

# CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS OF GEN Z EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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**Abstract**— Although there are many studies on Gen Z employees in the workplace, only a few have examined their characteristics and qualities. This present study explored the characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z employees in the modern workplace. Following a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, relevant studies published between 2020 and 2024 were identified from the academic database Google Scholar. Fourteen (14) peer-reviewed articles were then carefully selected, analyzed, and synthesized. The results showed that the significant characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z employees include technological proficiency, prioritization of work-life balance, high motivation for personal growth and professional development, a desire for job satisfaction, and a preference for a positive organizational culture and leadership.

**Keywords**— Gen Z, Characteristics, Behaviors, Workplace

## I. INTRODUCTION

A generation is a group of people who share similar birth years, life experiences, and cultural influences. Gen Z is the current generation that has attracted much attention from researchers and practitioners (Jayatissa, 2023). Generation Z, also known as iGen, Home landers, Digital Natives, and more frequently referred to as Gen Z or Gen Zers, encompasses individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Pichler, Chiranjeev Kohli & Granitz, 2021). Generation Z, the newest age group in the workforce, has distinct expectations and needs that differ from those of other generations. They desire a friendly and supportive work environment, are more tech-savvy, and have high standards for work-life balance.

As a result, knowing the elements that drive performance is critical for firms seeking to remain competitive and relevant. Organizational culture influences the behavior, attitudes, and work ethic of Generation Z employees (Widjanarko et al., 2023). As Gen Z employees begin to dominate the job market, organizations are increasingly focusing on understanding and harnessing the unique characteristics, motivations, and preferences of this generation to optimize their performance and productivity (Wulur, L., & Mandagi, D., 2023).

Notably, the majority of Gen Z individuals also exhibit characteristics associated with the millennial generation, such as responsibility, loyalty, determination, and thoughtfulness (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). Gen Z, often called adaptive workers, has a remarkable capacity to adapt to new work environments. Managers should be mindful of this characteristic to proactively address potential boredom issues, employing job

rotation as a viable strategy to sustain their engagement within the company (Dessler, 2018).

On the other hand, this generation exhibits a proclivity for forging connections with like-minded individuals, distinguishing them from their predecessors. Gen Zers differ significantly from different generations in their thinking patterns, values, and sources of satisfaction and motivation (Khare & Sumbul, 2024). Unlike previous generations, several factors motivate Gen Z at work, including the need for flexibility. Gen Z requires flexibility in the workplace, including the ability to work longer hours or from home (Bragas et al., 2022). They could become demotivated if they are unable to acquire this flexibility. Gen Z also selects occupations that allow them to advance. Gen Z likes freedom, setting their own goals and aspirations at work, and finding ways to be themselves to find happiness, which makes them adaptive and efficient at work. Gen Z is very concerned about career development and progress; if they do not get this, they are courageous enough to change jobs (Lorgulescu, 2016; Yacine & Karjaluo, 2022).

Despite the growing interest in understanding Gen Z's contributions to the workforce, the existing literature remains fragmented and lacks a cohesive synthesis. In addition, while existing research offers insights into Generation Z employees, significant gaps remain. Most studies are short-term, and there is limited exploration of diversity within Gen Z, including differences in gender, education, and industry. Additionally, the link between their digital fluency and actual workplace performance is underexplored. The gap between Gen Z's expectations — like flexibility and purpose-driven work — and what employers offer is also insufficiently studied. Finally, their views on leadership and career progression remain an emerging area that warrants further investigation. Therefore, this study aimed to shed light on the characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z employees in the modern workplace.

## II. METHODS

### Research Design

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to explore and synthesize existing research on the characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z employees in the workplace. It was also utilized to summarize existing knowledge, identify research gaps, ensure objectivity, and establish theoretical foundations.

### Data Source

The data for this study were systematically and thoroughly gathered from credible academic database to ensure the relevance and quality of the literature reviewed. A total of 14 literature sources were used in the review. The specific criteria guiding the data collection process are outlined in the table below:

Criterion	Detail
Search Terms	Keywords and phrases related to Gen Z employees, characteristics, and behaviors.
Language	Only studies published in English were considered for this review.
Timeframe	Literature published between 2020–2024 was included to ensure that the study is current and updated.
Databases	Searches were conducted on Google Scholar.
Inclusion Criteria	Studies that focus on Gen Z employees' characteristics, and behaviors were included.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method that involves identifying patterns, themes, and insights across the selected literature. This approach enabled in-depth identification of patterns and trends, data quantification, understanding of meaning and context, and support for theory development.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z employees in the modern workplace were explored, revealing crucial elements such as technological proficiency, prioritization of work-life balance, high motivation for personal growth and professional development, a desire for job satisfaction, and a preference for positive organizational leadership and culture.

### Technological Proficiency

Utilizing and leveraging technology will undoubtedly be helpful for organizations operating in today's rapidly changing business environment. (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023; Warbung et al., 2023). Gen Z, often referred to as digital natives, has grown

up with access to a range of digital devices, social media, and information whenever needed, which has changed many things about how they think, act, and expect in the workplace, often referred to as a paradigm shift. As the first truly digital generation, teenagers of today possess an entirely different skill set, value system, and work style than all previous generations. (Wulur, L. & Mandagi, D. 2023). Gen Z, often called "digital natives," has grown up in a world dominated by digital technology, social media, and instant access to information. As the first truly digital generation, Gen Z brings a fresh set of skills, values, and work preferences that differ significantly from those of previous generations. (Wulur, L. & Mandagi, D. 2023).

Gen Z employees demonstrate a wide range of technological proficiency, using various devices and software to accomplish their tasks more easily and quickly. This generation also demonstrates in-depth knowledge and skills in 21st-century skills, namely critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. They can further develop these skills by immersing themselves in this rapidly changing world and by being responsive to the needs of time and adaptable to its changes. Their proficiency with communication tools, project management software, and data analysis platforms enables seamless collaboration and information sharing among team members, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and project success (Cuic et al., 2022; Chillakuri, 2020; Leung et al., 2021). Additionally, Gen Z workers that are proficient with technology are able to investigate remote employment options. Having grown up in a connected world, they are comfortable working from various locations and are well-equipped to handle virtual collaboration (Waworuntu et al., 2022). This flexibility allows organizations to tap into global talent pools and build diverse teams, promoting creativity and efficiency. Technological proficiency also positively impacts Gen Z employee learning and development. With access to vast online resources and e-learning platforms, these employees can continuously upskill and stay updated on industry trends (Cuic et al., 2022). Also, technological advancements are shaping Gen Z's workplace communication practices (Raslie & Ting, 2021), as Zahra's study notes. Y. et. al (2025). Gen Z employees are quick to respond to issues, have fast access to information, and actively find out content.

For organizations to ensure that this generation of employees stays within their organizations, they must invest in digital analytics and tools and enable employees to attend training and seminars to leverage technological proficiency as a factor influencing Gen Z employees' productivity. Moreover, promoting the latest innovations, digital tools, and practices can

enhance their productivity, thereby improving engagement and performance.

### **Prioritization for Work-life Balance**

Work-life balance refers to a condition in which employees can effectively balance work responsibilities and other roles in their personal lives, supported by the organization through a series of activities and organizational culture (Rahmawati & Gunawan, 2020). Personal life can take the form of family life, social life, health, and other individual activities. Other research also found that work-life balance is essential in minimizing employees' intention to quit work (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). Furthermore, employees feel happy because they can balance work obligations and their personal lives and have commensurate time and contributions between work and personal life (Sismawati & Lataruva, 2020).

Work-life balance is essential for Gen Z in terms of career satisfaction and opportunities. Compared with earlier generations, who primarily focused on professional stability and financial benefits, Gen Z places greater importance on balancing career responsibilities with their personal lives. Their understanding of "work-life balance" goes beyond the typical definition, encompassing opportunities to pursue interests, to take care of one's mental and physical health, and to spend quality time with loved ones. During the pandemic, shifts in work culture such as remote working, flexible working hours, and being more open towards mental health indicate a shift that caters to their desire for meaningful work (Reddy, A. et. al, 2024). Gen Z employees prioritize flexibility, job satisfaction, and mental well-being as integral components of WLB.

There are several obstacles to overcome as Gen Z enters the workforce, especially in light of their expectations. Gen Z tends to prioritize work-life balance, seeking an environment that supports both personal well-being and professional growth. This shift is far different from earlier generations, who may have placed a higher value on job security or conventional benefits (Lazányi & Bilan, 2017; Raslie & Ting, 2021), as mentioned in the study of (Zahra, Y. et. al, 2025). Indeed, employees are the most critical asset of an organization, as they are indispensable resources. However, agencies must recognize that their employees are human too and have lives outside their jobs. That said, agencies should develop intervention programs to promote work-life balance among employees. Some of these interventions may include compressed work weeks, flexible work arrangements, and wellness and mental health programs.

### **High Motivation for Personal Growth and Professional Development**

One of the most critical ways career development affects Gen Z employee performance is as a significant incentive. Generation Z employees are known for their drive and eagerness to achieve their professional goals quickly. When firms offer clear, visible career pathways with opportunities for growth and development, Gen Z employees are inspired and dedicated to giving their all. The prospect of development motivates people to perform well in their current positions, leading to improved work performance and higher production (Wulur, L. & Mandagi, D., 2023). Also, career advancement motivates Gen Z individuals to enhance their skills and expertise continually (Tarigan et al., 2022). They understand how to use technology for study and personal growth since they are digital natives. When companies implement training and upskilling programs, Gen Z workers feel valued. They are more inclined to adopt a development attitude, seek out novel ideas, and strive for excellence in their job. Gen Z employees born in the digital era are highly motivated to acquire new knowledge and skills to navigate this fast-changing world. They become more productive in their organization when they attend training and seminars to further the competencies required in their workplace and to help them meet the demands of a changing world. Additionally, chances for growth foster a sense of loyalty and sustained dedication among Gen Z workers.

They value organizations that recognize and reward excellence and give a clear route for advancement. When combined with the organization's training and development initiatives, meaningful work maintains high levels of motivation by fostering growth and fulfillment. Young individuals desire to acquire skills that provide opportunities for progress and personal development. In order to gain practice and experience, they are looking for work that will help them develop their careers (Surugui, et. al 2025).

### **Desire for Job Satisfaction**

Other researchers (Latif et al., 2013; Othman et al., 2020) agreed that increasing job satisfaction is beneficial for helping employees survive and be motivated to achieve optimal work results, which are vital for companies. Job satisfaction among Generation Z is significantly influenced by recognition, appreciation, and organizational well-being, aligning with existing literature on motivational factors. Specifically, it emphasizes that recognition from management and personalized appreciation are key drivers of job satisfaction, as they provide intrinsic motivation and a sense of value

(Baldonado, 2018; Kirchmayer & Fratrićová, 2020; Riksen & Spies, 2023) as mentioned in the study of (Surugiu, et. al 2025)

The way a person feels about their job as a whole—including the nature of the work itself, relationships with coworkers, benefits, and compensation—is called job satisfaction. When workers are happy in their employment, they find their work fulfilling, joyful, and rewarding; when they are unhappy in their jobs, they are not satisfied with these characteristics. Job satisfaction underscores the supervisor's role in nurturing employees, particularly through in-person interactions. In addition, a friendly community and support from coworkers also shape millennial and Gen Z job satisfaction (Waworuntu, E. et. al 2022). Recent research found that employees with positive feelings and low levels of stress at work and home are more likely to experience job satisfaction (Bataineh, 2019). When Gen Z employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to become motivated and productive, as they are driven by the fulfillment of completing the tasks assigned to them.

### **Preference for Positive Organizational Culture and Leadership**

According to Putri & Yusuf (2022), organizational culture is essential for organizational growth. It is recognized that organizational culture brings about positive change. Organizational culture fundamentally conveys a sense of internal cohesion. Organizational culture influences Gen Z employees' communication and cooperation behaviors. Gen Z employees are digital natives with advanced technological skills (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). A culture that welcomes technology, supports open communication, and facilitates cooperation through digital platforms and tools can significantly improve performance, creating opportunities for cross-functional collaboration, mentorship, and knowledge sharing.

On the other hand, inclusive leadership refers to a leader's ability to create an environment that embraces diversity and ensures that all team members can fearlessly bring their whole selves to work and are valued for their contributions (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). According to Shore and Chung (2022), inclusive leaders pay close attention to their employees' views and beliefs, tolerate their mistakes, and provide support and direction when errors occur. Likewise, Katsaros (2022) proposes that inclusive leadership is always anthropocentric, emphasizes equal treatment for employees, and fosters organizational unity. Furthermore, transformational leadership styles that prioritize recognition, feedback, and employee

development can cultivate a psychologically safe and motivating workplace climate. Such leadership approaches are associated with increased employee satisfaction and retention, particularly among younger workers like Gen Z who value support and recognition (Dudija & Apriiliansyah, 2024; Fernandez et al., 2023) as mentioned in the study of (Surugiu, et. al. 2025)

Organizations need to provide a supportive environment with transparent procedures and clear rewards to improve workplace motivation and development for employees (Mahmoud et al., 2021), as mentioned in the study of (Zahra, Y. et. al, 2025). Gen Z employees are highly influenced by organizational culture and leadership: when they are in an organization that fosters inclusivity, excellence, equality, and well-being, they are more likely to become engaged and motivated. As a result, they perform better in achieving the organization's goals and objectives.

### **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study aimed to determine the characteristics and behaviors of Generation Z employees in the modern workplace. Findings revealed that this group is distinguished by strong technological proficiency, a clear prioritization of work-life balance, and a high level of motivation for both personal growth and professional development. In addition, Gen Z employees demonstrate a strong desire for job satisfaction and show a clear preference for working in environments that promote a positive organizational culture and supportive leadership. These recurring characteristics highlight the evolving expectations of the modern workforce and emphasize the need for organizations to adapt their management practices to better engage and retain Gen Z employees.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that future research expand the scope of literature by exploring additional academic databases to capture a broader range of studies on Gen Z in the workplace. There is also a need to conduct more localized research within the Philippine context to ensure that findings are culturally relevant and reflective of local workplace dynamics. Furthermore, comparative studies across different countries are encouraged, as these may provide valuable insights into cultural differences and similarities in the characteristics, behaviors, expectations, and challenges of Gen Z employees, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this emerging workforce.

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