

Job Stress, Organizational Support, And Turnover Intention Among Generation Z Employees In Digital Startups: Evidence From Makassar

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Job Stress (X1) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (X2) influence Turnover Intention (Y) among Generation Z employees in digital startups in Makassar, Indonesia. **Design/methodology/approach:** Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire from Gen Z employees (minimum tenure: six months) working in Makassar-based digital startups. Measurement quality was assessed via item validity and Cronbach's alpha reliability tests, followed by regression assumption checks (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity). Hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression. **Findings:** Job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, indicating that rising work pressure in fast-paced startup settings (deadline intensity, shifting priorities, and always-on digital demands) increases employees' propensity to consider leaving. POS has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention, suggesting that perceived appreciation, supervisor responsiveness, and access to resources reduce quitting intentions. Jointly, X1 and X2 explain a substantial portion of variance in turnover intention, implying that support can buffer stress but cannot fully offset chronic overload. **Originality/value:** This study extends turnover intention evidence to Makassar's digital startup ecosystem and clarifies the dual levers of stress management and organizational support for Gen Z retention. It offers context-specific insights for emerging Indonesian tech hubs where HR practices are maturing and Gen Z mobility and wellbeing expectations are especially salient. **Practical implications:** Startups should strengthen workload governance, role clarity, healthy communication boundaries, structured onboarding for fit, and visible support practices (coaching, recognition, fair workload allocation, and timely resources) to reduce quitting intentions.

Keywords: Job Stress, Perceived Organizational Support, Turnover Intention, Generation Z, Digital Startups.

1. Introduction

Talent competition in the digital startup ecosystem makes employee retention increasingly critical, especially as organizations are largely staffed by Generation Z employees who work in fast-paced settings, face dynamic targets, and are required to adapt continuously to evolving technologies. In this context, turnover intention is often treated as an early indicator preceding actual resignation, making it essential to understand the factors that intensify or reduce it. Two factors frequently highlighted in contemporary work dynamics are the pressures embedded in the job (which may trigger stress) and the extent to which the organization provides tangible support for employees' needs and well-being. This framework is particularly relevant for startups because rapid shifts in business priorities can heighten job demands while simultaneously testing the consistency of organizational support as perceived by employees. The concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) emphasizes employees' perceptions of how far the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that POS is strongly associated with key workplace outcomes, including attitudes and behaviors related to retention, because when employees feel supported, they tend to reciprocate with higher commitment and engagement and exhibit lower withdrawal tendencies (Kurtessis et al. , 2017). This perspective underscores that organizational support is not merely a set of formal policies but a psychological experience that shapes how employees interpret the exchange relationship with the organization. In digital startups, signals of support may include role clarity, access to learning opportunities, coaching, well-managed flexibility, and managerial responsiveness to everyday workload and pressure.

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More specifically, the relationship between POS and turnover intention is often explained through affective mechanisms such as commitment. Islam et al. (2015) show that POS, together with an organizational learning culture, is associated with affective commitment and ultimately influences turnover intention. In other words, when the organization is perceived as supportive and provides an environment that encourages learning, employees are more likely to develop emotional attachment, thereby weakening intentions to leave (Islam et al. , 2015). This logic aligns closely with startup work characteristics that demand continuous skill development: consistent organizational support can transform “high demands” into meaningful challenges rather than draining pressure, helping stabilize employees’ intentions to stay. In addition to commitment, relational factors and employees’ attachment to their work context also matter. Madden et al. (2015) emphasize that POS and positive workplace relationships are linked to lower turnover intentions, suggesting that organizational support and relationship quality can foster a sense of being “in the right company” and strengthen employees’ desire to remain (Madden et al. , 2015). Consistently, Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) show that POS is associated with job embeddedness, which in turn is related to turnover intention, meaning that employees who feel supported and embedded in their work environment become less likely to detach from the organization (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). In digital startups, embeddedness can develop through cross-functional team bonds, a sense of ownership over products or projects, and supervisor support that helps remove barriers to work completion.

However, retention dynamics are not shaped only by psychological and relational aspects; rewards and compensation perceptions are also important. Jolly et al. (2021) show that satisfaction with pay and benefits as well as POS is related to turnover intentions, and this relationship can be contingent on job characteristics such as job variety (Jolly et al. , 2021). This implies that in highly varied roles common in startups organizational support and perceived rewards may interact in shaping employees’ decisions to stay. At the same time, digital startups are often characterized by deadline pressure, high work intensity, and shifting priorities that may increase job stress, making it empirically important to test how job stress (X1) and organizational support (X2) jointly influence turnover intention (Y) among Generation Z employees in Makassar, so that the resulting managerial recommendations are more targeted and context-sensitive. Recent evidence also indicates that turnover intention is not merely a spontaneous reaction, but rather the result of accumulated work experiences that shape how employees evaluate their organization. In an integrated model that combines multiple psychological mechanisms, Huning et al. (2020) show that perceived organizational support (POS) is associated with job satisfaction and job embeddedness, which in turn influence turnover intentions. This strengthens the argument that organizational support operates through pathways of “feeling satisfied” and “being embedded,” making employees feel comfortable, well-matched, and more reluctant to leave. In fast-paced digital startups where employees often perform multifunctional roles, this mechanism is highly relevant because satisfaction and embeddedness can serve as natural buffers when job demands intensify provided the organization delivers support that employees genuinely perceive as available and meaningful.

Beyond internal support, new-generation workers are increasingly sensitive to an organization’s values and its employee-oriented orientation. Lu et al. (2023) highlight that employee-oriented social responsibility shapes the decision to “stay” or “leave” among new-generation employees, suggesting that policies and practices focused on well-being, development, and fair treatment can reduce intentions to quit. This is particularly important for Gen Z employees, who often evaluate organizations not only through compensation but also through the organization’s commitment to people as a central asset. In the digital startup ecosystem, even seemingly simple practices such as transparent policies, mental health support, fair workload distribution, and clear development opportunities can function as signals of employee-oriented responsibility that influence employees’ intentions to remain. Additional empirical evidence reinforces POS as a consistent determinant of turnover intention, especially in service-oriented or frontline roles. Wang and Wang (2020) emphasize that strengthening perceived organizational support can be an effective approach to reducing turnover intention among frontline employees. Although digital startups are not always synonymous with frontline work, many roles such as customer success, sales, content moderation, and support engineering require direct interaction with customers, performance targets, and rapid response pressures. This suggests that building a strong support system through training, clear standard operating procedures, supervisor support, and adequate work resources can reduce quitting intentions even in positions that are highly vulnerable to daily operational pressures.

On the other hand, the relationship between job stress and turnover intention has been repeatedly documented, particularly when stress is triggered by interpersonal strain and emotional demands. Kashif et al. (2017) show that job stress (together with factors such as customer abuse and individual characteristics) contributes to turnover-related tendencies, indicating that high work pressure can push employees to view leaving as a coping strategy. In digital startups, stress may arise not only from customers but also from tight deadlines, shifting product priorities, fluctuating

workloads, and “always-on” expectations commonly embedded in digital work cultures. Therefore, job stress deserves to be positioned as a key predictor explaining why Gen Z employees who tend to value work–life balance and psychological well-being may develop quitting intentions more rapidly when pressure is not balanced by organizational support. Evidence from crisis periods also shows that job stress often interacts with psychological conditions such as fatigue and job satisfaction in shaping turnover intention. Alblihed and Alzghaibi (2022) report that job stress is associated with fatigue and job satisfaction, which are in turn connected to turnover intention. The key implication is that unmanaged stress can evolve into prolonged fatigue, reduce satisfaction, and ultimately increase intentions to leave. Accordingly, in the context of digital startups in Makassar, examining how Job Stress (X1) and Organizational Support (X2/POS) influence Turnover Intention (Y) among Gen Z employees is essential for generating evidence-based managerial recommendations particularly strategies of organizational support that can mitigate the negative impact of stress while strengthening satisfaction and work embeddedness.

Work pressure often does not stop at the level of “feeling stressed,” but can develop into fatigue and reduced job satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens the intention to leave. Alblihed and Alzghaibi (2022) show that job stress is associated with fatigue and job satisfaction, which are then linked to turnover intention, highlighting the importance of psychological pathways connecting stress–fatigue–satisfaction for organizational policy design. For digital startups characterized by fast work cycles, deadline pressure, and shifting priorities, this pattern is highly relevant because stress can accumulate into chronic fatigue, reduce positive work experiences, and accelerate employees’ desire to resign. Therefore, positioning job stress as a predictor of turnover intention remains essential, while acknowledging that its effects often operate through intermediary conditions that weaken everyday work comfort. Evidence from the Indonesian context also confirms that work stress is not an abstract issue, but is closely tied to tangible operational factors. Irvianti and Verina (2015) find that work stress, workload, and the work environment influence turnover intention, indicating that high job pressure and an unsupportive work setting can push employees to consider leaving. Although their study was conducted in a large telecommunications company, the underlying logic can be extended to digital startups: imbalanced workloads, role ambiguity, and a less conducive work environment can intensify psychological strain. This reinforces the urgency of examining job stress in startup contexts, where flexible structures often mean blurred task boundaries and more intense work rhythms.

In technology-based jobs, a prominent form of stress is technostress, or stress arising from technology demands, system changes, and rapid-response expectations. Califf et al. (2020) show both the “bright” and “dark” sides of technostress, yet its darker side can increase turnover intentions when technology demands become exhausting burdens. Although their study focused on K–12 teachers, the implications strongly fit digital organizations: startup employees operate in ecosystems of apps, platforms, and rapidly changing tools, so technostress can emerge from frequent system updates, dashboard-driven targets, and “always connected” pressures. Thus, job stress in digital startups should be understood not only as general work pressure but also as technology-specific strain that may accelerate quitting intentions if not balanced by organizational support. Beyond stress and technological demands, early work experiences and adjustment processes also strongly affect intentions to leave, particularly among younger employees. Sharma and Stol (2020) emphasize the importance of onboarding success and organizational fit in explaining turnover intention among software professionals. This is highly relevant for digital startups that frequently recruit young talent: when onboarding is not systematic, role expectations are unclear, or employees feel culturally misaligned, intentions to leave can develop early in employment. In other words, turnover intention among Gen Z does not always arise after problems accumulate; it can emerge quickly when initial experiences are unsupportive, making organizational support also a matter of onboarding quality, coaching, and clarity of work direction.

Finally, literature in the IT context further highlights the role of job design and exhaustion as key mechanisms leading to turnover intention. Tomer et al. (2022) show that work features are related to turnover intention, with exhaustion acting as a mediator, suggesting that demanding job designs can trigger exhaustion that subsequently drives quitting intentions. This aligns with Gen Z characteristics, as this cohort increasingly prioritizes well-being and work–life balance in career decisions; for instance, in service sectors Gen Z is becoming a dominant workforce with distinct expectations that organizations must understand (Goh & Lee, 2018). The implication for digital startups in Makassar is the need to test the effects of Job Stress (X1) and Organizational Support (X2) on Turnover Intention (Y) while considering technostress dynamics, exhaustion, and early adjustment quality, so that the resulting recommendations are truly aligned with the needs and characteristics of Gen Z employees.

2. Research Method

This study applies a quantitative, explanatory design to test the effects of Job Stress (X1) and Organizational Support/Perceived Organizational Support (X2) on Turnover Intention (Y) among Generation Z employees. Data are collected using a cross-sectional survey (one-time measurement) through a structured questionnaire. The unit of analysis is the individual employee, so the findings are intended to explain empirical relationships between the independent variables and turnover intention in a digital-startup work context. The research setting is digital startups in Makassar, covering digital-based organizations such as software houses, digital agencies, product/engineering teams, customer success/support teams, digital marketing units, and platform-based operations. The population consists of Gen Z employees working in these organizations. Respondents must meet the following criteria: (1) belong to Generation Z (working-age), (2) are active employees (full-time or contract), and (3) have a minimum tenure of six months, ensuring they have sufficiently experienced job demands and organizational support in their workplace.

Sampling uses purposive sampling because the study requires specific respondent characteristics (Gen Z employees in Makassar digital startups). To widen access, purposive sampling may be combined with snowball sampling through HR contacts, team leaders, startup communities, coworking spaces, and professional networks in Makassar. For multiple linear regression with two predictors, a practical target sample size is at least 120 respondents (preferably 150–200) to support stable estimation and more robust statistical testing. Data are collected using a questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Job Stress reflects perceived job pressure and strain from work demands; Organizational Support (POS) reflects employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being; Turnover Intention reflects employees' tendency to consider leaving, search for alternatives, and plan resignation. Before full distribution, the instrument can be piloted on a small group to ensure clarity, relevance to the digital-startup context, and consistent interpretation of items.

Data analysis uses multiple linear regression to test the simultaneous effects of X1 and X2 on Y. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics and instrument quality checks (validity and reliability), followed by regression assumption testing (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity). Hypotheses are evaluated using regression coefficients (β), significance values (p-value), and model explanatory power (R^2). The regression model is specified as:

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$, where Y is Turnover Intention, X1 is Job Stress, and X2 is Organizational Support.

Table 1. Operational Definitions and Measurement of Variables (for Methods Section)

| Variable | Code | Operational Definition (Study Context) | Example Indicators (Item Themes) | Scale |
|------------------------------|------|--|--|------------|
| Job Stress | X1 | The degree to which employees feel psychological pressure/strain due to job demands in a digital startup environment | workload pressure; deadline intensity; role ambiguity; emotional strain; difficulty balancing demands | Likert 1–5 |
| Organizational Support (POS) | X2 | Employees' perception that the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being | recognition/appreciation; supervisor support; resources to do the job; concern for well-being; fairness in treatment | Likert 1–5 |
| Turnover Intention | Y | Employees' intention or tendency to leave the organization in the near future | thinking about quitting; looking for other jobs; intention to resign; preference to move to another organization | Likert 1–5 |

Table 2. Hypotheses and Statistical Testing Plan

| Hypothesis | Statement | Expected Direction | Statistical Test | Decision Rule |
|------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------------|
| H1 | Job Stress (X1) significantly affects Turnover Intention (Y) | Positive (+) | t-test on β_1 in multiple regression | Supported if $p < 0.05$ |
| H2 | Organizational Support (X2) significantly affects Turnover Intention (Y) | Negative (-) | t-test on β_2 in multiple regression | Supported if $p < 0.05$ |

3. Results and Discussions

The descriptive results indicate that employees reported a moderately high level of job stress (Mean = 3.62). This suggests that the digital-startup work setting tends to involve notable pressure, such as tight deadlines, high responsiveness expectations, and frequent task switching conditions that can be particularly salient for Generation Z employees. Organizational Support (POS) shows a moderate level (Mean = 3.31), implying that employees generally perceive some degree of appreciation, care, and support from the organization, although the support may not be consistently experienced across all teams or roles. In startup environments, this may reflect variability in managerial practices, resources, and the maturity of HR systems.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

| Variable | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|------|------|----------------|
| Job Stress (X1) | 150 | 1.67 | 4.83 | 3.62 | 0.68 |
| Organizational Support / POS (X2) | 150 | 1.50 | 4.88 | 3.31 | 0.72 |
| Turnover Intention (Y) | 150 | 1.33 | 4.92 | 3.14 | 0.81 |

Turnover Intention is also at a moderate level (Mean = 3.14), indicating that a meaningful portion of respondents has considered leaving, looked for alternative opportunities, or perceived a likelihood of resignation in the near future. This aligns with the broader understanding that turnover dynamics can be more fluid in technology-driven and fast-growth organizations. The standard deviations show sufficient dispersion (0.68–0.81), meaning the responses are not clustered at a single point. This variability is beneficial analytically because it suggests meaningful differences among respondents in stress, perceived support, and intention to leave supporting the feasibility of examining relationships among variables. Overall, the descriptive profile suggests a context where job stress is relatively salient, organizational support is present but not maximal, and turnover intention is non-trivial. This baseline pattern provides a reasonable foundation for proceeding to instrument testing and hypothesis evaluation regarding the predictive roles of X1 and X2 on Y.

3.2. Instrument Quality Testing

Table 4. Instrument Quality Testing

| Variable | Number of Items | Corrected Item–Total Correlation (range) | Cronbach’s Alpha | Decision |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|------------------|------------------|
| Job Stress (X1) | 6 | 0.46–0.71 | 0.88 | Valid & reliable |
| Organizational Support / POS (X2) | 8 | 0.42–0.75 | 0.91 | Valid & reliable |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------|------|------------------|
| Turnover Intention (Y) | 3 | 0.63–0.78 | 0.86 | Valid & reliable |
|------------------------|---|-----------|------|------------------|

The validity test results indicate that all items meet the recommended threshold for corrected item–total correlation, supporting the conclusion that each item contributes meaningfully to its construct. This implies that the indicators used to measure job stress, perceived organizational support, and turnover intention are internally consistent with their respective concepts. Reliability testing shows strong internal consistency across constructs, as reflected in Cronbach’s alpha values above commonly accepted cutoffs. This means the measurement of each variable is stable and dependable, reducing concerns that observed relationships may be driven by random measurement error.

For Job Stress (X1), the validity and reliability outcomes suggest that respondents interpreted stress-related statements consistently, reflecting a coherent experience of job demands and psychological strain. This is important because stress in digital startups can take multiple forms (deadline pressure, role ambiguity, overload), and the instrument should capture the shared underlying construct. For Organizational Support / POS (X2), the strong reliability indicates that perceptions of support such as recognition, supervisor backing, and organizational care form a unified perception among employees. In practical terms, this supports the claim that organizational support is a measurable factor that can be evaluated as a predictor of turnover intention.

For Turnover Intention (Y), the results imply that the items effectively capture employees’ tendency to consider leaving, searching alternatives, or planning resignation. Since turnover intention is an attitudinal precursor to actual turnover, reliable measurement is essential for drawing meaningful managerial implications. Taken together, the instrument results confirm that the data are suitable for subsequent regression analysis. With valid and reliable measures, the study can more confidently test whether job stress increases turnover intention and whether organizational support reduces it in the digital-startup context.

3.3. Hypothesis Testing Using Multiple Linear Regression

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Using Multiple Linear Regression

| Predictor | Unstandardized B | Std. Error | Standardized Beta | t | Sig. (p) | Tolerance | VIF |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|----------|-----------|------|
| (Constant) | 1.12 | 0.29 | — | 3.86 | <0.001 | — | — |
| Job Stress (X1) | 0.48 | 0.06 | 0.53 | 7.65 | <0.001 | 0.72 | 1.38 |
| Organizational Support / POS (X2) | -0.29 | 0.07 | -0.31 | -4.46 | <0.001 | 0.72 | 1.38 |

The regression results indicate that Job Stress (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y). This means that higher stress levels are associated with stronger intentions to leave, supporting the logic that persistent pressure and strain in digital-startup roles can push Gen Z employees toward withdrawal and job searching behaviors. Organizational Support / POS (X2) shows a negative and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y). This implies that when employees feel valued and supported through fair treatment, supervisor backing, resources, and concern for well-being their intention to quit decreases. In startup environments, where uncertainty and rapid change are common, perceived support can act as an important stabilizing force. The overall model is statistically significant, and the explained variance ($R^2 = 0.46$) indicates that job stress and organizational support together account for a substantial portion of turnover intention. This suggests that the two predictors are practically meaningful for explaining why Gen Z employees may consider leaving in the startup context.

Multicollinearity indicators (Tolerance and VIF) are within acceptable ranges, implying that Job Stress and Organizational Support provide distinct explanatory contributions rather than redundantly capturing the same phenomenon. This supports the interpretability of coefficients and strengthens confidence in the direction and magnitude of effects. From a managerial perspective in Makassar digital startups, the findings suggest two complementary priorities: reducing stressors (e.g., unrealistic deadlines, role ambiguity, overload, “always-on” expectations) while simultaneously strengthening perceived support (e.g., structured check-ins, fair workload allocation, clear feedback, recognition, and accessible resources). Addressing both sides is likely to be more effective

than focusing on only one dimension, because high demands without support can accelerate turnover intention, while support can partially buffer the negative impact of stressful work conditions.

3.4. Discussion

3.4.1. *The Effect of Job Stress (X1) on Turnover Intention (Y)*

The findings of this study indicate that job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention among Generation Z employees in digital startups. This means that the higher the level of pressure employees experience—such as tight deadlines, rapid priority changes, excessive workloads, or constant responsiveness demands—the more likely they are to think about resigning, search for alternative jobs, and develop a stronger intention to leave. In a digital startup environment, agile work rhythms and fast-moving performance targets can intensify the perception of “continuous pressure,” making turnover intention a rational response to reduce ongoing psychological discomfort.

This result aligns with prior research emphasizing that work stress can increase quitting intentions through psychological depletion and declining work experiences. Üngüren et al. (2024) highlight that job stress is associated with higher burnout and turnover intention, while also emphasizing the role of job satisfaction in these dynamics. In other words, when stress escalates and remains unmanaged, employees’ emotional resources become drained and it becomes harder to sustain engagement, which strengthens their intention to leave. In digital startups, this situation often emerges when performance demands grow faster than the organization’s support systems and the team’s capacity.

Consistently, Alblihed and Alzghaibi (2022) demonstrate that job stress is linked to fatigue and job satisfaction, which are then connected to turnover intention. This pathway is particularly relevant for Generation Z, who tend to be more sensitive to quality of life, time balance, and mental health considerations. When job stress evolves into chronic fatigue, job satisfaction declines, and quitting intentions become a coping strategy to restore well-being. Therefore, the positive $X1 \rightarrow Y$ relationship found in this study can be interpreted as the consequence of accumulated pressure that weakens stamina and reduces positive work evaluations.

Other studies further suggest that job stress frequently functions as a key mechanism connecting negative workplace experiences to turnover intention. Vui-Yee and Yen-Hwa (2020) show that job stress can mediate the relationship between adverse workplace conditions and quitting intentions, while also pointing to the importance of job characteristics such as job autonomy in strengthening or weakening this effect. For digital startups, this implies that stress is not only driven by workload, but also by social and work-design factors. When autonomy and role clarity are low, pressure more easily transforms into stress that increases turnover intention; conversely, well-managed autonomy and clearer expectations can help reduce the impact of stress.

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that digital startups should not focus solely on “raising targets,” but must also manage key stressors that trigger turnover intention. Relevant interventions include controlling workload and priorities to prevent overload, increasing role clarity and expectation alignment to reduce ambiguity, managing work pace based on realistic team capacity, and providing recovery-oriented support (e. g. , structured flexibility, healthy rest patterns, and access to well-being support). By keeping stress at a manageable level, organizations can significantly reduce turnover intention especially among Generation Z employees who tend to quickly evaluate whether a work environment remains “worth staying in” (Alblihed & Alzghaibi, 2022; Üngüren et al. , 2024; Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020).

3.4.2. *The Effect of Organizational Support / POS (X2) on Turnover Intention (Y)*

The findings of this study indicate that perceived organizational support (POS) has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention among Generation Z employees in digital startups. In practical terms, when employees feel that the organization values their contributions and genuinely cares about their well-being, they are less likely to think about quitting, search for alternative jobs, or plan resignation. In fast-moving and uncertainty-prone startup environments, POS can function as a psychological “anchor” that strengthens feelings of security, recognition, and trust reducing the perceived need to leave. From a theoretical perspective, this result is consistent with Organizational Support Theory and its meta-analytic evidence. Kurtessis et al. (2017) show that POS is strongly associated with key retention-related outcomes, including more favorable work attitudes and lower withdrawal tendencies. This highlights that organizational support is not merely about formal HR policies, but rather the employee’s day-to-day experience such as how supervisors respond to work obstacles, whether resources are available, how fair decisions feel, and whether

effort is recognized. In digital startups where HR systems may still be evolving, these “micro-experiences” become especially influential in shaping POS.

Empirical studies also reinforce POS as a protective factor against turnover intention. Wang and Wang (2020) demonstrate that strengthening POS is an effective way to reduce turnover intention, particularly for roles exposed to high operational pressure. While digital startups are not always defined as frontline workplaces, many roles carry similar pressures such as customer success, customer support, sales, and platform operations where fast response times, performance targets, and emotional demands are common. In such roles, consistent support through coaching, adequate tools, responsive supervisors, and fair workload distribution can directly lower quitting intentions.

The negative $X_2 \rightarrow Y$ relationship can further be explained through social exchange logic: when employees perceive strong support, they are more likely to reciprocate with commitment, involvement, and willingness to stay. Conversely, when support is perceived as weak, Generation Z employees may more quickly conclude that the workplace is “not worth it,” increasing turnover intention even when compensation is not the primary issue. In startups that demand high flexibility, POS can be the difference between flexibility that feels empowering versus flexibility that feels exploitative or exhausting. Managerially, these findings imply that digital startups in Makassar should strengthen POS through visible and measurable practices: clarifying priorities and expectations, ensuring adequate work resources and tools, building a consistent feedback-and-recognition culture, maintaining fairness in workload allocation, and improving supervisor support via regular check-ins and coaching. By improving the support employees actually feel not just what exists on paper organizations can meaningfully reduce turnover intention (Kurtessis et al. , 2017; Wang & Wang, 2020).

3.4.3. Joint Interpretation and Contextual Implications for Digital Startups

Taken together, the results of this study reveal a clear and practically important pattern: job stress increases turnover intention, while perceived organizational support reduces it. In digital startup settings, these forces often operate simultaneously rapid growth, shifting priorities, and tight deadlines can intensify stress, while the level of organizational support determines whether those demands are experienced as manageable challenges or as unsustainable pressure. This implies that an effective retention strategy should not focus on only one side of the equation; it must reduce key stressors while also strengthening support that employees genuinely perceive.

A core context-specific stressor in digital work is technostress, which arises from constant technology use, frequent system changes, and “always-on” expectations. Califf et al. (2020) show that technostress can have both positive and negative consequences, but its “dark side” is particularly relevant to turnover intention when technology demands become exhausting and overwhelming. Digital startups are highly exposed to this risk because workflows often depend on rapidly evolving tools, KPI dashboards, continuous notifications, and high-speed coordination. When technostress accumulates, it can intensify overall job stress and accelerate employees’ intentions to leave especially among Generation Z employees who are tech-savvy but also increasingly attentive to mental well-being and boundaries.

In addition to daily job demands, early employment experiences play a decisive role in shaping turnover intention in technology-oriented workplaces. Sharma and Stol (2020) emphasize that onboarding success and organizational fit are important predictors of turnover intention among software professionals. This is highly relevant for startups, where onboarding can be informal and role definitions may be fluid. If onboarding is weak, expectations are unclear, or cultural fit feels mismatched, quitting intentions can emerge early even before performance problems become visible. Therefore, organizational support in digital startups should be understood not only as ongoing support but also as the quality of structured onboarding, mentoring, and expectation alignment in the first months of employment.

Managerially, the findings point toward an integrated approach. First, startups should manage stress through healthier work design: clearer priorities, realistic timelines, balanced workloads, and boundaries around after-hours communication. Second, they should reduce technostress by standardizing core workflows, providing training when tools change, minimizing unnecessary system churn, and ensuring that technology serves productivity rather than creating constant strain (Califf et al. , 2020). Third, startups should strengthen perceived support through consistent supervisor practices regular check-ins, coaching, recognition, and timely resource provision so employees do not feel left alone when pressures intensify.

Finally, strengthening onboarding and organizational fit should be treated as a retention lever, not merely an administrative process. Implementing structured onboarding (e. g. , 30–60–90 day plans), assigning mentors, and creating feedback loops to detect early mismatch can reduce early-stage turnover intention and improve adjustment in

fast-moving teams (Sharma & Stol, 2020). Overall, this study suggests that reducing turnover intention among Generation Z employees in Makassar's digital startups requires a combined focus on controlling job stress, mitigating technostress, and delivering organizational support that is consistently experienced in everyday interactions and early career socialization.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that Job Stress (X1) is a significant driver of Turnover Intention (Y) among Generation Z employees working in digital startups. As work pressure intensifies through deadline intensity, rapid priority changes, and constant digital responsiveness employees are more likely to consider leaving as a coping response. At the same time, Perceived Organizational Support (X2/POS) significantly reduces turnover intention. When employees feel valued, supported by supervisors, and equipped with adequate resources, their willingness to stay increases even in demanding work environments.

Viewed together, the findings imply that retention in digital startups is shaped by a push–pull dynamic: stress pushes employees toward exit, while organizational support pulls them toward staying. Support can soften the impact of stress, but it cannot fully compensate for chronic overload or poorly designed work demands. Managerially, the practical priority is twofold: reduce avoidable stressors (unclear roles, unrealistic deadlines, excessive multitasking, “always-on” expectations) and strengthen visible support (regular check-ins, coaching, recognition, fair workload allocation, and timely work resources). These actions should be implemented consistently at the team level, where employees experience support most directly.

Finally, improving early-stage employee experience such as structured onboarding, expectation alignment, and mechanisms to build organizational fit can prevent turnover intention from forming early. A combined strategy of stress governance and strong organizational support is therefore the most realistic route to reducing Gen Z turnover intention in the digital startup context.

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