



Article

Factors Motivating Generation Z in the Workplace: Managerial Challenges and Insights

Camelia Surugiu ^{1,2}, Marius-Răzvan Surugiu ^{3,*}, Cătălin Grădinaru ¹ and Ana-Maria Grigore ¹

¹ Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest, 030018 Bucharest, Romania; camelia.surugiu@faa.unibuc.ro (C.S.); catalin.gradinaru@faa.unibuc.ro (C.G.); ana.grigore@faa.unibuc.ro (A.-M.G.)

² National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism, 050741 Bucharest, Romania

³ Institute of National Economy, 050711 Bucharest, Romania

* Correspondence: marius.surugiu@ien.ro

Abstract: The paper aims to identify the powerful forces of Generation Z's (Gen Z) work motivations, considering four key drivers: recognition, appreciation, well-being, and skills. Four hypotheses were developed, and Gen Z-triggering motivational factors at work were analyzed using a survey approach. Using the collected data, a logistic regression model was constructed to investigate the effects on work motivation. An in-depth interview of managers from different companies was applied to identify Gen Z's perceptions about the workplace. All four predictors proved to influence work motivation significantly. According to the answers of Gen Z's members, wage is the primary motivator for them to increase work efficiency, with other financial and non-financial factors being less significant. Gen Z is generally not teamwork-oriented and prefers working alone to demonstrate their abilities and achieve greater efficiency. Gen Z switches jobs frequently and shows low loyalty to organizations, often prioritizing personal preferences over long-term commitment. This study explores Romanian Gen Z-triggering motivational factors and shows the motivators for increasing work efficiency. It provides unique insights into a less teamwork-oriented, low loyalty to organizations segment, filling a literature gap and offering business recommendations for connecting with this generation.

Keywords: work appreciation; work recognition; organizational well-being; skills development



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1. Introduction

Nowadays, finding the ideal candidates to join a team and keeping them on board with high levels of motivation and engagement have become more challenging than ever. Consequently, companies' most significant challenge is fostering high employee motivation and loyalty by implementing appropriately tailored motivational programs (Nieżurawska, 2023). The necessity to adjust the workplace, not just for the newest generation, but also for intergenerational cohesion and cooperation makes human resources management (HRM) and the conception of an effective workflow and atmosphere in the workplace more stimulating (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022).

Generation Z (Gen Z) refers to individuals born in the late 1990s through the early 2010s, often described as 'digital natives'. This generation has grown up with digital technology, the internet, and social media as integral parts of their lives, shaping their communication styles, behaviors, and expectations in both personal and professional settings. Gen Z represents the most educated, intelligent, and networked generation in the workplace (Ocampo, 2021; Nieżurawska, 2023; Media & Culture, 2023). They cherish

predictability, have a strong work ethic, and appreciate structure and order (Nieżurawska, 2023). It is essential to consider that while some members of Gen Z are already employed, some are still in school, and some are joining the labor market now at a higher rate than anticipated due to the pandemic (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). This generation will certainly have a significant influence on working procedures (Fratriciová & Kirchmayer, 2018).

The work environment, policies, leadership, employee relations, wages, perks, and development opportunities, together with personal and professional development and responsibility, are the variables that drive Gen Z employees to perform effectively at work (Gochangco & Ocenar, 2024). Gen Z wants to feel connected to a group that would help them achieve self-actualization and enable them to live by their ideals (Rice & Potts, 2024).

Gen Z possesses distinct knowledge, skills, and abilities compared to the previous decade's generation (Jayanthi & Mathews, 2023; Cruzvergara, 2024; Young Social Innovators, 2025; Horton International, 2025). Creating trust, providing mentorship, soliciting peer criticism, and exchanging information are effective strategies for engaging Gen Z (Jayanthi & Mathews, 2023). On the other hand, Gen Z workers are frequently perceived as indolent and uninterested in specific tasks requiring both mental and physical exertion; they also lack originality, protest, and opinion (Nieżurawska, 2023).

Employers naturally feel that understanding the factors that are important to the generation about to enter the workforce would enable them to match employee needs better with corporate requirements and prepare for Gen Z. This would also explain why prestigious consulting firms all over the world conduct certain polls on the career choices of Gen Z (Fratriciová & Kirchmayer, 2018).

In the framework above, the issue of efficiently motivated workers from Gen Z represents a noteworthy scientific problem. Thus, the present paper aims to identify the powerful forces of Gen Z work motivation, considering several key drivers, such as recognition, appreciation, well-being, and skills, by deploying a multivariate binary logistic regression analysis.

The novelty of this study lies in its focused exploration of Gen Z workplace motivation, a topic that remains underexplored compared to other generational cohorts. Gen Z represents a distinct demographic with unique values, preferences, and behaviors that differ from previous generations, and this research addresses critical gaps in understanding their workplace motivators, particularly in the Romanian context. The findings reveal unique behavioral traits, such as limited interest in teamwork, frequent job-switching, and low organizational loyalty, prioritizing personal preferences over long-term commitment. These insights challenge conventional motivational strategies and provide a clearer understanding of how to engage this workforce. Furthermore, the research contributes regionally specific insights about Romanian Gen Z members, addressing an underrepresented context in global studies. Overall, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace motivation by focusing on a generation with distinctive characteristics, offering theoretical and practical insights to bridge the gap between Gen Z workers and organizational needs.

The motivation for this study stems from the growing presence of Gen Z in the workforce and the need to better understand their unique values, preferences, and behaviors. As organizations increasingly rely on this emerging cohort, it becomes essential to adapt motivational strategies to align with their values and expectations. The body of research on Gen Z's workplace motivators is still developing, particularly in regions like Romania, and calls for further exploration. Additionally, understanding the factors that influence their workplace engagement and loyalty is critical for organizations aiming to attract, retain, and maximize the potential of Gen Z employees in a competitive labor market.

The data used in this study incorporate responses from Gen Z employees and managers. The Gen Z data, collected through an online questionnaire, capture key motivational factors and demographic information, ensuring a focused analysis of the cohort.

The quantitative component, based on a questionnaire and analyzed using multivariate binary logistic regression, offers statistical rigor and allows for the identification of significant predictors of motivation. The qualitative data, derived from semi-structured interviews with 20 managers across various industries, provides depth to the analysis by exploring managerial perspectives on Gen Z workplace dynamics. The quantitative and qualitative datasets offer a strong foundation for examining the interplay between motivation and workplace factors.

The variables selected for this study—work recognition, skills development, well-being within the organization, and work appreciation—were carefully chosen based on their relevance to understanding Gen Z's workplace motivation. These variables cover key aspects of workplace engagement, from acknowledgment and career development to overall satisfaction within an organization. The mix of binary and polytomous variables enhances the robustness of the analysis.

Businesses and managers can use the insights from this study to develop targeted strategies for engaging Gen Z, such as creating opportunities for individual performance, and addressing challenges related to job mobility and organizational loyalty.

The research questions are designed to explore the key factors that motivate Gen Z in the workplace. They emphasize the importance of understanding how recognition, skills development, employee well-being, and appreciation within the organization influence Gen Z's workplace motivation. These questions aim to provide insights into aligning organizational practices with the expectations and needs of this emerging workforce. The research questions are as follows:

- Does recognition from managers influence the workplace motivation of Gen Z employees? Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory from 1959 (Herzberg et al., 2017) suggests that recognition acts as a significant motivator by fulfilling the need for acknowledgment, driving engagement and satisfaction.
- Does the opportunity for skills development within a company motivate Gen Z employees? Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes the importance of autonomy and competence, and skill development is fulfilling the need for growth in the workplace.
- Does an organization's focus on employee well-being influence Gen Z's motivation at work? Job Demands–Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) highlights that well-being-enhancing resources reduce stress and increase motivation, aligning with preferences for balanced work environments.
- Does feeling appreciated by the organization motivate Gen Z employees? Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) emphasizes that employees who feel appreciated by their organization are more motivated to accomplish their tasks.

The choice of the sample was crucial in addressing the research questions, as it directly targeted Gen Z employees and included insights from managers to provide a complementary perspective. By focusing on Gen Z respondents, the study ensured alignment with its objective of exploring motivational drivers.

Additionally, the inclusion of managers from various industries added depth, providing a contextual understanding of Gen Z's workplace behaviors and expectations. This dual approach—quantitative data from Gen Z employees and qualitative data from managers—ensured a comprehensive analysis, effectively answering the research questions.

The results of this study provide insights into the motivational drivers of Gen Z in the workplace. Understanding that wage is the primary motivator, coupled with the

importance of recognition, appreciation, and well-being, offers a perspective on how organizations can effectively engage and retain Gen Z employees. By addressing these motivational factors, organizations can better align their policies with the needs of this generation.

The next section of this paper presents the literature review regarding Gen Z work motivators and formulates the research hypotheses. Section 3 presents the methodology and data. Section 4 discusses the model used. Section 5 debates the key findings. The last section concludes the paper.

2. Literature Review

Scholars argue that knowledge of generational differences allows managers to understand the needs of generations and learn about each generation's priorities, motivations, and communication styles (Vugts, 2016; Creary et al., 2019; Gates, 2023). Consequently, we try to find the particular traits of Gen Z from this perspective: Will they be able to take over the burden of management successfully when the time comes? We notice some uneasiness among specialists; they observe some disturbing traits among the members of this generation, including independence and individualistic approaches (Bond, 2016). Gen Z is more sensitive to episodes of demotivation and extrinsic motivation factors (Mahmoud et al., 2021); they have a reputation for mistrust of the status quo, disconnection, impatience, and demanding immediate action rather than long-term considerations (Vieira et al., 2020; Bărbulescu & Vasiluță-Ștefănescu, 2021; Fernandez et al., 2023); they also place unprecedented emphasis on personal well-being (Choughari, 2024).

Work motivation is considered an essential catalyst for the success of organizations as it promotes employees' effective performance (Vo et al., 2022). There are several previous studies that pointed out the correlations between higher motivation and higher performance (Qomariah et al., 2022; Taryana et al., 2023).

Maintaining high levels of employee motivation can be a challenge for many leaders because of the sheer number of factors that play a role in employee motivation. The debate regarding how motivation can enhance employee performance is deeply rooted in the theory of human behavior, which encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Nusraningrum et al., 2024). Worker needs are diverse, and what could motivate one employee will not necessarily motivate the others. However, fulfillment of basic needs is related to wellness and effective performance (Vo et al., 2022).

To promote engagement, managers should focus on creating a balance between an employee's contribution to the organization and their personal satisfaction (Dobrydney, 2023). When employees are engaged, they enroll and combine diverse aspects of their cognitive and psychological selves to transform their job tasks and special interactions into tangible accomplishments (Almawali et al., 2021).

Factors such as job fit and challenges, variety, feedback, recognition, and alignment with the organization's mission can impact engagement (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Dobrydney, 2023). Additionally, providing opportunities for continual learning and autonomy can help employees feel energized and engaged (Dobrydney, 2023). Several factors were found as contributors to the work motivation of Gen Z employees: learning and development, family, impact on others and society, passion and enjoyment, financial security, ability to provide for oneself, personal achievement, and self-rewards (Talamayan et al., 2024). Understanding how motivation impacts performance can help leaders develop effective strategies to increase it and create a work environment where employees feel inspired and thrive (Tenney, 2024).

This section discusses some factors, namely, work recognition, skills development, organizational well-being, and work appreciation, that can boost Gen Z's motivation, and that will be further evaluated with our research model.

2.1. Motivation and Work Recognition

Gen Z leans toward a more flexible work schedule, a program that is not only flexible but also enables work from home practice (Gaidhani et al., 2019; Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021; Siregar et al., 2023). However, Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2020) found that flexible working time is not one of this generation's top priorities.

Linked more literally to spending time at work, Gen Z may instead work from home as they prefer teamwork or knowledge sharing at a virtual level (Bencsik et al., 2016) because they have a low tendency to associate with colleagues (Dwivedula & Singh, 2021). Rice and Potts (2024) stated that employee engagement results from enhanced performance and productivity, which are sparked by rewards and recognition. The findings of Fratričová and Kirchmayer (2018) also pointed out that a lack of recognition, which was described 'in terms of lacking any work feedback or feeling unseen by superiors', is one barrier to motivation. Gen Z value possibilities for professional growth, a welcoming work environment, and recognition from superiors (Bińczycki et al., 2023).

When they are happy with the pay and recognition within the company, most employees react with high commitment (Saks, 2006). Economic incentives significantly impact workers' productivity and success (Swapna & Narayanamma, 2019; Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Other researchers stated that rewards and recognition serve as direct motivators that reflect the returns on an individual's investment of effort and time, enhancing their engagement (Bashir et al., 2023).

Starting from the previously mentioned statements, the following research hypothesis was constructed: Hypothesis 1—Gen Z members are motivated at work when they receive recognition from their manager.

2.2. Motivation and Skills Development

Skill development within this generation is highly appealing if the company supports it (Kariuki & Rohula, 2020). Previous research has shown that there are Gen Z members who feel they have grown their skills and abilities due to the mentorship they receive at the workplace, and the opportunity to improve their skills further is a motivational factor (Holopainen & Suslova, 2019; Dessel, 2024). Moreover, supervisor guidance seems to help Gen Z employees build formal interaction skills to be efficient at various tasks (Irin, 2023).

However, a study focused on retail employees mentioned that they do not feel they can use their skills at their workplace (Machova et al., 2022), hinting toward a negative answer to whether they could have developed their abilities within the company they are working at. Matching the employees' skills and jobs is essential as it is relevant for positive behavior due to physical and mental conditions such as stress (Hendratmoko & Mutiarawati, 2024).

Meaningful work, coupled with the company's training and development programs, contributes to growth and fulfillment, thereby maintaining high levels of motivation and engagement (Lin et al., 2021). Young people want to gain competencies that offer chances for advancement and self-improvement. In order to obtain experience and practice, they are seeking employment that will improve their skills and abilities (Bińczycki et al., 2023).

When applying for a job, the most commonly cited criterion is whether the organization offers development programs. They respect knowledge and experience, which raises expectations that they will be able to advance within the organization by improving their

skills. They favor occupations that call for particular competencies. They take pleasure in being able to use their talents at work (Nabahaniand & Riyanto, 2020).

Gen Z members, known for being very goal-oriented, want chances for advancement within their organization and continuous professional development (Schroth, 2019). Relying on a higher degree of knowledge, they want to feel fortunate and eventually attain better personal fulfillment (Meret et al., 2018).

Subsequently, the following research hypothesis was developed: Hypothesis 2—Gen Z members are motivated at work when they can develop their skills within the company.

2.3. Motivation and Organizational Well-Being

Chala et al. (2022) focused on the post-pandemic context specific to Gen Z. They showed some motivational changes toward well-being, amongst which there are motives for maintaining health and wanting to balance life and professional and personal growth. Bailey and Phillips (2015) studied the impact of motivation on the well-being of students, and the results showed that those interested in exploring and learning new concepts derived pleasure from the process of achieving and creating, showing the tendency to perceive a stronger sense of well-being.

Studies conducted by Rae and Lonborg (2015) on undergraduates using a renowned social media platform proved that the relationship specific to the quantity of the platform usage on 'psychological well-being was moderated by the motivation of the user'. The authors highlighted that the motivations of that specific social media platform strongly influence psychological well-being.

In addition, employees' mental health and well-being are linked to how creative and innovative they are at their workplace, impacting productivity, performance, and cost reduction (Ratnasari et al., 2023; Begley et al., 2023). A study by Xiang et al. (2024) also points out six dimensions of workplace well-being: personalization, identification, tolerance, responsibility, realization, and self-drive. They also noted that their Gen Z study group used their inherent motivations.

A company's psychological well-being is crucial since it directly affects worker satisfaction, engagement, and production. Workers with strong psychological well-being are more resilient and capable of problem-solving because they can handle stress and difficulties better (Dudija & Apriliansyah, 2024).

Consequently, the following hypothesis was constructed: Hypothesis 3—Gen Z is motivated at work when the organization aims to ensure the well-being of its employees.

2.4. Motivation and Work Appreciation

If work appreciation can be seen as a reward, Kutlák (2020) pointed out that it is one potent motivational that could also be a demotivational factor specific to Gen Z at the workplace alongside meaningful work. It is important to note that Gen Z workers are intrinsically motivated, especially when compared to generations X and Y, as they are seen as the 'Do-It-Yourself generation' (Gaidhani et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2021; Mahmoud et al., 2021).

A strong indicator for linking workplace motivation and work appreciation is highlighted by Kirchmayer and Fratričová (2020), showing that this generation enjoys work and focuses on reward and achievement. Furthermore, confirmation that the employee is doing things right is a good motivator and element for engagement. Gen Z employees want to feel valuable and that they are doing valuable work (Riksen & Spies, 2023). Employees from Gen Z value relationships with their coworkers and prefer to work together rather than compete. They also expect to be respected and appreciated (Bińczycki et al., 2023).

Baldonado (2018) mentioned that a motivational factor for Gen Z is recognition; hence, his recommendation is for employers to use rewards/motivation for employees within this

generation when they accomplish something at work; they can use rewards or increased responsibility as motivation. Hence, work appreciation can be exhibited through incentives aligned with the employee's needs, customized rewards, or even rewards such as the well-known employee of the month, thus exhibiting moral appreciation. However, our study finds that the financial motivator is dominant, a viewpoint aligned with [Niezurawska's \(2023\)](#) analysis.

Considering previous statements, we developed the following hypothesis: Hypothesis 4—Gen Z is motivated at work when they feel appreciated within the organization.

3. Methodology and Data

This paper used two types of research to identify Gen Z-triggering motivational factors at work. First, a quantitative study was conducted using a questionnaire to Gen Z respondents. Second, an in-depth interview of managers from different companies was applied to identify Gen Z's perceptions about the workplace.

3.1. Quantitative Research

The methodological approach, combining survey data with logistic regression analysis, adds robustness to the findings and offers results with practical implications. The quantitative research examines the relationship between motivation and work recognition, skills development, well-being, and work appreciation. The study was conducted among Gen Z in Romania using an online questionnaire between April and July 2024. The weblink to the online form was sent to respondents via email, and the authors provided face-to-face support to assist them in completing it. A convenience sampling strategy was used to reach Gen Z.

The study employed the convenience sampling method, which involves selecting respondents from an easily accessible subset of the population ([Baxter et al., 2015](#); [Edgar & Manz, 2017](#)). While this approach is considered one of the less robust forms of non-probabilistic sampling, it is frequently utilized to gather diverse perspectives and opinions that can serve as a foundation for further investigation in future studies ([Albert et al., 2010](#)). We collected 316 valid, filled questionnaires.

3.1.1. Research Description and Sample

The questionnaire for Gen Z members comprises close-ended, selected polytomous, Likert scale, and dichotomous questions. The first section of the questionnaire covered basic demographic information about the person. The predictor factors of work motivation, which are included in the second half of the questionnaire, are as follows: work recognition (WorkR), skills development (Skills), well-being within the organization (WB), and work appreciation (WorkA). An overview of the factors that affect Gen Z's motivation is described in [Table 1](#).

The majority of respondents were female, with a percentage of 54.1%. Approximately 58.3% of respondents have a bachelor's or a master's degree, 38.3% have high school/professional or post-secondary studies, and 3.4% have doctoral studies. Out of the 316 respondents, 31% are unemployed, while 69% are employed. More than 42% of participants had below RON 1500 of their income (approx. EUR 300), 38% had between RON 1500 and RON 4000 (approx. EUR 800), and the rest had more than RON 4000.

While this study focuses on Gen Z, a small subset of Gen Y respondents (12.3% of the sample) was included in the analysis. This decision was made to preserve the integrity of the dataset and to reflect broader trends that may be relevant to overlapping life stages of younger generations. The sample representation is displayed in [Table 2](#).

Table 1. Response variable ‘motivation’ and predictors.

Variable	Questions from the Questionnaire	Type	Code
Work motivation	Do you feel motivated at work?	Dichotomous	Motivation
Work recognition from the manager	Do you receive or have you received recognition from your manager for your work?	Dichotomous	WorkR
Skills development within the company	Do you feel you have opportunities to develop your skills within the company?	Dichotomous	Skills
The organization aims to ensure the well-being of its employees	Do you agree that the organization you work for aims to ensure the well-being of its employees?	Dichotomous	WB
Work appreciation	How valued do you feel your work is?	Polytomous (Likert scale)	WorkA

Table 2. Demographic characteristics.

Variable		Sample Size N = 316	Share (%)
Gender	Male	145	45.9
	Female	171	54.1
Education level	High school/Professional/Post-secondary studies	121	38.3
	Bachelor/Master	184	58.3
	PhD	11	3.4
Income	Below RON 1500	134	42.4
	RON 1500–4000	120	38.0
	Above RON 4000	62	19.6

Note: EUR 1 ~ RON 5.

Preliminary checks indicated that the inclusion of these individuals did not significantly alter the overall trends identified in the analysis (see Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics—average of key questionnaire variables for Gen Z and Gen Y.

Variable	Gen Z	Gen Y
Work motivation	0.74	0.78
Work recognition from the manager	0.71	0.78
Skills development within the company	0.84	0.78
The organization aims to ensure the well-being of its employees	0.78	0.73
Work appreciation	3.50	3.63

The analysis of the average of the key questionnaire variables for Gen Y respondents yielded results consistent with those of Gen Z, indicating that their inclusion is unlikely to significantly affect the observed trends.

Also, a set of close-ended questions was introduced in the questionnaire to identify further the main influence determinants that affect the work motivation of respondents. The results of these answers are presented in the paper.

3.1.2. Multivariate Binary Logistic Model Description

A multivariate binary logistic regression model was used to evaluate the data and identify how the predictors, WorkR, Skills, WB, and WorkA, influence the independent variable 'Motivation'. The dependent variable (motivation) and the predictors, WorkR, Skills, and WB, were dichotomous/binary, while the WorkA predictor was a polytomous variable using a 5-point Likert scale.

This research applied the multivariate binary logistic regression model. In a logistic regression model, a linear combination of independent variables (X_s) and the probability of an event of interest, $P(Y = 1)$, are constructed as a relationship between p and the logit link function. The logit link function is the natural log of the odds ratio, or the ratio between the chance of an event of interest occurring (if it occurred, p , and if it did not, $1 - p$) (Srimaneekam et al., 2022).

$$\text{logit}(p) = \ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_n X_n \quad (1)$$

In the above equation, β_n is a regression coefficient for each X_n independent variable (predictor). Y is the continuous response variable, which is binary ($Y = 1$ (yes) or 0 (no)). The odds (or the odds ratio) is $p/(1 - p)$. The previous equation can be rearranged as follows:

$$p = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\omega}} \quad (2)$$

IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.0 was used to perform the binary logistic model. Several statistics were deployed to evaluate the model's goodness of fit. Examining how closely the model's predicted values match the observed values is one way to determine the fit quality (Rastogi & Singh, 2019).

The ability of a model to discriminate or anticipate the response's consequence is known as discrimination. As a result, the Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROCs) curve's graphical representation shows how closely forecasts match the data. The optimal model was determined to be the one with the highest sensitivity and the lowest specificity. The model with a larger area under the ROC curve (AUC) was deemed the better. The AUC has a value between 0 and 1. An AUC of 1.0 indicates a model whose predictions are 100% correct.

The assessment of multi-collinearity between the independent variables was also performed. Collinearity causes the logit coefficients' variance and/or standard error to increase, leading to inaccurate conclusions about the relationships between the independent and dependent variables (Midi et al., 2010). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to measure multi-collinearity. The reciprocal of VIF (tolerance) can also be used to detect multi-collinearity. Tolerance's value should be higher than 0.1 to avoid multi-collinearity.

The coefficient of determination can be estimated using the following techniques: the Cox and Snell Index, Nagelkerke's Index, and McFadden's R2. These indicators measure the goodness of fit in logistic regression analysis. Nagelkerke R2 ranges from 0 to 1, with values nearer 1 denoting a better model fit. The maximum Cox and Snell pseudo-R2 for logistic regression is 0.75 or lower (Baguley, 2012). Another variation is McFadden's R2, which is based on the log-likelihood kernels for the complete estimated and intercept-only models.

The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients are used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the baseline model and the new model's log-likelihoods, and it uses chi-square tests. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test aids in examining how closely the observed proportions of events match the anticipated likelihood of occurring in the model's subgroups (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000). According to the test's interpretation,

significant values (with $p < 0.05$) imply a poor model fit, but small values (with $p > 0.05$) indicate a robust model fit.

The odds ratio (OR) ($\exp(B)$) lists the degree of correlation between the two occurrences. Given a specific independent variable, OR represents the odds that a response or event will occur and contrasts with the odds that the response or event would happen without that exposure (Rastogi & Singh, 2019).

3.2. In-Depth Interviews

To put our conceptual background to the test, we conducted 20 in-depth interviews with managers from diverse fields. The interviews were based on close- and open-ended questions, prompting the respondents to use a storytelling approach to describe their experiences managing different generations in the workforce in a turbulent and volatile environment. We randomly sampled managers through a LinkedIn query. The sample included managers from all four generations working in sectors ranging from academia to agriculture. A semi-structured interview was used. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Almost all invited interviewees accepted and participated in Skype, Zoom, and WhatsApp interviews.

The allotted time for the interviews was roughly forty minutes. The interview schedule was followed, with the interviewees being asked the same questions in the same sequence. An overview of the study was given before the interviews began. After every interview, the researchers examined the transcribed audio recordings. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Table 4 displays the respondents' general demographic data (age, gender, and education).

Table 4. In-depth respondents' profiles.

Respondent	Role in Company	Field of Activity	Gender	Age	Education
Respondent 1	E	P	M	65+	(1)
Respondent 2	MM	I	M	30–45	(1)
Respondent 3	MM	S	M	45–65	(1)
Respondent 4	MM	S	M	30–45	(1)
Respondent 5	LM	S	F	45–65	(1)
Respondent 6	MM	NGO	M	30–45	(1)
Respondent 7	LM	Ed	F	30–45	(2)
Respondent 8	E	Ed	M	45–65	(2)
Respondent 9	MM	S	F	45–65	(1)
Respondent 10	LM	Ed	M	45–65	(2)
Respondent 11	UM	S	M	45–65	(1)
Respondent 12	UM	NGO	F	45–65	(1)
Respondent 13	MM	I	M	30–45	(1)
Respondent 14	UM	TT	M	45–65	(1)
Respondent 15	MM	S	F	65+	(1)
Respondent 16	UM	Ed	M	45–65	(1)
Respondent 17	MM	TT	F	45–65	(1)
Respondent 18	UM	TT	M	45–65	(2)
Respondent 19	UM	S	M	45–65	(2)
Respondent 20	E	P	M	30–45	(1)

Note: Entrepreneur—E; upper manager—UM; middle manager—MM; low-level manager—LM; production—P; industry—I; education—Ed; S—services (retail, real estate, consultancy, housing); transport and telecommunication—TT; male—M; female—F; bachelor's/master's degree/postgraduate university/MBA—(1); PhD—(2).

The managers were asked to provide insights into various aspects related to the following topics:

- Perceptions of whether this generation exhibits different behaviors and values.
- Management's focus on ensuring the well-being of employees.
- Whether this generation requires similar motivation tactics from their employer.
- Observations on differences in commitment and loyalty.
- Propensity to migrate to other companies.

4. Research Results and Comments

4.1. Model Validation

The first step in the model analysis is to run the previously discussed goodness of fit tests to validate the proposed model. The ROC curve is displayed in Figure 1.

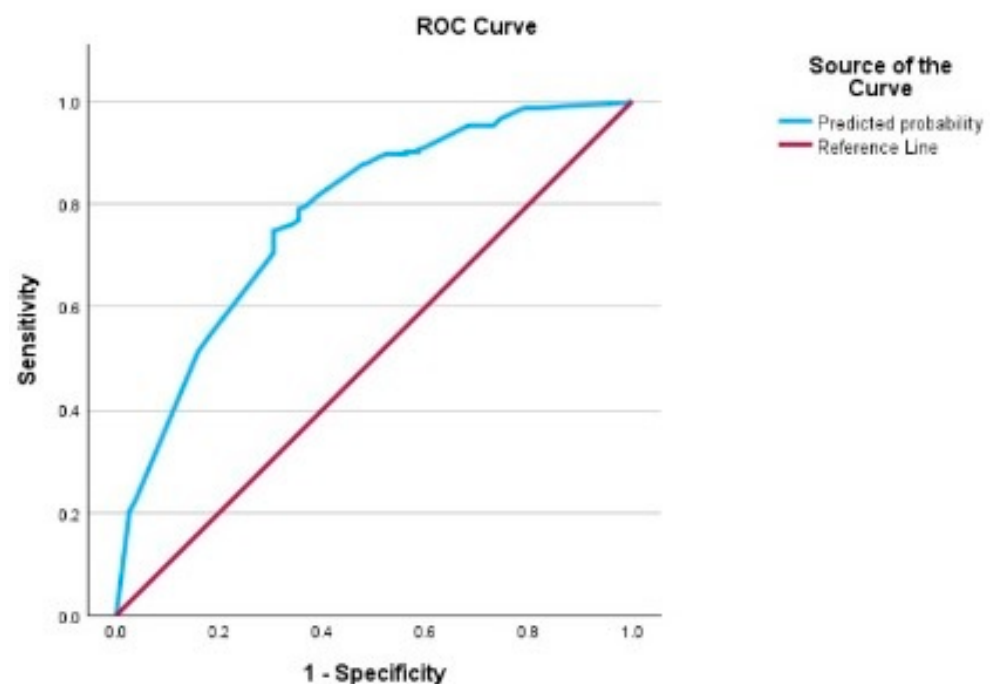


Figure 1. ROC Curve. Source: Authors own work.

The study's predictor variables did not exhibit multi-collinearity. The VIF for each predictor factor is listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Collinearity statistics.

	Tolerance	VIF
WorkR	0.776	1.289
Skills	0.810	1.235
WB	0.802	1.247
WorkA	0.826	1.211

These predictor variables can be utilized to fit the logistic regression since $1 < VIF < 5$ in every case (between 1.211 and 1.289). All of the predictors' tolerance values were higher than 0.1 (between 0.776 and 0.826), meaning multi-collinearity does not exist.

The collinearity statistics are presented in Table 6. According to the Omnibus test, chi-square is highly significant (chi-square = 66.493; $df = 7$; $p < 0.001$), so our new model is

significantly better than the baseline model. AUC is 0.778, which means there is a 77.8% probability that the model can discriminate between positive and negative classes.

Table 6. Model fit tests.

Model Fit Tests	Outcomes
Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients	Chi-square = 66.493; df = 7; $p < 0.001$
Pseudo R-Square	Cox and Snell = 0.190; Nagelkerke = 0.278; McFadden = 0.177
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	Chi-square = 1.726; df = 6; $p = 0.943 (>0.05)$
Area Under the ROC Curve	Predicted probability: 0.778

The significance values are $p < 0.001$, suggesting that adding our predictor variables enhances the model's accuracy. The classification table shows that the model correctly classifies 41.5% as not being motivated and 90.2% as being motivated at work, and the overall accuracy is 77.5% compared with the initial percentage of 74.1%. Pseudo-R² = 0.190 (Cox–Snell); pseudo-R² = 0.278 (Nagelkerke); and pseudo-R² = 0.177 (McFadden) provide a rough measure of the model's effect size. The observed proportion of events was similar to the predicted probabilities because the Hosmer–Lemeshow test results clearly showed that the significance level was greater than 0.05 ($p = 0.943$), which is why it was concluded that the model fits the data.

4.2. Model Estimations

Once the logistic regression assumptions are met, the data set used to fit the model consists of four predictor variables: WorkR, Skills, WB, and WorkA. The 'motivation' was the dependent variable. The estimated coefficients, standard error (SE), and Wald test are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Variables in equation.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)
WorkR	0.876	0.331	7.000	1	0.008 ***	2.400	1.255–4.591
Skills	1.067	0.364	8.615	1	0.003 ***	2.908	1.426–5.930
WB	0.738	0.333	4.919	1	0.027 **	2.091	1.090–4.014
WorkA			8.531	4	0.074 *		
WorkA (1)	0.548	0.728	0.567	1	0.451	1.730	0.415–7.202
WorkA (2)	0.522	0.637	0.670	1	0.413	1.685	0.483–5.872
WorkA (3)	0.895	0.668	1.797	1	0.180	2.448	0.661–9.061
WorkA (4)	2.044	0.809	6.383	1	0.012 **	7.725	1.582–37.733
Constant	−1.687	0.649	6.766	1	0.009 ***	0.185	

Note: *** Significance at 1% level, ** at 5% level, and * at 10% level.

The Wald test estimation is obtained by comparing the beta coefficients' maximal likelihood estimates (B_i) to their SE. Therefore, the Wald and significance column in Table 7 shows that WorkR, Skills, and WB significantly impact motivation ($p < 0.05$) at a 95% confidence interval. Similarly, it was clear from examining Table 7 that motivation is significantly influenced by WorkA(4) ($p = 0.012 < 0.05$). Nonetheless, there was no discernible variation ($p > 0.05$) found in WorkA(1) ($p = 0.451$), WorkA(2) ($p = 0.413$), or WorkA(3) ($p = 0.180$).

Table 7 indicates the sign of the computed logistic model's coefficients. The sign of B shows how predictor variables affect the dependent variable. The sign is positive for all the significant predictors, indicating that those variables positively influence 'motivation'.

Table 7 presents OR (Exp(B)) for the predictors. When the predictor variable increases, the event—‘motivation’—has higher odds of occurring when $OR > 1$. This implies that the likelihood of having a more motivated Gen Z at work rises with work recognition, skills, and well-being.

OR for the Gen Z respondents who received recognition (WorkR) indicates that they are about 2.4 times more motivated than those who do not receive recognition at work ($p = 0.008, < 0.01$). Any value between 1.255 and 4.591 is possible (95% CI—confidence interval). The range of values that make up these CIs will likely contain the actual OR values.

For Skills, $OR = 2.908$ indicates that Gen Z are about 2.9 times more motivated when they appreciate that their skills can be developed within the company compared to those who do not consider that their skills can be developed within the company (p -value = $0.003 < 0.01$). Any value between 1.426 and 5.930 is possible (95% CI).

As it concerns WB, $OR = 2.091$ shows that Gen Z is about 2.1 times more motivated when they perceive that the organization in which they work aims to provide well-being to their employees than those who do not. Any value between 1.090 and 4.014 is possible (95% CI).

OR for WorkA(4) is 7.725, which indicates the odds that Gen Z becomes motivated because they feel very appreciated at work (5 points Likert scale WorkA; 5—very appreciated), are approximately eight times higher than the odds that Gen Z feels not at all appreciated (5 points scale WB; 1—not at all appreciated).

5. Discussions

5.1. Discussions on Model Findings

The previously presented outcomes display exciting and valuable insights into Gen Z work motivators. Work recognition, skills development, and well-being within the company were statistically significant predictors of work motivation when the test of association between motivation and the predictor factors was performed.

The research questions of this study were designed to explore the key factors influencing Gen Z’s workplace motivation, and the hypotheses were developed to test these relationships empirically. Each validated hypothesis provides evidence that answers the respective research question.

First, the research question, ‘Does feeling appreciated by the organization motivate Gen Z employees?’, is directly addressed by the partial validation of Hypothesis 4. The strongest predictor for work motivation in Gen Z was ‘very high work appreciation’. If Gen Z’s work is very appreciated within the organization, they feel motivated. Not all positive appreciation is essential to motivate Gen Z at work, but just very high appreciation. Gen Z wants to celebrate both great and minor victories. Companies must learn to integrate greater employee appreciation into their operational procedures (Otieno & Nyambegera, 2019). An organization’s support system for staff members reflects how much the company values their contributions. Positive feelings are produced when workers feel appreciated and understood and their abilities are valued (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019; Xueyun et al., 2023). Consequently, Hypothesis 4 is partially validated. The findings highlight the importance of tailored strategies to provide meaningful recognition.

The research question, ‘Does the opportunity for skills development within a company motivate Gen Z employees?’, is answered through the validation of Hypothesis 2. The second strongest predictor of Gen Z work motivation was ‘Skills’, meaning that Gen Z feel more motivated when they appreciate that their skills can be developed within the company. Regarding professional growth, Gen Z desires managers to be personal advisors and assist staff members in advancing their careers (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Also,

in-depth interviews revealed that ‘Younger generations are into constant learning. They are into self-development, not necessarily hierarchical, into careers’ (Respondent 6).

Gen Z appears to be driven by the prospect of landing their ideal career and developing their skill set (Ogunsola et al., 2024). An entrepreneurial attitude drives this workforce, seeks direct contribution to the firm, wants to influence outcomes, and benefits from an established and well-known organization (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Ogunsola et al., 2024). They want coaching and mentoring to expand their skill sets on the job (Nguyen Ngoc et al., 2022; Khanna & Dutta, 2023). By giving Gen Z a growth orientation, career counseling and coaching can assist them in developing the abilities and tactics required to adjust to shifting situations in their lives and jobs (Donald & Manville, 2023). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is validated. This result supports the idea that fostering skill enhancement within the organization is a key driver of workplace motivation for this generation.

The research question, ‘Does recognition from managers influence the workplace motivation of Gen Z employees?’, aligns with the validation of Hypothesis 1. The third predictor exerting a high influence on motivation is work recognition. Organizations must adopt a strategic approach to recognizing and rewarding Gen Z personnel (Gochangco & Ocenar, 2024). According to Nieżurawska (2023), this generation’s work–life balance seems optimal, as they are satisfied with it. They choose companies that provide such packages or perceive this balance as enough. It appears that they are currently focused on reaching professional success. In conclusion, Hypothesis 1 is validated, and the results reinforce the role of managerial acknowledgment in driving engagement and productivity.

The research question, ‘Does an organization’s focus on employee well-being influence Gen Z’s motivation at work?’, is answered by the validation of Hypothesis 3. The last predictor encompassed in the econometric model was well-being, which proved to be a variable that supports Gen Z motivation. Organizations should ensure the well-being of their employees. According to Xiang et al. (2024), Gen Z employers should cultivate six dimensions of workplace well-being: self-drive, personalization, responsibility, tolerance, realization, and identification. According to the in-depth interviews, ‘Well-being is becoming increasingly important for younger generations’ (Respondent 14).

Moreover, Respondent 4 stated, ‘Gen Z find their motivation either in many days off, for achieving personal goals (such as increasing their fitness condition, technology detox, spending quality time with family and friends) or in communal activities related to teambuilding trips and workshops, that conclude with many pictures, videos or other testimonials including all the members of the team, alongside a certificate of participation or even a distinction that highlights the various formal and informal qualities of the recipients (for example punctuality, humor, fair play etc.’.

Also, Respondent 18 believes that ‘emotional commitment is much more pronounced among young employees. Employees are looking for a balance between work and personal life. Still, employee well-being is the cornerstone of a solid company, and that is why we invest in finding a balance between professional life and private life (free employee access to medical clinics, entertainment and cultural programs)’.

Considering the previous statement, we can conclude that Hypothesis 3 is validated. This finding highlights the importance of prioritizing employee well-being as a core component of organizational motivational strategies. Thus, considering the characteristics of the motivational profiles of youth in contemporary settings, business management ought to give particular attention to a set of non-material motivational instruments, which include new labor organization regulations, equitable compensation, flexible work schedules, excellent communication, psychological support in times of ambiguity, and other well-being management instruments (Chala et al., 2022).

5.2. Further Discussions on Research Findings

As previously mentioned, Gen Z answered closed questions about motivation factors that increase work efficiency, teamwork, and loyalty to the organization. In-depth interviews were also conducted to investigate Gen Z's motivation factors from the employers' perspective.

Respondent 2 declared, 'Displayed behaviors vary from generation to generation; their motivators differ substantially. Values (e.g., innovation, courage, rigor, etc.), on the other side, do not seem to differ among generations, but between individuals'. Still, 'every generation has its core values and humanity should not judge any generation as long as it is scientifically proven that from generation-to-generation humanity has progressed more and more in all areas that have a major impact on the transformation of people for the better. Naturally, each generation brings new elements of identity that will help it address the challenges of the time interval in which it manifests itself' (Respondent 18).

Motivation factors that Gen Z appreciated as increasing work efficiency were wage as the primary motivator, with a percentage of 73.1% of the answers. It is the primary stimulus for Gen Z to consider becoming more work-efficient (see Figure 2).

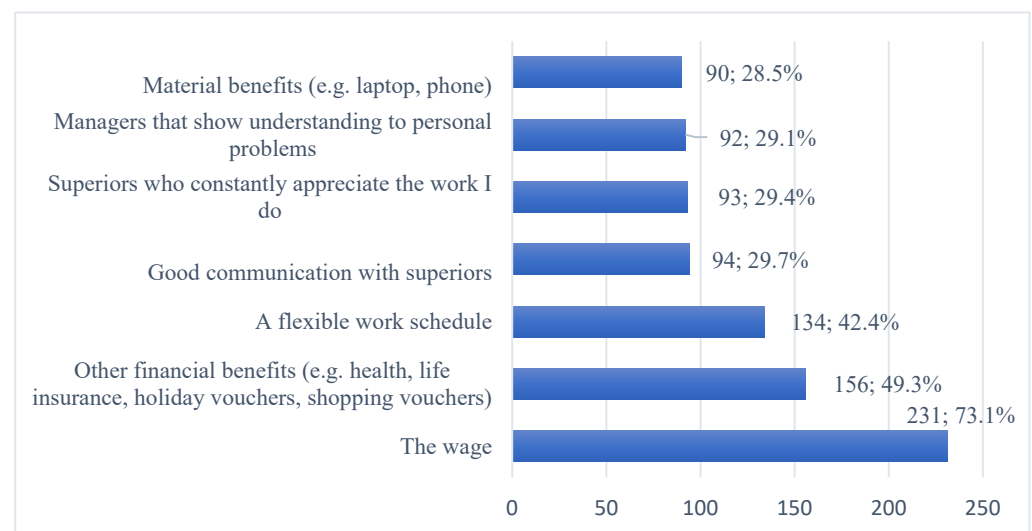


Figure 2. Motivation factors to increase Gen Z work efficiency. Source: Authors own work.

The remaining motivating factors registered percentages below 50%, meaning that less than half of the Gen Z respondents agree with the factors mentioned below. Other financial benefits such as health, life insurance, holiday vouchers, and shopping vouchers were declared by 49.3% of Gen Z respondents. Also, 'a flexible work schedule' was considered by 42.4% of the respondents, which should be further taken into consideration by employers. The rest of the motivators, receiving a similar number of answers, were as follows: 'good communication with superiors' (29.7%); 'superiors that constantly appreciate the work' (29.4%); and 'managers that show understanding to personal problems' (29.1%). Also, in-depth interviews showed that 'Gen Z tend to be more flexible, more adventurous and more demanding concerning the payment and promotion policy, and also to reducing the commute time in favor of free time spent among nature or attending their hobbies' (Respondent 13). These results are further underlined by the fact that most Gen Z members prefer an insecure job as long as it provides a high salary (59%) (see Figure 3).

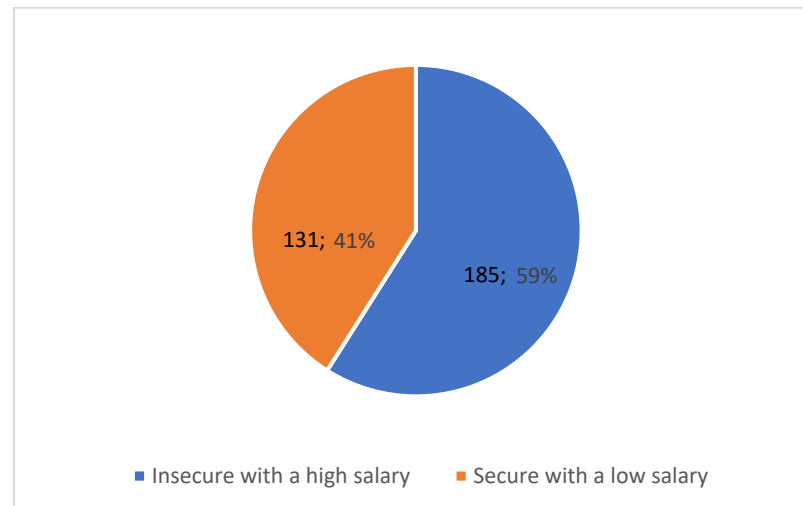


Figure 3. If you had to choose, you would choose a job.

Another motivating factor that was interviewed referred to teamwork. Is teamwork considered by Gen Z a factor that stimulates work efficiency? Gen Z's answers revealed that they are not necessarily teamwork-oriented, as just 31% of the respondents mentioned that teamwork is more effective for them. The most significant percentage was noted by those who prefer to work alone to become more efficient (37%). Almost 32% of Gen Z appreciate their efficiency in both situations (teamwork and working alone). The statistics are presented in Figure 4.

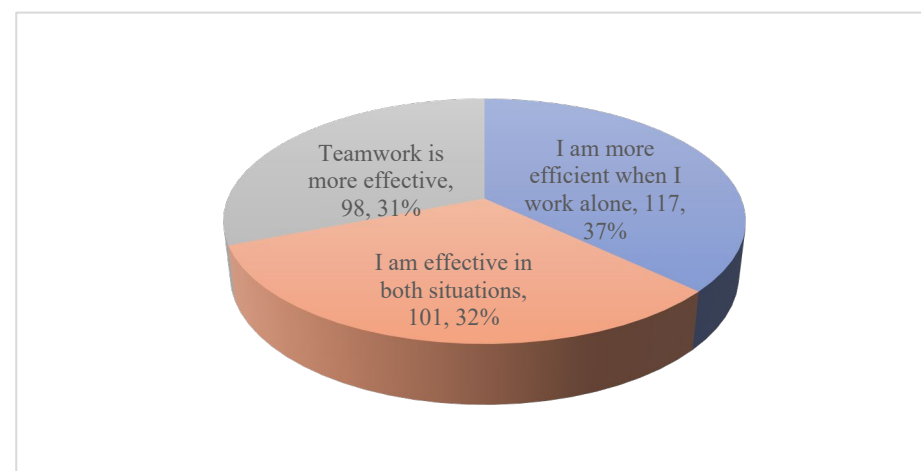


Figure 4. To be effective at work, do you prefer to work alone or in a team?

Gen Z wants to oversee their projects so they can demonstrate their abilities. They do not want to rely on others to complete their tasks. This generation tends to shy away from teamwork and wants to work alone (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Ogunsola et al., 2024). They have a distinct mindset; they do not believe in contingent pay for teamwork because they represent a generation of lone children who struggle with collaboration. They are among the most individualistic experts in a group (Niezurawska, 2023).

The loyalty issue is another aspect that the managers of Gen Z frequently mention, as this generation is perceived as the one that switches jobs often. As the results show in Figure 5, 41% of Gen Z mentioned that they intend to stay in the current organization between 1 and 3 years, while 26% desire to stay less than a year and just 21% want to stay between 3 and 5 years. Just a small percentage of 12% expressed that it is the organization that they want to lead one day. These results are in line with the results from the in-depth

interviews. Respondent 18 stated, 'We have noticed that most employees find it very difficult to be loyal; they prefer to approach the job from a financial point of view vs. the time allocated'. Also, Respondent 6 declared, 'It's not about loyalty to the organization, but about loyalty to the cause! Their connection to the kind of work'.

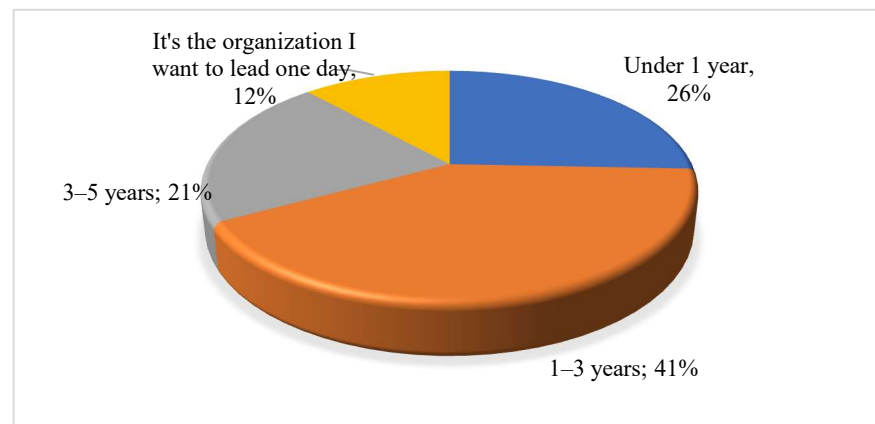


Figure 5. How long do you intend to stay in your current organization?

Compared to previous generations, this generation switches employment more frequently. They are willing to change immediately if they do not like something (Csiszárík-Kocsír & Garia-Fodor, 2018; Ogunsola et al., 2024). Unlike the previous generations, they are rarely eager to dedicate themselves to a company (Klein, 2018). 'The younger is restless and more susceptible to be lured away by other companies' (Respondent 1). Respondent 7 stated, 'Younger generations are driven more by their interests. They leave if they can pursue their interests elsewhere'.

Younger generations are prone to changing jobs more easily; job security is not yet one of their priorities. Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022) also underlined that Gen Z employees switch jobs more frequently. Therefore, human resource departments must find ways to attract new hires and provide Gen Z employees with the resources required to remain within the organization.

6. Conclusions

This paper used multivariate binary logistic regression analysis to examine the factors that motivate Gen Z in the workplace. Four predictors, work recognition, skills development, well-being within the organization, and work appreciation, were used to explain Gen Z work motivation. All four predictors proved to influence work motivation significantly.

Wage is the primary motivator for Gen Z to increase work efficiency, with other financial and non-financial factors being less significant. Work is primarily a means of earning money despite members of Gen Z seeking opportunities for self-fulfillment (Bińczycki et al., 2023). While money is undoubtedly important to them, it is not the most important factor when they are looking for a job (Nabahaniand & Riyanto, 2020). Gen Z is generally not teamwork-oriented and prefers working alone to demonstrate their abilities and achieve greater efficiency. Gen Z switches jobs frequently and shows low loyalty to organizations, often prioritizing personal preferences over long-term commitment. They prefer to change occupations rather than remaining in one position for an extended period (Nabahaniand & Riyanto, 2020).

Gen Z needs high organizational leadership or management appreciation to feel motivated and improve their work efficiency. Also, they want to feel recognized, appreciated, and acknowledged for their efforts and contributions. Personalized appreciation, social recognition, and digital and rapid recognition are essential tactics managers can implement.

Work recognition and rewards, as we previously noted that wages remain the primary motivating factor, could increase motivation. With these managerial tools, they might become more loyal to their organization. For these reasons, such as a lack of appreciation, recognition, well-being, and skills, Gen Z does not want to stay long-term in an organization as they seek more fulfilling and affirming employment outside their companies.

Could these traits create a substantial gap in the managerial workforce? Maybe not, but it is well-known that when there is a need, it is also an opportunity for some—a gap will be filled quickly. The problem could be the quality of the filling material. Recruiting and retaining talent are two principal challenges companies face (Shet, 2020). Managers must shape the company workplace environment to encourage the employees to work efficiently and connect their future with the company (Nieżurawska, 2023). That issue should be tackled today: training, motivation, empathy, selection, and career management process (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021).

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by expanding the understanding of Gen Z's workplace motivations, focusing on a less-studied context—Romanian Gen Z members. Earlier studies have emphasized flexible work schedules and virtual teamwork (Gaidhani et al., 2019; Bencsik et al., 2016) while noting Gen Z's low association with colleagues (Dwivedula & Singh, 2021). Recognition was shown to enhance performance and engagement (Rice & Potts, 2024), with a lack of feedback often demotivating Gen Z workers (Fratricová & Kirchmayer, 2018). Skill development is a key motivator, especially when it is supported through mentorship and growth opportunities (Holopainen & Suslova, 2019; Dessel, 2024), though some workers feel their abilities remain underutilized (Machova et al., 2022). Well-being, particularly post-pandemic, has emerged as a critical driver linked to motivation, creativity, and productivity (Chala et al., 2022; Ratnasari et al., 2023). Similarly, appreciation and meaningful work are motivators for Gen Z, aligning with their preference for rewards and acknowledgment of their contributions (Kutlák, 2020; Riksen & Spies, 2023).

This paper offers a balanced theoretical exploration of workplace motivation, integrating perspectives from both Gen Z employees and their managers. It presents an econometric model identifying key predictors of Gen Z motivation, such as recognition, appreciation, skills development, and well-being. Additionally, the study contributes to the literature by addressing gaps with regionally specific insights from Romania, providing valuable guidance for both academics and practitioners.

The practical contribution is highlighted by exploring strategies for stimulating Gen Z workplace motivation while addressing associated challenges and proposing potential solutions. The study emphasizes approaches like personalized recognition, skills development, and retention programs, which can enhance engagement, loyalty, and productivity.

The findings of this study underline managerial implications for effectively engaging Gen Z in the workplace. Managers can foster a more supportive and engaging work environment by adopting personalized recognition systems, cultivating a culture of appreciation, and offering opportunities for skill development. These approaches address Gen Z's desire for acknowledgment and can enhance their loyalty to the organization. Furthermore, their preference for individual work over teamwork requires a balanced strategy, combining autonomy with the gradual development of teamwork abilities. The study also reveals Gen Z's tendency to frequently switch jobs and demonstrate low organizational loyalty, emphasizing the need for innovative retention strategies, including clear career pathways and targeted training programs. By addressing these characteristics proactively, organizations can minimize workforce gaps and maintain a high-quality talent pool.

Prioritizing meaningful work appreciation requires managers to go beyond general positive feedback, as it is a key predictor of Gen Z workplace motivation. Well-structured

programs that emphasize individual contributions, such as one-on-one feedback sessions or tailored rewards, can be highly effective. However, these strategies may involve significant resource investments, underscoring the importance of monitoring their impact over time. Incorporating team-based activities can balance group achievements with personalized appreciation. Consistency and frequency in delivering appreciation are essential for sustaining motivation and fostering organizational loyalty.

Fostering skill development enhances Gen Z motivation by offering learning programs, mentoring systems, and on-the-job training. Flexible career pathways align with their preference for self-development. Managers should communicate growth opportunities while balancing individual aspirations with organizational goals to maintain focus and productivity.

Strengthening work recognition is vital for Gen Z motivation. Managers can implement transparent reward systems focused on individuals, such as peer recognition programs or point-based incentives. Recognition should highlight efforts surpassing expectations, remain meaningful, and avoid fostering unfair competition, ensuring a balanced and impactful approach to motivating employees.

Promoting employee well-being is a strong motivator for Gen Z, encompassing flexible work schedules, psychological support, and equitable compensation. Initiatives like fitness programs, cultural events, medical access, and supportive leave policies can enhance motivation. However, managers must balance these with organizational goals, as well-being programs often require significant financial and logistical resources. Carefully selected tools such as mental health apps, flexible arrangements, and work–life balance programs can address Gen Z's needs while ensuring alignment with productivity and organizational priorities.

Implementing new measures presents challenges that may impact company culture and existing approaches. Key considerations to address include resource availability, alignment with organizational goals, resistance to change, and generational diversity.

While the recommendations for stimulating Gen Z workplace motivation offer practical solutions, their implementation should consider resource availability, especially for SMEs, as efficient resource allocation is critical. Managers could start with cost-effective measures, gradually increasing budgets based on results, or outsource well-being initiatives to external stakeholders for cost reduction. Implementation often entails change, which requires employee buy-in to avoid internal resistance. Organizational change becomes more achievable when employees are motivated and enthusiastic about their work. To address resistance, managers can focus on fostering 'organizational buy-in' (Olson, 2023) through a top–down approach, where leadership conducts training sessions to demonstrate the implementation process effectively.

Managerial buy-in is equally crucial, particularly as some Gen Z members may hold leadership positions. Challenges include aligning motivational policies with organizational goals and mitigating generational clashes, as diverse employees may not equally resonate with Gen Z-focused strategies. Individual differences within Gen Z can result in varied responses to the same policies. Designing targeted motivational strategies for different employee groups offers an effective approach to address these differences and ensuring tailored solutions that align with both individual needs and organizational objectives. The generalizability of the results in this study is influenced by its focus on Romanian Gen Z members and the use of convenience sampling. While the study provides valuable insights into motivational drivers, its findings are most directly applicable to the Romanian workforce. Cultural, economic, and organizational differences in other regions may limit the broader applicability of these results. Furthermore, the convenience sampling method, while practical for reaching the target population, may not fully represent the diversity of

Gen Z members, potentially underrepresenting subgroups such as those with lower levels of education or those who may not have completed high school. Insights from managers reflect industry-specific contexts and may not be universally applicable.

This study has several limitations. The convenience sampling method, although effective in reaching respondents within Romania, restricts the broader applicability of the findings. The relatively small sample size, particularly for qualitative interviews, may not fully capture the diversity of Gen Z or managerial perspectives, and certain subgroups within Gen Z may have been underrepresented. Additionally, the inclusion of a small number of Gen Y respondents, constituting 12.3% of the sample, is acknowledged as a limitation. However, this was deemed acceptable to maintain a sufficient sample size for meaningful analysis. These limitations underscore the need for caution when interpreting the findings beyond the specific context of this study.

Future research should aim to expand the sample size and increase diversity by including Gen Z participants from various cultural and economic backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Addressing potential underrepresentation of subgroups, such as those with lower levels of education, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's perspectives. Additionally, exploring other potential motivators could offer valuable insights for employers seeking to enhance Gen Z's work efficiency and retention in the workplace. Incorporating a broader range of organizational and industry contexts across different regions could further validate and enrich the study's findings.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: This study involved a survey on factors motivating Generation Z in the workplace. The research did not involve any intervention, treatment, or collection of sensitive personal data. The survey questions were designed to gather opinions and perceptions without any identifiable personal information. After careful consideration and consultation with the authors' institutions' guidelines on ethical research, it was determined that this study does not pose more than a minimal risk to participants. Consequently, the authors believe that formal ethical approval was not required for the following reasons: the survey consisted solely of opinion-based questions that did not require participants to disclose personal or sensitive information; participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences; and the survey was conducted anonymously, ensuring that no identifiable personal data were collected. Given these points, the authors believe that ethical approval from an institutional review board or ethics committee was not necessary for this study.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed verbal consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data are available at <https://figshare.com/ndownloader/files/49384561>.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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