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Role Of Positive Emotions in Reducing Job Stress: Tips for Millennial and Z Generation Employees

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ABSTRACT

Job-related stress is a prevalent issue that can adversely affect employees. This challenge is particularly pertinent among millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born after 1996), who are distinguished by their technological adeptness, pursuit of work-life balance, and preference for supportive work environments. Addressing job stress in these generations is essential for cultivating a healthy workforce, as these generations increasingly dominate the workforce. This study examines the impact of positive emotions on job stress among millennial and Generation Z employees. The 'New Job Stress Scale' was employed to measure job stress, while the Positive Emotion Scale, based on the 'Broaden and Build' theory, was used to assess positive emotions. Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression. The findings revealed that positive emotions significantly reduce work stress ($\beta = -0.462$, $p < 0.01$), accounting for 21.4% of the variance in influencing job stress. These results highlight the critical role of fostering positive emotions in the workplace to mitigate stress among young employees. Future research should focus on developing specific interventions to boost positive emotions and investigate their long-term effects on employee well-being. Organisations can create a more supportive and effective work environment by addressing the unique needs of millennials and Generation Z.

Keywords*: Positive Emotion, Job Stress, Millennials, Generation Z, Employees in Jakarta*

INTRODUCTION

Job stress is a significant issue that affects employees across various industries and generations. Stress is an individual's response to challenging situations that can disrupt well-being. It is divided into Eustress (positive stress), which motivates individuals, and Distress (negative stress), which disrupts physical and psychological conditions (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Job stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's abilities or expectations, leading to an imbalance between workload and rewards (Pandey, 2020). Shukla and Srivastava (2016) identified several dimensions of job stress, including Time Stress, Anxiety Stress, Role Expectation Conflict, Coworker Support, and Work-Life Balance. Factors influencing work stress include internal factors (individual personality) and external factors (relationships with coworkers, superiors, or work conditions) (Zulfa in Bimawa, 2021).

As they increasingly dominate the workforce, Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z are particularly affected by job stress, as they increasingly dominate the workforce. Examining the factors that can reduce their stress is important. These generations are characterised by their technological adeptness, pursuit of work-life balance, and preference for supportive work environments. However, they also face unique stressors that contribute to higher levels of work-related stress. Research indicates that millennials and Generation Z experience higher stress levels than older generations. A Gallup survey (2022) conducted in Southeast Asia found that 46% of respondents in

Indonesia experienced anxiety at work, and 20% experienced job stress. According to the Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia (2022), in 2021, 4,737,415 individuals were employed in Jakarta, with 1,829,825 aged between 15 and 34 years. A study by the Mental Health Foundation found that 28% of employees from the millennial and Generation Z cohorts, who will be aged 18-38 years in 2024, report higher stress levels than their older counterparts. This heightened stress is often attributed to their preference for freedom and flexibility, which can lead to work-related stress (Heckman, 2023).

Positive emotions play a critical role in managing job stress. Fredrickson's (1998) Broaden and Build theory identifies four dimensions of positive emotions: Pleasure, Interest, Satisfaction, and Affection. These emotions can enhance personal and social outcomes, such as confidence, creativity, teamwork, and leadership (Diener et al., 2020). Positive emotions help broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire, building enduring personal resources that can mitigate the effects of stress.

By fostering positive emotions, organisations can create a more supportive and effective work environment, reducing stress among young employees. This study explores the impact of positive emotions on job stress among millennial and Generation Z employees in Jakarta. Utilising the Broaden and Build theory, the research seeks to understand how positive emotions can mitigate job stress and contribute to a healthier workforce. By addressing these points, the study highlights the importance of designing interventions that enhance positive emotions to reduce work-related stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has shown that positive emotions can significantly reduce job stress in the workplace. Fredrickson's (1998) Broaden and Build theory explains that positive emotions help individuals think more broadly and build lasting personal resources, which can reduce stress. Diener et al. (2020) support this idea, showing that positive emotions improve confidence, creativity, teamwork, and leadership, all of which help create a more resilient workforce. Elkheloufi and Yean (2022) found that employees with low job demands, and high positive emotions perform better. Positive emotions help people overcome challenges, feel more satisfied, and improve their overall well-being (Sahu & Srivastava, 2017).

The impact of job stress on employee performance has also been widely studied. Pandey (2020) found that job stress negatively affects employee performance, meaning that higher job stress leads to lower work performance. On the other hand, Yustika (2022) found that job stress can sometimes improve performance by motivating employees to overcome challenges. Setyawati et al. (2018) studied 162 employees at Manggarai Station in Jakarta and found that job stress reduces performance while work discipline improves it. Their study concluded that high job stress decreases performance, whereas high work discipline increases it. This study focuses on Distress, which can lead to poor performance at work.

In summary, the body of research consistently shows that positive emotions are crucial in reducing job stress and enhancing employee performance. Organizations can create a more supportive and effective work environment by fostering positive emotions. This study aims to understand how positive emotions specifically benefit millennials and Generation Z. The hypothesis is that positive emotions affect the job stress of millennial and Generation Z employees in Jakarta.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research method. The aim is to determine the effect of positive emotions (independent variable) on work stress (dependent variable) using simple regression analysis. The population for this research consists of employees working in the DKI Jakarta area, specifically targeting millennials and Generation Z, who are between 18 and 38 years old in 2023. The sample size for this study is 143 respondents. The sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique, the convenience sampling method. This method involves collecting data from respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate, as described by Sugiyono (2013).

The G-Power application was used to ensure the sample size was adequate. Based on previous studies, the standard deviation (SD) and mean values for the work stress variable (Y) were 0.60 and 3.36, respectively (Lukman et al., 2019). For the positive emotion variable (X), the SD was 6.558, and the mean was 93.68 (Yasmin, 2021). Using a correlation value (p) of 0.3 and a power of 0.95, the G-Power analysis indicated that a minimum of 134 samples was required. This study included 143 respondents to ensure sufficient power and reliability of the results.

The measurement tools used in this study include the New Job Stress Scale (NJSS) to assess job stress and the Positive Emotion Scale based on Fredrickson's Broaden and Build theory to measure positive emotions. The NJSS consists of 20 items, with example items such as "I feel overwhelmed by my workload" and "I find it difficult to relax after work." This scale has been validated and shown to have high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating good internal consistency.

The Positive Emotion Scale consists of 24 items, with example items such as "I feel joyful when I achieve my goals" and "I am interested in learning new things at work." This scale also demonstrates high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, ensuring that the measurements are consistent and reliable

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 1. Reliability Test Job Stress Scale

Dimension	Items	Item Correlation	α
Time Stress	TS1: I have a lot of work and worry about having so little time to do it	0.470	0.870
	TS2: I feel so overwhelmed that even my days off feel bad	0.610	0.869
	TS3: I feel like I never take a day off	0.327	0.880
	TS4: Many people in my office are tired of the demands of the company	0.403	0.876
Anxiety Stress	AS1: My assignments make me anxious	0.557	0.871
	AS2: The impact of my assignments on me is too high	0.632	0.868
	AS3: Often, my assignments are a heavy burden	0.650	0.868
	AS4: Sometimes, when I think about my assignments, I feel a pain in my chest	0.590	0.870
	AS5: I feel guilty when I take time off	0.483	0.874
	REC1: I am unable to meet the different demands of my superiors	0.635	0.868

Role Expectation Conflict	RCE2: I am unable to meet the conflicting demands of my colleagues and juniors	0.571	0.871
	REC3: I am unable to meet the conflicting demands of clients and others, as they are contradictory	0.568	0.871
	REC4: The expectations of my seniors are different from those of my juniors	0.491	0.873
	REC5: I am worried about the different expectations of different people	0.527	0.872
Coworker Support	CS1: People I work with give me information or advice	0.207	0.880
	CS2: People I work with understand me and give me advice	0.145	0.882
	CS3: People I work with give me clear and helpful feedback on my work	0.177	0.881
	CS4: People I work with give me clear and helpful feedback on my work	0.240	0.879
Work-Life Balance	WLB1: I can maintain a balance between my work time and my other activities	0.570	0.879
	WLBI2: I have difficulty balancing my work and other activities	0.435	0.875
	WLBI3: I feel that my current tasks and other activities are balanced	0.483	0.873
	WLBI4: In general, I believe that my work and other activities are balanced	0.408	0.876

Table 2. Reliability Test Emotion Positive

Dimension	Items	Item Correlation	α
Pleasure	J1: I feel happy with my life	0.479	0.862
	J2: I like doing my job	0.686	0.856
	J3: I can still feel happy even though I have to work alone	0.338	0.867
	J4: Try to find new things at work	0.416	0.864
Satisfaction	CS1: I enjoy my current job	0.770	0.852
	CS2: I feel like leaving this job	0.503	0.861
	CS3: My current job makes me feel tired often	0.381	0.866
	CS4: I am satisfied with my current life	0.433	0.864
Interest	I1: I always want to deepen my current job	0.592	0.858
	IS2: I have hobbies that I like	0.357	0.866
	IS3: I am a person who likes to learn new things	0.314	0.867
Affection	L1: I love my job	0.725	0.854
	L2: This job has become a part of my life	0.509	0.861
	L3: I prefer being alone to being with my coworkers	0.227	0.872
	L4: I am fed up with my current job	0.647	0.856
Religious	R1: I feel my job is a calling from God	0.482	0.862

	R2: I feel my job has a deep meaning	0.588	0.858
	R3: I feel my job helps me get closer to God	0.443	0.863
	R4: I feel my job helps me better understand religious values	0.448	0.863

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The study involved 143 respondents who are employees working in the DKI Jakarta area. The respondents were selected explicitly from the millennial and Generation Z cohorts, aged between 18 and 38 years old, in 2023. Among the respondents, 60% were female and 40% were male. The age distribution was as follows: 45% were between 18-25 years old, 35% were between 26-32 years old, and 20% were between 33-38 years old. Regarding education level, 20% had completed high school, 60% held a bachelor's degree, and 20% had obtained a master's degree. Regarding work experience, 15% had less than 1 year of experience, 40% had 1-3 years of experience, 30% had 4-6 years of experience, and 15% had more than 6 years of experience.

Table 3. Results of Descriptive Data Analysis

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	63	44.1%
Female	80	55.9%
Total	**143**	**100%**
Age		
18 – 20 years	14	9.8%
21 – 25 years	82	57.3%
26 – 30 years	31	21.7%
31 – 35 years	14	9.8%
36 – 38 years	2	1.4%
Total	**143**	**100%**

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the regression analysis results, there is a significant relationship between positive emotions (independent variable) and work stress (dependent variable) among millennial and Generation Z employees in Jakarta. The model summary shows an R-value of 0.463, indicating a moderate positive relationship between positive emotions and work stress. The R^2 value of 0.214 means that positive emotions can explain 21.4% of the variability in work stress, while the remaining 78.6% is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

Model Summary

Table 4. Determination Coefficient Test

					Overall Model Test		
Model	**R**	**R²**	**Adjusted R²**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
1	0.463	0.214	0.210	48.9	1	179	< .001

Source: Author Calculation

The ANOVA table further supports the significance of this relationship. The F value is 48.9, with a significance level of p < 0.001, indicating that the model is statistically significant. This means positive emotions have a considerable influence on work stress, and the null hypothesis (which states that there is no influence of positive emotions on work stress) can be rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis that positive emotions affect the work stress of millennial and Generation Z employees in Jakarta is accepted.

Anova Table

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**p**
Emosi Positif	3726	1	3726.1	48.9	< .001
Residuals	13647	179	76.2		

Note. Type 3 sum of squares

Source: Author Calculation

The coefficients table provides insight into the relationship between positive emotions and work stress. The intercept value is 65.476, and the coefficient for positive emotions is -0.430, with a standard error of 0.0744. The t-value for positive emotions is -5.78, and the p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The negative coefficient suggests higher positive emotions are associated with lower work stress. The standardised estimate of -0.397 further confirms the strength of this negative relationship.

Coefficients Table

Table 6. Coefficient Model Test

Model Coefficients – Stress Job

predictor	**estimate**	**SE**	**t**	**p**	**stand. estimate**
intercept	65.476	4.1407	15.81	< .001	
Emotion Positive	-0.430	0.0744	-5.78	< .001	-0.397

The scatterplot illustrates the linear relationship between positive emotions and work stress. The regression line shows a negative slope, indicating that as positive emotions increase, work stress

decreases. The data points are spread around the regression line, demonstrating a linear relationship between the two variables.

Scatterplot
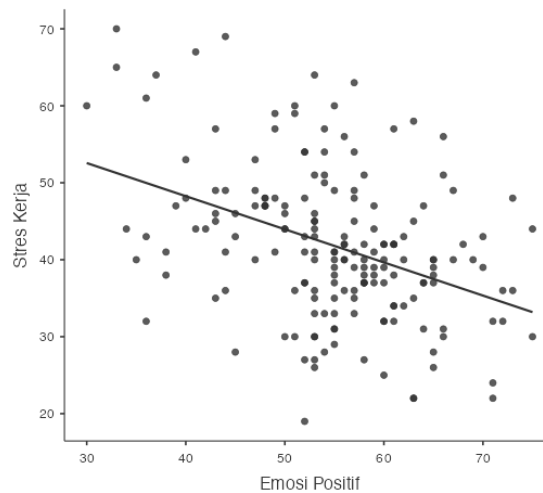
Picture 1. Scatterplot Linearity

In summary, the study's results support the hypothesis that increasing positive emotions can help reduce employee work stress levels. The statistical analysis confirms that positive emotions significantly and negatively affect work stress, highlighting the importance of fostering positive feelings in the workplace to mitigate stress and enhance employee well-being.

DISCUSSION

This study's findings reveal a significant impact of positive emotions on job stress among millennial and Generation Z employees in Jakarta. This outcome supports Fredrickson's (1998) Broaden and Build theory, which suggests that positive emotions broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire, thereby building lasting personal resources that can help mitigate stress. These results are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that positive emotions can enhance personal and social outcomes such as confidence, creativity, teamwork, and leadership (Diener et al., 2020).

Experiencing joy at work can foster a more positive outlook and greater resilience against stress. Employees who feel joyful are more likely to engage in proactive coping strategies, reducing the impact of stressors (Fredrickson, 2001); for millennials and Generation Z, who prioritise work-life balance and meaningful work, fostering joy can be particularly effective in mitigating stress. Employees who are interested in their work tend to be more engaged and motivated. This engagement can buffer against the adverse effects of job stress by providing a sense of purpose and fulfilment (Heckman, 2023). In addition, skill development and innovation opportunities can enhance their interest and reduce stress.

Furthermore, feeling content at work can increase job satisfaction and lower stress levels. Contentment helps employees appreciate their current situation and reduces the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed by job demands. For millennials, who often seek stability and career growth, creating a

supportive environment acknowledging their contributions can foster contentment and reduce stress. Positive work relationships, characterised by affection and support, can provide a strong social support network. This network can help employees manage stress more effectively by offering emotional and practical support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Fostering positive relationships can significantly reduce job stress for millennials and Generation Z, who value collaboration and a supportive work culture.

Positive emotions have practical implications for managing job stress. They help employees manage their time more effectively by enhancing their ability to prioritise tasks and maintain focus, leading to better time management and reduced feeling overwhelmed. Generation Z, who often juggle multiple responsibilities, can benefit from this. Positive emotions also reduce anxiety by promoting a sense of calm and well-being, providing emotional stability, and reducing the likelihood of experiencing anxiety-related stress. A relaxed and supportive environment can help alleviate anxiety for millennials facing significant career pressures. Moreover, positive emotions aid in navigating role conflicts by fostering open communication and collaboration, leading to more effective problem-solving and conflict resolution. Clear communication and role clarity are essential for both generations. Positive emotions enhance coworker support by building strong, positive relationships and creating a supportive work environment where employees feel valued. Generation Z, who value inclusivity and teamwork, can experience reduced job stress in a culture of mutual support.

Additionally, positive emotions improve work-life balance by promoting a healthy perspective on work and personal life, helping employees set boundaries and prioritise their well-being. Supporting work-life balance initiatives can significantly reduce stress for millennials striving for a balanced life. These findings are in line with a study done by Shukla and Srivastava (2016), who stated that several elements of job stress (Time Stress, Anxiety Stress, Role Expectation Conflict, Coworker Support, and Work-Life Balance) can be reduced by promoting positive emotion (Heckman, 2023; Diener et al., 2020).

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical role of positive emotions in reducing job stress among millennial and Generation Z employees. The findings highlight the importance of fostering positive feelings in the workplace to enhance employee well-being and performance. Organisations' Recommendations include creating a positive work environment, offering opportunities for professional development, supporting work-life balance, and fostering positive relationships. Future research should continue to explore the mechanisms through which positive emotions influence job stress and develop targeted interventions to promote positive emotions in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that positive emotions experienced affect employee work stress in the millennial and Z generations in Jakarta. With this conclusion, the hypothesis can be accepted so that positive emotions affect employee work stress. The influence given by positive emotions is 21.4% and is negative. The higher the positive emotions of employees, the lower the level of employee work stress. To increase employees' positive emotions, employees should show gratitude, such as remembering the positive things they experienced that day. It can also be done by reflecting and writing down positive things that happen as a form of gratitude for the things that happen.

Based on the research process, there are limitations experienced in this study that can be considered by future researchers to perfect this study because, of course, every study has shortcomings that can be improved. In this study, the limitations are as follows:

1. The number of respondents obtained was limited, which, of course, still does not adequately describe the conditions related to the immense subject population.
2. The information obtained during the data collection process does not fully describe the respondents' answers; it depends on their understanding of the questions and the employees' honesty.
3. The workplace factor owned by the dynamic respondents is due to differences in regulations in each company. Although someone experiences the same thing, they may have different responses.

Implication of the study

The result of the present study sheds light on the importance of motivating positive emotions to reduce job stress among millennials and Gen Z by promoting interventions that can enhance their satisfaction and gratitude for what they have, practice kindness, and share love. Contentment, or feeling satisfied with what you have, significantly reduces job stress, especially anxiety. Therefore, gratitude journaling and not comparing yourself to others while focusing on enhancing your skills may help young employees.

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