

# GENERATION Z'S WORK ETHIC IN A DIGITALLY DISRUPTED WORLD

Mihai Alin LAZĂR

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest, Romania  
alin.lazar.22@drd.snsa.ro

## Abstract

*This article examines how Generation Z is redefining the meaning and structure of work in ways that challenge long-standing organizational norms. Rooted in generational theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the evolving psychological contract, it offers a synthesis of current literature exploring the cohort's preference for autonomy, purpose, and ethical alignment. Generation Z's orientation to work is shaped not only by digital fluency but by a heightened sensitivity to inclusion, mental health, and cultural coherence. Rather than portraying this generation as anomalous or disruptive, the paper frames their expectations as harbingers of a broader shift in workforce values. Drawing from a wide body of scholarly and applied sources, it surfaces critical themes including flexible work, multigenerational tensions, and values-based employment. Finally, it identifies areas for future inquiry, particularly the long-term impact of Generation Z's values as they assume leadership roles.*

**Key words:** digital natives, flexibility, generational differences, purpose-driven work, work-life balance

**JEL Classification:** J24, M12, M54, O15

## I. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z—the first generation to fully come of age in a digitally saturated, socially turbulent, and environmentally precarious world—is not entering the workforce quietly. Born between 1997 and 2012, this cohort carries with it not only fluency in technology, but a sharpened sense of justice, authenticity, and emotional awareness. For Generation Z, work is not a static contract of hours and wages; it is a dynamic arena in which identity, purpose, and value alignment must coexist (Deloitte, 2024). In many ways, they are not resisting work itself—they are redefining what makes work worth doing.

Shaped by the 2008 financial crisis, escalating climate concerns, and the global disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, Generation Z is understandably cautious about traditional institutions. Yet their caution is paired with a proactive desire to improve what's broken. This generation does not simply ask "What does this job pay?"—they ask, "Who does this job make me become?" Their demands for transparency, inclusivity, and ethical coherence are not fads, but deeply anchored responses to a decade of systemic failures (Pew Research Center, 2021).

For organizations long accustomed to top-down leadership, fixed roles, and silent compliance, the arrival of Generation Z is often experienced as cultural dissonance. But the noise is telling. Generation Z is not indifferent to effort—they are skeptical of effort without care. The performative grind culture of earlier generations—one that equated self-sacrifice with virtue—is being unpicked, not out of laziness, but out of survival instinct (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

The traditional scaffolding of the work ethic—delayed gratification, linear promotion, and unwavering corporate loyalty—offers little appeal to a cohort that has witnessed economic volatility, social injustice, and rising burnout. Generation Z is not impatient; they are unconvinced that the older system ever truly worked for everyone. Increasingly, their work ethic is centered not on accumulation but alignment: with values, community, health, and flexibility (ManpowerGroup, 2023).

The academic frameworks that have shaped our understanding of motivation—such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)—still hold power but require recontextualization. In a world of hybrid teams, algorithmic management, and 24/7 connectivity, autonomy takes on new dimensions, and competence includes digital fluency and adaptive learning. Relatedness, once forged in shared office space, now finds its way through Slack threads, Zoom rituals, and asynchronous team culture. Psychological safety, meanwhile, is no longer just about voice—it's also about visibility, equity, and belonging.

Yet it would be reductive to characterize Generation Z merely as individualistic. This generation consistently demonstrates a paradoxical ethic: while fiercely protective of their autonomy, they also seek collective

meaning. They are not asking employers to coddle them, but to co-create with them—to co-own the values, vision, and voice of the workplace (World Economic Forum, 2024). Their call for ethical integrity is not abstract—it is measurable. They want to see lived commitments, not mission statements.

Forward-looking organizations are beginning to respond. Purpose-led companies like Patagonia and SAP, known for democratized leadership and values-based governance, are now seen as magnets for Generation Z talent. These firms are reimagining work through design thinking, cross-generational mentorship, and dynamic role evolution. Importantly, they are not responding with more perks—they are rebuilding trust and co-authorship (LinkedIn, 2024).

This article positions Generation Z not as a disruption to manage, but as a lens through which the future of work can be more clearly seen. Their ethic invites us to re-examine our assumptions about leadership, labor, and legitimacy. Through this inquiry, we move beyond generational caricatures and toward a deeper, more adaptive understanding of what it means to work well in an age that demands more than output.

The sections that follow offer both conceptual framing and practical implications, drawing from empirical research and emerging practices. Rather than offer prescriptive solutions, the aim is to surface new questions—and, in doing so, to illuminate the cultural shift underway as Generation Z reshapes the modern organization.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a systematic literature review to investigate how Generation Z's work ethic is emerging within contemporary organizational life. Grounded in generational theory and motivational frameworks, the review synthesizes how core values—such as flexibility, job security, and purposeful work—are being expressed by Generation Z across diverse work environments and how these differ from earlier cohorts (Booth et al., 2016).

The temporal scope of the review spans from 2010 to 2024. This range captures the cohort's formative workforce entry during a period defined by digital acceleration, socio-political upheaval, and widespread organizational restructuring. The search strategy targeted peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, and selected industry reports from databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, PsycINFO, PubMed, and Scopus. This mixed-source approach was intended to bridge theoretical perspectives with current, practitioner-informed insights (Tranfield et al., 2003).

Inclusion criteria focused on empirical and conceptual studies that explicitly examined Generation Z's attitudes toward work, cross-generational workplace comparisons, or industry-specific insights across global contexts. Seminal literature preceding 2010 was selectively included when foundational to key theoretical constructs. Sources such as opinion editorials and education-only studies not directly tied to workplace behaviors were excluded to preserve relevance (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The search employed Boolean operators and composite keyword strings—e.g., “Generation Z work ethic,” “digital natives in the workplace,” and “intergenerational workforce dynamics”—to refine and expand search sensitivity. All sources reviewed were in English to ensure consistency in thematic coding (Moher et al., 2009).

Once the literature corpus was established, a structured data extraction process was applied, documenting key study attributes including research aim, methodology, sample, and central findings. Thematic analysis then clustered insights around four recurrent domains: technological fluency, work-life integration, value-driven employment, and intergenerational contrast. This mapping provided a framework for tracing how Generation Z's work ethic is both contextually constructed and operationalized across cultures and industries (Snyder, 2019).

To evaluate methodological quality, studies were assessed for design clarity, sampling rigor, and analytical transparency. This critical appraisal helped ensure that the review rested not only on descriptive breadth but on empirically credible foundations (Tranfield et al., 2003). The final synthesis aims to offer a balanced, insightful, and academically robust account of how Generation Z is reshaping the ethical and functional contours of the modern workplace (Moher et al., 2009).

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring Generation Z's work ethic through contemporary academic and industry research reveals more than a generational shift; it exposes a broader transformation in the values, expectations, and psychological frameworks that define modern employment. As this cohort enters the workforce, they bring not only fresh demands but also a call to reimagine how, why, and for whom work is designed. The literature, though diverse in discipline, converges on a single insight: Generation Z is not passively inheriting the workplace—they are actively rewriting its terms (Pînzaru et al., 2019).

Generational theory provides a useful starting point for interpreting this shift. Rooted in the work of

Mannheim (1952) and later advanced by Strauss and Howe (1991), the theory posits that sociohistorical context informs shared generational values. Applied to Generation Z, this framework highlights the generational imprint left by financial instability, global health crises, social justice movements, and digital omnipresence. Unlike prior cohorts, Generation Z does not merely seek employment; they seek alignment—between their roles and their values, their work and the world. Empirical studies confirm this departure, showing a preference for authenticity, equity, and purpose over prestige or permanence (Twenge, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2021).

To understand the motivational architecture underlying these expectations, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers valuable insights. As articulated by Deci and Ryan (2000), autonomy, competence, and relatedness constitute the core drivers of human motivation. These needs are deeply salient for Generation Z workers, who gravitate toward decentralized leadership, feedback-rich environments, and growth-oriented cultures (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). However, the hybridization of work and the prevalence of algorithmic management necessitate a reconceptualization of SDT's application: digital autonomy, for example, may coexist with a desire for interpersonal warmth and communal efficacy (Levine & Chapman, 2022).

Complementing SDT, Expectancy Theory helps explain Generation Z's need for transparency and reciprocity in the workplace. Originating in Vroom's (1964) foundational work, the theory asserts that motivation stems from the perceived connection between effort, performance, and outcomes. Generation Z's insistence on clear, tangible progression paths reflects this logic (Van den Broeck et al., 2016). When these connections break down—when values are not mirrored in practice or feedback loops are opaque—the psychological contract begins to erode. (Hansen et al., 2015) and Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2021) argue that for Generation Z, psychological contracts are not abstract constructs but lived relationships. Breach them, and retention suffers.

Unsurprisingly, technology threads through nearly every dimension of Generation Z's work ethic. Prensky's (2001) notion of the "digital native" remains foundational, but has since evolved. Generation Z does not just use digital tools; they inhabit them. Seamless UX design, mobile-first platforms, and AI-assisted productivity are no longer perks but prerequisites (Rezi AI, 2024; LinkedIn, 2024). Moreover, technological fluency has shaped expectations for managerial responsiveness and peer collaboration. Leaders who resist tech integration may inadvertently signal cultural obsolescence.

Technology alone, however, does not account for Generation Z's insistence on ethical congruence. As Deloitte (2024) observes, this generation routinely evaluates employers based on their ethical stance, not just their benefits package. Purpose—long considered a nice-to-have—is now a decisive factor in recruitment and retention. Whether it's ESG accountability, inclusive governance, or political neutrality, Generation Z watches closely for organizational authenticity. Firms that communicate values but fail to operationalize them risk being labeled as inauthentic, a mark far more damaging today than mere inefficiency (World Economic Forum, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2023).

The concept of workplace flexibility has undergone a similar revaluation. While once seen as an exception or accommodation, flexible scheduling is now interpreted as a sign of institutional respect. Reports from Eagle Hill Consulting (2023) and Microsoft (2022) emphasize that Generation Z associates flexibility with trust and psychological safety, not laziness or detachment. Rigid, one-size-fits-all policies are increasingly interpreted as control mechanisms, prompting disengagement or exit (ManpowerGroup, 2023).

Mental health, once peripheral to workplace design, now occupies center stage in Generation Z's priorities. The American Psychological Association (2023) and SHRM (2023) both underscore a critical shift: for Generation Z, wellness is not a side initiative—it's a cultural mandate. Stipends for therapy, mental health days, and inclusive well-being programs have become structural necessities. This is not entitlement; it's an evolved understanding of productivity, one that recognizes emotional regulation and psychological resilience as conditions for meaningful output (Lee et al., 2024).

Intergenerational friction, though inevitable, is increasingly reframed in the literature as a site for innovation rather than conflict. While Generation Z's values and communication styles may clash with those of Gen X or Boomers, these differences also offer opportunities for mutual enrichment. Le Monde (2024) documents tensions around work ethic and collaboration, yet forward-thinking firms are responding with reverse mentoring, shared learning platforms, and intergenerational ERGs (Forbes, 2022). These practices acknowledge that culture is not a static inheritance but a living, co-authored process.

Taken as a whole, the literature reveals not merely a generational preference but a paradigmatic realignment in how work is imagined, delivered, and experienced. Generation Z's demands are often framed as exceptional, but they are more accurately understood as anticipatory: they signal what all workers may soon expect as cultural norms shift. Still, gaps remain. Longitudinal research is needed to track whether Generation Z's expectations harden or soften over time, particularly as they ascend into leadership roles. Additionally, more work is required to understand how digital autonomy intersects with belonging, innovation, and sustained organizational trust.

This literature review does more than summarize themes—it captures a generational ethos in motion. Far from seeking disruption for its own sake, Generation Z offers a blueprint for a more just, humane, and adaptive

workplace. What remains is for institutions to decide whether they are willing—and able—to meet that call.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### **Work-Life Balance and Mental Health Prioritization**

Work-life balance has become a cornerstone of Generation Z's professional ethos. Unlike previous generations who often framed career commitment through the lens of sacrifice, Generation Z is vocally prioritizing personal well-being. Deloitte (2024) reports that 40% of Generation Z respondents feel stressed most of the time, attributing a substantial portion of that stress to work itself. This generational lens reframes wellness not as a benefit but as an essential element of employer responsibility.

Consequently, leading organizations are responding by institutionalizing flexible work arrangements and investing in mental health programs. Yet, flexibility alone does not mitigate chronic stress; employers must go further to design psychologically safe workplaces. Mental health accommodations are no longer optional enhancements — they represent structural demands embedded in Generation Z's employment calculus (Gallup, 2023).

Increasingly, companies are embedding mental health metrics into performance and engagement dashboards. Pulse surveys and anonymous check-ins have become common practice, with mental health days and company-wide wellness weeks acting as retention tools as much as health interventions. Firms like Google and Salesforce have embedded behavioral health into total rewards strategies, recognizing that burnout risks correlate directly with attrition among Generation Z staff (Fang, 2023).

##### **Emphasis on Purpose and Ethical Alignment**

Perhaps no generational trait is more consequential for employer branding than Generation Z's insistence on working with purpose. Deloitte (2024) found that 86% of Generation Z respondents rate purpose as central to job satisfaction. Notably, half of those surveyed reported rejecting assignments or employers due to perceived ethical misalignment. This signals a value shift: employment is not merely transactional — it is identity-defining.

For organizational leaders, this means that corporate values must be more than symbolic. Commitments to sustainability, inclusion, and ethical transparency are not peripheral—they are primary filters through which Generation Z assesses trustworthiness and decides whether to stay. Firms that fail to embed values into strategy may find Generation Z both difficult to recruit and harder to retain (Kimonyo, 2025).

An emerging trend among leading firms is co-developing mission statements and ESG priorities with younger employees. This participatory approach not only empowers Generation Z contributors but strengthens internal alignment. For instance, Patagonia and Unilever have launched cross-generational impact councils where Generation Z employees directly shape sustainability messaging and philanthropic outreach (Scarlata-Director & Vengrouskie, 2023).

##### **Technological Integration and Digital Expectations**

Generation Z's native fluency with technology is not simply about competence — it informs their expectations of work design, collaboration, and learning. Rezi AI (2024) reports that 64% of Generation Z professionals routinely use AI tools for ideation and communication. They don't merely tolerate tech-enabled workflows — they expect them.

This reality requires organizations to rethink digital infrastructure not as backend support but as front-line experience. For Generation Z, outdated systems hinder performance and engagement. Conversely, companies that embrace digital-first cultures — with upskilling, automation, and asynchronous collaboration tools — are better positioned to attract Generation Z talent. Their digital fluency also implies comfort with rapid innovation cycles, challenging leadership to keep technological adoption agile (Gallup, 2023).

In particular, the integration of AI in performance management and career development is emerging as a differentiator. Tools that offer real-time feedback, career path simulation, or adaptive learning recommendations signal technological maturity — a magnet for Generation Z applicants. Moreover, firms offering remote onboarding using VR/AR or gamified learning experiences are seeing faster time-to-productivity among new Generation Z hires (Rezi AI, 2024).

##### **Flexibility and Autonomy in Work Arrangements**

Flexibility is not a perk for Generation Z — it is a threshold expectation. A recent study by Eagle Hill Consulting (2023) found that 60% of Generation Z professionals would consider leaving an employer that

restricted remote work options. Their flexibility demands go beyond location; they extend to hours, workflows, and even role definition.

This generation thrives under autonomy. Organizations that empower employees to shape their schedules, define their deliverables, and contribute beyond their job descriptions tend to foster higher engagement. However, this must be balanced with structured feedback and community-building efforts, as remote autonomy may risk isolation if not supported by intentional connectivity (Lee et al., 2024).

Companies like Spotify and Atlassian have adopted “work-from-anywhere” models with periodic in-person retreats to reinforce team cohesion. These firms report higher engagement scores among Generation Z staff than traditional in-office peers. Meanwhile, digital management platforms (e.g., Monday.com, Asana) are being retooled to enable visibility without surveillance — a distinction Generation Z draws acutely (Forbes, 2022).

**Table 1: Flexibility and Autonomy – Generation Z Preferences vs. Organizational Strategies**

Generation Z Preference	Organizational Strategy
Remote/hybrid work expectations	Offer hybrid-first or remote-friendly policies
Asynchronous work and autonomy	Empower individual scheduling and ownership
Resistance to micromanagement	Shift to output-based performance evaluation
Self-directed career development	Provide personalized learning tracks
Digital collaboration tools	Implement integrated platforms (e.g., Slack, Notion)

### Retention Challenges and Organizational Confidence

While Generation Z is often described as driven and values-oriented, they are also more mobile than their predecessors are. Qualtrics (2024) reports that only 40% of Generation Z plan to remain with their current employer for more than three years — a figure dramatically lower than that of other generational cohorts.

The challenge for employers is twofold: not only must they deliver meaningful work, but they must also build confidence in organizational leadership. Eagle Hill Consulting (2023) found that Generation Z’s retention correlates directly with perceived trust in leadership and future prospects. This places cultural coherence and transparent communication at the center of talent strategy.

Organizations that succeed in reducing early turnover tend to emphasize narrative continuity in internal communications — showing not just where the company is going, but why and how employee contributions connect to that trajectory. Offering clear 18-month growth paths, with visible mentors and rotational assignments, has proven particularly effective in tech and consulting sectors (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2021).

**Table 2: Factors Influencing Generation Z Retention Rates**

Retention Factor	Description
Leadership transparency	Clarity in vision, feedback, and ethics
Career path visibility	Clear progression plans and fast-cycle promotions
Workplace culture	Inclusive, value-aligned, and psychologically safe
Purpose and societal alignment	Engagement with ESG and DEI efforts
Trust in organizational direction	Confidence in leadership and business sustainability

### Intergenerational Dynamics and Workplace Integration

Integrating Generation Z into multigenerational teams reveals persistent tensions. According to IPSOS, surveyed business leaders frequently expressed frustration with Generation Z’s work habits, while younger employees perceived these same leaders as out of touch (Le Monde, 2024).

These mutual misreadings can lead to fractured team cohesion unless addressed through structured mentorship and shared accountability frameworks. Facilitating intergenerational empathy — rather than enforcing generational stereotypes — has become a critical competency for managers navigating today’s hybrid workplace (Twenge, 2017).

Leading organizations are now implementing reverse mentoring programs, where Generation Z staff coach senior leaders on digital etiquette, inclusive language, and emergent technologies. This bidirectional learning flattens hierarchies and improves mutual understanding, while creating recognition opportunities for younger contributors (Scarlata-Director & Vengrouskie, 2023).

### Compensation Expectations and Financial Priorities

Though frequently associated with values and purpose, Generation Z is pragmatic when it comes to financial stability. According to Cake.com (2024), 74% of Generation Z job seekers still expect competitive salaries and advancement opportunities — but they are also willing to trade modest earnings for environments that support their holistic well-being.

This recalibration requires employers to make compensation strategies more transparent and flexible. Total rewards must include not only salary and bonuses, but wellness stipends, remote infrastructure allowances, and rapid feedback-driven development paths. For Generation Z, fair pay is assumed, but fulfillment is decisive (LinkedIn, 2024).

Firms have started experimenting with cafeteria-style benefits programs where employees select perks based on current life stage. Generation Z has shown strong uptake in mental health support, student loan repayment, and skills coaching, rather than more traditional car allowances or meal cards (Kimonyo, 2025).

### Workplace Culture and Inclusion

A psychologically safe, inclusive culture is not negotiable for Generation Z. According to Cake (2024), over 82% of Generation Z workers rank a non-toxic, inclusive environment among the most critical factors in job satisfaction.

This underscores the rising importance of DEI not just as a compliance metric but as a relational framework. Feedback mechanisms, anti-bias education, and employee resource groups are essential scaffolds. Generation Z does not view inclusion as political — they view it as operational: a core determinant of trust, creativity, and performance (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

High-performing teams often pair inclusive hiring with storytelling platforms (e.g., anonymous blog series, internal podcasts) where Generation Z employees share lived experiences. These informal, peer-authored narratives help scale cultural buy-in and signal authenticity — two features that resonate more with Generation Z than top-down value statements (Microsoft, 2022).

**Table 3: Inclusion and Belonging – Key Levers for Generation Z Engagement**

Inclusion Feature	Impact on Generation Z Engagement
Feedback-rich communication	Builds psychological safety and ownership
Anti-bias education	Supports ethical and equitable environments
Employee resource groups	Fosters identity expression and intergroup support
Transparent DEI metrics	Reinforces credibility and corporate authenticity
Support for intersectionality	Enhances trust among marginalized ident

## V.CONCLUSION

The emerging work ethic of Generation Z challenges longstanding paradigms of organizational behavior, pushing the boundaries of what it means to lead, engage, and retain a new generation of workers. As we move deeper into the 21st century, Generation Z's expectations are not simply deviations from tradition—they represent a structural recalibration of the workplace itself. This recalibration is neither cosmetic nor symbolic; it affects everything from how trust is formed to how purpose is operationalized in modern institutions (Pînzaru et al., 2019).

At its core, the Generation Z work ethic demands a reframing of the psychological contract. No longer is this unspoken agreement limited to stability and pay in exchange for loyalty and performance. For Generation Z, the psychological contract includes mental health support, ethical coherence, digital enablement, and autonomy—delivered as foundational elements, not optional add-ons. This evolution necessitates a multi-level response: from culture and policy to technology and leadership ethos (Lee et al., 2024).

Organizational leaders must now reconcile a dual imperative: to enable radical individualism while maintaining a sense of community and belonging. Generation Z's desire for autonomy and asynchronous work clashes with their parallel need for visibility, mentorship, and social meaning. This tension is not easily resolved and presents a fertile area for future inquiry. It compels leaders to explore adaptive structures—team charters, digital collaboration rituals, and inclusive feedback loops—that preserve freedom without eroding cohesion (Kimonyo, 2025).

Equally important is the interpretive challenge that Generation Z presents to leadership models. The archetypal authoritative leader—decisive, hierarchical, and stoic—resonates less with a cohort that prioritizes emotional intelligence, transparency, and moral congruence. Managerial legitimacy now depends on one's ability to embody openness, fairness, and relatability, often requiring unlearning as much as learning. This opens a new chapter in leadership development: one centered not on power or charisma, but on trustworthiness, accessibility, and ethical fluency (Gallup, 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, Generation Z exposes gaps in how we model workforce motivation and engagement. Classical economic theories that prioritized extrinsic rewards offer only partial insight. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and psychological safety frameworks provide stronger scaffolding,

but even these may require expansion to account for hybrid work, digital identity, and moral self-expression as components of workplace satisfaction. Generation Z is signaling the need for more pluralistic, nuanced, and contextually dynamic frameworks.

What also becomes clear is that retention is no longer a function of tenure management—it is a function of meaning management. Generation Z does not leave roles only because of better offers elsewhere; they exit when coherence breaks down between self and system. This suggests that retention strategy must evolve into cultural congruence strategy. Organizations will need to monitor cultural health as closely as financial health—using tools such as culture pulse surveys, inclusion indices, and purpose alignment audits to retain credibility and connection (Scarлата-Director & Vengrouskie, 2023).

Looking ahead, the implications extend beyond HR. They touch legal design (e.g., employee data sovereignty in AI systems), global policy (e.g., universal learning credits for skill agility), and education-to-employment pipelines (e.g., earlier exposure to workplace ethics and mental health literacy). The workforce of the 2030s will not only contain more Generation Z workers—it will operate within norms they have helped define (Fang, 2023).

Future research should explore the interplay between digital behavior and interpersonal trust among Generation Z employees. How do asynchronous tools affect conflict resolution, creativity, or mentoring in multigenerational teams? How does moral injury manifest in Generation Z workers when working for companies that publicly fail to meet their stated values? Furthermore, longitudinal studies are needed to track whether Generation Z's expectations shift as they ascend into leadership roles themselves—or whether they institutionalize new standards altogether.

In sum, the rise of Generation Z is not merely a demographic inevitability—it is a leadership test. Their presence demands a deeper reckoning with authenticity, design, justice, and emotional intelligence in the world of work. Meeting these demands requires more than programs or perks. It calls for a profound reimagining of what work is, who it serves, and how it aligns with the human spirit in the digital age.

## VI. REFERENCES

1. American Psychological Association. (2023). *2023 Work in America survey: Workplaces should promote health and well-being*. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/work-in-america/2023-workplace-health-well-being>
2. Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
3. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
4. Cake. (2024, April 17). *Gen Z workforce statistics: What Gen Z wants from work in 2024*. <https://cake.com/empowered-team/gen-z-workforce-statistics/>
5. Coyle-Shapiro, J. A. M., & Shore, L. M. (2021). The employee–organization relationship: Where do we go from here? *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(2), 100743.
6. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01)
7. Deloitte. (2024). *2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey*. <https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/docs/campaigns/2024/deloitte-2024-genz-millennial-survey.pdf>
8. Eagle Hill Consulting. (2023). *Employee retention index*. <https://www.eaglehillconsulting.com/employee-retention-index/>
9. Fang, J. (2023). Application and limitations of the expectancy theory in organizations. *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences*, 54, 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/54/20230868>
10. Forbes. (2022). *The evolution of work: How Gen Z is reshaping leadership and workplace culture*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeseq/2025/04/02/the-evolution-of-work-how-gen-z-is-reshaping-leadership-and-workplace-culture/>
11. Gallup. (2023). *State of the global workplace: 2023 report*. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>
12. Hansen, S., Rousseau, D., & Tomprou, M. (2015). Psychological contract theory. In *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.weom110075>
13. Kimonyo, T. (2025). Influence of strategic leadership on Generation Z employees: A strategic approach

- to organizational performance. *European Journal of Business and Strategic Management*, 10, 72–85. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ejbsm.3250>
14. Le Monde. (2024). *Intergenerational workplace tensions increase*. <https://www.lemonde.fr>
15. Lee, S., Chong, C., & Ojo, A. (2024). Influence of workplace flexibility on employee engagement among young generation. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2309705>
16. Levine, D., & Chapman, E. (2022). Digital expectations and leadership in Gen Z employees. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 35(3), 427–441.
17. LinkedIn. (2024). *Workplace learning report*. <https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report>
18. ManpowerGroup. (2023a). *The new age of work: Gen Z and beyond*. [https://www.manpowergroup.de/-/media/project/manpowergroup/manpowergroup/manpowergroup-germany/studien\\_pdf/mpg\\_2023\\_humanage\\_workforce\\_trends\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.manpowergroup.de/-/media/project/manpowergroup/manpowergroup/manpowergroup-germany/studien_pdf/mpg_2023_humanage_workforce_trends_interactive.pdf)
19. ManpowerGroup. (2023b). *Gen Z employees expect more than a paycheque*. <https://www.manpower.co.za/press-releases/gen-z-employees-expect-more-than-a-paycheque>
20. McKinsey & Company. (2023). *How does Gen Z see its place in the working world?* <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/sustainable-inclusive-growth/future-of-america/how-does-gen-z-see-its-place-in-the-working-world-with-trepidation>
21. Microsoft. (2022). *Gen Z and millennial workers reshaping a workplace*. <https://news.microsoft.com/en-ccc/2022/07/13/gen-z-and-millennial-workers-reshaping-a-workplace/>
22. Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & The PRISMA Group. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *PLOS Medicine*, 6(7), e1000097. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097>
23. Pew Research Center. (2021). *Gen Z, Millennials stand out for climate change activism*. <https://www.pewresearch.org>
24. Pinzaru, F., Zbucea, A., & Vițelar, A. (2019). Digital transformation trends reshaping companies. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 13(1), 635–646. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2019-0056>
25. Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1–6.
26. Rezi AI. (2024). *AI tools and Gen Z's workplace habits*. <https://www.rezi.ai/posts/gen-z-work-ethic>
27. SHRM. (2023). *State of the workplace report*. <https://www.shrm.org/content/dam/en/shrm/research/2023-2024-State-of-the-Workplace-Report.pdf>
28. Scarlata-Director, J., & Vengrouskie, E. (2023). Generation Z employees as future leaders? *Journal of Emerging Trends*, 12, 74–83. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.773197>
29. Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
30. Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), 207–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00375>
31. Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy—and completely unprepared for adulthood—and what that means for the rest of us*. Atria Books.
32. Twenge, J. M. (2023). Generations: The real differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and what they mean for America's future. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 75, 212–214. <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF12-23Twenge>
33. Van den Broeck, A., Ferris, D. L., Chang, C. H., & Rosen, C. C. (2016). A review of self-determination theory's basic psychological needs at work. *Journal of Management*, 42(5), 1195–1229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316632058>
34. Vroom, V.H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley.
35. Qualtrics. (2024, April 25). *Despite low retention scores, Gen Z are engaged at work*. <https://www.qualtrics.com/news/despite-low-retention-scores-gen-z-are-engaged-at-work/>
36. World Economic Forum. (2024). *The future of jobs report 2025*. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>