

Predictors Of Career Longevity Among Gen Z Employees Of University Of Cagayan Valley: Basis For A Proposed Enhancement Program

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the predictors of career longevity among Generation Z employees at the University of Cagayan Valley for the Academic Year 2025–2026 to serve as a basis for a proposed enhancement program. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 176 Gen Z employees who had rendered at least six months of service. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Chi-square tests of relationship.

Findings revealed that the respondents were predominantly female, single, bachelor's degree holders, and classified within the low-income bracket, with a mean length of service of 2.14 years. Regarding the predictors of longevity, the employees demonstrated high career motivation (mean = 4.24), particularly in their desire for continuous knowledge and skill enhancement. However, their levels of organizational commitment, emotional attachment, perceived cost of leaving, and perceived obligation were all interpreted as "Neutral" (means ranging from 3.11 to 3.34), indicating a transactional and precarious relationship with the institution.

Statistical analysis led to the partial rejection of the null hypothesis, showing that gross monthly income significantly relates to career motivation and perceived obligation. Additionally, emotional attachment was found to be significantly influenced by civil status, length of service, and employee classification. The study concluded that while Gen Z employees possess high intrinsic motivation for personal growth, they lack strong organizational loyalty due to minimal domestic anchors and financial pressures.

Based on these findings, the study proposed the GZ-CLEP Program (Gen Z Career Longevity Enhancement Program). This developmental framework includes strategies such as role-specific upskilling, clear professional development plans, and tiered financial incentives aimed at bridging the "engagement gap" and fostering long-term institutional commitment.

Keywords: *Career Longevity, Generation Z, Career Motivation, Organizational Commitment, Job Embeddedness, Higher Education Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading Comprehension.*



Introduction

The current labor market is experiencing a paradigm shift due to the entry of Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012. This generation of digital natives, who are socially conscious and driven by meaningful work, has less patience for meaningless work roles, which has been further exacerbated by the aftermath of “The Great Resignation 2.0” (Bloomberg, 2023). The changeover of generations is a major challenge for organizations that are retaining young professionals. By 2025, Gen Z is expected to account for more than a quarter of the global workforce (World Economic Forum, 2023), but they are more likely to quit their job within a short period of time than other generations (Deloitte, 2023).

This global mobility suggested that institutions around the world need to understand the key drivers of career retention for this new generation of professionals. In the Philippines, these demographic issues are a pressing concern, as the country has the youngest population in Asia, with a median age of 25.7 years. With Gen Z comprising almost 39% of the country’s workforce, their longevity in the workforce is the key to the country’s economic sustainability. The education sector is facing a daunting challenge; as of 2024 reports, a staggering 58% of Gen Z workers in the sector had plans to leave their employment in the sector within a year, posting the highest turnover rate among all sectors.

This “brain drain” not only affected the smooth operation of the educational sector but also halts the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which seeks to ensure decent work and economic growth. The University of Cagayan Valley (UCV) is not exempted from these factors. Based on the internal data of the university from 2021 to 2024, the turnover rate of the Gen Z employees is gradually increasing. These individuals usually hold important positions in dealing with the students.

They are the ones who oversee the admissions and administration. They are the ones who possess institutional knowledge. They take this knowledge with them whenever they leave the institution. Although there is existing literature regarding the retention of faculty members, it seems that there is a huge gap in the research regarding what exactly influences the lifelong dedication of the Gen Z employees in the specific cultural setting of the Philippine higher education system. Although there is a considerable body of research available on Gen Z’s preferences in the corporate setting and on faculty retention in higher education (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2021), there is still a definite research gap. There is no research that specifically explores the predictors of career longevity, particularly in the context of Gen Z employees in the specific cultural and operational setting of Philippine higher education institutions.

The research that is available tends to be more general in nature, exploring retention or satisfaction without specifically identifying the predictors of career longevity for Gen Z employees in the academic setting. To fill this research gap, this research aimed to specifically explore the predictors of career longevity in Gen Z employees at UCV. The research explored variables such as career motivation, organizational commitment, and emotional attachment, using established theories such as the Generational Cohort Theory and the Job Embeddedness Theory. The goal of this research is to provide a specific, evidence-based rationale for a



proposed enhancement program that aimed to improve the identified predictors and promote career longevity, thereby contributing to a more resilient and decent work environment at UCV.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the predictors of career longevity among Gen Z employees of the University of Cagayan Valley for the Academic Year 2025-2026, as the basis for a proposed enhancement program.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Gender
 - 1.2 Civil Status
 - 1.3 Highest Educational Attainment
 - 1.4 Gross Monthly Income
 - 1.5 Length of Service in the University
 - 1.6 Employee classification
2. What are the predictors of career longevity among Gen Z employees in terms of:
 - 2.1 Career Motivation
 - 2.2 Organizational Commitment
 - 2.3 Emotional Attachment to the organization
 - 2.4 Perceived Cost of Leaving Your Organization
 - 2.5 Perceived Obligations to the organization
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile variables of the respondents and the predictors of career longevity?
4. What enhancement program can be proposed to foster career longevity among Gen Z employees?

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research design employed in this study was a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component of this design was used to quantify and describe the characteristics of the respondents and the variables of the study. This included the development of a detailed profile of the respondents in terms of sex, civil status, educational attainment,

income, length of service, and employee classification, as reflected in the first research question. At the same time, the descriptive approach was used to determine the prevailing levels of the key factors associated with career longevity investigated in this study, namely: career motivation, organizational commitment, emotional attachment, perceived cost of leaving, and perceived obligation, as indicated in the second research question.

To complement this, the correlational component of the design was used to examine the relationships among the variables. This component served as the central part of the study's analysis, as it determined whether significant relationships existed between the profile variables of the respondents and the factors associated with career longevity, thereby directly addressing the third research question. This design allowed the researcher to examine how the variables naturally related to one another within the organizational context of the University of Cagayan Valley. As explained by Creswell and Creswell (2018), this type of research is aimed at observing variables in their natural setting to determine the strength and direction of their relationships.

A key principle of correlational research is that it does not involve the manipulation of variables, nor does it establish cause-and-effect relationships. Instead, its primary purpose is to identify whether variables are significantly related. This research design was appropriate for the present study, as it aimed to determine the specific factors significantly associated with career longevity, thereby providing empirical evidence for the development of a targeted enhancement program.

Respondents of the Study

The target population of the study consisted of all willing full-time Gen Z employees (born between 1997 and 2012) across the administrative and academic departments of the University of Cagayan Valley. The study employed total enumeration, wherein all eligible members of the population were included. To ensure that the respondents had sufficient exposure to the organizational environment, participants were required to have rendered at least six months of service in the university. Part-time employees were excluded from the study.

Table 1

Distribution of Target Respondents by Department

Department	Number of Eligible Gen Z Employees
Non-Teaching Staff	60
Teaching Staff	116
Total	176
Department	Number of Eligible Gen Z Employees



Data Gathering Tool

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured survey questionnaire designed to gather data relevant to the specific questions stated in the Statement of the Problem. To ensure the effective measurement of the variables, the study adopted items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ) developed by Mark Fichman, along with other validated scales. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, gross monthly income, length of service, and employee classification.

Section B assessed the factors associated with career longevity using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This section included adapted items from the MOAQ and other validated instruments to measure Career Motivation, Organizational Commitment, Emotional Attachment, Perceived Cost of Leaving, and Perceived Obligation. Career Motivation was measured through items related to growth aspirations and skill development, while Organizational Commitment and Emotional Attachment were assessed through statements reflecting affective attachment and loyalty to the organization. Perceived Cost of Leaving and Perceived Obligation were measured through items related to perceived sacrifices associated with leaving the organization and the sense of duty to remain.

Section C measured the dependent variable, Career Longevity, through items that assessed the respondents' intention to remain employed at the University of Cagayan Valley. The section also included selected reverse-coded items to ensure consistency and reliability in the respondents' answers.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted in four stages following the approval of the research ethics requirements. First, the Office of Human Resources provided an anonymized list of employees, which served as the basis for identifying qualified respondents. Second, printed copies of the survey questionnaire were distributed to the eligible participants, accompanied by an informed consent form that respondents were required to read and sign prior to participation, as well as a photocopy of the Certificate to Collect Data issued by the Institutional Review Board. Third, two follow-up reminder notifications were sent at seven-day intervals to increase the response rate. The entire data collection process was completed within a period not exceeding 28 days to minimize potential seasonal biases. All data were anonymized at the point of collection using unique identifier codes.

The following ethical considerations were strictly observed:

Informed Consent. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and any potential risks prior to their participation. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.



Confidentiality. All data collected from the participants were treated with strict confidentiality. The identities of the respondents were not disclosed in any part of the study. Only the researcher had access to the raw data, and appropriate measures were implemented to ensure data protection.

Anonymity. Participants were assigned unique identifier codes to ensure anonymity during data analysis and reporting.

Voluntary Participation. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any form of consequence.

Statistical Tools

The following ethical considerations were strictly observed in the conduct of the study:

Informed Consent. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and any potential risks prior to their participation. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The quantitative data were analyzed using Jamovi statistical software. The statistical treatments were aligned with the Statement of the Problem to ensure a clear and systematic analysis of the data.

Moreover, Mean and standard deviation was used to determine the extent of the factors associated with career longevity.

Furthermore, Chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between the profile variables and the predictors of career longevity among Gen Z employees, and it was further analyzed using a Five-point Likert scale below:

Interpretation	Scale
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

Lastly, an inferential statistical tool was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the respondents' profile variables and the identified predictors of career longevity.



Summary of Findings

The following are the key findings of the study based on the research objectives:

1. Profile of the Respondents

- Sex: The workforce is mostly female.
- Civil Status: An overwhelming majority of the Gen Z employees are single.
- Highest Educational Attainment: Most respondents are bachelor's degree holders, followed by master's degree holders, and a small percentage holding a Doctorate.
- Gross Monthly Income: The respondents belong to the low-income classification.
- Length of Service: Most employees have a tenure of 1–3 years.
- Employee Classification: A significant portion of the respondents are teaching personnel.

2. Predictors of Career Longevity among Gen Z Employees

- Career Motivation: Interpreted as Agree. The highest mean was recorded for the desire for knowledge and skill enhancement, while the lowest was for monetary motivation.
- Organizational Commitment: Interpreted as Neutral. This indicates that respondents both agree and disagree with statements regarding their intent to stay or quit, suggesting a fragile commitment level.
- Emotional Attachment to the Organization: Interpreted as Neutral. While respondents feel like "part of the family", they remain neutral regarding identifying with the organization's systemic problems.
- Perceived Cost of Leaving your organization: Interpreted as Neutral. Respondents primarily stay out of necessity but are uncertain whether the university is the best possible organization for them.
- Perceived Obligation to the Organization: Interpreted as Neutral. Respondents acknowledge a sense of gratitude for opportunities but do not feel a strong moral or ethical duty to remain if personal advantages arise elsewhere.

3. Relationship between Profile Variables and Predictors

- The null hypothesis was partially rejected. Gross Monthly Income significantly relates to Career Motivation and Perceived Obligation.



- Emotional Attachment is significantly influenced by Civil Status, Length of Service, and Employee Classification.
- Perceived Obligation is significantly related to Employee Classification.
- No significant relationships were found between the predictors and the variables of Sex or Educational Attainment.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the Generation Z workforce at the University of Cagayan Valley is a demographic in transition—predominantly young, single, and in the early stages of their careers. Their professional stability is currently precarious, as a lack of domestic ties and financial anchors makes their tenure highly mobile and dependent on the immediate perceived value of their roles.

A critical "engagement gap" defines this cohort: while they possess high intrinsic motivation for personal upskilling and professional discovery, this does not translate into organizational loyalty. Their relationship with the university is transactional rather than emotional, viewed more as a vehicle for individual growth than a long-term institutional partnership. This detachment is further influenced by economic factors and role-specific experiences, where financial security remains the primary baseline for building future institutional loyalty.

In alignment with Job Embeddedness Theory, the university has yet to fully integrate these employees through the dimensions of "Fit" and "Sacrifice." To mitigate the high risk of turnover, the institution must shift from a necessity-driven employment model to a value-driven one. The implementation of the GZ-CLEP Program is therefore vital to bridging this gap, aligning individual aspirations with the university's mission to ensure the sustainable growth of its human capital.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The University Administration and the Human Resources Office may adopt and implement the proposed Gen Z Career Longevity Enhancement Program, prioritizing the Continuous Learning and Upskilling components to satisfy the high intrinsic motivation of the employees.
2. Department heads may collaborate with HR to create clear Individual Development Plans (IDP) for Gen Z staff, especially those in the 1–3-year tenure bracket, to move them from "transactional" to "committed" status through clear promotion roadmaps.
3. Recognizing that income significantly influences motivation and obligation, the Finance Office may explore tiered incentive packages, such as the "Three-Year Milestone



Incentive," and expanded scholarship grants for graduate studies to increase the "perceived cost of leaving."

4. The Academic Affairs and Administrative Offices may develop differentiated engagement strategies. For teaching personnel, this includes research incentives and reduced loads for innovation; for non-teaching staff, it involves technical cross-training and professional certifications.
5. To move Emotional Attachment from "Neutral" to "Agree," the university may increase participatory decision-making through the proposed "Young Professionals Group," involving Gen Z employees in institutional problem-solving to build a sense of shared ownership.
6. A longitudinal study is recommended to track the career trajectories of this Gen Z cohort over the next five years. Additionally, further research could be conducted to include qualitative interviews to deeper explore the "neutral" sentiments regarding organizational loyalty.

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