

Understanding Turnover Intentions among Generation Z Employees: The Role of Individual, Organizational, and Contextual Factors

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Abstract

This study examines how individual (mental health, job satisfaction), organizational (leadership, coworker relationships, growth opportunities), and contextual factors (family/friend influence) shape turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in Brazil. A quantitative design was employed using an online survey with 300 Gen Z workers (18-30). The findings indicate that mental health, perceived growth opportunities, and family/friend influence are significant predictors. Poor mental health and limited development opportunities increased the likelihood of leaving. Crucially, external encouragement from family and friends also heightened turnover intention, suggesting that social support functions as a driver of career mobility, rather than a retention mechanism, for this generation. Traditional retention factors like job satisfaction and leadership were less influential.

Keywords: Generation Z, Turnover Intention, Employee Retention

Track: International Marketing & Emerging Markets

1. Introduction

The entrance of Generation Z (born 1995-2010) into the workforce presents new challenges for Human Resource Management, as this cohort values purpose, flexibility, mental health, and work-life balance. Turnover intention, an employee's conscious predisposition to voluntarily leave an organization, is a major predictor of actual turnover and carries significant costs. This study adopts a multidimensional framework, examining the influence of individual, organizational, and contextual factors on Gen Z's turnover intentions. The current study aims to investigate six variables on turnover intention among Gen Z: mental health and job satisfaction (individual); leadership, coworker relationships, and growth opportunities (organizational); and the influence of family and friends (contextual).

2. Theory Development and Hypothesis Formulation

The theoretical model includes six hypotheses predicting the influence of the chosen factors on turnover intention (Y).

Individual Aspects (Mental Health, Job Satisfaction):

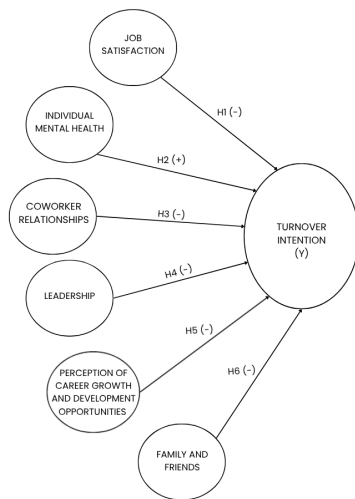
- **H1:** Job satisfaction is hypothesized to negatively affect turnover intention.
- **H2:** The instability of mental health is hypothesized to positively affect turnover intention. Mental health is a crucial factor for Gen Z, as they show low tolerance for environments that compromise psychological well-being.

Organizational Aspects (Leadership, Coworker Relationships, Growth Opportunities):

- **H3:** A positive relationship with the leader is hypothesized to negatively affect turnover intention.
- **H4:** Supportive relationships with coworkers are hypothesized to negatively affect turnover intention.
- **H5:** Perceptions of career growth and development opportunities are hypothesized to be negatively related to turnover intention. For this generation, the absence of clear advancement paths is a key driver for job mobility.

Contextual Aspects (Family and Friends' Influence):

- **H6:** The perceived influence of family and friends is hypothesized to negatively impact turnover intention. Traditional literature often views social support as a retention mechanism.



3. Methods

A quantitative and descriptive research design was used. Data was collected via an online survey conducted by a research firm between August and September 2025, from a non-probabilistic sample of 300 Generation Z workers (aged 18-30) across various industries in Southeastern Brazil.

Measures: All measures used a five-point Likert scale and were adapted from validated instruments, including measures for Mental Health (GHQ-12, Cronbach's $\alpha=0.81$) and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha=0.93$).

Analytical Strategy: Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha), and multiple linear regression using the stepwise method.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation:

- Turnover intention had a mean (M) of 2.51 (on a 5-point scale).
- Mental health ($r=-0.50$) and Organizational Growth Perspectives ($r=-0.25$) were negatively correlated with turnover intention.
- Family and Friends' Influence ($r=+0.65$) showed the highest and a positive correlation with turnover intention.
- Job Satisfaction ($r=-0.26$), Leadership ($r=-0.10$), and Coworker Relationships ($r=-0.05$) showed weaker or practically null correlations with turnover intention.

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression (Stepwise Model):

The final, parsimonious model explained approximately 49% of the variance in turnover intention (R^2 adjusted = 0.4885) and included only three statistically significant predictors.

$$Y_{turnover} = 2.5483 - 0.2909(X_{mentalhealth}) - 0.1784 (X_{growth_opportunities}) + 0.6658 (X_{family\backslash friends})$$

- **Mental Health** ($X_2/\beta = -0.2909$, $p = 0.001$): Confirmed H2. Poor mental health significantly increases turnover intention, highlighting the importance of psychological well-being for retention in Gen Z.
- **Organizational Growth Perspectives** ($X_5\beta = -0.1784$, $p < 0.001$): Confirmed H5. Lack of development opportunities significantly increases the likelihood of leaving, consistent with the generation's value for career progression.
- **Family and Friends' Influence** ($X_6\beta = +0.6658$, $p < 0.001$): Refuted H6. The positive coefficient shows that greater external support or validation from family and friends increases the intention to turnover, acting as a stimulus for professional mobility rather than a retention mechanism.

5. Conclusion and Practical Implications

The study demonstrates that retaining Generation Z is primarily dependent on preserving mental health and ensuring growth/development opportunities. The finding that external social support actively encourages turnover represents a generational shift that challenges traditional retention models, suggesting that Gen Z's career decisions are more guided by autonomy, purpose, and social validation than by organizational commitment.

Practical Implications: HR managers should implement psychological support programs, establish clear career paths, and prioritize continuous feedback and internal mobility. They must also seek to align the organizational culture with the employees' personal narrative (purpose, mental balance) to convert external social support from a departure factor into a validation for staying.

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