

The Influence of Organizational Culture and Ethical Literacy on the Integrity of Generation Z Human Resources with Self-Control as a Mediating Variable (Study in Bima City)

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Abstract

The urgency of this research is to examine how organizational culture and ethical literacy influence the integrity of Generation Z human resources through self-control, in response to the growing ethical challenges faced by young workers in the digital era and the increasing need for a trustworthy and sustainable workforce in Bima City. This study examines the influence of organizational culture and ethical literacy on the integrity of Generation Z human resources, with self-control serving as a mediating variable in the context of Bima City, Indonesia. In the era of rapid digital transformation, integrity has become an essential factor in maintaining ethical behavior, accountability, and organizational sustainability among younger generations entering the workforce. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey design and Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) for data analysis. Data were collected from 100–200 Generation Z respondents aged 15–25 through purposive sampling using online questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale. The findings reveal that ethical literacy has a positive and significant effect on integrity, while self-control also significantly strengthens integrity. Organizational culture does not directly influence integrity; however, it significantly affects self-control, indicating an indirect relationship through mediation. In contrast, ethical literacy does not significantly influence self-control. The model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with R-square values of 0.642 for self-control and 0.755 for integrity. These findings suggest that internal psychological factors, particularly ethical literacy and self-control, play a more dominant role than external organizational factors in shaping the integrity of Generation Z. This study contributes to the literature on organizational behavior and human resource management by integrating external and internal determinants of integrity within a comprehensive mediation framework in a local socio-cultural context.

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Ethical Literacy, Self-Control, Integrity, Generation Z.*

Introduction

In the era of rapid digital transformation, organizations are increasingly challenged to develop human resources (HR) that are not only technically competent but also possess strong integrity. The acceleration of digitalization, automation, and information exchange has significantly reshaped organizational environments, requiring individuals to make faster and more complex decisions (Wati & Lasmi, 2026). In such conditions, integrity becomes a fundamental value that ensures ethical behavior, accountability, and long-term organizational sustainability (Yusuf et al., 2023). Without integrity, technological advancement may instead increase the risk of unethical practices, such as data manipulation, fraud, and misuse of digital resources.

Despite growing awareness of ethical standards, persistent cases of misconduct indicate that integrity remains a significant issue across various sectors, particularly among younger

generations entering the workforce (Kaptein, 2022; Brown & Treviño, 2021). Generation Z, as the newest cohort in the labor market, presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations. This generation is characterized by high digital literacy, adaptability, and access to vast amounts of information. At the same time, their tendency toward instant gratification, rapid decision-making, and exposure to diverse values may increase vulnerability to unethical behavior if not supported by strong internal control mechanisms (Singh & Dangmei, 2022). The digital environment often encourages speed over reflection, which can reduce individuals' ability to critically evaluate the ethical implications of their actions. Consequently, internal factors such as self-control and ethical awareness become critical determinants in guiding behavior toward ethical standards (Podsakoff et al., 2020).

Individuals who possess strong self-control are more capable of regulating impulses, delaying gratification, and aligning their actions with moral principles (Tangney et al., 2021; Baumeister & Vohs, 2022). Therefore, strengthening both internal and external factors is essential to ensure that Generation Z develops integrity in a rapidly changing environment. Recent studies emphasize the importance of ethical literacy and organizational culture in shaping individual integrity (Vallerand, 2021). Ethical literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand, evaluate, and apply ethical principles in decision-making processes (Nur & Asmadi, 2026). In increasingly complex and dynamic environments, ethical literacy enables individuals to assess moral consequences and choose actions that align with societal and organizational values (Nguyen et al., 2022). Empirical findings demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of ethical literacy tend to exhibit more responsible behavior, stronger moral judgment, and higher levels of integrity (Demir et al., 2023; Periman et al., 2023).

This suggests that ethical literacy is not merely cognitive knowledge but also a practical competence that influences real-world behavior. In addition to ethical literacy, organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping ethical behavior. Organizational culture, particularly ethical culture, provides a system of shared values, norms, and practices that guide individual actions within an organization. A strong ethical culture promotes transparency, accountability, and consistency in behavior, thereby reducing the likelihood of misconduct (Kaptein, 2022). Leadership also plays a significant role in reinforcing ethical culture through role modeling, communication, and enforcement of ethical standards. Studies have shown that organizations with well-established ethical cultures are more effective in preventing unethical behavior and fostering employee integrity (Newman et al., 2021; Suharti & Pramono, 2024).

Recent research highlights that organizational environments that emphasize ethical values positively influence Generation Z's engagement, motivation, and alignment with organizational goals (Kim & Park, 2023; Rahman et al., 2024). This indicates that organizational culture remains a relevant external factor in shaping behavior, even for a generation that is often considered highly individualistic. In addition to external factors, self-control has been widely recognized as a key psychological factor influencing ethical behavior. Self-control refers to an individual's ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, and actions in accordance with long-term goals and societal norms. Individuals with high self-control are better able to resist temptations, avoid impulsive decisions, and maintain consistency between values and behavior (Tangney et al., 2021; Duckworth, 2022). Empirical research confirms that self-control significantly reduces the likelihood of unethical behavior and strengthens moral consistency across various contexts (Gino et al., 2021; Lee & Kim, 2023).

Self-control becomes even more important due to the high level of digital stimulation and instant access to information, which can trigger impulsive behavior. However, despite its

importance, self-control is often treated as an independent variable rather than as a mediating mechanism that connects external influences and behavioral outcomes. Although prior research has contributed significantly to understanding ethical behavior, many studies still adopt fragmented approaches. Ethical literacy, organizational culture, and self-control are often examined separately, with a primary focus on direct relationships rather than integrated mechanisms (Nguyen et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2024). This limitation reduces the ability to fully explain how integrity is formed, particularly in complex social and organizational contexts. Some studies suggest that organizational culture may not directly influence ethical behavior but instead operates through psychological mediators such as self-control (Kaptein, 2022; Suharti & Pramono, 2024).

Ethical literacy may not automatically translate into ethical behavior unless individuals possess the capacity to regulate their actions. These findings indicate the need for a more comprehensive approach that integrates both external and internal factors within a single analytical framework. Despite these advancements, a critical gap remains in understanding how external organizational factors and internal psychological mechanisms interact simultaneously in shaping integrity. Many previous studies have overlooked the mediating role of self-control, even though behavioral theories emphasize that internal regulation is essential in translating ethical knowledge into action (Baumeister & Vohs, 2022; Duckworth, 2022).

Most empirical studies have been conducted in developed countries and formal organizational settings, with limited attention given to Generation Z in local or emerging contexts (Kim & Park, 2023; Rahman et al., 2024). Cultural, social, and environmental differences may significantly influence how integrity is developed, making it important to examine these relationships in diverse settings. The lack of empirical research in local contexts, such as Bima City, highlights the need for studies that capture the unique characteristics of Generation Z in different socio-cultural environments. Based on this gap, this study aims to examine: (1) the effect of organizational culture and ethical literacy on the integrity of Generation Z HR, (2) the influence of these variables on self-control, and (3) the mediating role of self-control in shaping integrity.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of an integrative model that combines external factors (organizational culture) and internal factors (ethical literacy and self-control) within a single SEM-PLS framework. By incorporating self-control as a mediating variable, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which integrity is formed. Additionally, this research contributes to the literature by focusing on Generation Z in a local context, namely Bima City, which remains underexplored in recent empirical studies. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical and practical implications for organizations in designing strategies to strengthen integrity among future human resources.

Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey design to examine the relationships among organizational culture, ethical literacy, self-control, and the integrity of Generation Z human resources. A cross-sectional approach was applied, where data were collected at a single point in time to capture respondents' perceptions and behavioral tendencies. The research utilized Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) because this method is appropriate for predictive analysis, mediation testing, relatively small sample sizes, and non-normal data distribution conditions. The study population consisted of Generation

Z individuals in Bima City, Indonesia, aged 15–25 years. This group was selected because it represents prospective human resources who are highly exposed to digital environments and ethical challenges in modern organizational contexts.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Respondents were required to be students, university students, or individuals with organizational or work-related experience to ensure adequate exposure to ethical decision-making situations. The total sample ranged from 100 to 200 respondents, which satisfies the minimum requirement for SEM-PLS analysis involving mediation models. Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires distributed via digital platforms. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Before the main data collection, the research instrument underwent expert validation to ensure content validity and relevance. Three experts in human resource management and organizational behavior were invited to evaluate the questionnaire items in terms of clarity, relevance, language appropriateness, and construct representation. The validation results were analyzed using the Content Validity Index (CVI). The item-level CVI (I-CVI) was calculated using the formula:

$$I-CVI = \frac{n_e}{N}$$

Where n_e represents the number of experts rating the item as relevant, and N represents the total number of experts. Items with I-CVI values ≥ 0.80 were categorized as valid and retained, while items below the threshold were revised according to expert suggestions. The overall scale validity was determined using the Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI), where values above 0.90 indicated excellent content validity.

A pilot test involving 30 respondents was also conducted to examine the practicality and feasibility of the instrument. The practicality level was measured using the following formula:

$$Practicality\ Percentage = \frac{Obtained\ Score}{Maximum\ Score} \times 100\%$$

The practicality categories were determined as follows: 81–100% = very practical, 61–80% = practical, 41–60% = moderately practical, 21–40% = less practical, and below 20% = impractical. The pilot test results indicated that the instrument was categorized as practical and understandable for respondents.

The effectiveness of the instrument was evaluated through respondents' consistency and completeness in answering questionnaire items. Effectiveness was measured using the formula:

$$Effectiveness\ Percentage = \frac{Actual\ Score}{Ideal\ Score} \times 100\%$$

The effectiveness criteria were categorized as follows: 81–100% = highly effective, 61–80% = effective, 41–60% = moderately effective, 21–40% = less effective, and below 20% = ineffective. The results showed that the instrument met the criteria for effective data collection.

To ensure data quality, construct validity and reliability tests were performed. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators with loading factors above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50 were considered valid.

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency.

The data analysis process was conducted using SmartPLS software in two stages: outer model evaluation and inner model evaluation. The outer model assessment focused on validity and reliability testing, while the inner model assessment examined path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance, and hypothesis testing. Bootstrapping procedures were applied to determine the significance of relationships using t-statistics and p-values. Mediation analysis was also performed to examine the role of self-control in mediating the relationships between organizational culture, ethical literacy, and integrity. These analytical procedures ensured that the findings were valid, reliable, and aligned with the research objectives.

Results

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study, namely organizational culture, ethical literacy, self-control, and human resource integrity. In SEM-PLS, outer model evaluation is essential to ensure that the indicators are capable of accurately measuring the latent constructs they represent. According to the theory convergent validity is achieved when indicators that measure the same construct share a high proportion of variance (Hair et al., 2022). Therefore, convergent validity was assessed through outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

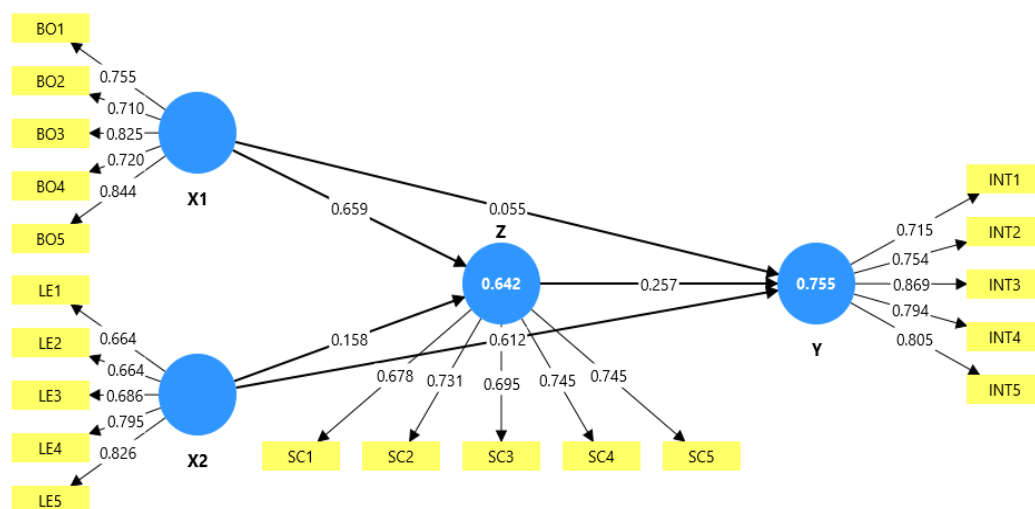


Figure 1. Convergent Validity Test

Based on the results presented in Figure 1, most indicators demonstrate outer loading values above 0.70, while several indicators fall within the range of 0.60–0.70. Outer loading values above 0.70 indicate strong indicator reliability because the construct explains more than 50% of the indicator variance. However, loading values between 0.60 and 0.70 are still considered acceptable in exploratory and social science research, particularly when the construct demonstrates adequate composite reliability and AVE values. The findings indicate that all indicators are capable of adequately reflecting their respective constructs. Therefore, no indicators were removed from the model, as all loading values exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60. These results confirm that the measurement model satisfies the

criteria for convergent validity. In addition to outer loading analysis, convergent validity was further evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as presented in Table 1. According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators, thereby confirming adequate convergent validity. Thus, the combination of acceptable outer loading values and AVE results demonstrates that the constructs used in this study possess satisfactory validity and are appropriate for further structural model analysis.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE
Organizational Culture	0.597
Ethical Literacy	0.533
Self-Control	0.517
HR Integrity	0.623

All AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. This confirms that all variables meet the criteria for convergent validity and are suitable for further analysis. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Organizational Culture	0.883	0.884
Ethical Literacy	0.855	0.856
Self-Control	0.843	0.844
HR Integrity	0.892	0.895

The results show that all Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Thus, all constructs are considered reliable and suitable for subsequent analysis.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R-square) to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R²).

Variable	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Self-Control	0.642	0.634
HR Integrity	0.755	0.747

The R-square value for self-control is 0.642, indicating that 64.2% of the variance in self-control is explained by organizational culture and ethical literacy. Meanwhile, the R-square value for HR integrity is 0.755, meaning that 75.5% of the variance in integrity is explained by organizational culture, ethical literacy, and self-control. These values are categorized as strong to very strong, demonstrating that the model has substantial explanatory power. Model fit was further evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Model Fit (SRMR)

Model Type	SRMR	Cut-off	Result
Saturated Model	0.076	0.10	Fit
Estimated Model	0.076	0.10	Fit

The SRMR value of 0.076 is below the recommended threshold of 0.10, indicating that the model has a good fit with the observed data. Further evaluation was conducted using the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Variable	AVE	R Square
Organizational Culture	0.597	-
Ethical Literacy	0.533	-
Self-Control	0.517	0.642
HR Integrity	0.623	0.755

Average AVE = 0.627

Average R² = 0.602

GoF = 0.629

The GoF value of 0.629 exceeds the threshold of 0.36, indicating a large effect size and confirming that the model has excellent overall fit and predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained through bootstrapping procedures. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Path Coefficients

Relationship	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value
OC → Integrity	0.219	1.798	0.072
OC → Self-Control	0.508	4.231	0.000
EL → Integrity	0.432	3.676	0.000
EL → Self-Control	0.238	1.944	0.052
SC → Integrity	0.231	2.345	0.019

The results indicate that organizational culture has a positive but not statistically significant effect on HR integrity ($\beta = 0.219$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the first hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that organizational culture alone is insufficient to directly enhance the integrity of Generation Z. One possible explanation is that the values embedded in organizational culture have not yet been fully internalized by individuals. In contrast, organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on self-control ($\beta = 0.508$; $p < 0.05$), supporting the second hypothesis. This finding implies that an ethical organizational environment plays an important role in shaping individuals' ability to regulate their behavior. Ethical literacy is found to have a positive and significant effect on HR integrity ($\beta = 0.432$; $p < 0.05$), confirming the third hypothesis. This result highlights the importance of ethical understanding in promoting responsible and consistent behavior among individuals. However, ethical literacy does not have a significant effect on self-control ($\beta = 0.238$; $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the fourth hypothesis.

This indicates that knowledge of ethical principles alone is not sufficient to enhance self-control, as behavioral regulation is more closely related to psychological capacity than cognitive understanding. Furthermore, self-control has a positive and significant effect on HR integrity ($\beta = 0.231$; $p < 0.05$), supporting the fifth hypothesis. This finding confirms that individuals who are able to regulate their impulses and emotions are more likely to maintain ethical consistency in their actions. Overall, the results suggest that self-control serves as a partial mediating variable, particularly in the relationship between organizational culture and HR integrity. The findings emphasize that internal psychological factors play a more dominant role than external factors in shaping the integrity of Generation Z.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings and Theoretical Implications

This study aims to examine the influence of organizational culture and ethical literacy on the integrity of Generation Z human resources, with self-control as a mediating variable. The findings provide several important insights into the mechanisms underlying ethical behavior and integrity formation, particularly in the context of a digitally oriented generation. The results indicate that organizational culture does not have a direct and significant effect on integrity. Although the relationship is positive, it fails to reach statistical significance, suggesting that the presence of an ethical organizational environment alone is not sufficient to directly shape the integrity of individuals.

This finding is reasonable and supported by the empirical results, as Generation Z tends to be more influenced by internal psychological factors rather than external environmental structures. In line with previous research, organizational culture often requires internalization before it can effectively influence behavior. Without such internalization, values remain symbolic rather than behavioral. Therefore, the non-significant direct relationship observed in this study supports the argument that organizational culture operates indirectly through individual-level mechanisms. Interestingly, organizational culture was found to have a strong and significant influence on self-control.

This suggests that a supportive and ethical environment contributes to the development of individuals' ability to regulate their behavior. Ethical norms, leadership examples, and organizational rules may create a structured environment that encourages discipline, reflection, and adherence to standards. These findings align with theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of environmental conditioning in shaping behavioral regulation. In this sense, organizational culture acts as a contextual factor that fosters the development of self-control, which in turn influences ethical outcomes.

This result confirms earlier studies suggesting that ethical culture strengthens internal psychological capacities rather than directly dictating behavior. Ethical literacy, on the other hand, demonstrates a strong and significant direct effect on integrity. This finding highlights the importance of cognitive and moral understanding in shaping ethical behavior. Individuals who are able to distinguish between right and wrong, evaluate moral consequences, and reflect on ethical dilemmas are more likely to act with integrity. The results are consistent with prior research indicating that ethical awareness enhances moral judgment and responsible behavior. This suggests that ethical literacy serves as a foundational element in developing integrity, particularly among Generation Z, who are frequently exposed to diverse and sometimes conflicting information. The strong relationship observed in this study reinforces the view that ethical knowledge is not merely theoretical but has practical implications for behavior.

Ethical literacy does not significantly influence self-control, which presents an interesting contradiction. While ethical knowledge enhances understanding, it does not necessarily translate into behavioral regulation. This finding supports the notion that knowing what is right does not always lead to doing what is right. Self-control is more closely associated with psychological capacity, including emotional regulation, impulse control, and habit formation. Therefore, ethical literacy alone may be insufficient to influence self-control without the presence of supporting psychological or environmental factors. This result is consistent with behavioral theories that distinguish between cognitive awareness and behavioral execution. Furthermore, self-control is found to have a significant positive effect on integrity, confirming its central role in ethical

behavior. Individuals with higher levels of self-control are better equipped to resist temptations, manage impulses, and act consistently with their values. This finding is strongly supported by the results and aligns with existing literature emphasizing self-control as a key determinant of ethical conduct. In the context of Generation Z, where digital distractions and instant gratification are prevalent, self-control becomes even more critical in maintaining ethical consistency. The findings suggest that self-control acts as a bridge between intention and action, ensuring that ethical knowledge is translated into actual behavior.

Integration with Previous Research and Model Implications

The findings of this study both support and extend previous research. The significant role of ethical literacy and self-control in shaping integrity is consistent with earlier studies that highlight the importance of internal factors in ethical decision-making. However, the absence of a direct effect of organizational culture on integrity challenges traditional assumptions that external factors alone are sufficient to shape behavior. Instead, the results suggest that organizational culture operates indirectly through self-control, thereby confirming the importance of mediation mechanisms.

The role of self-control as a mediating variable is one of the key contributions of this study. The results demonstrate that self-control partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and integrity. This means that organizational values must first influence individuals' ability to regulate themselves before impacting their ethical behavior. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding of how integrity is formed, emphasizing the interaction between external and internal factors. It also supports integrative models of behavior that combine environmental influences with psychological processes. In addition, the findings highlight the dominant role of internal factors compared to external factors in shaping the integrity of Generation Z. This is consistent with the characteristics of this generation, which tends to prioritize personal values, autonomy, and internal motivation. As a result, efforts to strengthen integrity should focus not only on organizational policies and culture but also on developing individuals' psychological capacities, particularly self-control and ethical awareness.

Integration with Previous Research and Model Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have important implications for organizations and educational institutions. First, the significant role of ethical literacy suggests that ethics education should be emphasized as a key component of human resource development. Training programs that enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making can help individuals develop a stronger sense of integrity. Second, the importance of self-control indicates that organizations should design interventions that support behavioral regulation. This may include creating structured environments, promoting reflective practices, and providing feedback mechanisms that encourage self-discipline.

Since self-control is influenced by both internal and external factors, a holistic approach is needed to strengthen this capacity. Third, the indirect role of organizational culture suggests that organizations should not rely solely on formal rules and values but also focus on how these values are internalized by individuals. Leadership plays a crucial role in this process, as leaders serve as role models who demonstrate ethical behavior in practice. By fostering an environment that encourages reflection and accountability, organizations can enhance the effectiveness of their ethical culture. Finally, the focus on Generation Z in a local context provides valuable insights into the unique characteristics of this group. The findings suggest that strategies to enhance integrity must be adapted to the specific needs and behaviors of this generation. In

emerging regions such as Bima City, cultural and social factors may further influence how integrity is developed, highlighting the importance of context-specific approaches. In conclusion, the discussion confirms that the claims presented in this study are well supported by the results. The findings are consistent with theoretical expectations while also offering new insights into the role of mediation and the dominance of internal factors. By integrating organizational and psychological perspectives, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of integrity in the modern workforce.

Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of organizational culture and ethical literacy on the integrity of Generation Z human resources, with self-control acting as a mediating variable. The findings reveal that the proposed model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with an R-square value of 0.642 for self-control and 0.755 for integrity, indicating that 75.5% of the variance in integrity can be explained by organizational culture, ethical literacy, and self-control. The results show that ethical literacy has a significant positive effect on integrity ($\beta = 0.432$; $p < 0.05$), while self-control also significantly influences integrity ($\beta = 0.231$; $p < 0.05$). In contrast, organizational culture does not directly affect integrity significantly ($\beta = 0.219$; $p > 0.05$), although it significantly influences self-control ($\beta = 0.508$; $p < 0.05$), indicating an indirect effect through mediation. Meanwhile, ethical literacy does not significantly influence self-control ($\beta = 0.238$; $p > 0.05$). These findings confirm the research objective that internal psychological factors, particularly ethical literacy and self-control, play a more dominant role than external organizational factors in shaping the integrity of Generation Z. The study contributes theoretically by developing an integrative framework that combines organizational and psychological perspectives in explaining integrity formation. Practically, the findings imply that organizations and educational institutions should strengthen ethics education, behavioral regulation programs, and supportive ethical environments to foster integrity among future human resources. However, this study has several limitations, including the use of a cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and limited research scope within Bima City, which may restrict generalizability. Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches and incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, social influence, organizational justice, and digital behavior to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of integrity development across different demographic and cultural contexts.

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