An Examination of Factors Influencing Turnover Intentions Among Generation Z Employees

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Main Objectives: Gen-Z has started to take over the workforce both worldwide and in Indonesia. West Java and the city of Bandung, in particular, are home to the greatest concentration of Gen-Z workers and inhabitants. **Background Problems:** However, challenges arise when Gen-Z workers frequently change jobs and move on from their positions. **Novelty:** This is the first qualitative study exploring factors influencing Gen-Z turnover intentions in Bandung. **Research Methods:** This research employs a qualitative and descriptive approach to provide a clear understanding of the causes or factors behind turnover intention, using interviews and observations. A total of 12 individuals from various industries in Bandung served as informants for this study. **Finding/Results:** 9 out of the 12 respondents interviewed reported experiencing more than one factor influencing their turnover intentions. These factors are interconnected, forming primary and secondary influences. The most common reasons driving Gen-Z employees' desire to leave their jobs include heavy workloads linked to multiple job responsibilities, dissatisfaction with compensation, high work intensity, toxic work culture and leadership, and a lack of supportive work environment. **Conclusion:** This research aims to encourage companies to implement effective and suitable staffing practices. By analyzing job positions and creating clear job descriptions, companies can avoid overlapping responsibilities. Additionally, placing competent leaders can help prevent toxic work cultures and foster a supportive environment for Gen-Z employees, ultimately reducing their intention to leave the company.

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1.   Introduction

Indonesia has population spans a wide range of ages, from toddlers to the elderly, each with distinct characteristics and needs. According to the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Indonesia's population reached 280.73 million in December 2023. This diverse population plays a crucial role in the nation's development. For instance, millennials are seen as the future's backbone, with significant potential to impact education, economy, and society. Meanwhile, the older generation plays a key role in preserving cultural heritage, knowledge, and experiences vital for societal continuity. The current generational groups in Indonesia include the Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964), Generation X (born 1965 – 1980), Millennials (Generation Y, born 1981 – 1996), Generation Z (born 1997 – 2012), and Generation Alpha (born after 2012) (Muhtar, 2023). According to Kupperschmidt (2000), a generation consists of people born around the same time, sharing similar ages, locations, and historical experiences that significantly impact their development. In essence, a generation is a cohort that experiences similar events during the same period (Putra, 2017).

Currently, Generation Z is the most prominent demographic in Indonesia, comprising about 27.94% of the population according to the 2020 census, which translates to roughly 75 million individuals across 38 provinces. West Java is one of Indonesia's most populous provinces, with a total of 49.9 million residents as of December 2023 (Databoks, 2024). Generation Z constitutes 26.86% of this population (Databoks, 2024), and West Java has the highest number of job seekers in Indonesia for 2023, totaling 541,015 individuals, or 29.79% of the national job-seeking population. Among its cities and regencies, Bandung is the most densely populated, with 2,555,187 residents in 2023, 51% of whom are Millennials and Generation Z.

West Java province has the largest population in Indonesia, totaling 50,489,208 people, with Bandung being the most populous city at 2,579,837 residents. Bandung, dubbed "Paris Van Java," has a diverse industrial landscape, featuring numerous fashion outlets, textile factories, and a vibrant food and beverage scene, along with prominent leather crafts from Cibaduyut. Key industries include food and beverage, textiles, tobacco processing, and leather goods (Central Statistics Agency of Bandung City, 2024.)

Gen-Z shows both strengths and weaknesses. They're digital natives, creative, and adaptable but struggle with technology reliance and face-to-face communication (Ambarwati, 2023). This has earned them the label "Strawberry generation," indicating perceived fragility and low perseverance (Aulia et al., 2022). High turnover rates in the workforce are concerning, with many Gen-Z workers changing jobs frequently due to an instant culture (Republika, 2022). A 2022 Deloitte survey found that 40% of Gen-Z employees are considering leaving their jobs within two years (Deloitte, 2022).

Turnover intention refers to an employee's plan to leave their current job and seek better opportunities elsewhere. High turnover rates can hinder a company's growth by disrupting operations, complicating recruitment and re-acquisition efforts, and necessitating extensive training and mentoring for new employees (Permai, 2022). Research and case studies have been conducted to understand the reasons behind turnover intentions among Gen-Z employees. For example, a study of PT ABC, a call center outsourcing company in Bandung, found that Gen-Z employees often resigned due to heavy workloads (Kashfitanto & Febriansyah , 2023). Additionally, a case study of the Daan Mogot branch of BJB Bank showed that job insecurity and high workloads significantly impact turnover intentions among both Millennials and Gen-Z employees (Priyono & Tampubolon, 2023).

At the start of this research, a preliminary survey was conducted using Google Forms, targeting 30 Gen-Z employees in Bandung to illustrate the factors driving their desire to leave their jobs across various industries. According to the survey results, 32.3% of respondents cited a lack of career advancement opportunities as their primary reason for leaving. Compensation issues and irregular working hours, along with excessive workloads and poor work-life balance, were each reported by 9.7% of respondents. The remaining respondents indicated issues related to co-workers, toxic company culture, and other factors. However, it's important to note that these respondents do not exclusively represent the largest industries in Bandung, as the sample also included individuals from finance, agriculture, energy, education, and health sectors.

It is imperative to do a comprehensive analysis of the five categories of factors impacting Gen-Z employees' intentions to leave their jobs, drawing on previous surveys, research, and case studies. The main industries in Bandung, the most populated city in West Java, Indonesia, should be covered in this thorough research. A comprehensive understanding will enable the implementation of preventive measures to reduce turnover intentions among Gen-Z employees, particularly in Bandung.

1.1. Research questions and objectives

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to turnover intention among Gen-Z employees in Bandung?
2. How can we address and reduce the factors leading to turnover intention among Gen-Z employees in Bandung?

2. Literature Review

Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human resource management (HRM) encompasses the processes of recruiting, training, evaluating, and compensating employees, as well as addressing issues related to employment, health and safety, and fairness (Dessler, 2020). According to him, the five key managerial functions are:

1. Planning: Establishing goals and standards, creating rules and procedures, and developing plans and forecasts.
2. Organizing: Assigning specific tasks to subordinates, setting up departments, delegating authority, creating channels of authority and communication, and coordinating subordinate work.
3. Staffing: Identifying the types of individuals needed, recruiting and selecting employees, setting performance standards, compensating and evaluating employees, providing counseling, and facilitating training and development.
4. Leading: Ensuring tasks are completed, maintaining morale, and motivating staff.
5. Controlling: Setting performance standards such as sales targets or quality benchmarks, comparing actual performance against these standards, and taking corrective measures when needed.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is the employee's intention to leave their current position and seek better opportunities elsewhere (Azhar, 2023; Bigliardi et al., 2005; Mobley, 1977).
According to Lum et al. (1998), the indicators used to assess turnover intention include:

1) Intention to Quit: This indicator reflects a person's readiness to leave their job, often evidenced by a change in attitude towards their work, such as increased absenteeism before they formally decide to resign.
2) Job Search: This indicator relates to a person's active search for another job, usually beginning with their desire to earn additional income outside their current employment.
3) Thinking of Quit: This indicator describes a person's contemplation before making a decision to leave their job, as they weigh the choice of either staying in their current role or departing from the workplace.

Generation Theory & The Emergence of Generation Z

According to (Strauss & Howe, 2015), a generation is a social construct consisting of individuals who share the same age and historical experiences. Mannheim elaborated that people within a generation are those born within a 20-year period and who experience similar social and historical contexts. This concept led to the development of Generation Theory, which defines a generation as a cohort of individuals born over twenty years, covering the span of one life stage, such as childhood, young adulthood, middle age, and old age. This theory posits an 80-year cycle, known as the Fourth Turning or the "Fourth Round," reflecting significant generational shifts in American history.

Strauss & Howe identify three key attributes that better define a generation beyond just birth years:

a) Perceived Membership: This refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group, especially during adolescence and young adulthood.
b) Common Beliefs and Behaviors: This includes shared attitudes towards family, career, personal life, politics, religion, and decisions related to work, marriage, children, health, and crime.
c) Common Location in History: This encompasses shared political views and experiences of significant historical events, such as wars or natural disasters, during adolescence and young adulthood.

Strauss & Howe refer to Generation Z, or Zoomers (born between 1995 and 2010), as the iGeneration, the net generation, or the internet generation. While they share some traits with Generation Y, they are particularly adept at multitasking (Wibawanto, 2016). Having grown up with technology, they are accustomed to advanced gadgets, which has influenced their personalities, often leading to a lack of focus and patience due to their tendency to juggle multiple tasks simultaneously. The widespread availability and affordability of technology products have ensured that Generation Z globally experiences similar technological influences (Lubis & Mulianingsih, 2019).

Connection between HRM and Turnover Intention

Different HRM practices are viewed as effective approaches to tackle personnel turnover. These include investing in training, strengthening organizational support, adopting innovative recruitment strategies, and offering better career advancement opportunities (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). Wenyan et al. (2024) emphasizes the important role of effective HRM practices in lowering turnover rates, improving employee satisfaction, and attaining long-term organizational development objectives. Wibowo et al. (2024)discovered that transformational leadership, work-life balance, and job stress significantly impact the turnover intentions of Generation Z in Surakarta. Thus, this generation's turnover problems can be mitigated with the use of efficient and ideal HRM techniques. To find out if the variables influencing Generation Z's intentions to leave an industry vary, more research is necessary.

Based on the above perspectives, this research can be outlined with the following research framework as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework
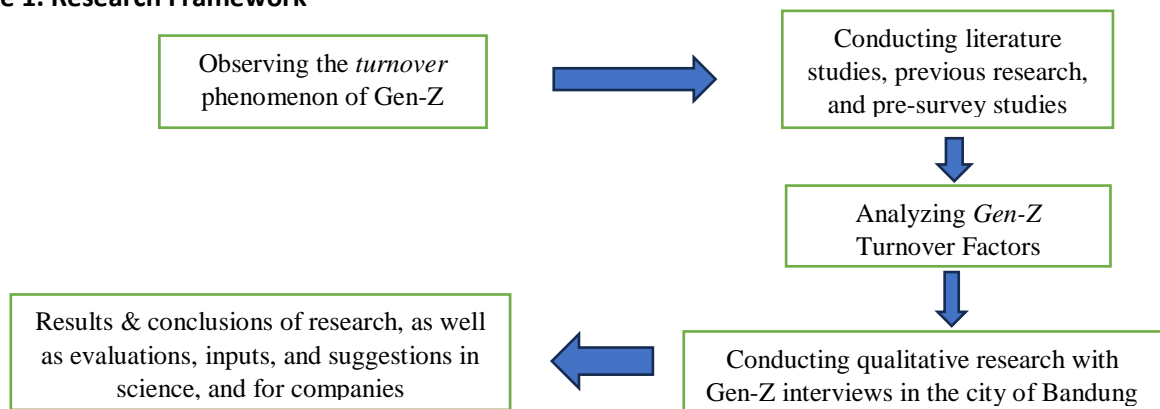
Source: Developed for Research (2024)

3. Method, Data, and Analysis

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The focus is on Generation Z employees in Bandung, specifically those born between 1997 and 2012, and currently aged 15 to 26 years, residing or working in Bandung.

Purposive sampling combined with nonprobability sampling is the sample method employed. Purposive sampling is widely applied in qualitative research because it enables researchers to concentrate on areas of interest and gather extensive information on those subjects. It's also frequently used in smaller-scale research projects with fewer participants. Representatives from the pre-survey-identified health and education sectors as well as four of the major Bandung industries are included in the sample. Each industry is represented by two respondents, resulting in a total sample size of 12 participants. Based on the data, saturation is typically reached after 9-17 interviews (Hennink & Kassier, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews and unstructured observation are the methods used to gather primary data. Semi-structured interviews are primarily used to gather structured data on important subjects, but they also allow for the exploration of any new problems or topics that may come up. On the other hand, secondary data comes from websites, books, and journals that provide more details. Following analysis and presentation of the data in this phenomenology study, conclusions are drawn from the collected and verified data. This approach is supported by the use of data triangulation techniques, which ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results.

4. Result and Discussion

Informant Profile & Turnover Intention Factors

Nine out of the 12 Gen-Z informants reported having multiple (2-3) interrelated factors that contribute to their decision to resign from their company, leading to the identification of both primary and supporting factors (Table 1.).

Table 1. Informant Profile & Turnover Intention Factor

No.	Industry	Informant	Age	Role in Industry	Reasons Turn Over	Job age Role in Industry main job
1	FnB	#1	25	Stand / Booth Guard in the Mall	The workload is too heavy	6 months
					Compensation	
2		#2	21	Barista Café	The workload is too light	1 year
3	Textiles & Apparel	#3	23	Production Staf	The workload is too heavy	2 years
					Toxic supervisor	
4		#4	25	Purchasing Staf	Moving due to family (work-family conflict)	3 years
5	Tobacco Processing	#5	27	Warehouse Head	Toxic supervisor	3 years
					Asked to help his wife's business (work-family conflict)	
6		#6	26	Sales Promotion Girl	Finding other opportunities (compensation)	1 year
7	Leather & Footwear Crafts	#7	24	Factory Admin	Toxic supervisor	7 months
					Overloaded workload	
8		#8	27	Mechanical Technician	Moving cities because of a wife (work family conflict)	4 years
					New job opportunities elsewhere (compensation)	
9	Health	#9	26	Clinic Nurse	Salary below minimum wage(compensation)	1 year
					No career path	
10		#10	25	Nurses in Companies	Overloaded workload	2 years
					Toxic co-worker	
11	Education	#11	26	Elementary – Private Junior High School Teacher	Demands are too high and double duty (workload)	2 years
					Salary does not match the jobdesk	
					Colleagues are less supportive (toxic)	
12		#12	24	Private Pre-School Teacher	Toxic supervisor	1 year
					Irregular working hours, no WLB	
					Finding other opportunities (compensation)	

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Table 2. Turnover Intention Factor by Industry

No.	Industry	Turnover Intention Factor				
		Irregular Working Hours, Workload, No Work Life Balance (Work Family Conflict occurs)	Salary does not match with job description	Company Culture, Work Environment & Toxic Colleagues (or Bosses)	No career path	Unclear SOPs & Rules
1	FnB	v	v			
2	Textiles & Apparel	v		v		
3	Tobacco Processing	v		v	v	
4	Leather & Footwear Crafts	v		v	v	
5	Health	v		v	v	
6	Education	v	v	v	v	

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Based on the data from the tables, here are some key trends and insights regarding turnover intention factors across various industries:

1. **Heavy Workload and Irregular Hours**

   A common theme across multiple industries (FnB, Textiles & Apparel, Tobacco Processing, Leather & Footwear Crafts, Health, and Education) is the presence of heavy workloads and irregular working hours. This suggests that excessive demands significantly contribute to turnover intention. Similarly, informant #2 reported that even if the salary is adequate, a too-light workload can lead to boredom and dissatisfaction, prompting them to leave their positions. This observation aligns with Tarwaka et al. (2004), which suggests that excessive workloads lead to physical and mental exhaustion, resulting in symptoms such as headaches, digestive issues, and irritability. Even if the salary is appropriate for the job description and meets minimum wage requirements, and despite having no issues with SOPs and maintaining internal relationships, these factors alone may not retain employees. To ensure employee retention, companies need to foster a supportive and constructive work environment (Ramdhani, 2021).

2. **Work Environments**

   Several informants cited issues with toxic supervisors or colleagues as a primary reason for leaving their jobs, particularly in the Textile & Apparel, Tobacco Processing, Leather & Footwear Crafts, Health, and Education sectors. This indicates that workplace culture plays a critical role in employee retention. A few toxic leaders can severely damage organizational culture (Matos et al., 2018), ultimately increasing turnover intention among employees who do not align with them. The 2022 JakPat survey indicates that Gen-Z employees who resign

due to unclear SOPs are often affected by unwritten rules, which may be introduced by toxic leaders (Jakmin, 2023). These abrupt changes in rules could be driven by concerns over losing power, popularity, or influence, as discussed by Milosevic et al., 2020) in their study on toxic leadership.

3. **Compensation Issues**

Many respondents indicated unhappiness with their income, whether it was below the minimum wage (particularly in Health) or did not meet work demands. This emphasises the necessity for competitive compensation structures to reduce turnover.

4. **Work-Family Conflict**

Several individuals noted that family-related conflicts influenced their decision to leave (e.g., relocating due to a spouse's job). This emphasizes the importance of work-life balance initiatives in retaining employees. According to (Frone et al., 1992), work-family conflict, once seen as a one-dimensional issue, is now understood as having two dimensions: work interfering with family life and vice versa. Therefore, work-life balance (WLB) concerns not only arise when work affects personal or family life but also when family issues impact work. This ongoing phenomenon often leads employees to resign due to reasons such as marriage, following a partner, or changing careers (Sulistiowati & Komari, 2023).

5. **Lack of Career Advancement**

In industries like Health and Education, the absence of a clear career path contributed to turnover intentions. Organizations should consider providing clear pathways for advancement to improve employee retention. This aligns with the Turnover Intention theory, which posits that turnover intention reflects the desire to leave one's current job in pursuit of more advantageous opportunities (Bigliardi et al., 2005).

Food and Beverages (FnB) Industries

The finance and banking industry have the fewest turnover intention factors, with only two found. The biggest challenge for Gen-Z employees is workload caused by many job tasks that do not match their salary, as opposed to other industries where high expectations are often derived from a single role. Intense rivalry in Bandung's food scene affects compensation decisions. One possible option is to lower job responsibilities or recruit more people, which would better align compensation with duties and reduce turnover intentions.

Textiles and Apparel

The Textile and Apparel industry faces challenges from high workloads, which can cause emotional instability and a toxic work environment, impacting personal and family life. Despite these challenges, the business offers fair pay, defined career routes, and established SOPs. A positive work environment is essential for reducing turnover intentions, as informant #3 noted that Gen-Z employees are more likely to stay if the company fosters support and minimizes toxicity.

Tobacco Processing

The Tobacco Processing sector has a balanced workload and no major complaints about demand. Salaries are commensurate with job demands, and the industry provides clear career routes, friendly colleagues, and transparent SOPs. However, obstacles include toxic leadership, work-family conflict caused by excessive hours, and the possibility that employees would seek chances elsewhere because of strong industry connections. To mitigate these issues, leaders should offer incentives for extra hours and achievements to reduce household conflicts and turnover intentions while discouraging external job offers.

Leather and Footwear Crafts

The Leather and Footwear industry offers competitive salaries, clear career paths, and well-defined SOPs, despite a high workload and no multiple job responsibilities. However, toxic leadership contributes to higher turnover among Gen-Z employees, as noted by informant #7. Additionally, work can interfere with personal and family life, especially for men in supervisory roles, leading to concerns about household integrity. Addressing toxic leadership and enforcing SOPs could help reduce turnover intentions in this sector.

Healthcare Industry

According to informant #10, heavy workloads encourage turnover intentions in this industry, resulting in unfavourable attitudes and rudeness among colleagues. Despite attractive compensation and experienced management, the job demands provide obstacles. Variations in company sizes impact career opportunities, with employees in smaller firms often receiving lower-than-standard compensation and lacking advancement prospects, as mentioned by informant #9. To retain young talent, companies should consider expanding their size, developing clear career paths, and enhancing competitiveness.

Education Industry

The education industry has the highest turnover intention among Gen-Z employees, primarily due to the demanding nature of teaching roles that lack defined hours. Issues such as multiple job responsibilities, inadequate compensation, and toxic leadership further drive the desire to leave, as noted by informant #12. To address these challenges, comprehensive changes are needed, including reducing job responsibilities, adjusting compensation, managing working hours effectively, appointing suitable leaders, rebranding the teaching profession to highlight teachers' personal lives, and fostering a supportive work environment. These measures are essential to reducing turnover intentions among young teachers.

5.   Conclusion and Suggestion

The conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. Factors that contribute to turnover intention among Gen-Z employees in Bandung:
   Out of 12 respondents, 9 experienced 2-3 factors influencing their turnover intentions. Each factor is interconnected, involving one main factor and several supporting ones. For instance:
      a) A high workload resulting from multiple job responsibilities may lead to demands for compensation adjustments. If these demands are not met, employees may wish to leave the company.

b) Other factors include the impact of toxic coworkers on workload intensity, and the role of toxic leaders in creating a negative work environment and unclear SOPs. Addressing both main and supporting factors could reduce turnover intentions among Gen-Z employees.

c) Excessive workload can negatively affect employees' emotional well-being, potentially leading to a toxic work environment. Companies need to ensure a supportive and conducive work atmosphere to mitigate these effects.

d) Proper staffing is crucial for defining job responsibilities and placing suitable leaders to minimize toxic behaviors and unclear SOPs, thereby reducing turnover intentions among Gen-Z employees.

e) In the FnB sector, the primary factor driving turnover is the workload from multiple job roles combined with inadequate compensation. The solution is to adjust compensation or increase personnel to eliminate the need for multiple job responsibilities.

f) Common patterns causing turnover among Gen-Z employees are observed in the Textile & Apparel, Tobacco Processing, Leather & Footwear, and Healthcare industries. These include high workload intensity and the need for effective leadership and supportive colleagues to create a positive work environment.

g) The education industry needs to address fundamental issues by eliminating multiple job responsibilities, defining clear working hours, respecting teachers' personal lives, and appointing effective leaders to maintain a non-toxic work environment.

2. This research identifies several managerial implications that can help companies in Bandung address and mitigate factors contributing to turnover intention among Gen-Z employees:

a) Staffing

Companies should strictly adhere to human resource management principles to ensure that the correct people are placed in appropriate jobs, especially in leadership positions. It is critical to avoid choosing leaders who lack the essential competences, as this can result in toxic leadership behaviours such as bullying and a hostile work environment. This, in turn, leads to unclear SOPs and rules, which can push Gen-Z employees away. Effective staffing can also ensure that job responsibilities are well-defined and free from unnecessary duplication.

b) Compensation Adjustments

If a company's efficiency strategy involves individuals managing numerous job functions, compensation should be adjusted to reflect the added duties. Alternatively, increasing the number of staffs can help to share the workload more evenly, minimising the pressure on individual employees and decreasing turnover intentions.

c) Work-life balance principle and culture

Companies should prioritise work-life balance to promote a healthier organisational culture, hence increasing employee happiness and loyalty to the organisation. It is important to prioritise fair and humane overtime practices that respect to Ministry of Manpower standards governing limit hours and adequate pay, as well as encourage the use of employee leave entitlements and family-inclusive holidays with colleagues.

Addressing workload, improving workplace culture, assuring competitive compensation, and fostering work-life balance are all important methods for organisations looking to prevent turnover. Tailoring these tactics to specific industry constraints may result in more effective retention strategies. This study's limitations include a small sample size limited to one location and six industries. Future research could include a bigger sample of key cities and sectors.

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