

Command Culture and Generation Z's Egalitarian Expectations: A Conceptual Analysis of Intergenerational Cultural Conflict in the Indonesian National Police

Karina E.O Marpaung

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kepolisian, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: keomarpaung@stik-ptik.ac.id

HOW TO CITE: | ABSTRACT:

Karina E.O Marpaung (2026).
Command Culture and Generation Z's
Egalitarian Expectations: A
Conceptual Analysis of
Intergenerational Cultural Conflict in
the Indonesian National Police
International Journal of Special
Education, 41(22s), 898-914

Background: The entry of Generation Z into the Indonesian National Police (Polri) has brought more egalitarian work values, such as participatory communication, transparency, and competency-based recognition, which have the potential to clash with a command culture that emphasizes hierarchy, discipline, and obedience. Although both topics have been extensively studied separately, there remains a limited body of research that conceptually explains the mechanisms of their interaction in giving rise to intergenerational cultural conflict.

Objective: This study aims to conceptually analyze the relationship between command culture and Generation Z's egalitarian expectations within the Polri environment, as well as to develop a conceptual framework explaining the mechanisms underlying the emergence of intergenerational cultural conflict.

Method: This study employs a conceptual paper approach using a narrative literature review method. Literature was collected from Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and Google Scholar for the period 2016–2025, and then analyzed using thematic synthesis and conceptual analysis.

Key Findings: The findings shed light that intergenerational cultural conflict is influenced by value incongruence between command culture and Generation Z's work values. The five primary sources of conflict identified include orientation toward authority, communication patterns, reward systems, orientation toward technology, and leadership expectations. These conflicts have the potential to affect organizational communication, trust in leadership, cross-generational collaboration, innovation, and the organization's ability to adapt.

Contribution: This study offers a conceptual framework that integrates command culture, Generation Z's work values, and intergenerational cultural conflict into a single analytical model. This framework positions value incongruence as the primary mechanism linking command culture to intergenerational cultural conflict and serves as a foundation for

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.
Open access publication under the
terms and conditions
of the Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY) empirical research on the Indonesian National Police (Polri) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). and other command-based organizations.

Keywords: Command Culture; Generation Z; Intergenerational Cultural Conflict; Police Organizational Culture; Conceptual Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture is a fundamental element in shaping behavior, values, and patterns of interaction within public sector organizations. In bureaucratic organizations, hierarchical structure serves as the primary mechanism for ensuring coordination, discipline, and work accountability. In the context of police organizations, organizational culture functions not only as a normative guideline but also as a control system that regulates power relations, communication, and decision making within the institution. Investigation by Campeau (2019) on police culture shows that hierarchical structure and a culture of discipline are the dominant characteristics that shape the work identity of police personnel in highly structured organizations.

The command structure is a vital element that underpins the operational effectiveness of police organizations. This structure emphasizes a clear chain of command, obedience to authority, and top-down decision making. Research by Reiner (2017) shows that police organizational culture tends to be dominated by values of hierarchy, group solidarity, and an orientation toward compliance with strict institutional rules, which directly influences personnel communication patterns and work behavior.

However, in recent years public sector organizations have experienced significant demographic change with the entry of Generation Z into the workforce, including within police institutions (Fanani & Jannah, 2025; Rachmadi et al., 2024). This generation has different work

value characteristics compared to previous generations, such as a preference for horizontal communication, work flexibility, and

expectations of participation in decision making. Research by Cockcroft (2017) on police organizations shows that generational differences influence work dynamics, communication style, and expectations of leadership within hierarchical organizations.

The context of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) shows that generational differences are an important issue in organizational dynamics. Research shows that older generations tend to maintain values of stability, compliance with hierarchical structure, and directive leadership. In contrast, younger generations, including Generation Z, place greater priority on flexibility, the use of digital technology, and openness in organizational communication. This difference creates potential incompatibility between individual expectations and an organizational culture that is command-based and hierarchical.

Differences in perception of organizational culture can contribute to the emergence of intergenerational conflict (Cordner, 2017). Differences in interpreting hierarchical structure, vertical communication patterns, and seniority systems can affect organizational cohesion and work effectiveness (Nurwicaksono et al., 2023). In some cases, this incompatibility has an impact on increasing work stress, decreasing job satisfaction, and weakening organizational adaptation to changes in the modern work environment (Campeau & Keesman, 2024).

A top-down, seniority-based work system with one-way communication is often perceived as an obstacle to the performance development and innovation of the younger generation. This indicates a gap between command-based organizational values and the more egalitarian and participatory expectations of Generation Z.

Although research on Generation Z and organizational culture has developed quite rapidly, there remains a conceptual gap that needs attention. Most research on Generation Z focuses on work value preferences, motivation, employee engagement, and leadership styles suited to the younger generation across various organizational sectors (Cogin, 2012; Schroth, 2019). In contrast, research on police organizations more often examines issues of organizational culture, inclusivity, or institutional effectiveness without specifically explaining how the value characteristics of Generation Z interact with the command system that forms the foundation of police organizations (Brough et al., 2016; Cordner, 2017; Ingram et al., 2018). Further, research on differences in work values in the public sector (Park & Park, 2024) has not specifically addressed police organizations, which have a stronger character of hierarchy, discipline, and chain of command than other public organizations. Thus, there remains limited research that integrates command culture with the egalitarian values of Generation Z within a single conceptual framework, particularly in the context of the Indonesian National Police (Polri). This study seeks to fill this gap by conceptually analyzing the potential clash between command culture and the egalitarian values of Generation Z as part of the dynamics of demographic change within police organizations.

Although various studies have discussed police organizational culture and generational differences separately, a conceptual gap remains in understanding how command culture interacts with the egalitarian expectations of Generation Z within a single integrated analytical framework. Most research tends to focus on aspects of organizational culture or generational differences separately, without integrating both into an analysis of intergenerational cultural conflict within highly hierarchical institutions such as Polri. Hence, this study aims to conceptually analyze the relationship between command culture and the egalitarian expectations of Generation Z within the Indonesian National Police, with a focus on the

potential for intergenerational cultural conflict within hierarchical organizations.

2. METHODS

This study uses a conceptual paper approach with a narrative literature review method to develop a conceptual understanding of the relationship between command culture and the egalitarian values of Generation Z within the organization of the Indonesian National Police (Polri). The conceptual paper approach was chosen because this study does not aim to test hypotheses through empirical data, but rather to build a conceptual synthesis based on theory and prior research findings in order to obtain an analytical framework capable of explaining the dynamics of police organizational culture in facing generational demographic change (Jaakkola, 2020).

The literature search strategy was performed systematically through reputable scientific databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Taylor & Francis Online, with Google Scholar as a supporting source. The search used combinations of keywords such as police organizational culture, command culture, police hierarchy, Generation Z, work values, intergenerational workplace, organizational culture, and Polri. The literature selected consisted of scientific journal articles in English and Indonesian published between 2016 and 2025, with direct relevance to police organizational culture, the characteristics of Generation Z, or the dynamics of hierarchy-based organizations. Literature that was duplicated, not peer reviewed, or not directly related to the focus of the study was excluded from the review process (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic synthesis combined with conceptual analysis. The stages of analysis included identifying the main concepts from each piece of literature, grouping themes with shared meaning, interpreting relationships between themes, and compiling a conceptual synthesis of the interaction between command culture and the

egalitarian values of Generation Z within police organizations. The results of the synthesis were then used to build a conceptual framework explaining the potential for intergenerational cultural clash, the factors that influence it, and its implications for the management of organizational culture and leadership within Polri.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Understanding Command Culture in the Indonesian National Police

Command culture is an organizational characteristic that places formal hierarchy, compliance with the chain of command, organizational discipline, and loyalty to leadership as the primary mechanisms for coordinating member behavior. In police organizations with a semi-military character such as the Indonesian National Police (Polri), command culture developed as a historical consequence of Polri's position, which for several decades was part of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI). Although the 1999 reform separated Polri from the Indonesian military (TNI) and shifted the institutional orientation toward civilian policing, various studies show that many characteristics of the previous organizational culture still persist in daily practice, particularly in leadership patterns, superior-subordinate relationships, and decision-making mechanisms (Abdussalam et al., 2023; Siregar, 2014).

1. Hierarchy

Hierarchy is the main foundation of Polri's command culture. The organizational structure is arranged in layers, from Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri), Regional Police (Polda), District Police (Polres), down to Sector Police (Polsek), with a clear division of authority based on rank and position. This structure enables consistent operational coordination within an organization that has a very large number of personnel and a broad area of operation

. From the perspective of bureaucratic organization, hierarchy provides clarity

regarding authority, accountability, and the distribution of responsibility, thereby facilitating organizational control. However, an overly layered structure also has the potential to slow innovation, reduce organizational flexibility, and limit the participation of members at the operational level in decision making (Mukhtas, 2019; Setyawan et al., 2024).

2. Chain of Command

This hierarchy is operationalized through the principle of chain of command, a mechanism for delivering orders vertically from leaders to subordinates. This principle ensures that every member knows to whom they are responsible and where the legitimacy of an order originates. In police organizations, the chain of command has an important function in maintaining coordination when facing emergency situations, security operations, or law enforcement that requires a fast and integrated response. However, an overly strong dominance of the chain of command can reduce space for horizontal communication and feedback from members at the lower levels. This condition has the potential to create an organization that emphasizes procedural compliance more than organizational learning (Mukhtas, 2019; Setyawan et al., 2024; Siregar, 2014).

3. Discipline

Discipline is a central element in Polri's command culture because it relates directly to professionalism, operational readiness, and consistency in carrying out duties. Discipline is embodied through compliance with regulations, the professional code of ethics, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and internal oversight mechanisms (Muardi et al., 2022). In an organization whose function is to maintain public security, discipline is a prerequisite for ensuring that the use of authority remains within legal boundaries. However, discipline that is too oriented toward administrative compliance can produce an organizational culture that emphasizes formal compliance more than the development of critical thinking capacity and adaptive problem solving. Thus, various Polri

reform agendas place the strengthening of professionalism and integrity as a complement to traditional disciplinary culture (Abdussalam et al., 2023; Harismeihendra & Lufpi, 2024; Indriyanto, 2017).

4. Obedience

Obedience within command culture is understood not only as compliance with organizational rules, but also as compliance with the authority of leaders. In the context of police organizations, obedience is needed so that decisions can be implemented quickly, particularly in high-risk operational conditions. However, organizational literature shows that obedience that is too strong without accompanying mechanisms for critical evaluation can give rise to organizational silence, that is, a tendency among members not to voice criticism or differing opinions for fear of being seen as opposing their superiors. As a result, the decision-making process risks losing important information that actually originates from personnel in the field. Organizational culture reform is therefore directed toward building a balance between loyalty to the organization and professional responsibility and public service ethics (Abdussalam et al., 2023; Siregar, 2014).

5. Seniority

A culture of seniority is another characteristic inherent in Indonesian police organizations. Seniority is based not only on age, but also on rank, length of service, operational experience, and structural position. In many conditions, seniority provides benefits in the form of experience transfer, the formation of professional identity, and organizational stability. However, if seniority becomes the primary basis for exerting influence or making decisions, the organization can experience obstacles in leadership regeneration and provide less room for new ideas from younger personnel. This phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant as Polri

begins to be dominated by a generation with more egalitarian, collaborative characteristics that are accustomed to two-way communication

(Setyawan et al., 2024; Siregar, 2014).

6. Power Distance

Polri's command culture can also be understood through the concept of power distance introduced by Hofstede. Power distance describes the extent to which members of an organization accept an unequal distribution of power. Organizations with a high level of power distance tend to have formal superior-subordinate relationships, one-way communication, and decision making centralized in leadership. These characteristics are relatively consistent with command culture as they provide clarity of authority and organizational stability. However, in an increasingly complex modern work environment, excessively high power distance can reduce creativity, slow innovation, and hinder the flow of information from the operational level to leadership. Therefore, various strands of public organization management literature have begun to emphasize the importance of participatory leadership without eliminating the command function as the primary coordination mechanism (Abdussalam et al., 2023; Holý & Evan, 2022; Setyawan et al., 2024; Bektı et al., 2025).

7. Strengths and Challenges of Command Culture

Command culture has a number of strengths that keep it relevant for police organizations. First, this culture enables rapid coordination in crisis situations because authority has been clearly defined. Second, a strong hierarchy makes it easier to control the organization and ensures that operational standards are applied consistently throughout Indonesia. Third, discipline and loyalty strengthen organizational cohesion so that every member has the same orientation in carrying out security and law enforcement duties (Indriyanto, 2017; Mukhtas, 2019).

On the other hand, command culture also faces increasingly great challenges in the era of organizational transformation and digitalization. A highly hierarchical structure has the potential

to reduce organizational agility, slow innovation, and limit two-way communication between leaders and members. A culture of seniority and high power distance can also reduce the participation of younger members in decision-making processes, even though they possess the digital competence and fresh perspectives that modern organizations need. These challenges show that Polri's cultural reform does not mean eliminating command culture, but rather transforming it into a leadership system that maintains discipline and operational coordination while also opening space for collaboration, organizational learning, and innovation that is more adaptive to changes in the strategic environment.

3.2. Generation Z's Egalitarian Expectations in the Workplace

Various studies show that Generation Z enters the workforce with a set of values different from previous generations. One of the most prominent characteristics is an increasing orientation toward more egalitarian working relationships, that is, relationships that position superiors and subordinates as mutually respecting professional partners, rather than merely as a vertical power relationship. A work environment that values equality is perceived as capable of increasing a sense of belonging, trust in the organization, and long-term work commitment. Conversely, organizations that maintain highly hierarchical communication structures tend to be viewed as less responsive to the needs of a younger generation accustomed to a more open digital culture (Van Beurden et al., 2022; Zahra et al., 2025).

This egalitarian value is reflected in Generation Z's high expectations regarding employee voice, that is, the opportunity for every member of the organization to convey ideas, criticism, or proposals without fear of negative consequences. Organizational behavior literature explains that employee voice is not merely a communication mechanism, but an

indicator of psychological safety and organizational trust in its members (Ghani & Hyder, 2020; Weber et al., 2020). When an

organization provides space for expressing aspirations, employees tend to show greater work engagement, innovation, and organizational commitment. Conversely, an organizational culture that restricts the expression of opinions can lower intrinsic motivation and reduce members' willingness to contribute actively.

In addition to voice, Generation Z also expects participation in the decision-making processes that affect their work. Participation is viewed not as the elimination of organizational structure, but as a form of recognition of individual competence. A meta-analysis of organizational democracy shows that employee involvement in decision-making processes correlates positively with job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment, and prosocial workplace behavior (Ghani & Hyder, 2020; Weber et al., 2020). Thus, organizations that develop participatory mechanisms have a greater chance of building productive working relationships while also improving the quality of organizational decisions.

The next expectation relates to continuous feedback. Unlike traditional evaluation systems that are conducted only periodically, Generation Z prefers feedback that is fast (real-time), constructive, and oriented toward competency development. The digital environment that has shaped their social experience makes feedback part of their daily learning process. Meta-analytic studies show that the provision of quality feedback has a positive relationship with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, organizations that still rely on one-way communication with formal and infrequent evaluation are at risk of experiencing an expectation gap with Generation Z employees (Tagliabue et al., 2020).

In line with the need for feedback, Generation Z also has high expectations for transparency within the organization. Transparency covers openness of information regarding organizational policy, the basis for decision making, promotion systems, and performance

appraisal. Transparency strengthens perceptions of organizational justice, increases trust in leadership, and strengthens the legitimacy of organizational policy. The employee-centered human resource management perspective explains that employee perceptions of organizational practices often determine work behavior more than formal policy itself. Thus, communication openness becomes an important part of building working relationships that are trusted by Generation Z (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024).

Another characteristic inseparable from Generation Z is a preference for digital communication. As digital natives, they are accustomed to using digital media as the primary means of exchanging information, collaborating, and obtaining feedback quickly. The digitalization of organizational communication not only increases the efficiency of information delivery, but also accelerates the coordination process across work units and expands opportunities for employee participation. The use of digital media and professional communication platforms can increase work engagement, collaboration, and the effectiveness of human resource management when properly integrated into the organizational system (Zahra et al., 2025).

In addition to an open work environment, Generation Z also seeks meaningful work, that is, work that provides personal meaning, opportunities to grow, and a real contribution to society. For this generation, financial compensation is no longer the sole indicator of career success. They tend to consider the fit between personal values and organizational values, opportunities for continuous learning, and the social impact of the work performed. A scoping review of Generation Z in the workplace shows that the search for meaningful work is one of the important determinants of retention, work engagement, and organizational loyalty (Burger et al., 2021; Zahra et al., 2025).

This expectation is closely related to the principle of meritocracy. Generation Z expects that promotion, rewards, and career

development be based on competence, performance, and

real contribution, rather than solely on seniority or closeness to leadership. A merit system is perceived as capable of increasing a sense of fairness while also motivating individuals to continue developing their professional abilities. Conversely, if promotion is more influenced by power relations or seniority, trust in the organization can decline, leading to lower engagement and an increased desire to change jobs. From the perspective of strategic human resource management, employee perceptions of fair HR practices are an important factor shaping work attitudes and behavior.

Conceptually, these characteristics as a whole indicate that Generation Z's expectations of the workplace are moving toward organizations that are more participatory, communicative, transparent, and competency-based. These values are not always in conflict with formal organizational structure, but they do require adjustments in leadership patterns, internal communication, and human resource management. For organizations that still rely on a highly hierarchical command culture, such as police institutions, these characteristics have the potential to create cultural tension because of a fundamental difference between Generation Z's egalitarian orientation and organizational control mechanisms that emphasize compliance with the chain of command. This tension forms the conceptual basis for discussing the potential clash between command culture and Generation Z's work values in the next section.

3.3. Intergenerational Cultural Conflict: A Conceptual Framework

Intergenerational conflict within organizations is a consequence of changes in workforce composition that bring together individuals with different social experiences, values, and work orientations. Intergenerational conflict is not solely influenced by age difference, but is more often triggered by value incongruence, communication preferences, leadership expectations, and ways of interpreting working relationships (Wardani et al., 2024). When an

organization maintains a long-entrenched culture while a new generation brings different values, the opportunity for cultural conflict to emerge becomes greater. This condition makes intergenerational conflict a matter of organizational culture, not merely a matter of demographics (Bukhari & Nadeem, 2024).

From the perspective of organizational culture, cultural conflict can occur when there is incompatibility between the values, norms, and practices that have become institutionalized within the organization and the values and expectations brought by new members. This condition indicates a gap in person-organization fit, in which individuals experience difficulty adjusting to the organization's prevailing value system (Kristof, 1996; Schein, 2010). Organizational socialization is an important factor in reducing the potential for this conflict because it functions to build a shared understanding of the values, norms, and behavior patterns expected by the organization (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Organizational culture basically functions as a mechanism that directs member behavior through a set of formal and informal rules. However, culture is not static. Changes in the social environment, technological development, and the entry of a new generation continuously drive organizations to adapt their cultural practices without losing their organizational identity. Therefore, cultural conflict often emerges during a phase when the organization is undergoing a value transition but adaptation mechanisms have not yet developed optimally (Wardani et al., 2024)

This phenomenon becomes more complex in organizations with hierarchical characteristics, including police organizations. Police culture is built on the principles of command, discipline, loyalty, compliance with procedure, and a clear chain of command. These values are necessary to guarantee the effectiveness of coordination, consistency of action, and speed of decision making in high-risk situations. Therefore, command culture is an inseparable part of the identity of police organizations. However, research shows that police culture is not entirely homogeneous (Demirkol & Nalla, 2020; Ingram

et al., 2013), but rather has internal variation influenced by individual factors, organizational structure, rank, and work

environment. This view rejects the assumption that all police members share the same values, norms, and behavior patterns in carrying out their duties (Demirkol & Nalla, 2020; Ingram et al., 2013).

This culture forms through interaction among formal rules, leadership, work groups, and operational experience, so that each organizational unit can develop a different cultural character even though it belongs to the same institution. Thus, changes in human resource characteristics will affect the overall dynamics of police organizational culture.

The entry of Generation Z accelerates this dynamic. As a generation born and raised in a digital environment, Generation Z has different characteristics compared to previous generations. Various studies on the characteristics of Generation Z show that this group tends to have expectations of a work environment that emphasizes open communication, collaboration, transparency, flexibility, the use of digital technology, and opportunities for continuous learning and development (Bińczycki et al., 2023; Fridayani et al., 2022; Taibah & Ho, 2023). In addition, Gen Z also shows a preference for a participatory leadership style, one that provides space for dialogue, gives regular feedback, and builds mutually supportive working relationships (Bińczycki et al., 2023; Fridayani et al., 2022; Taibah & Ho, 2023). This orientation forms since they grow up in an information ecosystem that is fast, open, and interactive, so they are accustomed to accessing information without being restricted by a rigid hierarchical structure.

In contrast, command culture within police organizations places compliance with an authority structure as the primary foundation of organizational governance. The legitimacy of authority is based more on position, seniority, and chain of command, so communication takes place vertically (top-down communication). From an organizational perspective, this

mechanism is needed to maintain discipline and the effectiveness of task implementation. However, from Generation Z's perspective, a communication pattern that is too closed is often perceived as providing insufficient opportunity to participate or express ideas. This difference in perception becomes one of the main sources of intergenerational cultural conflict (Rachmadi et al., 2024)

Based on this synthesis, intergenerational cultural conflict cannot be understood as a direct consequence of the presence of Generation Z in the organization, but rather as the result of interaction between an established organizational culture and the value system of the new generation. The greater the value incongruence between command culture and the values held by Generation Z, the greater the potential for communication barriers, declining trust in leadership, resistance to the organizational system, and reduced work effectiveness. Therefore, the true source of conflict is not age difference, but the organization's inability to manage the cultural change that accompanies generational turnover.

3.3.1. Sources of Cultural Conflict

Changes in the demographic composition of the workforce have made organizations a space of interaction among various generations with different social experiences, value orientations, and work preferences. Intergenerational conflict is no longer understood merely as a consequence of age difference, but as a result of differences in value systems that influence how individuals view leadership, communication, decision making, and working relationships (Campeau, 2019). Thus, the conflict that arises in modern organizations is more accurately understood as intergenerational cultural conflict, that is, conflict originating from the incompatibility between an entrenched organizational culture and the values brought by the new generation.

From the perspective of organizational culture, every organization develops a set of values, norms, symbols, and behavior patterns that serve as guidance for organizational members in carrying out work activities (Locke, 2019). These

values and norms form a shared

understanding of expected behavior, while organizational symbols and practices serve as media for conveying identity and cultural meaning to organizational members. This culture forms through a process of institutionalization that takes place over a long period, so that it becomes the organization's identity. Organizational culture has an important function in creating stability, strengthening coordination, and building shared perception among organizational members. However, organizational culture is not static. Changes in the external environment, technological development, and the entry of a new generation continually drive organizations to undertake cultural adaptation in order to remain relevant to the demands of the times. When this adaptation process runs more slowly than changes in human resource characteristics, value incongruence emerges as the root of intergenerational cultural conflict (Gutschmidt & Vera, 2020)

This phenomenon becomes more complex in organizations with hierarchical characteristics, such as police organizations. Unlike business organizations, which are relatively flexible, police organizations are built on principles of command, discipline, loyalty, compliance with procedure, and a clear chain of command. This structure is necessary to guarantee coordination effectiveness, consistency of action, and speed of decision making in high-risk situations. Therefore, command culture is an inseparable part of the identity of police organizations. However, research shows that police culture is not an entirely homogeneous culture. This culture develops through interaction among formal structure, leadership, work groups, operational experience, and member socialization processes, so it can undergo change alongside changes in personnel composition.

Based on Schein (2010), police culture also shows that cultural change often faces cultural inertia, that is, the organization's tendency to maintain practices, norms, and ways of working that have long been considered successful even though the organizational environment has

changed. Campeau (2019) explains that police culture is maintained through institutional myths, that is, beliefs and practices passed down from generation to generation so that they obtain legitimacy as the “correct way” of carrying out the police profession. This condition causes cultural change to proceed slowly because senior members tend to maintain traditional work patterns, while younger members begin to question the relevance of these values to contemporary organizational challenges. As a result, generational difference develops into organizational cultural difference.

The entry of Generation Z into police organizations strengthens this dynamic. Generation Z is a generation born and raised in a digital environment, giving them a different social experience compared to previous generations. Access to information technology, social media, and digital communication shapes characteristics that are more open to change, place greater value on collaboration, prioritize two-way communication, and have high expectations for transparency and participation in decision-making processes. In the workplace, they tend to expect leaders capable of providing constructive feedback, explaining the reasoning behind a decision, and acting as facilitators of learning rather than merely givers of instruction. These characteristics differ from the traditional culture of police organizations, which has historically placed greater emphasis on compliance with hierarchy and seniority.

This difference in orientation does not automatically result in conflict. Conflict arises

when the organizational culture fails to provide an adaptation mechanism capable of bridging intergenerational value differences. In other words, the main source of conflict lies not in the presence of Generation Z, but in the incompatibility between organizational values and the values brought by the new generation. Research on police organizations shows that members of the younger generation tend to perceive an overly hierarchical organizational culture as an obstacle to communication, self-development, and innovation, while more senior generations view hierarchical structure as a primary prerequisite for discipline and organizational

effectiveness. This difference in perception becomes the starting point for the emergence of intergenerational cultural conflict.

Based on a synthesis of literature on generational conflict, organizational culture, and changes in workforce characteristics, intergenerational cultural conflict within command-based organizations can be understood through several dimensions that reflect differences in values, expectations, and behavior patterns between senior generations and Generation Z (Janssen & Carradini, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2025). These differences are particularly evident in orientation toward authority, communication patterns, reward systems, technology adaptation, and leadership expectations (Janssen & Carradini, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2025).

3.1.2. Conceptual Framework

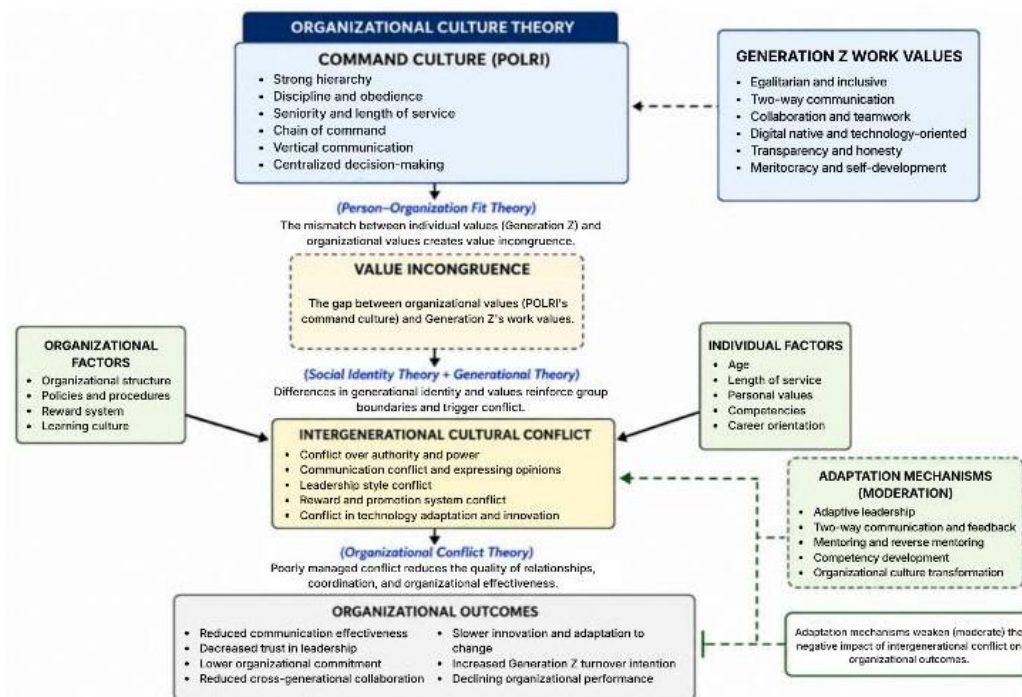


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is built on the argument that intergenerational cultural conflict within police organizations does not arise solely because of the presence of Generation Z or the characteristics of command culture, but through a process of value incongruence that develops into cultural conflict and ultimately affects organizational effectiveness. This argument stems from Person-Organization Fit Theory, which states that the effectiveness of the relationship between an individual and an organization is largely determined by the degree of compatibility between personal values and organizational values (Kristof, 1996). In the context of Polri, command culture emphasizes hierarchy, compliance with the chain of command, centralization of decision making, and vertical communication. This culture functions to maintain discipline, coordination, and consistency in the

implementation of duties, but at the same time forms a set of norms that must be internalized by all organizational members. On the other hand, various studies show that Generation Z

places greater value on two-way communication, collaboration, transparency, flexibility, the use of digital technology, and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. When these two value systems interact, a gap emerges between the values practiced by the organization and the values held by the individual. From the person-organization fit perspective, this condition is understood as value incongruence, that is, incompatibility between organizational values and individual values that affects how organizational members interpret their work environment (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996).

Based on Person-Organization Fit Theory, organizational culture functions not only as a set of formal rules, but also as a mechanism that shapes and maintains the value system expected to be held by all organizational members. The stronger the organizational culture, the higher the demand for individuals to adjust their values and behavior to organizational values. In an organization that applies command culture, the dominance of values such as compliance with hierarchy, centralization of authority, and institutional discipline increases the likelihood

of value incongruence emerging when organizational members bring different value orientations. Thus, the relationship between command culture and value incongruence is not an assumed relationship, but a logical consequence of the person-organization fit mechanism.

This study positions value incongruence as the primary conceptual mechanism because intergenerational conflict is fundamentally more influenced by differences in value systems than by biological age difference alone. Generational difference within an organization does not automatically result in conflict, because conflict is more heavily influenced by the level of compatibility of values and expectations among organizational members (Costanza et al., 2012; Kristof, 1996). The person-organization fit perspective explains that when individuals have value alignment with their work environment, interpersonal relationships and work coordination tend to run more effectively. Conversely, value incongruence can create differing interpretations of leadership practices, communication patterns, reward systems, and ways of completing work, which ultimately increases the potential for conflict among organizational members (Costanza et al., 2012; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Thus, intergenerational conflict is not solely the result of age difference or generational cohort, but arises when differences in work values interact with the organization's cultural systems and prevailing practices. Compared to other concepts such as job satisfaction or organizational trust, which more strongly represent the psychological consequences that follow interaction, value incongruence is more appropriately positioned as the mechanism that explains how organizational cultural characteristics are translated into intergenerational conflict (Deal et al., 2010; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). As such, the relationship between command culture and cultural conflict is not assumed to occur directly, but is explained through the process of forming a value gap as its underlying mechanism.

Positioning value incongruence as the primary

mechanism is also consistent with the characteristics of mediating constructs in organizational research (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Deal et al., 2010). As a conceptual mediator, value incongruence explains the initial process that links organizational cultural characteristics with the emergence of intergenerational social responses, while constructs such as trust, job satisfaction, and psychological safety more strongly represent psychological consequences that follow after individuals experience interaction within the organization (Edmondson, 1999; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, value incongruence is positioned as an explanatory mechanism that explains how organizational culture is translated into intergenerational cultural conflict.

This value incongruence further develops into intergenerational cultural conflict through a process explained by Social Identity Theory (Turner et al., 1979) and Generational Theory (Mannheim, 1952). When organizational members perceive that the values prevailing in the organization do not match the values they hold, they tend to identify themselves with groups that share a similar value orientation and distinguish themselves from other groups. This process of identification strengthens intergenerational social boundaries, so that differences in perspective toward authority, communication, leadership style, reward systems, and technology use are no longer perceived as variations in preference, but develop into cultural conflict. In other words, value incongruence functions as the mechanism that explains how value differences turn into intergenerational conflict, rather than merely indicating that the two phenomena are related to one another.

From the perspective of Social Identity Theory, this process occurs through the mechanism of social categorization, that is, the tendency of individuals to group themselves into groups with characteristics and value orientations considered similar. As differences in work values become increasingly perceived as group identity, the boundary between the senior generation group and Generation Z becomes increasingly strong,

thereby increasing the tendency for stereotypes, intergroup bias, and social conflict to emerge. Thus, social identity

theory explains that intergenerational conflict does not arise solely because of age difference, but because value differences develop into group identities that are mutually distinguished.

Intergenerational cultural conflict that is not managed effectively subsequently has an impact on various organizational outcomes. Literature on organizational conflict explains that conflict originating from value differences tends to hinder communication, reduce trust among organizational members, and weaken collaboration in carrying out tasks (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn & Rispens, 2008). Within police organizations, this condition can slow the learning process, hinder adaptation to technological change, reduce organizational commitment, increase turnover intention among Generation Z personnel, and ultimately decrease organizational effectiveness and performance. This relationship shows that the impact of conflict does not stop at the interpersonal level, but develops into an organizational problem that affects the institution's ability to maintain performance and face changes in the strategic environment.

Nevertheless, the relationships among these variables are not linear or deterministic. Organizational characteristics such as structure, policy, reward systems, and learning culture can either strengthen or reduce the emergence of value incongruence and intergenerational conflict. Likewise, individual characteristics, including age, length of service, career orientation, competence, and personal values, also influence how a person interprets organizational culture. On the other hand, Adaptive Leadership Theory (Heifetz, 2009) provides a foundation showing that adaptive leadership, two-way communication accompanied by feedback, cross-generational mentoring, competency development, and organizational cultural transformation can narrow the value gap through a process of dialogue, learning, and mutual adjustment.

Therefore, adaptation mechanisms are positioned as factors that can weaken the negative impact of value incongruence on intergenerational cultural conflict while also reducing its negative consequences for the organization.

Based on this theoretical synthesis, the relationships among constructs in this framework are not understood as direct causal relationships, but as a process that occurs through a mechanism of value compatibility within the organization. Command culture, which emphasizes hierarchy, compliance, and formal control, has the potential to create a gap between the dominant organizational values and the work values brought by different generational groups. This gap (value incongruence) then becomes a condition that enables differing interpretations of leadership practices, communication patterns, reward systems, and work expectations, thereby increasing the potential for intergenerational cultural conflict to occur. Furthermore, the conflict that arises as a result of this value incongruence can affect various organizational outcomes, such as the quality of working relationships, employee engagement, and coordination effectiveness.

Thus, this framework broadens the understanding of intergenerational conflict by positioning value incongruence as the theoretical mechanism that explains the process by which the characteristics of organizational culture are translated into the experience of conflict between generational groups. This approach shows that intergenerational conflict does not originate solely from differences in demographic characteristics between generations, but is a consequence of the interaction between the organization's value system and the work values held by organizational members.

Value incongruence is seen as more appropriately positioned as a conceptual mechanism compared to other constructs such as trust, psychological safety, resistance to change, or job satisfaction. These constructs generally represent psychological responses or consequences that

emerge after individuals interact with the organizational environment. In contrast, value incongruence explains a more fundamental process, namely how the difference between organizational values and individual values causes leadership practices, communication patterns, reward systems, and the application of technology to be perceived differently by each

generation. Thus, this study argues that intergenerational cultural conflict does not arise directly from the characteristics of command culture, but develops through a mechanism of value incongruence that shapes how organizational members interpret their work experience.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the potential for intergenerational cultural conflict within the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is not caused solely by the characteristics of Generation Z, but by value incongruence between command culture, which emphasizes hierarchy, discipline, chain of command, seniority, and obedience, and the work expectations of Generation Z, which are more egalitarian, participatory, transparent, collaborative, and oriented toward two-way communication. Based on a synthesis of the literature, this study identifies that cultural conflict primarily emerges through differences in orientation toward authority, communication patterns, reward systems, the use of technology, and expectations of leadership. These findings confirm that intergenerational dynamics are a matter of organizational culture that requires an adaptation mechanism, rather than merely a consequence of age difference.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual framework that integrates the literature on organizational culture, command culture within police organizations, and the work value characteristics of Generation Z into a single analytical model. This framework explains that value incongruence acts as the conceptual mechanism linking command culture to intergenerational cultural conflict, while organizational adaptation mechanisms, such as adaptive leadership, two-

way communication, mentoring, and cultural transformation, are positioned as factors that can reduce the negative impact of conflict on organizational effectiveness. Thus, this study broadens the study of police organizational culture while also providing a conceptual foundation for empirical research on command-based organizations.

Practically, the results of the study indicate that Polri does not need to eliminate command culture as its organizational identity, but needs to adapt its implementation to be more aligned with the characteristics of the new generation. This can be done through strengthening more communicative and participatory leadership, developing two-way communication channels, applying a reward system that is increasingly based on competence and performance, optimizing the use of digital technology in work processes, and developing cross-generational mentoring programs. This approach is expected to be able to maintain discipline and operational effectiveness while also increasing collaboration, innovation, and the organization's ability to face changes in the strategic environment.

This study has several limitations. As a conceptual paper using a narrative literature review approach, this study did not conduct empirical testing of the relationships among variables proposed in the conceptual framework. In addition, the synthesis compiled relies on the results of prior research, so it cannot directly describe the dynamics of organizational culture across all Polri work units, which have different characteristics.

Therefore, future research is recommended to empirically test the proposed conceptual framework through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches. Research could also develop measurement instruments to measure value incongruence, intergenerational cultural conflict, and organizational adaptation mechanisms, as well as compare their implementation across various Polri work units or other command-based organizations. Thus, the conceptual model developed in this study can be empirically validated while also providing a

stronger basis for the development of human organizations.
resource management policy within police

REFERENCES

- Abdussalam, A. F., Abdurrachman, H., & Hamzani, A. I. (2023). Perlunya Reformasi Kultural di Kepolisian Republik Indonesia. *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-I*, 10(1), 141–154.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6). <https://doi.org/10.1037//898-914.51.6.1173>
- Bekti, H., Pancasilawan, R., Komara, S. R., & Achmad, W. (2025). Integrating Policy, Public Opinion, and Sundanese Values for Effective Public Leadership and Good Governance. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 4(2), 898-914.
- Bińczycki, B., Łukasiński, W., & Dorocki, S. (2023). Determinants of motivation to work in terms of Industry 4.0—The Gen Z perspective. *Sustainability*, 15(15), 12069.
- Brough, P., Chataway, S., & Biggs, A. (2016). ‘You don’t want people knowing you’re a copper!’ A contemporary assessment of police organisational culture. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 18(1), 28–36.
- Bukhari, S., & Nadeem, M. S. (2024). Reducing the Intergenerational conflict between generation Y and generation Z through creating a culture of mutual respect. *UW Journal of Management Sciences*, 8(1).
- Burger, R., Fisher, G., Hudson, A., & Rader, M. E. (2021). Generation Z and the 21st century workplace: A scoping review. *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics*, 21(1), 41–54.
- Cable, D. M., & Parsons, C. K. (2001). Socialization tactics and person-organization fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(1), 1–23.
- Campeau, H. (2019). Institutional myths and generational boundaries: cultural inertia in the police organisation. *Policing and Society*, 29(1), 69–84.
- Campeau, H., & Keesman, L. D. (2024). “You can’t really turn it off”: The police “sixth sense” as cultural schema. *Sociological Forum*, 39(3), 267–280.
- Chatman, J. A. (1989). Improving interactional organizational research: A model of person-organization fit. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(3), 333–349.
- Cockcroft, T. (2017). Police culture: Histories, orthodoxies, and new horizons. In *Policing: a journal of policy and practice* (Vol. 11, Issue 3, pp. 229–235). Oxford University Press.
- Cogin, J. (2012). Are generational differences in work values fact or fiction? Multi-country evidence and implications. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(11), 2268–2294.
- Cordner, G. (2017). Police culture: individual and organizational differences in police officer perspectives. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 40(1), 11–25.
- Costanza, D. P., Badger, J. M., Fraser, R. L., Severt, J. B., & Gade, P. A. (2012). Generational differences in work-related attitudes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 27(4), 375–394.
- De Dreu, C. K. W., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 741.
- Deal, J. J., Altman, D. G., & Rogelberg, S. G. (2010). Millennials at work: What we know and what we need to do (if anything). *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 191–199.
- Demirkol, I. C., & Nalla, M. K. (2020). Police culture: An empirical appraisal of the phenomenon. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 20(3), 319–338.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>

- Fanani, M. A., & Jannah, L. M. (2025). Perencanaan sumber daya manusia sektor publik: Strategi adaptif untuk generasi milenial dan Z. *Jurnal Pemerintahan Dan Politik*, 10(4), 779–796.
- Fridayani, J. A., Kusuma, S. E., & Yuniarto, A. Y. (2022). Building link-match of gen z and the world of work through contextual-adaptive facilitation. *Jurnal Bisnis Strategi*, 31(2), 117–129.
- Ghani, B., & Hyder, S. I. (2020). Employee voice behavior at individual and organizational level: an integrative review. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(4), 2704–2716.
- Gutschmidt, D., & Vera, A. (2020). Dimensions of police culture—a quantitative analysis. *Policing: An International Journal*, 43(6), 963–977.
- Harismeihendra, R. N., & Lufpi, B. (2024). Integritas Polisi: Studi Pengaruh Budaya Organisasi, Kepuasan Kerja, Dan Kepemimpinan Etika Terhadap Integritas Polisi Di Wilayah Hukum Polres Jakarta Pusat. *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, 18(1).
- Heifetz, R. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Harvard Business Press.
- Holý, V., & Evan, T. (2022). The role of a nation's culture in the country's governance: Stochastic frontier analysis. *Central European Journal of Operations Research*, 30(2), 507–520.
- Indriyanto, B. (2017). Profesionalisme Anggota Polri dalam Kerangka Kebhinnekaan. *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, 11(1), 15.
- Indroputri, I. A., & Sanjaya, R. (2024). Digital Transformation in Human Resource Management and Its Role in Gen Z Career Development: A Systematic Literature Review. *Petra International Journal of Business Studies*, 7(1), 48–56. <https://doi.org/10.9744/petrajbs.7.1.898-914>
- Ingram, J. R., PAOLINE III, E. A., & Terrill, W. (2013). A multilevel framework for understanding police culture: The role of the workgroup. *Criminology*, 51(2), 365–397.
- Ingram, J. R., Terrill, W., & PAOLINE III, E. A. (2018). Police culture and officer behavior: Application of a multilevel framework. *Criminology*, 56(4), 780–811.
- Jaakkola, E. (2020). Designing conceptual articles: four approaches. *AMS Review*, 10(1–2), 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1898-914-0898-914>
- Janssen, D., & Carradini, S. (2021). Generation Z workplace communication habits and expectations. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 64(2), 137–153.
- Jehn, K. A., & Rispens, S. (2008). Conflict in workgroups. *Handbook of Organizational Behavior*, 1, 262–276.
- Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences OF INDIVIDUALS'FIT at work: A meta-analysis OF person–job, person–organization, person–group, and person–supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(2), 281–342.
- Kristof, A. L. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology*, 49(1), 1–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.898-914.1996.tb01790.x>
- Locke, K. D. (2019). Development and validation of a circumplex measure of the interpersonal culture in work teams and organizations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 850.
- Lyons, S., & Kuron, L. (2014). Generational differences in the workplace: A review of the evidence and directions for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(S1), S139–S157.
- Mannheim, K. (1952). The sociological problem of generations. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, 306, 378–404.
- Muardi, J., Rohmawan, K., & Nurminingsih. (2022). The Effect Of Discipline And Training On Performance Of Employees At The Fire And Rescue Service In City Administration Of Central Jakarta. *MARGINAL : Journal Of Management, Accounting, General Finance And International Economic Issues*, 1(2), 83–92. <https://doi.org/10.55047/marginal.v1i2.137>
- Mukhtas, H. (2019). Analisis Model Ideal Struktur Organisasi Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (Polri) Pascareformasi. *Jurnal Pemerintahan Dan Keamanan Publik (JP Dan*

KP), 77–89.

Nugroho, Y. A. W., Yanti, B. E. D., & Haryanto, F. (2025). A systematic literature review on workplace expectations and behavioral characteristics of Generation Z employees. *Psikostudia: Jurnal Psikologi*, 14(3), 367–375.

Nurwicaksono, M. B. H., Dwilaksana, C., & Simanjuntak, P. J. (2023). Career Development Challenges in Strengthening the Performance of the POLRI Baintelkam. *POLICY, LAW, NOTARY AND REGULATORY ISSUES*, 2(4), 349–364.

<https://doi.org/10.55047/polri.v2i4.828>

Park, S., & Park, S. (2024). Generational differences in work values in the Korean Government sector. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 48(1–2), 149–161.

Rachmadi, S. F., Setyabudi, C. M., & Handayani, R. S. (2024). Strategy for Managing Generational Differences in The National Police (Polri). *Policy, Law, Notary And Regulatory Issues*, 4(1), 13–29.

Reiner, R. (2017). Is police culture cultural? *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 11(3), 236–241.

Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3rd Editio). John Wiley & Sons. Schroth, H. (2019). Are you ready for Gen Z in the workplace? *California Management*

Review, 61(3), 5–18.

Setyawan, N. A., Purnomo, J. A., Pranata, A. Y., & Prasetyo, D. (2024). The Functional Position in the Indonesian National Police. *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, 18(1).

Siregar, S. N. (2014). Tinjauan kritis reformasi kultural Polri (898-914). *Journal of Political Research*, 11(1), 18.

Tagliabue, M., Sigurjonsdottir, S. S., & Sandaker, I. (2020). The effects of performance feedback on organizational citizenship behaviour: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 29(6), 841–861.

Taibah, D., & Ho, T. C. F. (2023). The moderating effect of flexible work option on structural empowerment and generation Z contextual performance. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(3), 266.

Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8(1), 45.

Turner, J. C., Brown, R. J., & Tajfel, H. (1979). Social comparison and group interest in ingroup favouritism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 9(2), 187–204.

Van Beurden, J., Van De Voorde, K., & Van Veldhoven, M. (2022). The employee perspective on HR practices: A systematic literature review, integration and outlook. *Strategic Human Resource Management and Organizational Effectiveness*, 135–169.

Wardani, F. P., Krismayanti, Y., Sacha, S., Siahaan, R. S., Anjarsari, N., & Rumambi, F. J. (2024). Management of Intergenerational Conflict in the Workplace and Its Impact on Employee Relations. *Indonesian Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(12), 1929–1940.

Weber, W. G., Unterrainer, C., & Höge, T. (2020). Psychological research on organisational democracy: A meta-analysis of individual, organisational, and societal outcomes. *Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 1009–1071.

Zahra, Y., Handoyo, S., & Fajrianthi, F. (2025). A comprehensive overview of Generation Z in the workplace: Insights from a scoping review. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 51, 2263.