Workplace Preference of Generation Z: A Review and Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Gen Z is born into a globally connected world and growing up with the latest technology in hand, their world revolves around the digital media and technology is their identity. This generation is entering the organizations now, with absolutely new expectations and preferences of the workplace. There is very little awareness about their values, work ethics, characteristics and attributes. Gen Z is different from Gen X and Gen Y in their approach towards work and these unique qualities are going to bring evident changes in the future of organizations.

Generation Z are also called "digital natives", being social, technological, global and developed, clever and educated and the most connected, generation that ever existed before. They have a musical culture and are enthused by influencers over social media, alluring them over brands. It is affirmative that the hiring and retention of this generation without proper understanding will affect the sustainable progress of organizations.

However, by analyzing the preferences and workplace motivation factors of this generation, companies can determine the changes to be brought in their recruitment and retention processes. This review paper observes the attitude and inclinations of the Gen Z from the prevailing studies so that organizations can forecast and build a workplace apposite for them in order to upscale the performance of their organization.

Introduction

Generation Z is the one that has arrived after the Millennials, specifically porn in 1996 and post that. They are also well known by the names 'I Gen', "Founders', "Centennials". Interesting fact is that the population comprising the Gen Z are not just children, but the earliest members of Gen Z are now 22 years old. They are the youngest voters today and are already entering the workplaces. They pose a new facet to the world of customer expectations, employees and citizens.

Gen Z appeared just a few years after the desires of Gen X and Gen Y were realized, by national and international organizations alike in the 21st century.

As per research conducted by CIPD (2008) and Harber J., (2011), every generation has non-concurring approaches towards work and workplace. Also, as per the studies of Knoll (2014), the latest task of organizations around the world is to come up with solutions to the varying values and needs of their mixed workforce comprising Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z.

Thus it is essential that the HR managers and employers work towards the modification of their recruitment, retention policies. Studies show that it is not easy to keep the Gen Z motivated with the traditional methods that were used for Gen Y and Gen X and thus, it becomes extremely difficult to keep the talent from draining out of organizations. Understanding the attitudes and workspace preferences of this modern generation would prove helpful to the recruiters in order to pitch in the best talent and engage them for a long period for upscaling the organizational performance.

It is estimated that by 2020, about 30% of the workforce will be represented by Gen Z and it is high time for organizations to learn and understand about their preferences in order to mentor them at their first jobs, lead them to personal and professional growth and transition them into future leaders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics

The studies of The Institute For Emerging Issues(2012) show that the Generation Z is the most diverse ethnically and sophisticated technologically.

- They are individualistic, prefer the informal communication styles and consider social media as an important portion of their lives; as per the

International Journal Of Management,Technology And Engineering.

- The Gen Z is optimistic about their work and future. But, they can also be impatient and spontaneous, having a short attention span, also known as the attention deficit disorder which makes them extremely dependent on technology as well as demanding and materialistic. These observations were made in the Generational White Paper (2011).
- This tech savviness has impacted the problem-solving abilities of the Gen Z, which in turn showcases their lacking in the analysis and decision making skills, finds Joseph Coombs (2013) and irrespective of this, they want to be heard even at a young age. Amanda Salvin (2015).
- They are not as much motivated by money as the Gen Y. However, the studies of Schawbel, Dan in his studies in 2014, suggests Gen Z to be having entrepreneurial skills with a good level of tolerance and trustworthiness.
- Gen Z are acquisitive and the most entitled generation. Their participation in the voting process less than their previous generations.
- Concerns about environmental issues, being conscious of various resource shortages directs us to a strong sense of responsibility amongst the Generation Z. Max Mihelich, 2013.

Attracting Workforce

As per the studies of Irina Sidorcuka (2017), Flexible schedule emerged as the top attribute in attracting the working staff. Engagement at workplace was maintained with the help of interactive communication on varied and exciting facets. Gen Z have also been recognized as the generation that prefer working for an organization that is famous for dynamic growth. Another aspiration of this generation is innovation at work.

Requirements at Workplace

It has become important now to create a good working environment and maintain communication for understanding the values of the Gen Z so that they remain motivated for organization's productivity.

- Gen Z respects transparency. It is self-reliant and does not compromise with flexibility and personal freedom. (Bascha – 2011)
- Ignoring the work ethics of Gen Z would leave them hanging with low morale, less productive and often cause frustration among fellow co-workers. (International Journal Of Management, Technology and Engineering Volume IX, 2019)
- They want sufficient autonomy in their working and expect timely acknowledgements. Since they have grown up in a world with electronic gadgets like the smart phone around them, they expect to have these in their close proximity while at work. (Max Mihelich – 2013)
- Gen Z workforce loves to work for an honest leader who is open to them about company information and does not show any kind of bias because of age or seniority at workplace. They want their leader to apprehend their ideas, respect their work ethics and value their feelings. (Dan Schawbel – 2014)
- Generation Z is certain that their years of education has failed in giving them the required professional skills for the problems faced in organizations and thus want a mentoring work environment, with learning opportunities in order to upskill themselves, that nurtures their entrepreneurial skills, a work environment that is not just sociable but also allows them to have flexible schedules in their job role. (Teresa Bridges – 2015)
- They see technology as their lifeline and use it all the time for work irrespective of time zones and geographical differences.
- They look for a comparatively easy workplace to adjust and put certainty and value arrangement above planning functions. (Knoll – 2014)
- This generation is highly motivated by the idea of working for a leader who is honest, transparent in the information transfer and undertakes his or her functions with integrity. (Robert Half – 2015)

Retention

Research by the company Evolution in Latvia has shown that the Gen Z is particular about health and work-life balance. Thus, bringing about a provision of gymnasiums and the concept of paid vacation and health insurance has significantly improved the retention rates. The study by Irina Sidorcuka (2017) shows that the Gen Z are more likely to be comfortable working with a company that may provide paid-off for birthdays and have more opportunities for extracurricular like social events and sports. They are not long-term planners and would change employers for the sake of better opportunities and innovative approaches in their operations and novelty alike. This research was concluded at permanently adapting to the values and requirements of the Generation Z which include active interaction, quick response to change and continuous innovation.

Comparison at Workplace

Table 1. Situational behaviour comparison of Gen Y with Gen Z

Situation	Generation Y	Generation Z
Conflict	Hates conflict, hides. Gets along well with parents of previous generation	Argumentative, counter-culture to parents
Spot Light	Doesn't stand out, is led by Baby Boomers	Posed to lead, tends to capture the power vacuum created by Gen X and Gen Y; will take charge and create constancy
Passion	Has an idea of doing 'what they love'	Executing the idea and creating a sense of stability and adjusting to new realities
Communication	Excellent at written communication	Excellent at verbal communication. Prefers Videos over text

Leadership Transition

Organizations all around the world are beginning to realize or are already facing challenges in the process of effectively leading or transitioning Leadership roles to Gen Z respectively. As illustrated by Mark Zuckerberg in one of his quotes, the scale of technology and infrastructure to be built in order to connect the society is exceptional.

This generation does not follow or admire a specific leadership style. The leader is required to be proficient enough to lead a gamete of employees that act and behave in many different aspects from one another under similar circumstances. In the future, the circumstances are bound to adversely change as the skillsets evolve over time.

Generation Z has migrated from books and magazines to technology in a relatively short span of time. Since these technologies present fast-easy- to the point solutions, they will be pushed over with the dilemma of either to acquire practical experience or to pursue a professional degree.

On the whole, leadership from Gen Y to Gen Z is similar but requires to transform and cope with the manifold of characteristics that emerge.

Conclusion and Research Agenda

The observation of various studies and literature available combined together pointed to the fact that the employees belonging to Generation Z have specific choices and inclinations to digital media in terms of communication, work ethics and leadership styles. They are not in search of a long term prospectus of employment but are looking forward to being hired by organizations that value their requirements of flexible working hours, autonomy in work in order to apply their individuality, innovation along with speed and capability of the organization to manage change. They also long for companies that are excellent in

the field of promoting platforms for developmental benefits and education.

The analyses were carefully examined and it was concluded that Generation Z is highly motivated by factors such as the quality of relationship with employer and other fellow co-workers and loving the work they do. Another prevalent motivator is the zeal to achieve one's goals.

The future research agenda proceed this review is the factors affecting the workplace preference of Generation Z post Covid-19 with specific focus on the IT industry. There is further scope for design and implementation strategies of innovative organizational models.

Table 2. Attitudes of Gen Z corresponding to various aspects of work-life

Attribute	Attitude
Career	Multiple parallel careers
Workplace	Flexible working hours and location
Technology	Surfs internet, researches and creates own sources of data, "always on"
Communication	Email, text message
Retention	Depending on relationships
Mentorship	Continuous feedback is required
Motivation	Maintenance of work-life balance
Clothing	Comfortable attire

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