



Generation Z and the Future of Work: Expectations of a Healthy Workplace

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Abstract

This study examines the most important work expectations of Generation Z, focusing on aspects of a healthy workplace. The research was conducted with a sample of 113 Croatian students representing Generation Z. It assessed their preferences regarding various workplace factors, including the type of work arrangement, benefits, employee health and safety, employee mobility, training and advancement opportunities, job security and work atmosphere. The results of the research conducted on the observed sample reveal some valuable insights into expectations. Above all, the majority of respondents expect development opportunities, a workplace that encourages creativity and innovation, recognition for their work, but also psychological counseling or psychological help. They also expect a pleasant working atmosphere, international experience and the promotion of diversity. The results suggest that flexibility in work arrangements is still an important priority for Generation Z, but only in relation to work location: the majority of respondents expect to be able to telecommute, but what is particularly interesting is that half of respondents still expect fixed working hours, which contradicts expectations and other studies. With Generation Z already quite sluggish in the labor market and their younger generations just entering the workforce, these results highlight the evolving expectations of the youngest generation of workers and provide insights for employers looking to adapt their organizational policies to meet the needs of Generation Z.

Keywords: HRM, job satisfaction, work arrangements, work atmosphere, work conditions

1. Introduction

From the industrial revolution, when the focus was on business efficiency and problem solving, to the modern age, the perception and expectations of the workplace have changed significantly. The focus is now on people as the foundation of the organization, and more attention is being paid to their needs and feelings. According to Sikavica et al. (2008), behaviorist theory has contributed to the special attention given to people in the workplace focusing on increasing the efficiency and productivity of human work while recognizing that

humans are not exclusively economic beings but also social beings. In this context, Generation Z has additionally seen new factors in the work environment.

Due to the large amount of information Generation Z acquire and access, it is crucial for them to have a stimulating work environment, competent and supportive supervisors and opportunities for professional development, as well as flexibility in working hours and the ability to work remotely (Fleeton, 2024). Compared to the previous generation, members of Generation Z exhibit a higher level of technological competence and individualism, a greater willingness to take risks and a higher degree of financial responsibility. Today's youth are not smarter or better educated than previous generations, but their advantage lies in their access to information. Given the almost unlimited availability of information today, this generation has placed new conditions and demands on the workplace.

This article is therefore about exploring the expectations of the youngest employees and determining which factors are decisive for Generation Z's idea of a desirable workplace. Working conditions encompass all circumstances relating to the physical aspects of work (technical components, working hours and place of work), psychological and social aspects, health and safety, pay and benefits, and opportunities for growth and advancement.

This study addresses several key questions: What are the main expectations of Generation Z regarding a healthy and desirable workplace? How does flexibility in working arrangements affect their perception of job attractiveness? What role do psychological support, occupational safety, and opportunities for professional growth play in shaping their satisfaction? To what extent do creativity, diversity, and international experience influence their career choices?

The main objectives of the research are to identify the most important factors that Generation Z associates with a healthy work environment, to examine the significance of flexible work arrangements and work-life balance, to analyze their views on professional development and recognition, and to assess the relevance of psychological support and a positive work atmosphere. Based on these findings, the study aims to provide guidelines for employers on how to adapt organizational practices and policies to better align with the values and needs of the youngest workforce.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Zoomer's Preferences and Expectations

"Generation Z is a group of contrasts" (Cirstea and Sorin, 2023). Cirstea and Sorin (2023) claim that their members are very technology-savvy and prone to diversity, but at the same time struggle with large environmental burdens. They state that they are willing to act on social and political fronts and express skepticism towards traditional institutions. Generation Z has a high aptitude for ingenuity and entrepreneurial skills, which has been proven by numerous studies (Cirstea et al., 2023). Characterized by digital literacy (Szymkowiak et al., 2021) and a global mindset, this generation also faces challenges such as anxiety and lack of practical experience. Despite that, Generation Z is quite confident and optimistic about their professional future and career. This generation also shows a strong commitment to entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation (Iorgulescu, 2016), which makes them an important group for the development of new business ideas and entrepreneurial initiatives. It can be said that Generation Z has an entrepreneurial spirit. The key to their motivation lies in clear communication, teaching digital skills and creating space for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial ideas, which further stimulates their entrepreneurial spirit (Kargas et al., 2024). Some findings suggest cautious optimism, indicating that Gen Z's fearlessness could

enable them to rival or surpass Gen Y's entrepreneurial record, while their stronger sense of purpose, visionary outlook, preference for clear work-life boundaries, and reliance on smart digital communication distinguish them from the more pragmatic and financially driven Gen Y (Dreyer and Stojanová, 2023).

Generation Z seeks to be actively involved in decision-making, develop meaningful relationships, engage in face-to-face communication, contribute to organizational success, and receive guidance from their leaders (Williford, 2023). They value mentoring, time for training and development, showing support and guidance, understand skill-gaps and reasonable workloads (Borg et al., 2023). Additionally, they emphasize the importance of fostering greater inclusivity for the LGBTQ+ community and promoting the advancement of women in the workplace (Williford, 2023). For Gen Z, key motivators include educational and health-related benefits, childcare, insurance, and social guarantees, alongside a strong emphasis on job security, employer social responsibility, and the flexibility to choose personalized benefits (Niezurawska et al, 2023). Flexibility, effective communication, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, technology, cross-cultural competence, teamwork, and independence are key factors shaping Generation Z's behavior in the workplace (Sharma and Gokhale, 2025).

Despite growing up in a digital environment, Generation Z attaches particular importance to face-to-face communication and interpersonal interactions in the business environment (Schenarts, 2020). Generation Z understands the importance of being informed about changes and the environment, but the way they approach communication differs significantly from previous generations. Instead of traditional channels such as e-mail and phone calls, Generation Z prefers fast, digital forms of communication such as social networks, correspondence and video calls. This change in communication habits is impacting the academic and professional environment, forcing institutions and employers to adapt the way they deliver information to stay in touch with the newer generations (Janssen, 2020). They want transparency and information about decisions that affect them and expect open dialog with superiors (Imagine Johns Hopkins University, 2023). According to Kutlák (2019), the new generation is showing a gradual return to individualism. Young people increasingly prefer to work in small groups of people they know personally. Such an environment allows them a higher level of trust, more effective communication and a sense of belonging, which has a positive impact on the quality of cooperation and satisfaction with work processes, but also on the effectiveness of the work itself.

It can rightly be emphasized that continuous learning and development in the workplace is a significant advantage for Generation Z. Their awareness of the importance of continuous learning and the usefulness of career advancement is quite high, and they prefer and practice more forms of practical application and learning from their own mistakes, i.e. learning from experience. Generation Z values professional development and advancement in the work environment because they value financial security and entrepreneurial thinking. They expect support and guidance from a reliable supervisor as well as access to training and development programs. For this reason, they prefer companies that offer mentoring and development opportunities. The lack of diversity and inclusion in decision-making can also make it difficult to attract and retain employees from this generation (Imagine Johns Hopkins University, 2023).

Creativity can be described as an important part of the lives of younger generations, as it is seen as a tool for career advancement (Hughes et al., 2018). For Generation Z, creativity represents a link between the moral importance of work and their creative interpretation. Unlike previous generations, who rarely associate intrinsic motivation with a sense of the

moral value of work, Generation Z is particularly motivated when they believe that their work has meaning and contributes to something important and rational. Although they value rewards such as recognition and advancement, their creativity grows most when they see that their work has a positive impact or purpose (Krishna and Agrawal, 2025). Murozzi (2025) compares creativity with artificial intelligence and it can be said that Generation Z does not separate human and artificial creativity, but combines them. In addition, creativity helps to alleviate emotional exhaustion (Santiago-Torner, 2024), it promotes motivation at work and can also be emphasized as a means of shaping one's own identity. Generation Z demonstrates a high level of engagement by contributing suggestions, a willingness to collaborate and a strong orientation towards learning. Such engagement promotes positive change and innovation in the work environment and is increasingly valued and encouraged in HR management. According to Donelan (2023), members of Generation Z are looking for: professional development and mentoring opportunities that allow them to grow and secure their careers, so companies that provide this are more likely to retain them; more frequent and personal communication (e.g., video calls or face-to-face meetings); and social responsibility and care for the environment because this generation wants to work in organizations that share their values and where they can have a greater positive impact on society.

The presence of Generation Z in today's organizations is a reality and is leading to a paradigm shift in the daily work of private and public sector organizations, making the need for new HR policies and practices urgent (Gomes et al., 2023).

2.2. Physical Workplace Aspects

2.2.1. Flexible Work Arrangements

According to Spreitzer et al. (2017), increased flexibility in the workplace can be divided into three categories: (a) flexibility in the employment relationship, (b) flexibility in the work schedule, and (c) flexibility in the place of work. Flexibility in the employment relationship includes alternative forms of employment, such as joint employment (work through employment agencies) and contract work (work on demand). "Flexibility in the work schedule and in the place of work can be summarized under the term time-space flexibility" (Wessels et al., 2019). According to Halpern (2005), the availability of flexible time policies in the workplace has a number of positive effects on employees and employers. First, the more such policies are available to employees, the less likely they are to report stress-related health problems, as flexibility allows them to more easily balance work and personal commitments. Furthermore, employees with fewer health problems contribute to reducing employer costs by being less likely to miss work, being late or leaving early, and completing work tasks more often, despite family obligations. Finally, employees who have access to more flexible work policies express greater commitment to their employer and demonstrate greater responsibility and work ethic than those who do not have such opportunities.

Flexible working hours are increasingly becoming not just a convenience, but an expected standard. Working hours are defined by the Labor Law, which defines the concept of working hours, full, partial, and part-time working hours, overtime, uneven working hours, and the distribution of working hours (Ecimović Nemarnik, 2024). "Workplace flexibility is the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks" (Hill et al., 2008). According to a 2023 Deloitte survey, more than three-quarters of Generation Z members are interested in more flexible working hours or in reducing the number of working hours. The flexibility of employment relationships in general and flexible working hours in particular have meant that not only the boundaries between an employee's work and family life, but also the time during which a person participates in social life, can no longer be clearly defined (Bilić, 2017). "Most of the time, the flexibility of

an organization can determine both the longevity of employees and, more importantly, their motivation to work hard and be productive. Employer flexibility benefits not only employees, but also the organization that offers it” (Davidescu et al., 2020). Fixed working hours, traditionally defined as an eight-hour working day as part of a Monday to Friday working week, are increasingly perceived as an outdated model that does not meet the demands of the modern working world.

By leveraging technology and adaptive management practices, organizations can mitigate the challenges associated with remote work, such as communication barriers and performance monitoring, while maximizing employee productivity and engagement (Retnowati et al., 2024). “Promoting employee well-being is a strong motivator for Generation Z, and includes flexible working hours, psychological support and fair compensation. Initiatives such as fitness programs, cultural events, access to medical care, and supportive leave policies can increase motivation. However, managers must balance this with organizational goals, as well-being programs often require significant financial and logistical resources” (Surugiu et al., 2025).

Before the pandemic, remote work was known as a “premium benefit” for employees of many companies. It could only be used occasionally or in exceptional circumstances. A massive shift in the mindset and perception of remote work seemed an almost impossible process (Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, 2022). Still, remote work has become the “new normal” (Lizdek, 2021). Remote work allows flexibility that Generation Z highly values. The telecommuting trend has positive implications for Generation Z, as it provides many opportunities that benefit Generation Z, including opportunities for career exploration, personal development and expanding professional relationships (Meriliandi and Darma, 2024).

Telework today means mobile work using information and communication technologies, which regularly takes place, at least partially, outside the employer's premises, provided that the rights and obligations of employees working remotely may not be below the level of the rights of other employees (Mišević, 2022). Teleworking raises a variety of issues, such as the organization and recording of working hours, the protection of workers' privacy, and how much and how the employer will monitor workers. It can also bring challenges for Generation Z, such as feelings of isolation, fewer opportunities for informal communication and learning from more experienced colleagues, and difficulties in drawing clear boundaries between work and personal life. Young people's expectations of understanding, empathy, patience and support in completing work tasks show that despite their willingness to work remotely, Generation Z representatives fear that such a way of working may bring additional difficulties that they may not be able to fully cope with (Michałkiewicz, 2024).

2.2.2. Technical Equipment

Technical equipment as a working condition (especially in the context of Generation Z and modern forms of work such as teleworking or the hybrid model) is becoming a key factor for satisfaction and productivity. Just as internal offices require certain equipment, remote work may require technological and communication devices that are difficult to obtain or dependent on the region (Ilag, 2021).

The lack of adequate equipment leads to a decrease in productivity, frustration and lower employee engagement. Generation Z is accustomed to having information "in the palm of their hand", available anytime, anywhere, making it easier for them to get the data they need (Parks, 2013). To the extent that they receive the information, they also process it - extremely quickly and in high quality, striving for the easiest possible access to the data itself (Fistrić,

2019). They expect companies to use modern tools that optimize productivity and promote collaboration (Saraiva and Nogueiro, 2025). The use of technology is key to attracting Generation Z and increasing their efficiency and satisfaction in the workplace (Rani & Suneja, 2025). When working with Generation Z, it is more important to know what they see and how it impacts their growth and relationships than just how much time they spend with technology (Turner, 2015). Younger generations are familiar with tools such as video conferencing, instant messaging and project management software that allow them to collaborate seamlessly with remote colleagues.

2.2.3. Occupational Safety

Occupational health and safety apply to all persons engaged in work, first and foremost to employees (Učur, 2014). “Health and safety at work is essential for a sustainable working life and active and healthy aging, and this requires the creation of a safe and healthy environment throughout working life” (Begović, 2016). Work safety from the Generation Z perspective encompasses several dimensions, including a safe physical environment, stress and burnout prevention, psychological safety, digital protection, transparency and communication. Generation Z expects their workplace to have clearly defined protocols for emergency situations, adequate ergonomic equipment, ventilation and sanitary conditions, especially in physical environments such as warehouses or retail stores. Psychological safety refers to employees' sense that they can be themselves and express themselves without fear of negative consequences to their own image, status or career (Kahn, 1990).

Work overload and emotional pressure cause psychological problems. Generation Z values policies that promote work-life balance, including mentally healthy days off, work breaks and flexibility. In general, the more individuals work, the less time they have for other areas of life, potentially impacting their overall well-being (Neubert et al., 2022).

At the same time, the increasing use of digital systems also increases the need for strong security measures to protect sensitive data from cyber threats (Digital Croatia Strategy to 2032, 2023: 30). Employees want open communication with their employers about security procedures, risks and employee rights, including regular training and the involvement of employees in security-related decision-making processes.

2.3. Healthy Workplace and Healthy Employee

Mental health is one of the key factors that is increasingly being discussed. It involves a person's ability to maintain emotional relationships, fulfill social roles, manage emotions and adapt to change. All of these elements provide a sense of worth, control and understanding of themselves and the world around them (Bhugra et al., 2013). Mental health is becoming increasingly important for Generation Z as they face growing problems such as depression, anxiety and stress, often caused by overuse of social networks, academic pressures and social challenges, which require attention and appropriate interventions (Akbar et al., 2024). In addition to stress and burnout, clinical disorders as part of mental health are increasingly affecting work outcomes. It is important to keep in mind that mental health is not only the absence of mental illness, but also the presence of positive states such as emotional well-being, resilience, and the ability to cope with challenges at work (Kelloway et al., 2023).

For Generation Z, psychological and emotional experiences are an important factor in the working environment, so psychological support is very important to them. A study conducted by Helena Lee in 2021 shows that employees generate and express their emotional responses based on the supervisor's communication style, information provided to their coworkers and referral to care. In crisis situations, it is particularly important to provide clear information, flexibility and a sense of community, which contributes to a positive working atmosphere and

higher employee productivity. The introduction of psychological support thus demonstrates the employer's care and enables employees to better adapt to challenges, which strengthens organizational culture and efficiency in the long term (Lee, 2021).

Generation Z generally shows lower job satisfaction than previous generations because its representatives strive for faster advancement, greater challenges and greater commitment, and their mental health is significantly worse compared to other groups (Nichols et al., 2024). For this reason, social support and psychological counseling programs in the working environment are becoming necessary services for newer generations. Social support in the workplace is an important factor as it influences the increase of job satisfaction and the reduction of emotional exhaustion (Garmendia et al., 2023).

According to John Hopkins University, companies should pay particular attention to the mental health of Generation Z employees, as they expect support and an open approach, diversity and a high level of engagement. In fact, inclusion and an open approach to neurodiversity not only help to attract Generation Z, but also to retain them. Neurodiversity improves business because it fosters greater diversity, creativity and innovation in teams: adjustments introduced for better support often lead to more effective communication and management practices for the entire organization (Sniderman et al., 2024).

In addition to the aforementioned mental health, physical health also stands out as an important part of business. With the new way of doing business and with the aim of greater efficiency at work, it is important to strive to promote the health of your employees. The study by Nijp et al. (2016), which is explained by Oakman et al. (2020), shows that working from home has a negative impact on physical health. Karatrantou et al. (2024) on the other hand highlight the importance of physical health for the general well-being of workers and improved employee performance, but pay particular attention to the negative components of office work. They emphasize that low levels of physical activity can negatively affect workers' health, productivity, and daily functioning. The World Health Organization has therefore launched an initiative to reduce physical inactivity levels worldwide, and this initiative is specifically aimed at Generation Z (Rinat et al., 2024).

3. Methods and Results

The study conducted empirical primary research on a sample of 113 students at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek, Croatia. The research was conducted in 2024 using an online questionnaire (the questionnaire consists of 21 statements covering various aspects of working conditions). The statements in the questionnaire were rotated and elements from different aspects were mixed to maintain better focus for the respondents. The basic prerequisite for participation in the study was that the respondents belonged to Generation Z. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. The respondents answered the statements offered with the answers 1-5 according to the Likert scale, with the answers being as follows: 1 – does not apply to me at all / I completely disagree with the statement; 2 – partially does not apply to me / I partially disagree with the statement; 3 – neither applies to me nor does it not apply to me / I neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 4 – partially applies to me / I partially agree with the statement; 5 – applies to me completely / I completely agree with the statement. Descriptive statistics were used and the software package used for data processing was MS Excel. The sample consists of equal numbers of male and female respondents, and the results of their attitudes towards expected workplace preferences are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Research results

Item No.	Statements	Values/answers (N=113)					Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	I expect regular training on safety measures in the workplace and access to the necessary personal protective equipment.	2	11	22	18	60	4.09
2	I expect to receive psychological counseling or psychological support at workplace.	7	6	32	28	40	3.78
3	I expect fixed working hours.	15	18	23	18	39	3.42
4	I want to be recognized when I do my job well.	2	7	10	30	64	4.3
5	I expect flexible working hours.	6	5	22	25	55	4.04
6	I expect the workplace to have clearly defined work processes and policies.	1	3	8	35	66	4.43
7	I expect my working environment to be quiet and without excessive noise.	6	16	42	25	24	3.4
8	I expect that workplace provides an opportunity to gain useful and relevant experience for my career.	1	0	9	22	81	4.61
9	It is important to me that the workplace encourages creativity and innovation and provides the opportunity to participate in projects that require original solutions.	1	1	15	27	69	4.43
10	I expect to be given the opportunity to take part in the training and education.	1	1	10	32	69	4.48
11	For me, it is important that the workplace provides the opportunity to work in a team in order to develop the ability to work together.	2	5	23	35	48	4.08
12	It is important for me to have access to professional software or technical equipment.	3	4	25	31	50	4.07
13	I expect the workplace to offer opportunities for travel and international experience to gain new perspectives.	2	6	14	30	61	4.26
14	I expect to be supported in the workplace to work in an environment that promotes diversity.	3	3	15	38	54	4.21
15	It is important for me to have access to tools for virtual collaboration and working remotely.	4	3	14	31	61	4.26
16	I expect the workplace to promote a healthy lifestyle through activities such as sport/exercise.	6	8	29	35	35	3.75
17	It is important to me that my workplace offers a dynamic environment that provides the opportunity to learn quickly and adapt to change.	2	3	12	44	52	4.25
18	I want to be well informed about changes and news in the organization.	1	0	10	29	73	4.53
19	I expect to have the opportunity to working remotely at work.	7	5	22	21	58	4.04
20	I expect the workplace to meet the minimum working conditions.	6	6	11	21	69	4.25
21	For me, it is important that the workplace is equipped with ergonomic furniture.	10	11	30	30	32	3.56

Source: Authors

The study found that 89% of respondents expect a workplace with clearly defined work processes and policies, and that 90% of respondents want to be well informed about changes and news in the company. 83% of respondents want recognition for a job well done, and 73% of respondents believe that the opportunity to work in a team to develop collaborative skills is important for the workplace, with only 7% of respondents not wanting teamwork.

Understandably and as expected, 91% of respondents expect the workplace to provide the opportunity to gain useful and relevant experience for their career and 89% of all respondents expect opportunities to participate in training that will enhance their professional development. Again, the majority of respondents, 96%, expect a workplace in a dynamic environment that offers the opportunity to learn quickly and adapt to change. 84% of respondents expect a workplace that encourages creativity and innovation and offers the opportunity to participate in projects that require original solutions. Finally, 80% of respondents expect the workplace to offer opportunities for travel and international experiences to gain new experiences and perspectives.

In relation to the physical aspects of work, 43% of respondents want a workplace with a quiet and noise-free environment, while 37% of respondents are completely indifferent to this issue. 72% of respondents want access to professional software or technical equipment, while 22% are indifferent to this question. For 92% of respondents, it is very important or extremely important to have access to tools for virtual collaboration and remote working. When remote working is mentioned, 70% of respondents expect the workplace to offer the possibility of remote working.

As far as working hours are concerned, 70% of those surveyed would like flexible working hours, but do not necessarily expect this. Interestingly, half of respondents expect fixed working hours, while only a third of respondents reject this and only 13% of respondents find this option completely unacceptable.

In the psychosocial area, 81% of respondents expect support at working in an environment that promotes diversity, and 60% of respondents expect psychological counseling or

psychological support in the workplace. In terms of health and safety, 80% of respondents expect the workplace to meet minimum working conditions, while 69% of respondents said they expect regular training on safety measures in the workplace and access to the necessary personal protective equipment. For 55% of respondents, it is important that the workplace is equipped with ergonomic furniture, and 62% of respondents believe it is important that the workplace promotes a healthy lifestyle through activities such as sport - worryingly, as many as a quarter of respondents do not care.

The univariate analysis revealed that Generation Z places the highest value on opportunities for growth and development (as shown by the arithmetic mean of the items related to opportunity to gain useful and relevant experience (4.61), opportunity to take part in training and education (4.48), opportunity to participate in projects that require original solutions (4.43)) and that it is very important for them to be well informed about changes and news in the organization (4.53), and that work processes and policies are clearly defined (4.43). They attach least or moderate importance to a quiet working environment (3.4), the possibility of fixed working hours (3.42) and ergonomic furniture (3.56).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the research carried out show some expected, but also some unexpected conclusions. What is to be expected, and consistent with previous research, is that this is a generation that wants continuous learning, development and progress, clearly defined processes and policies, creativity and innovation culture. Also, in accordance with previously researched, results showed that they value recognition and being informed. This study has also emphasized that Zoomers want opportunities for professional development, but that they are more fixated on remote working than flexible working hours in the context of time-space flexibility. By all appearances, hybrid working arrangements are the best choice for this generation, adapting to the different preferences of employees. This would also satisfy their need for a more personalized approach, which is sometimes difficult for management to achieve. Hybrid work could involve a flexible organization of working hours and work locations. Employees can work in the office on certain days, while the rest of the time they could be working from home or at another location outside the company. Depending on the organization's rules, the hybrid model can be implemented in such a way that two days a week are prescribed for office work or that employees decide for themselves when and where they work. A stable internet connection, VPN access, ergonomics of the home workplace, security software and remote support are necessary elements for successful and safe work outside the traditional office.

The fact that half of the respondents expect fixed working hours is encouraging in the context of flexibility towards the employer. This means that the younger generation is still aware that flexible working hours cannot be expected from every workplace, and the fact that exactly half of respondents do not even want this is a good sign for employers (this should be taken into account in particular when it comes to respondents who have a higher level of education and whose future jobs are more likely to be adapted to flexible work arrangements).

When it comes to the importance of mental health, this generation seems to be aware of the need to take care of the psychosocial and emotional aspects that improve their productivity at work, and they are clearly more committed to it than previous generations. What is not encouraging, however, is the neglect of physical health in relation to the workplace, to which these respondents do not attach too much importance. On the other hand, perhaps this should not be surprising, as the younger generation is generally healthier and takes for granted what they have, which can and will be compromised in the future. Unfortunately, they are

obviously already confronted with socio-emotional stresses and are aware of them, but in this context, awareness of physical health also clearly needs to be raised. After all, it is basically a prerequisite for mental health.

The modern world of work is undergoing significant transformations. Generation Z values work-life balance, mental health and the ability to manage their own time. Integrating flexible working policies not only considers the individual preferences of employees, especially Generation Z, for whom work-life balance and autonomy are of paramount importance, but also contributes to organizational resilience and effectiveness. In addition, they are accustomed to quickly adapting to new systems and platforms, which makes them very efficient in dynamic and technologically advanced work environments. The ability to work from different locations, manage their own working hours, and eliminate daily commutes to work have a positive impact on their perception of productivity and quality of life.

The study's results highlight that Generation Z places the highest emphasis on continuous learning, structured processes, and opportunities for professional development, which implies that organizations must invest in comprehensive training programs and transparent communication strategies to attract and retain this generation. Managers should not only provide formal learning opportunities but also encourage experiential learning through projects that foster creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. The strong demand for recognition and feedback suggests that Gen Z thrives in environments where performance appraisal systems are more frequent, transparent, and personalized rather than traditional annual reviews. Their mixed preferences regarding flexible and fixed working hours indicate the need for hybrid work models that balance organizational stability with individual autonomy, offering both flexibility for adaptation and predictability for planning. The preference for remote work underscores the importance of providing robust digital infrastructure, cybersecurity measures, and effective virtual collaboration tools to ensure productivity and trust in distributed teams.

The psychosocial findings show that Generation Z expects inclusive and supportive organizational cultures, where mental well-being, diversity, and safe spaces for expression are prioritized, pushing HR policies towards more comprehensive wellness programs and anti-discrimination frameworks. However, the relatively low importance given to physical health factors signals a potential blind spot that organizations should address proactively, for example through education on ergonomics or incentivizing healthy lifestyle initiatives. The results also reveal that Gen Z is more transactional in its understanding of organizational commitment, which means retention strategies should focus less on lifetime loyalty and more on offering career growth, meaningful work, and international opportunities that suit their value system.

The digital transformation driven by the demands of Generation Z is also redefining the role of managers and leaders who need to master digital skills and be able to manage remote teams. Leadership in a digital environment also involves the use of technology to develop emotional intelligence and employee engagement, further transforming traditional leadership approaches. Young employees want to work in an environment where they can express their opinions freely without fear of repercussions, and they expect support in dealing with conflict, discrimination or harassment. As more and more work takes place in virtual spaces, they expect a high level of protection for personal and professional data as well as education about cyber risks. Generation Z is redefining the concept of safety in the workplace. For them, safety is not just the absence of injury, but also the presence of mental stability, a sense of belonging and digital security. Additionally, employers need to recognize that digital

safety and emotional security are now seen as part of workplace safety, calling for leadership that balances empathy with technological competence.

This generation is more willing to change jobs to develop their skills and advance their careers. Therefore, it is necessary to invest more in this generation so that the bonds with them are potentially indestructible. The current understanding of organizational commitment in the context of previous generations cannot be equated with Generation Z, as their commitment can no longer be measured by the intention to stay (Tidhar, 2023). On the other hand, this generation is more inclined to penalize their employers, which must also be considered. Research shows that, compared to Generation Y, Generation Z exhibits deviant behavior in the workplace that harms the interests of stakeholders, and is preceded by their social irresponsibility (Abbasi et al, 2024). Finally, the dynamic and ambitious nature of this generation suggests that companies willing to embrace hybrid models, invest in professional growth, and foster inclusive cultures will not only retain Gen Z talent but also benefit from their adaptability, creativity, and visionary mindset in an increasingly uncertain labor market.

The limitations of this study are certainly reflected in the limited sample and the univariate analysis. Future research would benefit from applying more rigorous statistical analyses, as this could enhance the validity and reliability of findings in studies of Generation Z's workplace expectations. In order to provide employers with more specific guidelines for workplace design in the future, it would be necessary to examine concrete hybrid forms of work arrangements in more detail in order to create a conceptual model and at the same time different approaches for its implementation depending on the context (primarily the type of workplace and industry and then also different cultural factors). Multivariate analyzes would provide a broader view of this topic and it would be particularly interesting to identify the cause-effect relationships of the key variables that influence the satisfaction and behavior of Generation Z in the workplace.

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