

The Influence of Job Hopping and Career Adaptability on Generation Z's Career Development with Work Engagement as a Mediating Variable in Padang City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of job hopping and career adaptability on the career development of Generation Z employees in Padang City, with work engagement as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected from 130 employees and analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.0. The results indicate that job hopping has a negative and significant effect on career development and work engagement. In contrast, career adaptability positively and significantly influences career development but has no significant effect on work engagement. Work engagement positively and significantly affects career development, indicating that enthusiastic and emotionally engaged employees are more proactive in developing their skills and career opportunities. Furthermore, work engagement significantly mediates the relationship between job hopping and career development. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of managing job mobility and strengthening employee engagement to support sustainable career development among Generation Z.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management has undergone one of the most significant transformations, where human resources must compete in facing global developments and technological advances, therefore, in the current era must improve the foundation of knowledge and skills in order to prepare themselves to face global competitiveness, so that employee empowerment is an important element in facing competition at this time, especially for career development.(Ariadi et al., 2025).

According to Mangkunegara in Yolinda (2023) career development is personal improvement that is attempted by someone to achieve a personal career plan, an employee needs self-improvement to achieve a better career and develop the potential that exists within him to achieve satisfactory targets in order to achieve the desired career, researching career development is very important because it can map the needs of today's workforce, formulate strategies to increase organizational productivity, and help individuals achieve maximum potential, research in this field provides insight to overcome the challenges of the ever-changing world of work

Research conducted by Larasati et al., (2024) states that human resource management (HRM) has a vital role in organizational success and career development because employees as the main element contribute directly to achieving agency goals, this is relevant because most of a person's time - around 40 hours or more each week - is spent at work, making interactions with coworkers more dominant than communication with those closest to them in their personal lives.

This research was conducted on Gen Z employees in Padang City because the generation born in 1997-2012 is identical with technological advances and the rapid flow of information via the internet has influenced the lives of Generation Z, Generation Z is accustomed to communicating using their smartphones (gadgets), viewing information about various things from the outside world via the internet, in general digitalization in the world of work can help in the employee work process to be more effective and efficient, where the number of Gen Z is growing rapidly as shown in Graph 1 below.

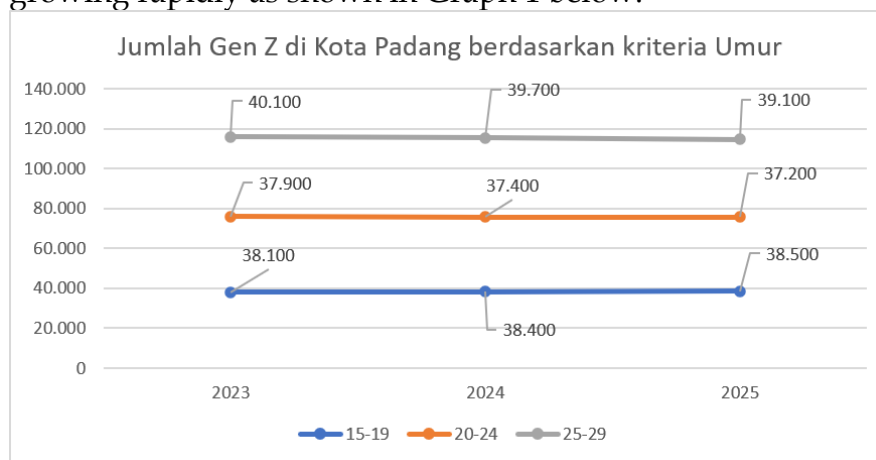


Figure 1. Number of Gen Z in Padang City in 2023-2025 based on age criteria
Source: Central Statistics Agency

Based on Figure 1 above, the number of Gen Z residents in Padang City is dominated by the age group of 25-29 years, which is a crucial phase in building a solid career foundation, but at that age there is also a workforce, both those who are already working and those who are looking for work and some who are not working, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table1. Number of Gen Z Workforce in Padang City

No	Criteria	2024
1	Work	438,571
2	Doesn't work	48,067

Source: Padang City in Figures 2025

Table 1 presents data on the workforce in Padang City. Based on Table 3, 438,571 people are recorded as having jobs, while 48,067 are still unemployed, with a total workforce of 486,638 people in Padang City. This suggests that Gen Z is also anxious about their future, both in terms of careers and future preparation, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Should I stay or should I go? Career growth and work environment are key factors after salary

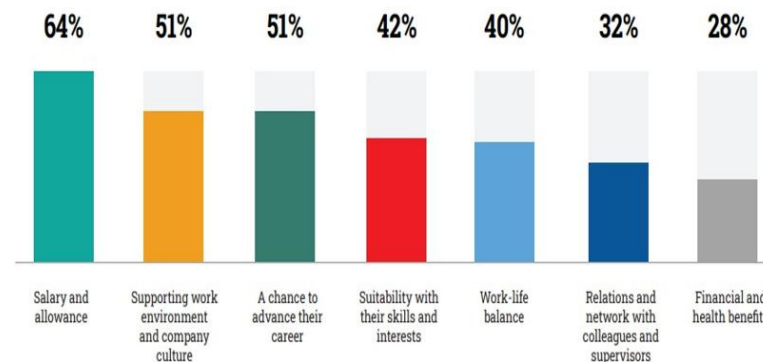


Figure 1. Gen Z Confusion in Padang City

Figure 2 shows the confusion experienced by Gen Z in determining the future direction of work. Gen Z is known as a generation that focuses not only on salary, but also on job opportunities that suit the needs of the generation. This generation tends to want jobs that can provide satisfaction as well as opportunities to improve their abilities and potential. To find these phenomena and problems, researchers have conducted a pre-survey of 40 Gen Z respondents in Padang City, the results of which are presented in Table 1 below.

Researchers conducted a survey by giving a questionnaire in the form of statements related to career development to 40 Gen Z people who have worked in Padang City, based on the results of the pre-survey of phenomena and problems experienced by Gen Z career development in Padang City, namely,

many young workers in Padang City face challenges in the form of the absence of a clear career path and structured training programs from the company, Gen Z also tends to have high expectations for accelerated career growth, so they feel frustrated when trapped in monotonous administrative work or minimal appreciation, and they feel dissatisfied, unappreciated, or bored, Gen Z in Padang impulsively tends to want to change jobs immediately, and also Gen Z workers are required to continue to hone new skills in order to be able to adapt to modern dynamics. when they fail to build adaptability aspects, they become easily stressed and are more vulnerable to deciding to leave the company suddenly, retention and loyalty of Gen Z workers do not solely depend on financial compensation, therefore the government and companies must find solutions so that the career development problems of Gen Z employees can be resolved by reducing job hopping, increasing career adaptability, and increasing work engagement.

In this study, the researcher used the variables of job hopping, career adaptability, and work engagement because they are in accordance with career development theory as the main theory in this study because career development theory highlights the psychological readiness of employees in facing transitions, focusing on reciprocal relationships in the form of commitment between individuals and organizations.

According to (Pasaribu et al., 2025) Job hopping intention is the intention or tendency of a person to move from one job to another in a relatively short time, either to obtain better opportunities, career development, increased income, job satisfaction, or other personal reasons. Often identified in young workers such as millennials and Gen Z who prioritize personal satisfaction and skills over long-term loyalty to one company, researching job hopping intention (intention to frequently change jobs) is very important for designing employee retention strategies, understanding the shifting values of the modern workforce (especially Generation Z and Millennials), and minimizing high turnover costs for companies.

Research by Leovani (2022) and Bramasta et al. (2023) shows that job hopping has a positive effect on the career development of the millennial generation in Palembang City, because the intention to frequently change jobs periodically or job hopping has a significant impact on career development, this phenomenon is closely related to the dynamics of the modern workforce such as Gen Z, where they sacrifice long-term work for growth, experience, and personal satisfaction.

However, there are differences in previous research conducted by Kusuma (2024) and Deviana (2026) which stated that career development has a negative influence on job hopping intention in employees because this company often experiences employee changes which can damage the company's reputation which could be a gap in this research.

According to Anastasya, (2024) career adaptability or career adaptation is a person's ability to overcome assigned tasks. This ability aims to realize more effective performance in times of transition or changes in a person's competencies and psychosocial resources to anticipate, manage, and respond to various

changes and challenges in the world of work, this ability is very important to adapt to tasks, environments, or dynamic career transitions, researching career adaptability is very important because it helps individuals, especially students and job seekers, in managing and anticipating dynamic world of work transitions, this equips them to face technological changes, reduces anxiety, and increases the chances of long-term success

Desiana and Fitriani's (2023) research shows that career adaptability has a positive impact on career development. However, Ntobuo et al. (2022) found different results, namely no relationship between career adaptability and career development.

Research also conducted by Lakshmi (2022) found that career adaptability contributes to students' career development readiness. This indicates that career adaptability is a crucial skill for students to develop job readiness. Students with career adaptability are more concerned about their future careers, making them better prepared for workplace changes occurring during the pandemic.

The uniqueness of this research compared to previous research using *work engagement* as a mediating variable is one of the factors that influence career development, Work engagement is an individual's attachment to his work which is characterized by a sense of satisfaction, enthusiasm, and passion in working. Individuals with high work engagement tend to be more motivated, focused, and energetic so that they can support their career success. (Ningsih et al., 2025).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Career Development Theory

Career Development Theory, proposed by Donald Super (1957), explains that a career is a developmental process that occurs throughout an individual's life and is not limited to the selection of a specific job. According to Super, a career is the implementation of self-concept, manifested through job choices, work experiences, and the various roles an individual plays throughout their life.

Career Development

According to Mangkunegara in Yolinza (2023), career development is the personal improvement an individual strives for to achieve their personal career goals. An employee needs self-improvement to achieve a better career and develop their potential to achieve satisfying goals and achieve their desired career.

Job Hopping

An individual's desire to change jobs within a period of no more than two years of working for a company.

Career Adaptability

A psychosocial construct that indicates the source of a person's needs to successfully manage and anticipate current career transitions.

Work Engagement

A state in which a person is able to commit to an organization both emotionally and intellectually.

Hypothesis

H1: Job Hopping has a negative and significant influence on Gen Z's career development in Padang City.

H2: Career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on Gen Z career development in Padang City.

H3: Job Hopping has a negative and significant effect on Gen Z work engagement in Padang City.

H4: Career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on Gen Z work engagement in Padang City.

H5: Work Engagement has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z career development in Padang City.

H6: Job Hopping has a positive and significant influence on career development with work engagement as a mediating variable for Gen Z in Padang City.

H7: Career adaptability has a positive and significant influence on the career development of Gen Z work engagement as a mediating variable in Padang City.

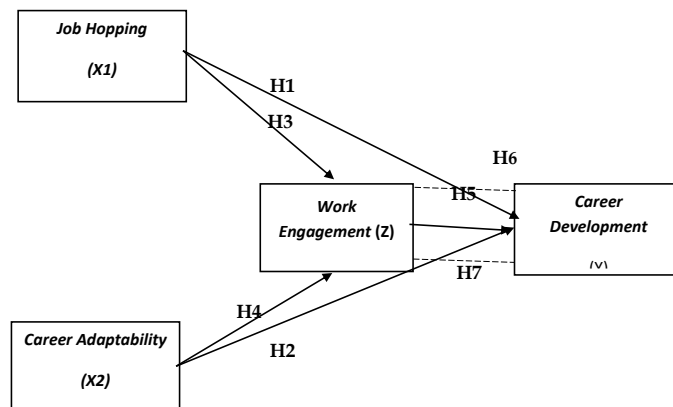


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The research method used is quantitative descriptive, is a research method that aims to describe, summarize, and explain the characteristics of a variable or phenomenon systematically using numerical data (numbers) as they are, this method focuses on measuring single variables or relationships between variables without manipulating, testing causal hypotheses, or developing theories. The population in this study were Gen Z Employees in Padang City, This research was conducted in Padang City, with a sample of 130 Gen Z Employees in Padang City, the data collection technique was by distributing questionnaires to 130 Gen Z Employees in Padang City. The Data Analysis Method used was SEM analysis with Smart PLS 4.

RESULTS

Direct Effect Test

This study uses a two-way approach because the hypothesis indicates an influence without a specific positive or negative direction. If the P value is <0.05 , then the hypothesis is accepted, and if the P value is >0.05 , then the hypothesis is rejected. The following are the results of the study, which are presented in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Information
<i>Job Hopping -> Career Development</i>	-0.335	2,187	0.005	Accepted
<i>Career Adaptability-> Career Development</i>	0.229	2,864	0.001	Accepted
<i>Job Hopping -> Work Engagement</i>	-0.537	5,296	0,000	Accepted
<i>Career Adaptability -> Work Engagement</i>	0.153	1,237	0.216	Rejected
<i>Work Engagement-> Career Development</i>	0.842	8,538	0,000	Accepted

Source: Statistical Analysis (2026)

Based on the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows a negative and significant relationship between job hopping intention and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, which has an original sample of -0.335 with a significance of 0.005, a statistical value of 2.187 ($2.187 > 1.96$) meaning that the higher the employee's desire to frequently change jobs, the lower the career development they achieve, this condition is very vulnerable to be experienced by Gen Z employees in Padang City, this pattern occurs because employees who frequently change companies (job hopping) often have difficulty building continuity of skills (skillset) or deep professional relationships, on the other hand, companies in Padang City tend to prioritize promotions and managerial responsibilities for loyal employees, have good Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE), and have a well-established work period. Gen Z employees who frequently move will lose the opportunity to participate in ongoing training programs or job promotions from within the company, thus hypothesis one can be supported

Furthermore, the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows a positive and significant relationship between career adaptability and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City have an original sample of 0.229 with a significance of 0.001, a statistical value of 2.864 ($2.864 > 1.96$), meaning that the higher the readiness and ability of Gen Z employees in Padang City in adapting to changes in the work environment, the better and faster the career development they achieve.

Furthermore, the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows a negative and significant relationship between job hopping intention and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City have an original sample of -0.537 with a significance of 0.000, a statistical value of 5.296 ($5.296 > 1.96$) meaning that the higher the employee's intention to move companies, the lower their level of engagement, enthusiasm, and dedication to their current job.

Furthermore, the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows an insignificant relationship between career adaptability and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City have an original sample of 0.153 with a significance of 0.216, a statistical value of 1.237 ($1.237 > 1.96$) meaning that it can occur due to a shift in work value priorities, demographic characteristics in Padang City require an in-depth understanding of how the younger generation views their work environment.

Furthermore, the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and the career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City have an original sample of 0.842 with a significance of 0.000, a statistical value of 8.538 ($8.538 > 1.96$), meaning that employees who are enthusiastic and emotionally attached to their work will be more proactive in seeking opportunities to improve their skills in the workplace.

Mediation Test

The indirect effect in the basic mediation model is the degree to which the independent variables influence the dependent variable. The P-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, so the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3. Mediation Test

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Information
Job Hopping -> Work Engagement -> Career Development	0.452	4,375	0,000	Accepted
Career Adaptability -> Work Engagement -> Career Development	0.129	1,202	0.229	Rejected

Source: Statistical Analysis (2026)

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Job Hopping on Career Development

Based on the test results from the SmartPLS analysis where the output path coefficient value shows a negative and significant relationship between job hopping intention and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, which has an original sample of -0.335 with a significance of 0.005, a statistical value of 2.187 ($2.187 > 1.96$) meaning that the higher the employee's desire to frequently change jobs, the lower the career development they achieve, this

condition is very vulnerable to be experienced by Gen Z employees in Padang City, this pattern occurs because employees who frequently change companies (job hopping) often have difficulty building continuity of skills (skillset) or deep professional relationships, on the other hand, companies in Padang City tend to prioritize promotions and managerial responsibilities for loyal employees, have good Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE), and have a well-established work period. Gen Z employees who frequently move will lose the opportunity to participate in ongoing training programs or job promotions from within the company, thus hypothesis one can be supported

This aligns with Career Development Theory, which is closely related to job-hopping intention. This theory explains how individuals construct, adapt, and evaluate their careers throughout their lives. This theory helps us understand why someone might want to change jobs and the impact it has on their career development.

This is in accordance with research by Leovani (2022) and Bramasta et al. (2023) which shows that job hopping intentions have a negative and significant impact on the career development of the millennial generation in Palembang City, because the intention to frequently change jobs periodically or job hopping has a significant impact on career development, this phenomenon is closely related to the dynamics of the modern workforce such as Gen Z, where they sacrifice long-term work for growth, experience, and personal satisfaction.

The Influence of Career Adaptability on Career Development

Based on the results of the study, it shows a positive and significant relationship between career adaptability and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City with an original sample of 0.229 with a significance of 0.001, a statistical value of 2.864 ($2.864 > 1.96$), meaning that the higher the readiness and ability of Gen Z employees in Padang City to adapt to changes in the work environment, the better and faster the career development they will achieve.

This aligns with Career Development Theory, which explains how a person builds and manages a career throughout their life. One highly relevant modern theory is the lifespan and constructivist approaches, particularly those related to the concept of career adaptability from Vocational Psychology.

Research by Desiana and Fitriani (2023) showed that career adaptability positively impacts career development. However, Ntobuo et al. (2022) found a different result, namely no relationship between career adaptability and career development. These discrepant findings prompted the study of other factors, such as work engagement.

The Influence of Job Hopping on Work Engagement

Based on the results of the study, it shows a negative and significant relationship between job hopping intention and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City, with an original sample of -0.537 with a significance of 0.000, a statistical value of 5.296 ($5.296 > 1.96$), meaning that the higher the

employee's intention to move from company to company, the lower their level of engagement, enthusiasm, and dedication to their current job.

Job hopping intention is a person's intention or tendency to move from one job to another in a relatively short time, either because of seeking better opportunities, career development, salary increases, job satisfaction, or other personal reasons. Job hopping intention has the potential to increase work experience, a high frequency of changes without a clear career development strategy can trigger professional instability and reduce the effectiveness of career development in the long term (Pasaribu et al., 2025). The relationship between career development theory, job hopping intention, and work engagement can be understood as a series of psychological processes in modern career management.

The influence of Career Adaptability on Work Engagement

Based on the results of the study, it shows an insignificant relationship between career adaptability and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City, with an original sample of 0.153 with a significance of 0.216, a statistical value of 1.237 ($1.237 > 1.96$), meaning that it can occur due to a shift in work value priorities, demographic characteristics in Padang City require an in-depth understanding of how the younger generation views their work environment.

Hi, this is different from the research of Savickas & Porfeli in Wijayanto, (2022) the dimensions of career adaptability include concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, this is used to predict the behavior of online motorcycle taxi partners regarding role readiness in carrying out assigned tasks and future career development.

Hi, this is different from the relationship between career development theory, career adaptability, and work engagement which can be understood as a flow: how individuals build their careers, adaptability →, level of involvement in work.

This contrasts with research conducted by Wijayanto (2022), which found that career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. Individuals with high career adaptability will adapt more easily to their jobs. They will strive to maintain self-control, thus improving their work performance. Furthermore, they will not be easily satisfied with their existing knowledge, leading to a greater willingness to learn new things.

The Influence of Work Engagement on Career Development

Based on the results of the study, it shows a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City with an original sample of 0.842 with a significance of 0.000, a statistical value of 8.538 ($8.538 > 1.96$), meaning that employees who are enthusiastic and emotionally attached to their work will be more proactive in seeking opportunities to improve their skills in the workplace.

This is in accordance with Bakker and Demerouti's findings in Syafira (2023), who agree that employees with high levels of engagement will exhibit a productive, creative attitude, and be willing to expend their energy to work harder. This means that if students participating in internships are highly engaged, they will easily achieve company goals and be able to contribute.

The relationship between career development theory, work engagement, and career development can be understood as the flow of how individuals view their careers, how they engage in work, and how their careers develop.

The Influence of Job Hopping on Career Development with Work Engagement as a mediating variable.

Based on the results of the study, it shows a positive and significant relationship between job hopping intention and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City mediated by work engagement, which has an original sample of 0.452 with a significance of 0.000, a statistical value of 4.375 ($4.375 > 1.96$), meaning that positive job hopping intention (intention to change jobs) towards career development of Gen Z in Padang City can occur if supported by high work engagement (work involvement). This mobility facilitates the mastery of various skills and networks more quickly, but requires emotional commitment to provide optimal results.

Research by Leovani (2022) and Bramasta et al. (2023) shows that job hopping intention has a positive effect on the career development of the millennial generation in Palembang City, because the intention to frequently change jobs periodically or job hopping has a significant impact on career development, this phenomenon is closely related to the dynamics of the modern workforce such as Gen Z, where they sacrifice long-term work for growth, experience, and personal satisfaction, the uniqueness of this study is using work engagement as a mediating variable.

The Influence of Career Adaptability on Career Development with Work Engagement as a mediating variable.

Based on the results of the study, it shows that there is no significant relationship between career adaptability and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City mediated by work engagement, which has an original sample of 0.129 with a significance of 0.229, a statistical value of 1.202 ($1.202 < 1.96$), meaning that adaptability (career adaptability) does not have a significant direct or indirect impact on career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, even when work engagement is involved as a mediator variable.

In this study, the researcher used the variables of job hopping intention, career adaptability, and work engagement because they are in accordance with career development theory as the main theory in this study because career development theory highlights the psychological readiness of employees in facing transitions, focusing on reciprocal relationships in the form of commitment between individuals and organizations.

In this study, the researcher used the variables of job hopping intention, career adaptability, and work engagement because they are in accordance with career development theory as the main theory in this study because career development theory highlights the psychological readiness of employees in facing transitions, focusing on reciprocal relationships in the form of commitment between individuals and organizations.

Research by Desiana and Fitriani (2023) shows that career adaptability b

positively impact career development. However, Ntobuo et al. (2022) found different results, namely no relationship between career adaptability and career development. These discrepant findings prompted the study of other factors, such as work engagement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a negative and significant relationship between job hopping and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, meaning that the higher the employee's desire to frequently change jobs, the lower the career development they achieve. This condition is very vulnerable to be experienced by Gen Z employees in Padang City. This pattern occurs because employees who frequently change companies (job hopping) often have difficulty building continuity of skills (skillset) or deep professional relationships. On the other hand, companies in Padang City tend to prioritize promotions and managerial responsibilities for loyal employees, have good Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE), and have a well-established work period. Gen Z employees who frequently move will lose the opportunity to participate in ongoing training programs or job promotions from within the company. Thus, hypothesis one can be supported.
2. There is a positive and significant relationship between career adaptability and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, meaning that the higher the readiness and ability of Gen Z employees in Padang City to adapt to changes in the work environment, the better and faster their career development will be.
3. There is a negative and significant relationship between job hopping and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City, meaning that the higher the employee's intention to move from one company to another, the lower their level of engagement, enthusiasm, and dedication to their current job.
4. There is an insignificant relationship between career adaptability and work engagement of Gen Z employees in Padang City, meaning that this could occur due to a shift in work value priorities. Demographic characteristics in Padang City require a deep understanding of how the younger generation views their work environment.
5. There is a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and the career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, meaning that employees who are enthusiastic and emotionally attached to their work will be more proactive in seeking opportunities to improve their skills in the workplace.
6. There is a positive and significant relationship between job hopping and career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, mediated by work engagement. This means that positive job hopping intention can occur if supported by high work engagement. This mobility facilitates faster mastery of various skills and networks, but requires emotional commitment to provide optimal results.
7. There is an insignificant positive relationship between career adaptability and the career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City mediated by work

engagement, meaning that adaptability (career adaptability) does not have a significant direct or indirect impact on the career development of Gen Z employees in Padang City, even when work engagement is involved as a mediator variable.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research could examine additional factors that may influence Generation Z's career development, such as organizational support, job satisfaction, career motivation, psychological well-being, and workplace flexibility. Further studies are also encouraged to use larger and more diverse samples across different cities, industries, and organizational settings to improve the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal or mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insights into how job hopping, career adaptability, and work engagement interact over time. In addition, future researchers may explore other potential mediating or moderating variables to better explain the career development patterns of Generation Z employees.

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