

Exploring Turnover Intention among Gen Z Employees: Job Stress and Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities

Eksplorasi Niat Turnover pada Karyawan Generasi Z: Stres Kerja dan Persepsi terhadap Peluang Kerja Alternatif

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Artikel Info

Riwayat Artikel:

Penyerahan 05/01/2026

Revisi 11/03/2026

Diterima 21/04/2026

Keywords:

generation Z; job stress; perceived alternative job opportunities; turnover intention.

ABSTRACT

Generation Z is known to have a high tendency to change jobs, so it is important to understand the factors that influence this intention. This study aims to identify the dominant factors that influence the intention to change jobs, both from internal work pressure and perceptions of external opportunities, particularly among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. This study uses a correlational quantitative approach with purposive sampling techniques, involving 181 respondents. The research instruments included the Turnover Intention Scale, Job Stress Scale, and PAJO Scale. The analysis was performed using multiple linear regression through Jamovi. The results show that the regression model is significant ($p < 0.001$; $F = 105$; $R^2 = 0.542$), indicating that Job stress and perceived alternatives job opportunities simultaneously contribute 54.2% to the variation in turnover intention. These findings show that internal pressures and external opportunities equally increase Generation Z's tendency to leave their jobs.

ABSTRAK

Generasi Z dikenal memiliki kecenderungan tinggi untuk berpindah pekerjaan, sehingga penting untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi niat tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi faktor yang memengaruhi niat berpindah kerja, baik dari tekanan kerja internal maupun persepsi terhadap peluang eksternal khususnya pada karyawan Generasi Z di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional dengan teknik purposive sampling, melibatkan 181 responden. Instrumen penelitian meliputi Skala Niat untuk Meninggalkan Pekerjaan, Skala Stres Kerja, dan Skala PAJO. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan regresi linier berganda melalui Jamovi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model regresi signifikan ($p < 0,001$; $F = 105$; $R^2 = 0.542$), sehingga stres kerja dan persepsi peluang kerja alternatif secara simultan berkontribusi sebesar 54,2% terhadap variasi niat berpindah kerja. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa tekanan internal dan peluang eksternal sama-sama meningkatkan kecenderungan Generasi Z untuk meninggalkan pekerjaan.

Kata Kunci:

generasi Z; stress kerja; peluang kerja alternatif yang dirasakan, intensi turnover

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BACKGROUND

The world of work has undergone a significant transformation with the arrival of Generation Z workers. This generation consists of individuals born in the period between 1997-2012 (Arum et al., 2023). It is estimated that the number of Generation Z workers will continue to grow over time (Wibowo et al., 2024). Generation Z has some interesting characteristics. In the workplace, Generation Z tends to express ideas openly and spontaneously, and with enthusiasm, although they sometimes lack consideration for others' feelings (Kasih, 2023). Generation Z often faces various challenges in the workplace. They tend to be fickle and want to try new things because they often feel dissatisfied and restless, this condition causes Generation Z to actively seek new jobs (Manggala & Siswanto, 2024).

Several surveys indicate that Generation Z is inclined to switch jobs more frequently, with higher frequency compared to previous generations (Wibowo et al., 2024). The results of a survey conducted by DataIndonesia.id in Puspita et al (2024) show that the resignation rate among Generation Z reached 76%, higher than that of Generations X and Y, which were 74% and 73% respectively. This finding is supported by a (Thinkuser & Group, 2018) survey, which reported that employee turnover rates reached 10% as Generation Z began entering the workforce. These data indicate that Generation Z has a higher tendency to change jobs compared to previous generations.

Phenomenon of Generation Z wanting to change jobs called turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to the inclination or desire of employees to voluntarily resign from their positions or transition to a different workplace that aligns with their preferences (Mobley in Suana, 2020). Turnover intention usually starts with the employee thoughts or intentions to move to another workplace (Linda Mora et al., 2022). As stated by Mobley (1978), turnover intention is influenced by several aspects, including thinking of quitting, job search, and intention to quit. Turnover intention is usually the final decision chosen by employees when working conditions no longer meet their expectations (Saefullah, 2018).

High employee turnover intention can potentially reduce organizational productivity significantly and increase costs associated with recruitment, selection, and employee training processes (Saputri & Husna, 2022). This situation can certainly disrupt the effectiveness of the company's operations. Turnover intention can influence organizational stability and adversely affect multiple facets of company operations (Hutapea, 2025). Comprehending the elements that influence employees desire to depart from the organization is a crucial measure in mitigating turnover intention.

Turnover intention can be experienced by anyone and triggered by various conditions in the workplace. This phenomenon does not happen abruptly, rather it arises from a range of interconnected dynamics. Generally, turnover intention can be attributed to two main categories of causes internal factors and external factors. According to Mobley in

(Hakim, 2016), Internal elements encompass organizational culture, leadership approach, compensation, job satisfaction, and career development. If these factors are not managed properly, they can cause psychological pressure in the form of work stress, mismatches between employee abilities, resources and needs, and job requirements (Aruldoss et al., 2021).

According to Parker and DeCotiis in Hadiyanti and Sari (2025), Job stress is a condition in which an individual's normal functioning is disrupted by conditions or situations in the work environment. This condition caused by high workloads and unsupportive work environments, which can have a negative impact on employees' mental well-being (Imran et al., 2020). High levels of job stress have a negative impact on employee health, motivation, productivity, and sense of security, which can ultimately lead to job dissatisfaction and increase the risk of termination or resignation (Handayani et al., 2024). Siddiqui and Jamil (2015), emphasizes that job stress is one of the factors that can cause turnover intention among employees.

An individuals intention to resign from their job not only triggered by conditions within the workplace, but also by the perception of other, more attractive job opportunities outside the company. This perception referred to as perceived alternative job opportunities. According to Price and Mueller in Sukmawati and Prasetyo (2024), perceived alternative job opportunities as PAJO are an individuals view of the availability of other jobs, both within and outside the organization, that can be taken when the current job is considered unsatisfactory. Research conducted by Albalawi et al (2019), states that perceived alternative job opportunities can influence an individual's decision to stay or leave a company. This concept refers to employees' perceptions of the availability of suitable jobs in the labor market, as well as how they assess and consider the availability of such opportunities (Albert & Olivia, 2015). Perceptions about alternative job opportunities often arise early in a person's mind, even before they actually realize or discover that there are real opportunities out there. This influenced by factors such as education, skills, expectations, resilience, engagement, and job satisfaction (Abrian et al., 2025).

Previous research has indicated that the turnover intention is affected by multiple factors. Setyawati (2021) found that quality of work life, hardiness, and perceived alternative job opportunities simultaneously influenced turnover intention by 57.8%. In line with this, research by Sukmawati and Prasetyo (2024) also showed that perceived alternative job opportunities had a positive effect on turnover intention. Regarding the role of job stress in increasing Turnover intention, Marcella and Ie (2022) discovered that job stress significantly and positively influenced turnover intention at PT XYZ. The study by Aditya et al (2021) also revealed a significant partial influence between job stress and turnover intention.

Several previous studies have consistently shown that work stress and various work-related stressors are

significantly associated with turnover intention. Excessive workload is often perceived as work demands that exceed an individual's capacity, triggering physical and psychological fatigue. Pangonan (2019) found a positive relationship between workload and turnover intention, indicating that the higher the workload perceived by employee, the greater their tendency to leave the organization. This finding is reinforced by Safitri (2020), who shows that workload is closely related to increased work stress, especially when employees face time pressure, role demands, and resource constraints. Fadli et al (2022) revealed that poorly managed work stress leads to decreased job satisfaction, which ultimately encourages the intention to change jobs. Thus, work stress acts as a psychological mechanism that bridges job demands with employees' tendency to leave the organization.

Furthermore, previous literature on perceived alternative job opportunities has also been shown to play an important role in shaping turnover intention. Perceptions of job opportunities outside the organization cause employees to reevaluate their current working conditions. Simanjuntak (2020) shows that low job satisfaction and limited career development can weaken organizational commitment, making employees more open to alternative job opportunities. This condition reinforces the assumption that when employees perceive other more promising job options, their psychological attachment to the organization tends to decrease. In line with this, Fatmawati et al (2025), through a phenomenological study of bank employees, found that the decision to resign was influenced by awareness of alternative jobs that offered better career prospects, work-life balance, and rewards. Therefore, perceived alternative job opportunities serve as a cognitive factor that strengthens the intention to leave, especially when internal organizational conditions are deemed to fall short of employee expectations.

This research seeks to address the gap identified in earlier studies by investigating how job stress and perceived alternative job opportunities affect turnover intention, specifically among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Previous research has largely analyzed these factors separately, which has limited understanding of the elements that contribute to increased turnover intention, particularly in this demographic. By combining these three variables into an integrated research framework, this study offers more comprehensive insights into the dynamics driving job turnover behavior, particularly among Generation Z. The study proposes two hypotheses, that job stress significantly impacts turnover intentions, and that perceived alternative job opportunities also significantly influence turnover intentions. The results of this study are anticipated to enhance theoretical understanding of the work behavior of young individuals, along with providing practical strategies for organizations to create effective human resource management interventions aimed at decreasing turnover intention.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a correlational quantitative approach that measures three variables, namely turnover intention, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities.

The population in this study was all Generation Z employees. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with a minimum sample size of 66 participants. The sample calculation used G-Power 3.1.9.4, with an effect size of 0.25, statistical power of 0.95, and significance level (α) of 0.05, based on the research by Axelsia dan Hadi (2022) which showed an R^2 value of 0.202. Final sample in this study consisted of 181 participants who were: (1) actively employed, (2) born between 1997 and 2012, and (3) had at least one year of work experience. Most of the participants were contract employees (109 people), followed by permanent employees (47 people), Outsourcing (16 people), part-time (4 people), freelance (3 people), and honorary (2 people).

Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of several scales. The turnover intention scale by Mobley, (1978) was adapted by Saefullah (2018), consisting of three dimensions thinking of quitting, job search, and intention to quit. This scale consists of six items measured using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) with a Cronbach's α value of 0.835. Job Stress scale by (Parker and DeCotiis (1983) adapted by Hadiyanti and Sari (2025), covers two dimensions, namely anxiety and time pressure, consisting of 13 items assessed on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) with a Cronbach's α value of 0.831. The Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities scale is based on Griffeth and Hom, (1988) was adapted by Setyawati (2021) for the Indonesian context. It consists of two dimensions: general availability of alternatives (4 items) and expected utility of alternatives (6 items). The scale comprises a total of 10 items, measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a Cronbach's α of 0.858.

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression to identify the contribution of predictor variables to turnover intention, using Jamovi software version 2.3.28.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Data

Characteristic	Category	N	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	99	54.7%
	female	82	45.3%
Employment Status	Permanent Employees	47	26.0%
	Contract Employees	109	60.2%
	Outsourcing	16	8.8%
	Part Time	4	2.2%
	Freelance	3	1.7%
	Honorary	2	1.1%

Table 1 indicates that most respondents in this study are male. The respondents are predominantly contract employees, while only a small proportion are permanent employees, outsourcing workers, part-time workers, freelancers, and honorary staff.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

	Turnover Intention	Job Stress	Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities
N	181	181	181
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	18.1	35.1	37.7
Median	19.0	35.0	38.0
Standard deviation	3.53	5.83	6.43

Table 2 presents a description of the data obtained from 181 respondents. The statistics shown include the mean, median, and standard deviation for each variable (turnover intention, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities).

Table 3. Descriptive Categorization of Turnover Intention

Interval Formula	Interval	Category	f	%
$X < M - 1SD$	$Y < 14,58$	Low	28	15%
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$14,58 \leq Y < 21,64$	Moderate	126	70%
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$Y \geq 21,64$	High	27	15%

Based on Table 3, the categorization results show that the respondents' turnover intention is dominated by the moderate category at 70%. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents are in the low category and another 15% are in the high category. These results indicate that most respondents have a moderate level of turnover intention, which means that the respondents' tendency to leave the organization is neither too low nor too high.

Table 4. Descriptive Categorization of Job Stress

Interval Formula	Interval	Category	f	%
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 29,22$	Low	33	18%
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$29,22 \leq X < 40,88$	Moderate	116	64%
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$X \geq 40,88$	High	32	18%

Based on Table 4, the categorization results show that most respondents are in the moderate work stress category, namely 64%. Meanwhile, 18% of respondents are in the low category and 18% are in the high category. These findings indicate that, in general, the level of work stress experienced by respondents tends to be moderate.

Table 5. Descriptive Categorization of Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities Variable

Interval Formula	Interval	Category	f	%
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 31,24$	Low	34	19%
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$31,24 \leq X < 44,10$	Moderate	125	69%
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$X \geq 44,10$	High	22	12%

Referring to Table 5, the data distribution shows that the majority of respondents fall into the moderate category regarding perceived alternative job opportunities, accounting for 69%. Meanwhile, 19% of respondents are classified in the low category and 12% are in the high category. This finding indicates that most respondents have a moderate perception of the availability of alternative job opportunities outside the organization.

Table 6. Classical Assumption Test

Classical Assumption Test	Result	Conclusion
Normality	.409	Normal (Sig. p > .05)
Linear Job Stress Perceived alternative job opportunities	.082 .069	Linear (Sig. p > .05)
Multicollinearity	VIF = 1.74; Tolerance = .576	No multicollinearity (VIF < 10.00 & Tolerance > .10)
Heteroscedasticity Job Stress Perceived alternative job opportunities	.271 .172	No heteroscedasticity (Sig. p > .05)

Table 6 shows the results of classical assumption tests, indicating that the data are normally distributed and have a linear relationship between variables. The test results also show that there is no multicollinearity indicated by VIF and tolerance values that are within the permissible limits. In addition, no heteroscedasticity found, so that the residual variance declared constant. With all classical assumptions fulfilled, the analysis can proceed to the hypothesis testing stage, namely multiple linear regression testing.

Table 7. Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df 1	df 2	p
1	0.736	0.542	0.537	10.5	2	17	< .001

Based on the analysis conducted in Table 7, the regression model as a whole shows significance ($p < .001$), indicating that both predictors simultaneously exert a

significant impact on turnover intention. The coefficient of determination (R^2) stands at 0.542, indicating that 54.2% of the variation in turnover intention can be accounted for by the two independent variables in the model, whereas the remaining 45.8% is affected by other factors not considered in the model. Additionally, an R value of 0.736 suggests a robust relationship between the predictors and the outcome in this analysis.

Table 8. Model Coefficients – Turnover Intention

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.117	1.1846	0.943	0.347
Job stress	0.265	0.0405	6.544	< .001
Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	0.205	0.0367	5.575	< .001

Table 8 displays the findings from the partial t-test conducted to examine the effect of job stress and perceived job alternatives on turnover intention. The t-test results validate both hypotheses, suggesting that job stress and the perception of alternative job opportunities each significantly contribute to turnover intention. Of these two variables, job stress is the most impactful, followed by the perception of alternative job opportunities, which also significantly affects turnover intention. Job stress demonstrates a clear positive relationship, where increased levels of job stress correlate with increased turnover intentions. The standard coefficient estimate ($\beta = 0.437$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a substantial and significant positive effect. More simply, a 1 SD increase in job stress leads to a 0.437 SD increase in turnover intention. The same thing is also seen in the variable of perceptions of alternative job opportunities, with a standard coefficient estimate ($\beta = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$). This means that a 1 SD increase in perceptions of alternative job opportunities will increase turnover intentions by 0.373 SD. These findings provide empirical support for both hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

Results show that the combination of job stress and perceived alternative job opportunities (PAJO) has a significant effect, explaining 54.2% of the variation in turnover intention among Generation Z. This figure illustrates that both factors play an important role in influencing how respondents assess job suitability. The average turnover intention score of 18.1 means that most respondents are in the phase of considering leaving their jobs. The evaluative phase arises when individuals feel a mismatch between working conditions and psychological needs in age groups that are in the early stages of career development, such as Generation Z (Zumhas, 2024). Such evaluations tend to arise quickly because expectations for the job are relatively high and oriented toward emotional comfort and personal development. Supporting this Sahputra et al (2025) found that job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Likewise, perceived alternative job opportunities

also have a positive and significant influence on turnover intention. Mahantshetti et al. (2018) found through exploratory factor analysis that time stress and anxiety are the primary dimensions of job stress while perceived job alternatives both within and outside the industry constitute the core dimensions of perceived job alternatives. Anxiety, time stress, and perceived job alternatives significantly predict turnover intention. In addition, employee turnover is influenced by perceptions of external job opportunities, namely when employees see better job alternatives outside the organization, thus increasing their likelihood of leaving their current workplace (Rainayee, 2013).

Job stress emerged as the factor that contributed most significantly to turnover intention, as indicated by the standard coefficient estimate ($\beta = 0.437$, $p < 0.001$). The average value of 35.1 reflects that respondents generally faced fairly high job demands. This situation is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources Theory, which explains that stress arises when job demands are not matched by an individual's psychological resources or environmental support (Bakker, 2014). High-intensity pressure can lead to emotional exhaustion, difficulty concentrating, negative emotions, and decreased psychological resilience in dealing with work (Aruldoss, 2021). This impact makes individuals feel that their jobs are no longer worth keeping, opening up the possibility of leaving their work environment. This is in line with the characteristics of Generation Z, who have grown up in a culture that cares about mental health, making them more willing to express their dissatisfaction with working conditions that they feel are too stressful (Kasih, 2023). Thus, the level of work stress in this study can be understood as Generation Z's natural response to working conditions that are not considered emotionally healthy.

These findings have similarities in mechanism to the research (Imran B. M., 2020) not because the results are the same, but because both illustrate how unmanaged job stress can erode individuals' motivation and engagement in their work. The study shows that when individuals feel overwhelmed by work demands, they experience a decline in their sense of belonging to the organization, leading to thoughts of leaving. This pattern was also observed in this study, particularly among Generation Z respondents who are very concerned about emotional stability and psychological needs in their daily work. Generation Z's sensitivity to the imbalance between workload and psychological well-being makes them more likely to consider a career change when they feel increasing pressure. Negative experiences such as workload pressure, stress, and burnout tend to trigger stronger emotional responses in this generation, when organizational support is insufficient burnout develops more quickly, increasing turnover intention (Rizky, 2025). When employees experience resource depletion due to prolonged stress, additional job demands become amplified, creating a stress-intensification effect. In this condition, psychological strain increases, which strengthens the positive relationship between job stressors and turnover intention (Hung et al., 2025). Stress becomes more damaging when burnout levels are high. Specifically, workload has a significantly stronger

effect on turnover intention under high burnout conditions reflecting resource loss spiral where sustained stress continuously drains employees psychological capacity and increases their intention to leave (Chen et al., 2025).

In addition to internal factors such as job stress, perceived alternative job opportunities were also found to contribute to turnover intention, with a standard estimate ($\beta = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$) and an average value of 37.7. This figure shows that respondents perceived alternative job opportunities as being readily available and realistic to achieve. A person's decision to leave a job is not only influenced by the discomfort they experience, but also by the belief that alternatives out there are easier to achieve. When individuals feel they have many choices, the psychological barriers to leaving decrease, so that evaluation of the suitability of the job they are currently doing becomes more active (Djibran, 2025). Generation Z tends to continuously assess whether a job provides learning opportunities, flexibility, and meaningful value (Aprilita, 2024). When external opportunities are found that are more consistent with these aspirations, the urge to consider leaving becomes greater. This is reflected in the high perceived alternative job opportunities value in this study, showing that respondents feel the job market offers many alternatives that are considered attractive.

The findings by (Albalawi, 2019) provide an overview of how individuals who see brighter external opportunities will tend to reevaluate the suitability of their current job. The psychological mechanisms described in the study appear consistent with the conditions of the respondents in this study. It is not only because see perceived alternative job opportunities, but there is also a process of comparison between current working conditions and the potential benefits to be gained elsewhere. Such comparisons tend to be more active among Generation Z because they are oriented towards career development and the search for experience. This mechanism aligns with the argument of Zivkovic et al (2023) who noted that employees may remain in their jobs regardless of satisfaction levels when external alternatives are limited, in contrast when alternatives are visible and attainable the likelihood of leaving increases. Empirical evidence further confirms that perceived external employability significantly predicts turnover intention, indicating that job alternatives play a crucial role in employees decisions to quit (Zhang et al., 2021). This tendency is particularly salient among Generation Z that demonstrates optimistic yet pragmatic career expectations, placing less emphasis on long-term job security and showing a stronger inclination toward job mobility in search of growth and stimulating environments (Gaidhani et al., 2019). Tran et al (2025) found that emotional exhaustion significantly drives turnover intention and job-hopping behavior among Generation Z employees with affective commitment mediating this relationship. The study also highlights the direct role of perceived alternative employment opportunities in shaping turnover decisions.

A comparison between the two predictors shows that job stress has a greater contribution in influencing turnover intention than perceived alternative job opportunities. This can be understood through the characteristics of Generation Z, who place a high priority on emotional stability. The tendency to leave a job is not solely because they are tempted by new opportunities, but because they want to protect their mental health when work pressure begins to interfere with their psychological comfort. Perceived alternative job opportunities act as an additional motivating factor when work stress has broken their interest in their job. Thus, perceived alternative opportunities can accelerate the decision to move on. The combination of these two factors helps explain why turnover intention is quite high among Generation Z.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this reaserch show that both hypotheses were supported, indicating that job stress and perceived alternative job opportunities significantly influence turnover intention among Generation Z employees, together explaining 54.2% of its variance. These results highlight that psychological stress at work and beliefs about external opportunities play a role in shaping the decision to stay or leave a job. The implications of this study indicate that to reduce turnover intention intention among Generation Z, companies need to reduce sources of job stress through a supportive work environment and appropriate workload management. In addition, companies need to provide clear career development paths and meaningful work experiences so that employees are less likely to consider perceived alternative job opportunities. Future studies are encouraged to include additional factors such as burnout, social support, or job satisfaction to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of turnover intention.

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