

# EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION Z FROM THE WORKING LIFE

## A LONGITUDE RESEARCH



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# PROJECT TEAM

## **Project Managers:**

Prof.Dr. Necla Keleş  
Bahçeşehir University Faculty of Education

Bahri Toper  
Bahçeşehir University CO-OP Director

## **Project Team:**

Tuncer Köklü- ATA Holding-Coordinator

Ecehan Kurdođlu-ATA Holding- Board Member Responsible for Milgo  
Business Development

Gizem Menderes-ATA Holding-Human Resources Manager

Cansu Mat-CO-OP Career Counselor

Neyzen Aydın Yanık-CO-OP Career Counselor

Beril Çađlayan-CO-OP Assistant Specialist

Vanesa Yeruřalmi-CO-OP Student Assistant

Zeynep Yılmaz – CO-OP Student Assistant

**"MY ONLY HOPE  
IS IN THE YOUTH"**

M. Kemal ATATÜRK

# PREFACE



Especially the changes in the working life that occurred after the pandemic, as well as the changes in the perspective of employees towards work, have made it necessary to examine the depth of the concept of employee commitment, especially among the younger generations, and to update management strategies and human resources approaches. This research aims to contribute to these approaches with some scientific and concrete data by examining the expectations of Generation Z in their working life after graduating from university and entering the job market. In addition, the goal is to update company practices and create new ones based on the views and thoughts of Generation Z towards work life.

The project was conducted with five employees from Ata Holding and its group companies who belong to the Y/Z generation, as well as 10 students selected from Bahçeşehir University (BAU). The part of the project that involved BAU students was carried out longitudinally in two stages.

The content of the interview questions and forms were jointly created by ATA Holding and Bahçeşehir University, with priority given to the observations and evaluations/needs related to young generation employees within ATA Holding and its group companies.

The research was completed in all stages between January 2022 and August 2022 in accordance with the project schedule created.

# INTRODUCTION

Humanity has been interacting with each other and its ecosystem since its existence. The socio-cultural structure and economic conditions of the society in which individuals are located shape their attitudes and behaviors throughout their lives. Due to the environment, they are in, people's attitudes and behaviors have shown similar characteristics according to the period they are in, and this has brought about the concept of generation. Nowadays, the increasing attention to the different attitudes and behaviors of generations in the workplace and their impact on work styles has brought understanding generational differences to the forefront from a managerial perspective. Based on this, the aim of this study is to determine the views and expectations of Ata Holding and Group Companies employees and Bahçeşehir University students within the Z generation regarding their working life. The first part of the study includes research questions developed within the framework of literature review. Then, the study group, data collection method, and analysis of the study are discussed. Subsequently, the research findings are presented, and the study is concluded with conclusions and recommendations.



# 1. GENERATION CONCEPT

When examined scientifically, studies on generations were first examined by Comte (1798-1857). Comte claimed that differences between generations were factors that continued to exist in the historical process and that social development would only occur through the accumulation that one generation would pass on to the next (Akdemir, Atan, Demirkaya, and Karaman, 2015). The needs of society change due to events and different behaviors, needs, priorities, expectations, and perceptions can develop among people of different eras. This behavioral and perceptual difference is explained by the concept of "generation" (Kaçar, 2019). Generations are groups of people who were born in the same or very close time, who were influenced by the dominant social, economic, political, and cultural events of their time, and who therefore have similar values. Generations not only are affected by the events of their time, but also influence the society in which they live with their ideas and behaviors.

The concept of generation has been defined in quite different and numerous ways. For instance, while defining a generation, the Turkish Language Association (TLA) describes it as a group of individuals who were born in approximately the same years and exposed to similar conditions of the same period. These individuals are a community of people who were born around the same time, shared the same conditions of the era, and therefore had similar difficulties and fates, and had similar obligations ([www.tdk.gov.tr](http://www.tdk.gov.tr), 2014).

The Dictionary of Social Sciences defines the concept of generation as "a group of people who form age cohorts of approximately 25-30 years, also known as cohort, generation, or age set" (Turkish Language Association, 2020).

According to Keleş (2011), a generation is "a group of people who were born in a similar period, have similar age and life stages, and were shaped by the events of a similar era". In other words, generations can be defined as "a series of birth years for a group of people" (Jopling, 2004).

# 2. GENERATION TYPES

Although there is no common agreement on the classification of generations in the literature, the classification based on individuals' birth years is as follows: those who born before World War II are referred to as the Traditional generation (1925-1944). Those born after World War II until the mid-1960s are referred to as the Baby Boom generation (1945-1965) (Roberts & Manolis, 2000; O'Bannon, 2001; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Wallace, 2006). Those born between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s are referred to as Generation X (1966-1979) (Roberts & Manolis, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Wallace, 2006). Those born from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s are referred to as Generation Y (1980-1995) (Cogin, 2012).

Traditional Generation. Silent Generation	Before 1944	"No waste, no wanting"
Baby Boomers Generation	1945 – 1965	"Live to work"
Generation X	1966 – 1979	"Work to live"
Generation Y	1980 – 1995	"Living first, then work."
Generation Z	1997 – 2012	"Work is just a part of life."
Generation Alpha	2012- Now	



## 2.1 SILENT GENERATION

The Silent Generation, which is referred to as the first generation in generational classifications starting from the 20th century, was born between 1925-1944 and was affected by shortages due to the war (Kırık and Köyüstü, 2018). It is a generation that experienced unemployment and scarcity, received food with food stamps, and adopted saving as a principle in their lives. The scarcity and future concerns they experienced during the war years have contributed to the characterization of members of the Silent Generation as loyal to their employers, respectful to authority, dedicated to their work, hardworking, and adaptable (Aka, 2017).

## 2.2 BABY BOOMERS GENERATION

The baby boomer generation, born between 1945 and 1965, symbolizes the increased births after World War II. The baby boomer generation, who had positive and prosperous post-war years, owes their characteristic structure to being raised by harmonious, hierarchical, respectful, and authoritarian parents. The phrase "live to work" could be the best expression of their perspective on life. It can be said that the only rule for living well for the baby boomer generation, who started working at a young age, is to work hard. Lifelong employment and loyalty to the institutions where they work can be considered as remarkable features for this generation, for whom working life does not only mean earning money (Elsdon & Lyer 1999).

## 2.3 GENERATION X



The Generation X, born between 1966 and 1979, consists of individuals following the baby boomer generation. The relevant period represents a social structure where social developments and freedom movements became widespread, individual rights and freedom fights came to the forefront, and the oppressive family structures were openly observed (Şalap, 2016). Although the education level of Generation X is quite high compared to the baby boomer generation, the rising unemployment and economic difficulties led to dropping out of education or entering the working life with low wages while they were still in school (Lyons, 2003). This generation was neglected by their workaholic parents, and they created confidence in standing on their own feet. Individuals of this generation are prominent with concerns about the future, hopelessness, and pessimism due to witnessing their parents' unemployment and struggles to make ends meet (Williams and Page, 2011). Economic and social events have led the Generation X to grow up in a eco-anxiety environment.

Although they may not be as politically and value oriented as their parents, they are sensitive to social events. Their basic philosophy is "Happy family, happy work," and they believe that they need to work for the best possible outcome. This also ensures that they show sufficient work motivation. This generation, who always wants more, aims for a life with more money and better conditions. Their frequent divorces and having fewer children are thought to be due to this reason (Çetiner, 2014). Generation X prefers to secure their future with what they have learned from life. Being competitive in the workplace and saving money is important for them. Considering the conditions, they live in, it is possible to define their perspective on life as "work to live." Unlike the baby boomer generation who lives to work, for the X generation, work is not their initial priority, and they prefer to work while avoiding stress. (Adıgüzel, Batur, Ekşili, 2014).

## 2.4 GENERATION Y

The literature on the time represented by Generation Y contains various information, but generally it is composed of individuals born between 1980 and 1995. Generation Y is a generation that grew up with television, became acquainted with computers in the later part of their childhood, and quickly adapted to the internet. It can be said that the Y generation, who rapidly adapts to technological advancements, is open to innovations. Communication technologies have become an indispensable means of self-expression for Generation Y, and active use of mobile phones, social platforms, and the internet has led to a preference for communication and chatting in virtual environments rather than face-to-face communication (Acıhoğlu, 2017).

The rapid changes and developments in the technological field, along with the widespread use of communication networks, have made access to information easier, leading to significant transformations in many areas such as work and social life. Technological advancements and increased access to information have made it possible to be instantly informed about any event happening anywhere in the world, and this flow of information has provided opportunities for intercultural closeness and shared experiences. International interactions have increased thanks to technological opportunities and globalization, and with the removal of national boundaries, it has become possible to get to know different cultures. One of the significant areas where Generation Y has made a difference is the increasing participation of women in the workforce. The role of women has started to change from household management to working women. In this transformation, women have started to prefer flexible working practices to establish a work-life balance (Kaçar, 2019).

The expectation of more expertise in different fields from the Y generation and the expectation of using it in different fields have caused different expectations in the perception of education, knowledge, and skills in individuals. Employees are expected to start their business life in an educated way and to be able to do different jobs at the same time. In recruitment preferences, training and technology use in the workplace or special abilities have become the desired features. Career perception has also changed, and the importance of diploma has left its place to knowledge and skills and the rising career in the same field has lost its importance (Aytaç, 2005).

The perspective of the Y generation can be stated as "Living first, then work". It is important to understand the logic of events by questioning events for the Y generation, who grew up in the age of technology and communication and can quickly access the information they need. Therefore, the definition of "Y" (Why?) in English which means is used as the concept that best expresses them. Their working styles, expectations, and understanding of promotion are different from previous generations and they focus on project work. Changing jobs is more common than in previous generations. Generation Y, whose origins of motivation are different from previous generations, attach importance to matters such as approval, appreciation, obtaining development opportunities, flexibility in working hours, social support, and prestige, as well as income. The Y generation, who is supported financially and morally by their families, has expectations of being accepted and being a partner in the decision process. In the study conducted by Keleş (2011) on the motivation of Generation Y workers, it was found that providing flexibility in working conditions, receiving regular feedback from managers and colleagues, considering individual differences, and planning for future expectations are important factors. However, it was found that strict supervision creates a sense of insecurity, causes a decrease in motivation, and creates disturbance in the workplace. Having all kinds of technological opportunities that facilitate their work and are easily accessible is an important preference for Generation Y workers in the institution where they work. They are willing to work with different cultures and values in tolerance with the effect of globalization, and they enjoy diversity in their working environment. They do not avoid working extra hours towards their goals and are ambitious in completing their tasks (Kaçar, 2019).



# 2.5 GENERATION Z

Born and raised during the technology boom in the early 1990s, the latest generation to enter the business world is known for their unique preferences, generally libertarian and entrepreneurial attitude. They tend to prefer working in environments that offer flexibility, without strict hierarchical structures, and where work-life balance is prioritized. They also tend to value recognition and appreciation for their work. This generation, known as the Z generation or the "digital natives," is characterized by their ability to multitask, hence also referred to as the Multitask / M Generation. They seek socialization online and have even been referred to as "The New Silent Generation" due to their tendency towards isolation (Mercan, 2016). This generation can also be described as the "children of the technology age." According to McCrindle (2010), they come from smaller families, with the least number of siblings compared to previous generations. They are quick to understand and integrate technological changes into their daily lives and are more sensitive to social events, the environment, technological advancements, and all forms of inequality and injustice.

They demonstrate themselves with their behavior of completing their tasks quickly and meticulously (Tas et al., 2017). When it comes to purchasing or financial decision-making, instead of researching other resources, they prefer to make requests or ask questions to their "friends" and "followers" lists, making this generation more digitally crowded (Robertson Associates, 2013).

This generation, which has the capacity to think differently, can process many different pieces of information (Prensky, 2001). Described as more flexible, collaborative, value interaction and innovative from both a working and personal life perspective (Diaconu and Dutu, 2020), the worldview of the Z generation can be summarized in one sentence: "Work is just a part of life."

A study conducted by the human resources firm Randstad in 2016 with the participation of 4,000 representatives of the Y and Z generations showed that these young people place great importance on communication and collaboration in the workplace. According to the study, 39% of the participants prefer face-to-face communication with their colleagues. When asked about the type of colleague they want, 31% of young people said they prefer a colleague who works as hard as they do. It is also noted that the pursuit of happiness is extremely important for young employees due to the isolation and restrictions imposed in the past two years.

# 3. RESEARCH



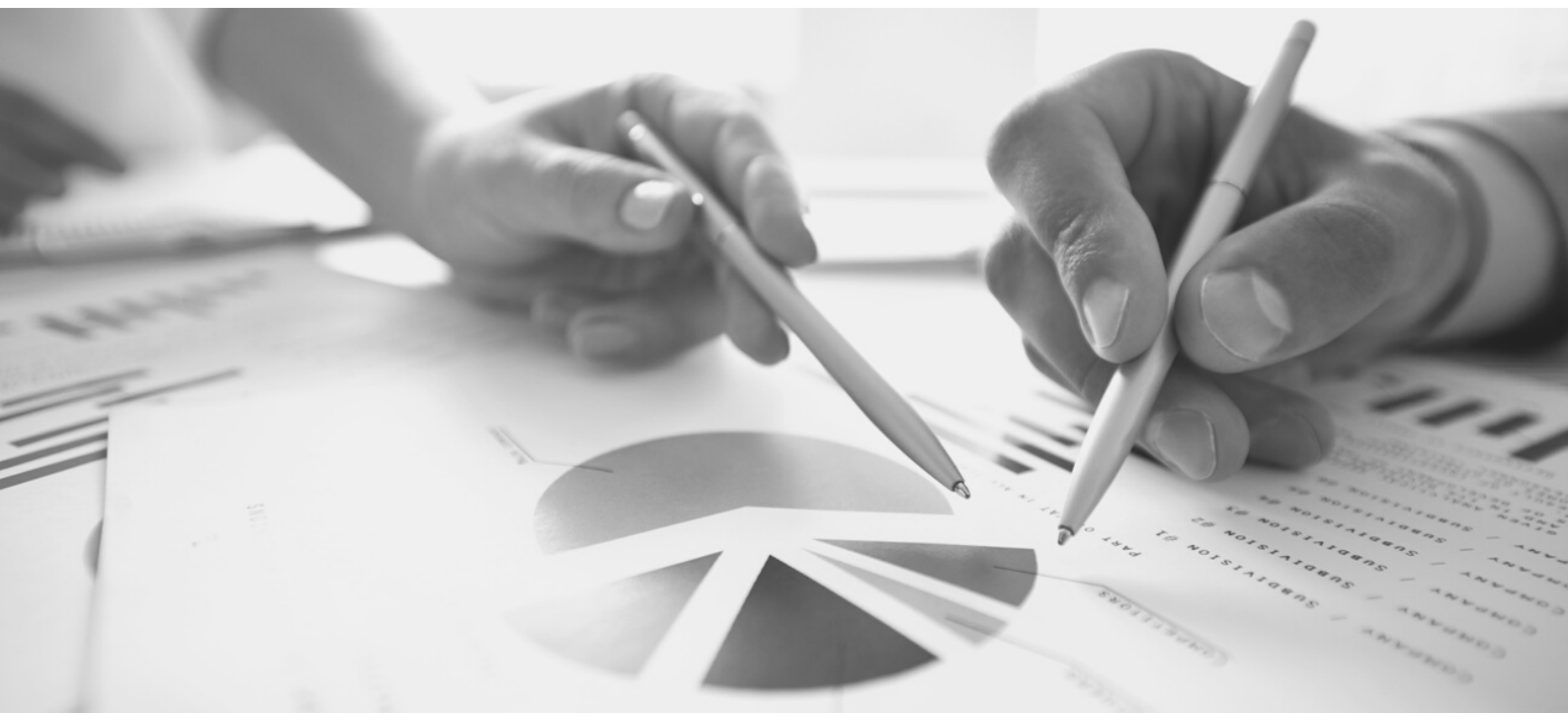
## 3.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Studies on generational differences are among the topics that are frequently researched both in the popular press and in scientific publications (Reeves & Oh, 2008). Each generation has different ways of perceiving life and different communication styles specific to the period in which they live, and this may reveal different working styles shaped by the perspectives of different generations working together in working life. From this point of view, this study aims to examine the opinions and expectations of the members of the Z generation, whose numbers are increasing in the business world, regarding working life. The study group of the research consists of Ata Holding employees and members of the Z generation who continue their education at Bahçeşehir University.

## 3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

Since this research aims to determine the perceptions of the Z generation individuals in their minds, the phenomenology method was used for this study. Phenomenology is both a philosophical movement and a qualitative research method (Gill, 2014) that aims to determine individuals' perceptions, experiences, and meanings attributed to a phenomenon.

Research data were analyzed by content analysis method. Because content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). First, semi-structured interview data was converted into written form. The sentences in the data were read and prepared for the coding process. In the research, the opinions of the participants were given by direct quotation. Based on the opinions of the participants and examining the literature, themes and codes were created. The encodings in all data were combined and compared. The extracted codes were reanalyzed in themselves and associated with sub and main themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002). Research data; the coding of the data was analyzed as determining the themes, combining the codes and themes, defining, and interpreting the findings (Can & Gündüz, 2016).



# 3.3 STUDY GROUP OF THE RESEARCH

A purposive sampling method was used to facilitate comparisons and analysis by identifying specific subgroups. The purpose of purposive sampling is not to adequately represent the population, but to consult with relevant and knowledgeable individuals on the subject being researched (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2007). In other words, it is the decision of the researcher on what to investigate based on their objectives.

Purposive sampling can be defined as a non-probability technique in which the researcher selects suitable samples to be included in the sample according to their research objectives, rather than taking the easy way out (Sığrı, 2021). The study groups were determined as follows in accordance with the purpose of this research:

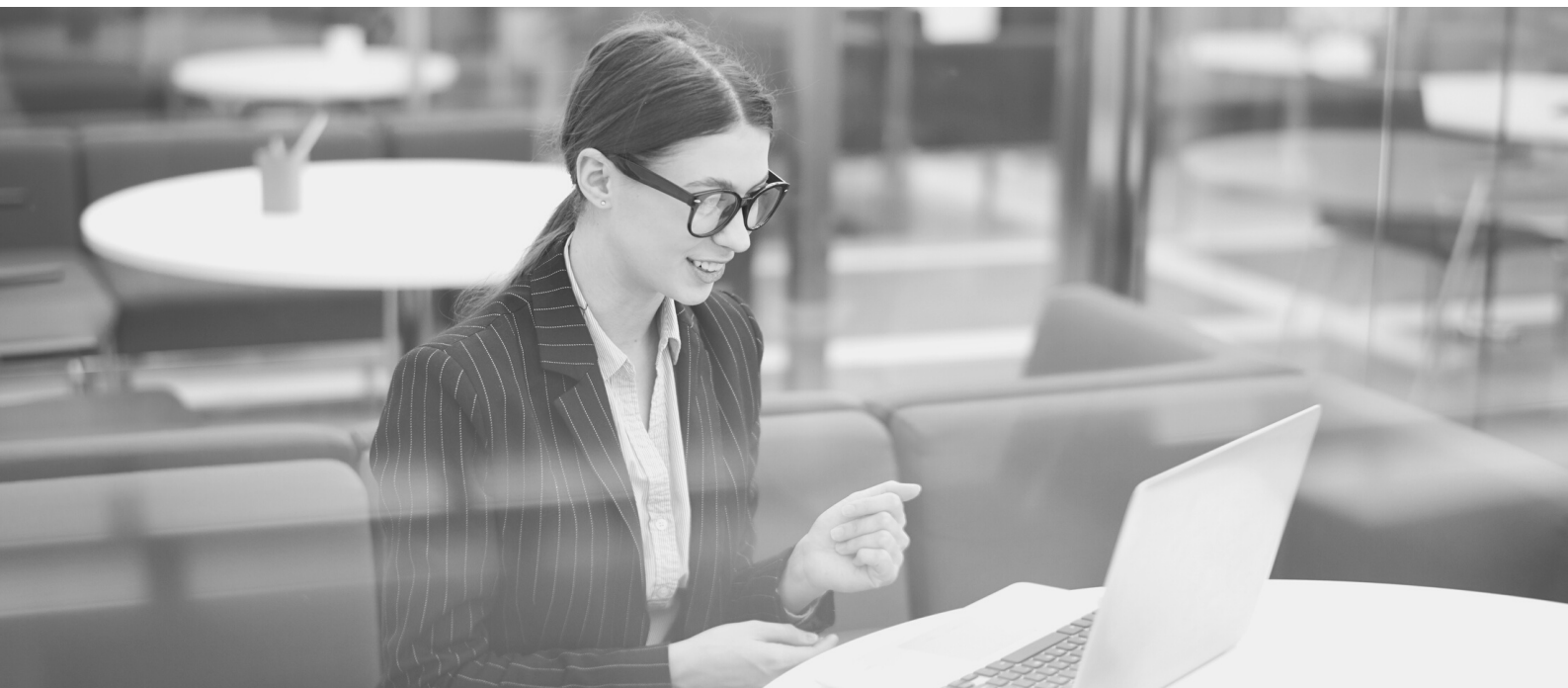
I. Study Group:	<i>Z generation employees <u>working within Ata Holding and its Group Companies.</u></i>
II. Study Group:	Z generation students who continue their education in different faculties at Bahçeşehir University and <u>have work experience.</u>
III a. Study Group:	Generation Z students who continue their education in different faculties at Bahçeşehir University and <u>have no work experience.</u>
III b. Study Group:	Generation Z students who continue their education in different faculties at Bahçeşehir University and <u>have work experience in Ata Holding and its Group Companies.</u>



The data collection process of the 1st Study Group of the research was carried out by Ata Holding and Group Companies. Semi-structured interview questions directed to the I. Study group are as follows:

1. How would you describe working life?
2. What is an ideal working environment for you?
3. What does work friendship mean to you?
4. What do you think are the characteristics of a successful manager?
5. What do you think are the issues that the business world should focus on in the future?
6. What are your suggestions for young people at the beginning of their careers in choosing a workplace?

The data collection process of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th study groups of the research was carried out by Bahçeşehir University CO-OP Unit. In the selection of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th study groups, Bahçeşehir University students were contacted via e-mail and informed about the research purpose and process, and face-to-face interviews were requested with students who can be classified as Z generation who are willing to participate in the research. In the face-to-face interviews, the students were informed about the purpose and process of the research, and the questions were answered. The students who decided to participate in the study were sent a participant consent form and their approval signatures were obtained.



The demographic information of the students in the 2nd and 3rd study groups is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: 2. Features of the Study Group*

STUDENT	DEPARTMENT	YEAR
D1.	Industrial Engineering	4
G.	Industrial Engineering	3
M.	International Trade	4
S1	Software Engineering	4
S2	Political Science and International Relations	4



Table 2: 3. Features of the Study Group

STUDENT	DEPARTMENT	YEAR
E.	Artificial Intelligence Engineering	3
B.	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	4
H1.	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	3
H2.	Economy	3
D2.	Industrial Engineering	3

In the study, it was found appropriate to use an interview form to investigate the thoughts and expectations of the Z generation about work life in depth. Before the research, 7 basic open-ended questions were prepared, and an interview form was created. Expert opinions were taken from the project consultant to ensure the validity of the interview form. The interview questions, which were finalized in line with expert opinions, are listed below.

II. and III. The semi-structured interview questions directed to the study group are as follows:

1. What does working life mean to you?
2. What is your post-graduation plan?
3. What would an ideal working environment be like?
4. What does work friendship mean to you?

5. What kind of manager would you like to work with?

6. Full-time office work, full-time home (online) work, hybrid work (both at home and at the office), which would you prefer, could you share with the reasons?

7. As young people who will participate in the working life, what do you think are the issues that the business world and managers should focus on?

Appointments were made from the students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the research, and 1-hour one-to-one interviews were organized face-to-face. In these interviews, a semi-structured interview was conducted using a 6-question form. With the semi-structured interview, the same questions were administered to the students, and the opportunity for data analysis and comparison was captured. With the application of the interview form, detailed information about the feelings, thoughts or experiences of the individuals interviewed was collected by using the questions prepared by the researcher before.

## 3.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

During the research process, the data obtained in semi-structured interviews were converted into written form. The sentences in the data were read in different environments by the researchers conducting the research and prepared for the coding process. Based on the opinions of the participants and examining the literature, themes and codes were created by the researchers. Then, all the coding's obtained from the data were combined and compared. The extracted codes were reanalyzed in themselves and associated with sub and main themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002). Research data; the coding of the data was analyzed as determining the themes, combining the codes and themes, defining, and interpreting the findings (Can & Gündüz, 2016). In the research, the opinions of the participants were given by direct quotation.

# TABLE 3: 29.04. II. DATED 2022. AND III. WORKING GROUP THEMES

Study Group	The Meaning Of Work Life	Post Graduation Goal	Expectation From The Institution	The Meaning Of Study Fellowship	The Ideal Manager	Ideal Work Environment	What Should Business Focus On?
II. Study Group People Have Work Experience	Formality	Seeking a Career Abroad	Non-Hierarchical Structure	Socialization	Open to Contact	Employee-Initiative Hybrid	Economic Conditions
	Experience	Self-Employment Research	Work- Life balance	Task Sharing	Value		Positive Corporate Climate
	Problem Solving		Trust-Based Corporate Climate	Emotion Sharing	Listening		Emotional Literacy
	Learning		Entertaining Offices		Solution Oriented		Learning-Oriented Corporate Climate.
	Financial Gain				Sincere		Agile HR Practices

# TABLE 3: 29.04. III. DATED 2022. AND III. WORKING GROUP THEMES

Study Group	The Meaning Of Work Life	Post Graduation Goal	Expectation From The Institution	The Meaning Of Study Fellowship	The Ideal Manager	Ideal Work Environment	What Should Business Focus On?
III a. Study Group Before Internship Experience		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking a Career Abroad</li> <li>Institution With Brand Value</li> <li>Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Satisfaction</li> <li>Corporate Image</li> <li>Dress-Code Flexibility</li> <li>Entertaining Offices</li> <li>Self-Improvement</li> <li>Comfortable Work Environment</li> <li>Value To The Employee</li> </ul>	Socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to Contact</li> <li>Accessible</li> <li>Disciplined</li> <li>Trustworthy</li> </ul>	Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Limits</li> <li>Respect For Private Life</li> </ul>

# TABLE 4: THEMES OF WORKING

## GROUP I DATED 19.08.2022

Study Group	The Meaning Of Work Life	Post Graduation Goal	Expectation From The Institution	The Meaning Of Study Fellowship	The Ideal Manager	Ideal Work Environment	What Should Business Focus On?
Study Group I ATA Holding and its Group Companies Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning</li> <li>Producing</li> <li>Responsibility</li> <li>Promotion</li> <li>Integrated With Social Life</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Opportunities</li> <li>Value Their Opinion</li> <li>Learning From Experience</li> <li>Socialization</li> <li>Non-Hierarchical Structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust-Based Communication</li> <li>Motivation</li> <li>Support</li> <li>Rapport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open To Communication</li> <li>Listener</li> <li>Trustworthy</li> <li>Knowledgeable</li> <li>Consistent</li> <li>Yönlendiren</li> </ul>	Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology</li> <li>Transparent Management</li> <li>Justice</li> <li>Social Responsibility</li> </ul>

# TABLE 5: THEMES OF WORKING

## GROUP IIB DATED 19.08.2022

Study Group	The Meaning Of Work Life	Post Graduation Goal	Expectation From The Institution	The Meaning Of Study Fellowship	The Ideal Manager	Ideal Work Environment	What Should Business Focus On?
III b. Study group Post Internship Experience	Learning	Seeking A Career Abroad	Development Opportunities	Communication	Listener	Hybrid	Sustainability
	Producing	A Global Institution	Promotion Opportunities	Socialization	Learner		Social Gender Equality
	Financial Gain		Appraisal	Solidarity	Fair		Employee Competencies
	Regular Life		Fair And Transparent Management	Getting Feedback	Appreciative		Adapting To The Current Era
			Sincerity	Collective Problem Solving	Problem Solver		

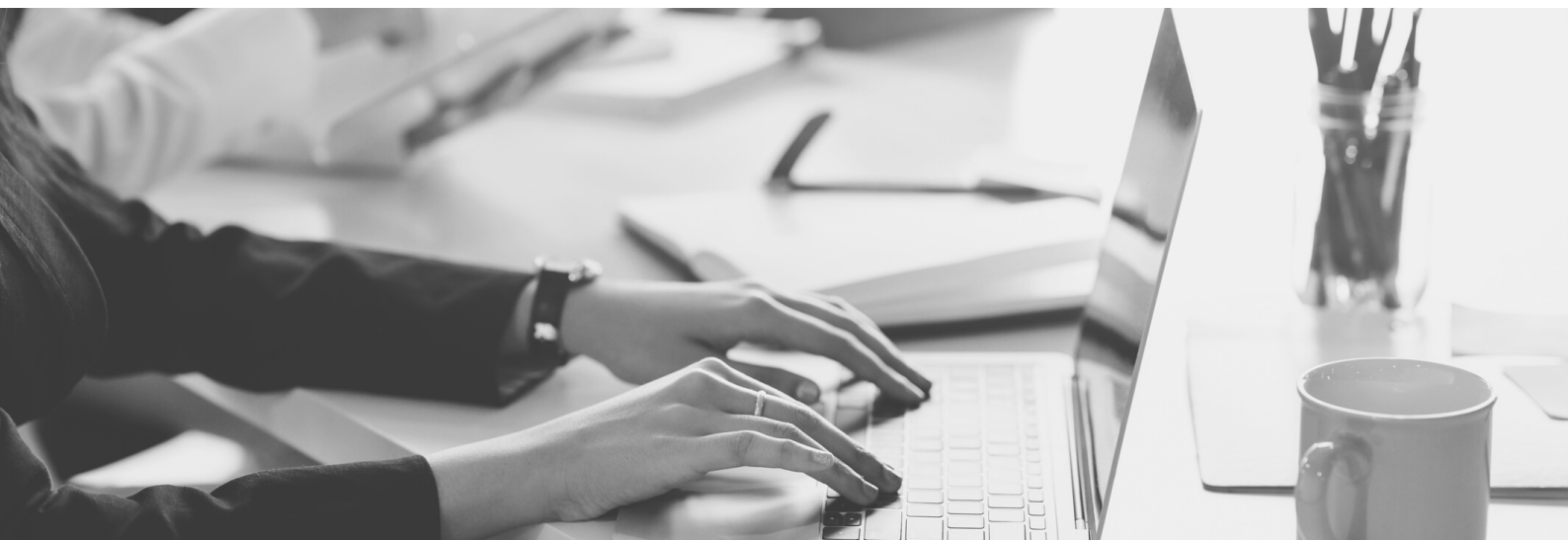


# I- FINDINGS REGARDING WORK LIFE

It is understood that the Z generation individuals, who were raised with the intense interest of their parents, perceive their working lives as learning and productive environments that will constantly improve themselves and always move forward.

Participant B expressed the meaning of work with their life, rather than just a means to earn money, saying

“Actually, work has become a part of my life rather than just a tool to earn money. Now, I see my profession not just as a means but as a purpose for myself.” However, it can also be stated that individuals from Generation Z have expectations regarding the rules of work-life balance. Participant G's views on this subject can be expressed as "You will work throughout your life anyway and you don't need to work 24/7. Your personal life is being taken away this time. Limits need to be drawn. This is very important.”



Participant M

“Defines work as "a sum of problems". "They say that there is no such thing as if I solve this one problem, I will be relieved because there is always a problem.”



S1 defines it as follows:

"At school, you just receive information and move on. However, the work process is not like that. They give you something and then you receive it. You transform it like a machine and then give it back. You put in effort there. It feels like a new daycare to me. Like, I'm still a novice there even though I'm receiving a different kind of education. I started a new daycare and I'm adjusting to a new place. It's not like school, to be honest. I'm given new toys and I'm looking at the process with the mindset of learning how to play with them."

E. emphasizes the importance of being happy in business life.

"I don't mean to say I'm going to work again, since when we all start working, our life will be our life at work. I really want to feel that I can be happy when I go there and that the people, I work with value me and value my knowledge. I would love to have an environment where we can contribute something to each other. The fact that I want to start my own business also comes from the fact that I don't like too many manager-employee relationships. I don't like it very much."

Emphasizing the necessity of professional communication in working life, the participants expressed their opinions on this subject as Participant D. **"We can maintain our professional borders, everyone does not have to love each other anyway"**, Participant H. **"It is not very healthy for human life to be purely work. That's why these little breaks are important. But when we go back to work, they interrupt me while I'm doing my job and try to chat with me or say something about themselves or show me a photo of their cat and dog, obviously unprofessional, and it bothers me as well."**

# II- FINDINGS

## REGARDING THE IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

It can be stated that they prefer to make their own decisions both in their social and working lives and they do not like hierarchy and strict rules in the working environment. The fact that the conditions they are in have provided personalization in their preferences for many areas may also lead to the search for specific management styles. They want their institutions to be able to stretch, when necessary, just as they can stretch themselves.

Participant S1. S/he expresses her/his opinion on this subject as "I don't think all order and rules should be abolished, but flexibility should be allowed".

Valuing the employee can be expressed as another element among the expectations of the Z generation individuals.

Participant E. expressed her/his views on this subject: "When I say my expectations from the institution, I always think of the value that the institution gives to its employees."

While participant M. continues "We value people." sentence... it doesn't affect me. So, anyone can say that anyone can put it on their website. It doesn't affect me if he wrote it on the website or in that policy. I really need to see an example of this, you must feel it."

Participant E. said, "Having the right to have a voice, evaluating, and caring for my ideas really motivates me. During my internship, I was given the right to speak at every meeting. It was nice for me to have something like that and to be treated like that as a trainee." stressed the importance of receiving their opinions and being valued in the working environment.

Another element emphasized by the Z generation regarding the ideal working environment is respectful communication.

Regarding the internship experience, participant D1 said,

“They kept me informed of the whole process and this was valuable for me because they did not humiliate me in any way, even though I was gone for two days, and I was going to do my internship for a very short time. This was important to me. I felt respected.”



Participant S1 said,

“It seems unnecessary to me to stay in a place where we are not happy, no matter what is given in return. I think the fulfillment of a person's life is through happiness. In other words, you are only the moments when you are happy in your life. Now, I don't think it makes much sense to be in a company just to earn money or just to gain work experience. Since I don't feel happy, I am also questioning the time I was there.”

It can be stated that they do not favor a steep hierarchical structure and formal subordinate relationship.

Participant G.:

“I don't know if it's called a caste system today, but there is a lot of relationship between superior and inferior. There is no need for such a thing. After all, we are all a team, and we do business together. We need to work together to make what we do sustainable. It doesn't matter if you're the manager or I'm a trainee. I'm putting something in there too. And you also put something there. I respect you, but then you must respect me as well.”

D. expresses his views as follows:

“Obviously, there should be a respectful environment. I won't be humiliated for being ignorant, and an environment where someone can at least volunteer to teach me something makes me happier when I'm just starting out. I don't feel unwanted there. Other than that, I want to be happy. When I get up for work every morning, I don't want to think about whether I'm going to work again or keep quitting work in my mind.” Participants, who were observed to be aware of different parameters regarding the working environment, commented on this issue by Participant H.: “We are now a different generation and I think we are aware of everything. So, we are aware of each other.”

expression is an example.



# III- FINDINGS

## REGARDING THE IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Gen Z individuals who prefer open communication stated that they find it productive to work together physically.

Participant M. expressed his thoughts on this subject: "Human want to see a human. I want to look at the same computer and have a real interaction, maybe like this, sensually. Totally remote working is driving people away. For example, we encountered a situation where we learned that a colleague was a painter fifteen months after we started working. So, this is something completely different."

However, it should be added that the application of flexibility in face-to-face work is especially emphasized.

Participant S1 "For example You will come this day." should not be a case. Let Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday be put in front of me, and I will make my choice accordingly." Participant H. said, "I do not want the work to be online because it is very inefficient, but everyone lives far away. Such an occasional forewarning, such as saying "Is it okay if I work remotely today?" should be a right." He stated that it should be a flexible application in the form.

D2 is: "Hybrid is the best against fully online or physical. e.g., By saying that 3 days of office and 2 days of working from home is ideal, there is a feeling of missing something completely online, it is missing the dynamics within the team- it cannot adapt, it is completely unnecessary physically, while there are things that can be done from home."

In general, it was clearly seen that the participants preferred the hybrid model as the way of working. It is noteworthy that almost all participants are completely against working online and state that they would not prefer it. 3 days at work and 2 days remote work is defined as ideal. Especially those in the group with work experience stated that they prefer flexible working not only in terms of time but also in space, and that they prefer to work from different locations of the company-satellite campuses on some days. In addition, almost all the participants stated that the days they will work in the company are not dictated and the flexibility to choose these days should be recognized.

# IV- FINDINGS REGARDING WORK FRIENDSHIP



It was determined that the participants focused on trust, taking responsibility, open communication and professional attitudes and behaviors in relation to co-workers. Regarding this, Participant E. states “.. Although my ideas do not align, and I do not like the person, I should be able to ask my questions to her/him when necessary.”

While Participant H. interpreting as “The disruption of one affects the other. Everyone plays small roles, but in that environment of trust, the work of one seriously affects the other. That's why it's so important for colleagues to trust each other. I think the ideal work environment is where people in the whole unit take their responsibilities because someone else neglecting their own work can affect my work as well.”

Participant B1 expressed their thoughts as followed “I also think that professionalism should be preserved somewhere. But of course, we are not robots, after all, we should be able to do social activities as a team and sit and chat with each other.”

S1, on the other hand, focuses on the fact that everyone should does their job well, and gives his/her opinion on this issue; “She/he is throwing it at someone. The person who throws it sends it to someone else. When it's such a chaotic process, I feel very tired, so I feel like I've been beaten without realizing it. I don't like this part of throwing work at co-workers.” stated as.

# V- FINDINGS ON IDEAL MANAGERIAL ATTITUDE

It is seen that the attitudes and behaviors of the manager are very important for the Z generation. As a matter of fact, participant M. expressed his/her opinion on this subject with the phrase "You choose your manager, not the company", while participant G. "It is very important to be a people-oriented manager." expressed as.

The views of the Z generation individuals participating in the study on the ideal managerial attitude can be listed as listening to their ideas, valuing, development-oriented, giving feedback and being open to communication.

Participant S. "I prefer to talk to my manager directly. This not only makes the business process more effective, but you can express yourself, that is, you can establish the communication yourself." expressed his/her expectation of working with a manager with whom he/she can communicate comfortably.





# VII – FUTURE FINDINGS

Technology and the internet are indispensable elements for the Z generation, and the freedom to connect to the internet and use technological devices as they wish in their working life is one of the issues they seek. For this reason, the subject of monitoring and adapting technological developments is one of the issues that should be focused on for the future in working life.

In addition, awareness of social justice and social events is very important for Generation Z individuals who frequently experience the effects of natural disasters, attacks, terrorist incidents, economic problems, and political tensions.

Participant H. expressed his views on this subject:

“I think that companies should attach great importance to gender equality. There is also a new concept. Sustainability concept. I think it is very important for companies to embrace sustainability.”

expressed in sentences.

It is understood that the findings of Tari (2010) regarding the environmental protection and knowledge values of the Z generation are important for them (Desai & Lele, 2017) and the findings obtained in this research. From this point of view, it can be stated that the Z generation individuals expect sensitivity towards social issues in their working life in the future.



# EVALUATING THE FINDINGS



It can be stated that they expect to be valued the most in business life, to be asked for their opinions and to be respected. Although they are not completely against the hierarchy, it can be said that in the business environment, especially the managers expect the language of communication to be constructive and courteous, not dictating and domineering.

It is seen that they give importance to sharing and friendships in the work environment,

therefore they believe in the benefit of post-work social sharing-collaboration by staying in a certain professionalism.

They expect their workplaces to attach importance to concepts such as sustainability and gender equality and to reflect this not only in their discourse but also in their practices.

They look at whether concepts such as human value, employee value, etc., are in real practice, not slogans, and give importance to whether sustainability studies are published as an annual report.

They prefer the workplace environment to be professional yet fun. In the beginning, they find orientation training necessary and useful. They see monotony as a great threat by doing the same job all the time and believe that this can be overcome with in-house projects and entrepreneurship. Some of them state that they would prefer to progress on their own initiative after work experience. Almost all of them define opportunities abroad and working abroad as their top priority ideal target. Hence, almost all of them prefer the company they will work with to be a global company and to offer opportunities abroad.

They believe that the qualifications listed at the beginning of the job and announced in the advertisements do not reflect the truth, and that the tasks given after starting the job/internship are not related to the specified qualifications. They expect the jobs given during the internship to be jobs that will contribute to the team and reflect their performance, just like the employees. They find it motivating to be included in all processes and to be treated like employees during the internship.

They expect to receive feedback on their performance every 3 or 6 months and to update all their processes, including their job descriptions, taking this feedback into account. They criticize the fact that in the current order, feedback is received after a very long time and that business processes continue without any updates afterwards. By evaluating their performance, they expect the promotion period to be around 1-2 years.

They also state that they do not find it meaningful to work in the same company for a long time, such as 10-15 years.

They see the talent wars between the HRs of the companies as an important factor in the frequent job changes of young employees. They state that they can be easily reached from LinkedIn, so that even a satisfied employee who loves his job can switch to another company with a more attractive offer. They find the salary important, but many emphasize that they will not change jobs just for the salary. Doing your job with love and being happy at work are also stated to be as important factors as salaries.

It was observed that there were differences between the pre-internship and post-internship interviews in the perspectives of the group who had no internship experience. All participants stated that they spent their time in the company where they did their internship very well, that they had a concrete work experience by being included in the processes, and that their managers and other employees provided serious support to the processes of learning and gaining experience. They emphasized that there is a mixed generation distribution from the upper generations in addition to their close generations in the environments where they work, which is beneficial for the project. They stated that some of the concepts that were at the forefront of their thoughts before the internship changed after the experience. For example, some of the participants, who thought only about certain brands to work and expressed in the interview, stated that their ideas changed afterward and that they saw that they could happily work in corporate companies that they had no idea about, by meeting their expectations.

As a work environment, they have clearly stated that they do not want to work completely online, preferring hybrid and flexible working style. They also demand that office-remote working days be in a flexible model so that they can make their own choices. In the office environment, they emphasize that the managers can be in a separate place without being disconnected, but the team works more beneficially in the open office environment. Also time and space flexibility is also among their expectations.

# CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

1. It is clearly seen that the Z generation young people expect to be valued the most in their business life, to be listened to and their ideas to be valued and reflected in their business processes. On the other hand, they express that they expect communication from their managers and leaders in a sharing and positive language, not dictating, and they believe in equality in labor.
2. It has been determined that they expect their work environment to be professional as well as fun, and to be happy at work.
3. It has been determined that they prefer to work in a hybrid model where employee preference is also considered.
4. The participants, who stated that they did not want to be in a hierarchical structure that would make them feel worthless, while respecting experience and hierarchy, stated that their managers did not have any superiority and they saw them as human/employee like themselves.
5. As it can be understood from the findings of the research, meeting the expectations of young generations from business life will be possible with serious transformations in both understanding and structure, especially in human resources approaches. It is recommended that human resources processes in institutions be updated by taking advantage of employee feedback from orientation, performance evaluation, promotion periods to motivation tools. For example, it would be an approach that is compatible with the new generation's view of business life, accepting it as normal by reducing the ideal retention-connection period to 2-3 years in the company and designing the systems accordingly. The dynamics in the business world will inevitably continue to change as younger generations see business life as a process where they take what they want from different modules (even with more than one module at the same time) rather than a long journey to be continued in a single pattern with career steps. Since it will become increasingly common for them to continue their working life with more than one work module at the same time, HR approaches and legislative arrangements that allow freelance business models are recommended.

6. It can be suggested that structuring a corporate career center in human resources units will be one of the transformations in line with the expectations of Generation Z. As a matter of fact, in the researchers conducted on the great wave of resignation after the pandemic, the failure to meet and present the career expectations of young talents has emerged as the biggest factor besides the salary. At a time when work-life balance is questioned by all generations after the pandemic, the biggest expectation of the Z generation is to be listened to and valued at the workplace, and in parallel with this, extremely concrete goals in modules without extending to very long terms and a career planning accordingly. In the current HR structures, it is not possible to meet these expectations by managing them, and a more holistic approach and structuring is required within the HR units where functions are carried out from a single source but separately. If this is a holistic approach and structure, a Career Center-like structure can be established. The demand of the Z generation will be possible with the "Career Counselors" positions to be formed within the existing HR structures, with the expectation of establishing one-to-one care-communication and being listened to-value based on their family and upbringing. It can be stated that one-to-one interviews with career counselors will not only add value to the employee, but also contribute to the roadmap of the employee's career planning in coordination with other relevant HR units and unit managers.

7. In this period when companies find and select talents, Z generation also emphasizes importance to choosing the institution they will work for by researching. The importance that institutions attach to social issues such as the environment, sustainability and gender equality determines their decisions regarding the institutions they want to work with. However, they emphasize that concrete data and shares of institutions are distinguished rather than campaigns with slogans. For this reason, it is thought that it will be an important step for institutions to plan and implement annual sustainability activities at international scale and standards to attract young talents.



8. Brand awareness and perception is an important factor in the workplace preference of Generation Z. Especially in multi-company structures with Holding-Group structuring and hosting many sub-brands, employer brand gains more and more importance and makes it necessary to design special programs to reach young talents. It is recommended to plan/increase studies for employer branding.

9. All study groups participating in the research evaluated work life as a development and learning environment. They emphasized that they want to continue learning from both their colleagues and their managers. From this point of view, it is recommended to reevaluate the training activities of the human resources department according to current expectations and to organize a new structure such as "ATA Academy". While creating the academy structure, it will not only be a structure like the classical company-corporate academy existing in many companies that plan and provide training but will also be supported by career counselors in a model like the ATA Career Center structure/understanding, as stated in the above articles, and will handle all career processes of the employee in a holistic manner. It will be an up-to-date model compatible with the expectations of the new generation. In addition, it will be beneficial in terms of cost-effectiveness that the training programs and modules to be designed while creating the Academy contents are created by assuming and accepting that the company-institutional commitment/adhesion of the new generation will be 2-3 years, as stated above.

Based on the changing behaviors and expectations of young generations in business life, intergenerational communication, and the reflections of this communication on the business environment and company culture will continue to maintain its importance on the agenda. Positive and good management of this communication will be possible by updating the company culture, management-leadership methods, and approaches to human resources in a way that matches the findings of the research.



It has been determined that the expectations of Ata Holding Z generation employees and Bahçeşehir University Z generation students from business life are largely parallel. There are partial differences since the working and career processes of an institution have started (for example, "promotion" among the expectations from work life, which is not very common in students) is seen in the theme tables.

The findings and results obtained because of the analysis of the in-depth interviews with the participants in the qualitative research are highly compatible with the literature and the results of the survey type research with large participation conducted by international research firms on a global scale. Due to the longitudinal nature of the research, it is possible to continue the research in the coming periods with the same questions and at regular intervals as the participants start work life and get older. Thus, it will be possible to determine what kind of differences the expectations of the Z generation from working life will show after their studentship, as their living conditions and responsibilities change (for example, leaving their families and taking on different responsibilities, etc.).

However, the fact that the effects of age, historical process and cohort variables associated with the term "generation" in generational studies are not clearly differentiated on individuals prevent the generalization of research findings. Because the age variable can be considered as the differences arising from the maturation of the individual or changes in the life stages, the historical process variable as the differences arising from the events experienced in certain periods and the cohort variable as the differences arising from the communities formed by the people who have experienced similar problems and experiences.

The characteristics of the generations are different, but Generation Z is the first generation to really grow up with technology, and perhaps for this reason, they can be expected to be more comfortable and prone to digitalization. Although it is important to note that the research findings in the literature are based on averages, not all members of Generation Z may show similar characteristics in generalizations (Philip & Garcia, 2013; Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Twenge, 2017). From this point of view, the findings obtained in this study are limited to the study groups of the research and do not show the general result. It is recommended to conduct comparative studies with different study groups on the subject in the future.

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# ANNEX 1

## QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

- Being biased towards a sector that one does not find appealing, but the prejudice changes when experienced
- Orientation training is important, learning while having fun
- Interest in the company's history and culture
- Learning on-the-job in a master-apprentice style at the first entry
- Business life is different from school life.
- Hierarchical structures may seem friendly, but they are not sincere in a vertical structure.
- Horizontal hierarchy allows for intimacy among employees of the same age group.
- There should be respect for higher positions, but they should not be arrogant either.
- There should be equality in labor.
- Doing the same job continuously in corporate life causes monotony.
- Getting bored of routine tasks.
- Encouraging corporate entrepreneurship and supporting it.
- The ideal work environment should be redesigned.
- The physical space should be motivating.
- Celebrating special occasions is motivating.
- Short breaks during work should include non-work-related conversations.
- Discomfort with strict rules.
- Tracking employees digitally or through other methods is uncomfortable, causing stress and pressure.
- Performance monitoring with an open screen is very uncomfortable, a source of fear.
- Managers should be sincere in communication, making their role clear but with boundaries.
- Addressing managers as "Mr." or "Ms." is normal.
- A good manager should ask for the team's opinions.
- If necessary, work should be renewed according to employee feedback.
- Generation Z is underestimated in the workplace.
- The competencies listed in job postings are too ordinary and randomly written, and the given tasks are not related to those competencies.
- They are willing to develop themselves and try.
- The initial tasks given during internships are disappointing and demotivating.
- Interns are given low-level tasks that are below their competencies.

- Internship programs should have richer content.
- They prefer changing and evolving tasks rather than repetitive processes.
- Work should also be fun.
- A hybrid work model is the best, combining online and physical work. For example, working in the office for 3 days and from home for 2 days is ideal.
- Feeling like missing out on something completely online, having trouble adapting to team dynamics, while completely physical is unnecessary when there are things that can be done from home.
- In a hybrid system, they want to choose how office-home days will be - flexibility.
- Office days should be together as a team.
- There may be work outside working hours online, depending on the industry/situation.
- Work-life balance should be flexible.
- 1 year is ideal for promotions/performance evaluation, should not be longer.
- Job change criteria is not only about salary, but also important factors like team, liking the job, and adaptation.
- The desire for a job change is more related to being bored than salary. If they get bored, they will change.
- Happiness is important in the workplace.
- There should be a system in place; otherwise, even if the manager is good, employees won't be happy.
- Having to do other people's work or take on additional tasks can be frustrating.
- Even negative experiences can provide valuable learning opportunities.
- Negative communication and gossip within the organization can be demotivating.
- Being happy is important to do a good job.
- Doing the same task repeatedly and being in the same cycle can be exhausting.
- Project-based work instead of routine and constant work is preferred.
- Project-based work is more instructive and broadens the vision.
- The company should value its employees.
- Hybrid preference for both home and office, 3 days' work-2 days office
- The online part should be made more efficient in hybrid work
- Going to the office for sharing with teammates-office days should be common
- Ideas should be valued and important, and opinions should be asked
- Everyone should be seen as independent and equal, regardless of rank
- The manager should be people-oriented
- The manager should be up-to-date and catch up with current trends
- The superior-subordinate relationship should not be excessive and rigid
- There should be respect for employees as well as for the manager, and there should be no discrimination
- What ties people to the company: communication with the manager, shared ideas with the team, and being asked for their opinion
- There should be a fair compensation for the work done
- Preference to work in a global company, and working abroad is a plus

- Work-life balance should not be disrupted in online work, there should be boundaries
- Without employees, there can be no company - people-oriented management. Motivation and happiness are important
- Not only time but also the workplace should be flexible - satellite office
- Corporate entrepreneurship is important
- The company should follow the current trends
- Z generation consumes everything very quickly, is impatient, easily bored, and has a desire to become CEO quickly.
- The idea of doing the same job during specific hours and constantly working can be scary, but the system is designed this way.
- An energetic and fun office environment is important.
- Promotion period should not be too long, minimum 1 year is ideal.
- Discipline is important, and company policies can provide guidance while also enforcing discipline.
- Work experience is a complementary factor for learning.
- Human factors and emotions are important in the workplace.
- They see problems as a sum and solution, and problem-solving skills are crucial.
- The company's scale affects its culture.
- Prejudice towards a company or sector can be overcome through experience.
- They want to meet and learn about as many companies as possible. They see interviews not only as an opportunity for the company to choose them, but also as a chance for them to choose the right company for themselves.
- Data-driven decision making is important.
- Being completely online can distance people.
- The convenience of online does not mean that it is the ideal way of working.
- He learned 15 months later that his colleague was a painter. (Negative side of working online)
- Hybrid work is ideal, 3 days office-2 days home
- Office days should be as a team
- Not only time but also space should be flexible-cheerleader offices-Multidimensional flexible working
- People want to see people
- Knowing and interacting with each other within the team is an important human-robot difference here.
- Human touch-interaction is important in managerial positions. Technical positions are more job-oriented
- Human interaction is related to business processes rather than personal preference and business processes are decisive.
- The manager must communicate positively and constructively, the style is important, sincere, and touching the employee.
- Emotions cannot be conveyed in written digital communication
- Motivation is twofold: the employee feels that he adds value and that he feels valued.
- Commitment to the institution is possible with motivation, besides, the work of the company adds value to the lives of people and the work is meaningful.

- Even if the work is routine, it should be given tasks-tasks that will add value from time to time.
- Company values should not be a marketing tactic, they should be concrete and reciprocated.
- Receiving-verification of company references in other employees when entering the job
- At first, special programs should be implemented, and opportunities should be offered.
- Generation Z has their eyes on the outside – always on the other company
- The talent wars and competition of companies-HRs negatively affect and fuel retention.
- Another company can offer more than a good opportunity, and they can easily reach the island.
- For promotion, the company's offers to its employees should be constantly updated, the expectations when starting a job can change after 1 year, the company should update these expectations.
- Firms need to update the definition and criteria of their promotion values, for example, the remaining 2 years, not 5 years, should be adhered.
- One of the reasons for the Z generation not to hold on is the company HRs.
- All organizational structure and processes should be flexible and constantly updated.
- Prefers to continue his career abroad
- First corporate life experience, then entrepreneurship
- Learning by hovering at first
- Generation gap should be turned into an advantage, learning from the upper generation
- Respect for experience, respect for professionalism
- Generation Z approaches the problem instantly, passes when it is solved, upper generations focus on the cause
- Generation Z is the consumer generation, focused on consuming, not repairing
- It also consumes emotions-happiness and sadness
- Generation Z speed generation
- Reason: domestic behavior patterns, upbringing style of families, presenting ready for comfort, lifting when dropped. Don't expect the same things at work.
- Generation Z is accustomed to comfort and tends to quit when bored
- Internship is like a kindergarten
- He is happy when he spends effort in business life
- School is stagnant and boring; work life is dynamic and productive – giving back
- It is not starting the day at 12:00, it means averaging the day-it should start early
- Prefers hybrid work, completely against online. Belonging does not develop
- There should be sharing outside of work, only business is talked about online
- Ideally 3 days office-2 days away from home
- Generation Z prefer flexibility over the rule. Office/home plan of days should be left to the employee
- Rule means restriction means imposition, obligatory things reduce motivation

- Group work should also be flexible, flexibility should be given to the group
- Generation Z is placed at the center of life, the sense of self in the center
- Their opinions should be asked at work
- The business area should be decided by experience.
- His preference is to work in a global company, to go abroad. Effort has no monetary value here.
- Against strict hierarchy and subordinate relations
- Manager should be friendly, understanding, not autocrat
- Generation Z expects positive communication from the manager, if I am not happy at work, I will not stay.
- Money is not a priority, being happy is important
- Doesn't like when teammates don't do their own work and throw it on themselves.
- Their expectations from the job are flexibility, respect, and love in general, Smiling, solution-oriented
- A good manager is someone who can solve a problem with the least number of circles.
- Sub-unit managers should also try to establish belonging.
- The manager should create a sense of belonging by taking work and private life to the intersection cluster, for example, food, social activities, etc.
- Belonging cannot be achieved when online
- Belonging is not just about meeting the expectations of the employee; the employee should feel that the company is doing something for the future.
- Vertical hierarchy should not be rigid, there should be communication, hierarchy should be reduced
- Generation Z does not want a strict hierarchical structure, it is tiring, it is a waste of time
- Hierarchy sometimes violates personal privacy, for example, a mistake is learned many levels more in between
- Generation Z is the speed and consumption generation
- Emotionality is important but neglected in the workplace
- Generation Z, who consumes everything fast, also consumes emotions immediately
- Generation Z merges with the company very quickly, enters with a new energy, exploits the happiness there and leaves. This happens because he gets the entertainment he needs to get, then it gets monotonous, and when nothing different is offered, the business process doesn't really matter - the leaving process begins.
- Generation Z thinks of today, not yesterday or tomorrow
- 5 years is too long for promotion, feedback should be 6 months-1 year
- The promotion system should not be robotized, flexible and personalized
- It is not nice to try to standardize everything in the workplace
- Even 1 year late for performance evaluations, it should be more periodic Emotional needs of employees should not be neglected in the workplace.
- There should be discipline in work life.



- There should be a work-life balance on weekends.
- Promotion should take 1-2 years.
- High sense of belonging.
- Z generation is hard to please and wants everything to be perfect, which is why they frequently change jobs.
- Continuity is necessary for experience, at least 6 months.
- They expect discipline from their managers and want to be constructively corrected when they make mistakes for their own development.
- A manager should not be a friend but rather firm yet motivating and corrective.
- Z generation quickly gets bored, and experiences focus problems.
- Learning by doing is preferred while working.
- Boring tasks should not be assigned only to interns, they should be part of the team and taught.
- At the beginning of employment, the work environment should not be stressful.
- Z generation wants to be liked.
- Z generation quits their job when they get bored or dislike the work. Their economic situation and family life play a significant role.
- Z generation does not like starting close to the minimum wage.
- They have a different mindset due to their family background: they are more responsible, disciplined, organized, and enjoy going to work.
- A hybrid work model is ideal, but they want to go to the office 5 days a week.
- The work environment should be fun and enjoyable while working.