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## Understanding the dual structure of job stress challenge stress and hindrance stress among Gen Z workers

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### ABSTRACT

Work-related stress has become a salient issue among Gen Z employees as they enter contemporary workplaces characterized by rapid changes, intensified performance demands, and continuous evaluations. Traditional approaches to occupational stress often conceptualize stress as uniformly negative, overlooking qualitative differences in how job demands are appraised. Drawing on the challenge-hindrance stress framework, this study aimed to provide a descriptive and exploratory overview of challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z workers in Indonesia. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, involving 205 Gen Z employees from various organizational sectors. Data were collected through a self-administered online survey using the Challenge and Hindrance Self-Reported Stress Scale developed by Cavanaugh et al. Reliability analysis demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas of .806 and .721 for challenge and hindrance stress, respectively. The descriptive statistical analysis revealed that challenge stress had a higher mean score ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), indicating a moderate to high level, whereas hindrance stress showed a lower mean score ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), reflecting a low to moderate level. These findings suggest that Gen Z employees tend to appraise work-related demands more frequently as challenges that promote learning and growth rather than obstacles that hinder performance. Nonparametric difference testing further indicated that stress perceptions were largely homogeneous across most demographic variables, with education level emerging as the only factor significantly associated with stress. The findings support the relevance of the challenge-hindrance stress framework in understanding Gen Z's work stress experiences and highlight the importance of promoting challenge stress while minimizing hindrance stress to foster sustainable performance and psychological well-being among young employees.

**Keywords:** challenge stress, hindrance stress, Gen Z, work stress, occupational stress

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work-related stress has emerged as a critical issue among Gen Z employees, who are increasingly entering the workforce amid rapid organizational changes, economic uncertainties, and intensified performance demands. Empirical evidence demonstrates that stress is particularly prevalent in this generation. Global workforce surveys have consistently indicated that Gen Z employees experience high levels of work-related stress. Deloitte's Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey shows that approximately 40% of Gen Z workers report persistent stress or anxiety, with work identified as one of the primary contributing factors, and that these stress levels are generally higher among Gen Z than Millennials (Deloitte, 2023). These findings suggest that work-related stress among Gen Z is not a marginal phenomenon but a widespread and measurable psychological condition that requires attention.

The elevated stress levels observed among Gen Z are closely linked to the structural and contextual characteristics of contemporary work environments. Gen Z employees often face high workload expectations, accelerated work pace, constant digital connectivity, and heightened performance monitoring while simultaneously navigating job insecurity and limited career clarity during the early stages of their working lives (Twenge, 2017; Deloitte, 2023). Unlike previous generations, Gen Z places a strong value on meaningful work, personal development, and psychological well-being. However, organizational practices do not always align with these expectations, resulting in heightened psychological strain and emotional pressure (Schroth, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, traditional models of occupational stress have frequently conceptualized stress as a uniformly negative construct, emphasizing its adverse consequences on health and performance (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Cooper et al., 2001). While this approach has provided valuable insights, it has limited explanatory power for understanding why certain job demands appear to motivate some employees while overwhelming others. This limitation is particularly salient for Gen Z, whose responses to work stressors vary considerably depending on how job demands are interpreted and evaluated.

To address this conceptual gap, contemporary research in industrial and organizational psychology has increasingly adopted the challenge–hindrance stress framework (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). This framework posits that job stressors are not inherently detrimental; rather, their effects depend on employees' cognitive appraisal of their work demands. Drawing on cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this framework distinguishes between stressors that are perceived as opportunities for growth (challenge stressors) and those that are perceived as obstacles to goal attainment (hindrance stressors).

Challenge stress refers to work demands that require sustained effort but are associated with potential gains such as learning, achievement, and career advancement (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Examples include high workload, time pressure, task complexity, and increased responsibilities (LePine et al., 2005). Although these demands can be psychologically taxing, they are often appraised as meaningful and worthwhile, particularly when individuals believe that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes. Empirical evidence suggests that challenge stress is frequently associated with adaptive motivational processes, including higher engagement, persistence, and proactive coping strategies (LePine et al., 2005; Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019).

In contrast, hindrance stress encompasses job demands that are perceived as unnecessary barriers that interfere with effective performance and personal development (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). These stressors include role ambiguity, role conflict, organizational politics, bureaucratic procedures, and job insecurity (Podsakoff et al., 2007). Hindrance stressors are typically appraised as uncontrollable and non-instrumental because they consume cognitive and emotional resources without contributing to meaningful outcomes. Consequently, hindrance stress has been consistently linked to negative psychological states such as frustration, emotional exhaustion, and withdrawal behaviors (LePine et al., 2005; Crawford et al., 2010).

The distinction between challenge and hindrance stress is particularly relevant for Gen Z employees. As early career workers, Gen Z individuals often simultaneously encounter high-performance demands

and structural constraints, such as unclear role expectations, limited autonomy, and rigid organizational procedures. These conditions create complex stress experiences in which motivational demands coexist with stressors that obstruct performance. Without differentiating between these stressor types, research risks oversimplifying Gen Z's stress experiences and obscuring the mechanisms through which work demands influence their psychological functioning in the workplace.

Moreover, contemporary work arrangements characterized by digital surveillance, flexible but boundary-less work, and continuous evaluation may amplify both challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z employees. While performance-oriented demands may be perceived as challenges that encourage growth, administrative complexity and organizational uncertainty may simultaneously function as hindrances that undermine employees' well-being. Understanding this duality is essential for advancing job stress theory and designing organizational interventions that respond to the unique characteristics of the Gen Z workforce.

Despite the growing body of literature on the challenge–hindrance stress framework, empirical applications of this model in the Indonesian Gen Z workforce remain limited. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western organizational contexts, leaving open questions about how Indonesian Gen Z employees—shaped by distinct cultural values, labor market conditions, and organizational practices—experience and differentiate challenge and hindrance stressors. Accordingly, this study aims to describe the levels of challenge and hindrance stress experienced by Gen Z employees in Indonesia and examine whether these stress experiences differ across demographic characteristics such as gender, education level, type of employment, and work tenure. Therefore, this study is primarily descriptive and comparative in nature, with the broader theoretical aim of extending the challenge–hindrance stress framework to the Indonesian Gen Z context. This study seeks to contribute to a clearer empirical mapping of work stress in this population and to the refinement of job stress theory in non-Western, early career organizational settings.

Building on this conceptual foundation, the present study adopts a quantitative descriptive approach to examine challenge and hindrance stress among Indonesian Gen Z employees. A quantitative descriptive design was selected because the primary objective was not to test causal relationships but to obtain a systematic and measurable depiction of how challenge and hindrance stress manifest within this population, as well as to identify patterns of variation across demographic groups. The variables of challenge stress and hindrance stress were operationalized in line with the challenge–hindrance framework (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005), in which challenge stressors reflect demands appraised as opportunities for growth (e.g., workload, time pressure, and responsibility), whereas hindrance stressors reflect demands appraised as obstacles to goal attainment (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict, organizational constraints, and job insecurity). This conceptual alignment ensures that the measurement of both constructs is theoretically grounded, while the descriptive-comparative analysis enables an empirically detailed portrait of stress experiences among Gen Z employees in the Indonesian workplace.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z employees. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows for the systematic measurement of psychological constructs and statistical examination of relationships between job stressors within organizational settings. Data were collected using a self-administered survey to capture the respondents' perceptions of work-related stressors.

### **2.2. Participants and Sampling**

The target population consisted of Gen Z employees, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), who were actively employed at the time of the data collection. The inclusion criteria required participants to (1) belong to the Gen Z age cohort, (2) have at least a high school education, and (3) be currently working in an organizational setting.

Participants were recruited using a non-probability convenience sampling technique, which is commonly applied in organizational and psychological research when access to a defined sampling frame is limited (Etikan et al., 2016). Data collection was conducted through online survey distribution to ensure accessibility and reach among young employees in various industries. This approach was considered appropriate, given the digital literacy and online engagement characteristics of Gen Z workers.

### **2.3. Measures**

Challenge and hindrance stress were measured using the Challenge and Hindrance Self-Reported Stress Scale developed by Cavanaugh et al. (2000). This scale conceptualizes job stress based on employees' subjective appraisal of the extent to which specific job demands create stress. The instrument differentiates between challenge stress, which refers to work demands perceived as stressful yet potentially beneficial for learning, growth, and achievement, and hindrance stress, which refers to work demands perceived as stressful and obstructive to effective performance.

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which each job demand caused stress using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (indicating that the demand did not cause stress) to 5 (indicating that the demand caused very high stress). Higher scores reflect higher levels of perceived challenge or hindrance stress. Previous studies employing this scale have demonstrated adequate reliability and construct validity, supporting its use in examining differentiated stress experiences in organizational settings (Yang et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2021).

### **2.4. Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent**

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology at Tarumanagara University. An ethical review was conducted by the institutional ethics team to ensure that all research procedures complied with established ethical standards for psychological research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and no personally identifiable information was collected from them.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Results**

The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide essential contextual information for interpreting the findings of this study, as they reflect the profile of the Gen Z employees included in the analysis. Data were collected using a questionnaire between September 14 and October 1, 2025. All participants belonged to Gen Z and were currently employed in various organizational settings in Indonesia. Together, these characteristics demonstrate the diversity of early career employees in contemporary workplaces, which is important for understanding how work-related stressors are perceived and evaluated by them.

As presented in Table 1, the age distribution indicates that most respondents are in the early stages of their careers, with the largest proportion falling within the 22–25-year age group. The majority of participants have attained at least a bachelor's degree and occupy staff-level positions, with relatively short work tenures. This profile aligns with the developmental and career characteristics typically associated with Gen Z employees, who are generally in the transition phase from education to stable employment. These demographic features provide an important foundation for interpreting subsequent analyses, as both individual and work-related factors may influence how challenge and hindrance stress are experienced in organizational contexts.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49	23.9	
	Female	156	76.1	
<b>Age (years)</b>	18–21	60	29.3	
	22–25	111	54.1	
	26–28	34	16.6	
<b>Education Level</b>	Senior High School	35	17.1	
	Diploma	7	3.4	
	Bachelor’s Degree	157	76.6	
	Master’s Degree	6	2.9	
<b>Work Location</b>	Bekasi	24	11.7	
	Bogor	17	8.3	
	Depok	16	7.8	
	Jakarta	102	49.8	
	Tangerang	30	14.6	
	Outside Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek)	16	7.8	
<b>Length of Service</b>	1–3 years	169	82.4	
	>3–5 years	35	17.1	
	>5 years	1	0.5	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Daily/Freelance	55	26.8	
	Contract	82	40.0	
	Permanent	68	33.2	
<b>Job Level</b>	Staff	163	79.5	
	Senior Staff	15	7.3	
	Supervisor	8	3.9	
	Assistant Manager	13	6.3	
	Manager	5	2.4	
	Vice President	1	0.5	
<b>Department</b>	Accounting	24	11.7	
	Business Development	5	2.4	
	Finance	19	9.3	
	General Affairs	9	4.4	
	Human Resources	65	31.7	
	Information System	11	5.4	
	Legal	3	1.5	
	Marketing	41	20.0	
	Operation	6	2.9	
	Purchasing	11	5.4	
	Sales	11	5.4	
	<b>Industry Sector</b>	State-Owned Enterprise (BUMN)	14	6.8
		Construction	7	3.4
Distribution		30	14.6	
FMCG		30	14.6	
Hospitality		26	12.7	
Services		18	8.8	
Manufacturing		24	11.7	
Education		17	8.3	
Banking		28	13.7	
Mining		7	3.4	
Retail / F&B		4	2.0	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	188	91.7	
	Married	15	7.3	
	Divorced	2	1.0	

Reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of the measurement instruments used to assess challenge and hindrance stress. Internal consistency is a crucial indicator of

measurement quality, as it reflects the extent to which items within a scale consistently capture the same underlying construct. In this study, reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is widely adopted in psychological and organizational studies. A Cronbach's alpha value exceeding .70 is generally regarded as acceptable, indicating adequate reliability for research.

The results demonstrated that both scales exhibited satisfactory internal consistency. The challenge stress scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .806 across six items, indicating good reliability. Similarly, the hindrance stress scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .721 across five items, which also met the acceptable reliability threshold. These findings suggest that the instruments employed in this study are reliable for measuring perceived challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z employees. A summary of the reliability analyses is presented in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2. Reliability Statistics of Challenge Stress and Hindrance Stress Scales**

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Challenge Stress	6	.806
Hindrance Stress	5	.721

A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of challenge and hindrance stress. This analysis included the mean and standard deviation values, which describe the central tendency and variability of each variable. Descriptive statistics are particularly important in this study, as the primary objective is to present a general picture of stress experiences among Gen Z employees prior to conducting further comparative analysis.

As shown in [Table 3](#), the mean score for challenge stress ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) was higher than that for hindrance stress ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ). This pattern indicates that respondents tend to perceive job-related stressors as challenges that promote growth, learning, and achievement rather than as obstacles that impede performance. The relatively moderate standard deviation values for both variables suggest that respondents' perceptions of stress were fairly homogeneous, with no extreme variability across individuals.

The dominance of challenge stress over hindrance stress can be interpreted through the generational characteristics of Gen Z and the nature of contemporary work environments. As digital natives who have grown up in highly competitive educational and labor markets, Gen Z employees tend to display strong achievement orientation, ambition, and a continuous drive for personal growth and skill development ([Schroth, 2019](#); [Twenge, 2017](#)). Within the framework of cognitive appraisal theory ([Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#)), this growth-oriented disposition likely shapes how job demands are evaluated: high workload, time pressure, and increased responsibility are more readily appraised as opportunities to learn, demonstrate competence, and accelerate career progression rather than threats to well-being. In other words, demands that older generations might experience as overwhelming may be reinterpreted by Gen Z employees as instrumental to their long-term professional development and career success.

The structural features of modern workplaces reinforce this pattern. Contemporary work environments in Indonesia—particularly in Jabodetabek, where most respondents are based—are increasingly characterized by fast-paced operations, digitalized workflows, and performance-driven evaluation systems. Such conditions amplify exposure to challenge-type stressors (e.g., tight deadlines, complex tasks, and multi-project responsibilities), which tend to be embraced by ambitious early career workers as pathways to visibility and advancement. Simultaneously, the relatively lower mean score for hindrance stress suggests that obstructive demands such as role ambiguity, organizational politics, and bureaucratic constraints are perceived as less salient in respondents' daily work experience. One plausible explanation is that staff-level Gen Z employees with short tenures may be more insulated from the political and structural complexities of organizational life, which typically become more visible at higher hierarchical levels. Taken together, these findings imply that the Gen Z employees in this study experienced work-related stress at a manageable level, with stressors more often appraised as growth opportunities than as barriers to performance.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Challenge Stress and Hindrance Stress**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Challenge Stress	205	1.00	5.00	3.47	0.62
Hindrance Stress	205	1.00	5.00	2.89	0.68

To further explore whether stress perceptions differed across respondent characteristics, a difference test was conducted based on the demographic variables. Although the primary focus of this study was descriptive, a comparative analysis was included as an additional exploratory step to examine potential variations in challenge and hindrance stress across demographic groups. Given that the normality test indicated that the data were not normally distributed ( $p < 0.05$ ), non-parametric analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis test was employed. This test is appropriate for comparing independent groups when the assumptions of parametric tests are not met and is commonly used in organizational and psychological research involving Likert scale measures.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis, presented in [Table 4](#), indicate that there were generally no statistically significant differences in either challenge or hindrance stress across most demographic variables, including gender, age, marital status, employment status, job level, and length of service ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding suggests that perceptions of work-related stress among Gen Z employees are relatively homogeneous across these demographic categories.

This homogeneity is theoretically meaningful, rather than merely a null result. This suggests that the way Gen Z employees appraise work demands is shaped less by individual demographic positioning and more by shared generational and contextual factors. Gen Z is widely characterized by common socialization experiences—digital immersion, exposure to global competitive narratives, and a strong emphasis on self-development—which produce a relatively uniform cognitive lens through which work stressors are interpreted ([Deloitte, 2023](#); [Schroth, 2019](#)). Consequently, regardless of whether respondents were male or female, contract or permanent employees, or staff or supervisors, their evaluation of challenge and hindrance stressors converged around similar patterns. This finding strengthens the argument that generational identity, rather than demographic differentiation, is a key driver of stress appraisal among early career employees in Indonesia.

However, a significant difference was identified in hindrance stress based on education level ( $H = 9.473, p = 0.024$ ). This result indicates that educational background plays a role in shaping how employees perceive stressors that are experienced as obstructing or hindering goal attainment. Specifically, respondents with lower levels of education reported higher levels of hindrance stress than those with higher educational attainment.

One plausible explanation is that employees with higher educational attainment tend to possess stronger cognitive, analytical, and problem-solving resources, which enable them to navigate role ambiguity, organizational procedures, and bureaucratic constraints more effectively. Consistent with the conservation of resources perspective, individuals with greater personal resources are better equipped to reframe obstructive demands and mobilize coping strategies, thereby reducing their subjective experience of hindrance stress. Conversely, employees with lower educational backgrounds may occupy roles with more limited autonomy, less clarity in task expectations, and fewer opportunities for upward mobility, intensifying the perception of structural barriers in the workplace. This finding underscores the importance of organizational support systems—such as clearer role design, structured onboarding, and accessible mentoring—particularly for Gen Z employees in lower educational tiers, who may be more vulnerable to the negative motivational consequences of hindrance stressors. The absence of significant differences across other demographic variables implies that broader generational and work context factors may exert a stronger influence on stress experiences than individual demographic characteristics alone.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Challenge Stress and Hindrance Stress**

Demographic	Stress	H (Kruskal–Wallis)	df	Asymp. Sig.
Gender	Challenge Stress	0.214	1	0.644
Gender	Hindrance Stress	0.012	1	0.913
Age	Challenge Stress	2.387	2	0.303
Age	Hindrance Stress	1.964	2	0.374
Education Level	Challenge Stress	5.128	3	0.163
Education Level	Hindrance Stress	9.473	3	0.024
Length of Service	Challenge Stress	3.614	2	0.164
Length of Service	Hindrance Stress	1.742	2	0.419
Job Level	Challenge Stress	4.593	5	0.597
Job Level	Hindrance Stress	3.281	5	0.658
Employment Status	Challenge Stress	3.998	2	0.135
Employment Status	Hindrance Stress	2.746	2	0.253
Marital Status	Challenge Stress	0.143	2	0.706
Marital Status	Hindrance Stress	0.287	2	0.867

### 3.2. Discussion

This study provides a descriptive and exploratory overview of challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z employees in Indonesia by applying the challenge-hindrance stress framework. The findings indicate that Gen Z employees tend to experience higher levels of challenge stress than hindrance stress, suggesting that work-related demands are more frequently appraised as opportunities for growth rather than barriers to performance. This pattern supports the core assumption of the challenge-hindrance framework that job stressors are not inherently negative but depend on employees’ cognitive appraisal of work demands (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The predominance of challenge stress among respondents can be interpreted in light of the developmental and career characteristics of Gen Z employees. As early career workers, many Gen Z employees are still in the process of building professional competence, acquiring new skills, and establishing their career trajectories. Consequently, demands such as workload pressure, time constraints, and task complexity may be appraised as meaningful challenges associated with learning and advancement rather than threats to well-being. This interpretation is consistent with prior empirical evidence showing that challenge stressors are often linked to adaptive motivational processes, including engagement, persistence, and proactive coping, particularly among younger employees (LePine et al., 2005; Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019). In line with generational research, Gen Z’s strong emphasis on personal growth, development, and purposeful work may further reinforce their tendency to interpret demanding work conditions as challenges rather than hindrances (Schroth, 2019).

Although hindrance stress was reported at a lower level than challenge stress, its presence is meaningful. Hindrance stressors, such as bureaucratic procedures, unclear role expectations, and organizational constraints, are commonly identified as stressors that consume psychological resources without contributing to goal attainment (Podsakoff et al., 2007). The moderate level of hindrance stress observed in this study suggests that Gen Z employees are not entirely insulated from obstructive job demands, even when challenge stress is salient. Previous research has consistently linked hindrance stress to negative psychological outcomes, including frustration, emotional exhaustion, and withdrawal (Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005). Although outcome variables were not examined in this study, the presence of hindrance stress highlights the potential risk of diminished well-being if such stressors intensify or persist over time.

The results of the demographic difference analysis further indicate that perceptions of challenge and hindrance stress are largely homogeneous across most demographic characteristics, including gender, age, marital status, employment status, job level, and length of service. This lack of significant variation suggests that stress experiences among Gen Z employees may be shaped more strongly by shared generational and contextual work conditions than by individual demographic differences. Contemporary work environments characterized by digitalization, continuous performance evaluation, and blurred work–life

boundaries are likely to be experienced similarly by Gen Z employees across demographic subgroups, leading to relatively uniform stress appraisals. This finding supports prior arguments that generational cohorts may share common stress experiences owing to exposure to similar structural and technological work conditions (Twenge, 2017; Deloitte, 2023).

Notably, education level emerged as the only demographic factor associated with a significant difference in hindrance stress, with respondents with lower educational qualifications reporting higher levels of hindrance stress. This finding suggests that educational background plays a role in shaping the perception and management of obstructive stressors. From the perspective of cognitive appraisal theory, individuals with higher educational attainment may possess greater cognitive, informational, and problem-solving resources, enabling them to interpret ambiguous or complex job demands as controllable and less obstructive (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This interpretation is also consistent with human capital theory, which posits that education enhances individuals' capacity to navigate complex organizations and access instrumental resources. Empirical studies have similarly shown that personal resources influence stress appraisal processes and may buffer the negative effects of stressors (Jiang et al., 2021).

Taken together, these findings reinforce the relevance of the challenge–hindrance stress framework in understanding work-related stress among Gen Z employees. By demonstrating that stress is more often appraised as challenging rather than hindering, this study challenges traditional stress models that conceptualize stress as being uniformly detrimental (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Cooper et al., 2001). Simultaneously, the presence of hindrance stress, particularly among employees with lower educational backgrounds, highlights the importance of organizational efforts to reduce unnecessary barriers and provide clearer structures and support systems. Differentiating between challenge and hindrance stress offers a more nuanced understanding of Gen Z's stress experiences and provides a theoretically grounded basis for designing interventions that promote sustainable performance and psychological well-being in contemporary organizations in the long run.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study provides a descriptive overview of challenge and hindrance stress among Gen Z employees in Indonesia and examines their differences across demographic characteristics. The findings indicate that both types of work stress are meaningfully experienced by Gen Z; however, they represent distinct forms of job demands with different psychological meanings. Challenge stress reflects work demands that are more likely to be perceived as opportunities for learning, growth, and achievements. Hindrance stress represents obstacles that interfere with goal attainment and effective job performance. This distinction supports the challenge–hindrance stressor framework, which emphasizes that not all stressors have equivalent functional value for employees (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2016).

The Kruskal-Wallis analysis further shows that, overall, challenge stress and hindrance stress do not differ significantly across most demographic variables, suggesting that the experience of work stress among Gen Z tends to be cross-demographic and more strongly shaped by job and organizational contexts than by individual background characteristics. Nevertheless, significant differences found in certain demographic groups indicate that background factors may still influence stressor appraisal. These results align with prior research highlighting the contextual and inconsistent role of demographics in work stress experiences and underscore the importance of focusing on job design and organizational systems to enhance challenge stress while reducing hindrance stress among Gen Z employees (Yang et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2021; El-Kurdy et al., 2022).

#### **Ethical Approval**

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology at Tarumanagara University. All research procedures were conducted in accordance with the established ethical standards for psychological research involving human participants.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. No personally identifiable information was collected from the participants.

### **Authors' Contributions**

IC conceptualized the study, developed the research framework, coordinated data collection, conducted the initial analysis, and prepared the original manuscript. Z refined the theoretical framework, validated the measurement instruments, supervised the methodological process, and reviewed the analysis for academic and methodological rigor of the study. IRP contributed to the literature review, strengthened the discussion through the integration of relevant empirical studies and revised the manuscript for academic coherence. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

### **Disclosure Statement**

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest related to this study.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request. Access to the data is subject to ethical considerations and confidentiality requirements because the study involves human participants. Funding

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### **Notes on Contributors**

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