

Digital Work Pressure, Workplace Well-Being, and Retention Intention among Generation Z Employees: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to explore the experiences of Generation Z employees within digital work environments, focusing specifically on digital work pressure, workplace well-being, and retention intention.

Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative approach utilizing an exploratory design and a constructivist paradigm was employed. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 Generation Z employees working in digitally-based organizations in Yogyakarta. Participants were selected via purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings/Results: The analysis identified four core themes: (1) digital work pressure as a normalized strain within digital work cultures; (2) constant connectivity and the blurring lines between work and personal life; (3) the ambivalent effects of digital work pressure on productivity and mental exhaustion; and (4) workplace well-being as an interpretive mechanism in shaping retention intention. While digital technology is perceived to enhance flexibility and productivity, continuous connectivity induces mental fatigue and challenges work-life balance. The intent to remain within an organization is evaluated through the quality of work experiences, organizational support, self-development opportunities, and work-life harmony.

Originality/Value: This study enriches the literature on the digital work experiences of Generation Z and offers practical insights for organizations to design digital work policies that support employee well-being and reinforce retention.

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1. Introduction

Digital technology advancements have fundamentally transformed corporate operations, interpersonal communications, and human resource management, concurrently introducing distinct opportunities and constraints for the workforce. Digital transformation has altered how organizations execute business operations and manage their human capital (Hom et al., 2017)(Tarafdar et al., 2019). The integration of digital technologies such as instant messaging software, project management systems, and online collaboration platforms facilitates highly flexible, rapid, and integrated work execution. Furthermore, the mainstreaming of hybrid and remote working models underscores the indispensable role of technology within the architecture of modern work environments.

Despite offering diverse operational efficiencies, digitalization imposes novel demands on employees. Digital work environments are characterized by high communication intensity, uninterrupted information flows, and an omnipresent expectation of connectivity. This condition triggers the phenomenon of digital work pressure, conceptualized as the psychological and operational strain resulting from mandatory technology utilization during task execution (Califf et al., 2020). This pressure extends beyond conventional workload volume, encompassing institutional expectations for immediate responses, simultaneous multi-platform management, and baseline availability outside formal working hours.

Extant literature demonstrates that intensive digital tool usage generates paradoxical work experiences. On one hand, technology optimizes efficiency, autonomy, and productivity; on the other hand, hyper-connectivity can blur boundaries between professional and private spheres, curtail opportunities for psychological detachment, and exacerbate mental exhaustion (Molino et al., 2020). Empirical reports from (Eurofound, 2020) further substantiate that professionals in technology-driven landscapes face elevated risks of work-life imbalance driven by constant connectivity expectations. Consequently, hyper-connectivity, information overload, and instant response pressures represent major vulnerabilities within digitalized workspaces.

This dynamic becomes remarkably critical when focused on Generation Z. Raised as digital natives, Generation Z exhibits advanced technological fluency and seamless tool integration into daily routines (Twenge, 2018). However, technical competence does not automatically equate to psychological resilience when confronting complex institutional digital demands.

Prior research indicates that Generation Z possesses distinct occupational preferences compared to preceding cohorts. Beyond financial compensation, they heavily prioritize schedule flexibility, work-life balance, continuous self-development, and mental health preservation within their employment experiences (Fuchs et al., 2024). Domestic studies in Indonesia similarly reveal that Generation Z expects a supportive psychological climate aligned with their personal value systems (Gustine, 2023). Consequently, employee retention has emerged as a strategic institutional challenge, given that Generation Z professionals demonstrate high mobility and openness to external market alternatives when psychological contracts are unmet (Mahmoud et al., 2021).

Within this framework, workplace well-being serves as a core analytical concept. Workplace well-being refers to the psychological, emotional, and social health individuals experience within their organizational environment (Diener et al., 2025). Favorable workplace well-being correlates with enriched job experiences, heightened employee engagement, and robust organizational commitment (Broeck et al., 2016). Correspondingly, retention intention the conscious willingness to remain within an enterprise is increasingly determined by the

comprehensive quality of the work climate, development pathways, flexibility, and institutional well-being mechanisms (Rodotua et al., 2026; Salem, 2025).

While scholarship regarding digital work pressure, workplace well-being, and retention intention continues to expand, existing studies remain heavily dominated by quantitative methodologies focused on linear variable verifications. Such frameworks struggle to adequately capture how employees experience, interpret, and internalize the fluid realities of digital spaces (Tarafdar et al., 2019). Moreover, qualitative investigations explicitly capturing the lived experiences of Indonesian Generation Z workers remain scarce.

Addressing these empirical, theoretical, and methodological gaps, this study utilizes a qualitative approach anchored in the constructivist paradigm to explore Generation Z's experiences within digital work environments. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 Generation Z employees operating across digitally-driven enterprises in Yogyakarta. The generated narratives were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to decode shared experiential patterns and subjective meanings.

This investigation aims to comprehensively explore the digital work experiences of Generation Z employees. Specifically, the study addresses the following objectives:

- a. To explore the lived experiences of Generation Z employees regarding digital work pressure.
- b. To explore how Generation Z employees conceptualize and interpret workplace well-being within digital employment contexts.
- c. To explore the perspectives of Generation Z employees concerning retention intention in digitalized workspaces.

Accordingly, this study addresses three fundamental research questions:

- a. How do Generation Z employees experience digital work pressure within digital work environments?
- b. How do Generation Z employees interpret workplace well-being within digital employment contexts?
- c. How do Generation Z employees view retention intention within digitalized workspaces?

This study shows that digital work experiences among Generation Z cannot be evaluated uniformly. Employees interpret digital pressure, well-being, and retention motivations heterogeneously based on their specific occupational contexts and subjective realities. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on digital work dynamics via a qualitative lens. Practically, the findings provide a framework for organizations to execute adaptive strategic human resource interventions that nurture well-being and solidify retention across digital landscapes.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1 Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, pioneered by Bakker and Demerouti, serves as a robust analytical framework for understanding how occupational attributes influence employee well-being and behavioral outcomes (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). This theory posits that all occupational settings can be divided into two primary categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands encompass physical, cognitive, or emotional aspects of work that require sustained effort and can cause psychological exhaustion. Conversely, job resources comprise functional elements that facilitate task completion, mitigate the physiological and

psychological costs of job demands, and stimulate professional growth, learning, and systemic development (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Under the JD-R lens, equilibrium between these components dictates the quality of the employee experience.

Digitalization has altered traditional job demands and resources. Immediate messaging platforms, digital collaboration ecosystems, and hybrid setups offer enhanced operational autonomy but increase connectivity expectations. (Scholze & Hecker, 2023) argue that digital transformation reshapes modern job characteristics, requiring organizations to re-evaluate demand-resource configurations within digitalized workspaces. Similarly, (Lovejoy et al., 2021) emphasize that contemporary job designs must balance digital demands with accessible resources. Enterprises that provide adequate resources such as autonomy, social support, operational flexibility, and learning pathways better equip their workforces to manage digital workflows.

Furthermore, (Shajek & Hartmann, 2023) indicate that digital settings introduce unique stressors, including hyper-connectivity, continuous information streams, and urgent response expectations. These conditions can intensify job demands and impair employee well-being if not balanced by organizational resources.

The significance of demand-resource equilibrium is reinforced by (Fitzhugh et al., 2024), who demonstrate that employee well-being depends not only on low stressors but also on resources that foster valuation, institutional support, and professional progress. Correspondingly, managing socioemotional well-being requires a holistic understanding of the interplay between job characteristics and individual needs (Tabor-Błażewicz & Kinowska, 2026).

Within this study, digital work pressure is treated as a modern job demand arising from digital tool requirements, including perpetual availability and multi-channel communication tracking. Workplace well-being reflects employees' subjective evaluations of their professional life quality, while retention intention captures their conscious decision to remain with the firm. The JD-R theory is used here as a conceptual lens to understand how Generation Z interprets digital demands and evaluates well-being to form retention choices.

2.2 Digital Work Pressure

Digital work pressure stems from mandatory technology use, requiring constant availability, rapid responses, and simultaneous platform coordination. Although related to the broader concept of technostress, it focuses specifically on the challenges of hyper-connectivity and an "always-on" work culture (Leonardi & Neeley, 2022). Unlike traditional workplace stressors, digital work pressure frequently blurs the boundaries between professional and private life. Notably, this strain occurs even among highly technologically fluent workers, as digital tools enable work demands to cross into personal hours (Shajek & Hartmann, 2023).

(Day et al., 2012) state that intensive communication technologies increase psychological demands by raising information volume and response expectations. Without proper technical and organizational support, these factors can lead to emotional exhaustion, stress, and diminished well-being.

2.3 Workplace Well-Being

Workplace well-being involves an individual's holistic evaluation of their professional experiences across psychological, emotional, social, and professional dimensions. It extends

beyond the mere absence of occupational stress to encompass purpose, engagement, positive interpersonal relationships, and general job satisfaction (Pevec, 2022). (Rook et al., 2020) describe workplace well-being as a multidimensional construct reflecting how individuals experience and find meaning in their work. It is shaped by social connections, organizational belonging, and opportunities to fulfill personal goals.

(Kal & Öncer, 2025) note that supportive work environments must offer resources like flexibility, supervisor support, psychological safety, and work-life balance. In digital workspaces, these resources are essential to help employees manage constant connectivity and protect their mental health. Consequently, workplace well-being acts as an important resource that can mitigate digital work pressure and bolster retention intention.

2.4 Retention Intention

Retention intention represents an employee's conscious desire to remain with their current organization over the long term (Hom et al., 2017). In digital landscapes, this intention depends less on financial rewards and more on work quality, autonomy, career growth, and well-being support. It reflects an employee's alignment with organizational values and their experience within the workplace.

In digital contexts, retention increases when organizations offer adequate job resources, such as flexible work arrangements, which boost engagement and reduce turnover (Lee et al., 2017). Generation Z employees place a premium on work-life balance, meaningful work, flexibility, and mental health support. As digital natives, they favor companies that provide positive work experiences and continuous learning. Thus, their retention decisions depend heavily on how well an organization meets both professional and personal expectations (Mahmoud et al., 2021).

From a JD-R perspective, retention intention drops when digital demands exceed an employee's resources. Conversely, when organizations supply robust support, flexibility, and well-being initiatives, employee commitment improves. (Butler et al., 2021) confirm that Generation Z's career choices are strongly tied to mental health support and meaningful work experiences.

2.5 Conceptual Linkages among the Study Variables

Under the JD-R model, digital work pressure acts as a job demand that can undermine workplace well-being. Constant digital communications and rapid response expectations can drain psychological resources and cause emotional burnout (Tarafdar et al., 2019). Excessive job demands without sufficient resources typically trigger a health impairment process (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

In contrast, workplace well-being serves as a psychological resource that sustains motivation and strengthens retention intention. Employees with high well-being show greater engagement and organizational loyalty (Rook et al., 2020). (Kundi et al., 2021) note that well-being helps buffer job demands, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions.

These dynamics are highly relevant for Generation Z, who heavily prioritize mental health and work-life balance (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Organizations that fail to manage digital pressure risk harming well-being and increasing turnover. This study uses JD-R theory to

understand how Generation Z experiences digital work pressure and how that experience shapes their well-being and retention choices.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm to understand how Generation Z employees interpret their experiences in digital work environments. The constructivist paradigm views reality as socially constructed through individual experiences and interactions within specific contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2007). Therefore, digital work pressure, workplace well-being, and retention intention are examined as subjective experiences rather than linear causal links (Flick, 2022).

An exploratory qualitative design was chosen due to the limited research on Generation Z's digital work experiences in Indonesia. This design allows for a deeper exploration of how participants experience and interpret digital pressure, well-being, and their intention to stay with an organization (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). JD-R theory was applied as an interpretative framework rather than a model for quantitative testing.

3.2 Research Context, Participants, and Sampling Strategy

The study was conducted in Yogyakarta, a prominent hub for the creative economy and digital industries in Indonesia. The context covers organizations using digital workflows, including startups, software houses, digital marketing agencies, and firms utilizing hybrid or remote setups. These organizations rely heavily on instant messaging, project management tools, cloud services, and online collaboration platforms.

The unit of analysis was the individual Generation Z employee. Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich participants who met the study's objectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) be born between 1997 and 2012; (2) work in an organization with intensive digital workflows; (3) have at least one year of tenure; and (4) regularly use digital communication and project management platforms.

Sample size was guided by data saturation, which was reached at 20 participants, as additional interviews stopped yielding new themes (Guest et al., 2020).

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Participant Code	Age	Gender	Industry	Tenure	Work Arrangement
P1	23	Female	Startup	2 years	Hybrid
P2	24	Female	Information Technology	1,5 years	Remote
P3	25	Female	Creative Industry	3 years	Hybrid
P4	22	Male	Information Technology	1 years	Onsite
P5	24	Female	Startup	2 years	Hybrid
P6	23	Female	Creative Industry	1 years	Remote
P7	25	Female	Information Technology	3 years	Hybrid
P8	24	Male	Startup	2 years	Onsite
P9	22	Male	Creative Industry	1 years	Hybrid
P10	23	Male	Information Technology	2 years	Remote
P11	24	Female	Startup	2 years	Hybrid
P12	25	Male	Information Technology	3 years	Onsite
P13	22	Male	Creative Industry	1 years	Hybrid
P14	23	Male	Startup	2 years	Remote
P15	24	Male	Information Technology	2 years	Hybrid
P16	25	Male	Creative Industry	3 years	Onsite

P17	23	Male	Startup	1,5 years	Hybrid
P18	24	Male	Information Technology	2 years	Remote
P19	22	Male	Creative Industry	1 years	Hybrid
P20	25	Male	Startup	3 years	Onsite

Source: Research Data, 2026.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected via semi-structured in-depth interviews, which offer the flexibility to explore emerging insights while ensuring a comprehensive review of participants' experiences (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interview guide was developed around digital work pressure, workplace well-being, and retention intention, informed by JD-R theory. Interviews were conducted from March to April 2026, either face-to-face or via video conferencing based on participant preference. Sessions lasted 45–60 minutes, were recorded with permission, and were transcribed verbatim (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following (Braun & Clarke, 2019) six-phase framework: (1) data familiarization; (2) initial code generation; (3) theme identification; (4) theme review and refinement; (5) theme definition and naming; and (6) report production. The process was inductive and iterative, using JD-R theory as an interpretive lens rather than a rigid coding grid. Analysis involved transcript coding, grouping related codes, and collaborative theme development through research team reflections.

3.5 Trustworthiness

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through source triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. Transferability was supported by detailed descriptions of the research context and participant demographics. Dependability was maintained through a systematic audit trail, while confirmability was supported by reflexive memo-writing and team discussions to minimize personal bias.

4. Result and Discussion

This study aims to explore the experiences of Generation Z employees in a digital work environment, specifically regarding digital work pressure, workplace well-being, and retention intention. Based on a reflective thematic analysis of in-depth interview results with 20 participants working at digital-based organizations in Yogyakarta, this study identifies four main themes that describe the participants' experiences and interpretations of the phenomena under study.

These four themes include: (1) digital work pressure as a normalized form of pressure within digital work culture; (2) constant connectivity and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life; (3) the ambivalent impact of digital work pressure on productivity and mental exhaustion; and (4) workplace well-being as an interpretive mechanism in shaping retention intentions.

These themes were used to address three research objectives and three research questions. Some themes contributed to more than one research objective because participants' experiences related to digital work pressure (themes 1, 2, and 3), workplace well-being (theme 4), and retention intention (theme 4) are interrelated, as explained below:

4.1 Generation Z Employees' Experiences with Digital Work Pressure

Theme 1. Digital Work Pressure as a Normalized Form of Pressure in Digital Work Culture

Most participants view the demands of using digital technology as an integral part of their daily work. The pressure to stay constantly connected, respond to messages quickly, and monitor various communication platforms simultaneously is seen as a normal consequence of working in the digital age.

Participants noted that intensive use of digital technology had become routine even before they entered the workforce. As a result, these digital demands are not always perceived as a source of stress, but rather as a form of professionalism and a professional responsibility.

One participant stated:

“If there’s a message from a supervisor or the team, I feel like I have to reply quickly. I’ve been used to it since college, so I don’t see it as a burden.” (P5)

Another participant explained:

“All work is done through apps. So, it’s only natural to constantly monitor notifications and be active on several platforms at once.” (P11)

In addition to the expectation of always being responsive, participants also mentioned an implicit demand to remain available even outside of formal working hours.

“There’s no written rule that says I have to reply to messages at night, but it feels awkward not to respond.” (P17)

These results suggest that Generation Z workers tend to normalize digital work pressure, viewing hyper-connectivity as a hallmark of professionalism. This dynamic can be understood through their background as digital natives (Twenge, 2018). In a JD-R framework, digital work pressure functions as a job demand that becomes internalized into the professional role (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). This extends technostress research by showing that Generation Z often normalizes digital demands before fully recognizing their psychological impacts (Tarafdar et al., 2019). Consequently, clear organizational communication policies are valuable to prevent normalized workflows from turning into excessive strain.

Theme 2. Constant Connectivity and the Blurring of Boundaries Between Work and Personal Life

Although digital connectivity is considered the norm, most participants admitted to having difficulty separating work time from personal time.

Participants explained that constant notifications, communication outside of work hours, and the use of the same devices for both work and personal needs have blurred the line between these two spheres.

One participant shared:

“Sometimes I still get work messages at night or on weekends. Even if I don’t have to act on them right away, my mind still drifts back to work.” (P8)

Another participant noted:

“Because of hybrid work, I feel like I’m always on call. My laptop and phone are always nearby.” (P14)

Some participants try to limit access to work outside of operating hours by turning off notifications or separating work devices from personal ones. However, these efforts aren’t always easy to implement due to work demands and the communication norms in place within the organization.

“I’ve tried turning off notifications after work hours, but I often worry that there might be urgent work.” (P2)

Research findings indicate that constant digital connectivity is blurring the line between work and personal life. Constant notifications, communication outside of working hours, and the use of the same devices for both work and personal needs make participants feel as though they are always on call for work.

These findings align with research by (Day et al., 2012), (Molino et al., 2020), and (Eurofound, 2020), which indicate that the intensity of digital technology use increases the risk of work-life imbalance through expectations of rapid responses and a reduced ability for individuals to separate their work and personal roles. Furthermore, (Leonardi & Neeley, 2022) explain that a digital work culture establishes norms of connectivity that encourage employees to remain available even outside formal working hours.

From the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective, constant connectivity is a form of job demand that can reduce individuals' opportunities for psychological recovery (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Although some participants attempted to set boundaries, organizational communication norms and concerns about urgent work demands often hindered these efforts. Therefore, organizations need to establish clear communication policies outside of working hours to support employees' work-life balance.

Theme 3. The Ambivalent Impact of Digital Work Pressure on Productivity and Mental Fatigue

Participants described varied experiences regarding the impact of digital work pressure. On the one hand, technology is seen as capable of increasing work efficiency, speeding up coordination, and facilitating access to information.

One participant stated:

"Technology makes work get done faster because all information is easily accessible." (P10)

Another participant explained:

"Communication with the team has become more practical because we don't need to meet in person." (P7)

On the other hand, the high intensity of connectivity also leads to feelings of fatigue, burnout, and difficulty disconnecting from work.

"What makes me tired isn't the work itself, but the constant stream of notifications and the sheer volume of information I have to process." (P19)

Another participant shared:

"I feel more productive, but after work hours end, I find it hard to truly stop thinking about work." (P4)

Some participants noted that increased productivity is often accompanied by reduced rest time and increased mental fatigue.

The research findings indicate that Generation Z employees have mixed feelings about digital work pressure. On the one hand, digital technology improves work efficiency, speeds up coordination, and facilitates access to information. On the other hand, constant connectivity and a high volume of information lead to mental fatigue and difficulty disconnecting from work.

These findings align with those of (Scholze & Hecker, 2023) and (Lovejoy et al., 2021), who state that digital transformation boosts productivity and work flexibility but also increases the complexity of job demands. (Shajek & Hartmann, 2023) demonstrate that hyper-connectivity and information overload can increase psychological stress among employees.

From the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective, digital technology can function as both a resource and a job demand. The balance between the two is a critical factor in maintaining

employee well-being in a digital work environment (Fitzhugh et al., 2024; Tabor-Błażewicz & Kinowska, 2026).

4.2 Generation Z Employees' Perceptions of Workplace Well-Being

Theme 4. Workplace Well-Being as an Interpretive Mechanism in Shaping Retention Intention (Focus: The Evaluative Process in the Decision to Remain)

Participants defined workplace well-being as a state in which they can work productively without sacrificing their mental health, work-life balance, and opportunities for growth.

For most participants, workplace well-being is not only related to financial compensation but also includes psychological support, healthy work flexibility, positive interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for learning and self-development.

One participant stated:

"A good workplace isn't just about salary, but also about how the company cares for its employees." (P3)

Another participant explained:

"I feel comfortable working when there's flexibility, but there's still a clear boundary between work and personal life." (P12)

Support from supervisors and coworkers is also seen as a key factor in creating a positive work experience.

"When my supervisor understands my situation and doesn't always demand an immediate response, I feel more at ease." (P16)

In addition, participants felt that opportunities to learn, grow, and find meaning in their work are an important part of workplace well-being.

"I want to work somewhere that offers opportunities for growth, not just chasing targets." (P9)

The research findings show that Generation Z employees define workplace well-being as a work experience that allows them to remain productive without sacrificing their mental health, work-life balance, and opportunities for self-development. These findings indicate that workplace well-being is not only understood as satisfaction with compensation, but also as the result of the availability of workplace resources that support employees' psychological and professional needs.

From the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective, supervisor support, work flexibility, positive interpersonal relationships, and learning opportunities are job resources that help employees cope with the demands of digital work and maintain their well-being (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). These findings align with (Rook et al., 2020), who state that workplace well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological, social, and professional aspects. Furthermore, (Kal & Öncer, 2025) emphasize that flexibility accompanied by clear work boundaries, organizational support, and psychological safety are key factors in fostering workplace well-being in the digital age.

For Generation Z, workplace well-being is also closely linked to opportunities for growth and finding meaning in their work. These findings support the research by (Mahmoud et al., 2021) and (Butler et al., 2021), which shows that Generation Z tends to prioritize personal development, mental health, and alignment between personal values and the work environment. Thus, workplace well-being is understood as a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of the work experience, which plays a crucial role in shaping employees' commitment to the organization.

4.3 Generation Z Employees' Perspectives on Retention Intention

Theme 4. Workplace Well-Being as an Interpretive Mechanism in Shaping Retention Intention (Fokus: The Evaluative Process in the Decision to Remain)

Interview results indicate that participants' decisions to remain with the organization are not solely influenced by compensation or workload, but by their evaluation of their overall work experience.

Participants revealed that support for mental health, opportunities for self-development, alignment of personal values with organizational culture, and the ability to maintain work-life balance were key considerations in determining their desire to remain with the organization.

One participant stated:

"If I feel I'm growing, am supported, and still have time for my personal life, I'll stay." (P6)

Another participant explained:

"I don't mind a busy workload as long as the work environment is healthy and my supervisor respects my personal boundaries." (P18)

Conversely, participants noted that the demand to always be available and the organization's lack of attention to employee well-being can drive the desire to look for another job.

"If I have to be available at all times without clear boundaries, eventually I'll look for another job." (P13)

In general, participants viewed the decision to remain with an organization as related to the organization's ability to create a meaningful work experience, support employee well-being, and align with their personal needs and values.

The research findings indicate that retention intention among Generation Z employees is not determined solely by compensation or workload, but by how they evaluate their overall work experience. Support for mental health, opportunities for self-development, alignment of personal values with organizational culture, and the ability to maintain work-life balance are the key factors influencing the decision to remain with the organization.

From the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective, workplace well-being serves as an interpretive mechanism that helps employees assess whether digital work demands are still commensurate with the resources they receive. When organizations provide adequate support such as work flexibility, managerial support, and development opportunities employees are more likely to maintain their intention to stay despite facing digital work pressures (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023).

These findings are consistent with the research by (Hom et al., 2017), which states that employees' decisions to stay are influenced by their evaluation of the quality of their work experience and the fit between their individual needs and the organizational environment. Furthermore, (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Salem, 2025) indicate that Generation Z tends to prioritize mental health, flexibility, and the meaning of work over mere financial rewards. Conversely, expectations of constant availability and a lack of organizational attention to employee well-being can reduce retention intentions. Thus, organizations need to build a digital work environment that supports employee well-being and respects the boundary between work and personal life to strengthen Generation Z employee retention.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana Generasi Z mengalami lingkungan kerja digital melalui perspektif tekanan kerja digital, kesejahteraan di tempat kerja, dan niat untuk tetap bertahan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tekanan kerja digital telah menjadi bagian yang

dianggap wajar dalam budaya korporat modern. Meskipun alat-alat digital meningkatkan efisiensi operasional dan fleksibilitas, konektivitas yang terus-menerus mengaburkan batas antara pekerjaan dan kehidupan pribadi, sehingga meningkatkan risiko kelelahan mental. Bagi Generasi Z, kesejahteraan di tempat kerja didefinisikan sebagai kemampuan untuk mempertahankan produktivitas tanpa mengorbankan kesehatan mental, kehidupan pribadi, atau pertumbuhan. Selain itu, niat untuk tetap bertahan didorong oleh kualitas pengalaman di tempat kerja secara keseluruhan, bukan hanya oleh kompensasi semata. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesejahteraan di tempat kerja berfungsi sebagai mekanisme interpretatif yang memandu keputusan untuk tetap bertahan. Secara praktis, organisasi harus menetapkan batasan komunikasi digital yang jelas, mendukung kesehatan mental, menawarkan fleksibilitas yang terstruktur, dan menyediakan jalur pertumbuhan profesional yang jelas untuk mempertahankan talenta Generasi Z.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has certain limitations. First, the sample was confined to 20 Generation Z employees within digital firms in Yogyakarta, meaning the findings are contextual and cannot be widely generalized. Second, the constructivist qualitative approach focuses on subjective accounts, leaving the interpretations open to the specific contexts of the participants and researchers. Third, the study did not compare experiences across different industries or generational cohorts. Future research should consider expanding participant recruitment across diverse regions and sectors, conducting comparative generational studies, and using mixed-methods approaches to test the relationships identified in this work.

7. Statement on AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized OpenAI's ChatGPT to assist with language editing, structural development, and grammatical refinement. The final content, data analysis, interpretations, and conclusions were fully reviewed and remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

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