

Gen Z Employee Turnover: The Role of Work-Life Balance and Digital Leadership

Levin Chandra Aprilio¹, Meily Margaretha^{2*}

^{1,2} Maranatha Christian University, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: meily.margaretha@eco.maranatha.edu

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ABSTRACT

The high tendency of job turnover among Generation Z encourages an understanding of the factors related to employees' decisions to leave the organization. This study explains the relationship between work life balance (WLB) and turnover intention (TOI) in the Generation Z worker in West Java, with digital leadership (DL) as an intervening variable. A total of 121 participants who met the research criteria were recruited through a purposive sampling technique. Information was obtained using a five-level Likert scale-based instrument and the analysis stage used the PLS-SEM method operated on SmartPLS 4 software. Empirical findings indicate a significant relationship between WLB and TOI. In contrast, the indirect path through DL did not reach the required level of significance. The coefficient of determination of 0.640 indicates that most of the TOI variation, namely 64%, is related to the variables discussed in this study. These results lead to the understanding that the quality of the balance between work and personal life demands plays a greater role in explaining the tendency to leave the organization than the digital leadership mechanism as an intermediary.

INTRODUCTION

The proportional division of work and personal life (WLB) has become a hot topic in the workplace amidst digital transformation. Flexible work arrangements, hybrid systems, and technology-based communication have transformed the way employees work within organizations. Research (Kim et al., 2023) found that perceptions of the proportional division of work and personal life significantly impact employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty. The imbalance between work and personal life responsibilities has the potential to cause high levels of stress and encourage employee turnover intentions (Jamalulel & Chang, 2025; Kasperczuk et al., 2025). This underscores the importance of organizational support for employees' ability to manage work and personal life roles proportionally to improve work intentions and performance.

The proportional division of work and personal life roles in Gen Z directly has a strong influence on their career life which is characterized by the intention to obtain high flexibility, automation, and work that can provide its own meaning for them, therefore most of the employees in generation Z place the proportional division of work and personal life roles as a

priority in work compared to employees of previous generations and are more willing to resign when employee expectations are not aligned with the conditions offered by the organization (Maříková et al., 2025; Adelia et al., 2024). Thus, the mismatch between Gen Z's expectations of the proportional division of work and personal life roles and the reality of the organization gives rise to employee intentions to change jobs voluntarily. This phenomenon tends to be known as turnover intention (TOI) or better known as employee intentions to change jobs.

Employee turnover intention is an indicator of the likelihood of actual organizational behavior occurring in the future. This concept refers to an individual's habit of moving from an organization within a certain period of time, influenced by job dissatisfaction, an unsupportive work environment, work stress, and a mismatch between employee expectations and the reality of the work they face (Nabila et al., 2025). The high employee turnover intention should be a significant concern for organizations because it has the potential to negatively impact organizational performance, such as increased costs in the recruitment and training of prospective employees, loss of information and knowledge held by the organization, and disruption to the stability and productivity of the work team. (Putri et al., 2025). The phenomenon of employee turnover intention becomes more relevant along with the increase in the workforce, the integration of work roles, and job satisfaction among Generation Z employees regarding life outside of work. A number of previous studies have shown a significant influence on the emergence of employee intentions to move jobs in Generation Z employees, this shows that if the organization is unable to meet the needs and expectations of Generation Z, they tend to leave the organization (Adelia et al., 2024; Sidiq & Poerwita, 2025). The results of the study (Tran et al., 2025) revealed that of the 237 Generation Z employees who were respondents, 174 of them only had 1 to 2 years of work experience, which further supports that Generation Z is less durable to stay in an organization.

Literature shows that the integration of work responsibilities and personal life is proportionally significantly related to the intention to leave the organization. The level of balance perceived by employees is associated with a lower tendency to leave the company, while imbalance tends to increase this intention (Jamalulel et al., 2025; Sidiq & Poerwita, 2025). This condition becomes even more significant in the context of Generation Z, which places flexibility and personal well-being as priorities in maintaining employment. Gen Z employees retain jobs if financial, personal existence, and comfort are met, as these three things are the foundation of happiness among Generation Z (Delloit., 2025). Based on research (Jamalulel et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2023), it is suggested that the integration of work responsibilities and personal life is negatively and significantly related to job turnover. Improvements in the quality of balance experienced by employees tend to be followed by a decrease in the urge to leave the organization, while less balanced conditions are associated with a strengthening of this tendency. This relationship appears in the form of direct and indirect influences through job satisfaction as a mediator, where the proportional division of work and personal life roles is able to increase the level of job satisfaction, optimize employee engagement in the organization, and reduce employee intentions to move jobs, so it can be stated that the proportional division of work and personal life roles is a strategic factor in reducing the level of employee intentions to move jobs. However, studies have found different results stating that the proportional division of work and personal life roles has a positive and significant effect on employee intentions to move jobs, which is seen in

employees who feel good harmony between work and personal life does not always become a high commitment to stay in the organization, in some conditions, employees who already have high welfare and flexibility prefer to seek better career opportunities in other organizations, therefore the proportional division of work and personal life roles does not always reduce employee intentions to move jobs (Amelia & Nugroho, 2024). Because there is inconsistency in the research results between the proportional division of work and personal life roles and employee intentions to move jobs, I propose a mediating variable of digital leadership in this study.

In the context of digital transformation, achieving a proportional division of work and personal life roles is inseparable from the role of leadership that is adaptive to technology and work flexibility. Therefore, it is important to examine how digital leadership can be a factor that can strengthen the creation of a proportional division of work and personal life roles and also influence turnover intention. Therefore, to support the creation of a proportional division of work and personal life roles amidst the ever-evolving transformation of the work environment, responsive leadership to technological developments is needed, known as digital leadership. This concept is rooted in the ability of leaders to integrate and maximize the use of available digital technology in organizational management activities to support innovation, flexibility, and collaboration within the organization (Ifenthaler et al., 2021). Research by Kim et al., (2023) proves that digital leadership plays a crucial role in the transformational digital era in improving employee performance and strengthening organizational commitment. Research by Qiao et al., (2024) shows the relationship between digital transformation, employee productivity, and organizational commitment by offering insights into how digital initiatives affect employee outcomes. Through the implementation of flexible work systems and empowerment of technology bases, digital leadership has the potential to strengthen the perception of employees, especially Generation Z, regarding the proportional division of work roles and personal life and has the possibility to reduce employee intentions to change jobs.

Although the literature on the proportional division of work-life roles and employee turnover intentions continues to grow, research examining digital leadership as a mediator in Generation Z is still limited. Given the continued development of technology in Generation Z and the digitalization of organizations, this study aims to examine the influence of proportional work-life role balance on employee turnover intentions in Gen-Z in West Java with digital leadership as a mediating factor. This study also aims to examine the influence of proportional division of work-life roles on employee turnover intentions in Generation Z in West Java because the working generation in West Java is generally dominated by Generation Z.

The proportional division of work and personal life roles is a concept that reflects a person's ability to maintain harmony between work demands and personal life. This shows how far an individual is able to manage their time, energy, and commitments between work and personal life without causing significant conflict. According to Fang et al. (2025), the division of work roles and personal life balance is achieved when an individual is able to balance work demands and needs outside of work harmoniously without interruption and still run effectively. Research shows that harmony between work responsibilities and personal life is related to increased job satisfaction as well as satisfaction in employees' personal lives and is also able to reduce stress levels and health problems in employee mental health (Sidiq &

Poerwita., 2025). Other research shows that providing flexible working hours and receiving support from the organization can increase employee motivation and dedication to the organization. This suggests that organizations that provide space for integration between work responsibilities and personal life conditions are associated with higher retention (Kasperczuk et al., 2025).

Furthermore, employee intentions to change jobs within a given period are often used as indicators of the likelihood of actual turnover intentions occurring in the future. Research in technology organizations shows that motivation and job satisfaction are negatively related to the incentive to leave the organization, with higher job satisfaction lowering the incentive to leave (Kasperczuk et al., 2025). Furthermore, research by Authar et al. (2025) shows that employee intentions to change jobs have a negative impact on the organization, so that organizations need to consider factors that can cause discomfort to employees which give rise to employee intentions to change jobs. Employees who are able to balance the demands of their work and personal lives tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to remaining with the organization. This is evident in research by Authar et al. (2025), which found that work-life imbalance is associated with increased job stress and emotional exhaustion, which can lead to a desire to seek employment elsewhere. So that hypothesis first submitted is *Work life balance influences turnover intention*

To maintain employee job satisfaction, organizations can make digital changes toward a digital leadership concept. Digitalized leadership refers to the ability of organizational leaders to optimize technology to encourage innovation, strengthen collaboration, and improve work effectiveness within the organization. Furthermore, Dirk Ifenthaler demonstrated that digital leadership plays a role in directing digital transformation and forming a work ecosystem accustomed to integrating technology into daily activities. He then stated that digital leadership can also encourage digital collaboration, innovation, and work flexibility, which can increase employee satisfaction and, in turn, organizational productivity. In previous research, the proportional division of work and personal life roles was seen as an important predictor of employee intention to change jobs. Employees who have a good proportional division of work and personal life roles usually demonstrate higher commitment, thereby reducing their incentive to search for another organization (Sidiq & Poerwita, 2025). Interestingly, amidst the current digitalization, *digital leadership* has emerged as a crucial variable supporting the creation of an adaptive work system. Research by Ifenthaler et al. (2021) and Secundo et al. (2021) clarifies that digital leadership not only increases flexibility but also strengthens organizational commitment. Based on this relationship, digital leadership has the potential to act as a mediating variable, strengthening the positive impact of proportionally dividing work and personal roles in reducing employee incentives to move to other workplaces within the company. Hypothesis the second one proposed in study This is *Digital leadership mediates the influence of work-life balance on the turnover intention of Generation Z employees.*

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey design through a questionnaire to Generation Z employee respondents domiciled in West Java. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, with 120 respondents who had met the sample size guidelines of 5–10 times the number of research indicators, namely 19 indicators or

equivalent to 95–190 respondents (Putra et al., 2025). Measurements were carried out using a five-point Likert scale to assess the variables of proportional division of work and personal life roles, digital leadership, and employee incentives to switch to another workplace. The research instrument was adapted from Authar et al. (2025) for the variables of division of work and personal life roles and employee incentives to switch, while the digital leadership variable refers to Shin et al. (2023), then adapted to the context of Generation Z employees in West Java. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to test the direct and indirect relationships between variables, including the mediating role of digital leadership. The analysis was conducted through testing the measurement model and structural model, including convergent validity, construct reliability, discriminant validity, R^2 value, as well as hypothesis and mediation testing using bootstrapping at a significance level of 5%, with the criteria of t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study of 121 respondents, the majority of respondents were female at 53.72% and male at 46.28%, with a dominant age of 19–23 years at 57.02%. Based on the educational background of participation, most respondents had a Bachelor's degree (S1) at 47.11%, and more participants were single at 79.34%. Based on length of service, the dominant participation had work experience of more than 1 to 5 years at 76.03%, while based on current position it was dominated by staff/non-managerial at 69.42%, thus indicating that the study involved more respondents of young productive age at the operational level.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1. Man	56	46.28%
• Woman	65	53.72%
Age		
• 14 – 18 years	1	0.83%
• 19 – 23 years old	69	57.02%
• 24 – 28 years old	38	31.40%
• 29 – 33 years old	13	10.74%
Education		
• High school and equivalent	45	37.19%
• Diploma	17	14.05%
• Bachelor degree)	57	47.11%
1. Postgraduate (S2 and S3)	2	1.65%
Marital status		
• Not married yet	96	79.34%
• Married	25	20.66%
Length of work		
• > 1 year – 5 years	92	76.03%
• > 5 years – 10 years	24	19.83%
• > 10 years – 15 years	2	1.65%
• > 15 years	3	2.48%
Department		

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
• Staff / non-managerial	84	69.42%
• Supervisor / coordinator	27	22.31%
• Middle management (manager / head of department)	8	6.61%
• Top management (director/general manager)	2	1.65%

Source: Data processing (2026)

The data processing stage in this study utilized the SmartPLS 4 application to examine the relationships between research variables. The analysis began with the design of the research model, followed by an assessment of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). This stage included examining the construct's validity and reliability based on the outer loading value, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. The structural model assessment referred to the R-square value, t-statistics, and p-values. Next, the bootstrapping technique was applied as a basis for determining the significance of the relationships formed between variables in the research model.

Convergent validity was evaluated to determine the ability of each indicator to represent the construct it represents. This assessment was based on the outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct. According to Subhaktiyasa et al. (2024), in a reflective measurement model, an indicator is considered adequate if it has an outer loading value of at least 0.708, while a construct is considered to have good convergent validity if the AVE value exceeds 0.50. During the evaluation process, several indicators that did not meet the required value limit were removed from the research model. After these adjustments were made, all remaining indicators demonstrated values that met the convergent validity criteria and were therefore worthy of being retained in the next analysis stage. A summary of the convergent validity evaluation results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Convergent validity

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE
<i>Digital Leadership</i>	DL2	0.828	0.672
	DL3	0.734	
	DL4	0.804	
	DL5	0.829	
	DL6	0.895	
<i>Turnover intention</i>	TOI1	0.851	0.676
	TOI2	0.786	
	TOI3	0.829	
<i>Work Life Balance</i>	WLB1	0.739	0.603
	WLB2	0.803	
	WLB3	0.854	
	WLB4	0.732	
	WLB5	0.802	
	WLB6	0.745	
	WLB7	0.788	
	WLB9	0.727	
	WLB10	0.788	

Information: DL= *Digital Leadership* ; TOI= *Turnover Intention*; WLB= *Work Life Balance*

Source: SmartPLS Process Results

Table 3. Fornell Larcker Criteria

Variables	DL	TOI	WLB
DL	0.82		
TOI	-0.339	0.822	
WLB	-0.3	0.793	0.777

Information: DL= *Digital Leadership* ; TOI= *Turnover Intention*; WLB= *Work Life Balance*

Source: SmartPLS Process Results (2026)

Discriminant validity testing is used to assess whether each tested concept demonstrates clear distinctions, ensuring there is no overlapping meaning between variables in the study. According to Rasoolimanesh (2022), discriminant validity is demonstrated when a construct can be clearly distinguished from other variables in the research model. In this study, discriminant validity testing refers to the Fornell-Larcker criteria by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the correlation between latent variables. The analysis results show that the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is higher than its correlation value with other variables in the research model. This condition leads to the understanding that each latent variable has distinct characteristics and does not overlap with other variables, making it suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

The next stage is a reliability test used to assess the internal consistency of the indicators in forming the latent variables being studied. According to Ghanbar (2024), reliability in a reflective measurement model can be evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's Alpha is a traditional reliability measure used to measure the internal consistency of a construct, while Composite Reliability is considered more relevant in PLS-SEM analysis because it compares the reliability of each indicator based on the outer loading value. Ghanbar (2024) stated that a Composite Reliability value range of 0.60–0.70 is still relevant for use in exploratory research. The range of 0.70–0.90 reflects stronger measurement consistency between indicators within a construct. The analysis shows that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed the recommended minimum limit. This condition leads to measurement consistency across all variables, so that removal from the research model is not necessary. Table 4 presents the details of the reliability test results.

Table 4. Reliability Values

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)
DL	0.877	0.911
TOI	0.762	0.862
WLB	0.917	0.932

Information: DL= *Digital Leadership* ; TOI= *Turnover Intention*; WLB= *Work Life Balance*

Source: SmartPLS Process Results

Table 5. R-Square

R-square
TOI
0.640

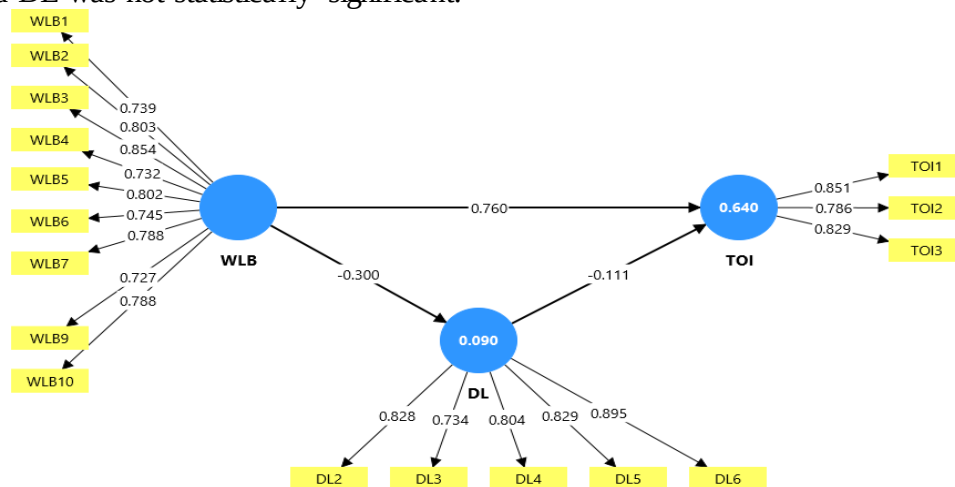
Information: DL= *Digital Leadership* ; TOI= *Turnover Intention*; WLB= *Work Life Balance*

Source: SmartPLS Process Results

Table 6.0. Hypothesis testing

Information: DL= *Digital Leadership* ; TOI= *Turnover Intention*; WLB= *Work Life Balance*

Meanwhile, the WLB-DL pathway obtained a coefficient value of 0.033, a T-statistic of 1.400, and a p-value of 0.162. These values did not reach the established threshold because the T-statistic was <1.96 and the p-value was >0.05 . Therefore, the relationship between WLB and DL was not statistically significant.



Source: SmartPLS Processing Results (2026)

In the SmartPLS model diagram presented in Figure 2, the direction of the arrows indicates the connections between constructs in the research framework. The arrow connecting WLB to TOI indicates the direct influence of WLB on TOI, while the arrow from DL to TOI indicates the influence of DL on TOI. The path coefficient values displayed on the connecting lines between constructs indicate the magnitude of the relationship between variables in the model, which is 0.760 for the relationship between WLB and TOI and -0.111 for the relationship between DL and TOI.

The value shown in the endogenous construct circle represents the R-Square (R^2) value. The Digital Leadership construct has an R^2 value of 0.090, which means that 9.0% of the diversity of Digital Leadership is related to the variables contained in the research framework, while the other 91.0% comes from factors outside the framework used. In the TOI construct, the R^2 value reaches 0.640, which indicates that 64.0% of the diversity of TOI can be predicted by the variables involved in the research framework, while the other 36.0% is related to other factors not included in the focus of the study. Figure 2 displays the structural model and measurement model as the basis for analysis in this study.

Discussion

The results of the hypothesis testing in Table 6 found a significant influence between WLB and TOI. This relationship is reflected in the path coefficient value of 0.760, the t-statistic value of 15.777, and the p-value of 0.000. The t-statistic value exceeding the limit of 1.96 and the p-value below 0.05 provide evidence that the first hypothesis has empirical support. WLB plays a role in the emergence of TOI in employees. The level of integration between work responsibilities and personal life experienced by employees is related to their tendency to stay or leave the company. This positions WLB as one aspect of HR management, especially in reducing employee desire to change jobs.

The results of this study align with the view (Sidiq & Poerwita, 2025) that places WLB as a factor related to TOI. Kasperczuk et al. (2025) also suggest that organizations that are able to support the proportional division of work roles and personal lives of employees tend to be able to retain their workforce for a longer period. Meanwhile, Authar et al. (2025) explain that low levels of WLB can trigger work stress and emotional exhaustion, which then contribute to the emergence of employee intentions to change jobs. The findings of this study also support the view that WLB is an element that helps determine the effectiveness of HR management because it is related to the welfare of the workforce within the organization. In this regard, organizations need to consider implementing policies and working conditions that can encourage the achievement of a proportional division of work roles and personal lives of employees.

Referring to the results of the test of the relationship between variables in Table 6, it is known that Digital Leadership is unable to mediate the influence of WLB on TOI. The test results describe the results of the indirect effect coefficient of 0.033, a t-statistic value of 1.400, and a p-value of 0.162. The t-statistic value that has not reached 1.96 accompanied by a p-value that exceeds 0.05 leads to not meeting the specified significance limit, so the second hypothesis is not supported by the analysis results.

These results indicate that the influence of WLB on TOI does not occur through the role of Digital Leadership. In other words, the existence of digital leadership in the organization has not been able to act as a bridging mechanism for the relationship between WLB and TOI. The influence of WLB on TOI tends to occur directly without Digital Leadership as an intermediary variable. This insignificant mediation effect is due to various factors. One is the possibility that employees' decisions regarding their intention to leave the organization are more influenced by the conditions of the proportional division of work roles and personal life that they directly experience rather than by the digital-based leadership style implemented by the organization. Furthermore, the implementation of Digital Leadership may not be fully perceived by participants, making its contribution to explaining the relationship between WLB and TOI less strong. These results indicate that although digital leadership is an

important aspect in facing organizational digital transformation, its role does not always strengthen or explain the relationship between WLB and TOI. Thus, organizational efforts to reduce TOI need to focus more on improving the quality of WLB as perceived by employees.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study on the influence of WLB on TOI with DL in Generation Z employees point to the emergence of a relationship between WLB and Digital Leadership. The condition of the proportional division of work and personal life roles experienced by Generation Z employees is related to how they interpret the implementation of digital leadership in the organization. An increase in the level of balance tends to be followed by a better experience in interactions with leaders who utilize digital technology in the work environment. WLB is also related to TOI. The proportional division of work and personal life roles is one aspect that influences the tendency of Generation Z employees to stay or leave the organization. This generation places work-life balance as an important part of work activities. When these conditions are not met, the tendency to consider other work options tends to increase. This study also shows that DL has an influence on TOI. This can explain that DL, which is implemented effectively, can create a more adaptive, communicative work environment that is in accordance with the characteristics of Generation Z. Thus, the better the implementation of digital leadership in the organization, the level of TOI in employees can decrease. Overall, this study leads to the understanding that WLB and digital leadership play a role in explaining TOI in Generation Z employees. Based on the results of the analysis, these two variables are able to explain the variation in turnover intention by 64%, while the rest is outside the scope of the variables studied in this study. Thus, companies need to pay attention to the division of work roles and personal life proportionally and strengthen the quality of digital leadership to support work comfort and retain Generation Z employees.

For companies, the findings of this study indicate that WLB is related to TOI in Gen-Z employees. This condition points to the need to strengthen the implementation of WLB through work policies that support the proportional division of work roles and personal life, including flexible work time arrangements, more balanced workload management, providing adequate rest time, and supporting employees' personal needs. These steps are aimed at creating a more comfortable work environment so that the tendency of employees to switch to other workplaces can be reduced. In addition, companies still need to develop Digital Leadership practices that are adaptive to technological developments to support effective communication and work coordination, although in this study Digital Leadership has not been proven to play a role as a mediating variable. For Gen-Z employees, this study can be used as a consideration in maintaining a balance between work responsibilities and personal life. Employees are also expected to be able to build good communication with superiors and utilize technology optimally to support work implementation. Achieving a balance between work demands and life outside of work allows employees to increase work comfort and maintain their well-being. Further research can be expanded by integrating other variables potentially related to TOI, such as Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employee Engagement, and work stress, to create a more comprehensive analytical framework. Further research can be conducted in different industrial sectors and with a larger number of respondents, thus increasing the reach and applicability of the results.

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