

INSIGHTS INTO THE NEXT GENERATION: A METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW OF CAREER EXPECTATIONS IN GENERATION Z

JAYATISSA. K.A.D.U

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

todimani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines the growing research on career expectations of Generation Z (born 1995-2012), focusing on implications for Human Resource Management. Employing a structured search strategy in Google Scholar, this review analyzes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies across diverse regions and disciplines. Findings reveal a predominance of quantitative surveys, primarily involving student samples from Asia, Europe, and North America. Key themes include career aspirations, job choices, employee resourcing implications, and distinctive generational characteristics. Synthesizing empirical research and industry reports, this review provides a nuanced understanding of Gen Z's career decision-making processes. The paper concludes by identifying avenues for future research and outlining practical implications for attracting, retaining, and managing this emerging workforce.

Keywords: Career expectations; Generation Z; Human resource management; Systematic Literature review; Workforce trends

1. Introduction

The significance of employees in shaping the success or downfall of a company is a concept acknowledged by both employees and management alike. The late Steve Jobs emphasized the importance of assembling a team of top-notch individuals, stating, that a small team of top performers can outperform a large team of average performers (Keller, 2017). This insight resonates with the current multi-generational workforce, comprising Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and the emerging Generation Z. While Jobs' perspective emphasizes the quality of the workforce, it sets the stage for understanding the nuances in the expectations and aspirations of each generation.

Generation Z, also known as “digital natives”, born between 1995 and 2012, introduced a unique dynamic to the workforce. As they begin to surpass Millennials in population, organizations face the challenge of comprehending and meeting their distinct expectations (Gomez et al., 2018). Recent research illuminates significant shifts in the behaviours, attitudes, and career aspirations of Gen Z, emphasizing their distinctive attitude and value system, as well as perceptions of work (Diaconu & Dutu, 2020; Fodor et al., 2017; Jha, 2021). Notably, career management studies, such as those by Ahmad et al. (2019), highlight the need for attention to both pre-entry and post-entry phases to understand the comprehensive career expectations of individuals.

The emerging field of Generation Z career research delves into the motivations, preferences, and challenges of this tech-savvy and diverse cohort. Born into an era of technology, Gen Z exhibits high educational attainment and seeks meaningful work aligned with their passions. Their expectations, including flexibility, autonomy, feedback, and recognition, pose new challenges for organizations aiming to attract and retain this young talent in a competitive market (Diaconu & Dutu, 2020; Jha, 2021).

Consequently, the formulated research questions seek to unravel the methodological approaches, major areas of research, and specific career expectations characterizing Generation Z. This systematic review aims to contribute insights to guide future research on understanding and addressing the evolving career aspirations of this dynamic generation. Thus, to understand this new incoming generation and to meet their career aspirations the following research questions were formulated to guide the review:

RQ1: What methodological approaches have been employed to investigate the career expectations of Generation Z, as evidenced by empirical studies and industry reports?

RQ2: What key research domains have emerged in the study of Generation Z, particularly in relation to their career aspirations and workplace expectations?

RQ3: Based on past research, what specific career expectations characterize Generation Z, and how do these expectations differ from previous generations?

These research questions are addressed through the application of a systematic literature review methodology, followed by a comprehensive discussion of the findings. The article concludes by presenting implications that can guide future research focused on Generation Z.

2. Literature Review

The workplace is in a constant state of evolution, shaped by the arrival of new generations and the departure of older workers. This dynamic environment often leads to employees collaborating with individuals across a wide age spectrum. The concept of “generation” emerged as a defining social category in the 19th century, used to categorize individuals born within a shared timeframe (Arar & Yuksel, 2015). This categorization recognizes that shared historical and cultural experiences can profoundly shape values, attitudes, and behaviours (Arar & Öneren, 2018).

The contemporary workforce comprises four distinct generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Each cohort exhibits unique characteristics, encompassing work ethics, cultural inclinations, political perspectives, and lifestyle choices (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Examining major social and life events during formative years provides insights into the distinct perspectives of these generations. For Generation Z, pinpointing precise birth year boundaries remains a subject of debate. Some researchers define the cohort as those born after 1995, while others propose a broader range encompassing individuals born between 1990 and 2000, or even later (Robak & Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, 2019). This ongoing discussion highlights the challenges in establishing definitive generational boundaries.

Unlike preceding generations who lacked constant internet access, Generation Z is characterized as “digital natives” and the “iGeneration” (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018; Bejtkovsky, 2016; Chareewan et al., 2020; Cora, 2019; Diaconu & Dutu, 2020; Fodor et al., 2018; Grow & Yang, 2018; Huțanu et al., 2020; Jha, 2021; Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2017; Lalić et al., 2020; Lanier, 2017; Tang, 2019). This upbringing in a technologically saturated environment has shaped their worldview, leading to heightened expectations, particularly regarding professional aspirations, that often surpass those of earlier generations. Researchers exploring Generation Z have employed diverse methodological approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. However, existing research exhibits a significant limitation: a predominant focus on student populations. Studies examining the post-entry experiences of Generation Z employees remain limited (Aggarwal et al., 2020; Hameed & Mathur, 2019; Mahmoud et al., 2020). This gap in the literature highlights a crucial area for future research.

Over the past decade, scholarly inquiry into Generation Z has encompassed key research domains, including workplace values, labour market dynamics, career attitudes and expectations, and HR practices such as talent management, onboarding, recruitment, job satisfaction, retention, and turnover (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018; Bejtkovsky, 2016; Bieleń & Kubiczek, 2020; Chareewan et al., 2020; Chillakuri, 2020; Cseh-Papp et al., 2017; Diaconu & Dutu, 2020; Fodor & Jaeckel, 2018; Goh & Lee, 2018; Grow & Yang, 2018; Hampton & Welsh, 2019; Jayathilake, 2019; Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021; Self et al., 2019; Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017). This growing body of research reflects the increasing significance of understanding this emerging generation's influence on the workplace.

Having come of age amidst global events like economic recession and terrorism, Generation Z exhibits a heightened sense of caution and a pronounced desire for financial and workplace security, surpassing that of their Millennial predecessors (Half, 2015). Shaped by the experience of economic instability during their formative years, Generation Z prioritizes a satisfying and fulfilling career (Half, 2015). To effectively attract and retain this distinctive cohort, organizations must adapt to their unique characteristics and expectations.

3. Methodology

This systematic literature review meticulously documents the research journey, encompassing the search process, selection criteria, and inclusion/exclusion parameters. The Google Scholar database served as the primary source for relevant literature, focusing on key areas such as career expectations, career aspirations, work expectations, and career development. The search strategy employed specific keywords: “career,” “career expectations,” “career development,” “career aspirations,” “Generation Z,” and “Gen Z.” This initial search yielded over 80 publications. Recognizing that Generation Z is a relatively recent research subject, the review considered materials published after 2007, including journal articles, newspaper articles, blog posts, conceptual papers, infographics,

and industry reports. To ensure a targeted and relevant pool of sources for analysis, rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the selection process.

The following inclusion criteria were applied:

1. Articles were required to include keywords related to both Generation Z and careers within their abstracts, ensuring a focus on relevant content.
2. Preference was given to evidence-based research, particularly empirical studies.
3. Both journal articles and industry reports were considered for inclusion, acknowledging Generation Z as an emerging research area.

The following exclusion criteria were applied to empirical studies and industry reports:

1. Articles lacking a primary focus on Generation Z and empirical findings were excluded.
2. Industry reports that deviated from the topic of Generation Z careers (e.g., branding, consumer behaviour, happiness, education) were excluded.
3. Articles that failed to recognize Generation Z as a distinct generational cohort, instead of grouping them with Millennials, were disregarded.

4. Findings

This section commences with a comprehensive overview of the methodological approaches employed in Generation Z research. It then delves into the prominent research domains that have characterized past studies on this cohort. Finally, the section conceptualizes Generation Z's career expectations by synthesizing themes from previous research that have shaped this generation's career aspirations.

4.1 Methodological Approaches

This section examines the methodological landscape of Generation Z studies, encompassing research design, employed methods, and participant demographics. The analysis encompasses 51 studies, including 10 industry reports and 41 published articles. Among the published articles, 10 employed qualitative methodologies—utilizing techniques such as case studies, interviews, focus groups, narratives, and observation for data collection—5 employed mixed methods, and 26 employed a quantitative methodological approach. Regarding industry reports, one study (Keller, 2017) adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing focus groups and interviews, while the remaining reports employed quantitative methodologies.

As depicted in Table 1, the predominant research focus centered on Generation Z students, examining their career perspectives through data collected specifically from college/university students within this cohort. However, a study by Glassdoor (2019) expanded the scope to include data from Generation Z job applicants. Additionally, a few studies gathered insights from Generation Z employees, particularly those in the early stages of their careers (e.g., interns). Notably, Table 1 also highlights studies that incorporated data from HR managers/specialists or corporations, providing insights into employer perspectives regarding Generation Z individuals entering corporate settings.

Table 01: Methodological Approaches in Reviewed Empirical Studies and Industrial Reports of Gen Z

Author	Methodology	Method	Participants
Empirical Research			
Agarwal and Vaghela (2018)	Quantitative	Survey	215 Students
Arar and Öneren (2018)	Qualitative	Case study	HR Managers
Bejtkovsky (2016)	Quantitative	Survey	182 Corporations 3182 Employees
Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020)	Qualitative	Interview	04 Corporations
Böhlich and Axmann (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	103 (Students or Employees)
Chareewan et al. (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	333 Students
Cseh-Papp et al. (2017)	Quantitative	Survey	112 Students
Diaconu and Dutu (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	112 Students
Fodor et al. (2017)	Mixed Method	Focus Group Survey	30 (Students or Employees) 1178 (Students or Employees)
Fodor et al. (2018)	Mixed Method	Focus Group Survey	180 Students 1178 Students
Fodor and Jaeckel (2018)	Qualitative	Focus Group	180 Students
Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018)	Quantitative	Content Analysis	235 Students
Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017)	Quantitative	Survey	237 Students
Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2018)	Qualitative	Narrative	235 Students
Goh and Lee (2018)	Qualitative	Interviews	71 Students
Grow and Yang (2018)	Quantitative	Survey	98 Students
Hampton and Welsh (2019)	Quantitative	Survey	103 Students
Huțanu et al. (2020)	Qualitative	Interview	57 Students
Kılınç and Varol (2021)	Quantitative	Survey	534 Students
Lalić et al. (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	359 Students
Mahmoud et al. (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	600 Employees
Maioli (2016)	Mixed Method	Survey Interview	400 Students 23 Employers
Maloni et al. (2019)	Quantitative	Survey	1537 Students
Mărginean (2021)	Quantitative	Survey	69 Students
Ozkan and Solmaz (2015)	Quantitative	Survey	276 Students
Jha (2021)	Quantitative	Survey	196 Students
Iorgulescu (2016)	Quantitative	Survey	156 Students
Safránková and Sikýř (2017)	Quantitative	Survey	484 Students
Vítelar (2019)	Quantitative	Survey	100 (Students or Employees)
Kutlák (2019)	Quantitative	Survey	114 Students
Cho et al. (2018)	Quantitative	Survey	306 Students
Torocsik et al. (2014)	Mixed Method	Survey Focus Group	2000 Students
Dwivendula et al. (2019)	Qualitative	Peer-reviewed articles	19
Chillakuri (2020)	Qualitative	Interview/ Observation	136 Business Students
Sidorcuka and Chesnovicka (2017)	Quantitative	Survey	210 (Employees)
Hameed and Mathur (2019)	Mixed	Focus Group Survey	350 (Employees)

Aggarwal et al. (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	493 (Employees)
Racolța-Paina and Irini (2021)	Qualitative	Interviews	HR Specialist
Self et al. (2019)	Qualitative	Delphi Method	13 (HR Specialist)
Industrial Reports			
Ernst and Young (2016)	Quantitative	Survey	1800 (Students or Employees)
Adecco (2015)	Quantitative	Survey	444 Students
Ernst and Young (2020)	Quantitative	Survey	2054 Students
Randstad (2016)	Quantitative	Survey	1965 Employees
Francis and Hoefel (2018)	Qualitative	Interview Focus Group	120 90 (Students or Employees)
DELL Technologies (2022)	Quantitative	Survey	12086 Students
Gomez et al. (2018)	Quantitative	Survey	1531 Students
Coca Cola (2015)	Quantitative	Survey	3331 Students
Barnes and Noble College (2018)	Quantitative	Survey	1300 Students
Stansell (2019)	Quantitative	Content Analysis	304,192 Gen Z Job applications

Source: Author's own creation

4.2 Gen Z Research Focus Areas

Table 2 reveals that the geographical scope of the studies primarily encompassed Europe, North and South America, and South Asia. Notably, global studies by Randstad (2016) and DELL Technologies (2022) spanned various countries, including North and South America, the European market, and Southeast Asia. Of the 38 empirical studies reviewed, a significant majority focused on various career-related aspects of Generation Z, encompassing dimensions such as career attitude, career/work expectations, career choices, career conceptions, and work values. Beyond Generation Z's career-related perspectives, scholars have explored broader research domains within Human Resources Management, including retention and attraction, talent management, recruitment, and job satisfaction, reflecting a holistic examination of this generation's impact on organizational dynamics.

Table 02: Geographical Distribution of Gen Z Studies

Author(s)	Country	Context / Sector	Purpose
Empirical Research			
Agarwal and Vaghela (2018)	India	Workplace values	How the work values differ within diverse groups of Generation Z (work values based on intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, status-associated, and social values)
Aran and Öneran (2018)	Turkey	Talent Management	Advantages of talent management to develop Gen Z careers
Bejtkovsky (2016)	Czech Republic	Labor Market	The current generation of employees in the labour market
Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020)	Poland	Labor Market	How companies adapt to generational change in the labour market
Böhlich and Axmann (2020)	Germany	Career Attitude	Occupational attitudes of Generation Z
Chareewan et al. (2020)	Croatia	Career Expectations	Generation Z career goals and daily work expectations

Cseh-Papp et al. (2017)	Hungary	Career Expectations	Career expectations of Gen Z
Diaconu and Dutu (2020)	Romania	Labor Market	Create a profile pattern regarding the labour market entry and behaviour
Fodor et al. (2017)	Hungary	Career Choice	Factors influencing the career and workplace choice of Generation Z
Fodor et al. (2018)	Hungary	Career Choice	Factors influencing the career and workplace choice of Generation Z
Fodor and Jaeckel (2018)	Hungary	Career Expectations	Characteristics of Gen Z influencing their workplace expectations
Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018)	Slovakia	Barriers	Barriers to work motivation of Generation Z
Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017)	Slovakia	Career Preferences	Career Preferences of Generation Z
Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2018)	Slovakia	Work Motivation	Generation Z factors of future work motivation
Goh and Lee (2018)	Australia	Hospitality	Positive and negative attitudes among Gen Z students toward careers in hospitality
Grow and Yang (2018)	USA	Advertising	Expectations of Gen Z viewed through a gendered lens
Hampton and Welsh (2019)	United Kingdom	Nursing	Determine work-values of Gen Z nursing students
Huțanu et al. (2020)	Romania	Expectation	Gen Z expectations from the workplace
Kılınç and Varol (2021)	Konya	Career Expectation	Career perceptions and expectations of Generation Z
Lalić et al. (2020)	Serbia	Career Expectation	Career expectations of Generation Z
Mahmoud et al. (2020)	Canada	Workplace Motivation	Workplace motivation of generations
Maioli (2016)	Argentina	Career Conceptions	Characteristics of Gen Z and their conception of employment
Maloni et al. (2019)	USA	Work Values	Work values of Gen Z
Mărginean (2021)	Romania	Job Expectations	Gen Z expectations on present and future jobs
Ozkan and Solmaz (2015)	Turkey	Work Perception	Gen Z work perception
Jha (2021)	India	Career Attitude	Career attitudes and perceptions of Gen Z
Iorgulescu (2016)	Romania	Work Perception	Gen Z's perception of work
Safránková and Sikýř (2017)	Czech Republic	Work Expectation	Present work expectations of Gen Z in the Czech labor market
Vitelar (2019)	Romania	Personal Branding	Gen Z and social media personal branding
Kutlák (2019)	Czech Republic	Teamwork	Gen Z and teamwork issues
Cho et al. (2018)	USA	Volunteer motivation	Gen Z motivations for volunteering
Torocsik et al. (2014)	Hungary	Lifestyle Groups	Characteristics and Lifestyle Groups of Gen Z
Chillakuri (2020)	India	Onboarding	Expectations of Gen Z in onboarding programs

Sidorcuka and Chesnovicka (2017)	Latvia	Recruitment	Attraction and retention of Gen Z staff
Hameed and Mathur (2019)	India	Competencies	Managerial competencies and change strategies
Aggarwal et al. (2020)	India	HR practices / Job Satisfaction	Influence of HR policies and practices on Generation Z toward job satisfaction
Racolța - Paina & Irini (2021)	Romania	Attract, motivate, retain	Changes and challenges of Gen Z in the workplace
Self et al. (2019)	USA	Recruitment, Talent	Assessing talent when recruiting Gen Z college students
Literature Review Papers			
Barhate and Dirani (2021)	Literature Review	Career Aspirations	Explore the career aspirations of individuals belonging to the Gen Z
Bulut and Maraba (2021)	Literature Review	Work Habits Motivations Preferences Expectations	Explore dimensions that are related to work
Cora (2019)	Literature Review	Characteristics	Characteristics of Gen Z
Said et al. (2020)	Literature Review	Job Expectations	Gen Z expectations on job surrounding
Tang (2019)	Literature Review	Work Attitude	The work-related attitude of Gen Z
Larkin et al. (2018)	Literature Review	Real Estate	Gen Z – real estate preferences
Dwivendula et al. (2019)	Literature Review	Workplace Expectations	Gen Z employees at the workplace
Robak and Albrychiewicz-Słocińska (2019)	Literature Review	Work Expectation	Work expectations of Gen Z
Goh and Okumus (2020)	Literature Review	Recruitment/ Talent management	Practical recruitment strategies to attract Gen Z of hospitality talent
Industrial Reports			
Ernst and Young (2016)	USA	Work Expectations	Insights into Gen Z
Adecco (2015)	USA	Job Market	Key differences between Gen Z and Millennials in the job market
Ernst and Young (2020)	USA	Contradictions	Gen Z contradictions

Randstad (2016)	USA, UK, Germany, Mexico, Poland, Argentina, India, China, Canada, South Africa	Workplace Expectations	Preparation for work and workplace expectations
Francis and Hoefel (2018)	Brazil	Preferences and Choices	Gen Z choices and preferences
DELL Technologies (2022)	United States, Canada, Brazil, UK, Germany, France, Turkey, Australia/New Zealand, China, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines	Expectation	Gen Z expectations on future employment
Gomez et al. (2018)	USA	Work Attitude	Gen Z and their attitude toward work
Coca Cola (2015)	European Market	Happiness	What happiness means to Gen Z teenagers
Barnes and Noble College (2018)	USA	Education	Gen Z: expectations on education
Sri Lankan Context			
Pemerathna (2016)	Sri Lanka	Brand Dilution	Generation Z idiosyncrasy and its influence on brand dilution
Ranasinghe and Ekanayake (2019)	Sri Lanka	Behavioral finance	Behavioral finance and investment decision-making of Gen Z.
Jayathilake (2019)	Sri Lanka	Turnover	Development of a conceptual framework to tackle the turnover of Gen-Z in Sri Lanka
Ashwithi and Weerasinghe (2019)	Sri Lanka	Person Organization fit	Person-organization value fit of Gen Z in Sri Lanka
Kahawandala et al. (2020)	Sri Lanka	Consumer Behavior	Factors influencing the purchasing behaviour of Generation Z
Tennakoon et al. (2018)	Sri Lanka	Job searching	Role of the internet in job searching by Gen Z

Source: Author's own creation

4.3 Gen Z Career Expectations

Social scientists posit that individual career fulfilment is significantly influenced by career expectations. Research suggests a positive correlation between elevated individual career expectations and higher expectations regarding prestige and salary (Hung-Chang & Mei-Ju, 2014). Furthermore, the literature underscores that work- and education-related aspirations and expectations evolve from adolescence to early adulthood. Individuals typically begin aligning their career development expectations with their employers—

integrating their aspirations and personal abilities—soon after joining an organization (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Despite their relatively recent entry into the workforce, Generation Z is already significantly impacting the business landscape, demonstrating unprecedented levels of digital competency. As more individuals from this cohort enter the labour market in the coming years, understanding their unique work expectations will be crucial for employers. Early and current studies consistently characterize Generation Z as technologically advanced, with distinct demands and expectations regarding their careers. This section examines seven key themes related to Generation Z's career expectations: rewards and benefits, intrinsic work values, communication, altruistic work values, employment stability, work environment, and leadership. Insights into Generation Z's expectations within each thematic category were drawn from the published sources.

Table 03: Generation Z Career Expectations

Theme	Sub-theme	Citation
1. Reward and Benefits	Fair Compensation/ Generous Pay	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); DELL Technologies (2022); Diaconu and Dutu, (2020); Fodor et al. (2017); Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018); Half (2015); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Iorgulescu (2016); Jha (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lalić et al. (2020); Maioli (2016); Maloni et al. (2019); Mărginean (2021); Randstad (2016); Safránková and Sikýř (2017); Said et al. (2020); Stansell (2019)
	Status / Designation	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018)
	Promotion	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Fodor et al. (2017); Huțanu et al. (2020); Jha (2021); Kılınç and Varol (2021); Maloni et al. (2019); Mărginean (2021); Randstad (2016); Said et al. (2020)
	Learning and Advancement	DELL Technologies (2022); Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018); Iorgulescu (2016); Jha (2021); Mărginean (2021); Safránková and Sikýř (2017); Said et al. (2020)
	Mentoring Program	Chareewan et al. (2020); Fodor et al. (2018); Maioli (2016); Mărginean (2021)
	Work-life balance	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Arar and Öneren (2018); Bulut and Maraba (2021); Cora (2019); DELL Technologies (2022); Diaconu and Dutu (2020); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Jha, (2021); Kılınç and Varol, (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lalić et al. (2020); Mahmoud et al. (2020); Maioli (2016); Randstad (2016)
	Flexible Working Hours	Arar and Öneren (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); Bulut and Maraba (2021); Cora (2019); Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); DELL Technologies (2022); Diaconu and Dutu (2020); Fodor et al. (2017); Half (2015); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Huțanu et al. (2020); Jha (2021); Kılınç

		and Varol (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Maioli (2016); Randstad (2016); Stansell (2019)
	WFH (remote working)	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Half (2015); Huțanu et al. (2018); Mărginean (2021); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Appreciation and Recognition	Adecco (2015); Ernst and Young (2016); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Huțanu et al. (2020)
	Ideas are valued and heard.	Ernst and Young (2016); Lalić et al. (2020); Randstad (2016)
	Career Development	Arar and Öneren (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); DELL Technologies (2022); Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018); Half (2015); Jha (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lanier (2017); Randstad (2016)
	Professional Development	Diaconu and Dutu (2020); Ernst and Young (2016); Lalić et al. (2020)
	Training & Development	Diaconu and Dutu (2020); Ernst and Young (2016); Jha (2021)
	Opportunities for growth	Adecco (2015); Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Huțanu et al. (2020); Lalić et al. (2020); Maioli (2016); Maloni et al. (2019)
	Autonomy	Jha (2021)
	Holidays	Jha (2021)
	Fringe Benefits /Perks	DELL Technologies (2022); Fodor et al. (2017); Jha (2021)
	Health care benefits	Bulut and Maraba (2021); Ernst and Young (2016); Grow and Yang (2018); Half (2015); Maloni et al. (2019); Randstad (2016)
	Expectations for childcare and parental leave	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Pension / Retirement	Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Maloni et al. (2019)
	Rewards and Benefits (in common)	Adecco (2015); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Lanier (2017); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
2. Intrinsic Work Values	Enjoying one's work	Jha (2021)
	Self-fulfilment	Fodor et al. (2017); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Huțanu et al. (2020); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Meaningful job	DELL Technologies (2022); Kılınc and Varol (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lalić et al. (2020); Maloni et al. (2019); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Chance to make a Positive Impact	Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018); Jha (2021)
3. Communication	Open and transparent communication	Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Said et al. (2020)
	In-person communication	DELL Technologies (2022); Half (2015); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Randstad (2016)
	Texting	Mahmoud et al. (2020)
	Prefer Email	Randstad (2016)
4. Altruistic Work Values	CSR conscious	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020); Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); DELL Technologies (2022); Fodor et al. (2017); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Tang (2019)

	Environmentally conscious	Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); DELL Technologies (2022); Fodor et al. (2017)
5. Stability in Employment	Job security	Böhlich and Axmann (2020); DELL Technologies (2022); Francis and Hoefel (2018); Half (2015); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Iorgulescu (2016); Jha (2021); Kılınç and Varol (2021); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lalić et al. (2020); Lanier (2017); Maioli (2016); Maloni et al. (2019); Mărginean (2021); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Financial Stability / Economic Security	Adecco (2015); Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Bulut and Maraba (2021); DELL Technologies (2022); Grow and Yang (2018); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Lanier (2017); Mahmoud et al. (2020); Maioli (2016); Mărginean (2021)
6. Work Environment	Good/Inspiring working atmosphere	Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Fodor et al. (2017); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017); Maioli, (2016); Stansell (2019)
	Attractive environment/ culture	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Fodor et al. (2017)
	Good Team / Team Climate	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Fodor et al. (2017); Huțanu et al. (2020); Jha (2021)
	Teamwork - Virtual	Tang (2019)
	Friendly Team	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Huțanu et al. (2020); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Opportunity to implement their ideas	Fodor et al. (2017)
	Friendly Colleagues	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Huțanu et al. (2020); Lalić et al. (2020)
	Good relationship with Co-workers	Barhate and Dirani (2021)
	Technological devices /Access to it	Arar and Öneren (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020); Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Randstad (2016)
	Individual Office Space	Arar and Öneren (2018); Cora (2019); DELL Technologies (2022); Mărginean (2021); Ozkan and Solmaz (2015)
	Open-space office layout	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Iorgulescu (2016)
	Independent Work Environment/Autonomy	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Barhate and Dirani (2021); DELL Technologies (2022); Iorgulescu (2016); Kılınç and Varol (2021); Lalić et al. (2020); Maioli (2016); Ozkan and Solmaz (2015)
	Supportive Work Environment	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Pleasurable/Happy Work Environment	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Safránková and Sikýř (2017)
	Informal, relaxed work environment	Mărginean (2021)
	A safe and secure workplace	DELL Technologies (2022)

	Flat Hierarchical Structure	Arar and Öneren (2018); Cora (2019); Mărginean (2021); Tang (2019)
	Work collaboratively	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Bulut and Maraba (2021); Half (2015); Kılınç and Varol (2021); Mărginean (2021)
	Diversity	Agarwal and Vaghela (2018); DELL Technologies (2022); Half (2015); Lanier (2017); Tang (2019)
7. Other Factors	Company Reputation	Fodor and Jaeckel (2018); Jha (2021)
	Public sector	Kılınç and Varol (2021); Mărginean (2021)
	Large Companies	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Cseh-Papp et al. (2017); Diaconu and Dutu (2020); Iorgulescu (2016); Mărginean (2021)
8. Leadership	Honest Leaders	Bulut and Maraba (2021); Half (2015); Kılınç and Varol (2021)
	Willingness to communicate	Randstad (2016)
	Fair and Confident Leader	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Friendly and open-minded	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Listening	Ozkan and Solmaz (2015)
	Passionately motivating	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Kind and understanding	Grow and Yang (2018)
	Good Relationship	Iorgulescu (2016); Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2017)
	Supportive	Hampton and Welsh (2019)
	Feedback	Böhlich and Axmann (2020); Bulut and Maraba (2021); Hampton and Welsh (2019); Maioli (2016); Randstad (2016)
	No Bureaucracy	Kılınç and Varol (2021); Maioli (2016)
	Monitoring Role	Bulut and Maraba (2021); Lalić et al. (2020)
	Mentoring Role	Barhate and Dirani (2021); Bieleń and Kubiczek (2020); Half (2015); Iorgulescu (2016); Mărginean (2021); Randstad (2016)

Source: Author's own creation

5. Discussion

Generation Z represents a dynamic and complex research domain requiring continuous updates for scholars as this cohort enters the workforce (Fodor et al., 2017). Ongoing research is vital to fully comprehend their evolving needs. This paper examines empirical studies and industry reports on Gen Z, focusing on three key areas within the existing literature: methodological approaches, major research themes, and primary career expectations. These insights hold value for both researchers and practitioners invested in understanding Gen Z and its implications across various industries (Hameed & Mathur, 2019; Keller, 2017).

Empirical research on Generation Z has employed diverse methodological approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Fodor et al., 2017; Hameed & Mathur, 2019). While a majority of studies lean toward quantitative methods, utilizing surveys to collect data from students (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018; Chareewan et al., 2020; Cseh-Papp et al., 2017; Diaconu & Dutu, 2020), some expand their scope to include employee perspectives (Bejtkovsky, 2016; Mahmoud et al., 2020). A smaller subset of

studies adopt qualitative methods such as case studies, interviews, focus groups, and observations (Arar & Öneren, 2018; Bieleń & Kubiczek, 2020). Researchers also utilize mixed methods approaches to capture a more holistic view (Fodor et al., 2017; Hameed & Mathur, 2019; Maioli, 2016).

Industry reports also utilize varied methodological approaches, primarily quantitative and qualitative. While most employ surveys for data collection, some gather insights from both students and Generation Z employees (Ernst & Young, 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). McKinsey and Company stand out by employing a qualitative approach that incorporates focus groups and interviews (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Research on Generation Z spans multiple regions, focusing on various themes, including career expectations, labour markets, career choices, work motivation, work perception, and employee resourcing (Diaconu & Dutu, 2020; Fodor et al., 2018). Review papers contribute to understanding Generation Z's career aspirations, characteristics, and employee resourcing strategies (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Bulut & Maraba, 2021; Dwivendula et al., 2019; Said et al., 2020). Industry reports predominantly explore Generation Z's workplace expectations, preferences, and choices, along with discussions on contradictions, happiness, and educational expectations (Ernst & Young, 2016; Randstad, 2016).

This paper identifies seven major themes regarding Generation Z's career expectations: rewards, intrinsic work values, communication, altruistic work values, employment stability, work environment, and leadership. Noteworthy findings reveal Generation Z's emphasis on both tangible and intangible benefits, including fair compensation, work-life balance, flexible schedules, career development opportunities, growth opportunities, healthcare benefits, retirement perks, meaningful jobs, and self-fulfilment. Additionally, altruistic values play a crucial role in their career choices, with a preference for organizations demonstrating corporate social responsibility and environmental consciousness (Fodor et al., 2017; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Generation Z also expresses a desire for job security, financial stability, positive work environments, diverse and friendly teams, independence, mentorship, honest leadership, and regular feedback (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Jha, 2021; Kılınç & Varol, 2021).

In summary, this paper provides a comprehensive overview of Generation Z's career expectations, synthesizing insights from empirical studies and industry reports. Given the multifaceted nature of Generation Z, ongoing research is essential to inform practices and policies for effectively engaging and managing this emerging workforce.

6. Conclusion

This paper synthesizes existing literature on Generation Z, a complex cohort entering the workforce, examining methodological approaches, major research areas, and career expectations. Findings reveal that most studies have employed quantitative methods and surveys, collecting data from student populations, primarily in Asia, Europe, and North

America. These studies have largely concentrated on topics such as career expectations, career choices, employee resourcing implications, and characteristics of Generation Z. This paper identifies several implications for future research, including the need for more qualitative and mixed-methods research, increased research from diverse regions and contexts, further exploration of the implications of Generation Z for various industries, and development of more innovative and creative methods capable of capturing the complexity and dynamism of Generation Z. Finally, this paper discusses some of the challenges and opportunities that Generation Z presents to researchers and practitioners interested in this cohort.

This paper contributes to the advancement of knowledge and theory on Generation Z by synthesizing information from empirical research and industry reports, offering valuable insights and recommendations for various stakeholders and sectors, including employers, educators, policymakers, marketers, and HR professionals. By fostering a deeper understanding of Generation Z, these stakeholders can design more effective and relevant strategies and interventions that meet the unique expectations and needs of this cohort. The paper also highlights the gaps and limitations within the current literature on Generation Z, suggesting directions for future research. Ultimately, this paper aims to stimulate further research and dialogue on Generation Z, a cohort actively reshaping industries and society with their unique values, preferences, and behaviours.

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