



## The role of job stress as a mediator on toxic leadership and turnover intention in Gen Z employees

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### ABSTRACT

Turnover intention is a pressing concern for organizations, as employees are increasingly choosing to leave due to toxic leadership. Toxic leaders characterized by intimidation, manipulation, and a lack of support create detrimental work environments that elevate employee stress levels. This heightened stress, in turn, intensifies turnover intention, leading to higher retention rates. Toxic leadership not only undermines employee well-being but also significantly impairs organizational performance. This study aims to investigate the impact of toxic leadership on turnover intention, with job stress acting as a mediating variable. Focusing on Generation Z employees a growing segment of the workforce demographic this research examines how the unique challenges of this group interact with toxic leadership, offering crucial insights for organizations. The study employs a quantitative research approach utilizing survey methodology. Data were collected through questionnaires by involving 400 Generation Z employees in Jakarta. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. The study utilized the Toxic Leadership Scale, Intention to Leave Scale, and Job Stress Scale as instruments. The results demonstrated that toxic leadership significantly drives turnover intention, with job stress playing a key mediating role. Toxic leadership was found to increase job stress, which, in turn, strengthened the intention of Generation Z employees to leave their jobs. These findings underscore the pressing need for organizations to address toxic leadership, thereby enhancing employee well-being and reducing turnover rates. The study offers valuable insights for organizations seeking to foster a healthier work environment and enhance employee retention.

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## Introduction

Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, represents the largest generational group in Indonesia, accounting for 27.94% of the population, or approximately 74.93 million individuals (IDN Media, 2024). In DKI Jakarta, this group comprises 25% of the workforce, totalling an estimated 1,169,139 individuals (BPS DKI Jakarta, 2024). A global survey conducted by Deloitte across 45 countries reveals that 53% of Generation Z employees are contemplating resigning from their jobs within the next two years (Deloitte, 2024), a 13% increase from the 40% of respondents who expressed similar intentions in 2022 (Deloitte, 2022). In Indonesia, a Jakpat survey reveals that 69% of Generation Z employees are contemplating job resignation, with 20% citing leadership-related issues as the primary cause

(Jakpat Survey Report, 2024). As a generation entering the workforce, Generation Z employees are susceptible to toxic behavior and hold high expectations of their leaders. Indeed, they prioritize cultivating a positive work environment to mitigate turnover intentions (Wilis et al., 2023). Nevertheless, despite these predictions, many Generation Z employees continue to face difficulties stemming from toxic leadership.

Toxic leadership has emerged as a pervasive organizational issue, characterized by manipulative or unethical behaviors that foster a detrimental work environment. A preliminary survey conducted in Indonesia in 2024 revealed that 70% of employees reported experiencing toxic leadership, a figure comparable to a similar finding in the United States, where 71% of employees encountered such toxic leadership at least once in their professional careers (The Harris Poll, 2023). Toxic leadership—defined as destructive behaviors employed by leaders to maintain control—generates considerable stress and emotional distress among employees. The repercussions of toxic leadership extend beyond stress and mental health challenges, impeding creativity, innovation, and employee commitment to the organization. The following text is a précis of the study as mentioned earlier.

Previous studies have documented various consequences of toxic leadership, including burnout (Augustin et al., 2022). In the Philippines, nurses working under toxic leadership reported increased stress, higher absenteeism, and a greater intention to leave the nursing profession (Labrague et al., 2020). Similarly, recent research has confirmed a significant correlation between toxic leadership and turnover intention, with narcissistic traits exerting the strongest influence (Nonehkaran et al., 2023). This claim suggests that the more negative the supervisor's behavior, the higher the likelihood of employee turnover intention. Additionally, heavier workloads and increasing job demands further intensify the intention to resign (Fitriani et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the impact of toxic leadership can cause stress and have prolonged negative effects on employees and organizations, extending beyond the workplace domain.

Job stress arises when employees experience adverse physical and psychological reactions due to a mismatch between job demands and their capabilities (Wijaya et al., 2019). Research indicates that toxic leadership is associated with decreased job satisfaction, heightened job stress, and increased absenteeism—factors that ultimately contribute to turnover intention (Labrague et al., 2020). It is therefore crucial to examine job stress as a distinct construct before integrating its role with toxic leadership and turnover intention. A study on logistics couriers in Indonesia demonstrated that job stress had a more substantial effect on turnover intention than toxic leadership, highlighting job stress as a critical determinant (Yulianto et al., 2024). Given these implications, further research is warranted to uncover the drivers of turnover intention and to develop effective interventions.

Amid inconsistent findings in previous studies regarding the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention, this study introduces job stress as a mediating variable. The selection of job stress as a focal point is rooted in its extensive documentation as a contributing factor to employees' well-being within the professional environment. Job stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from job demands and pressures. Research has demonstrated a significant impact of job stress on turnover intention (Ekingen et al., 2023). A substantial body of literature has identified a correlation between exposure to toxic leadership and elevated levels of job stress among employees. This heightened stress can subsequently lead to the development of various psychological issues, including depression, anxiety, and burnout (Sippio, 2023). Such stress, particularly when exacerbated by negative leadership behaviors, can trigger the desire to leave the organization in search of a healthier work environment. The present study examines job stress as a mediator to explore how it elucidates the mechanism by which toxic leadership contributes to turnover intention, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee retention.

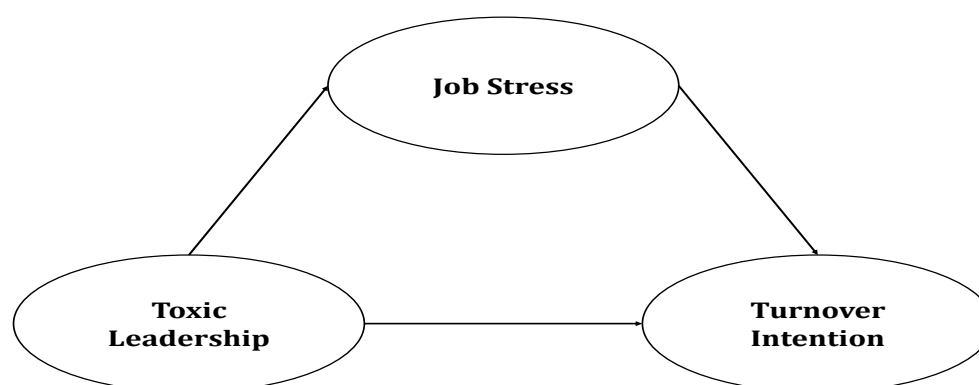
Leaders who exhibit an abusive and authoritarian (toxic) leadership style have a detrimental effect on their subordinates, leading to increased frustration with their work,

higher turnover rates, and a greater intention to leave the organization (Gravili et al., 2022). Employees subjected to toxic leadership often experience significant job stress and dissatisfaction. Job stress is defined as a physiological and psychological response to an imbalance between job demands and the resources available to meet those demands (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991). This phenomenon can be understood through Affective Events Theory (AET), which posits that workplace events are the primary drivers of employees' emotional experiences, subsequently influencing their attitudes and behaviors (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This finding suggests that workplace events have a significant impact on employees' emotions. Emotional reactions often serve as a bridge between the events that occur and the outcomes achieved at work. When individuals perceive injustice, they become more attuned to the fairness or unfairness of subsequent events. Each occurrence prompts an evaluation of the situation, including emotional responses that can shape their assessment of the event. Consequently, individuals who experience injustice in stressful work conditions may exhibit less favorable behaviors toward the organization or their colleagues. This finding suggests that perceived injustice can exacerbate negative employee behavior in high-stress work environments.

Research found that individuals who have worked under toxic leaders often experience several emotional reactions, including shame, fear, disappointment, and stress (Morris, 2019). Job stress, as a mediating variable, plays a crucial role in elucidating the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention. Factors influencing turnover intention typically focus on employee emotions, such as psychological stress and anxiety (Jacop et al., 2023). A review of the literature indicates a strong correlation between job stress and turnover intention (Shah et al., 2022). Furthermore, another study revealed that job stress mediates the relationship between job demands and turnover intention; specifically, employees experiencing higher levels of job stress due to job demands are more likely to contemplate leaving their positions (Chen et al., 2011). Thus, it can be concluded that when employees find themselves in high-pressure situations with excessive demands, and they exert significant effort without receiving commensurate rewards, this can exacerbate their stress levels, ultimately leading to an increased intention to leave the organization.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention, with job stress serving as a mediating factor. It identifies job stress as a mediator, thereby seeking to clarify the mechanism through which toxic leadership influences turnover intention. This study contributes to the existing literature by explicitly focusing on Generation Z employees. This demographic is increasingly prominent in the workforce, yet remains underrepresented in studies of toxic leadership and turnover intention. Furthermore, the research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured survey to analyze the relationships among toxic leadership, job stress, and turnover intention. This methodology offers a more transparent and precise understanding of how negative work environments impact employee behavior.

The findings are anticipated to provide valuable insights into how toxic leadership contributes to turnover intentions and offer practical solutions for improving organizational environments. By identifying how employees cope with toxic leadership and the associated stress, the study enables organizations to develop more effective strategies for fostering a healthier workplace. These strategies can enhance employee productivity, well-being, and retention, while concurrently reducing turnover rates. Additionally, the research has significant implications for organizational performance, benefiting not only employees affected by toxic leadership but also the organization as a whole. The study's approach, which focuses on a specific demographic and integrates job stress as a mediator, presents a novel contribution to understanding toxic leadership dynamics.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

## Method

This study employed a quantitative research design utilizing a survey method to gather data. A structured questionnaire was employed to measure three key variables: toxic leadership, turnover intention, and job stress, using the Toxic Leadership Scale, the Intention to Leave scale, and the Job Stress scale, respectively. Convenience sampling was applied to recruit 400 Generation Z employees in Jakarta, all of whom had reported experiencing toxic leadership in their workplaces. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics. At the same time, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the relationships among toxic leadership (independent variable), job stress (mediator), and turnover intention (dependent variable). This methodological approach yielded valuable insights into the mechanism through which toxic leadership contributes to turnover intention, with job stress playing as a key mediator, offering practical recommendations for improving employee well-being and retention within organizations.

The Toxic Leadership Scale (Schmidt, 2008) was employed to measure toxic leadership in this study. This measurement has also been utilized in previous studies by Türkmen Keskin and Özduyan Kiliç (2024 and Semedo et al. (2022), and was adapted by Hattab et al. (2022). The instrument consists of 5 subscales: self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, and authoritarian leadership, with a total of 30 items. Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Sample items include: 'My boss expresses anger at subordinates for no apparent reason' (unpredictability), 'My boss thinks he/she is an exceptional person' (narcissism), 'My boss takes credit for successes that are not his/her own' (self-promotion), 'My boss talks badly about subordinates to others at work' (abusive supervision), and 'My boss will ignore dissenting ideas against his/her own ideas' (authoritarian leadership). Based on the samples size in this study (N=400), the internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was  $\alpha=0.97$ . Reliability values for each dimension were  $\alpha=0.90$  (abusive supervision),  $\alpha=0.88$  (authoritarian leadership),  $\alpha=0.90$  (narcissism),  $\alpha=0.88$  (self-promotion), and  $\alpha=0.93$  (unpredictability). Second-order Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated a good model fit, with RMSEA=0.03, CFI=0.99, and SRMR=0.02.

The Intention to Leave scale developed by Rosin and Korabik (1991) was utilized to measure turnover intention in this study. This unidimensional instrument was adapted by Rifmawati et al. (2016) and has been employed in previous studies by Tutan and Kökalan (2024) and Tari Selçuk et al. (2022). The scale consists of 7 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Sample items include: 'If I get a job offer tomorrow, I will refuse it' for negative items and 'I often think about leaving my job' for positive items. Based on the sample size in this study (N=400), the internal consistency reliability coefficient for the scale was  $\alpha=0.88$ . Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

demonstrated a good model fit, with RMSEA=0.08, CFI=0.99, and SRMR=0.02.

The Job Stress Scale (JSS), developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983), was employed to measure job stress in this study. The instrument was adapted by Sarah (2018) and has been utilized in previous studies by Hemati Alamdarloo et al. (2023) and Pincha (2022). The scale consists of 13 items divided into 2 subscales: time stress and job anxiety. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Some items include 'I feel like I never have a day off' and 'I feel anxious or nervous because of my job'. Based on the sample size in this study (N=400), the internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was  $\alpha=0.92$ . The reliability coefficient values for the subscales were  $\alpha=0.88$  (Job Stress) and  $\alpha=0.84$  (Job Anxiety). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrated a good model fit, with RMSEA=0.04, a CFI=0.99, and SRMR=0.02.

The data analysis in this research was performed using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). A rigorous quantitative approach was employed, involving the implementation of regression analysis to investigate the direct impact of toxic leadership on turnover intention. Additionally, the study examined the role of job stress as a mediating factor. This methodology provided insights into the mechanisms by which toxic leadership influences turnover intention, with job stress serving as a mediating factor. The findings, based on the analysis of empirical data, led to clear conclusions.

## Results

Participants in this study consisted of Generation Z employees aged 18 to 27 years, all of whom had a minimum of one year of work experience and were in full-time employment status. Based on a sample size calculation with a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05, a power of 80%, and an estimated standard deviation of approximately 0.5 (Bhalerao & Kadam, 2010), a minimum of 393 participants is required to assess the proportion of Gen Z employees in Jakarta. Data collection was conducted between March 29 and April 20, 2025, resulting in responses from 400 Generation Z employees in Jakarta who voluntarily completed the questionnaire. A summary of participants' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, highest level of education, length of employment, and domicile, is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Data of the Latest Education

| Characteristics         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Latest Education</b> |           |                |
| High School             | 138       | 34.5           |
| Diploma                 | 36        | 9              |
| Bachelor                | 214       | 53.5           |
| Master                  | 8         | 2              |
| Others                  | 4         | 1              |
| <b>Gender</b>           |           |                |
| Male                    | 170       | 42.5           |
| Female                  | 230       | 57.5           |
| <b>Age</b>              |           |                |
| 18 years                | 2         | 0.5            |
| 19 years                | 2         | 0.5            |
| 20 years                | 10        | 2.5            |
| 21 years                | 10        | 2.5            |
| 22 years                | 22        | 5.5            |
| 23 years                | 58        | 14.5           |
| 24 years                | 72        | 18             |
| 25 years                | 78        | 19.5           |
| 26 years                | 50        | 12.5           |
| 27 years                | 96        | 24             |



| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Tenure</b>   |           |                |
| 1-2 years       | 86        | 21.5           |
| > 2-3 years     | 104       | 26             |
| > 3-4 years     | 70        | 17.5           |
| > 4-5 years     | 78        | 19.5           |
| > 5 years       | 62        | 15.5           |
| <b>Domicile</b> |           |                |
| West Jakarta    | 78        | 19.5           |
| Central Jakarta | 104       | 26             |
| South Jakarta   | 98        | 24.5           |
| East Jakarta    | 88        | 22             |
| North Jakarta   | 32        | 8              |

This study examined three primary variables: toxic leadership, turnover intention, and job stress. Table 2 presents a descriptive analysis of toxic leadership, turnover intention, and job stress. The mean score for toxic leadership is 4.04, indicating a moderate to high perception of toxic behaviors in the workplace. Subcategories such as "Abusive Supervision" and "Narcissism" reflected similar moderate ratings, with standard deviations ranging from 1.32 to 1.46, suggesting variability in responses. The turnover intention has a mean of 3.33, indicating a moderate level of intention to leave among participants. Job stress yielded a mean of 2.79, indicating moderate levels of stress, with similar scores observed for its subdimensions—Time Stress and Job Anxiety. These findings emphasize the substantial presence of toxic leadership and job stress, each of which may significantly contribute to turnover intention among Generation Z employees.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis

|                           | Scale | Mean | Std.<br>Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Toxic Leadership</b>   | 1-6   | 4.04 | 1.32              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| Abusive Supervision       | 1-6   | 3.93 | 1.38              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| Authoritarian Leadership  | 1-6   | 3.73 | 1.36              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| Narcissism                | 1-6   | 4.22 | 1.46              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| Self-Promotion            | 1-6   | 4.15 | 1.42              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| Unpredictability          | 1-6   | 4.22 | 1.43              | 1.00    | 6.00    |
| <b>Turnover Intention</b> | 1-5   | 3.33 | 1.03              | 1.00    | 5.00    |
| <b>Job Stress</b>         | 1-4   | 2.79 | 0.78              | 1.00    | 4.00    |
| Time Stress               | 1-4   | 2.79 | 0.83              | 1.00    | 4.00    |
| Job Anxiety               | 1-4   | 2.79 | 0.79              | 1.00    | 4.00    |

Several assumption tests were conducted in the study, including tests for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. The normality test, based on classical regression assumptions, showed that the histogram of standardized residuals approximated a normal distribution, indicating that the residuals were normally distributed. Additionally, the Q-Q plot showed points that closely followed the diagonal line, further confirming the normality of the residuals.

The results of the linearity test, as illustrated in scatter plots between the residuals and the predictors (toxic leadership and job stress), demonstrated a clear pattern. The residuals were distributed around the regression line, indicating a positive linear relationship. The heteroscedasticity test, assessed through scatter plots, revealed that the data points were evenly dispersed above and below the zero line, satisfying the assumption of homoscedasticity.

The multicollinearity test indicated that none of the independent variables exhibited

significant multicollinearity. Tolerance values for both toxic leadership and job stress were 0.486, exceeding the standard threshold of 0.10. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for both variables was 2.057, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a concern in this analysis.

A correlation analysis was also conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables, as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Correlations between Variables

| Variable           | Toxic Leadership | Job Stress | Turnover Intention |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Toxic Leadership   | —                |            |                    |
| Job Stress         | 0.717***         | —          |                    |
| Turnover Intention | 0.747***         | 0.710***   | —                  |

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

Based on the data presented in Table 3, the correlation between toxic leadership and turnover intention is  $r=0.747$ ,  $p<0.001$ , indicating a statistically significant and strong positive relationship. This result suggests that as the level of toxic leadership increases, employees' turnover intentions also become greater. Additionally, toxic leadership is strongly correlated with job stress ( $r=0.717$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), implying that toxic leadership significantly contributes to elevated levels of job-related stress. The correlation between job stress and turnover intention is also statistically significant at ( $r=0.710$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), indicating that employees who experience higher levels of job stress are more likely to consider leaving their organization. The intercorrelations among the dimensions of the toxic leadership construct are detailed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Correlation between Toxic Leadership Variable

| Variable | TL       | AS       | AL       | NA       | SP       | UP |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----|
| TL       | —        |          |          |          |          |    |
| AS       | 0.937*** | —        |          |          |          |    |
| AL       | 0.931*** | 0.856*** | —        |          |          |    |
| NA       | 0.921*** | 0.790*** | 0.819*** | —        |          |    |
| SP       | 0.935*** | 0.839*** | 0.842*** | 0.869*** | —        |    |
| UP       | 0.950*** | 0.866*** | 0.840*** | 0.859*** | 0.860*** | —  |

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001. TL=Toxic Leadership; AS=Abusive Supervision; AL=Authoritarian Leadership; NA=Narcissism; SP=Self-promotion; UP=Unpredictability

According to Table 4, the five dimensions of toxic leadership exhibit strong positive relationships. Specifically, the correlation between toxic leadership and abusive supervision is  $r=0.937$ , denoting a highly significant association. Similarly, strong correlations are observed with authoritarian leadership ( $r=0.931$ ) and narcissism ( $r=0.921$ ), underscoring the cohesiveness among the dimensions within the toxic leadership construct. The correlations among the components of the job stress variable are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Correlation between Job Stress Variable

| Variable    | Job Stress | Time Stress | Job Anxiety |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Job Stress  | —          |             |             |
| Time Stress | 0.971***   | —           |             |
| Job Anxiety | 0.957***   | 0.860***    | —           |

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

As shown in Table 5, job stress is strongly correlated with both time stress and job anxiety. The correlation between job stress and time stress is particularly high ( $r=0.971$ ). At the same time, the correlation between job stress and job anxiety is also substantial ( $r=0.957$ ), both indicating a highly significant relationship. To test the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention, hypothesis testing was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4). The results of this analysis, presented in Table 6, provide empirical evidence regarding the mediating effect of job stress in the toxic leadership–turnover intention relationship.

**Table 6.** Path Coefficients of Research Variables

|                  |   |                    |          |            |         |        | 95% Confidence Interval |       |
|------------------|---|--------------------|----------|------------|---------|--------|-------------------------|-------|
|                  |   |                    | Estimate | Std. Error | z-value | p      | Lower                   | Upper |
| Toxic Leadership | → | Turnover Intention | 0.089    | 0.008      | 11.069  | < .001 | 0.073                   | 0.105 |
| Job Stress       | → | Turnover Intention | 0.254    | 0.031      | 8.152   | < .001 | 0.193                   | 0.315 |
| Toxic Leadership | → | Job Stress         | 0.185    | 0.009      | 20.564  | < .001 | 0.168                   | 0.203 |

Note. Confidence intervals are bias-corrected percentile bootstrapped. Standard errors, z-values, and p-values are based on the delta method.

The analysis results presented in Table 6 reveal several significant relationships among toxic leadership, job stress, and turnover intention. The direct effect of a toxic relationship on turnover intention is statistically significant at 0.089 ( $p<0.001$ ), with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from 0.073 to 0.105, indicating a significant positive relationship. More notably, job stress exerts a more substantial influence on turnover intention, with a coefficient of 0.254 ( $p<0.001$ ), and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.193 to 0.315. Additionally, toxic leadership significantly increases job stress levels, as evidenced by a coefficient of 0.185 ( $p<0.001$ ) and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.168 to 0.203. These findings imply that job stress functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention. Specifically, the presence of toxic leadership contributes to elevated job stress levels among employees, which in turn increases the likelihood of turnover intention. Thus, job stress plays a critical mediating role in explaining how toxic leadership influences employees' intentions to leave the organization.

## Discussion

The present study offers empirical evidence of the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention. Toxic leadership fosters an unhealthy work environment, characterized by harmful behaviors such as bullying, manipulation, and excessive pressure from superiors. These behaviors significantly elevate employees' stress levels. Prolonged exposure to such toxic behaviors can lead to adverse physical and psychological effects, ultimately undermining employees' mental well-being and affecting their work-related attitudes and behaviors in the workplace.

Consistent with Affective Events Theory (AET), which posits that workplace events are the primary drivers of employees' emotional experiences and subsequent behaviors (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), the findings underscore the emotional impact of toxic leadership. Emotional reactions serve as the mechanism through which workplace events influence work outcomes. When organizational demands surpass the support systems available to employees, they trigger an emotional response that shapes how these events are appraised. In such a



context, employees subjected to toxic leadership and elevated job stress are more likely to exhibit unfavorable behaviors, including increased turnover intention.

These findings align with previous studies conducted in Indonesia, which indicate that the greater the intensity of toxic leadership, the higher the levels of job stress experienced by employees, ultimately leading to increased turnover intention (Dwita, 2022; Hattab et al., 2022; Yulianto et al., 2024). The present study strengthens this body of research by demonstrating that excessive job demands associated with toxic leadership contribute to job dissatisfaction, which, in turn, significantly increases the likelihood of turnover intention. Moreover, it confirms that job stress plays a critical mediating role in the relationship between toxic leadership and employees' intention to leave the organization.

The results also suggest that, if left unaddressed, the stress induced by toxic leadership will persist, further heightening the risk of turnover. Previous research by Labrague et al. (2020) and Augustin et al. (2022) found that employees working under toxic leadership are more susceptible to job stress and burnout, which subsequently drives turnover intention. Morris (2019) emphasized that employees affected by toxic leadership may benefit from external support, including access to professional counseling services, to help manage work-related stress. Consequently, organizations must take proactive measures to address toxic leadership by implementing comprehensive support systems. These may include leadership development programs, confidential reporting mechanisms, and strict enforcement of disciplinary policies.

In alignment with Morris (2019), this study also highlights the importance of fostering resilient coping mechanisms and providing counseling services to employees operating in toxic environments. Organizational initiatives, such as leadership training focused on empathy, communication, and emotional intelligence, can play a vital role in mitigating the negative impacts of toxic leadership. Shah et al. (2022) similarly emphasize the effectiveness of interventions such as stress management workshops in addressing the psychological burden caused by toxic leadership.

The implications of this study extend beyond individual psychological well-being, underscoring the responsibility to foster a work environment that discourages toxic leadership and supports employees in managing stress. Gravili et al. (2022) emphasized that organizational efforts aimed at reducing toxic leadership behaviors—through leadership development programs and awareness campaigns—are crucial for fostering a psychologically healthy work environment.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. The sample was restricted to Generation Z employees based in Jakarta, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other generational cohorts or geographical regions. Furthermore, the cross-sectional research design captures only a single point in time, thereby limiting the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships among the variables.

Future research should aim to broaden the sample to include a diverse range of employees across different generations, industries, and regions, thereby capturing the nuanced ways in which toxic leadership and job stress manifest across various contexts more effectively. Longitudinal studies could also offer deeper insights into the evolution of these relationships over time and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at mitigating turnover intention. Moreover, future investigations could explore the mediating or moderating roles of organizational culture and leadership development programs in shaping the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of job stress in linking toxic leadership to the intentions of Generation Z employees to resign from their jobs. Toxic leadership can exacerbate job stress, leading to higher turnover rates. This assertion underscores the necessity for

organizations to address this issue proactively before it escalates. By implementing targeted interventions, such as leadership training that emphasizes communication and empathy, organizations can mitigate the adverse effects of toxic leadership, enhance employee well-being, and foster long-term sustainability.

### Statement of Interest

Both authors of the article declare that they have no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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