

Psychological Challenges Faced by Young Workers in the Digital Era: A Systematic Literature Review in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract. The digital transformation of the modern workplace has reshaped the psychological landscape for young workers, especially Millennials and Generation Z, navigating Indonesia's evolving labour market. This study presents a systematic review of empirical literature examining the psychological challenges faced by young Indonesian workers in the digital era, focussing on core themes such as burnout, stress, quiet quitting, motivation, work-life balance, and coping strategies. Guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol, 28 peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2025 were selected from the Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar and Garuda databases. The review identifies prevalent issues such as emotional exhaustion, job insecurity, and disengagement, while also highlighting adaptive responses including intrinsic motivation, digital self-efficacy, and culturally grounded coping mechanisms. The findings underscore the importance of supportive workplace environments, leadership quality, and digital competence in mitigating psychological distress. This review not only synthesises context-specific insights, but also provides a foundation for the development of targeted interventions and policy recommendations to improve mental well-being among Indonesia's emerging digital workforce.

Keywords: Burnout, Coping strategies, Digital work, Generation Z, Gig economy.

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Introduction

The digital era has profoundly reshaped the structure and nature of work, especially for younger generations entering or navigating the workforce. In Indonesia, Millennials and Generation Z, defined as individuals born between approximately 1981 and 1996 and 1997 and 2012, respectively, are now the dominant age groups in the labour market (Cox et al., 2023). These cohorts have grown along with or within rapid technological change and bring new values, expectations, and work behaviours into organisations. At the same time, they face a growing range of psychological challenges due to increased digitisation, remote work culture, job fluidity, and participation in the gig economy (Cho et al., 2022; Risi & Pronzato, 2021).

This shift underscores the urgent need for psychological research to examine how these structural and cultural changes affect the mental well-being of young workers. Several global studies have highlighted critical issues such as burnout, blurring work-life boundaries, quiet quitting, reduced work motivation,

and occupational stress within gig-based employment (Shaikh et al., 2023; Cezarino et al., 2019). However, the relevance and manifestation of these issues can vary widely between cultural contexts. In Indonesia, mental health concerns among young people are already evident at the population level. The 2018 Basic Health Research (Riset Kesehatan Dasar) reported that the prevalence of mental disorders increased from 6% in 2013 to 9.8% in 2018, affecting an estimated 19 million Indonesians (Basrowi et al., 2024). More recent evidence shows that depression affects approximately 5.1% of adolescents and 5.6% of young adults (Basrowi et al., 2024), while surveys among adolescents aged 16–18 years indicate levels of psychological distress of 24–26 %, with depression rates ranging from 12 to 23% depending on the state of school participation (Pham et al., 2024). These figures underscore that young Indonesians already experience significant psychological stress, which the pressures of digitalisation, precarious employment, and changing workplace cultures can further exacerbate. Indonesia, with its collectivist values, diverse workforce, and

emerging digital economy, thus provides a unique case in which such challenges must be understood through localised lenses.

A review of the existing literature reveals that although research on work psychology in Indonesia has increased, much of it remains focused on general job satisfaction, employee engagement, or traditional organisational settings (Wirawan et al., 2020; Nur et al., 2021; Goestjahjanti et al., 2020). There remains a lack of consolidated understanding of how young workers in Indonesia specifically experience psychological stress in the digital work environment. Studies focussing on digital burnout, prolonged exposure to screen-based work, shifting work identities in flexible employment, and the subtle disengagement process represented by quiet quitting are scarce. Studies focussing on digital burnout, prolonged exposure to screen-based work, shifting work identities in flexible employment, and the subtle disengagement process known as quiet quitting remain scarce. A scoping search using the terms “quiet quitting” AND “Indonesia” across Scopus, Google Scholar, and Garuda (conducted April 2025) initially yielded 27 records. After removing duplicates and screening abstracts, only two empirical studies directly examined quiet quitting among Indonesian workers (Lestari et al., 2024; Suhendar et al., 2023), both limited to the hospitality and digital start-up sectors. No qualitative or mixed-method studies were found, and no research explored the phenomenon specifically among gig workers. This scarcity highlights the lack of integration of quiet quitting into broader theoretical frameworks such as motivation theories, stress models, or perspectives on the workplace-life interface in modern organisational settings.

In the last decade, the psychological dynamics of young workers in contemporary workplaces have attracted increasing attention. Millennials and Generation Z workers tend to value flexibility, autonomy, and purpose in their careers, but these values often clash with the structural demands of traditional and emerging work systems (Saraiva & Nogueiro, 2025). In Indonesia, this tension is exacerbated by rapid digital transformation and the evolving employment landscape, including freelance, remote, and gig-based work. These changes warrant a deeper examination of the psychological costs that young professionals may face in this changing landscape.

Burnout remains one of the most frequently discussed outcomes of prolonged work-related stress. Chirico (2016) defines burnout as a psychological syndrome that arises from a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors at work. In Indonesian contexts, studies such as those by Juanamasta et al. (2024) indicate that digital work settings increase the

risk of burnout among young employees, particularly in urban environments. However, most local studies remain focused on health workers and educators, leaving a knowledge gap for employees in the tech, start-up, and gig sectors.

Closely related to burnout is the issue of work-life balance. With the rise of remote work and mobile technologies, the boundaries between work and personal life are blurred. According to Role Conflict Theory (Meng et al., 2025), stress arises when expectations from different social roles, such as being an employee and a family member, are incompatible or demand excessive resources, leading to psychological tension. Similarly, boundary theory (Ryu, 2024) highlights how the permeability of boundaries between work and non-work domains determines whether individuals experience enrichment or conflict. In the Indonesian context, where collectivist values emphasise strong family and community obligations, the inability to separate professional and personal roles clearly can intensify role conflict, thus accelerating burnout. Empirical studies in Indonesia have shown that young workers, particularly in urban digital industries, struggle with blurred boundaries that interfere with recovery time and emotional well-being (Ryu, 2022). Thus, the challenge of working-life balance among young Indonesian workers is not only a matter of time allocation, but reflects deeper tensions between cultural expectations, technological connectivity, and the psychological capacity to manage demands from overlapping roles. With the rise of remote work and mobile technologies, the boundaries between work and personal life are blurred. Aruldoss et al. (2022) argue that imbalance occurs when the demands of one role interfere with the fulfilment of another. Indonesian scholars, such as Sutrisni et al. (2023), have begun to explore this issue among urban professionals, yet comparative or generational insights remain limited. Research also rarely integrates cultural expectations about family and social obligations, which are particularly strong in Indonesian society.

Quiet quitting, a newer term popularised in post-pandemic discourse, refers to employees disengaging from tasks beyond their job description while maintaining minimum performance standards (Serenko, 2023). This phenomenon is not necessarily tied to laziness but rather reflects a form of psychological disengagement that has long been described in organisational research. Within the work withdrawal framework (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990), quiet quitting can be understood as a subtle withdrawal behaviour that lies between everyday coping strategies (e.g., reduced effort) and more severe outcomes such as absenteeism or turnover. Similarly, it is related to the concept of job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), as employees actively renegotiate their work

boundaries, though often by limiting extra-role contributions rather than proactively expanding them. In Indonesia's collectivist context, where cultural norms emphasise loyalty and 'the extra mile', quiet quitting may not represent apathy, but a strategic adjustment to unmet expectations and a search for autonomy. Although international literature on this topic is expanding rapidly, Indonesian-based studies remain limited (see, e.g., [Lestari et al., 2024](#); [Suhendar et al., 2023](#)), underscoring the need to integrate quiet quitting into broader theoretical discussions of disengagement, withdrawal, and motivational regulation.

Motivation is another central issue. Self-determination theory ([Chiu, 2021](#)) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, both of which can be shaped by work conditions, leadership, and generational values. Studies such as [Saraiva and Nogueiro \(2025\)](#) show that younger Indonesian workers often feel disconnected from organisational missions and seek meaning through flexible or socially impactful work. However, within our systematic search, only three of the 28 included studies explicitly examined motivation as a mediator or moderating factor between psychological challenges (eg, burnout, disengagement, work-life balance) and outcomes. None of the studies conducted a longitudinal analysis or tested motivation as a central mechanism within established frameworks such as the JD-R model or self-determination theory. This indicates that the role of motivation in linking workplace demands with psychological well-being among young Indonesian workers remains underexplored in the literature.

Finally, the rise of the gig economy has redefined the meaning of employment, particularly for Gen Z workers who favour freelance platforms and flexible income models. Although this offers autonomy, it also introduces new vulnerabilities such as job insecurity, lack of benefits, and lack of structured support. In Indonesia, studies such as [Asa et al. \(2021\)](#) have focused more on economic aspects than on psychological implications. From a psychological perspective, this situation can be interpreted through the psychological contract theory, which emphasises workers' expectations of fairness, reciprocity and organisational support. Gig workers often experience violations of these unwritten contracts due to unstable income, limited career progression, and lack of benefits, which contribute to stress and disengagement. Similarly, precarity frameworks highlight chronic uncertainty and insecurity that characterise contingent forms of work, linking these conditions with increased psychological strain. These perspectives highlight the need for a more integrated understanding that combines

both economic and psychological dimensions of gig work in Indonesia.

Together, these studies suggest an emerging but still fragmented understanding of the psychological challenges faced by young Indonesian workers. It is necessary to consolidate the findings into different psychological constructs to form a clearer picture of the stressors, outcomes, and coping mechanisms relevant to this population. This systematic review of the literature addresses this gap by exploring key psychological issues that shape the experiences of Millennials and Gen Z in Indonesia's digital workforce.

Therefore, this study aims to systematically review and synthesise the existing empirical literature on the psychological challenges experienced by young Indonesian workers in the digital era. By focussing on key constructs such as burnout, work-life balance, quiet quitting, motivation, and gig economy participation, this review seeks to identify emerging themes, theoretical underpinnings, and research gaps to inform future studies and organisational practices. The novelty of this study lies not only in synthesising scattered findings, but also in advancing theoretical integration. Specifically, this review positions global frameworks such as self-determination theory (SDT) to explain motivation and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model to understand stress and burnout within the Indonesian sociocultural context characterised by collectivist values, interdependent social roles, and evolving digital work arrangements. Such an integrative approach, systematically connecting international theories with the unique Indonesian context, has not yet been undertaken in the literature, thus offering a significant theoretical and cultural contribution.

Methods

This study used a systematic literature review (SLR) design to synthesise existing empirical evidence on the psychological challenges experienced by Generation Z workers in Indonesia's digital work environment. The review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, ensuring methodological transparency and replicability.

Search Strategy and Data Sources

The literature search was conducted between March and April 2025 in several electronic databases, including Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, and Garuda. A combination of English and Bahasa Indonesia search terms was used to capture studies relevant to the psychological well-being of young Indonesian workers. The search terms included: ("Millennial" OR "Generation Z" OR "Gen Z" OR "Young workers") AND ("Indonesia") AND

("Burnout" OR "Work life balance" OR "Quiet quitting" OR "Motivation" OR "Gig economy" OR "Mental health" OR "Psychological wellbeing"). Boolean operators and advanced filters were applied to refine the search and backward citation tracking was carried out to identify additional studies that met the inclusion criteria.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Millennials and Gen Z (approx. aged 18–42) working in Indonesia	Non-Indonesian populations or workers outside Millennial and Gen Z cohorts
Topic of Interest	Burnout, work-life balance, quiet quitting, motivation, gig economy, mental health	Studies focussing only on technical/economic issues unrelated to psychology
Context	Indonesian workplace (formal, informal, gig, remote, hybrid)	Studies carried out outside the Indonesian work context
Study Type	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)	Opinion pieces, theoretical articles, book reviews, and non-systematic literature
Language	English or Bahasa Indonesia	Languages other than English or Bahasa Indonesia
Publication Period	2020–2025	Studies published before 2020

Eligibility Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established according to the PICoS framework (Population, Interest, Context, Study Type) and are summarized in Table 1.

Publication Period: Studies published between 2020 and 2025 were included. This time frame was chosen for methodological reasons: (1) it captures the period in which the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent acceleration of digital transformation fundamentally reshaped work arrangements in Indonesia, creating new psychological dynamics (eg remote work stress, quiet quitting, digital burnout); (2) the term 'quiet quitting' itself only emerged in the global and Indonesian literature after 2020, making earlier studies less relevant; and (3) focus on the last five years ensures that the review reflects the most current empirical evidence in a rapidly evolving labour and digital context.

Study Selection Process

The screening process followed three main stages. First, duplicates were removed and titles and abstracts were screened to exclude irrelevant articles. Second, the eligibility of full-text articles was evaluated. Third, a final selection was made on relevance and methodological rigour.

Two reviewers with a background in organisational and occupational psychology conducted the evaluation. To assess consistency, we calculated reliability using Cohen's Kappa (κ), which adjusts for chance agreement. Cohen's kappa (κ) was .82 for the title and abstract selection stage, indicating substantial agreement according to the Landis and Koch (1977) benchmark (.61–.80 = substantial; .81–1.00 = almost perfect). For the full-text eligibility stage, $\kappa = .87$, which indicates almost perfect agreement.

Disagreements ($n = 9$ for abstracts; $n = 3$ for full texts) focused mainly on borderline cases where psychological well-being was indirectly addressed. These were resolved by discussion, and a third reviewer was consulted when consensus was not reached. This process ensured methodological transparency, minimised selection bias, and strengthened the rigour of study inclusion. The general selection procedure is illustrated in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram.

To ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to reviewing the relevant literature, a PRISMA 2020 flow chart was used to illustrate the process of study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion process. A total of 1,128 records were identified from four major databases: Scopus ($n = 504$), PubMed ($n = 224$), Google Scholar ($n = 268$), and Garuda ($n = 132$). After removing 194 duplicate records, 934 records remained for screening. These records were screened according to their titles and abstracts, resulting in the exclusion of 822 records that did not meet the predefined inclusion criteria, such as lack of relevance to psychological challenges, lack of focus on young workers, or insufficient context in the Indonesian context. Subsequently, 112 full-text articles were sought and successfully retrieved for eligibility assessment. Of these, 84 articles were excluded for reasons including failure to address psychological challenges ($n = 37$), failure to focus on young workers ($n = 25$), and lack of an Indonesian context ($n = 22$). Ultimately, 31 studies were included in the final review, comprising both qualitative and quantitative research, without differentiation. This systematic process ensured the inclusion of studies that are most relevant to understanding the psychological challenges facing young workers in Indonesia's digital era.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data were extracted using a standardised coding sheet that captured the following information from each study: (a) author(s) and year, (b) research design and methodology, (c) population and sample characteristics, (d) psychological constructs examined, (e) theoretical framework applied, and (f) key findings. The results were analysed using narrative synthesis, str-

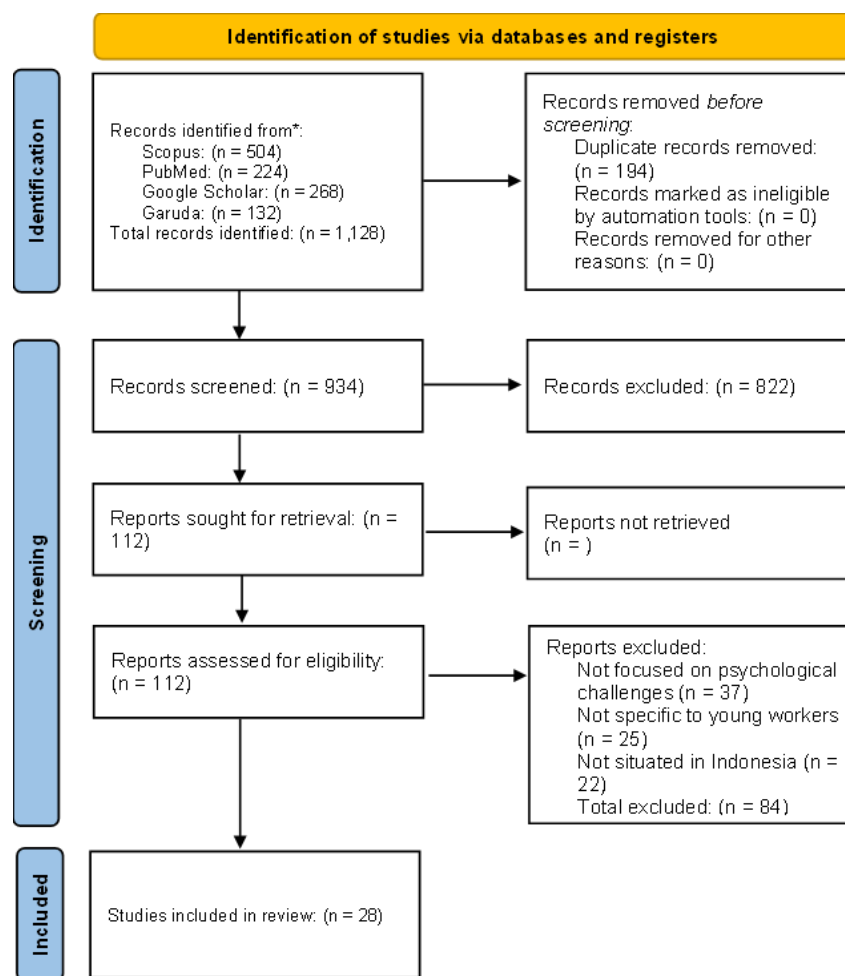


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram – Psychological Challenges Faced by Young Workers in the Digital Era (Indonesia).

uctured around the main research questions. Emerging patterns, consistencies, and gaps in the findings were systematically reviewed and grouped by construct (eg, burnout, motivation, work-life balance). Write in the table names and descriptions of related articles.

Results and Discussion

Results

This systematic review of the literature synthesises findings from 31 empirical studies conducted between 2020 and 2024, focussing on the psychological challenges faced by Millennial and Generation Z workers in Indonesia's digital work environment. Of these, 28 studies were subjected to detailed thematic synthesis because three studies, while meeting eligibility criteria, provided only descriptive or preliminary findings without sufficient psychological analysis. The review is organised around four key subtopics corresponding to the research questions: (1) psychological challenges, (2) thematic characterisation reflected in six recurring themes (career adaptability, motivation, communication, resilience, learning preferences and work-life balance), (3) theoretical

frameworks, and (4) research gaps. The findings provide a comprehensive overview of the complex factors that influence the psychological well-being of young workers in Indonesia's evolving digital labour market.

Common psychological challenges among young Indonesian workers

Young Indonesian workers, particularly those of Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z, face a unique set of psychological challenges that significantly affect their well-being and work performance. The most frequently reported issues in the reviewed studies were stress (n = 9 studies), anxiety (n = 6), burnout (n = 7), job insecurity (n = 4), and quit smoking (n = 5). These challenges are not only ubiquitous but also interconnected, often exacerbated by the pressures of navigating contemporary professional environments, balancing multiple roles, and managing expectations amid economic and social uncertainty. Understanding the relative frequency of these challenges is critical for designing interventions and support mechanisms of young workers in Indonesia.

Table 2

Key Findings on Psychological Challenges among Young Indonesian Workers

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Wendra et al.	2024	The Truth about thriving gig workers: Why are job demands and coping mechanisms not enough?	Quantitative approach using questionnaires	333 gig workers in Indonesia's digital creative industry	The rise of the gig economy is more influenced by internal resources, such as psychological capital and goal-setting skills, than external pressures, such as job demands or coping mechanisms
Lestari et al.	2024	Impact of career development, job insecurity, and tech awareness on the quiet quitting of hospitality employees in Indonesia	Explanatory research design (Quantitative)	289 hotel employees in Jakarta (stratified random sampling)	1. Significant negative relationship between perceived career development opportunities and quiet quitting. 2. Positive and significant relationship between job insecurity and quiet quitting. 3. Positive correlation between awareness of smart technology and quiet quitting. 4. Quitting smoking negatively affects employee performance.
Idaiani & Waris	2022	Depression and Psychological Stress Among Health Workers in Remote Areas in Indonesia	Cross-sectional study (Quantitative)	140 health workers in 26 community health centres in 13 provinces in Indonesia	1. 7.1% of health workers experienced depression. 2. 10.0% experienced psychological stress. 3. High motivation was associated with lower psychological stress (odds ratio = .218). 4. High-motivation health workers experienced relatively low levels of psychological stress.
Yani et al	2025	perceptions of Mental Health Challenges and Needs of Indonesian Adolescents: A Descriptive Qualitative Study	Descriptive qualitative study (Thematic analysis)	14 adolescents from two public schools in Indonesia (purposive sampling based on mental health literacy scores)	1. Adolescents faced challenges related to emotional regulation, body image, self-esteem, academic pressure, and the influence of social networks. 2. Adolescents used adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms. 3. Strong desire to learn better coping strategies and pursue career goals. 4. Importance of culturally appropriate mental health education and support programmes.
Suhendar et al.	2023	The New Trend: Why Are Indonesian Digital Start-Up Employees Opting for Quiet Quitting?	Quantitative study (SEM with SmartPLS 4.0)	269 employees from various digital start-ups in sectors like transportation, logistics, food delivery, e-commerce, fintech, digital payments, wallets, and online learning platforms	1. Job satisfaction (JS) and organisational commitment (OC) significantly influenced organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and quiet quitting (QQ). 2. OCB significantly affected QQ and mediated the effect of OC on QQ. 3. JS did not mediate the relationship between JS and QQ. 4. Improving JS, fostering OC, and encouraging OCB can mitigate QQ. 5. Recommendations include competitive compensation, performance-based bonuses, and promoting a positive work culture and opportunities for employee development.

Table 2 (Continued)

Key Findings on Psychological Challenges among Young Indonesian Workers

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Suhendar et al.	2023	The New Trend: Why Are Indonesian Digital Start-Up Employees Opting for Quiet Quitting?	Quantitative study (SEM with SmartPLS 4.0)	269 employees from various digital start-ups in sectors like transportation, logistics, food delivery, e-commerce, fintech, digital payments, wallets, and online learning platforms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job satisfaction (JS) and organisational commitment (OC) significantly influenced organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and quiet quitting (QQ). 2. OCB significantly affected QQ and mediated the effect of OC on QQ. 3. JS did not mediate the relationship between JS and QQ. 4. Improving JS, fostering OC, and encouraging OCB can mitigate QQ. 5. Recommendations include competitive compensation, performance-based bonuses, and promoting a positive work culture and opportunities for employee development.
Winata & Nurhasanah	2022	Pengaruh Work-Life Balance, Self-Efficacy, dan Komitmen Organasional Terhadap Burnout pada Mahasiswa yang Bekerja [The Influence of Work-Life Balance, Self-Efficacy, and Organisational Commitment on Burnout in Working Students]	Quantitative study (Multiple linear regression)	119 working students from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Esa Unggul University, Kebon Jeruk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work-life balance has a positive influence on burnout in working students ($p < .05$, Beta = .582). 2. Self-efficacy has a negative effect on burnout ($p = .009$, Beta = -.257). 3. Organisational commitment has a negative effect on burnout, but the effect is not significant ($p = .878$, Beta = -.017). 4. The three variables (work life balance, self-efficacy, and organisational commitment) significantly affect burnout simultaneously ($F = 22.831$, $p < .05$).
Hinduan et al.	2020	Generation Z in Indonesia: The Self-Driven Digital	Literature review	Generation Z in Indonesia (general characteristics, no specific sample)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generation Z in Indonesia is realistic yet confident in their abilities, particularly in using technology. 2. Sociocultural factors and significant life events, such as inhumanity and natural disasters, shape their characteristics. 3. This generation shows a need for social interaction, particularly with experts or superordinates during difficult times. 4. Specific behaviours in personal and professional contexts, including consumer behaviours, are influenced by these characteristics.

Table 2 (Continued)

Key Findings on Psychological Challenges among Young Indonesian Workers

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Dida et al.	2021	Gender, education, and digital generations as determinants of attitudes toward health information for health workers in West Java, Indonesia	Quantitative research (t-test, ANOVA)	617 health care workers in West Java	1. Attitudes toward health information are influenced by educational attainment and digital generation (age differences). 2. Gender differences do not have a significant effect. 3. Generational differences in digital usage (baby boomers, Gen X, Y, and Z) impact how health workers use WhatsApp for health information.
Rahmawati et al.	2022	What makes Gen Y and Z feel stressed, anxious and interested in doing social tourism when pandemic?	Quantitative Research (Structural Equation Modeling - SEM)	321 respondents from 15 provinces in Indonesia, Generation Y and Z (17-40 years)	1. Stress and anxiety levels had no significant effect on interest in social tourism. 2. Altruistic value significantly increased social tourism interest. 3. The altruistic value moderated the relationship between stress/anxiety levels and interest in social tourism. 4. Respondents demonstrated emotional resilience in the face of COVID-19.

One of the most common psychological difficulties faced by these generations is stress. In the study by Rahmawati et al. (2022), stress levels among the respondents of Generation Y and Generation Z were high, particularly during the pandemic. However, stress and anxiety did not significantly influence their interest in social tourism. This suggests that although these emotional states were present, they did not necessarily diminish their desire for social interaction or leisure activities. This may indicate a coping mechanism or a form of emotional resilience that young workers in Indonesia may exhibit in response to external pressures. However, it is essential to recognise that the underlying psychological stress can manifest itself in different ways, such as disengagement, burnout, or other maladaptive behaviours.

Additionally, closely related to stress was another prevalent psychological challenge. The findings of Dida et al. (2021) emphasise how different generations, such as Baby Boomers, Generations X, Y and Z, interact with health information. Although the study was not conducted in a strict workplace setting, it highlights how digital information environments, particularly through platforms like WhatsApp, shape generational differences in anxiety and stress responses. For younger generations, the constant flow of health information and misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic created greater uncertainty and emotional strain. This is relevant to the work context because the same digital channels that drive anxiety

(e.g. instant messaging, continuous notifications, and rapid information flows) are also widely used for work communication in Indonesia, blurring the line between personal and professional stressors. Therefore, although indirect, this study underscores how digital ecosystems can amplify the spillover of stress into the workplace, making it relevant to the psychological challenges faced by Millennial and Gen Z workers.

Another significant psychological problem identified in young workers is burnout. As seen in Winata and Nurhasanah's (2022) study on working students, work-life balance plays a crucial role in determining levels of burnout. Young workers who cannot effectively balance their professional responsibilities with their personal life tend to experience higher levels of burnout. The study demonstrated that self-efficacy, a belief in one's abilities, served as a protective factor, and people with higher self-efficacy exhibited lower levels of burnout despite demanding jobs. This suggests that psychological resilience, driven by self-belief, may buffer against the emotional toll of work-related stress, particularly among young workers.

Job insecurity and the rising phenomenon of quiet quitting have also emerged as major concerns for young Indonesian workers. Lestari et al. (2024) found that the hospitality sector felt a significant impact from job insecurity, which in turn led to increased instances of quiet quitting. Quiet quitting occurs when employees disengage from their roles by doing the bare minimum

Table 3

Key Findings on Characterisation of Key Psychological Phenomena

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Hidayat	2023	Education and communication in Indonesia: A survey among generation Z near Mount Krakatoa	Quantitative (Survey with SEM-Path Analysis)	238 middle and high school students in 12 sub-districts around Mount Krakatoa	Online informal learning and extra-school activities significantly influence disaster preparedness. Formal learning indirectly affects preparedness through knowledge sharing.
Lestari & Perdhana	2023	Generation Z Work Motivation in Indonesia	Mixed Methods (Survey + Interview)	293 Gen Z employees (questionnaire) and 5 interviewees	Identified and identified regulations dominate motivation. Key drivers include autonomy, competence, relationships, compensation, and flexibility. Relationships are the most prominent. Flexibility is emphasised uniquely.
Pradhana	2024	A Phenomenological Study of Gen Z Workers Facing Conflict Generation Gap in the World of Work	Qualitative (Phenomenology)	6 Gen Z workers, 1 Gen Y worker, and 1 communication expert in Bali tourism sector	Gen Z workers experience communication mismatches with older generations, but manage conflicts through adaptive communication patterns. Emphasis on adaptation and communication as coping mechanisms.
Saraswati & Indiyati	2023	The Influence of Non-Physical Work Environment and Work Stress on Job Performance of Gen Z: A Research Framework	Quantitative (Framework, planned SEM)	150 Gen Z employees in the tech sector (DKI Jakarta)	The study proposes a conceptual framework that suggests that the non-physical work environment and work stress significantly influence Gen Z's job performance. Data to be analysed using SEM.
Helaluddin et al.	2023	Perception of ideal learning by Gen Z students in post-pandemic: A Phenomenological Study from Indonesia	Qualitative (Phenomenology)	30 Gen Z students from 6 universities in Serang, Banten	Ideal post-pandemic learning includes no monotonous formats, balanced theory and practice, competent lecturers, and implementation of blended learning. Emphasise student-centred flexibility in post-COVID education.
Rani et al	2023	Analysing the Impact of Working Expectations on Intention to Apply in Indonesia: A Study on Gen Z College Graduate	Quantitative (SEM)	350 Gen Z college students nearing graduation	Work expectations significantly influence the intention to apply for jobs, both directly and through mediators such as organisational attractiveness, person-organisation fit, and social media usage. Key job priorities include health insurance, coaching, and job security.
Waworuntu et al.	2022	Work-Life balance, job satisfaction, and performance among millennials and Gen Z employees: a systematic review	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	35 peer-reviewed articles (2018–2022)	Work-life balance and job satisfaction positively influence performance. Gen Z is more idealistic, prioritising growth and purpose. Both generations value supportive environments, career opportunities, flexible hours, annual leave, and remote work.
Pandiangan et al.	2023	Resilience Management in Generation Z Entrepreneurs in Medan City	Quantitative (Multiple Linear Regression)	50 Gen Z entrepreneurs in Medan (random sampling)	Pressure and risk management significantly affect the performance of Gen Z entrepreneurs. Effective resilience strategies are critical to maintaining performance under stress and uncertainty.

Table 3 (Continued)

Key Findings on Characterisation of Key Psychological Phenomena

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Alamanda & Riyanti	2023	The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Job Performance for Generation Z Employees at Startup Companies in Jakarta	Quantitative (Simple Regression)	100 Gen Z employees in startups in Jakarta (convenience sampling)	Quality of work life significantly influences job performance (QWL contributes 14.6%). The highest QWL dimensions were health, job satisfaction, and job security, while work-life balance was the lowest. Management must focus on holistic QWL improvements.
Nadya & Farozin	2021	Conceptualisation of career guidance to improve career Adaptability for Generation Z	Library research (books and literature)		The study emphasises the importance of career adaptability for Generation Z, highlighting career control as its main need. Career guidance for Gen Z can be provided through coaching, workshops, social media content, and internship programmes.

required, significantly impacts both their personal job satisfaction and the overall performance. In a similar study by [Suhendar et al. \(2023\)](#), employees in digital start-ups exhibited high levels of quiet quitting driven by poor job satisfaction and low organisational commitment. The lack of job security, coupled with the demands for greater performance in the competitive start-up sector, led many young workers to withdraw emotionally from their jobs.

In addition, young workers also face the challenge of navigating the emotional impact of social and economic changes, particularly in the aftermath of significant events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This period increased levels of stress and anxiety among workers, influencing their work-life balance, participation, and overall job satisfaction. As observed in the study by [Rahmawati et al. \(2022\)](#), stress and anxiety did not significantly reduce Gen Y and Z's interest in social tourism, but altruistic values increased their willingness to participate. Although not a specific outcome at work, this finding illustrates the resilience and coping mechanisms of young Indonesians: Despite psychological stress, they sought meaningful community-orientated activities. Such adaptive orientations are relevant for workplace psychology because they suggest that young workers can similarly rely on values-based engagement (e.g., meaningful work, prosocial initiatives) to buffer against stress and maintain well-being in professional settings. Therefore, the pandemic not only affects the psychological vulnerabilities of young workers but also their resilience and capacity to adapt emotionally in the face of adversity.

Young Indonesian workers, particularly those of Generations Y and Z, face a wide range of psychological challenges that significantly influence their participation and performance in the workforce. These challenges are largely shaped by external factors such as job insecurity, work-life balance issues, and the demands of the digital economy. At the same time,

internal resources such as self-efficacy and altruistic values can buffer against the negative impacts of stress and anxiety. As organisations strive to maintain a healthy workforce, it is essential to recognise these psychological struggles and address them through targeted interventions, such as promoting better work-life balance, offering career development opportunities, and fostering emotional resilience among young workers. By doing so, employers can improve the overall well-being of their employees, ensure greater job satisfaction, and improve organisational performance (see [Table 2](#)).

Characterisation of key psychological phenomena

The reviewed studies provided nuanced characterisations of five key psychological phenomena: career adaptability, motivation, communication, resilience, learning preferences, and work-life balance. These phenomena were framed and understood in varying ways, shaped by psychological and sociocultural contexts (see [Table 3](#)).

One of the most significant psychological phenomena for Gen Z is their career adaptability, with an emphasis on career control. Gen Z faces an increasingly dynamic job market characterised by rapid technological advancements and changing economic landscapes. As a result, their ability to adapt to career transitions and challenges is vital. The study by [Nadya and Farozin \(2021\)](#) argues that career adaptability is essential for Gen Z to navigate such a volatile environment. The primary need for Gen Z in the context of career development is career control, which allows them to make informed choices and influence the trajectory of their professional lives. In line with this, career guidance models must be designed to provide Gen Z with the tools and resources to exercise autonomy in their career decisions. This can include personalised career counseling, mentoring programmes, coaching, and the use of social media platforms for career exploration. The use of internships

and workshops also offers opportunities for practical experience, further enhancing career adaptability.

Motivation is another key psychological phenomenon that shapes Gen Z's behaviour, especially at work and in educational settings. According to [Lestari and Perdhana \(2023\)](#), Gen Z is motivated primarily by intrinsic factors, including autonomy, competence, and relationships. The study suggests that motivation in Gen Z is largely governed by introduced and identified regulations, meaning that they are driven by internalised goals that align with their values, such as a desire for personal growth and development. This finding aligns with self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasises the importance of fulfilling the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation. For Gen Z, autonomy is a key driver, as they prefer work environments that allow them to make decisions independently. Competence is another critical motivator; Gen Z seeks opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills and capabilities. Finally, relationships that are particularly supportive interpersonal relationships are central to your motivation, with a significant emphasis on collaboration and teamwork. This suggests that workplaces and educational environments should foster collaborative relationships and provide opportunities for skill development and personal autonomy to maintain motivation among Gen Z employees and students.

Communication and its adaptation to generational differences represent another significant psychological phenomenon for Gen Z. The study by [Pradhana \(2024\)](#) highlights how Gen Z workers face communication mismatches with older generations, such as Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation X, due to differing communication preferences and technological fluency. However, Gen Z demonstrates remarkable adaptive communication skills, managing these generational gaps through more flexible and adaptive communication patterns. Gen Z's ability to adjust their communication styles such as using digital platforms for instant communication and balancing formal and informal interactions speaks to their ability to navigate complex social environments. This adaptive communication is a coping mechanism for dealing with intergenerational conflicts, particularly in professional settings. The ability to adapt communication strategies based on context or preferences is a psychological trait that will continue to shape the way Gen Z interacts with colleagues, managers, and other generational groups on the job.

Resilience is a crucial psychological trait for Gen Z, particularly in high-pressure and uncertain environments. The study by [Pandiangan et al. \(2023\)](#)

on Gen Z entrepreneurs in Medan city revealed that resilience specifically in managing pressure and risk significantly affects their performance. Gen Z entrepreneurs demonstrated the ability to maintain high performance despite facing challenges and uncertainties, a reflection of their robust stress management strategies. This psychological resilience is essential as they navigate the increasingly unpredictable landscape of entrepreneurship and the rapidly changing global job market. The ability to stay resilient under stress allows Gen Z to maintain focus and drive, even in the face of adversity. This trait is particularly important in work environments that require rapid decision making, adaptability, and the ability to manage multiple stressors simultaneously. Promotion of resilience building programmes and stress management training in both educational and workplace contexts can help Gen Z develop this crucial psychological asset.

Gen Z learning preferences are another critical psychological phenomenon that influences their participation and success in education. As [Helaluddin et al. \(2023\)](#) found in their study of Gen Z students in Indonesia, Gen Z strongly prefers flexible learning environments that allow for a combination of online and offline components. This preference for blended learning formats reflects their desire for more personalised and dynamic learning experiences that align with their preferences for autonomy and flexibility. Gen Z students are also highly receptive to nonmonotonous learning methods, such as interactive classes, real-world applications, and hands-on experiences. This finding suggests that traditional rigid educational structures may not meet the needs of Gen Z, and educators must adapt by offering more interactive and engaging learning formats. The use of digital technologies, gamification, and student-centred pedagogical approaches can increase Gen Z's engagement and enhance their learning outcomes.

The phenomenon of work-life balance is a central concern for Gen Z, both in their professional and personal lives. As highlighted by [Waworuntu et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Alamanda and Riyanti \(2023\)](#), Gen Z places high value on the balance between work and personal life, significantly impacting their job satisfaction and performance. Gen Z workers prioritise flexible work arrangements, including remote work, flexible hours, and the ability to take annual leave to maintain this balance. In addition, job security is another factor that influences their satisfaction and performance. Gen Z seeks work environments that provide a sense of stability and security, while also offering opportunities for personal growth and flexibility of work. For employers, this means creating environments that promote a healthy balance of work and family, such as

Table 4

Coping Strategies and Adaptive Mechanisms

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Arija et al.	2024	Strategi Coping Mechanism Pada Perempuan Generation Z yang Bekerja	Qualitative (Phenomenology)	3 working Gen Z women	Gen Z women apply problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Despite active coping intentions, they tend to deny reality in stressful situations. They rely on social and instrumental support (colleagues or partners), prioritise tasks via mapping, and manage emotions with acceptance, positivity, and spiritual beliefs.
Dwidienawati et al.	2025	The Influence of Well-being, Empowering Leadership, and Career Development on Work Engagement in Generation Z in Indonesia	Quantitative	438 Gen Z employees in Indonesia	Well-being, empowerment of leadership, and career development positively influence participation in work. Empowering leadership also improves well-being, suggesting that the leadership style is central to fostering both engagement and mental health in Gen Z workers.
Arifin et al.	2024	Gen Z generation: Does Job Hopping Matter	Qualitative (Phenomenology)	6 Gen Z employees in Indonesia	The selection of jobs among Gen Z is driven by motivational factors, personality traits, and the influence of social networks. Participants view job switching positively, citing career and personal growth. The study identified two job-hopping processes and four movement cycles, indicating that this behaviour is often intentional and adaptive.
Tan & Antonio	2022	New insights on employee adaptive performance during the COVID-19 pandemic: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	271 teleworkers from a private financial company in Indonesia	Organisational commitment, teleworking output, and a sense of purpose significantly predict adaptive performance. E-leadership indirectly affects adaptive performance through these mediators. Intrinsic motivation is a central factor in improving the adaptability of Gen Z employees, especially in remote work settings.

Table 4 (Continued)

Coping Strategies and Adaptive Mechanisms

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Sample	Key Finding
Judijanto et al.	2024	The Effect of Performance-Based Compensation, Collaborative Work Environment, and Organisational Culture on Generation Z Employee Motivation in the Food and Beverage (F&B) Industry in Indonesia	Quantitative (Multiple Linear Regression using SPSS)	45 Gen Z employees in the Indonesian F&B industry	The culture of the organisation has the strongest influence on the motivation of Gen Z employees, followed by performance-based compensation and a collaborative work environment. All three factors significantly and positively affect motivation.
Hartono & Prapunoto	2024	Computer Self-Efficacy, Work Stress, and Burnout in Gen Z in Mentoring Communities	Quantitative (Multiple Linear Regression)	Gen Z members of the Mentorin community (number not specified)	Computer self-efficacy and work stress significantly predict burnout among Gen Z. Low self-efficacy and unmanaged stress contribute to a higher risk of burnout.
Rahmawati et al.	2022	What makes Gen Y and Z feel stressed, anxious, and interested in doing social tourism during the pandemic?	Quantitative (Structural Equation Modelling, SEM)	321 respondents from 15 provinces in Indonesia, Gen Y and Z (17–40 years)	Stress and anxiety levels did not significantly affect interest in social tourism. However, altruistic value significantly increased social tourism interest and moderated the stress-anxiety relationship.
Amin & Ritonga	2024	Diversity, Local Wisdom, and Unique Characteristics of Millennials as Capital for Innovative Learning Models Evidence from North Sumatra, Indonesia	Qualitative (in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions)	Millennials in North Sumatra, Indonesia	Values of local wisdom such as gotong royong and Dalihan Na Tolu promote social harmony and resilience against identity politics. The study proposes integrating these values with digital technology in an innovative educational model for millennials.
Sasmita et al.	2025	Digital motivation, knowledge, and skills: Pathways to adaptive millennial farmers	Quantitative (Survey, PLS-SEM)	345 millennial farmers in Bogor Regency, Indonesia	Motivation positively impacts digital knowledge and skills. Digital communication skills improve the adaptive performance of millennial farmers by increasing their online participation, helping them adapt to technological disruptions.

offering flexible hours, remote work options, and comprehensive benefits. Organisations that do not recognise and support these needs may struggle to

retain Gen Z talent, as their expectations for work-life balance are a key determinant of their job satisfaction and overall well-being.

The psychological phenomena that define the adaptability to the career of Generation Z, motivation, communication styles, resilience, learning preferences, and work-life balance are critical factors that influence their behaviour in both educational and professional contexts. These phenomena highlight the need for tailored interventions and strategies that promote autonomy, flexibility, personal growth, and work-life balance. Organisations, educational institutions, and policy makers must understand and address these needs to effectively engage and support Gen Z. Providing personalised career guidance, offering flexible learning environments, fostering adaptive communication, and promoting resilience building programmes are essential steps in helping Gen Z thrive in today's dynamic world.

Coping Strategies and Adaptive Mechanisms

Coping strategies and adaptive mechanisms are central to understanding how Gen Z and millennials manage stress, career challenges, digital transitions, and identity-related pressures in various environments. In the selected studies, individuals from these generations demonstrate a dynamic range of behaviours and psychological responses aimed at maintaining mental health, improving performance, and adapting to social and workplace demands (see Table 4).

Arija et al. (2024) investigated the coping mechanisms among working Gen Z women using a qualitative phenomenological approach. The study revealed that these women employ problem-focused coping (eg, task prioritisation through mapping) and emotion-focused coping (e.g. acceptance, spirituality, and positive thinking). Although they exhibit a proactive attitude toward problem solving, they also show a tendency to deny stressful realities, possibly as a psychological buffer. Furthermore, their reliance on social and instrumental support, particularly from colleagues and partners, emphasises the collective nature of coping in Gen Z women. These findings suggest a hybrid coping model that combines self-regulation with interpersonal dependency.

Dwidienawati et al. (2025) examined participation in work in relation to well-being, empowerment of leadership, and career development among 438 Gen Z employees in Indonesia. Although the main focus was not coping per se, the findings imply that empowering leadership improves both well-being and engagement, offering an organisational level buffer against workplace stress. Leadership that empowers employees can promote psychological resilience, enabling Gen Z workers to cope more effectively with occupational demands.

Arifin et al. (2024) explored job hopping among Gen Z through qualitative methods and found that this cohort tends to view job mobility as positive adaptive behaviour rather than a sign of instability. Their

decisions are influenced by internal motivation, personality traits, and exposure to social networks, indicating that job-hopping is often a deliberate coping mechanism for dealing with dissatisfaction or perceived stagnation. The study identified two job-hopping processes and four movement cycles, highlighting the strategic and self-managed nature of career adaptation among Gen Z.

Tan and Antonio (2022) provided quantitative evidence on adaptive performance during remote work in the COVID-19 pandemic, surveying 271 teleworkers. They identified organisational commitment, telework performance, and sense of purpose as significant predictors of adaptive performance. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation has emerged as a crucial psychological resource for adapting to remote work settings. Their results underscore that Gen Z can thrive in changing work environments when they feel connected to organisational goals and are intrinsically driven. e-leadership, although not directly predictive, had an indirect effect through these mediating variables, suggesting that the leadership style can influence adaptive outcomes when it improves internal resources.

Judijanto et al. (2024) investigated Gen Z motivation in the F&B industry and indirectly contributed to understanding coping strategies by identifying the organisational culture as the strongest motivator, followed by performance-based compensation and a collaborative work environment. These elements can be seen as environmental supports that improve psychological safety and reduce stress, allowing Gen Z employees to better cope with industry pressure and maintain motivation in a competitive field. This aligns with the idea that supportive workplace climates foster better adaptation.

Hartono and Prapunoto (2024) focused directly on psychological vulnerability, analysing burnout among Gen Z in mentoring communities. Their findings confirmed that low self-efficacy on the computer and high work stress significantly predict burnout. Gen Z members lacking confidence in their digital abilities are more prone to mental exhaustion, particularly in tech-mediated environments. This points to the critical need for digital literacy and stress management programmes to build psychological resilience and adaptive capacity among young professionals in digital work settings.

Rahmawati et al. (2022) examined how stress and anxiety influence the interest of Gen Y and Z in participating in social tourism during the pandemic. Contrary to expectations, stress and anxiety levels did not significantly affect tourism interest. Instead, altruistic values, such as helping others and contributing to communities, played a moderating role, strengthening the link between emotional stress and prosocial behaviour. This suggests that Gen Z may

adapt emotionally not by avoiding stress, but by channelling it into meaningful social action, reflecting an altruistic coping strategy rooted in purpose and contribution.

Amin and Ritonga (2024) explored how young people in northern Sumatra engage with local wisdom as a means to build resilience. Through qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, they found that traditional values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and Dalihan Na Tolu (a Batak cultural system) serve as cultural coping mechanisms, promoting social harmony and buffering against divisive identity politics. These findings show how culturally rooted coping frameworks remain relevant even for younger generations connected generations.

Finally, Sasmita et al. (2025) conducted a survey with 345 millennial farmers to understand how digital motivation, skills, and knowledge affect adaptive performance. The results showed that motivation significantly improves digital competencies, which in turn improve adaptability through increased online participation. This demonstrates a clear pathway from internal drive to digital engagement and adaptive capacity, positioning digital literacy and self-efficacy as core elements of millennial coping in the face of industry disruption and climate uncertainty.

The reviewed studies illustrate a complex and multifaceted picture of how Gen Z and millennials cope with personal, professional, and social challenges. Their strategies include emotional regulation, problem solving, digital skill development, altruistic action, and cultural integration, supported by leadership, organisational culture, and community norms. This generation tends to be self-directed but socially connected, using a blend of individual effort and collective resources to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Understanding these mechanisms is essential to develop targeted interventions, policies, and support systems that align with their psychological and sociocultural profiles.

The coping mechanisms identified in the reviewed studies can be more fully understood when interpreted through established psychological frameworks. Two influential perspectives, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, provide valuable lenses for synthesising these findings and situating them within broader theories of stress and adaptation.

The Lazarus and Folkman model emphasises the role of cognitive assessment in shaping coping responses, distinguishing between problem-focused coping, which seeks to directly address stressors, and emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional reactions. Several patterns from the

reviewed studies align with this framework. For example, task prioritisation and career mobility strategies such as job hopping (Arija et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2024) illustrate problem-focused coping, as do digital upskilling practices that enhance adaptive performance (Sasmita et al., 2025). In contrast, reliance on spirituality, acceptance, and altruistic engagement (Arija et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2022) exemplifies emotion-focused coping. Taken together, these findings suggest that young Indonesian workers often adopt a hybrid coping style, alternating between direct problem solving and values-driven emotional regulation in response to stressors.

Hobfoll's COR theory provides a complementary lens by focussing on the protection, acquisition, and replenishment of valuable resources. Evidence from included studies demonstrates these processes in practice. Resource preservation was evident in social and instrumental support and reliance on cultural values such as gotong royong (Arija et al., 2024; Amin & Ritonga, 2024). Resource acquisition emerged through empowerment of leadership and supportive organisational cultures, which increased workers' psychological capacities (Dwidienawati et al., 2025; Judijanto et al., 2024). Finally, resource replenishment was visible in studies highlighting the role of digital motivation and adaptive performance pathways in restoring capacity to meet new challenges (Tan & Antonio, 2022; Sasmita et al., 2025).

By situating these empirical findings within both the appraisal-based perspective of Lazarus and Folkman and the resource-orientated framework of Hobfoll, this review provides a more integrated understanding of how Millennials and Gen Z workers in Indonesia cope with the demands of the digital era. The synthesis underscores why some young workers demonstrate resilience under demanding conditions, while others remain vulnerable to stress, burnout, or disengagement. It also points to practical implications: organisations can foster adaptive coping by creating opportunities for problem solving, strengthening cultural and social supports, and investing in resources such as digital skills and self-efficacy that sustain psychological resilience.

Discussion

The present review synthesised 28 empirical studies examining the psychological challenges experienced by Millennial and Generation Z workers in Indonesia's evolving digital labour context. In the reviewed literature, several interrelated psychological challenges have consistently emerged, namely stress, burnout, anxiety, quiet quitting, job insecurity, and issues surrounding motivation and work-life balance. These findings offer a comprehensive picture of the psychological toll experienced by young workers who

navigate Indonesia's increasingly digital and flexible labour market.

Burnout emerged as a prominent and widespread issue, frequently associated with poor work-life balance and low organisational support. Particularly among working students and digital industry workers, burnout was associated with a high workload, blurred personal-professional boundaries, and poor recovery time. Studies such as [Winata and Nurhasanah \(2022\)](#) and [Hartono and Prapunoto \(2024\)](#) revealed how self-efficacy played a moderating role, suggesting that individual psychological resources can partially mitigate burnout. However, the structural nature of digital work, such as 24/7 connectivity and fragmented attention, appears to amplify emotional exhaustion even among those with moderate internal coping abilities.

Closely related to burnout, stress, and anxiety were also recurring themes, especially among Gen Z employees working under unstable conditions. [Rahmawati et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Dida et al. \(2021\)](#) showed how the constant stream of health and sociopolitical information through digital platforms increased emotional stress among younger workers, particularly during the pandemic. However, this stress did not necessarily lead to disengagement; instead, in some cases, it was redirected to prosocial outlets such as social tourism or online activism, demonstrating nuanced emotional responses shaped by context and personal values.

Quiet quitting emerged as a distinct behavioural response to psychological stress. Rather than overt resignation or conflict, many young Indonesian workers appear to withdraw emotionally from their roles while maintaining minimal performance. [Lestari et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Suhendar et al. \(2023\)](#) found that this disengagement is often driven by job insecurity, lack of career progression, and poor organisational commitment. Interestingly, awareness of technological advancements also correlated with higher instances of quiet quitting, possibly due to increased expectations for autonomy and digital efficiency that are not met in practice. This finding suggests that in the Indonesian context, quiet quitting is not simply a passive withdrawal, but a culturally nuanced form of disengagement shaped by insecurity, unmet expectations, and changing digital work norms. This extends psychological contract theory by showing how unmet obligations in digitally mediated workplaces manifest in subtle behavioural withdrawal rather than overt resistance.

The question of motivation was addressed in multiple studies, with findings pointing to the dominance of intrinsic motives, particularly autonomy, competence, and relatedness, among Gen Z. [Lestari and Perdhana \(2023\)](#) and [Judijanto et al. \(2024\)](#)

highlighted that this generation values collaborative cultures and meaningful work more than rigid organisational structures or transactional incentives. However, motivation tends to erode when these intrinsic needs are not met, especially in highly structured or bureaucratic environments. These findings reinforce Self-Determination Theory (SDT), but also suggest that contextual variables such as collectivist work values and expectations for digital autonomy need to be integrated into future adaptations of SDT in non-Western labour markets.

A recurring theme in studies is the importance of psychological resilience. Gen Z in Indonesia shows a wide range of adaptive mechanisms, including proactive coping (task prioritisation, upskilling), emotion-focused strategies (spirituality, positive reinterpretation) and collectivist coping (relying on peer and family support). [Arija et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Pandiangan et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasise how emotional regulation and cultural values like gotong royong and Dalihan Na Tolu help young workers manage pressure and uncertainty. This extends coping theory by showing how collectivist cultural scripts interact with digital stressors, a combination rarely explored in existing literature.

Work-life balance was also a central concern, particularly in studies involving gig workers, digital nomads, and hybrid employees. The boundaryless nature of digital work often leads to role spillover and emotional fatigue. However, preferences for flexibility and autonomy persist and respondents across studies consistently agree with remote work, flexible hours, and asynchronous task management. The tension between digital freedom and emotional overload is particularly salient, with some workers thriving in these environments, while others experience disconnection and loss of purpose.

The reviewed literature also identified identity-related pressures such as intergenerational conflict and career adaptability. [Pradhana \(2024\)](#) and [Nadya and Farozin \(2021\)](#) highlighted the need for control over their career paths and communication styles. Misalignment between generational work values, particularly between Gen Z and their older supervisors, can create psychological friction, especially in hierarchical or communication-heavy industries. However, Gen Z also exhibits high adaptability to managing these tensions, often through hybrid communication styles and strategic work choices, including job-hopping and freelancing.

Taken together, this review contributes to theory by extending the JD-R model through the integration of collectivist cultural values as job resources, refining self-determination theory in the context of digital and collectivist work cultures, and nuancing psychological contract theory by showing how quiet quitting in

Indonesia reflects disengagement driven by unmet relational and structural expectations. At the same time, the methodological quality of the reviewed studies requires critical reflection. Most of the included studies used cross-sectional designs and relied heavily on self-report questionnaires, raising concerns about causality and common method bias. Few studies used longitudinal or mixed method approaches that could capture dynamic changes in motivation, resilience, or disengagement over time. The sample sizes varied widely, and most studies focused on urban populations, leaving rural or informal workers under-represented. These limitations suggest that, while the current evidence base is valuable, the strength of conclusions remains constrained, and future research should prioritise methodological diversity and longitudinal designs.

Conclusion

This systematic review of the literature synthesised 28 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025 to examine the psychological challenges faced by Millennial and Generation Z workers in Indonesia's digital work landscape. The findings indicate a complex interplay of stress, burnout, job insecurity, quiet quitting, and motivational dynamics shaped by digitalisation, flexible work arrangements, and evolving career expectations. Despite these challenges, many young workers demonstrate adaptive capacity through intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and culturally grounded coping strategies. From a theoretical perspective, this review contributes by integrating fragmented evidence within established frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources model, Self-Determination Theory, and psychological contract perspectives, situated within Indonesia's collectivist and digitally evolving work context. This integration advances our understanding of how structural work demands interact with psychological processes among young workers in emerging economies.

Practically, the findings underscore the importance of psychologically safe work environments, empowering leadership, meaningful career development, and effective work–life boundary management to support well-being and engagement. By consolidating recent empirical evidence, this review provides a foundation for future research and offers information to organisations, educators, and policy makers looking to foster sustainable and mentally healthy digital work environments in Indonesia.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors used Grammarly solely to assist with English language editing and grammatical improvement. No artificial intelligence tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or content generation.

Ethical Clearance

Ethical review and approval were not required for this study because it is a systematic literature review based solely on previously published studies and does not involve direct participation, interaction, or the use of identifiable personal data from human subjects.

Data Availability

All data generated or analysed during this systematic literature review are fully presented in the text, tables, and figures of this article.

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