

Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Retention among GenZ in Gig Economy

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the effect of work-life balance on employee retention among Generation Z gig workers. The proposed research will attempt to analyse the impact of different factors influencing work-life balance, including working hours, flexibility, and stress levels, on the retention of Gen Z gig workers. Primary data will be collected using a structured questionnaire created using Google Forms and administered to Gen Z employees who are gig workers, while secondary data will be collected from published articles, journals, papers, and reports on existing research. This proposed research aims to uncover the factors that influence work-life balance and determine their effect on employee retention and propose appropriate measures to address work-life balance and employee retention. The primary findings of this proposed research are expected to show that work-life balance has a significant effect on employee retention among Gen Z gig workers.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Gig Economy, Employee Retention, Gen Z, Flexibility, Turnover

1. Introduction

Digital tools have helped gig jobs spread fast, creating many temporary roles that shift around. Younger workers often pick these because they want freedom in how they spend time. Yet gaps appear when pay feels shaky, days stretch too long, or help seems missing - these eat into personal space. When private moments fade, some choose to leave their gigs sooner. So, the research looks closely at how keeping life steady shapes whether young gig workers stay put. The nature of work is rapidly evolving because of technological advancements, the rise of digital platforms, and the changing needs of the modern workforce. One of the biggest impacts of these changes is the rise of the gig economy, which provides flexible, short-term, and task-based work opportunities through digital platforms. This form of work has particularly caught on with Generation Z (Gen Z), who values flexibility, autonomy, mental wellness, and work-life balance over traditional job security. While gig work provides workers with more flexibility and control over their work and careers, it also presents a number of challenges. Gig workers often face issues such as income instability, long working hours, lack of job security, perpetual online connectivity, and a lack of support from their organizations. These issues can make it difficult for gig workers to achieve a balance between their work and personal lives, which has a direct impact on their motivation to continue working in the gig economy.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it will help in understanding the work expectations and retention practices of Generation Z workers in the gig economy. The study will help gig companies and organizations understand the impact of work-life balance on retention and employee well-being. The study will also help policymakers in formulating labour policies that ensure a sustainable and employee-friendly gig work environment. The study will also help in filling the research gap in Gen Z gig workers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Mukhdar, N. M., Abdullah, S. M., & Permana S., A. R. (2024). Work-Life Balance of Generation Z Employees. The International Conference on Psychology UMBY states that fresh air at the workplace matters more than you might think - especially for younger workers who see job and private time as separate worlds. Mood shifts when spaces feel inviting, so offices that breathe easy keep people around longer. Messages sent through screens often land better than face-to-face chats these days, fitting how they already live each day. Keeping things light helps hold attention without force. Comfort is not just nice, it sticks.

2. Sadman Ishraq Hamid (2022) stated that for Gen Z, it often comes down to the workplace vibe. Not money alone - not perks - culture shapes their choice. Old-school tricks barely move the needle anymore. What grabs them? Learning that never stops. Tech woven into daily work life. Growth chances matter just as much as steady pay checks. A place where nothing changes loses them fast. Feeling stuck kills loyalty quicker than low wages. Progress, real and visible, keeps them around. Hamid, 2022 found this clear pattern across firms.

3. Poonam Bhadkariya & Dr. Shambhu Nath Singh stated that a fresh look at keeping workers around - Bhadkariya and Singh in 2025 point to custom-fit job experiences. Not everyone fits the old mold, especially younger staff who shrug off uniform rules. What pulls them in? Time for life outside work matters a lot, along with feeling seen for their efforts. Staying put often depends on growth plans shaped just right, plus choices in perks that match real daily rhythms. When support bends instead of breaks, people tend to stick. The shape of loyalty is shifting - one size no longer cuts it.

4. Joao Francisco Queiros de Sousa stated that a look at Gen Z and turnover intentions shows something odd - flexible work exists, yet many do not use it. Instead of simply providing choices, companies see better results when people actually take part without fear. Quitting becomes more tempting when team culture quietly discourages time-off or remote days. What sticks is not the policy on paper, but whether workers feel okay using it. Real staying power comes from lived experience, not just offered perks. Satisfaction grows where trust backs up written rules.

5. Jikku Susan Kurian & N. Bindu Madhavi (2024) stated that starting off differently - life in short-term jobs hits younger workers in distinct ways. A look at recent findings shows drive matters most, along with how comfortable someone is using technology. Instead of sticking to one company, what counts now is managing pressure while keeping control over daily choices. When people push themselves willingly,

their mood tends to stay stable, involvement continues. Staying active in work depends heavily on inner drive shaping everyday experience.

6. Nurul Maulidina Mukhdar, Sri Muliati Abdullah, & Dr. Asep Rokhyadi Permana S stated that life does not pause when work starts - not for Gen Z. Instead of blending everything together, they want jobs tucked neatly beside personal time. Boundaries matter more than balance. What companies offer often falls short of what younger workers imagine. Construction firms especially lag behind in matching those visions. Paying fairly for extra hours helps close the gap. So does offering real chances to grow within a role. When workplaces adjust, people stay. Expectations shift faster than old systems adapt. A new rhythm emerges where job demands do not overrun daily living. Fit matters more than flexibility alone.

7. Waworuntu, E. C., Kainde, S. J. R., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction and Performance Among Millennial and Gen Z Employees: A Systematic Review. *Society*, 10(2) states that starting off, a study by Waworuntu and team in 2022 looked closely at how young workers feel about their jobs. Instead of juggling tasks endlessly, those who manage time well between duties and personal life tend to enjoy work more. Because of this ease, they stay happier on the job, which shows up later in stronger results. When people feel satisfied, they are less likely to leave. Rather than treating balance as an extra perk, leaders should weave it into daily operations if they want teams to stick around.

8. Dhanpat, N., & Stanz, K. J. (2024). Human Resource Practices Aligned with Sustainable Development Goals. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management* states that work lives matter differently now. Younger workers stay longer where values match their own. A recent piece by Dhanpat and Stanz shows how people's practices connect to broader world goals. Purpose shapes loyalty, not just pay checks. Where fairness grows, so does belonging. Careers feel richer when aligned with real change. What companies do outside profit counts inside too. Feeling part of something bigger keeps energy alive at work. Meaning sticks. People notice if actions follow words. How firms treat earth and employee's links tightly together. Long-term engagement comes from shared belief, not perks.

9. Xueyun Z., Mamun A.A., Masukujjaman M., Rahman M.K., Gao J., Yang Q. (2023) stated that right off, this piece looks at how Gen Z - people born between 1996 and 2012 - is stepping into jobs worldwide. By 2030, nearly one out of three workers will come from this age group. Though companies used to study Millennials closely, now attention shifts elsewhere. What sets these younger folks apart is not just tech ease - it is also practical thinking and strong schooling. They grew up online, so borders rarely limit what they see or know. News spreads fast; ideas travel further than ever before. Because of constant connectivity, their worldview feels more borderless than past generations'. India sees them as especially driven, often aiming high in careers without hesitation. Work ethic stands out, along with a quiet push to change old workplace habits. Their presence brings subtle shifts, not loud revolutions. So expectations adjust - not overnight, but steadily. One thing stays clear: their influence grows whether noticed or not.

10. Kurniawan Setyantoro, Faizal Rizqi, Surya Raharja, & Puji Harto stated that this piece looks closely at how young employees in Indonesia's banking industry picture their future jobs, focusing on those at PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI). Because of shifts happening in workplaces, Gen Z is likely to step into leadership spots over the next decade. As they join teams, new ways of talking, leading, and valuing

differences are starting to take shape. While past studies paid attention mostly to students from this generation, little has been explored about their actual time on the job - especially inside local company settings.

11. Joao Francisco Queiros de Sousa stated that looking into how Dutch companies keep talented younger workers, this graduate paper traces the full work experience - starting at hiring, moving through growth phases, ending at departure. Newcomers settle in using both structured programs and casual routines; that process is called onboarding. For those born after 1996, chatting with peers matters much more, while phone use reshapes how messages flow across teams. People from the earlier wave, often labelled Millennials, tend to care deeply about shared beliefs with employers - even if job scarcity pushes them toward less ideal fits. One thing stands out when comparing groups: members of Gen Z expect clearer access to top leaders and human resources staff. Their role's impact needs explaining early, not left vague. Advance details before starting matter more to them than it did for those who came just before.

12. This piece looks at how young workers in China are choosing to do only their assigned tasks, stepping back when jobs start feeling overwhelming. Because of what happened during the pandemic, many from this generation began valuing free time more, resisting constant pressure. Instead of pushing through stress, they step away quietly if things feel unbalanced. Work environments matter a lot - when people feel supported, they tend to stay engaged longer. Even so, tough working conditions still push some toward disengaging slowly. Job stability helps, yet it is meaningful growth chances that truly keep spirits up. When someone feels emotionally tied to their workplace, leaving mentally becomes less likely. Burnout clearly links to pulling back effort - but hope for advancement changes behavior fast.

13. Dimokas Merkourios (2025) stated that looking at what drives Gen Z, this study takes another look at old ideas - think Maslow's pyramid, Herzberg's work on satisfaction, besides McGregor's views on management styles. Though steady pay plus safe jobs matter, they are just basics; deeper urges like growing skills, mental balance, together with meaning pull stronger today. Leadership that listens, involves people, then trusts them tends to land better than top-down control. When growth paths go missing, many walk away - three out of four said they would consider quitting without chances to move forward.

2.1. Research Problem (Research Gap)

Although some studies have examined employee retention and work-life balance in the traditional employment context, there is a dearth of research specifically targeting Gen Z employees in the gig economy. The existing literature tends to neglect the impact of work-life balance problems on Gen Z gig economy employees, who are remarkably different from previous generations in terms of their expectations and work values. The absence of empirical research on the association between work-life balance and employee retention in Gen Z gig economy employees is a substantial research gap that this study seeks to fill.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Objectives

The research objectives are:

- To determine the factors that influence work-life balance among Gen Z gig workers.
- To investigate the effect of work-life balance on employee retention in the gig economy.
- To analyse the difficulties encountered by Gen Z gig workers in achieving work-life balance.
- To propose strategies for improving work-life balance and employee retention among gig workers.

3.2 Sampling Method

The study uses a non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, respondents are selected based on ease of access and willingness to participate in the survey.

This method is suitable because:

- Gig workers are scattered and difficult to reach through random sampling.
- The questionnaire is distributed online through Google Forms, social media, and digital platforms.
- It allows faster data collection within the limited time of the research.

3.3 Sample Size

The study collects responses from approximately 130 Gen Z gig workers. This sample size is considered adequate to analyse the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention and to perform statistical analysis such as correlation and regression.

3.4 Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention among Generation Z gig workers.

A descriptive and analytical research design is used in this study. The descriptive approach helps in understanding the characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of Gen Z gig workers regarding work-life balance. The analytical approach helps in analysing the relationship between work-life balance factors and employee retention.

The study collects primary data through a structured questionnaire and uses statistical tools such as correlation and regression analysis to test the hypotheses and examine the relationship between variables.

3.5 Sources of Data

1. Primary Data

Primary data is collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire created using Google Forms. The questionnaire is distributed among Generation Z gig workers working on different digital platforms such as delivery services, freelancing platforms, ride-sharing services, and online work platforms.

The questionnaire includes questions related to:

- Working hours
- Flexibility in work
- Stress level
- Income stability
- Work-life balance
- Employee retention intentions

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected from various sources to support the study. These sources include:

- Research journals
- Published research papers
- Books related to HRM and gig economy
- Online databases
- Articles and reports on work-life balance and employee retention

Secondary data helps in building the literature review and theoretical understanding of the research topic.

3.6 Target Population

The target population of this study consists of Generation Z workers engaged in the gig economy. Generation Z generally includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012. For the purpose of this study, respondents are selected from the age group of approximately 18-27 years who are currently working in gig-based jobs.

Examples of gig workers include:

- Food delivery partners
- Ride-sharing drivers
- Freelancers
- Online content creators
- Platform-based service providers

3.7 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into different sections:

Section A - Demographic Information

Section B - Work-Life Balance Factors

Section C - Employee Retention

Section D - Challenges in Work-Life Balance

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data will be analysed using statistical tools. The following methods will be used:

- Descriptive Statistics: Frequency, Percentage, Mean values
- Correlation Analysis: To examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention
- Regression Analysis: To measure the impact of work-life balance factors on employee retention

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to Generation Z workers engaged in the gig economy and may not be applicable to other generations or traditional employment settings. The data is primarily collected through a structured questionnaire, which may be subject to respondent bias. Additionally, the study is confined to a limited sample size and geographical area, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

The results will help in testing the research hypotheses and determining whether work-life balance significantly affects employee retention among Gen Z gig workers.

3.10 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 (Main Hypothesis)

Based on Objective 2: To investigate the effect of work-life balance on employee retention.

H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis): Work-life balance has no significant effect on employee retention among Gen Z gig workers.

H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Work-life balance has a significant effect on employee retention among Gen Z gig workers.

Hypothesis 2 (Supporting Hypothesis)

Based on Objective 1: To determine factors influencing work-life balance.

H₀₂ (Null Hypothesis): Work-related factors (such as working hours, flexibility, income stability, and workload) do not significantly influence work-life balance among Gen Z gig workers.

H₁₂ (Alternative Hypothesis): Work-related factors (such as working hours, flexibility, income stability, and workload) significantly influence work-life balance among Gen Z gig workers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS 1: Work-Life Balance vs Employee Retention

H₀₁: No association between work-life balance and retention.

H₁₁: Association exists.

Chi-Square Formula: $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$

Where O = Observed frequency and E = Expected frequency.

$E = (\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}) / \text{Grand Total}$

Expected values:

WLB \ Retention	Low	Medium	High
Low	7.38	12.23	10.38
Medium	14.77	24.46	20.77
High	9.85	16.31	13.85

Final Chi-Square Value (after all calculations):

$\chi^2 \approx 18.5$

$df = (r-1)(c-1) = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$

Critical value (df = 4, 5%) = 9.49

- Calculated $\chi^2 = 18.5$
- Critical $\chi^2 = 9.49$
- $18.5 > 9.49$

Decision: Reject H₀₁, Accept H₁₁

Conclusion (H1): There is a significant association between work-life balance and employee retention.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Work Factors vs Work-Life Balance

H₀₂: No association between work factors and work-life balance.

H₁₂: Association exists.

Contingency Table:

WLB \ Retention	Low	Medium	High	Total
Low	15	10	5	30
Medium	12	28	20	60
High	5	15	20	40
Total	32	53	45	130

Factors \ WLB	Low	Medium	High	Total
Poor	20	10	5	35
Moderate	15	35	20	70
Good	5	10	10	25
Total	40	55	35	130

$E = (35 \times 40) / 130 = 10.77$

$\chi^2 \approx 16.2$

$df = 4$

- Critical value = 9.49
- Calculated $\chi^2 = 16.2$
- $16.2 > 9.49$

Decision: Reject H₀₂, Accept H₁₂

Conclusion (H₂): Work-related factors significantly influence work-life balance.

Final Conclusion: Chi-square analysis revealed a significant association between work-life balance and employee retention ($\chi^2 = 18.5, p < 0.05$). Similarly, a significant relationship was found between work-related factors and work-life balance ($\chi^2 = 16.2, p < 0.05$). Therefore, both null hypotheses were rejected.

4.2 Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age Group	18-21 years	29	22%
	21-23 years	31	24%
	23-25 years	40	31%
	25-27 years	21	16%
	Others	9	7%

Gender	Female	67	52%
	Male	63	48%
Type of Gig Work	Online Tutoring	23	18%
	Graphic Design	21	16%
	Content Creation	20	15%
	Food Delivery	20	15%
	Freelancing	19	15%
	Others	27	21%

Interpretation

The demographic analysis shows that the majority of respondents belong to the 23-25 years age group (31%), followed by 21-23 years (24%). The gender distribution is almost equal, with 52% female and 48% male respondents. Regarding the type of gig work, other gig activities account for the highest share (21%), followed by online tutoring (18%), graphic design (16%), and content creation, food delivery, and freelancing (15% each). This indicates that Generation Z workers participate in a wide range of gig economy jobs.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation with "Continue Gig Work"
Flexibility in choosing work hours	0.04
Healthy personal life from workload	-0.02
Financial satisfaction	-0.06
Platform/app support	-0.05
Ability to take leave	-0.15
Work-life balance motivates gig work	-0.09
Thinking about quitting	0.10
Satisfaction with work-life balance	0.07
Stable income increases commitment	0.01
Irregular income stress	0.02
Long working hours affect health	0.06
Job security concern	0.00
Customer ratings pressure	-0.13

Interpretation

- Most correlations are weak (close to 0).
- Leave flexibility (-0.15) and customer rating pressure (-0.13) show slightly stronger relationships.
- Overall, no strong relationship exists between these variables and the intention to continue gig work.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable (Y): Intention to continue gig work for next 2-3 years

Independent Variables (X):

- Flexibility
- Work-life balance
- Financial satisfaction
- Platform support
- Leave flexibility
- Income stability
- Stress factors
- Health impact
- Job security
- Customer rating pressure

Regression Results

Statistic	Value
Sample Size	130
R ²	0.088
Adjusted R ²	-0.014
F-Statistic	0.865
Significance (p-value)	0.591

Interpretation

R² = 0.088: Only 8.8% of variation in intention to continue gig work is explained by these variables.

p-value = 0.591 (>0.05): The regression model is not statistically significant. This means the variables do not significantly predict gig workers' intention to continue working.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Flexibility in choosing work hours	130	2.05	0.89	1	5
Ability to maintain healthy personal life	130	2.42	0.96	1	5
Financial satisfaction from gig work	130	2.88	1.02	1	5
Platform / App support	130	2.31	0.91	1	5
Ability to take leave	130	2.67	1.05	1	5
Work-life balance motivates gig work	130	2.12	0.88	1	5

Thinking about quitting gig work	130	2.73	1.01	1	5
Satisfaction with work-life balance	130	2.49	0.94	1	5
Intention to continue gig work	130	2.34	0.97	1	5
Stable income increases commitment	130	1.89	0.82	1	5
Stress due to irregular income	130	2.58	0.99	1	5
Long working hours affect health	130	2.71	1.03	1	5
Job security concerns	130	2.94	1.06	1	5
Pressure from customer ratings	130	2.76	0.95	1	5

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics show that respondents moderately agree that flexibility and work-life balance are important benefits of gig work, while financial satisfaction, job security, and income stability remain areas of concern among gig workers. The average scores range between 1.89 and 2.94, indicating generally moderate perceptions across the variables.

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

Most people in this study belong to Generation Z, falling between twenty-one and twenty-five years old - they make up just over half the group. Slightly more women take part than men, though numbers stay close overall. Instead of sticking to one kind of job, many do different things online: teaching through video calls shows up often, next to making visuals, posting on social media, delivering meals also appears common. Doing various tasks fits how today's young adults interact with internet-based work. When looking deeper into patterns, time management stands out as key for staying steady in their roles. Data tests show clear links - keeping daily routines balanced connects strongly to whether someone stays signed onto a service, another test backs similar ties between workplace conditions and maintaining that equilibrium. Because results cross accepted thresholds, earlier assumptions get ruled out. Staying in a position tends to depend heavily on managing private needs alongside working demands.

Yet even with strong links shown earlier, keeping people in gig jobs long term still seems tough. Flexibility and managing personal time matter quite a bit to those surveyed - ratings sit between 1.89 and 2.94 on average - yet money worries, steady pay, and feeling secure at work weigh heavily too. Oddly enough, things like freedom to take breaks (-0.15) or stress from client reviews (-0.13) barely connect to whether someone plans to stick around. From another angle, numbers pulled through regression show just 8.8% of staying intent comes from these factors, backed by a shaky p-value of 0.591. So although younger workers care deeply about balancing life and labor, that alone does not lock them into staying; instead, choices emerge from tangled threads - wanting control over schedules mixed with deeper unease about unstable earnings baked into short-term gigs.

5.2 Conclusion

Work-life balance shows little effect on keeping Gen Z gig workers around - at least according to this particular look at the data. Even though flexibility matters to younger workers, it does not lock them into staying. Numbers pulled from correlations and regressions back up that idea: no strong tie exists between downtime and sticking with gigs. What keeps popping up instead? Pay consistency, clearer paths forward, and some sense of safety in the role. Personal freedom helps, sure - but money and structure pull stronger levers when choices get made. Retention hinges less on hours logged outside work, more on whether the work itself feels worth continuing. The numbers just do not lie about that part. Not everyone thinks about work-life balance the way we assume, especially among younger workers - money worries and what comes next matter more than free time. Even though having a balanced schedule still counts for something, staying in gig jobs hinges less on flexibility and more on whether people feel secure about earnings and where they are headed.

5.3 Recommendations

Looking at what the research shows, changes could help keep younger gig workers around longer. One way forward involves platform operators setting clear earning floors alongside open pay tracking plus rewards tied to consistent work quality - money worries weigh heavily here. Stability might grow if services like health protection, crisis aid, and paths to stick around for months get added into standard offerings. Another shift comes by reworking how clients rate their helpers; swapping constant stress for balanced reviews paired with ways to challenge unfair scores makes a difference. On top of that, platforms need to make sure time-off rules are not just listed somewhere - they must be usable without cutting pay or causing pushback, which helps balance job demands with personal life. Workers stay longer when they see ways forward - so offering training or routes to steady roles matters more than it might first seem. Dealing with anxiety and sudden setbacks gets easier if emotional well-being tools are within reach during rough patches. When how jobs get handed out and money arrives is clear to everyone, confidence grows slowly but steadily. All these steps together shape working conditions that last - and actually hold up under pressure.

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