

## The Millennials: Adversity Intelligence and Work Engagement

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### ABSTRACT

The industrial world is transforming towards the era of revolution 4.0 and society 5.0. In this era, digital technology is applied and becomes the center of human life. Demand that the millennial generation who currently dominates the job market in Indonesia have adversity intelligence so that they can be more engaged in their work and have a positive impact on company performance and development. This study aims to determine the relationship between adversity intelligence and work engagement in the millennial generation. Subjects in this study were 214 employees, aged 20-39 years who live in Yogyakarta and have worked at least one year. The data collection method in this study uses a Likert scale model. Data were collected using the Work Engagement Scale and the Adversity Intelligence Scale, by sending the scale via Google Form to respondents. The data analysis technique used is the product-moment correlation from Karl Pearson. Based on the data analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) was obtained for 0.820 ( $p < 0.01$ ). These results indicate that there is a very significant positive relationship between adversity intelligence and work engagement among millennial employees living in Yogyakarta. This study provides an overview of the level of work engagement and adversity intelligence for millennial generation employees, so as to increase the work engagement of millennial generation employees by increasing their adversity intelligence.

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## 1. Introduction

Currently, there are more and more millennial generations who fill the world of work where this millennial generation is a group of productive age generations who were born between the period 1981 to 2000. In today's professional world, millennials continue to experience a significant increase (KPPPA & BPS, 2018). According to the 2017 Susenas (National Socioeconomic Survey), the number of millennials or generations born in 1981-2000 is 88 million people or 33.75 percent of the total population of Indonesia (Deloitte Indonesia Perspective (DIP, 2019). This number is expected to continue to increase compared to the number of other generations. Currently, the percentage of millennials in Indonesia is the largest (33.75%), followed by the number of generation X (25.74%), and the lowest is the baby boomers and veterans (11.27%). This condition is known as the demographic bonus era. The era of the demographic bonus is a rare phenomenon in which the proportion of the population of productive age is above 2/3 of the total population (KPPPA & BPS, 2018). The large number of millennial generations who control this demographic is a challenge for HR managers in the world of work.

It is predicted that by 2025, three-quarters of all professions and workforce in the world will be filled by the millennial generation. Generation Y or what is often called the millennial generation can be said to be a unique generation. Apart from its young age, generation Y has quite an interesting tendency and associations to look at. The millennial generation is the first generation to grow in digital media (Zemke et al., 2013). According to Lyons (2004), the millennial generation is a generation that grows on the booming internet, this generation uses a lot of communication technology such as email, SMS, instant messaging, and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. It is further explained that the millennial generation is a generation that is sensitive to rapid changes in technology and gadgets. This results in a faster attention span compared to the previous generation. His young age is attached to a dynamic persona and likes challenges, sees opportunities widely, and is not afraid to try new things. This is what

makes the millennial generation's self-development faster and the desire to change positions and careers faster too (Gallup, 2016). Unfortunately, this is accepted a little skewed by the general public. Generation Y is associated with being overly demanding, disloyal, and lacking patience in pursuing a career. Millennials are also known as the freedom-loving, fast-paced, instant, and digital generation (Gallup, 2016). The impression of disloyalty to this generation arises from dissatisfaction with the expectations that emerge at the start of the job offer.

Gallup (2016) also said that one of the characteristics of the millennial generation is not having a good attachment to work. Based on the results of a survey conducted by (Gallup, 2016) 85% of employees in the world are unhappy with their jobs. This is in line with the results of a survey conducted by Portal (2016) in Indonesia showing that around 76% of employees are not engaged and 11% are not actively engaged with their work. Several companies also complained about the high turnover rate that occurred. The average industry turnover rate reaches above 10% (DIP, 2019). In everyday life you can find employees who leave work, are not physically, cognitively, and emotionally attached to their roles, this is called employees who do not have engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Furthermore, work engagement is a positive psychological condition, covering conditions related to welfare and fulfillment of work, as well as having a strong motivation within the individual to do a job. Work engagement can be seen from three related aspects, including vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Based on previous research work engagement will affect the quality of work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Employees who have high engagement will make employees more motivated to work, have a commitment, enthusiasm and enthusiasm (Mujiasih, 2015), work performance (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), increase innovation and creativity (Gorgievski & Bakker, 2010), increase customer satisfaction, profitability, productivity (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) and reduce turnover (Cahyana & Prahara, 2020). Conversely, individuals who have low work engagement will have an impact on the emergence of work fatigue, work stress, workload that is considered high (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), and low loyalty (Albrecht, 2010). So that individuals feel that the tasks given by the company are a workload in their work. Work engagement must be owned by every worker (Kaswan, 2017), this is following the opinion of Bakker and Leiter (2010) that in modern companies today it is expected that employees have an enthusiastic attitude and show initiative at work.

This research is interesting to research because a company needs individuals who are involved in its work. Several factors determine the work engagement of an employee (Bakker, 2011). It was further explained that in the JD-R model, adversity intelligence is included in personal resources. It is further explained that positive belief in self and the environment is a form of personal resources. This can be developed and motivated in achieving goals even in the face of difficulties and challenges. A person's ability to view adversity as a challenge to solve is known as adversity intelligence (Stoltz, 2007). Furthermore, it was explained that individuals who have high adversity intelligence will be able to withstand difficulties and be able to develop their potential to overcome these challenges. Previous research has found that individuals with high adversity intelligence will be more optimistic in facing difficulties and be able to respond to these difficulties as an opportunity (Ekasaputri, 2016). Optimistic individuals have positive emotions. So that they can motivate themselves, dare to take risks when facing challenges, have high enthusiasm for work, and can say positive things when facing problems (Frederman, 2009). This makes individuals more focused when working, and can reduce the pressure they feel when facing changes and challenges.

Based on the explanation above, research on work engagement needs to be studied to determine the level of work engagement of millennial employees concerning their adversity intelligence. This study needs to be done to determine the level and relationship between adversity intelligence and work engagement among millennial employees. So that to increase work engagement among millennial employees it can increase their adversity intelligence, then the problem formulation in this study is there a relationship between adversity intelligence and work engagement on millennial employees?

## **2. Methods**

Subjects in this study were 214 employees of the millennial generation who live in Yogyakarta. The criteria for research subjects are millennial generation employees aged 20-39 years and have worked at least one year. This is based on the fact that employees have had enough experience and have had a lot of interaction with their work environment after working for at least one year (Sedarmayanti, 2017).

The data collection method in this study uses a Likert scale model. Data were collected using the Work Engagement Scale and the Adversity Intelligence Scale, by sending the scale via Google Form to respondents. This is done because it is easier and faster to implement.

The Work Engagement Scale was compiled by Prahara and Hidayat (2019) which refers to the aspects put forward by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The Work Engagement Scale consists of 15 items, the results of the scale trial show that there are no items that fail, with a range of item discrimination values between 0.254-0.632. Based on the calculations, the Alpha reliability coefficient is at 0.834. Thus The Work Engagement Scale is a reliable measurement. Meanwhile, the Adversity Intelligence Scale was prepared by researchers concerning the aspects put forward by Stoltz (2007). The Adversity Intelligence Scale consists of 20 items, the results of the scale trial show that no items are failing, with a range of item discrimination values between 0.387-0.728. Based on the calculations, the Alpha reliability coefficient is at 0.898. Thus the Adversity Intelligence Scale is a reliable measurement.

The data analysis technique used is the Product Moment correlation statistical test from Karl Pearson. The reason for using this analysis is because the data is a continuum and only consists of two variables (Hadi, 2013), namely work engagement and adversity intelligence as well as simplifying the statistical calculation process, so the overall calculation and hypothesis testing in this study was carried out using the help of a statistical analysis program.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

The normality test is an analysis conducted to determine whether each variable has a normal distribution. This normality test uses the Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS-Z) model analysis. The guidelines used to determine whether the distribution is normal or not is if  $p > 0.05$  then the data distribution follows the normal distribution and if  $p < 0.05$  then the data distribution does not follow the normal distribution. The results of the normality test for work engagement data obtained the KS-Z value = 0.08 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the Work engagement variable data does not follow the normal distribution. While the data for adversity intelligence obtained a KS-Z value = 0.109 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these results it can be concluded that the data for the adversity intelligence variable does not follow a normal distribution. A linearity test is performed to determine whether the two variables to be subjected to the statistical correlation analysis procedure show a linear relationship. The results of the linearity test for the work engagement variable with adversity intelligence obtained F of 403,626 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that the work engagement variable with adversity intelligence has a linear relationship.

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, it is proven that there is a positive relationship between work engagement and adversity intelligence on millennial employees in Yogyakarta with a correlation of  $r_{xy} = 0.82$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). This means that the hypothesis that there is a relationship between work engagement and adversity intelligence on millennial employees in Yogyakarta can be accepted. The positive relationship between work engagement and adversity intelligence for millennial employees in Yogyakarta illustrates that the higher the adversity intelligence, the higher the level of work engagement among millennial employees in Yogyakarta. The results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by Dewi and Sawitri (2015) which examined adversity intelligence with work involvement in employees. The results of his research indicate that adversity intelligence is a significant predictor of job involvement.

Adversity intelligence is a person's ability to accept and respond to difficulties in life such as stress and the problems at hand (Tigchelaar & Bekhet, 2015). This ability plays a very important role in dealing with problems such as uncertainty, demands, challenges, changes, and complications. Stoltz (2007) added that with Adversity intelligence, a person can face and manage these difficulties into a challenge that can be solved. Adversity intelligence When used properly, in a corporate environment, it will be a very important part of managing millennial generation employees (Wolor, Pratama, Aditya, & Purwana, 2020).

Based on the results of this study, it shows that the research subjects, namely millennial generation employees have a higher work engagement when they have more ability to control their work situation, can bear the consequences of the work situation they are experiencing, can face, and have self-resilience in perceiving problems that they experience. Faced in his workplace following the aspects of adversity intelligence.

In the dimension of the ability to control the situation (control), namely the ability of individuals to control and manage events that cause difficulties in the future. This self-control will have an impact on the next action or response taken by the individual concerned, regarding the expectations and ideals of the individual to keep trying hard to realize his desires, no matter how difficult the situation is (Stoltz, 2007) The results of Ekasaputri's research (2016) show that employees who can behave positively and respond to their work situations, these employees like moderate risk, good personal responsibility, and like feedback on their performance. Furthermore, the results of Saragih and Margaretha's research (2013) explain that employees who have high engagement tend to be enthusiastic, able to withstand pressure, can control bad moods, provide a comfortable atmosphere in the work environment, are enthusiastic

about the assigned task, and are responsible for problems. faced. Furthermore, Dewi and Sawitri (2015) added that employees who have high engagement tend to be tied to their work even though faced with difficulties will be able to overcome their difficulties and have a sense of responsibility with their intelligence to control themselves so that they remain focused, fully concentrate on their work and have difficulty leaving work. before finishing it. This is reinforced by the existence of an explanation of the subject in the field which says that the subject will continue to work optimally even though his mood is not good, such as the subject experiencing personal problems and the boss scolding the subject so that the subject gives good quality work and will remain enthusiastic when doing good work. Difficult this finding is also following the characteristics of the millennial generation which is described as a generation that is confident, independent, and tends to be goal-oriented (Meier, Austin, & Crocker, 2010).

In the dimension of the ability to bear the consequences of the situation (ownership & origin), namely the ability of a person to position his feelings with the courage to bear the consequences of the existing situation to create learning in making improvements to the problems that occur (Stoltz, 2007). Based on the results of research by Saragih and Margaretha (2013), employees who are responsible for their actions can receive awards and recognition from the organization, and employees feel obliged to reciprocate with high engagement. This is reinforced by the subject's explanation in the field that the subject will be responsible for mistakes that have been made at work, then the subject apologizes to colleagues and admits the mistakes the subject made so that the subject is responsible for completing his work as well as possible and trying to be better. When working millennial employees have a much higher intention of leaving the organization compared to older generations when they experience a lack of energy and difficulty with mental resilience at work. The results also show that when millennial employees lose their sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenges in their work, their intention to leave increases significantly compared to Baby Boomer employees (Park & Gursoy, 2012). Therefore, organizations need to be able to maintain enthusiasm and always provide challenges to millennial employees in working so that they can create work attachments.

In the dimension of the ability to face adversity (reach), namely the extent to which difficulties will add to a person's life and shows how the problem can interfere with other activities, even if it is not related to the problem at hand. Individuals with low adversity intelligence make the problems they face enter other parts of their lives so that it will interfere with individual survival (Stoltz, 2007). The results of Ekasaputri's research (2016) explain that employees who can reach and limit any problems that arise so as not to affect other parts of an individual's life, employees will be able to respond to difficulties as temporary, do not consider problems or conflicts as a disaster. Furthermore, according to Gibbons (2006), it explains that high engagement occurs when employees make problems that occur in the workplace something that can be resolved without linking them to other lives of the employee. Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) added that employees who have a positive and professional attitude towards values and goals in the workplace will tend not to associate the problems or conflicts they experience both individually and non-individually. This is reinforced by the subject's explanation in the field that when the subject has personal problems such as having problems with colleagues so that it is difficult to work with and experiences problems with superiors, the subject will still try to maintain the quality of work so that the subject will focus and concentrate when completing work.

In the dimension of self-resilience in perceiving adversity (endurance), namely a person's ability to perceive difficulties, and strength when facing these difficulties by creating ideas in overcoming problems so that courage and courage in problem-solving can be realized (Stoltz, 2007). The results of Ekasaputri's (2016) study of employees who can perceive difficulties and strengths when facing these difficulties by creating ideas in problem-solving so that courage and courage in problem-solving can be realized, employees will perceive difficulties as something that can be resolved and see difficulties as something that didn't last long and the subject will correct mistakes in doing the task without complaining.

Furthermore, according to Hackman and Oldham (n.d.), it is explained that employees who get a challenging and encouraging task to further improve their skills and rigor in carrying out the task at hand will make the work more meaningful for the employees who do it, such as being enthusiastic in carrying out the task, always stories, innovative and happy with their work, so that the level of engagement is higher, especially for millennial employees. This is reinforced by the subject's explanation in the field that when there is a problem with a colleague, the subject will immediately solve it. Then when a colleague interferes with the subject's work activities, the subject will reprimand him politely and the subject will maintain good relations with the boss even though the boss scolds him so that the subject feels difficult to work is a challenge for him and the subject remains excited even though the work at hand is difficult. This finding is consistent with the characteristics of the millennial generation who also have higher expectations for advancement opportunities in their careers. Hauw and Vos (2010) found that because of millennial self-confidence and the need for achievement, they are more likely to seek career advancement

opportunities in an organization. They believe that this can be used to motivate and encourage them. By offering advancement opportunities, organizations can also retain their talents because important upgrade opportunities for these newer generations, training and development sessions can be valuable retention and motivational tools.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between adversity intelligence and work engagement among millennial generation employees. This research provides knowledge on psychology, especially industrial and organizational psychology regarding work engagement and adversity intelligence for millennial generation employees. This study also provides an overview of the level of work engagement and adversity intelligence for millennial generation employees, so as to increase the work engagement of millennial generation employees by increasing their adversity intelligence.

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