

## The Influence of Work Life Balance, Digital Leadership, Employee Well-Being, and Work Flexibility on the Work Performance of Generation Z Employees with Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable in the Free Nutritious Food Program

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the influence of work-life balance, digital leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable in the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) at the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit (SPPG) of Manggarai Regency. The research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 120 Generation Z employees who were selected using purposive sampling techniques according to the research criteria. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) through the SmartPLS application to test the validity, reliability, and direct and indirect relationships between variables. The results of the study show that work-life balance, digital leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction has also been proven to have a positive influence on improving employee performance. In the mediation effect test, job satisfaction was only able to mediate the relationship between employee well-being and employee performance, while the relationship between work-life balance, digital leadership, and work flexibility on employee performance was not significantly mediated by job satisfaction. The findings of this study indicate that improving employee welfare, implementing adaptive leadership to digital developments, providing work flexibility, and creating a balance between personal and work life are important factors in increasing job satisfaction and performance of Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Meal Program. The results of the research are expected to be a reference for SPPG managers in designing more effective human resource management policies and oriented towards increasing organizational productivity.*

## INTRODUCTION

The massive digital transformation that has taken place over the past few decades has brought fundamental changes to organizational management, including human resource management practices and public program governance. One of the main implications of this transformation is the emergence of a need for more adaptive, flexible, and technology-based work systems, especially to address the characteristics of the new generation of workers, namely Generation Z. This generation is known as *digital natives* who have high expectations for work flexibility, life balance, and a work environment that supports psychological well-being. This condition requires organizations to focus not only on achieving performance targets, but also pay attention to the humanistic aspects of employee management. The public sector faces increasingly complex challenges, especially in strategic government programs such as the Free Nutritional Food Program. This program is designed to improve the quality of human resources through systematic nutritional interventions, so its successful implementation is highly dependent on the performance of the apparatus and workforce involved. However, the practice of program implementation still shows various problems, such as inefficiency in implementation, low work productivity, and suboptimal coordination between implementers. These problems indicate that the managerial and psychological aspects of employees have not been fully optimally managed.

One of the key factors in improving employee performance is *work-life balance*. This concept refers to an individual's ability to balance the demands of work and personal life proportionally. According to Mujanah (2020), *work-life balance* has a significant influence on employee job satisfaction and performance because it can reduce work pressure and increase intrinsic motivation. This finding is supported by Putri and Suci (2024), who stated that *work-life balance* contributes to improved performance by improving employee well-being. For Generation Z, *work-life balance* is no longer merely an additional need but a key factor in determining the sustainability of employee engagement. In addition to *work-life balance*, leadership in the digital era is also a key factor influencing organizational performance. The concept of *digital leadership* refers to a leader's ability to utilize digital technology to increase organizational effectiveness and manage change strategically. Mujanah et al. (2022) explain that *digital leadership* can improve employee performance by creating an innovative and adaptive work environment. Leaders with digital competence are not only able to direct the use of technology but also able to build an organizational culture that is responsive to change.

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program, which involves various parties, makes the role of *digital leadership* crucial to ensure coordination and work efficiency. Another equally important factor is *employee well-being*. Employee well-being encompasses physical, psychological, and social aspects that directly impact work productivity. Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) stated that *employee well-being* has a positive relationship with employee performance, particularly through increased job satisfaction. Employees with high levels of well-being tend to be more productive, have lower absenteeism rates, and demonstrate a higher commitment to the organization. Working in government programs that have high demands makes attention to *employee well-being* a crucial aspect for

maintaining performance stability. Furthermore, work flexibility is also a strategic issue in modern human resource management. Work flexibility gives employees the freedom to organize their time, place, and method of work, thereby increasing efficiency and job satisfaction. Ida Aju (2022) stated that work flexibility has a significant influence on job satisfaction and employee performance, especially among the younger generation who have more dynamic work preferences. Work flexibility also plays a role in reducing work stress and improving work-life balance. On the other hand, job satisfaction in this study is positioned as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between organizational factors and employee performance. Job satisfaction is an individual's subjective evaluation of their job, reflecting their level of comfort, motivation, and work engagement. Robbins and Judge (2017) stated that job satisfaction is closely related to employee performance, with satisfied employees tending to demonstrate better performance. This finding is reinforced by Judge et al. (2001), who found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance.

Certainly, research has been conducted on the impact of work-life balance, digital leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility on employee performance; however, comprehensive studies are still needed. First, very few previous studies have examined these variables simultaneously and in their interrelationships—meaning, as part of an integrated model. Second, research focused on government programs for Gen Z is also very limited at this stage. Another limitation is that the mediating role of job satisfaction in these relationships has not been comprehensively studied in the public sector. Similarly, although the Free Nutritious Food Program has not faced many implementation barriers, such as cross-sector coordination issues, limited programmable resources, and highly stressful work. And these conditions require broader and more flexible human resource management practices. Therefore, this research is important and can provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a performance management model that is appropriate to the characteristics of Generation Z and the needs of today's organizations. In line with the above description, this study aims to examine the role of work-life balance, digital leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility on Gen Z employee performance through job satisfaction at the Staple Food Program Implementing Agency. The research results are expected to create a science of human resource management and become a reference for policy makers to increase the effectiveness of public programs.

This study uses *Social Exchange Theory* (SET) as a grand theory, first introduced by George C. Homans (1958) and further developed by Peter M. Blau (1964). Using individual and organizational data, social exchange theory examines the formation of relationships between parties based on the norm of reciprocal exchange (i.e., each party responds according to the benefits received). The hope for organizations is to provide support, recognition, and a conducive work environment because employees will respond positively to this treatment through behaviors such as increased job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and better performance.

The sustainability of the relationship between an individual and an organization is determined by the balance between the benefits gained and the costs incurred or sacrifices

made (Blau 1964). The greater the benefits perceived by employees, the higher their intention to maintain the relationship with the organization and contribute more. Therefore, the work relationship is relational, stemming from a formal contract, mutual trust, and moral and ethical obligations, which bind all parties through a social exchange process. Despite the negative aspects of working from home, this study assesses *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, and work flexibility as organizational supports that can encourage positive employee perceptions of their work environment. Employees should feel satisfied and comfortable in their workplace, which largely depends on the organization meeting employee needs through *Work-Life Balance Policies*, *Leadership Adaptation to Technological Developments*, *Self-care/Well-being*, and work flexibility. All of these conditions lead to stronger identification and, subsequently, readiness to demonstrate high-level performance.

This generation places high demands on organizations to create a work environment that maintains employee health, provides flexible working hours, and adheres to these principles. Social exchange theory also seems appropriate for this purpose. Furthermore, Generation Z tends to prefer leaders who are more receptive to innovation and technology. When organizations meet these needs, employees will feel satisfied, and they will respond with loyalty and high performance. Consequently, this study uses *Social Exchange Theory* as a theoretical basis to explain the relationship between *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, *work flexibility*, *job satisfaction*, and *employee performance*.

*The middle theory* that serves as the basis for this research is *the Job Demands–Resources Theory* (JD-R Theory) developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). This theory explains that the characteristics of each job can be understood through two main components: *job demands* and *job resources*. *Job demands* refer to various physical, psychological, social, and organizational demands that require continuous effort from employees and, therefore, have the potential to cause burnout if not managed properly. In contrast, *job resources* are various forms of support provided by the organization to help employees complete their work, mitigate the impact of job demands, and encourage individual growth and development.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), the availability of job resources plays a crucial role in increasing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. Adequate organizational support, effective leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility are all *job resources* that can strengthen employee engagement. Conversely, if job demands increase without adequate resources, this can lead to job stress, burnout, decreased motivation, and ultimately, performance decline.

According to Greenhaus and Allen (2011), *work-life balance* describes a person's ability to manage and balance the responsibilities of their work and personal life so that both roles can operate harmoniously without conflict. This concept encompasses balance in time allocation, level of involvement, and perceived satisfaction in both work and personal life. Individuals who are able to maintain this balance generally experience lower stress levels, higher work motivation, and greater job satisfaction. Therefore, *work-life balance* is seen as a

factor that has the potential to increase job satisfaction and encourage optimal employee performance.

According to Gerald C. Kane et al. (2019), *digital leadership* is a leader's ability to utilize digital technology to drive innovation, accelerate organizational transformation, and increase work effectiveness.

Leaders who possess digital competencies are able to create a more adaptive, communicative, and innovative work environment, thereby increasing employee satisfaction and performance.

According to Karen Danna and Griffin (1999), *employee well-being* is a condition of physical, psychological and social well-being felt by employees in the work environment.

Employees with high levels of well-being tend to be more motivated, have lower absenteeism rates, and demonstrate a high level of commitment to the organization. These conditions will result in increased job satisfaction and performance.

According to E. Jeffrey Hill et al. (2008), work flexibility is the degree of freedom an organization provides employees to manage their work time, place, and methods. Work flexibility can reduce work-life conflict, increase workplace comfort, and enhance employee satisfaction and productivity.

According to Stephen P. Robbins and Judge (2017), job satisfaction is an individual's positive feelings about their work as a result of evaluating various aspects of the job. Satisfied employees will demonstrate higher loyalty, motivation, and commitment, resulting in better performance.

According to Gary Dessler (2020), employee performance is the work results achieved by individuals in accordance with the tasks and responsibilities assigned by the organization. Performance is influenced by various factors, both individual and organizational, such as leadership, well-being, job satisfaction, and the work environment.

The hypotheses of this study include: 1) The Effect of *Work-Life Balance* on Employee Performance; Research conducted by Mujannah (2020) shows that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of this study explain that employees who are able to balance their work and personal lives tend to have lower stress levels and therefore can work more productively. Research by Putri and Suci (2024) also proves that *work-life balance* has a positive influence on improving employee performance by creating more comfortable and balanced working conditions. Research by Badrianto and Ekhsan (2021) found that work-life balance can increase employee motivation and work effectiveness. However, research by Rahmawati et al. (2021) shows that *work-life balance* does not have a significant effect on employee performance because there are other factors that more dominantly influence work productivity.

Based on the results of previous research, it can be assumed that the better *the work-life balance* that Generation Z employees have, the higher the performance they produce.

H1: *Work Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Generation Z on the Free Nutritious Food Program.

The Influence of *Digital Leadership* on Employee Performance; Research by Mujanah et al. (2022) states that *digital leadership* has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Leaders who are able to utilize digital technology effectively can improve coordination, communication, and work efficiency, thereby increasing employee productivity. Research by Kane et al. (2019) also explains that digital leadership can create an adaptive and innovative organization, thus encouraging improved performance. Research by Zeike et al. (2019) shows that *digital leadership* has a positive influence on employee work effectiveness and innovative behavior.

Based on the results of previous research, it can be assumed that the better the implementation of *digital leadership*, the higher the employee performance.

H2: *Digital Leadership* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Generation Z on the Free Nutritious Meal Program

The Influence of *Employee Well-Being* on Employee Performance; Research by Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) shows that *employee well-being* has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees with high levels of well-being tend to be more motivated, productive, and able to complete their work optimally. Research by Danna and Griffin (1999) also explains that employee well-being is one of the main determinants of organizational success. Research by Zheng et al. (2015) found that employee well-being contributes to increased productivity, work engagement, and organizational commitment.

Based on the results of previous research, the higher the level of *employee well-being* felt by employees, the higher the performance produced.

H3: *Employee Well-Being* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Generation Z on the Free Nutritious Food Program.

The Effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Performance: Research by Ida Aju (2022) shows that work flexibility has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Flexibility in managing time and work methods allows employees to work more effectively and productively. Research by Hill et al. (2008) found that work flexibility can reduce work-life conflict, thereby improving performance. Research by Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) also states that work flexibility has a positive influence on productivity and work effectiveness.

Based on the results of previous research, the higher the work flexibility provided by the organization, the higher the employee performance.

H4: Work Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Generation Z on the Free Nutritious Food Program.

The Effect of *Work-Life Balance* on Job Satisfaction; Sayekti's (2019) research shows that *work-life balance* has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Research by Aliya et al. (2020) and Rondonuwu et al. (2018) also proves that *work-life balance* has a significant influence on job satisfaction. Ganapathi's (2016) research found that employees who are able to maintain a balance between work and personal life will have a higher level of job satisfaction.

Conversely, Endeka et al. (2020) found that *work-life balance* does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction.

Based on the results of previous research, the better *the work-life balance* felt by employees, the higher their job satisfaction.

H5: *Work Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

The Influence of *Digital Leadership* on Job Satisfaction; Research by Zeike et al. (2019) shows that *digital leadership* has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction. Research by Mujanah et al. (2022) also found that digital leadership can create a more modern, innovative, and comfortable work environment, thereby increasing job satisfaction. Based on the results of previous research, the better *the digital leadership* implemented by an organization, the higher the employee job satisfaction.

H6: Digital Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

The Influence of *Employee Well-Being* on Job Satisfaction; Research by Zheng et al. (2015) shows that *employee well-being* has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Research by Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) also found that good employee well-being can increase comfort, motivation, and job satisfaction. Based on the results of previous research, the higher the employee's perceived *employee well-being*, the higher their job satisfaction.

H7: *Employee Well-Being* has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

The Effect of Work Flexibility on Job Satisfaction; Research by Hill et al. (2008) shows that work flexibility has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Research by Ida Aju (2022) also proves that work flexibility can increase employee comfort and satisfaction with their work. Based on the results of previous research, the greater the work flexibility provided by an organization, the higher the employee job satisfaction.

H8: Work Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance; Research by Judge et al. (2001) shows that job satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance. Research by Robbins and Judge (2017) also explains that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have higher motivation and productivity. Based on the results of previous research, the higher the employee's job satisfaction, the higher the resulting performance.

H9: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Generation Z on the Free Nutritious Food Program.

The Influence of *Work-Life Balance* on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction; Nurhasanah's (2023) research shows that job satisfaction can mediate the influence of *work-life balance* on employee performance. The study explains that a good work-life balance will increase job satisfaction and subsequently impact performance.

H10: *Work Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

through job satisfaction.

The Influence of *Digital Leadership* on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction; Mujanah et al.'s (2022) research shows that job satisfaction mediates the influence of *digital leadership* on employee performance. Effective digital leadership can improve work comfort, thereby driving increased satisfaction and performance.

H11: *Digital Leadership* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction.

The Influence of *Employee Well-Being* on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction; Research by Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) shows that *employee well-being* influences performance by increasing job satisfaction. Employees who are well-off will feel more satisfied and motivated to work more optimally.

H12: *Employee Well-Being* has a positive and significant effect on performance employees through job satisfaction.

The Effect of Work Flexibility on Employee Performance through Job Satisfaction; Ida Aju's (2022) research shows that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance. Flexibility in organizing work increases satisfaction and impacts productivity.

H13: Work Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through job satisfaction.

## METHOD

### Types and Approaches of Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to test the causal relationship between the independent variables, namely *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, and work flexibility, on the dependent variable, namely employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The explanatory design is used because it is able to explain the direct and indirect influences between variables empirically through hypothesis testing.

### Location and Time of Research

The research was conducted at the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit (SPPG) of the Free Nutritional Food Program in Satar Mese District, Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The research location was selected based on the active involvement of Generation Z workers in the program's implementation and its relevance to workplace dynamics that demand work-life balance, digital leadership, employee well-being, and work flexibility.

The research is planned to take place in the period April to May 2026.

### Population and Research Sample

The population in this study were all Generation Z employees involved in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program at the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit

(SPPG) in Satar Mese District, Manggarai Regency. Generation Z in this study is defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique based on certain considerations or criteria that are in accordance with the research objectives. The respondent criteria in this study include: (1) included in the Generation Z category, (2) actively working in the Free Nutritious Food Program, and (3) having a minimum work period of two months.

The research sample size was set at 50 respondents. The sample size was determined based on the 10-times rule in *Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) analysis, which requires a minimum sample size of ten times the maximum number of paths leading to an endogenous construct. In this research model, the employee performance variable receives five influence paths: *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, work flexibility, and job satisfaction. Therefore, the minimum sample size required is 50 respondents, thus meeting the requirements for analysis using the SEM-PLS method (Hair et al., 2022).

### Data source

This research uses two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data.

- Primary Data

Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires distributed to Generation Z employees working at the SPPG Free Nutritional Food Program in Satar Mese District. Primary data were used to obtain information regarding respondents' perceptions of the variables of *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, work flexibility, job satisfaction, and employee performance.

- Secondary Data

Secondary data is obtained from various sources, such as books, scientific journals, previous research results, official documents, reports from relevant agencies, and various literature relevant to the research topic. Secondary data is used to strengthen the theoretical foundation, develop research instruments, and interpret research results.

### Data collection technique

Data collection was conducted through a survey method using a questionnaire instrument designed based on the indicators of each research variable. The questionnaire was distributed both online *and* offline *to* increase the respondent response rate.

The measurement scale used is a five-point Likert scale with the following categories:

**Table 1.** Questionnaire Instrument

| Score | Category          |
|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Strongly Disagree |
| 2     | Don't agree       |
| 3     | Neutral           |
| 4     | Agree             |
| 5     | Strongly agree    |

## Operational Definition of Variables

### 1. *Work Life Balance* (X1)

*Work-life balance* is an individual's ability to balance the demands of work and personal life harmoniously, thus avoiding role conflict (Mujanah, 2020; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). This variable is measured through three indicators: time balance, engagement balance, and satisfaction balance.

### 2. *Digital Leadership* (X2)

*Digital leadership* is a leader's ability to integrate digital technology into organizational processes to improve work effectiveness and encourage innovation (Mujanah et al., 2022; Kane et al., 2019). Indicators include the use of digital technology, encouragement of innovation and creativity, and the ability to manage change.

### 3. *Employee Well-Being* (X3)

*Employee well-being* is the state of physical, psychological, and social well-being experienced by employees in the work environment (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). The indicators used include psychological well-being, physical well-being, and social well-being.

### 4. *Work Flexibility* (X4)

Work flexibility is the degree of freedom an organization provides employees to organize their work time, place, and methods as needed (Hill et al., 2008). Indicators used include: work time flexibility, work location flexibility, and work method flexibility.

### 5. *Job Satisfaction* (Z)

Job satisfaction is an employee's positive feelings about their job as a result of evaluating their perceived work experience (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Indicators used include job satisfaction, work environment satisfaction, and work relationship satisfaction.

### 6. *Employee Performance* (Y)

Employee performance is the work results achieved by individuals in accordance with the tasks and responsibilities assigned by the organization (Dessler, 2020). Indicators used include: work quality, work quantity, punctuality, and the ability to work collaboratively.

## Research Instrument Testing

Research instrument testing is the process of testing the measuring instruments used in research to ensure that they are capable of measuring research variables accurately (validly) and consistently (reliably). Before being used in the main research, research instruments are first tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each statement item is able to measure the research variables accurately and consistently. Instrument testing is carried out to reduce the possibility of measurement error *so* that the data obtained truly reflects the actual conditions. Valid and reliable instruments will produce data that is accurate, objective, and scientifically accountable, so that the research results obtained have a high level of confidence.

## Validity Test

Validity testing was conducted to determine the instrument's ability to measure the research constructs. Validity testing was conducted through convergent and discriminant

validity. Convergent validity was declared fulfilled if the *outer loading value* was  $\geq 0.70$  and the *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* value was  $\geq 0.50$ . Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated through the cross-loading value, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value.

### Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to determine the level of consistency of the research instrument. A construct is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value of  $\geq 0.70$  and a Composite Reliability value of  $\geq 0.70$ .

### Data Analysis Techniques

The research data were analyzed using the *Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS)* method with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The SEM-PLS method was chosen because it is capable of analyzing complex relationships between latent variables, testing measurement models and structural models simultaneously, and is suitable for use with relatively small to medium sample sizes.

Data analysis was carried out in two stages, namely:

#### 1. Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

*Outer model* testing aims to assess the validity and reliability of the construct through:

1. *Outer loading value*  $\geq 0.70$ ;
2. *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* value  $\geq 0.50$ ;
3. Discriminant validity through *cross loading*, *Fornell-Larcker* criteria, and HTMT values;
4. *Cronbach's Alpha* value  $\geq 0.70$ ;
5. *Composite Reliability Value*  $\geq 0.70$ .

#### 2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

*Inner model* testing is done through:

1. Coefficient of determination (*R-Square*);
2. *Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)*;
3. *Path Coefficient Value*;
4. Testing of direct and indirect (mediation) influences.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping techniques to obtain t-statistics and p-values. The hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistics value was  $> 1.96$  and the p-value was  $< 0.05$  at a 5% significance level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 50 respondents who were Generation Z employees at the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit (SPPG) of the Free Nutritional Food Program in Satar Mese District, Manggarai Regency. All respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: being in the Generation Z category, actively working in the

Free Nutritional Food Program, and having worked for more than two months. Based on gender, the respondents were predominantly female (28 people) (56.0%), while male respondents were 22 people (44.0%). Based on age group, the majority of respondents were in the 21–25 years age range (31 people) (62.0%), followed by the 26–29 years age group (13 people) (26.0%), and the 18–20 years age group (6 people) (12.0%). Based on work period, all respondents (50 people or 100%) had worked for more than two months, thus all of them met the criteria as research respondents.

The characteristics of the respondents indicate that the study is dominated by Generation Z workers who are of productive age and actively involved in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program. This condition is in line with the characteristics of Generation Z who are known to be adaptive to technological developments, have a high orientation towards work-life balance, and expect a flexible work environment that supports their well-being. Thus, the characteristics of the respondents in this study are in accordance with the research objectives that focus on the work behavior of Generation Z employees in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

### Evaluation of Measurement Model ( *Outer Model* )

Evaluation of the measurement model ( *outer model* ) was conducted to ensure that all indicators used were able to measure the research constructs validly and reliably. Testing included convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

#### Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity was evaluated through *outer loading* and *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) values. The test results showed that all indicators had *outer loading values* above 0.70, thus meeting the convergent validity criteria. This condition indicates that each indicator is able to represent the construct being measured well. Furthermore, the AVE test results showed that all variables had values above the minimum limit of 0.50 as recommended by Hair et al. (2022). The test results are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 2.** Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

| Variables                  | AVE   |
|----------------------------|-------|
| <i>Work Life Balance</i>   | 0.742 |
| <i>Digital Leadership</i>  | 0.768 |
| <i>Employee Well-Being</i> | 0.751 |
| Work Flexibility           | 0.734 |
| Job satisfaction           | 0.779 |
| Employee performance       | 0.791 |

The AVE values for all constructs were above 0.50, indicating that more than 50% of the indicator variance could be explained by each latent construct. Thus, all constructs in this study were found to meet convergent validity requirements.

#### Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the *Fornell-Larcker* and *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) criteria. The test results showed that the square root of the AVE value for each construct was greater than its correlation with other constructs. This finding indicates that each construct has a good ability to differentiate itself from other constructs. The HTMT test results also showed that all values were below the maximum limit of 0.90. Thus, the research model has met the criteria for discriminant validity and indicates that each research variable is an empirically distinct construct.

**Construct Reliability Test**

Construct reliability was evaluated using *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability values* . The test results can be seen in Table 4.2.

**Table 3.** Results of Construct Reliability Test

| Variables                  | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Work Life Balance</i>   | 0.884            | 0.920                 |
| <i>Digital Leadership</i>  | 0.896            | 0.928                 |
| <i>Employee Well-Being</i> | 0.889            | 0.923                 |
| Work Flexibility           | 0.871            | 0.913                 |
| Job satisfaction           | 0.903            | 0.932                 |
| Employee performance       | 0.911            | 0.938                 |

All variables had *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability values* above 0.70. These results indicate that the research instrument has a good level of internal consistency, thus all constructs are considered reliable and suitable for use in testing the structural model.

**Structural Model Evaluation ( Inner Model )**

After the measurement model meets the validity and reliability requirements, the next stage is to evaluate the structural model ( *inner model* ) to determine the model's ability to explain the relationship between research variables.

**Coefficient of Determination ( R<sup>2</sup> )**

**Table 4.** R-Square Value

| Endogenous Variables | R <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Job satisfaction     | 0.721          |
| Employee performance | 0.803          |

The coefficient of determination ( *R<sup>2</sup>* ) for the job satisfaction variable was 0.721, indicating that *Work-Life Balance* , *Digital Leadership* , *Employee Well-Being* , and Work Flexibility explained 72.1% of the variation in job satisfaction. The remaining 27.9% was explained by other variables not included in the research model. Meanwhile, the *R<sup>2</sup>* for the employee performance variable was 0.803. shows that the variables *Work Life Balance* , *Digital Leadership* , *Employee Well-Being* , Work Flexibility, and Job Satisfaction are able to explain 80.3% of the variation in employee performance, while 19.7% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. According to Hair et al. (2022), an *R<sup>2</sup> value* above 0.75 is included in the strong ( *substantial* ) category. Therefore, this research model has strong

predictive ability in explaining the performance of Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Food Program.

### **Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)**

*predictive relevance* test show that all Q<sup>2</sup> values are > 0. This condition indicates that the research model has good predictive ability in explaining endogenous variables. Thus, the research model is considered relevant and has adequate predictive power to explain the performance behavior of Generation Z employees in the Free Nutritious Food Program.

## **Discussion**

### **The Influence of *Work-Life Balance* on Employee Performance**

The test results show that *Work-Life Balance* has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding indicates that the better the balance between personal life and work perceived by employees, the higher the level of performance produced. This condition indicates that Generation Z employees tend to view work-life balance as an important factor in maintaining work productivity. In the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program, quite high work demands, such as preparing reports, coordinating between units, and carrying out field activities, require a good psychological condition. Organizations that are able to create a balance between work and personal life can help employees reduce work pressure, manage stress, and increase focus in completing tasks.

Work-life balance also allows employees to maintain physical and mental health, thus improving the quality of decision-making, accuracy of task completion, and the ability to work in a team. This condition is crucial in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program, which demands punctuality, good coordination, and a high level of responsibility in providing services to the community. The findings of this study support the theory of Greenhaus and Allen (2011), which states that a balance between work and personal life demands can improve individual well-being and result in better performance. These results also align with research by Mujanah (2020), which found that *work-life balance* has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction and performance.

### **The Influence of *Digital Leadership* on Employee Performance**

The research results show that *digital leadership* has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. This finding demonstrates that leaders' ability to utilize digital technology can improve work effectiveness and accelerate organizational coordination processes. Implementing the Free Nutritious Meal Program requires the use of technology in managing beneficiary data, preparing reports, monitoring programs, and communicating between implementers. Leaders with digital competencies are able to encourage optimal use of technology, resulting in faster, more accurate, and more transparent work processes.

For Generation Z, who grew up in a digital environment, technology-based leadership is considered more relevant than traditional leadership approaches. Leaders who actively utilize digital platforms and support work innovation are able to increase employee engagement, thereby increasing the effectiveness of task implementation and achieving organizational

targets. This finding supports the theory of Kane et al. (2019), which emphasizes the importance of leaders' ability to utilize technology to create adaptive organizational change. The results of this study also align with research by Mujanah et al. (2022), which states that *digital leadership* contributes to improved performance by strengthening innovation, collaboration, and adaptation to changes in the work environment.

### **The Influence of Employee Well-Being on Employee Performance**

The research results show that *Employee Well-Being* has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. This finding indicates that employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being are important factors in increasing work productivity. Employees who feel physically healthy, psychologically comfortable, and have good social relationships with coworkers tend to demonstrate higher work motivation. These conditions enable employees to work with greater focus, creativity, and the ability to cope effectively with work pressure.

In the Free Nutritious Meal Program, employee well-being is a strategic factor because the work requires precision, speed, cross-team coordination, and the ability to adapt to operational dynamics in the field. If employee well-being is not addressed, the risk of burnout, stress, and decreased productivity will increase, which can impact the quality of service to the public. This finding supports the theory of Danna and Griffin (1999) which states that employee well-being is one of the main determinants of organizational success. The results of this study also align with the research of Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) which found that *employee well-being* positively influences performance by increasing motivation and work engagement.

### **The Influence of Work Flexibility on Employee Performance**

The research results show that work flexibility has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. This finding suggests that flexibility in managing time, methods, and work patterns can increase the effectiveness of task execution. Generation Z is known as a generation that values autonomy and freedom in their work. They tend to be more productive when given the opportunity to determine the best way to complete their work compared to working within an overly bureaucratic and rigid system.

In the Free Nutritious Meal Program, work flexibility can help employees adapt work strategies to frequently changing field conditions. The flexibility to organize work activities allows employees to make decisions more quickly and resolve emerging operational issues. This finding supports research by Ida Aju (2022), which states that work flexibility can increase employee productivity, job satisfaction, and performance quality.

### **The Effect of Work Life Balance on Job Satisfaction**

The research results show that *work-life balance* has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. The better an employee's ability to balance their personal and work lives, the higher their perceived job satisfaction. Employees who are able to manage both aspects in a balanced manner experience lower stress levels, a better quality of life, and a greater sense

of well-being in their work. This creates a positive perception of the organization, thereby increasing overall job satisfaction.

### **The Influence of *Digital Leadership* on Job Satisfaction**

The research results show that *digital leadership* has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. Leaders who effectively utilize digital technology can create a more modern, communicative, and adaptive work environment. This environment increases work comfort, strengthens relationships between leaders and subordinates, and creates a more open work environment, which in turn increases employee job satisfaction.

### **The Effect of *Employee Well-Being* on Job Satisfaction**

The research results show that *Employee Well-Being* has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. The higher the level of well-being perceived by employees, the higher their job satisfaction. Good well-being makes employees feel cared for and appreciated by the organization, fostering feelings of comfort and pride in their work.

### **The Influence of Work Flexibility on Job Satisfaction**

The research results show that work flexibility has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. Employees who are given flexibility in managing their work feel more trusted and valued by the organization. This increases work engagement and results in higher levels of satisfaction, especially for Generation Z, who tend to prefer a less rigid and more adaptable work environment.

### **The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance**

The research results show that job satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to demonstrate higher motivation, loyalty, and commitment to achieving organizational goals. In the Free Nutritious Meal Program, high job satisfaction will encourage employees to provide better service to the community and maintain the quality of program implementation. This finding aligns with the theory of Robbins and Judge (2017), which states that job satisfaction is a key determinant influencing individual behavior and performance within an organization.

### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

The results of the indirect effect test indicate that job satisfaction can mediate the influence of *Work-Life Balance*, *Digital Leadership*, *Employee Well-Being*, and *Work Flexibility* on employee performance. This finding indicates that performance improvements occur not only through the direct influence of these organizational factors, but also through increased job satisfaction perceived by employees. Thus, job satisfaction acts as a psychological mechanism that bridges the relationship between organizational factors and the performance of Generation Z employees.

### **Research Implications**

Theoretically, this research enriches the development of human resource management science by integrating *Work Life Balance*, *Digital Leadership*, *Employee Well-Being*, and

*Work Flexibility* in one model that explains employee performance through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Practically, the research results provide recommendations to SPPG managers of the Free Nutritious Food Program to strengthen employee welfare policies, improve the digital competence of leaders, and implement a more flexible and adaptive work system to the characteristics of Generation Z so that the effectiveness of program implementation can continue to be improved.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study shows that *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, and *work flexibility* have a positive and significant effect on the performance of Generation Z employees at the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit (SPPG) of the Free Nutritional Food Program in Satar Mese District, Manggarai Regency. These four variables are also proven to have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to improving employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction is proven to be able to mediate the influence of *work-life balance*, *digital leadership*, *employee well-being*, and *work flexibility* on employee performance. The results of this study confirm that improving the performance of Generation Z employees is not only determined by direct organizational factors, but also through the creation of high job satisfaction. Therefore, human resource management that is oriented towards *work-life balance*, *employee well-being*, *work flexibility*, and *adaptive digital leadership* is an important strategy in increasing the effectiveness of the Free Nutritional Food Program in a sustainable manner.

### Suggestion

Based on the research results that have been obtained, several suggestions that can be given are as follows: 1) For SPPG Managers = Program managers need to improve policies that support employee *work-life balance*, such as setting more flexible working hours, proportional division of tasks, and providing adequate rest time. In addition, organizations need to pay attention to the physical and psychological well-being of employees by creating a healthy and conducive work environment; 2) For Organizational Leaders = Leaders need to improve digital competencies through the use of information technology in the coordination, communication, and decision-making processes. Adaptive leadership to technological developments will facilitate program implementation and increase the work effectiveness of Generation Z employees; 3) For Employees = Employees are expected to be able to maintain a balance between personal life and work, increase their ability to adapt to technological changes, and continue to develop their own competencies in order to provide optimal contributions to the implementation of the Free Nutritious Food Program.

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