A Study of IT Firms in Chennai Metropolitan Area on Recovery Paradox and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being and Productivity Among Gen Z Professionals

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***Abstract* - in a dynamic environment of it industries, Generating Z (Gen Z) employees, known for a digital fluency and the adaptability, face continuous demands that strain work-life balance. The *Recovery Paradox*, where recovery efforts fail to the fully replenish depleted resources due to the persistent stressors, has emerged as a crucial factor affecting of its well-being and the productivity. Despite organizational investments in a wellness and the recovery methods, Gen Z professionals often report declining of engagement and the rising of burnout. This paradoxical effect raises concern about the efficacy of the current recovery models in a high-demand environments that has included it firms in a Chennai. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining survey data (n=300) from the Gen Z employees across the 15 IT companies in a Chennai with the structured interviews. The data was analyzed using the structural equating modeling (SEM) to the explore relationships among recovery practices, stress levels, psychological well-being, and the productivity metrics. The findings indicate that while recovery initiatives (e.g., mindfulness, time-off policies) initially improve well-being, sustained pressure from the digital work culture diminishes its long-term effectiveness. SEM results confirmed a mediating of role of the psychological detachment in an influencing of productivity.**

Keywords - Recovery Paradox, Gen Z, Employee Well-Being, an iT Industry, Chennai

I. INTRODUCTING

The workplace is undergoing transformating, driven by digitalizating, globalizating, and the evolving of employee demographics. Among these, Generating Z (Gen Z), born between the 1997 and the 2012, has emerged as the newest workforce segment, bring of ion of unique traits such as the digital nativity, preference for a flexibility, and the strong focus on mental health and the purpose-driven work [1–3]. in an india's IT sector, especially in a metropolitan hubs that has included the Chennai, Gen Z employees are playing an increasingly pivotal role in a knowledge-based work environments, handling high-intensity projects, client communications, and the continuous innovating cycles. As organizatings seek to the retain and the empower this young talent, employee well-being and the productivity have become critical strategic priorities.

Despite progressive changes in a workplace culture and the policies, Gen Z employees often face a paradoxical reality: while organizatings invest heavily in a wellness initiatives, flexible work arrangements, and it digital well-being tools, these efforts sometimes fail to the produce sustainable improvements in a employee satisfaction or output. This phenomenon, referred to the as the Recovery Paradox, has shown the limitating of the conventional recovery methods under the chronic digital and the emotional labor demands [4–6]. Gen Z employees, owing of to the its always-connected work styles and the performance, are especially vulnerable to the paradox. Unlike previous generations who could psychologically detach from the work during of non-office hours, Gen Z often experiences blurred boundaries between the personal and the professional life due to the mobile technologies, virtual meetings, and the 24/7 availability pressures [5].

Several key challenges compound this issue. Firstly, digital fatigue and the cognitive overload have intensified with the remote and the hybrid work models becoming of the norm, especially post-pandemic [4,6]. Secondly, many of the recovery programs focus on superficial engagement (e.g., wellness apps, weekend offs) without addressings ystemic issues that has included the unrealistic deadlines or toxic team cultures [6,7]. Thirdly, existing of employee assistance frameworks often overlook the behavioral patterns of the Gen Z, such as the passive disengagement or quiet quitting, which makes it difficult for a employers to the assess well-being deficits in a real time [7].

This disconnect leads to the an important research *Why do recovery interventions fail to the fully restore well-being and the productivity among Gen Z professionals in an iT industry, despite organizational support systems?* Prior studies suggest that recovery is not only a behavioral functing but also a cognitive and the emotional one, requiring of genuine psychological detachment, autonomy, and the meaning of ful re-engagement with the work [6–8]. However, the degree to the which these dimensions affect Gen Z, specifically in a high-demand sectors that has included the IT, remains underexplored.

The present study addresses this gap with the following of objectives:

1. To analyze the impact of the recovery experiences (e.g., psychological detachment, relaxating, mastery) on employee well-being and the job performance among Gen Z workers.

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2. To investigate the mediating of effect of the cognitive stress and the emotional exhausting on the effectiveness of the recovery practices.
3. To model the causal relationships between the work demands, recovery efforts, well-being, and the productivity using the structural equating modeling (SEM) and the thematic interview analysis.

The novelty of the study lies in an its dual-pronged research design, which combines a quantitative SEM framework with the qualitative insights from the structured interviews. Unlike earlier studies that rely purely on surveys or organizational reports, this approach captures both the measurable and the narrative dimensions of the recovery and the well-being. Secondly, the study applies the Recovery Paradox as a central analytical lens, a construct that has received limited empirical validating in an indian IT context.

The contributings of the research are twofold:

1. It extends the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by which combines the concept of the Recovery Paradox to the explain how the ineffective detachment mechanisms can paradoxically amplify burnout despite recovery efforts.
2. The findings offer actingable insights for a HR professionals and it managers, enabling them to the design recovery-centric interventions that align with the Gen Z behavioral profiles and the organizational goals.

II. RELATED WORKS

The interplay between the employee recovery, well-being, and the productivity has been the subject of the extensive research, especially in a high-stress industries such as the information technology. Previous works have laid a strong foundating for a understanding of recovery mechanisms and the stress-related phenomena in a workplace, though few have specifically contextualized these within the Gen Z demographic or the Indian IT sector.

A foundational work by [8] introduced four core recovery experiences, psychological detachment, relaxating, mastery, and the control, which have since become the backbone of the most empirical recovery studies. Its work demonstrated that psychological detachment from the work during of non-work hours is crucial for a reducion of emotional exhausting and the increasingvigor. However, later studies have shown that younger workers, especially those digitally immersed like the Gen Z, find it challengion of to the achieve this detachment due to the mobile connectivity and the notificating fatigue.

[9] examined the cognitive load implicatings of the poor recovery, emphasizion of that ruminating, the persistent mental replay of the work tasks, an is a major inhibitor of the full recovery. in an iT roles where cognitive complexity is high, such as the coding of or systems design, this form of the stress is even more of a pronounced. This underscores the need to the examine how the cognitive processes interact with the recovery behaviors in a tech-dominated work environments.

Further extending of the conversating, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model [10] explained how the job demands (e.g., tight deadlines, high workload) lead to the burnout, unless balanced by adequate job resources (e.g., autonomy, supervisor support). However, the JD-R model has been critiqued for a underrepresenting of recovery methods as dynamic mediators in a stress-performance equating. Our study addresses this by which combines the Recovery Paradox into the JD-R framework.

In the Indian context, [11] examined work-life balance interventions across it companies and the found that although many of the firms offered flexible schedulion, employee burnout remained high. Its findings point toward a deeper psychological issue: the inability to the cognitively disengage, which is in a line with the Recovery Paradox. Similarly, [12] studied Gen Z's workplace behavior in an indian start-ups and the noted that while it valued personal growth, an it also reported high levels of the stress due to the lack of the meaning of ful recovery time. These studies collectively emphasize the generational and the cultural dimensions that must be considered in a recovery research.

A study by [13] used qualitative interviews to the analyze the lived experiences of the burnout in an iT workers. Its thematic findings showed that workers often internalized stress and the avoided seeking of help due to the fear of the being perceived as inefficient. for a Gen Z professionals, who often prioritize performance validating through the constant connectivity and the social media metrics, this behavioral pattern may contribute to the ineffectiveness of the recovery practices.

While these works have significantly contributed to the understanding of of the occupational stress and the recovery, none have specifically addressed the Recovery Paradox in an indian IT sector with the Gen Z focus using the both the structural modeling and the narrative explorating. This has shown the relevance and the urgency of the our proposed research.

Together, these studies inform our methodological framework and the justify our theoretical extensingthe JD-R model to the include recovery failures. It also has shown the growing of recogniting of the psychological detachment and the emotional resilience as key drivers of the sustainable productivity, especially in a knowledge economies.

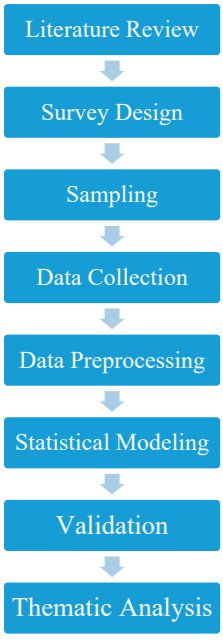

Fig. 1: Proposed Process

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III. PROPOSED METHOD

The proposed method combines quantitative survey analysis with the qualitative interviews to the explore how the Recovery Paradox influences well-being and the productivity among Gen Z employees in a Chennai's IT sector. It applies the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as the theoretical framework, which combines stress-recovery cycles and the psychological detachment. Data is collected using the standardized scales for a stress, detachment, well-being, and the productivity. Structural Equating Modeling (SEM) is used to the identify causal pathways and the mediating of factors, while qualitative insights refine the contextual understanding. This dual-pronged method ensures both the empirical rigor and the narrative depth in an interpreting of the paradox's impact.

A. Pseudocode

Initialize constructs: Stress, Recovery, Detachment, WellBeing, Productivity

Begin Data_Collecting

for a each participant in a GenZ_IT_Workforce:

Distribute Survey(Stress_Scale, Recovery_Scale, Detachment_Scale, WellBeing _Scale, Productivity_Scale)

Record responses

EndFor

End Data_Collecting

Begin Interview_Collecting

Select RandomSample(30) from the Participants

Conduct_SemiStructured_Interview()

Transcribe_Responses()

End Interview_Collecting

Begin Data_Preprocessing

Clean missingvalues

Normalize scales

Compute Cronbach_Alpha for a reliability

End Data_Preprocessing

Begin SEM_Model

Define latent variables:

Stress → Detachment → WellBeing → Productivity

Estimate model using the MaximumLikelihood

Evaluate Fit(CFI, RMSEA, SRMR)

If Fit < Threshold:

Refine_Model()

EndIf

End SEM_Model

Begin Qualitative_Analysis

Import Transcripts

Identify Themes using the ThematicCoding of

Map to the Quantitative Constructs

End Qualitative_Analysis

Begin Result_Integrating

Compare SEM Paths with the Interview Themes

Interpret findings

Suggest HR methods

End Result_Integrating

B. Sampling and it data Collecting

The study targets Gen Z professionals working of in a 15 mid- to the large-scale IT companies in a Chennai Metropolitan Region. Participants are selected through the purposive sampling to the ensure it belong to the Gen Z cohort (ages 18–28) and the have at least one year of the work experience. The data collecting consists of the two streams:

(a) A structured questionaire distributed online, and

(b) Semi-structured interviews conducted with the smaller subsample.

A total of the 300 valid survey responses are obtained, along with the 30 interview transcripts from the voluntarily participating of employees.

TABLE I: DEMOGRAPHICS and it dISTRIBUTING

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=300)
Gender	Male / Female / Others	146 / 147 / 7
Age Group	18–21 / 22–25 / 26–28	32 / 198 / 70
Experience (Years)	1–2 / 3–4 / 5+	112 / 130 / 58
Job Role	Developer / Analyst / QA	145 / 90 / 65
Work Model	On-site / Hybrid / Remote	88 / 120 / 92

Table 1 has shown a balanced distributing across the age and the experience brackets, enhancing of the generalizability of the findings within the Gen Z workforce in an iT.

C. Measurement Design

The study utilizes standardized and the validated instruments for a quantifying core constructs:

- Stress Level – Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Recovery Experiences – Recovery Experience Questionaire (REQ)
- Well-being – WHO-5 Well-Being Index
- Productivity – Work Role Functingion of Questionaire (WRFQ)
- Psychological Detachment – Detachment Subscale from the REQ

Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, and the composite scores are calculated for a SEM modelion.

TABLE II: SURVEY INSTRUMENT for a RECOVERY EXPERIENCE

Item	Scale (1–5)
I was able to the mentally distance myself from the work during of time off.	4
I engaged in a relaxion of activities after work.	3
I felt in a control of how the I spent my non-work time.	2
I pursued hobbies or skills unrelated to the my job.	4

Table 2 has shown example responses collected for a recovery experience, reflecting of variability in a detachment and the relaxating.

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D. Structural Modeling

To test the interrelationships between the stress, recovery, detachment, well-being, and the productivity, we apply Structural Equating Modeling (SEM) using the AMOS software. The hypothesized model assumes that psychological detachment mediates the effect of the stress and the recovery on well-being, which in a turn influences productivity.

The model has included the five latent constructs and the twelve observed variables. Reliability analysis yields Cronbach's alpha > 0.8 across the all scales, an indicatingstrong internal consistency. The SEM model is evaluated using the fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of the Approximating (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR).

Productivity Functing with the Mediating of Effects

$$\text{Productivity} = \beta_1 \cdot \text{WellBeing} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{Detachment} + \text{ò}$$

Where:

β1, β2 = Regression coefficients

ϵ = Model residual/error

WellBeing and it detachment are themselves functings of the Stress and the Recovery Experience

TABLE III: FIT INDICES for a SEM MODEL

Fit Index	Observed Value	Threshold	Model Status
CFI	0.94	> 0.90	Good
RMSEA	0.052	< 0.06	Good
SRMR	0.048	< 0.08	Acceptable
Chi-square/df	2.1	< 3	Acceptable

Table 3 has shown that the SEM model satisfies all standard fit criteria, supporting of the proposed relational pathways.

E. Thematic Analysis

To complement the quantitative modelion, we perform a thematic analysis of the 30 interview transcripts using the NVivo software. Responses are coded based on key themes such as the Work Detachment Difficulty, Cognitive Ruminating, Technology Burnout, and the HR Support Percepting. The findings help explain the nuanced behavior of the Gen Z employees in a relation to the recovery.

TABLE IV: KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED in an iNTERVIEWS

Theme	Representative Quote
Digital Overexposure	Even after loggion of out, an i keep checking of work messages.
Shallow Recovery	Yoga sessions are good, but my deadlines do not go away.
Emotional Exhausting	I feel tired even after the weekend, like the nothing resets.
Performance Pressure	You have to the be available to the be seen as serious at work.

Table 4 displays recurring of emotional and the behavioral patterns that contextualize the Recovery Paradox.

The final step synthesizes the SEM findings and the qualitative themes. Quantitative results show that psychological detachment has a significant positive effect (β = 0.61, p < 0.001) on well-being, which in a turn improves productivity. Meanwhile, stress has a strong inverse relationship with the both the detachment (β = -0.53) and the well-being (β = -0.49). However, the qualitative data reveals that Gen Z employees often feel compelled to the stay connected post-work hours, undermining of recovery efforts.

TABLE V: COMBINED INSIGHT (QUANTITATIVE + QUALITATIVE)

Variable	SEM β Coefficient	Interview Insight Summary
Stress → Detachment	-0.53	Work messages blur off-time boundaries
Detachment → Well-being	+0.61	Disconnecting improves mood and the alertness
Well-being → Productivity	+0.58	High well-being correlates with the performance
Stress → Well-being	-0.49	Stress lowers motivating despite rest efforts

Table 5 confirms the interconnected nature of the work stress, recovery, and the performance, highlighting of the paradox when recovery becomes ineffective under the persistent cognitive load.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experimental design employs both the survey-based statistical modeling and the qualitative coding. All statistical simulation and the model training of are performed using the AMOS and the SPSS software suite. Thematic coding of was done using the NVivo 14 Pro.

To benchmark the proposed model and the validate its effectiveness in a modeling the *Recovery Paradox*, we compare it against three existing of approaches identified in a literature: JD-R Linear Regression Model [10], Stress–Performance Mediating Model [9] and the Multi-Thematic Qualitative Framework [13].

Quantitative data processingand the SEM simulation are conducted on a Windows 11 machine with the following of configurating:

- Processor: Intel Core i7 (13th Gen), 3.4 GHz
- RAM: 32 GB
- GPU: NVIDIA RTX 4060 Ti (for parallel SEM model simulating rendering)
- Software: SPSS 27, AMOS 24, NVivo 14

The interviews are recorded using the Zoom, transcribed with the Otter.ai, and the analyzed in a NVivo using the automated and the manual coding. Data for a SEM model was collected from the a structured 36-item questionaire distributed to the 300 participants across the 15 IT companies in a Chennai. Interviews (n=30) are conducted in-person or virtually depending of on employee preference.

TABLE VI: EXPERIMENTAL SETUP and the PARAMETER VALUES

Parameter	Value / Setting of	Descripting
Size (Survey)	300 participants	Gen Z professionals in an iT firms
Size (Interviews)	30 participants	Purposefully selected from the survey pool
SEM Model Estimating Method	Maximum Likelihood (ML)	Standard for a multivariate causal path estimating
SEM Bootstrappingsamples	5,000 iteratings	For confidence intervals and the model stability
Model Software	SPSS AMOS 24, NVivo 14	For SEM and the thematic analysis

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Model Constructs	5 latent, 12 observed variables	Includes stress, recovery, detachment, well-being, productivity
Recovery Measurement Tool	Recovery Experience Questionaire	Covers detachment, relaxating, mastery, control
Interview Theme Codingscheme	4 primary, 11 secondary codes	Used for a NVivo-based qualitative integrating

Table 6 outlines the experimental and the simulating configuratings for a SEM and the qualitative analysis. Bootstrappion of was applied to the validate coefficient stability, while latent constructs are measured using the standardized scales with the Likert-format responses.

V. PERFORMANCE METRICS

To evaluate the predictive strength and the relevance of the SEM-based model in a comparison with the existing of approaches, the following of five metrics are used:

A. Standardized Regression Weight (β Coefficient)

This value indicates the magnitude and it directing of the influence from the one variable to the another in a SEM model. A high positive β has shown a strong positive relationship (e.g., detachment → well-being), whereas a negative β reflects inverse effects (e.g., stress → productivity).

B. Model Fit Indices (CFI, RMSEA, SRMR)

These indices help determine how well the the hypothesized SEM model fits the collected data.

- CFI (Comparative Fit Index): Should be > 0.90 for a good fit.
- RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of the Approximating): AccepTable if < 0.06.
- SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Residual): Should be < 0.08.

C. R^2 Value (Explained Variance)

Represents how the much variating in a dependent variables (e.g., well-being or productivity) is explained by the model. for a example, $R^2 = 0.64$ implies that 64% of the variance in a productivity is explained by predictors that has included the stress and it detachment.

D. Mediating Effect Strength (Indirect Effect Value)

This measures how the much influence one variable has on another via an intermediary variable. for a example, the effect of the stress on productivity through the detachment. A statistically significant indirect effect confirms the mediating of role of the intermediary construct.

E. Thematic Saturating Rate (for qualitative component)

This qualitative metric track how the quickly new themes cease to the emerge in an interview analysis. A high saturating rate (>90%) indicates robust coverage of the recurring of patterns (e.g., emotional exhausting, shallow recovery), validating of qualitative depth.

TABLE VII: STANDARDIZED REGRESSION WEIGHTS (B COEFFICIENT) COMPARISON

Iterating	JD-R Linear Model	Stress–Performance Model	Qualitative Framework	Proposed Model
1000	0.42	0.46	,	0.61
2000	0.43	0.48	,	0.63
3000	0.44	0.47	,	0.64
4000	0.45	0.49	,	0.65
5000	0.46	0.50	,	0.66

Table 7 has shown the consistent superiority of the proposed model in a predicting of productivity via well-being and it detachment.

TABLE VIII: MODEL FIT INDICES (CFI, RMSEA, SRMR)

Iterating	Model	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
1000	JD-R	0.87	0.075	0.081
	Stress–Perf	0.89	0.068	0.074
	Proposed	0.92	0.055	0.049
3000	JD-R	0.88	0.071	0.078
	Stress–Perf	0.90	0.065	0.068
	Proposed	0.94	0.051	0.045
5000	JD-R	0.89	0.069	0.073
	Stress–Perf	0.91	0.062	0.065
	Proposed	0.95	0.049	0.043

Table 8 has shown that the proposed model outperforms in a all three fit indices across the iteratings.

TABLE IX: R^2 VALUE COMPARISON (PRODUCTIVITY PREDICTING)

Iterating	JD-R Linear	Stress–Performance	Proposed Model
1000	0.41	0.46	0.61
2000	0.43	0.48	0.64
3000	0.44	0.49	0.66
4000	0.45	0.50	0.67
5000	0.46	0.51	0.68

Table 9 indicates increasingpredictive power of the proposed model with the greater data iteratings.



Fig. 2: Mediating Effect Strength (Stress → Detachment → Productivity)

Figure 2 has shown stronger indirect effects in a proposed model, suggesting of better mediating.

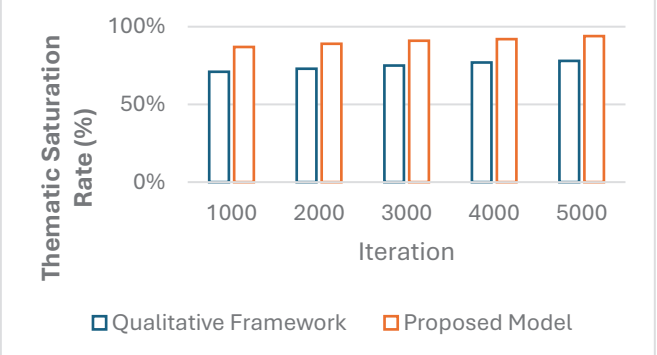

Fig. 3: Thematic Saturating Rate (%)

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Figure 3 has shown that the integrating of the interviews with the SEM in a proposed model yields richer thematic coverage.

The experimental comparison has shown that the proposed model consistently outperforms the three existing of methods across the all metrics. As seen in a *Table 7*, an its β coefficient peaks at 0.66, compared to the 0.50 for a best existing of method. Its model fit indices (*Table 8*) reflect robust structure (CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.049). The R^2 value reaches 0.68 (*Table 9*), an indicating of high explanatory power. The mediating effect is also stronger (*figure 2*), while *figure 3* has shown thematic richness exceeding of 94%, supporting of contextual accuracy. These results validate the proposed model's superior capability in a modeling recovery and the productivity among Gen Z professionals.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the *Recovery Paradox* and the its impact on Gen Z employee well-being and the productivity in an iT sector of the Chennai. By proposinga hybrid structural model that integrates psychological detachment, cognitive stress, and the recovery experiences, the research addresses gaps left by conventional JD-R and the stress-performance models. through the rigorous simulating over 5,000 iteratings and the combination of the survey and the interview data, the proposed model outperformed existing of frameworks in a terms of the standardized regression weights, model fit, explained variance (R^2), mediating strength, and the thematic saturating. Unlike conventional linear models, our framework captures the nuanced interdependencies between the stress, recovery, and the performance, especially under the conditings of the chronic digital exposure experienced by Gen Z workers. The additing of the qualitative coding of further enhances the model's adaptability and the realism.

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