

Beyond Paychecks: How Motivators and Personality Boost Job Commitment And Reduce Turnover Intentions among Gen Z

Abstract

Organisations have been crossing borders for a long time to keep their employees committed at work. They have been revolutionising their practices to fulfill the demands and expectations of their workforce. The addition of the new generation, Gen Z, and their tendency to frequently switch jobs poses a challenge for organisations. This study focuses on the determination of the motivators for Gen Z working professionals and their impact on the turnover intentions and job commitment of Gen Z. Semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions have been conducted, and 22 participants have participated. Thematic analysis has been conducted, and the identified motivators were Learning and Growth Opportunities, Job Description Clarity, and Meaningful and Complex Job. A framework has been proposed that can be tested in future studies. This study assists the management in decision-making and policy formulation for Gen Z professionals.

Keywords: Gen Z, Motivators, Turnover Intention, Job Commitment, Personality

Introduction

Generation Z is the new generation of influencers joining and revolutionising the workforce (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). Generation Z also known as Gen Z has been exposed to global connectivity, internet, and social media from a very young age (Workman et al., 2023). This exposure has made them experiential and open to exploration to the extent that they are fearless to switch jobs to explore and obtain a variety of experiences (Anh Do et al., 2023). Gen Z has a realistic approach and they can switch to an organisation offering them better financial and non-financial benefits (Chillakuri, 2020). Organisations are trying to cross the borders to understand Gen Z and revolutionise their practices to retain them in the organisation. However, Deloitte (2022) reported that Gen Z tends to switch their jobs more frequently than the previous generations. They are willing to quit the organisation without even having another offer in hand (Lim and Dini, 2023).

This study addresses this gap by assisting organisations in understanding the motivators for Gen Z at work to enhance their commitment and reduce their turnover intentions. This study focuses on determining the motivators for Gen Z professionals and their impact on the turnover intentions and organisational commitment of Gen Z. This study also focuses on the moderating impact of their personality on the association between motivators, turnover intentions, and job commitment of Gen Z working professionals. This study followed an exploratory qualitative approach. Thematic Analysis led to the identification of motivators of Gen Z. A framework and propositions have been proposed to be tested further.

Contextual Background

Generation Z

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, Digital Natives, iGen, has been the tech-savvy generation (Francis and Hoefel, 2018; Magano et al., 2020). They were born in a world with an abundance of choices which made them unafraid of switching among the options to experience new things (Anh Do et al., 2023). Long-term commitment towards organisations is not their priority (Chillakuri, 2020). However, Gen Z seek for opportunities to experience new things, develop their skills, and face challenges (Magano et al., 2020). Gen Z values transparency at work and it impacts their commitment to organisation (Kompa, 2019).

Methodology

This study focuses on the exploratory qualitative approach, and 22 participants have participated in this study. The sample of this study comprises working professionals who belong to Generation Z. The age range of the sample was 19-30 years to ensure that they are legally working as full-time employees at the organisations. The sample respondents possess work experience as full-time professionals in organisations. The working professionals working in different industries of the service sector have been interviewed for this study. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) have been conducted to determine the motivators for Gen Z professionals. The interviews have been recorded with the consent of the participants. The verbatim approach has been followed, and Gioia's method of thematic analysis has been utilized for the coding, in which data leads to the identification of first-order themes, which lead to the identification of second-order themes and aggregate dimensions (Gioia and Corley, 2013). Thematic analysis has been conducted to determine the critical motivators for Gen Z at work. Thematic Analysis is a flexible approach that results in exploring and discovering new insights (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006). The identified first-

order concepts from the responses lead to the identification of second-order themes. Figure 1 showcases the first-order and second-order themes that lead to the determination of the motivators for Gen Z at work.

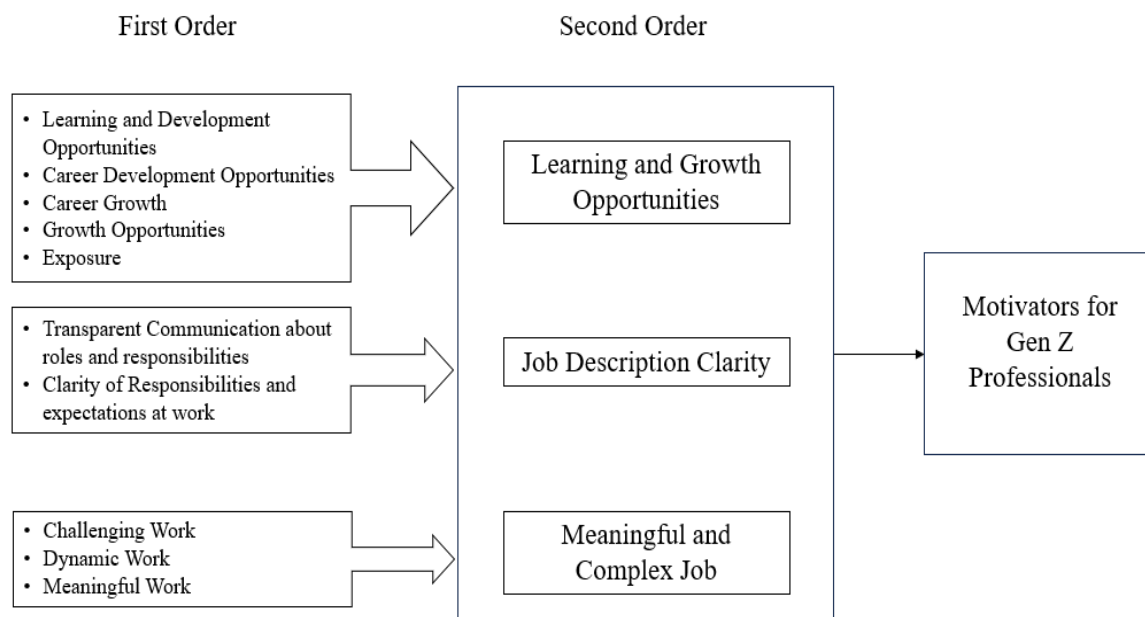


Figure 1: Motivators for Gen Z Professionals

Source: Author's Creation

This study also proposes a framework and propositions based on the identified motivators for Gen Z professionals. Figure 2 showcases the proposed framework, which can be tested further via a quantitative approach.

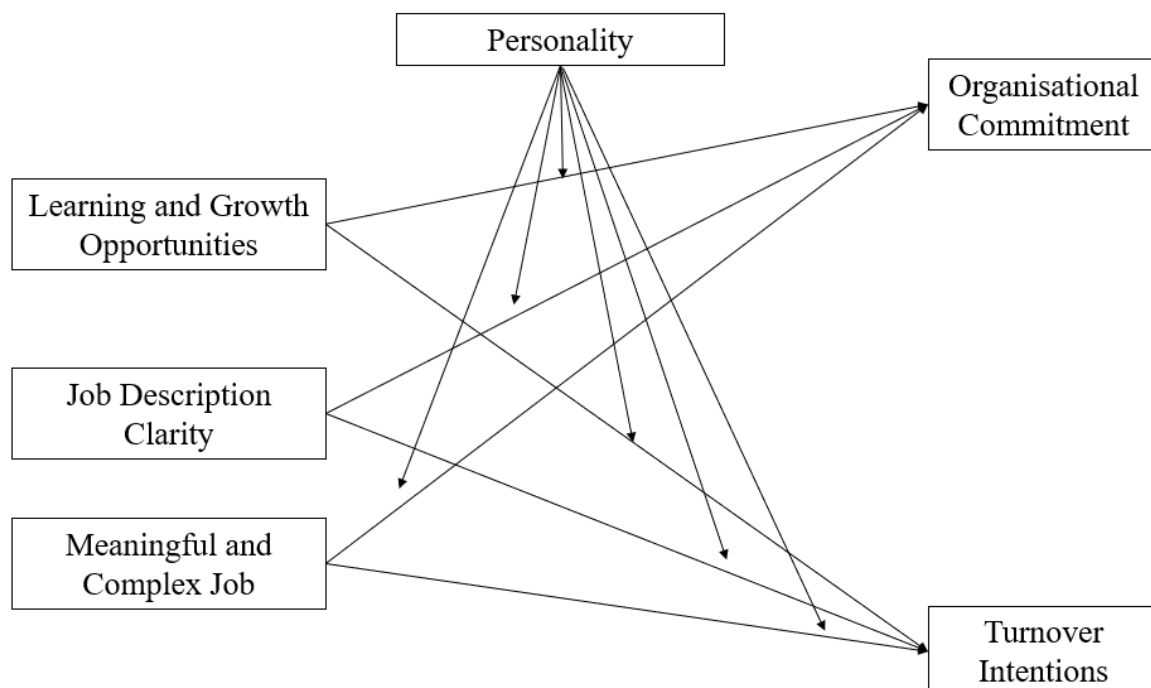


Figure 2: The Proposed Framework

Source: Author's Creation

Findings

This study aims to explore and determine the motivators for Gen Z professionals utilising the qualitative approach. Gen Z tends to explore new things and frequently switch organisations (Anh Do et al., 2023). A framework and propositions have been proposed to study the impact of motivators on turnover intentions and job commitment of Gen Z. This study also proposes the moderating effect of personality on the association between motivators, turnover intentions, and job commitment. Thematic Analysis has been conducted to analyse transcriptions. The results of the analysis lead to the identification of three categories of motivators for Gen Z working professionals: Learning and Growth Opportunities, Job Description Clarity, and Meaningful and Complex Job. The identified motivators can be viewed from the lens of the Kano Model developed by Dr. Noriaki Kano (1984) to study the needs and satisfaction of individuals. Three attributes have been identified in this model: Basic Needs, Performance Needs, and Exciting Needs (Shahin et al., 2013). Job Description Clarity can be considered as a basic need. The professionals often don't state Job Description Clarity as their motivator but they expect it to be offered by the organisations. Learning and Growth Opportunities can be considered performance needs. The abundance of Learning and Growth Opportunities offered by the organisation to Gen Z professionals enhance their motivation at work. Meaningful and Complex Job can be considered an exciting need. The absence of an abundance of Meaningful and Complex Job may not cause dissatisfaction but the presence of it causes satisfaction among Gen Z professionals. The identified motivators lead to the formation of the following propositions that can be tested further.

Learning and Growth Opportunities

Learning Opportunity refers to the activities that can engage individuals and lead to learning outcomes (Crabbe, 2007). Researchers stated that Gen Z seeks Learning and Growth Opportunities in organisations (Mantha and Krishna, 2024). The results of qualitative studies have found that Gen Z thrives with the provision of ongoing learning in organisations (Ma and Fang, 2024; Wulur and Mandagi, 2023).

Learning and Growth Opportunities and Turnover Intentions

Turnover Intentions refer to the desire of individuals to leave or quit the organisation (Cohen et al., 2016). The literature states that organisational learning culture impacts the turnover intentions of professionals (Islam et al., 2016). Researchers have found that Learning and Growth Opportunities impact the link between unfulfilled aspirations and turnover intentions (Proost et al., 2012). Hence, we propose that

P1: Learning and Growth Opportunities negatively impact the Turnover Intentions of Gen Z professionals.

Learning and Growth Opportunities and Organisational Commitment

Organisational Commitment refers to the strong bond between the professionals and the organisation, which encourages dedication and devotion among the professionals towards the organisation (Porter et al., 1976). The positive impact of learning and training opportunities on organisational commitment has been studied in the literature (Birdi et al., 1997; Ng, T.W. et al., 2006). Researchers have found that Learning and Growth Opportunities positively impact

organisational commitment in the healthcare industry (Somaskandan et al., 2022). Hence, we propose that

P2: Learning and Growth Opportunities positively impact the Organisational Commitment of Gen Z professionals.

Job Description Clarity

Job Description Clarity refers to when the expectations of roles and responsibilities are effectively communicated to the working professionals and the professionals understand them accurately (Chen et al., 2022; Majid et al., 2023). Researchers have found that Job Description Clarity significantly impacts Gen Z employee retention (Ali et al., 2024; Sujanto et al., 2024).

Job Description Clarity and Turnover Intentions

Researchers have found that Job Description Clarity negatively relates to the turnover intentions of South African professionals (De Villiers et al., 2011). The negative significant impact of Job Description Clarity on voluntary turnover intentions of Malaysian professionals has been studied in the literature (Bakar et al., 2021). Hence, we propose that

P3: Job Description Clarity negatively impacts the Turnover Intentions of Gen Z professionals.

Job Description Clarity and Organisational Commitment

The positive impact of Job Description Clarity on organisational commitment has been studied by researchers (Panaccio and Vandenberghe, 2011). Kanchana (2015) has found that Job Description Clarity positively influences organisational commitment of professionals in the paper and packaging industry.

P4: Job Description Clarity positively impacts the Organisational Commitment of Gen Z professionals.

Meaningful and Complex Job

Meaningful and Complex Job refers to the level of difficulty in the work that requires updated skills and increased effort, and dedication towards work (Joo and Lim, 2009; Vanzo, 2023). Researchers have stated that complex jobs may motivate and inspire individuals about work (Joo and Lim, 2009; Oldham and Cummings, 1996). Researchers have discovered that Meaningful and Complex Job contributes to job satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z professionals (Cheong, 2024).

Meaningful and Complex Job and Turnover Intentions

The association between Meaningful and Complex Job and turnover intentions has been studied in the literature. Researchers have found that Meaningful and Complex Job negatively impacts the turnover intentions of professionals working in SMEs in Pakistan (Rehman and Wajidi, 2023). Similarly, the Meaningful and Complex Job of knowledge workers in Korean conglomerate negatively impacts their turnover intentions (Joo et al., 2015). Hence, we propose that

P5: Meaningful and Complex Job negatively impacts the Turnover Intentions of Gen Z professionals.

Meaningful and Complex Job and Organisational Commitment

The literature states that Meaningful and Complex Job positively influences the organisational commitment among Korean professionals (Jung et al., 2016). Researchers have found that Meaningful and Complex Job positively and significantly impacts organisational commitment because when the employees perceive the job to be of high significance then they are motivated to work and more attached to the organisation (Joo and Lim, 2009). Hence, we propose that

P6: Meaningful and Complex Job positively impacts the Organisational Commitment of Gen Z professionals.

Personality

Personality refers to the assimilation of an individual's subjective traits, experiences, and unconscious and conscious behavioural patterns (Kernberg, 2016). It has been studied as a moderator by several researchers (Bowling and Eschleman, 2010; Skarlicki et al., 1999). Among the five-factor model of personality, conscientiousness and openness have been focused on in this study.

Conscientiousness highlights the ambitious, self-disciplined, responsible personality of individuals (Bowling and Eschleman, 2010). Researchers have found that conscientiousness moderates the link between work engagement and turnover intentions (Agarwal and Gupta, 2018). Researchers have discovered that conscientiousness significantly moderates the link between knowledge hiding and organisational commitment via loneliness (Garg and Anand, 2020). Hence, we propose that,

P7: Conscientiousness moderates the link between a.) Learning and Growth Opportunities, b.) Job Description Clarity, c.) Meaningful and Complex Job and Turnover Intentions.

P8: Conscientiousness moderates the link between a.) Learning and Growth Opportunities, b.) Job Description Clarity, c.) Meaningful and Complex Job and Organisational Commitment

Openness highlights the continuum of processing experience by the individuals (McCrae and Costa, 1997). The individuals with this personality are described as innovative, imaginative, curious, etc. (DeYoung et al., 2014). Researchers have studied the effect of moderation of openness on the link between job stress and turnover intentions (Irfan et al., 2024). The literature states that openness significantly moderates the link between task significance and organisational commitment (Fernández-Mesa et al., 2020). Hence, we propose that,

P9: Openness moderates the link between a.) Learning and Growth Opportunities, b.) Job Description Clarity, c.) Meaningful and Complex Job and Turnover Intentions.

P10: Openness moderates the link between a.) Learning and Growth Opportunities, b.) Job Description Clarity, c.) Meaningful and Complex Job and Organisational Commitment

Conclusion

Organisations have been working for a long time to keep their employees motivated at work. They were crossing the borders and continuously improving their practices based on the market scenarios to keep their employees motivated. Gen Z is now joining the workforce and their tendency to switch organisations for new experiences is found to be challenging for the management to retain them. This study assists the management in determining the motivators

for Gen Z professionals which can lead to their retention in the organisations. The study proposes a framework highlighting the impact of motivators on turnover intentions and job commitment. The proposed propositions can be tested further. The impact of other organisational factors like organisation policies, culture, etc. can also be studied further by the researchers. The comparison between the Gen Y and Gen Z motivators can also be focused on in future research. The proposed framework can also be tested on multiple generations for a comparative study.

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