0.358	0.795	
WI	0.480	0.229	0.547	0.828

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI) Source: Data Processed (2025) Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity test. According to Hair et al. (2016), a construct demonstrates adequate discriminant validity when the square root of its Average Variance Extracted (AVE)—represented by the diagonal values in the

matrix—is greater than its correlations with any other construct in the model (off-diagonal values). This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with those of other constructs. As presented in Table 3, all constructs meet this criterion. The square root of the AVE for burnout (0.776), transformational leadership (0.880), turnover intention (0.795), and workplace incivility (0.828) are all higher than their corresponding inter-construct correlations. For example, burnout has a correlation of 0.550 with turnover intention and 0.480 with workplace incivility, both of which are lower than its square root AVE of 0.776. Similarly, transformational leadership has its highest correlation with turnover intention (0.358), which remains well below its AVE square root of 0.880.

Table 4. Cross Loading

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO1	0.760	0.172	0.361	0.412
BO2	0.719	0.172	0.326	0.370
BO3	0.814	0.249	0.502	0.330
BO4	0.834	0.223	0.482	0.376
BO5	0.781	0.184	0.412	0.309
BO6	0.741	0.182	0.351	0.409
BO8	0.799	0.217	0.473	0.413
BO9	0.757	0.134	0.478	0.366
TI1	0.519	0.208	0.760	0.439
TI2	0.483	0.248	0.801	0.454
TI3	0.521	0.232	0.714	0.353
TI4	0.502	0.334	0.870	0.420
TI5	0.415	0.314	0.856	0.436
TI6	0.357	0.319	0.829	0.450
TI7	0.392	0.328	0.785	0.492
TI8	0.305	0.326	0.780	0.462
TI9	0.273	0.300	0.748	0.433
TL1	0.214	0.903	0.336	0.209
TL2	0.247	0.913	0.337	0.249
TL3	0.178	0.902	0.336	0.197
TL4	0.161	0.864	0.311	0.205
TL5	0.231	0.841	0.306	0.194
TL6	0.235	0.874	0.285	0.158
TL7	0.230	0.859	0.295	0.193
WI1	0.391	0.221	0.392	0.772
WI2	0.361	0.150	0.419	0.810
WI3	0.384	0.135	0.456	0.807
WI4	0.387	0.227	0.461	0.867
WI5	0.471	0.199	0.506	0.856
WI6	0.387	0.209	0.428	0.849
WI7	0.386	0.202	0.453	0.858
WI8	0.392	0.165	0.493	0.798

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI) Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 4 displays the results of the discriminant validity test using cross-loading parameters, indicating that the correlation of each item with its associated latent construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs. These findings confirm that the measurement model satisfies the requirements for

discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016). A closer examination shows that each indicator loads highest on the construct it is intended to measure. For example, all burnout items (e.g., BO1 = 0.760, BO3 = 0.814, BO4 = 0.834) exhibit substantially higher loadings on BO compared to other constructs such as transformational leadership, turnover intention, and workplace incivility. Similarly, all transformational leadership indicators (e.g., TL1 = 0.903, TL2 = 0.913, TL3 = 0.902) load more strongly on transformational leadership than on any other latent variables. The turnover intention items (e.g., TI4 = 0.870, TI5 = 0.856, TI6 = 0.829) also show the highest loadings on their own construct, with weaker correlations with unrelated constructs. Likewise, all workplace incivility indicators (e.g., wi4 = 0.867, wi5 = 0.856, wi7 = 0.858) demonstrate a stronger relationship with workplace incivility than with burnout, transformational leadership, or turnover intention. Convergent Validity Analysis Based on AVE Table 5. AVE Results AVE Burnout 0.603 Transformational Leadership 0.774 Turnover Intention 0.633 Workplace Incivility 0.685 Source: Data Processed (2025) Table 5 presents the results of the convergent validity evaluation using the AVE parameters, alongside prior reliability testing. According to Hair et al. (2016), an AVE value exceeding 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators, thus establishing adequate convergent validity. As shown in the table, all latent variables—burnout (0.603), transformational leadership (0.774), turnover intention (0.633), and workplace incivility (0.685)—have AVE values well above the minimum threshold. This suggests that the items used to measure each construct share a high proportion of variance in common, thereby validating that the indicators accurately and consistently reflect their respective theoretical constructs. Notably, transformational leadership exhibits the highest AVE (0.774), indicating exceptionally strong internal convergence among its measurement items. Even the lowest AVE value, for burnout (0.603), still comfortably exceeds the recommended cutoff, reinforcing the robustness of the construct measurements across all dimensions.

Reliability Analysis Table 6. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Burnout	0.906	0.909	0.924
Transformational Leadership	0.951	0.958	0.960
Turnover Intention	0.929	0.936	0.939
Workplace Incivility	0.934	0.937	0.946

Source: Data Processed (2025) Table 6 presents the results of the reliability test based on Cronbach's Alpha, rho_a, and Composite Reliability, three widely recognized indicators of internal consistency. The findings demonstrate that all reliability coefficients for the constructs—burnout, transformational leadership, turnover intention, and workplace incivility—exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended by Hair et al. (2016), confirming that the measurement instruments employed in this study are statistically reliable. Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.906 to 0.951, indicating high internal consistency among the items within each construct. The rho_a values, which offer a more accurate estimate of construct reliability in PLS-SEM, fall between 0.909 and 0.958, further reinforcing the reliability of the constructs. Similarly, Composite Reliability scores range from 0.924 to 0.960, exceeding the suggested threshold and confirming the consistency of the latent variable indicators.

Figure 2. Full Model Table 7. Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
WI → BO	0.447	7.206	0.000	Supported
WI → TI	0.246	4.852	0.000	Supported
BO → TI	0.550	9.716	0.000	Supported
WI → BO →TI	0.246	4.852	0.000	Supported
WI*TL → BO	-0.122	2.123	0.034	Supported

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI) Source: Data Processed (2025) Figure 2 and Table 7 present the results of the hypothesis testing, from which the following conclusions can be drawn. H1 is supported, indicating that workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 7.206 (greater than the critical value of 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). H2 is also supported, showing that workplace incivility positively and significantly influences turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 4.852 and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, H3 is

confirmed, demonstrating that burnout has a significant positive effect on turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 9.716 and a p-value of 0.000. H4 is also supported, indicating that burnout significantly mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention (t-statistic = 4.852, p-value = 0.000). Finally, H5 is validated, indicating that transformational leadership significantly moderates the effect of workplace incivility on burnout, as shown by a t-statistic of 2.123 and a p-value of 0.034.

DISCUSSION

Workplace Incivility Has a Positive Effect on Burnout

Data analysis revealed that workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout (H1). This finding is consistent with prior studies (Liu et al., 2019; Rahim & Cosby, 2016), which also demonstrated a significant and positive association between workplace incivility and burnout. Workplace incivility acts as a stressor, which, within the framework of the JD-R theory, can be categorized as a job demand. When such demands exceed an individual's available resources, they may result in psychological and physical exhaustion, leading to burnout. In the context of this study, persistent exposure to uncivil behavior in the workplace contributes to diminished well-being and increased negative outcomes for employees (Jungert & Holm, 2021). Common forms of workplace incivility experienced by employees include being ignored, being gossiped about, being mocked, receiving rude or inappropriate remarks, and unwarranted intrusion into personal matters. For some individuals, such uncivil behaviors may still be tolerable within certain limits. However, when these behaviors exceed acceptable boundaries, such as through excessively harsh language or prolonged exposure, they can lead to physical and psychological exhaustion. Prolonged exhaustion ultimately contributes to an increased risk of employee burnout. The findings of this study further reinforce the understanding that, although workplace incivility is often characterized by low intensity, when experienced over an extended period and beyond an individual's tolerance threshold, it can lead to significant fatigue and serve as a precursor to burnout. Workplace

Incivility Has a Positive Effect on Turnover Intention

Data analysis revealed that workplace incivility positively and significantly influences turnover intention (H2). This result aligns with previous research (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020), which identified workplace incivility as a significant predictor of turnover intention. In this context, workplace incivility serves as a psychological and emotional stressor that depletes an individual's internal resources (Ferdinan et al., 2025). According to the JD-R theory, individuals who experience resource depletion typically attempt to seek alternative coping strategies to manage job demands. Turnover intention may emerge as a mechanism for mitigating the escalating adverse effects of excessive demands. Consequently, as workplace incivility intensifies, employees may develop stronger intentions to leave their organizations in pursuit of new, replenishing resources. The findings of this study offer important insights, emphasizing that a key organizational concern is not solely the achievement of performance targets but also the effective management of the work environment. An uncomfortable or unsupportive workplace environment can significantly disrupt an individual's work-life balance. Work-life balance is one of the core values emphasized by Generation Z employees. Therefore, when this balance is no longer attainable, Generation Z workers are unlikely to hesitate in considering job changes or even exiting the organization altogether. Burnout Has a Positive Effect on Turnover Intention Data analysis shows that burnout has a positive and significant influence on turnover intention (H3). This result is in line with previous empirical findings (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020), which suggest that burnout significantly predicts employees' intentions to quit. Burnout reflects a state of psychological and physical exhaustion characterized by diminished personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional fatigue (Darydzaky & Desiana, 2023; Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). From the perspective of JD-R theory, prolonged exhaustion erodes psychological resources, prompting individuals to avoid further

exposure to stressors. In this regard, turnover intention can be interpreted as an escape mechanism employed by employees to avoid ongoing psychological strain. Generation Z represents a workforce that is highly sensitive to excessive demands. When the demands they experience are perceived as aligned with the rewards or recognition they receive, Generation Z employees are generally willing to accept them. However, when job demands exceed their expectations, these employees are unlikely to hesitate in seeking alternative employment. Generation Z places significant emphasis on opportunities for growth, acquisition of new skills, continuous learning, workplace flexibility, leaders who are not merely authoritative but also actively engaged, autonomy, work-life balance, and reasonable job expectations (Adiawaty, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2022). These preferences are closely aligned with the concept of a protean career, which emphasizes individual freedom in defining career success and self-development based on psychological values (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Individuals with a protean career orientation tend to manage their own career paths, define success subjectively, and prioritize autonomy (Erlin & Sandi, 2022). Therefore, when the expected work conditions are unmet, particularly when they contribute to burnout, turnover intention is likely to increase, while employee engagement correspondingly declines. Figure 3. Moderation Effect Burnout Mediates the Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention The data analysis demonstrates that burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention (H4). Drawing on the JD-R theory, workplace incivility can be interpreted as a job demand that depletes an individual's internal resources. As these resources diminish, individuals may experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. This state of exhaustion, when prolonged, ultimately contributes to increased turnover intention, as individuals seek to escape overwhelming demands that surpass their coping capacities. The findings of this study

offer valuable insights for organizational leaders regarding the critical importance of fostering a positive work environment. The work environment is a key determinant of employee retention and sustained engagement within an organization. When employees perceive the work environment as unsupportive or worse, characterized by persistent and excessive incivility, they are unlikely to hesitate in seeking alternative employment opportunities. This issue is particularly salient for Generation Z employees, who place a strong emphasis on personal freedom and work- life balance. Workplace incivility constitutes a form of job demand that depletes individuals' psychological and physical resources. Such demands can trigger burnout, which in turn increases turnover intention. Leaving the organization becomes a coping mechanism to preserve internal resources. Generation Z represents a cohort of high- potential employees whose presence can significantly enhance organizational growth and competitiveness. Therefore, when organizations fail to manage these employees effectively, starting with the provision of a supportive and respectful work environment, they risk losing critical talent and, consequently, their competitive edge. Transformational Leadership Moderates the Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Burnout The results indicate that transformational leadership functions as a moderating variable in the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout (H5). Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effect of transformational leadership. Both the figure and the statistical results (as shown in Table 7) reveal that transformational leadership weakens the positive effect of workplace incivility on burnout. When transformational leadership is high, it mitigates the adverse impact of incivility on employee burnout. This is evidenced by the flatter slope of the high transformational leadership line, which suggests that strong leadership can buffer the detrimental effects of incivility. In contrast, the steep slope observed under conditions of low transformational leadership indicates that even minimal incivility can significantly increase burnout in less supportive environments. Interestingly, the data also suggest

that at lower levels of incivility, individuals under high transformational leadership may experience slightly higher levels of burnout compared to those under low transformational leadership. This counterintuitive result may be attributed to the elevated expectations or "pressure to grow" often associated with transformational leaders, even in the absence of overt workplace incivility. High vision of transformational leadership can make the Generation Z workforce burdened. Ferdinan and Lindawati (2021) found a similar phenomenon, where transformational leadership had a negative and significant effect on innovative work behavior, potentially due to the pressure induced by continuous motivational and inspirational demands from the leader. In addition, transformational leadership can censor critical ideas and views, which will trigger dependency from subordinates, increase emotional attachment and hinder innovation (Basu & Green, 1997). Moreover, Figure 3 provides an additional insight: in environments characterized by extremely high levels of incivility, burnout levels converge regardless of the quality of leadership. This implies that even strong leadership may only serve to buffer, but not fully eliminate, the negative consequences of a toxic workplace. Thus, transformational leadership should not be viewed as a cure-all, but rather as a stabilizing force capable of softening the blow of a harsh organizational culture. Based on the research findings, every organizational leader is challenged to have the right leadership model, especially to manage the Generation Z workforce. A leadership model that not only provides motivation, listens to complaints, and helps workers solve problems, but also leaders who can act decisively on any violations that damage comfort in the workplace. CONCLUSION This study yielded several key findings: (1) workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout; (2) workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention; (3) burnout has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention; (4) burnout mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention; and (5) transformational leadership moderates the effect of

[workplace incivility](#) on [burnout. The practical](#) implications [of](#) these findings provide valuable insights for organizational leaders. Leaders are challenged to cultivate and maintain a work environment that is free from toxicity and incivility, as workplace incivility contributes to increased burnout, which in turn drives turnover intention. Therefore, leaders must take concrete actions to prevent and reduce incivility in the workplace. First, they should develop and enforce clear codes of ethics and conduct. Leaders are responsible for establishing comprehensive behavioral guidelines that explicitly define uncivil behavior, provide concrete examples of unacceptable actions, and outline consequences. Regular dissemination and socialization of these codes are essential to ensure that all employees understand and uphold the values of respect, civility, and professionalism. Second, leaders should implement targeted training and educational programs. This includes anti-incivility workshops, emotional awareness training, and empathy-building initiatives for all employees, including leadership development programs for managers to equip them with the skills needed to identify and address uncivil behaviors effectively. Third, leaders must promote active leadership and serve as positive role models. Leaders are expected to consistently demonstrate respectful behavior, respond constructively to conflict, and uphold fairness. Reducing passive leadership is critical, as it may exacerbate the spiral effects of incivility. Fourth, organizations must establish safe and non-retaliatory reporting mechanisms. Leaders should provide anonymous reporting channels through which employees can safely disclose incidents of incivility. It is imperative that all reports are treated seriously and that no adverse consequences befall those who report. Fifth, early intervention and firm corrective action are essential. Leaders must address uncivil behavior firmly—even when it occurs at low intensity—to prevent escalation. Adopting a zero-tolerance policy toward disrespectful or demeaning behavior sends a strong signal that such conduct is unacceptable. Sixth, emphasis must be placed on cultivating a positive organizational culture. Leaders should foster an

environment grounded in mutual respect, collaboration, and open communication. Implementing reward and disciplinary systems can reinforce desired behaviors and deter negative ones. Seventh, leaders should enhance employee well-being and provide psychological support. This includes offering access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for counseling and support, as well as monitoring workloads to prevent stress and frustration that may trigger uncivil behavior. The theoretical implication of this study lies in the nuanced understanding of [transformational leadership as a moderating variable. The findings](#) suggest [that](#) while [transformational leadership](#) can act as a psychological buffer, it is not a comprehensive solution to the psychological strains experienced by employees. Under certain conditions, transformational leadership may even intensify burnout, possibly due to elevated expectations and performance pressures. Leadership is a complex matter in which there is a relationship between leaders and subordinates. There needs to be cooperation between leaders and subordinates in order to form a leadership relationship. There are many other factors that will affect the relationship in leadership, resulting in not always leadership models or theories that theoretically have a positive impact when applied will have a positive influence as well. Generational differences can be one of the factors that affect the influence or effect of leadership. This study thus enriches empirical insights into the dual nature of transformational leadership, particularly in the context of Generation Z employees. It underscores the need for a more balanced and context-sensitive application of transformational leadership in managing workplace stressors. LIMITATION This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to infer causality between workplace incivility and its psychological or behavioral consequences. The temporal dynamics and long-term effects of incivility cannot be captured through a single time-point observation. A longitudinal approach in future studies would allow researchers to better

understand causal pathways, changes over time, and the potential cumulative effects of incivility. Second, the study focused exclusively on Generation Z employees in the city of Surabaya, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Regional cultural norms, organizational practices, and socioeconomic conditions may influence how incivility is perceived and managed. As such, the results may not be applicable to other generational cohorts or geographical areas. Future research could benefit from including a broader, more diverse sample from multiple regions or industries to enhance external validity. Third, relying on self-reported data may introduce common method bias and subjective interpretation, particularly when addressing sensitive issues such as incivility or psychological strain. Although efforts were made to ensure anonymity and reduce social desirability bias, the potential for response distortion remains. Future research may incorporate multi-source data (e.g., peer evaluations, supervisor assessments, or behavioral observations) to triangulate findings and enhance reliability. .

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership in Managing Turnover Intention Among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

by Perpustakaan1 UKDC

The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership in Managing Turnover Intention Among Generation Z Employees in Surabaya

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

This study investigates turnover intention among Generation Z employees in Surabaya, Indonesia. A total of 212 non-managerial respondents, born between 1997 and 2012, participated in the study. Data were collected via a Google Form over a four-month period (November 2024 to February 2025) using purposive sampling. The sample size exceeded the minimum requirement of 97, calculated using Cochran's formula for unknown populations. The research utilized a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. Workplace incivility (11 items, α = 0.80), burnout (9 items, α = 0.919), turnover intention (6 items, α = 0.91), and transformational leadership (7 items, α = 0.79) were measured using validated instruments. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS. The findings indicate that workplace incivility significantly increases burnout (t = 7.206, p = 0.000) and turnover intention (t = 4.852, p = 0.000). Burnout significantly affects turnover intention (t = 9.716, p = 0.000) and mediates the effect of incivility (t = 4.852, p = 0.000). Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between incivility and burnout (t = 2.123, p = 0.034). These results highlight the importance of leadership in mitigating psychological distress and reducing turnover among Generation Z workers.

Keywords: Burnout; Generation Z; Transformational Leadership; Turnover Intention; Workplace Incivility

INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are one of the most valuable assets possessed by organizations due to their critical role in achieving organizational goals (Ferdinan, 2021). The significant role of HR compels organizations to manage their workforce effectively to ensure optimal performance. However, the current modern era, characterized by brittleness, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI), poses challenges for organizations in managing human capital optimally (Coopersmith, 2022; Tshetshe, 2025). A workplace environment filled with vulnerability ultimately leads to employees feeling overwhelmed and exhausted in meeting the demands of adaptation (Tshetshe, 2025). This exhaustion and sense of being overwhelmed may result in decreased engagement and increased turnover intention among employees (Ferdinan et al., 2025).

Employment data indicate that Indonesia's workforce is predicted to be increasingly dominated by Generation Z. This prediction is based on the fact that Generation Z represents the largest proportion of Indonesia's population at 27.94%, followed by Generation Y at 25.87% (Rainer, 2023). These figures suggest that Generation Z is a promising labor force for organizations due to their potential to enhance performance and maintain competitiveness (Asif et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, when considered alongside the issues of exhaustion and the consequent impact on engagement and turnover intention, managing this generation poses a significant challenge for organizations.

Generation Z is known to have distinct workplace expectations compared to previous generations (Ferdinan et al., 2023). These expectations include opportunities for personal growth, acquisition of new skills, continuous learning, workplace flexibility, leadership that is not merely directive but actively involved, autonomy, work-life balance, and reasonable job demands (Adiawaty, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2022). In addition, Generation Z is synonymous with the term protean career. Protean is related to freedom in determining career success and self-development based on psychological factors (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Individuals who have a protean career have a tendency to develop their own careers, subjective meanings of success, and an emphasis on freedom (Erlin & Sandi, 2022). Therefore, when these expectations are not met, engagement tends to decline, and turnover intention increases.

As one of Indonesia's major cities and business hubs, Surabaya attracts a wide range of workers, including Generation Z. In 2020, the proportion of Generation Z in Surabaya was recorded at 24.7% (Kusnandar, 2021). When linked to turnover intention trends, a significant issue emerges that organizations must address. Despite their potential, Generation Z employees are less hesitant to leave organizations if their expectations are unmet.

Turnover intention refers to the likelihood of employees voluntarily leaving their organization in the near future (Namin et al., 2021; Qonita & Pupitadewi, 2021). According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, turnover intention occurs when the demands faced by employees exceed the resources available to them. JD-R theory posits that employees are exposed to specific risks arising from job demands and resource limitations (Ferdinan et al., 2023). It further suggests that individuals with greater internal resources are more capable of mitigating the negative relationship between external demands and personal resources (Bai et al., 2023).

Prior studies (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020) have identified workplace incivility as a contributing factor to turnover intention. Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm that

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violates workplace norms of respect (Jungert & Holm, 2022). Such behavior is reported to be commonplace in professional settings, with 98% of employees experiencing some form of incivility at work (Laschinger et al., 2009).

JD-R theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Incivility in the workplace constitutes a stressor that drains employees' emotional and psychological resources (Ferdinan et al., 2025). Individuals who deplete their internal resources often seek alternatives to cope with excessive demands, with turnover intention emerging as one such coping mechanism. Previous research (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020) has shown that workplace incivility positively correlates with turnover intention. However, Bai et al. (2023) found that burnout also plays a crucial role in driving turnover intention.

Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Darydzaky & Desiana, 2023; Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). It arises as a long-term consequence of job demands that are not matched by internal resources, leading to severe emotional and psychological fatigue (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Employees experiencing burnout may suffer significant declines in performance due to overwhelming emotional exhaustion.

Studies by Liu et al. (2019) and Rahim & Cosby (2016) have demonstrated a positive relationship between workplace incivility and burnout. Further research (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020) has indicated that burnout significantly contributes to turnover intention. When these findings are synthesized, they suggest a pathway where workplace incivility leads to burnout, which in turn leads to turnover intention. The JD-R model provides a theoretical foundation for this relationship, emphasizing that incivility acts as a demand depleting individual resources, which then triggers emotional exhaustion and ultimately turnover intention.

Despite the relevance of these constructs, few studies have examined workplace incivility, burnout, and turnover intention within a single integrated framework. To address this research gap, the current study aims to investigate the effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention, with burnout serving as a mediating variable. As a novel contribution, this study also introduces transformational leadership as a moderating variable, further enhancing the theoretical and practical significance of the proposed framework.

Leadership is known to influence workplace stress management (Ferdinan et al., 2025). Within the JD-R framework, leadership can function either as a demand or a resource (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2014; Fortunisa et al., 2023). Leadership acts as a demand when leaders' behavior drains subordinates' energy (Harms et al., 2017), but as a resource when leaders provide necessary support (Dixit & Upadhyay, 2021).

Transformational leadership is considered particularly effective in managing job stress, as it involves inspiring and motivating subordinates toward goal achievement (Ferdinan, 2021). When leaders offer direction and emotional support, the psychological demands experienced by employees are likely to diminish. Consequently, this study proposes that transformational leadership moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout.

The phenomena, empirical data, theoretical framework, and research gaps discussed above serve as the foundation for the present study. This research contributes to the literature by developing a novel framework comprising workplace incivility,

transformational leadership, burnout, and turnover intention. Moreover, it offers a fresh perspective on managing Generation Z workers in the context of Surabaya, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Demands–Resources (JD-R)

The JD-R grand theory is one of the key frameworks in human resource management that offers a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of individual behavior (Bakker et al., 2023; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Within the work environment, job demands are believed to have detrimental effects on employees' physical and mental health. These demands also negatively impact job satisfaction, increase turnover intentions, and lead to higher rates of absenteeism (Bakker et al., 2023). Job demands may include high workloads, emotional strain, time pressure, and traumatic experiences such as workplace incivility (Bauer et al., 2014). The workplace is inherently characterized by the coexistence of both job demands and job resources. Accordingly, several types of job resources are available within the work environment to mitigate the negative effects of job demands (Pirrotta et al., 2025). Opportunities for skill development, supportive leadership, organizational culture, and a positive work climate are considered crucial resources for employees (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018; Wang et al., 2023). This conceptualization underscores that one of the critical aspects of effective human resource management is the availability and optimization of job resources, as these can significantly buffer the adverse effects of job demands.

Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility can be understood as low-intensity deviant behavior in the workplace with an ambiguous intent to harm the target (Mehmood et al., 2023). Such uncivil behavior typically manifests through both verbal and non-verbal actions that are rude, disrespectful, and violate established workplace norms of mutual respect (Handoyo et al., 2018; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bijalwana et al., 2024). Compared to other forms of mistreatment, incivility is considered the most subtle or low-level manifestation of negative workplace behavior (Hershcovis, 2011). Examples of uncivil behavior include the use of harsh language, condescending looks, impatience, or a lack of basic courtesy toward others (Tricahyadinata et al., 2020). Previous studies have consistently shown that workplace incivility has detrimental effects on employees, primarily due to its capacity to increase psychological stress (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Lim & Cortina, 2005), diminish employee performance (Rahim & Cosby, 2016), and contribute to a range of other adverse outcomes for individuals.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership can be defined as a leadership style characterized by the ability to motivate and provide clear direction to subordinates in order to achieve organizational goals (Demak et al., 2022; Zeindra & Lukito, 2020). Transformational leaders tend to inspire and transform their followers, encouraging them to commit to and strive toward the attainment of higher organizational objectives (Ferdinan & Lindawati, 2021). The transformational leadership model will involve a closer relationship between leaders and subordinates, so that subordinates can have interests that go beyond self-interest, which will have an impact on the development of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence of subordinates. Such leaders actively seek to enhance the capacity of their subordinates through their transformational influence. This leadership model emphasizes the process of building strong relationships that foster increased morality and motivation between leaders and followers (Ferdinan, 2021). The transformational leadership model has an emphasis on idealized influence, inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Purnomo & Saragih, 2016). This leadership model is expected to help followers go beyond the understanding that the

work environment and the world of work are not only a means of earning income, but also a means for followers to gain meaning in life.

Burnout
Burnout is a psychological condition experienced by employees as a result of prolonged exposure to unmanaged workplace stress (Maslach, 2003). It is commonly characterized by three primary components: depersonalization, diminished professional efficacy, and emotional exhaustion (Corby et al., 2024; Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion of an individual's emotional resources, resulting in chronic fatigue. Depersonalization is reflected in a sense of detachment, cynicism, and withdrawal from one's work or colleagues. Reduced professional efficacy involves feelings of incompetence and an inability to perform job responsibilities effectively (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). Prior research has consistently demonstrated that burnout is positively associated with turnover intention (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020).

Turnover Intention
Turnover intention can be defined as an employee's psychological motivation to seek alternative employment, despite not having made a definitive decision to leave the current organization (Allen et al., 2005; Bai et al., 2023). In essence, turnover intention reflects an individual's voluntary intention to leave their current job (Qonita & Pupitadewi, 2021). Generally, turnover intention is influenced by three major factors: external, personal, and job-related factors (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). Intention is a critical construct to examine, as it serves as a reliable predictor of future behavior. In the context of turnover, intention functions as the internal drive that compels individuals to consider resignation or exiting their organization. Understanding the underlying intention to leave allows organizations to develop strategies for managing turnover effectively. This is especially important as high turnover rates can result in increased costs related to recruitment, training, and overall human resource management (Rahim & Cosby, 2016).

Based on the aforementioned explanation, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1:   Workplace incivility (X) has a positive effect on burnout (Y1).
H2:   Workplace incivility (X) has a positive effect on turnover intention (Y2).
H3:   Burnout (Y1) has a positive effect on turnover intention (Y2).
H4:   Burnout (Y1) mediates the relationship between workplace incivility (X) and turnover intention (Y2).
H5:   Transformational leadership (Z) moderates the relationship between workplace incivility (X) and burnout (Y1).

Figure 1 represents the model of this study.

Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is focused on Surabaya, East Java, with respondents comprising non-managerial employees classified as Generation Z. Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2012. A total of 212 responses were collected. Using Cochran's formula for an unknown population size, the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 97; thus, the sample size of 212 is considered adequate to represent the population (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were collected using a Google Form distributed to Generation Z workers residing in Surabaya. The data collection period spanned four months, from November 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, as it allows for the efficient selection of participants who meet the study's specific criteria (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

This study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the analytical technique, due to its suitability in testing and modifying complex theoretical models, examining relationships among variables, and assessing overall model fit (Kang & Ahn, 2021). Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software.

The research instrument used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Workplace incivility was measured using 11 items (e.g., "A colleague gossiped about you behind your back"), adapted from Handoyo et al. (2018), with a Cronbach's α of 0.80. Burnout was measured using nine items (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), adapted from Wallace and Coughlan (2023), with a Cronbach's α of 0.919. Turnover intention was measured using six items (e.g., "I think about leaving my current job"), adapted from Kelloway et al. (1999), with a Cronbach's α of 0.91. Transformational leadership was measured using seven items (e.g., "My leader provides valuable advice for my personal development"), adapted from Avolio and Bass (1995), with a Cronbach's α of 0.79.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profiles Data
Table 1. Respondent Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	123	58
Female	89	42
Age		
17-20	37	17.5
21-24	122	57.5
25-27	53	25

Marital Status		
Single	193	91
Married	19	9
Employment Status		
Contract	132	62.3
Permanent	80	37.7
Work Area		
West Surabaya	52	24.5
Center Surabaya	21	9.9
East Surabaya	76	35.8
North Surabaya	26	12.3
South Surabaya	37	17.5
Education		
Diploma	14	6.6
Postgraduate	5	2.4
graduate	92	43.4
Senior High School	101	47.6
Income		
<Rp. 1.000.000,00	22	10.4
Rp. 1.000.000,00 – Rp. 1.999.999,00	27	13.2
Rp. 2.000.000,00 – Rp. 2.999.999,00	44	20.8
Rp. 3.000.000,00 – Rp. 3.999.999,00	34	16
Rp. 4.000.000,00 – Rp. 4.999.999,00	37	17.5
Rp. 5.000.000,00 – Rp. 5.999.999,00	20	9.4
>Rp. 6.000.000,00	27	12.7
Organization		
Government organization	4	1.9
Stated-owned organization	7	3.3
Private organization	201	94.8

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents, indicating that the majority were male (58%), aged between 21 and 24 years (57.5%), and held a high school diploma as their highest level of education (47.6%). Most respondents were employed in the East Surabaya area (35.8%), with a monthly income ranging from IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 2,999,999 (20.8%). Additionally, the majority were contract employees (62.3%), working in private companies (94.8%), and were unmarried (91%).

Convergent Validity Based on Loading Factors
Table 2. Loading Factor

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO1	0.760			
BO2	0.719			
BO3	0.814			
BO4	0.834			
BO5	0.781			
BO6	0.741			
BO8	0.799			
BO9	0.757			
TL1		0.903		
TL2		0.913		
TL3		0.902		
TL4		0.864		

TL5		0.841		
TL6		0.874		
TL7		0.859		
TI1			0.760	
TI2			0.801	
TI3			0.714	
TI4			0.870	
TI5			0.856	
TI6			0.829	
TI7			0.785	
TI8			0.780	
TI9			0.748	
WI1				0.772
WI2				0.810
WI3				0.807
WI4				0.867
WI5				0.856
WI6				0.849
WI7				0.858
WI8				0.798

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 2 presents the results of the convergent validity test based on the loading factor values. The results indicate that all indicators used in the study have loading values greater than 0.7, which confirms that the indicators are valid (Hair et al., 2016).

Specifically, the burnout construct demonstrates strong item reliability, with loading values ranging from 0.719 (BO2) to 0.834 (BO4). Although BO2 falls slightly below the conventional 0.70 threshold, it is still within the acceptable range for newly developed scales or exploratory research. Similarly, all indicators for transformational leadership exhibit high loadings between 0.841 and 0.913, signifying strong convergent validity.

For the turnover intention construct, the loadings range from 0.714 (TI3) to 0.870 (TI4), indicating that each item effectively contributes to the latent construct. Even the lowest value (TI3 = 0.714) remains above the minimum acceptable threshold.

The workplace incivility indicators also show robust loading factors, from 0.772 (WI1) to 0.867 (WI4), confirming that all items are reliable measures of the construct.

Discriminant Validity Analysis
Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO	0.776			
TL	0.248	0.880		
TI	0.550	0.358	0.795	
WI	0.480	0.229	0.547	0.828

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI)
Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity test. According to Hair et al. (2016), a construct demonstrates adequate discriminant validity when the square root of its Average Variance Extracted (AVE)—represented by the diagonal values in the matrix—is greater than its correlations with any other construct in the model (off-diagonal

values). This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with those of other constructs.

As presented in Table 3, all constructs meet this criterion. The square root of the AVE for burnout (0.776), transformational leadership (0.880), turnover intention (0.795), and workplace incivility (0.828) are all higher than their corresponding inter-construct correlations. For example, burnout has a correlation of 0.550 with turnover intention and 0.480 with workplace incivility, both of which are lower than its square root AVE of 0.776. Similarly, transformational leadership has its highest correlation with turnover intention (0.358), which remains well below its AVE square root of 0.880.

Table 4. Cross Loading

	BO	TL	TI	WI
BO1	0.760	0.172	0.361	0.412
BO2	0.719	0.172	0.326	0.370
BO3	0.814	0.249	0.502	0.330
BO4	0.834	0.223	0.482	0.376
BO5	0.781	0.184	0.412	0.309
BO6	0.741	0.182	0.351	0.409
BO8	0.799	0.217	0.473	0.413
BO9	0.757	0.134	0.478	0.366
TI1	0.519	0.208	0.760	0.439
TI2	0.483	0.248	0.801	0.454
TI3	0.521	0.232	0.714	0.353
TI4	0.502	0.334	0.870	0.420
TI5	0.415	0.314	0.856	0.436
TI6	0.357	0.319	0.829	0.450
TI7	0.392	0.328	0.785	0.492
TI8	0.305	0.326	0.780	0.462
TI9	0.273	0.300	0.748	0.433
TL1	0.214	0.903	0.336	0.209
TL2	0.247	0.913	0.337	0.249
TL3	0.178	0.902	0.336	0.197
TL4	0.161	0.864	0.311	0.205
TL5	0.231	0.841	0.306	0.194
TL6	0.235	0.874	0.285	0.158
TL7	0.230	0.859	0.295	0.193
WI1	0.391	0.221	0.392	0.772
WI2	0.361	0.150	0.419	0.810
WI3	0.384	0.135	0.456	0.807
WI4	0.387	0.227	0.461	0.867
WI5	0.471	0.199	0.506	0.856
WI6	0.387	0.209	0.428	0.849
WI7	0.386	0.202	0.453	0.858
WI8	0.392	0.165	0.493	0.798

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI)
Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 4 displays the results of the discriminant validity test using cross-loading parameters, indicating that the correlation of each item with its associated latent construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs. These findings confirm that the measurement model satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016).

A closer examination shows that each indicator loads highest on the construct it is intended to measure. For example, all burnout items (e.g., BO1 = 0.760, BO3 = 0.814, BO4 = 0.834) exhibit substantially higher loadings on BO compared to other constructs such as transformational leadership, turnover intention, and workplace incivility. Similarly, all transformational leadership indicators (e.g., TL1 = 0.903, TL2 = 0.913, TL3 = 0.902) load more strongly on transformational leadership than on any other latent variables.

The turnover intention items (e.g., TI4 = 0.870, TI5 = 0.856, TI6 = 0.829) also show the highest loadings on their own construct, with weaker correlations with unrelated constructs. Likewise, all workplace incivility indicators (e.g., wi4 = 0.867, wi5 = 0.856, wi7 = 0.858) demonstrate a stronger relationship with workplace incivility than with burnout, transformational leadership, or turnover intention.

Convergent Validity Analysis Based on AVE
Table 5. AVE Results

	AVE
Burnout	0.603
Transformational Leadership	0.774
Turnover Intention	0.633
Workplace Incivility	0.685

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 5 presents the results of the convergent validity evaluation using the AVE parameters, alongside prior reliability testing. According to Hair et al. (2016), an AVE value exceeding 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators, thus establishing adequate convergent validity.

As shown in the table, all latent variables—burnout (0.603), transformational leadership (0.774), turnover intention (0.633), and workplace incivility (0.685)—have AVE values well above the minimum threshold. This suggests that the items used to measure each construct share a high proportion of variance in common, thereby validating that the indicators accurately and consistently reflect their respective theoretical constructs.

Notably, transformational leadership exhibits the highest AVE (0.774), indicating exceptionally strong internal convergence among its measurement items. Even the lowest AVE value, for burnout (0.603), still comfortably exceeds the recommended cutoff, reinforcing the robustness of the construct measurements across all dimensions.

Reliability Analysis
Table 6. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Burnout	0.906	0.909	0.924
Transformational Leadership	0.951	0.958	0.960
Turnover Intention	0.929	0.936	0.939
Workplace Incivility	0.934	0.937	0.946

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table 6 presents the results of the reliability test based on Cronbach's Alpha, rho_a, and Composite Reliability, three widely recognized indicators of internal consistency. The findings demonstrate that all reliability coefficients for the constructs—burnout, transformational leadership, turnover intention, and workplace incivility—exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended by Hair et al. (2016), confirming that the measurement instruments employed in this study are statistically reliable.

Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.906 to 0.951, indicating high internal consistency among the items within each construct. The rho_a values, which offer a more accurate estimate of construct reliability in PLS-SEM, fall between 0.909 and 0.958, further reinforcing the reliability of the constructs. Similarly, Composite Reliability scores range from 0.924 to 0.960, exceeding the suggested threshold and confirming the consistency of the latent variable indicators.
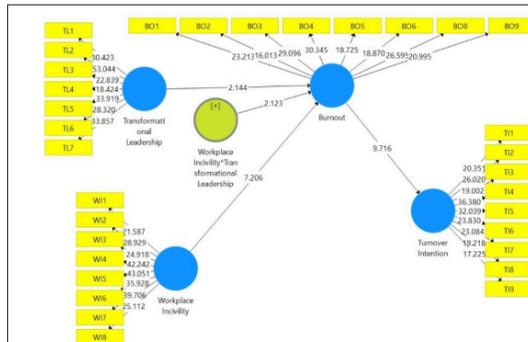
Figure 2. Full Model

Table 7. Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
WI → BO	0.447	7.206	0.000	Supported
WI → TI	0.246	4.852	0.000	Supported
BO → TI	0.550	9.716	0.000	Supported
WI → BO →TI	0.246	4.852	0.000	Supported
WI*TL → BO	-0.122	2.123	0.034	Supported

Note: Burnout (BO), Transformational Leadership (TL), Turnover Intention (TI), Workplace Incivility (WI)
Source: Data Processed (2025)

Figure 2 and Table 7 present the results of the hypothesis testing, from which the following conclusions can be drawn. H1 is supported, indicating that workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 7.206 (greater than the critical value of 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). H2 is also supported, showing that workplace incivility positively and significantly influences turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 4.852 and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, H3 is confirmed, demonstrating that burnout has a significant positive effect on turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 9.716 and a p-value of 0.000. H4 is also supported, indicating that burnout significantly mediates the relationship between workplace incivility

and turnover intention (t-statistic = 4.852, p-value = 0.000). Finally, H5 is validated, indicating that transformational leadership significantly moderates the effect of workplace incivility on burnout, as shown by a t-statistic of 2.123 and a p-value of 0.034.

DISCUSSION

Workplace Incivility Has a Positive Effect on Burnout

Data analysis revealed that workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout (H1). This finding is consistent with prior studies (Liu et al., 2019; Rahim & Cosby, 2016), which also demonstrated a significant and positive association between workplace incivility and burnout. Workplace incivility acts as a stressor, which, within the framework of the JD-R theory, can be categorized as a job demand. When such demands exceed an individual's available resources, they may result in psychological and physical exhaustion, leading to burnout. In the context of this study, persistent exposure to uncivil behavior in the workplace contributes to diminished well-being and increased negative outcomes for employees (Jungert & Holm, 2021). Common forms of workplace incivility experienced by employees include being ignored, being gossiped about, being mocked, receiving rude or inappropriate remarks, and unwarranted intrusion into personal matters. For some individuals, such uncivil behaviors may still be tolerable within certain limits. However, when these behaviors exceed acceptable boundaries, such as through excessively harsh language or prolonged exposure, they can lead to physical and psychological exhaustion. Prolonged exhaustion ultimately contributes to an increased risk of employee burnout. The findings of this study further reinforce the understanding that, although workplace incivility is often characterized by low intensity, when experienced over an extended period and beyond an individual's tolerance threshold, it can lead to significant fatigue and serve as a precursor to burnout.

Workplace Incivility Has a Positive Effect on Turnover Intention
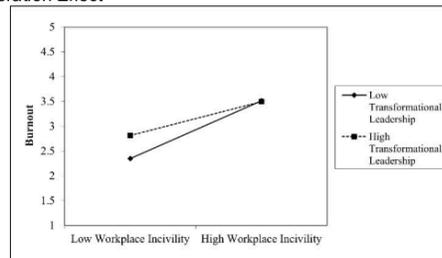
Data analysis revealed that workplace incivility positively and significantly influences turnover intention (H2). This result aligns with previous research (Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Tricahyadinata et al., 2020), which identified workplace incivility as a significant predictor of turnover intention. In this context, workplace incivility serves as a psychological and emotional stressor that depletes an individual's internal resources (Ferdinan et al., 2025). According to the JD-R theory, individuals who experience resource depletion typically attempt to seek alternative coping strategies to manage job demands. Turnover intention may emerge as a mechanism for mitigating the escalating adverse effects of excessive demands. Consequently, as workplace incivility intensifies, employees may develop stronger intentions to leave their organizations in pursuit of new, replenishing resources. The findings of this study offer important insights, emphasizing that a key organizational concern is not solely the achievement of performance targets but also the effective management of the work environment. An uncomfortable or unsupportive workplace environment can significantly disrupt an individual's work-life balance. Work-life balance is one of the core values emphasized by Generation Z employees. Therefore, when this balance is no longer attainable, Generation Z workers are unlikely to hesitate in considering job changes or even exiting the organization altogether.

Burnout Has a Positive Effect on Turnover Intention

Data analysis shows that burnout has a positive and significant influence on turnover intention (H3). This result is in line with previous empirical findings (Bai et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Widyantoro, 2023; Santi et al., 2020), which suggest that burnout significantly predicts employees' intentions to quit. Burnout reflects a state of psychological and physical exhaustion characterized by diminished personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional fatigue (Darydzaky & Desiana, 2023;

Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). From the perspective of JD-R theory, prolonged exhaustion erodes psychological resources, prompting individuals to avoid further exposure to stressors. In this regard, turnover intention can be interpreted as an escape mechanism employed by employees to avoid ongoing psychological strain. Generation Z represents a workforce that is highly sensitive to excessive demands. When the demands they experience are perceived as aligned with the rewards or recognition they receive, Generation Z employees are generally willing to accept them. However, when job demands exceed their expectations, these employees are unlikely to hesitate in seeking alternative employment. Generation Z places significant emphasis on opportunities for growth, acquisition of new skills, continuous learning, workplace flexibility, leaders who are not merely authoritative but also actively engaged, autonomy, work-life balance, and reasonable job expectations (Adiawaty, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2022). These preferences are closely aligned with the concept of a protean career, which emphasizes individual freedom in defining career success and self-development based on psychological values (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Individuals with a protean career orientation tend to manage their own career paths, define success subjectively, and prioritize autonomy (Erlin & Sandi, 2022). Therefore, when the expected work conditions are unmet, particularly when they contribute to burnout, turnover intention is likely to increase, while employee engagement correspondingly declines.

Figure 3. Moderation Effect

Burnout Mediates the Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention

The data analysis demonstrates that burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention (H4). Drawing on the JD-R theory, workplace incivility can be interpreted as a job demand that depletes an individual's internal resources. As these resources diminish, individuals may experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. This state of exhaustion, when prolonged, ultimately contributes to increased turnover intention, as individuals seek to escape overwhelming demands that surpass their coping capacities. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for organizational leaders regarding the critical importance of fostering a positive work environment. The work environment is a key determinant of employee retention and sustained engagement within an organization. When employees perceive the work environment as unsupportive or worse, characterized by persistent and excessive incivility, they are unlikely to hesitate in seeking alternative employment opportunities. This issue is particularly salient for Generation Z employees, who place a strong emphasis on personal freedom and work-life balance. Workplace incivility constitutes a form of job demand that depletes individuals' psychological and physical resources. Such demands can trigger burnout, which in turn increases turnover intention. Leaving the organization becomes a coping mechanism to preserve internal resources. Generation Z represents a cohort of high-

potential employees whose presence can significantly enhance organizational growth and competitiveness. Therefore, when organizations fail to manage these employees effectively, starting with the provision of a supportive and respectful work environment, they risk losing critical talent and, consequently, their competitive edge.

Transformational Leadership Moderates the Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Burnout
The results indicate that transformational leadership functions as a moderating variable in the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout (H5). Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effect of transformational leadership. Both the figure and the statistical results (as shown in Table 7) reveal that transformational leadership weakens the positive effect of workplace incivility on burnout. When transformational leadership is high, it mitigates the adverse impact of incivility on employee burnout. This is evidenced by the flatter slope of the high transformational leadership line, which suggests that strong leadership can buffer the detrimental effects of incivility. In contrast, the steep slope observed under conditions of low transformational leadership indicates that even minimal incivility can significantly increase burnout in less supportive environments.

Interestingly, the data also suggest that at lower levels of incivility, individuals under high transformational leadership may experience slightly higher levels of burnout compared to those under low transformational leadership. This counterintuitive result may be attributed to the elevated expectations or "pressure to grow" often associated with transformational leaders, even in the absence of overt workplace incivility. High vision of transformational leadership can make the Generation Z workforce burdened. Ferdinan and Lindawati (2021) found a similar phenomenon, where transformational leadership had a negative and significant effect on innovative work behavior, potentially due to the pressure induced by continuous motivational and inspirational demands from the leader. In addition, transformational leadership can censor critical ideas and views, which will trigger dependency from subordinates, increase emotional attachment and hinder innovation (Basu & Green, 1997).

Moreover, Figure 3 provides an additional insight: in environments characterized by extremely high levels of incivility, burnout levels converge regardless of the quality of leadership. This implies that even strong leadership may only serve to buffer, but not fully eliminate, the negative consequences of a toxic workplace. Thus, transformational leadership should not be viewed as a cure-all, but rather as a stabilizing force capable of softening the blow of a harsh organizational culture. Based on the research findings, every organizational leader is challenged to have the right leadership model, especially to manage the Generation Z workforce. A leadership model that not only provides motivation, listens to complaints, and helps workers solve problems, but also leaders who can act decisively on any violations that damage comfort in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study yielded several key findings: (1) workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on burnout; (2) workplace incivility has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention; (3) burnout has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention; (4) burnout mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention; and (5) transformational leadership moderates the effect of workplace incivility on burnout.

The practical implications of these findings provide valuable insights for organizational leaders. Leaders are challenged to cultivate and maintain a work environment that is free from toxicity and incivility, as workplace incivility contributes to increased burnout, which

in turn drives turnover intention. Therefore, leaders must take concrete actions to prevent and reduce incivility in the workplace. First, they should develop and enforce clear codes of ethics and conduct. Leaders are responsible for establishing comprehensive behavioral guidelines that explicitly define uncivil behavior, provide concrete examples of unacceptable actions, and outline consequences. Regular dissemination and socialization of these codes are essential to ensure that all employees understand and uphold the values of respect, civility, and professionalism.

Second, leaders should implement targeted training and educational programs. This includes anti-incivility workshops, emotional awareness training, and empathy-building initiatives for all employees, including leadership development programs for managers to equip them with the skills needed to identify and address uncivil behaviors effectively. Third, leaders must promote active leadership and serve as positive role models. Leaders are expected to consistently demonstrate respectful behavior, respond constructively to conflict, and uphold fairness. Reducing passive leadership is critical, as it may exacerbate the spiral effects of incivility.

Fourth, organizations must establish safe and non-retaliatory reporting mechanisms. Leaders should provide anonymous reporting channels through which employees can safely disclose incidents of incivility. It is imperative that all reports are treated seriously and that no adverse consequences befall those who report.

Fifth, early intervention and firm corrective action are essential. Leaders must address uncivil behavior firmly—even when it occurs at low intensity—to prevent escalation. Adopting a zero-tolerance policy toward disrespectful or demeaning behavior sends a strong signal that such conduct is unacceptable.

Sixth, emphasis must be placed on cultivating a positive organizational culture. Leaders should foster an environment grounded in mutual respect, collaboration, and open communication. Implementing reward and disciplinary systems can reinforce desired behaviors and deter negative ones.

Seventh, leaders should enhance employee well-being and provide psychological support. This includes offering access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for counseling and support, as well as monitoring workloads to prevent stress and frustration that may trigger uncivil behavior.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in the nuanced understanding of transformational leadership as a moderating variable. The findings suggest that while transformational leadership can act as a psychological buffer, it is not a comprehensive solution to the psychological strains experienced by employees. Under certain conditions, transformational leadership may even intensify burnout, possibly due to elevated expectations and performance pressures. Leadership is a complex matter in which there is a relationship between leaders and subordinates. There needs to be cooperation between leaders and subordinates in order to form a leadership relationship. There are many other factors that will affect the relationship in leadership, resulting in not always leadership models or theories that theoretically have a positive impact when applied will have a positive influence as well. Generational differences can be one of the factors that affect the influence or effect of leadership. This study thus enriches empirical insights into the dual nature of transformational leadership, particularly in the context of Generation Z employees. It underscores the need for a more balanced and context-sensitive application of transformational leadership in managing workplace stressors.

LIMITATION

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to infer causality between workplace incivility and its psychological or behavioral consequences. The temporal dynamics and long-term effects of incivility cannot be captured through a single time-point observation. A longitudinal approach in future studies would allow researchers to better understand causal pathways, changes over time, and the potential cumulative effects of incivility.

Second, the study focused exclusively on Generation Z employees in the city of Surabaya, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Regional cultural norms, organizational practices, and socioeconomic conditions may influence how incivility is perceived and managed. As such, the results may not be applicable to other generational cohorts or geographical areas. Future research could benefit from including a broader, more diverse sample from multiple regions or industries to enhance external validity.

Third, relying on self-reported data may introduce common method bias and subjective interpretation, particularly when addressing sensitive issues such as incivility or psychological strain. Although efforts were made to ensure anonymity and reduce social desirability bias, the potential for response distortion remains. Future research may incorporate multi-source data (e.g., peer evaluations, supervisor assessments, or behavioral observations) to triangulate findings and enhance reliability.
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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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