Generation Z's Work Values: An Empirical Study in Van[*]

Z Kuşağının Çalışma Değerleri: Van'da Ampirik Bir Çalışma

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Öz

İşletmeler, faaliyetlerini sürdürebilmek için her zaman nitelikli iş gücüne ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Günümüz iş dünyasında, işletmeler farklı kuşaklardan çalışanları bünyelerinde barındırmaktadır. Geçmişte Y kuşağının iş gücüne katılımıyla başlayan değişimler, günümüzde Z kuşağının istihdam edilmeye başlanmasıyla devam etmektedir. Her kuşak, kendine özgü özellikler ve değerlerle iş hayatına giriş yapmıştır; Z kuşağı da iş dünyasında farklılıklarıyla kendine yer edinmiştir. İşletmeler, gelecekte Z kuşağı çalışanlarıyla daha da şekillenecek ve bu kuşağa olan ihtiyaç giderek artacaktır. Bu nedenle, Z kuşağının iş hayatındaki rolü ve değerleri daha iyi anlaşılmalı ve analiz edilmelidir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın amacı, Z kuşağı çalışanlarının iş değerlerinin belirlenmesidir. Araştırma kapsamında, Van ilinde 542 Z kuşağı çalışanına anket uygulanarak, söz konusu kuşağın iş değerleri ve çalışma alışkanlıkları hakkında veriler toplanmış ve SPSS programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular Z kuşağı çalışanlarının çalışma tecrübesi dışsal çalışma değerlerinde önemli farklılık olduğunu, Z kuşağı çalışan yaş gruplarının harici çalışma değerlerine daha fazla önem verdiğini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, anket sonuçlarına göre Z kuşağı çalışanlarının, gelişime açık, motivasyona önem veren, çalışma ortamında gücü elinde toplamak isteyen, yüksek statü algısı bulunan, yüksek kariyer hedefleri olan, çalışma ortamında boş vakitlerini sanal ortamlarda ve kariyer gelişimlerine yönelik faaliyetler ile geçiren, iş yaşam dengesi kurma arzusunda olan kişiler olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışma, işletmelerin gelecekteki iş gücü planlamalarında önemli bir yol haritası sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Z Kuşağı, Değer, Kuşaklar, Çalışma Değerleri.

Abstract

Businesses always need a qualified workforce to sustain their operations. In today's business world, businesses encompass employees from different generations. Changes that began with the entry of Generation Y into the workforce in the past continue today with the employment of Generation Z. Each generation has entered the workforce with its own unique characteristics and values; Generation Z has also established itself in the business world with its uniqueness. Businesses will be further shaped by Generation Z employees in the future, and the need for this generation will gradually increase. Therefore, the role and values of Generation Z in business life should be better understood and analyzed. In this context, the aim of this study is to determine the work values of Generation Z employees. As part of the research, a survey was administered to 542 Generation Z employees in the province of Van, and data was collected on this generation's work values and work habits and analyzed using SPSS. The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant difference in the work experience and extrinsic work values of Generation Z employees, with Generation Z employees placing greater emphasis on extrinsic work values in their age groups. However, the survey results indicated that Generation Z employees are open to development, prioritize motivation, desire to hold power in the workplace, have a high sense of status, have ambitious career goals, spend their free time in virtual environments and engaging in career development activities, and desire to establish a work-life balance. This study aims to provide an important roadmap for businesses in planning their future workforces.

Keywords

Generation Z, Value, Generations, Work Values

Introduction

The workforce expectations and values have been greatly affected by the transformation that the labor market has undergone due to the forces of globalization, technological innovations, and altering socio-economic factors. Generation Z (Gen Z) is one of the new generations that has its unique features, formed under the influence of digitalization, social awareness, and the shifting of career interests. Gen Z individuals were born in the middle of the 1990s to early 2010s and now make their entrance to the labor market with their own work-related values that do not agree with those of the previous generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (Poláková and Klímová, 2019). This knowledge is important to employers, policymakers, and researchers since it offers some insights on workforce motivation, job satisfaction, and retention. Although some studies have been done on the topic of generational differences in work values, most of them concentrate on the Western perspective, creating a gap in knowledge about the generational work values of Gen Z in non-Western environments, especially in the regions and developing world. In this paper, the authors seek to fill this gap by studying the set of work values of Gen Z in Van, a metropolis of eastern Tuerkiye, with its own socio-economic and cultural peculiarities. This research aims to help advance the overall discussion of the topic of generational work values and its effect on labor market in the developing world through researching career aspirations, job satisfaction factors and preferences of Gen Z in Van.

The research questions that will be addressed by this study are the following:

1. What are the core work values of the Gen Z people in Van?

2. What are the differences between the job expectations and career aspirations of Gen z and the past generations?

3. How does the cultural and socio-economic factor impact the work values of Gen Z in Van?

4. What are the work values of the Gen Z in Van compared to those of the country or the world in general?

By answering these questions, the research will save a lot of information on the needs and expectations of the emerging workforce in Van so that the organizations can adjust their human resource policies and managerial strategies accordingly. This paper involves a quantitative research method. The target population of the survey will consist of young people who represent Gen Z in Van, and it is expected to reflect their attitude toward numerous elements of work, such as job security, payment, work-life balance, the possibility of professional development, and workplace flexibility. The area of this study is restricted to the people born between 1995 and 2012 and living in Van and being either currently employed or seeking a job. Table 2 of the study recognizes the limitation of the study such as the possible limits of generalizability because the socio-economic background of Van might not reflect the overall trends nationally or globally. Nonetheless, by targeting this particular area, the study will be able to reveal one of the localized understandings that could shape local labor policies as well as the overall comparison studies.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Chapter 2 shall entail a thorough literature review, elaborating the concept of generational work values, the defining features of Gen Z, and the past empirical research on the workplace expectations and motivations. Chapter 3 provides the description of the research methodology, such as the choice of the sample, methods of data collection, and analysis. Chapter 4 contains the research findings in which the author analyzes the major trends and patterns that arise out of the survey and interview data. Chapter 5 explains these findings based on existing literature, with similarities and differences being outlined. Chapter 6 is the last one that will complete the study summarizing main insights, policy and managerial implications, and providing recommendations as to what the future research should be. This research proposal is expected to equip a comprehensive view of the work values of Gen Z in Van and it can be applied in academic research and practice in human resource management and development of labor policy.

1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

According to the Turkish Language Association (TDK, 2019), generation is defined as "a group of individuals, encompassing a period of approximately 25 to 30 years." This definition refers to individuals born during the same period and enduring similar conditions, hardships, and responsibilities. Current and scientific generation classifications about generations were developed by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1991 (Strauss and Howe, 1991). These definitions by Strauss and Howe were accepted by many researchers and dubbed the "Strauss-Howe Generation Theory". Academic research on periodicity in Türkiye began in the 1960s, and research in this area increased, particularly with the 1968 student events. Studies conducted during that period generally focused on conflicts between different generations within the family (Tezcan, 1977). Kupperschmidt (2000) defined a generation as a group of people with similar birth dates, similar experiences over time, and influenced by specific events. J.C. Lagree defines a generation as a group of individuals who lived in a specific historical period, experienced the social structure of that period, and reflected that structure. Lagree emphasizes the social characteristics of the generation and the influences of the historical period (Taş et al., 2017). The definition of generation from a sociological perspective includes that individuals are born in the same historical period, are affected by the social and economic events of that period, have similar responsibilities and have common values (Özer et al, 2013).

The idea of generation is not something that is based on classifying those people who were born during the same time. The attitudes, perceptions, intellectual patterns, and impressions of the personalities that constitute a generation contribute immensely to the inclusion of those individuals to a given generation (Zemke et al., 2013). The differences between generations are based on such dynamic factors as the historical events, the influence of culture, and the social change. Every generation has its particular features, mode of behavior and cultural values. In addition, in setting a definition of a generation, some features that consider the similarities among the people of such generation are also considered. Yet, one must not expect that every member of a generation will have the same traits in comparison with every other member of the generation (Adıgüzel et al., 2014). The parallels of generations are based on education that people get in their family, the way they communicate between one another, the media experiences they share, and cultural system of that time (Twenge et al., 2010). Although there are some attributes of attitudinal aspects and value judgments that exist between generations, behavioral variations are experienced across generations (Chen, 2010). The differences between generations are based on differences in the lifestyles and the worldviews of generations (Acilioglu, 2015: 29). The generations are different because they vary depending on a number of factors that include upbringing, environmental factors, and social experiences. The differences are reflected in the personality, working life, and social interactions (Adiguzel et al., 2014).

The classification of generation D that is generally used in research is the one by Oblinger and Oblinger (2005). This subdivision is split into five categories, the silent generation, baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. The definition given by Kyles (2005) refers to people born earlier than 1945 as the Silent Generation or the Traditional Generation. According to Kotoglu et al. (2016), the Silent Generation is a cohort of all people who had been born prior to the year 1946 and more so before the Second World War. The representatives of the Silent Generation were not the direct participants in the war, however, they were deeply affected by the challenges and troubles that the war caused (Akdemir et al, 2013). The representatives of this generation became cautious and risk-averse in their approach and sensitive to events under the impact of social and economic transformations of 1925-1945 (Adıgüzel et al, 2014).

The high population that followed the World War II also initiated this population explosion that gave birth to the Baby Boom Generation of about one billion babies. Although there is no unanimous agreement regarding the factors that led to the marked rise in the birth rates in the period, it is claimed that the factors that led to the rise in birth rates include the elimination of war-related pressures, better economic circumstances, and the elimination of the psychological pressures arising during the war (Ayhün, 2013). Although the representatives of the Baby Boomer Generation work hard, their productivity can be sometimes poor. Nevertheless, this generation is usually characterised by people who have been in the same occupation over long periods and with the attitude of as long as I am alive, I have to work, they have stayed in the workforce even after retirement (Benlisoy, 2008). According to the opinion that the more a person works, the higher the level of his/her future living, Baby Boomers prefer to work overtime in order to have more comfort in the future (Acıliloglu, 2015). Although representatives of this generation might not be equally willing to work hard as Silent Generation, they want to be respected and rewarded (Mücevher, 2015). The level of commitment to the workplace by this generation is high due to economic gains and experience working in conservative management profiles. Baby Boomers tend to develop good relations and show effective and productive performance in their work life. They are however characterized by a spirit of competition and high workaholics (Delahoyde, 2009). Since nowadays, Baby Boomers are often seen in management roles within organizations (Daloğlu, 2013).

Generation X is described as those people who were born between 1965 and 1979. The name of the generation, which stems out of the English word ex, has been connected to the birth rate falling at this time, a great contrast to the Baby Boomer Generation (Kyles,

2005; Bayhan, 2014). Although the members of Generation X share their personalities with their parents, the alteration of social roles and economic difficulties that they experienced in the world during their existence shaped the traits of this generation. The generation includes people who require individual protection and went through a difficult time of development due to the adverse impact of economic, social, and environmental influences (Demirkaya et al., 2015). The Generation X was brought up in a less strict family structure as compared to the Baby Boomer Generation. The integration of the older generations into the labor market contributed to the fact that Generation X people have less time with their families and, accordingly, they also lack attention (Stillman and Stillman, 2018). Additionally, it can be said that the social changes like decreasing birth rate, increasing divorce rate, and the lack of trust towards the government institution contributed to the development of this generation (Senbir, 2004). The generation X lacked the economic warmth that the Baby Boomers enjoyed and had to work with the uncertainties in the global arena. The process caused the Generation X generation to work harder, become more experienced in the business, and pursue money (Altuntuğ, 2012).

Kyles (2005) defined Generation Y as individuals born between 1980 and 1994. However, in both national and international research, Generation Y is generally accepted as individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Keleş, 2011). The fact that parents of Generation Y individuals constantly encourage their children to question things has led to individuals in this generation being curious about the reasons for events and asking questions. In this context, the name Generation Y, derived from the English word "why," reflects the inquisitive and curious nature of this generation. Generation Y consists of individuals who are not afraid to ask questions, engage in discussions, and express their wishes easily (Çınkır, 2018). They are described by their parents as "helicopter parents", who are under constant surveillance of their children and observe every aspect of their lives (Howe and Strauss, 2007). Generation Y wants to make individual choices when deciding which field and timeframe they will work in. The integration of technology into business life and the proliferation of flexible work environments have enabled Generation Y to realize their professional life expectations (Yüksekbilgili, 2013). Generation Y excels at quickly accessing information and transferring what they learn to those around them. Thanks to these characteristics, they play an active role in knowledge transfer and learning processes in the workplace (Kolnhofer-Derecskei et al., 2017). Eisner (2005) stated that Generation Y expects to receive feedback without delay on their work and is output-oriented. Furthermore, they are eager to complete their personal development in the best possible way. Generation Y is impatient, impetuous, and output-focused. Because they frequently change jobs, they exhibit a tendency to remain loyal to their jobs. However, they are individuals who can express themselves freely at work, can multitask, and want to play an active role in decision-making processes. They are open-minded, eager to participate in decision-making mechanisms, and are known for their flexible work hours and environments, aptitude for teamwork, and desire for continuous development (Çetin Aydın and Başol, 2014). Furthermore, Generation Y individuals want their managers to possess leadership qualities and to see these managers as role models for themselves (Eisner, 2005).

Generation Z can be described as a generation composed of people who were born since 1995. The representatives of this generation are also known by other names like Generation I, Internet Generation, Next Generation and Network Generation (Levickaité, 2010). The literature on the matter has varying definitions, but in general, Generation Z started with the births of 2000 and later (Latif and Serbest, 2014). Altuntuug (2012) is another source that defines this generation as those people who are born after 2000. According to some sources, the Generation Z is made up of people born in 2003 and beyond (identifier Generation Z), and the generation was referred to as the technological generation because they grew up in a world whereby technology was found everywhere (Feiertag and Berge, 2008). Gen Z (Generation Z) normally encompasses people born in 1995 to 2010 (Bencsik et al., 2016). Being born in the era of the blistering technological advancement and the global changes, Gen Z is also known as digital natives because of the extensive use of digital platforms and technology since early childhood (Deloitte Insights, 2017). The introduction of Gen Z as the labor force is one of the key changes in demographics. According to the recent research, almost one-half of Gen Z are already old enough and working (IDN Research Institute, 2023). The population of this generation is also very large, as it makes over a quarter of the U.S. population (Deloitte, 2022). With this generation joining the labor market with a high degree of change being experienced, their dynamics in the work place are becoming more and more relevant. Gen Z is set to assume a leading position in the labor market given the fact that millennials will be nearing retirement by the year 2050 (Xueyun et al., 2023). The estimates of Johns Hopkins University (2023) indicate that by 2030, Gen Z would have made up around 30 percent of the global workforce. Considering this trend, it is important to understand their professional expectations and work preferences since their integration into the workforce is a challenge and opportunity to organizations across the world.

The Gen Z traits are strategic to companies. In this respect, knowing the values and expectations of the Gen Z about their professional life will allow the businesses analyzing the features of the future employees correctly. The work values generally are among the values people inherit during their lifetime and can be explained as the consideration of personal values in life in their professional lives (Wuthnow, 2008). It is through the work-related behaviors that individuals learn, have a critical thinking process, and even gain a mental background of career planning by interacting with their colleagues in the work place (Dose,

1997). Smola and Sutton (2002) referred to work principles as perceptions of what individuals either consider as right or wrong in the workplace. The text relates personal life values to professional behaviors by bringing out the importance of work values and principles which supports the notion that personal beliefs have a great influence in the workplace attitude. References to Wuthnow (2008), Dose (1997), and Smola and Sutton (2002) are used to support the argument by connecting the work-related behavior and values to the general theoretical concepts. Nevertheless, even though the theoretical information is well-substantiated, the paragraph may use more details on the practical ways of how the principled knowledge of Gen Z can be applied by the business to maximize its human resources management. Also it would be possible to incorporate the latest literature or real-life cases of how the values of Gen Z can be applied to the modern workplace context to offer a more up-to-date view on the subject matter. Generally, the reading provides a solid background on the influence of generational values on future workforce.

Intrinsic work values are those values that are directly associated with work processes and cannot be quantified in terms of monetary aspects and are manifested in sensory perceptions. Such values may be described as a good job, personal motivation in the situation of appeared difficulties during the working process, the development of new ideas, the awareness of the success, and the opportunity to retain control over personal work (Kaasa, 2011). Material rewards are not the only rewards that external work can provide employee with, but they also allow them to have prestige and respect (Twenge et al., 2010). Those persons are more satisfied with their jobs when they attain high financial income because they value external values (Malka & Chatman, 2003). The difference between the values of intrinsic and External work puts the dual perspective of employee motivation and satisfaction. Whereas the intrinsic values strongly relate with the inner parameters of work, that is, personal satisfaction, creativity, and sense of control, the external work values are oriented on the external rewards that include financial benefits, prestige, and recognition. These two kinds of values play a crucial role in developing the work experience as a whole and are capable of influencing job satisfaction, but are oriented to different needs and wants in a person. Personal development and a sense of purpose are usually caused by intrinsic values, and the external ones are more associated with tangible rewards and social validation. The balance between these values can be understood and assist the organizations to develop more efficient employee engagement and retention strategies.

The demographic variables play a major role in shaping the work principles of people and the attitudes and behaviors they have towards such values. The variables like gender, age, and education are some of the major factors that determine the preferences and work values of individuals in their work. Perceptions of gender roles and expectations of gender can affect males and females in terms of work values. E Elizur (1994) conducted a study that found that there are differences between work values that are held by men and women. It was established that women are more likely to internalize work values in the emotional dimension as opposed to men who emphasize more on conceptual work values. As it was found in one research by Schwartz and Rubel (2005), the differences in work values between the sexes are not due to the birth date of individuals, but to the cultural shift to which they belong. Frieze et all. (2006) concluded that there is no overall gender impact on work values but one difference was that women have more perfectionistic orientation about their work than men. Such results indicate that the influence of gender on work values is a multifaceted complex that is determined by cultural, social, and personal influences. Another demographic is age which influences the priorities of individuals in the work place. Youths mainly aim at developing their careers and getting innovative experiences whereas middle aged people would be more concerned about job security, family and economic stability. Work values and expectations can be focused to a greater extent on security, stability and retirement benefits as the age advances. The level of education is a significant factor, which directly affects the values of work by individuals. Educated people tend to prefer career progression, novelty of mind, intellectual satisfaction, and individual success, whereas less-educated ones tend to emphasize more on extrinsic work values, including job security and wealth. Attitudes in the workplace, as well as how work values are formed at an individual and professional level may depend on education level.

This research has a major gap in the literature, as it only focuses on working Gen Z, whereas much of the existing research on Generation Z has focused on students or comparative research between generations. In addition, it concentrated on a large sample (542 people) based on one province (Van) and used a five-dimensional work values scale that is comprehensive. Although most of the literature on Generation Z contains studies that are usually based on conceptual explanations, small sample sizes, or comparative generational analyses (e.g., Adıgüzel et al., 2014; Erden Ayhün, 2013; Ülker, 2013), the study under consideration presents a detailed and quantifiable profile, statistically proving how the Generation Z attributes itself to being on particular dimensions (i.e., intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, status-friendship-oriented, and social work values). Moreover, although the effects of demographic variables, including gender, age, and education, which are regularly identified in the literature as influencing work values, are frequently examined in a theoretical context, the current study empirically examines these relationships, which, in other words, substantiates the differences in effects of the variables and which do not. In this regard,

the investigation provides a novel contribution to the literature in terms of scale-based and implemented field data because it discloses how the work values of the generation Z are formed in Turkiye, what aspects their structure is homogeneous or heterogeneous, and what dimensions business organizations must pay particular attention to when operating with this generation.

2. Literature Review

These are just some of the studies made on both national and international literature on Generation Z and their work values. Other scholars like Adıgüzel et al. (2014), Serbest (2014), Arar (2016), and Adıbelli (2018) have also executed different research studies concerning the Generation Z employees in the workforce. Adiguzel et al. (2014) conceptual study is focused on defining and categorizing generations, unveiling the specifics of each generation, and, by examining the specifics, discussing the connection of the generation x to digital technologies, reliance on portable technology, and the idea of mobile collars. The research conceptualizes mobile collars to be people who extend their work at home (Adıgüzel et al., 2014). In his study within the telephone industry, Arar (2016) paid attention to the talent management of Generation Z and their career development. This paper has underscored the incorporation of Generation Z how they may be recruited into the workforce and management of talents. As a result, it was declared that Generation Z employees will be instrumental in the present and upcoming development of organizations, and the necessity to advance the career growth of these people was highlighted. It has further been highlighted that talent management practices ought to be oriented rather than conventional approaches to management (Arar, 2016). Adıbelli (2018) has performed a study in the IT sector, where he researched the factors influencing the motivation of the various generations. It was stated that factors that enhance the motivation of employees of Generation Y and Z are different, and the specific strategies have to be elaborated to provide the motivation of Generation Z employees once they start working. They decided that the optimal motivation approaches must be employed to ensure the productivity of Gen Z workers in the professional environment. Guilder and Acar (2019) in their study carried out in the banking industry investigated how innovative Human Resources Management (HRM) practices influenced the job satisfaction and job leaving intentions of Generation Z workers. The researchers found that the best HRM practices positively affect the employee happiness and lower the job leaving consideration (Güler and Acar, 2019). Yazic (2019) examined the expectations and job preferences of the employees of Generation Z in his study undertaken in the healthcare field. The research concluded that the Generation Z lays more emphasis on intrinsic values as compared to extrinsic ones, and the way of making this generation more motivated in business must be devised on the basis of these values. In a study involving HRM managers and other managers in the healthcare industry, Latif and Serbest (2014) investigated the relationship between the work experiences of various generations and the issues that arise due to differences in the way of generational mindsets, doing business, and communication styles. Moreover, this study also highlights the fact that in companies where generation Z and Y are interconnected, Generation Y managers should be trained to deal with Gen Z employees. The research discussed the incompatibility challenges between generations at the organizational level and proved the need to resolve them (Latif and Serbest, 2014).

The research papers by Büyukslu (2017), Taş et al. (2017), Çinke (2018), Şimsimsek (2019), Karaacetin and Akbas (2019), and Ciftcioglu et al. (2019) investigated expectations and nature of Generation Z about work life in their student days. The aim of these studies was to research the requirements of the generation Z when it comes to work life, their preference of style of management and their overall perceptions regarding work life. In a research of the expectations of Generation Z in relation to work life, Büyuksulu (2017) developed a study based on a sample of students, who spent their time in cafes and patisseries located in the Beyoksu district. In this work, the work life expectation of the Generation Z was quantified according to their perception of the right institutions, efficient managers, workplace motivation, communication, and teamwork. It can be seen that the findings of the research show that Generation Z prefers to be employed in the working environment where training and development opportunities are available and that they attach importance to both rational and emotional aspects in decision-making processes. It is established that the Generation Z generation wants their managers to understand them, provide feedback, and work in a job that has promotion prospects. A recent study by Şimşek (2019) which was done on 300 university students was intended to investigate the perceptions and personality characteristics of Generation Z as far as work life and career preferences were concerned. The article examined the personalities of Gen Z members through the Career Anchors scale created by Schein (1990). The findings showed that Generation Z has the characters of helpful and tolerant, friendly, and loving, and entrepreneurial elements are evident. Moreover, some of these differences were in career perceptions according to gender and the state of employment of parents. Çinkir (2018), in the research involving the sample of universities students, studied the idea of approach to work life by generations, the perception of the rewards, and the leadership qualities that Generation Z hopes to see in their managers. As the research has shown, the requirements of the Generation Z in terms of rewards are connected to the demographic data, especially gender. The women were found to be more concerned with intrinsic rewards. Nevertheless, it has been established that Generation Z has requirements to have as rewards in their future careers that are not contingent on the level of education and the field they hope to work in. Taş et al. (2017) conducted a study that investigated the professional behaviors of people, who were classified under the generation Z and how organizations ought to adapt to such behaviors.

Results of the research demonstrate that personal behaviors among the members of the generation Z are mostly influenced by their parents. Also, it was established that Generation Z is self-confident and willing to undertake various responsibilities in their career. It has been noted that the generation Y is able to add more value to their organizations where these individuals are benevolent and humane. In this regard, the human resource departments have been advised to stop following the traditional practice and instead, adopt an approach that can produce fast outcomes and is less rigidly structured. The paper by Karaçetin and Akbaş (2019) has investigated the management expectations of Generation Z by referring to a sample consisting of high school graduates. The results of the study demonstrated that the Generation Z does not accept the autocratic style of management, but rather adopts the democratic and tolerant style of management. One of the studies by Çiftçioğlu et al. (2019) was focused on exploring the professional needs and career expectations of Generation Z individuals who seek higher education. The research found out that Generation Z prefers informal working environment, wants to be informed about their work and appreciates trust. Moreover, Generation Z people were revealed to like having some voice in the workplace, being responsible, and having some responsibility even under a risky situation. Male Generation Zers were found to easily give up and change organizations more than females and females more willing to receive feedback. The paper highlights the importance of formulating proper generational strategies to ensure the active generational Z works in synergy with the other generations.

The works by Erden Ayhun (2013), Bako (2016), Çetin and Karalar (2016) and Aksu and Doğan (2020) provide valuable data on the comparison of Generation z with the other generations. These research works also seek to unveil the generational differences in terms of motivation, leadership styles, and career goals in organizations. The same concept study by Erden Ayhun (2013) showed that people born at various times of year i.e. various generations are observed to behave differently in the organization. The paper has noted that various generations are not good at comprehending one another and perceiving events in different ways. In this respect, it is stressed that it is significant that people in managerial roles should employ effective management process in order to retain different generations. The management of the various generations will enhance productivity in the organization and allow employees to work towards the realization of goals. According to a study conducted by Bako (2016), the authors studied the leadership preferences of academic representatives of various generations and people who were going to obtain an academic career. The research sample was composed of 256 representatives of various generations. The survey intended to determine how various generations have contributed and their leadership attributes to successful leadership. The study findings indicated that there are considerable differences in leadership attributes among generations. The paper concluded that self-sacrifice, conflict-inducing, and situation-saving leadership, oppressive and humble leadership are all leadership attributes that differ between generations. A research work of Aksu and Doğan (2020) investigated the connection between the motivational difference and career anchor between Generations X, Y, and Z. The purpose of the research was to unveil the fact whether the differences in motivation between these generations were substantial. According to the findings, only financial motivation forms a massive distinction between Generations Y and Z, whereas psychological and social motivation factors emphasize the distinctions between Generations Y and X. Moreover, the research has shown that managerial motivation is another factor that brings a generation gap between generational Y, X, and Z. The decision was made that the best factor in the motivation increment among Generations X and Z is the financial means. A research prepared by Çetin and Karalar (2016) investigated the background on education and career outlooks of members of the Generations X, Y, and Z. This research was meant to investigate the career preference and the desire to change organizations between these generations. The report established that Generation Y people are more likely to leave an organization than Generation X, and are also very sensitive to other concerns like security and order. Generation Z and Generation X, in its turn, has acquired more personal management skills and are more willing to switch between organizations. The fact that the Generation Z has less organizational commitment and sense of belonging and is more likely to find international employment was also stressed. The results pertaining to the level of education suggest that with the declining level of education, individual management skills, adherence to personal values, and intellectual boundaries become more narrow.

The results in the literature show that money is not the major factor in determining career selection among the Generation Z, but rather they focus on career opportunities and professional growth opportunities. It is stressed that intrinsic motivators, in particular, the presence of motivating jobs, positive working environment are highly effective with this generation; moreover, employers should provide the workers of this generation with the autonomy, flexibility, and healthy balance between the working and personal life as the employees of this generation tend to choose the work-life balance rather than the level of payment (Pózner and Kozak, 2025). Surugiu et al. (2025) believe that salaries are the main factor of work efficiency among Generation Z, and other financial and non-financial motivators have a relatively minor contribution to motivation to work. The research also reveals the tendency in the generation Z employees to be less oriented to teamwork and there is a clear indication that they prefer working in isolation which is their way of demonstrating their individual strengths and providing greater productivity. Also, the authors emphasize that Generation Z is connected to high mobility and low organizational loyalty in terms of which people often switch employers and focus on their own preferences and on career fulfillment as opposed to being loyal to one company. According to Roy et al. (2025), in a professional environment, Generation Z has a high value on meaningful and purposeful work, flexibility, and organizational alignment with their

own values. Another point that can be noted according to the study is that this generation values the importance of psychological safety, mental well-being, inclusion, diversity, and equity in the workplace, and actively opposes burnout and work pressure. Besides, the authors mention that Gen Z places great emphasis on lifelong learning, self-growth, autonomy, and creativity and works better in result-based working environments that provide opportunities to take initiative independently and be innovative. According to Shokeen (2025), an important difference between the values of work of the previous generations and those of generation Z is that the latter views work as the essential part of their personal identity and life, not as a tool to achieve some goal. The paper also reveals that the expectations and priorities of Gen Z professionals are high in terms of flexibility of the workplace, mental health care, inclusive team cultures, and the possibility to work on important tasks. It is further claimed that the excessive emphasis on work-life balance and mental health of Generation Z is a driver of the general cultural change in organizations. According to Sihite and Damanik (2025), Generation Z workers care a lot about purpose, personal growth and technology fluency, which in many cases are more important dimensions than traditional motivators, such as salary rates or job stability. The authors also mention that Gen Z desires purposeful work, quick skill development, and close alignment of personal with organizational values, which is not how the previous generations were concerned with job stability and career growth. Moreover, the paper notes that flexibility, authenticity, and social responsibility are key expectations that Generation Z possess regarding the workplace environment, where most members do not like working under strict timeframes and hierarchical organizational hierarchies instead of having more freedom and better work-life balance.

According to Mishra and Awasthi (2025), generation Z workers are practical, industrious, and highly career oriented, and they have a high emphasis on career growth and success. The paper also highlights that diversity, equity, and inclusion are the values of Generation Z that are fundamental, and the generation expects employers to establish these values via concrete and institutionalized approaches instead of symbolic promises. Secondly, the authors emphasize the primary role that Generation Z gives to mental health and overall well-being, pointing out that employees belonging to the cohort highly appreciate flexibility in the time and terms of working, such as the presence of remote and hybrid work options. As Nichols and Smith (2025) highlight, the representatives of Generation Z highly value such aspects as clear career advancement prospects, clear expectations and targets, mental health, diversity, equal opportunity systems, and frequent reviews of salaries. Their results also indicate that Generation Z have lower levels of overall job satisfaction than Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers. Furthermore, the paper highlights that this generation exhibits a strong desire to experience the progressive and challenging nature, as well as, an increased vulnerability to employer promises concerning mental health care and non-discriminatory practices at work. According to Syafani et al. (2025) the main work values of Generation Z are financial security, especially through fixed salaries, and flexibility in working hours and places, positive organizational environment, and a definite career progression. The paper also indicates that Generation Z values highly the incorporation of technology, particularly artificial intelligence, as the way of enhancing the efficiency of work, but at the same time, they stress the necessity of the balance between the usage of the technology and human interaction. Besides, the authors clarify that Gen Z employees are sensitive to collaborative, participative leadership styles, positive and ongoing feedback, managerial transparency, and a high level of autonomy in the working process. According to Novel and Tresna (2025), the most important factor in the list of Generation Z employees considering potential jobs is salary, and 83 percent of surveyed individuals value income the most, before the workplace environment (62 percent) and working hours and workspace (40 percent). Along with these aspects, the authors discuss the impact of technology as an influential factor that predetermines the expectations of Generation Z with regard to the employment work in terms of efficiency, flexibility, and digital enhancement in the workplace. The paper also explores the career expectations, work habits, motivational drives, preferences, and work ethics of Generation Z and their significance as the critical ones to employers who are interested in attracting, managing, and retaining this generation as their employees. Dwivedula (2025) states seven overall themes, such as the nature of work, job characteristics, organizational support, future opportunities, references, experience, and career prospects as the collective explanation of work motivation among the representatives of the Generation Z cohort, with the sharp focus on the interconnections between them and work values. The paper also shows that the most independent types of motivation namely intrinsic motivation and identified regulation are highly influential in defining the motivation of Generation Z employees in the workplace. Moreover, the results also demonstrate that Gen Z highly values a stimulating and fulfilling work, the chance to cross-train between various job functions, flexible working conditions, effective anti-discrimination policies and practices, occupational safety, availability of healthcare benefits, and financial security at the workplace in general.

3. Method

In this paper, the research is framed under a quantitative research approach. The variables and phenomenon in the research model are analyzed. The first stage implied the analysis of data obtained in Generation Z in the form of separate variables according to the subscales of the measurement tool with the help of the quantitative design. Nevertheless, these variables are the subdimensions of the same scale making group difference influenced by such variables as gender and industry sector investigated. The study population is made up of businesses that are located in the province of Van. The study sample will consist of employees and unit managers who will be sampled through voluntary selection by the respective organizations. The instrument of data collection was a questionnaire which

is divided into two parts. The initial part will capture demographic information as it will be needed to capture individual information among the participants. The second section will consist of job application, productivity, and motivation scales associated with performance management. The face-to-face interview and online tools were used to collect data, and the participants could approach the study in various platforms. The SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data. The results of the research were statistically evaluated and interpreted using SPSS program. The work values of the Generation Z employees in this study were measured in the context of the scale created by Gimberson and Lunderg (2015), which is the Work Values of Generation Z scale, comprising five subdimensions. The subdimensions of the Generation Z Work Values Scale are intrinsic work values, extrinsic work values, altruistic work values, work values associated with status and colleagues, and social work values. The master thesis of Kavak (2020) titled Generation Z work values was the foundation of the survey form to be used in the study.

4. Analysis and Findings

Descriptive statistics of continuous variables in the study was in terms of mean and standard deviation whereas those of categorical variables was in terms of frequency and percentages. The distribution of data was evaluated with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which tests the normality and Levene test which tests the homogeneity of the variances. To achieve the independent two-group continuum comparisons, in case of meeting the normality assumption, an Independent Samples T-Test was adopted in the research, and in case of non-observation of the normality assumption, the Mann-Whitney U test was adopted. To compare and contrast more than two groups independent of continuous variables, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to the data that met the normality requirement and Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to the data that do not meet the normality condition. The level of statistical significance was taken as $p < 0.05$ and SPSS Statistics Software, version 19.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used to do the analysis. In order to check the reliability of the Work Values Scale, the alpha internal consistency coefficients of Cronbach were determined and the results are provided in Table 1. The results of the analysis indicate that the reliability level of all subscales is greater than 0.80, and the average value of Cronbach alpha is 0.91. These values indicate that the scale is high in terms of internal consistency and is strongly applicable in research.

Table 1

Reliability Analysis Results of the Work Values Scale

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Intrinsic Values	6	0.86
Extrinsic Values	6	0.83
Altruistic Values	5	0.88
Status and Friendship Values	4	0.81
Social Values	4	0.84
Overall Scale	25	0.91

The demographic characteristics of the survey participants are presented in Table 2. Upon examining Table 2, it is observed that 46.3% (251) of the participants are female, while 53.7% (291) are male. When analyzing the distribution of participants by age group, 57.2% (310) were born between 1990 and 1995, 23.2% (126) between 1996 and 2000, and 19.6% (106) between 2000 and 2010. Regarding marital status, 36.9% (200) are married, and 63.1% (342) are single. Examining the educational status in the table, 1.7% (9) are primary school graduates, 7.6% (41) are high school graduates, 36% (195) are vocational school graduates, 40% (217) are university graduates, and 14.8% (80) have completed graduate studies. Regarding employment sector, 1.5% (8) are academics, 11.6% (63) are civil servants, 13% (73) are tradespeople, 37.3% (202) are employed in the private sector, 7% (38) are teachers, 19.4% (105) are students, and 9.8% (53) are in other professions. Lastly, when analyzing total work experience, 34.5% (187) of participants have between 0-5 years of work experience, 50% (271) have 5-10 years of experience, and 15.5% (84) have 10 years or more of experience. Upon examining the table of means and standard deviations for the Work Values Scale, it was observed that the average internal work values were 24.1639 (542), external work values were 38.5304 (542), altruistic work values were 26.0608 (542), work importance related to status and colleagues was 12.8950 (542), and social work values were 37.7937 (542).

Table 2

Distribution of Demographic Data of Survey Participants

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	251	46.3
	Male	291	53.7
Year of Birth	1990-1995	310	57.2
	1996-2000	126	23.2
	2000-2010	106	19.6
Marital Status	Married	200	36.9
	Single	342	63.1
Educational Status	Primary School	9	1.7
	High School	41	7.6
	Vocational School	195	36.0
	University	217	40.0
	Master's Degree	80	14.8
Employment Sector	Academics	8	1.5
	Civil Servant	63	11.6
	Tradesperson	73	13.5
	Private Sector	202	37.3
	Teacher	38	7.0
	Student	105	19.4
	Other	53	9.8
Total Work Experience	0-5 years	187	34.5
	5-10 years	271	50.0
	10 and more	84	15.5

Upon examining the table 3 of means and standard deviations for the Work Values Scale, it was observed that the average internal work values were 24.1639 (542), external work values were 38.5304 (542), altruistic work values were 26.0608 (542), work importance related to status and colleagues was 12.8950 (542), and social work values were 37.7937 (542).

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Work Values Scale

Work Values	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic Work Values	542	24.1639	3.70609
Extrinsic Work Values	542	38.5304	5.21020
Altruistic Work Values	542	26.0608	3.69626
Status and Work Relationships Work Values	542	12.8950	1.93483
Social Work Values	542	37.7937	6.01304

Research that was done to trace the variations in the subdimensions of the Work Values Scale and the gender factor indicated that the t-test indicating the difference in the internal work values ($t(274) = -0.421$, $p = 0.665$) was not significant in terms of gender. Based on this result, female and male Gen Z employees do not have any difference in internal work values. Because of the analysis of external work values ($p = 0.684$), the genders did not differ significantly. It means that no difference in the external values of work was observed between female and male Generation Z employees. With regard to evaluating the altruistic work values ($p = 0.976$), there was no significant difference between the genders. Thus, it was determined that the female and male Generation Z employees do not differ in the values of altruistic work. As to the status and colleagues work values ($p = 0.338$), the assay of the genders could not find any significant difference. This result shows that female and male Generation Z workers do not differ in their perception of both status and colleague-oriented work values. Lastly, when the values of social work were analyzed ($p = 0.689$), there was no significant difference between genders. This finding reveals that female and male Generation Z employees do not have a difference in the way they perceive social work values.

Table 4

Comparison of Work Values by Gender

Work Values	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	p
Intrinsic Work Values	Female	252	24.2381	3.69974	0.665
	Male	291	24.0997	3.71674	
Extrinsic Work Values	Female	252	38.4325	5.30573	0.684
	Male	291	38.6151	5.13369	
Altruistic Work Values	Female	252	26.0556	3.67354	0.976
	Male	291	26.0653	3.72214	
Status and Work Relationships Work Values	Female	252	12.8095	1.96874	0.338
	Male	291	12.9691	1.90528	
Social Work Values	Female	252	37.6825	6.02273	0.689
	Male	291	37.8900	6.01334	

Note: p<0.05 indicates statistical significance.

Due to the performed analyses aimed at gauging the dissimilarities between the age groups in the context of the subdimensions of the Work Values Scale, it was established that there was no significant difference between the age groups in the context of intrinsic work values (p = 0.438). The outcome of this result suggests that no significant difference in the intrinsic work values exists among Z-generation employees based on their ages. In the comparison that concerned extrinsic work values (p = 0.030), a significant difference was found between groups of age. This observation implies that Z-generation employees have a significant difference in extrinsic work values depending on their age groups. The comparison which was made in regard to altruistic work values (p = 0.227) also failed to indicate any significant difference between the age groups. This means that the difference between the values of altruistic work by Z -generation employees aged differently does not differ significantly. No significant difference was found existing between age groups in the analysis carried out on status and colleague-oriented work values (p = 0.707). This observation indicates that Z-generation employees do not have a clear difference in work values of status and colleagues, depending on their age groups. Lastly, the comparison of social work values (p = 0.229) also showed the lack of significant difference between age groups. This finding implies that Z-generation employees do not show a significant difference in their understanding of the significance of social work values depending on age groups.

Table 5

Comparison of Z Generation's Work Values by Age Groups

Work Values	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	p
Intrinsic Work Values	1990-1995	311	24.3376	3.79199	0.438
	1996-2000	126	23.9841	3.15210	
	2000-2010	106	23.8679	4.04987	
Extrinsic Work Values	1990-1995	311	38.9068	5.13379	0.030
	1996-2000	126	38.5873	4.70620	
	2000-2010	106	37.3585	5.84268	
Altruistic Work Values	1990-1995	311	26.2154	3.72981	0.227
	1996-2000	126	26.1429	3.40521	
	2000-2010	106	25.5094	3.90664	
Status and Work Relationships Work Values	1990-1995	311	12.8714	1.95997	0.707
	1996-2000	126	13.0159	1.79771	
	2000-2010	106	12.8208	2.02742	
Social Work Values	1990-1995	311	38.0354	5.93856	0.229
	1996-2000	126	37.9524	5.56397	
	2000-2010	106	36.8962	6.68179	

Note: $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

As it can be seen by the analyses which are performed to test the differences between the sub-dimensions of the work values scale and work experience, there is no significant difference of intrinsic work values (p = 0.106) by the levels of work experience. This observation implies no significant difference in intrinsic work values in Generation Z workers according to their work experience. Nevertheless, extrinsic work values (p = 0.006) are analyzed and display the significant difference based on the work experience. It suggests that the Gen Z employees have crucial differences in the extrinsic work values contingent on their scope of work experience. The discussion on altruistic work values (p = 0.191) proves that there is no significant difference between the work experience and altruistic work values. That is, there is no significant difference in the values of altruistic work amongst the Generation z employees according to their work experience. Equally, the results of the status- and colleague-focused work values (p = 0.757) show that there is no significant difference in various levels of work experience. This observation implies that work experience does not cause the significant difference in status- and colleague-oriented work values of Generation Z workers. Lastly, the analysis of social work values (p = 0.111) demonstrates no difference where there is a significant difference in relation to work experience. It can be concluded that the perception of the significance of social service among Generation Z employees does not differ significantly depending on their experience of working.

Table 6

Comparison of Generation Z's Work Values Based on Work Experience

Work Values	Gender	n	Mean	Std.Deviation	p
Intrinsic Work Values	0-5 Yıl	187	23.8128	4.11949	0.106
	5-10 Yıl	272	24.5000	2.82712	
	10 years and more	84	23.8571	4.98224	
Extrinsic Work Values	0-5 Yıl	187	37.7594	6.25110	0.006
	5-10 Yıl	272	39.2390	3.61805	
	10 years and more	84	37.9524	6.60577	
Altruistic Work Values	0-5 Yıl	187	25.7326	4.19333	0.191
	5-10 Yıl	272	26.3456	2.87085	
	10 years and more	84	25.8690	4.72823	
Status and Work Relationships Work Values	0-5 Yıl	187	12.8449	2.15838	0.757
	5-10 Yıl	272	12.9559	1.64291	
	10 years and more	84	12.8095	2.27335	
Social Work Values	0-5 Yıl	187	37.3636	6.88198	

	5-10 Yıl	272	38.3235	4.81600	0.111
	10 years and more	84	37.0357	7.23353	

Note: p<0.05 indicates statistical significance.

The increasing importance of extrinsic values as work experience increases suggests that employees focus more on factors such as pay, promotion, and security in later years. This result aligns with the finding by Özdemir (2020) and Ülker (2013) that "expectations shift toward tangible benefits as careers progress." While new Generation Z employees have more idealistic goals, individuals facing the realities of work life tend to gravitate toward extrinsic expectations, a consistent finding in the literature.

5. Conclusion

Due to the conducted analyses, the average and standard deviation of the values of the work values scale had the following results: The intrinsic work values had a mean of 24.1639 (standard deviation = 5.42), extrinsic work values had a mean of 38.5304 (standard deviation = 5.42), altruistic work values had a mean of 26.0608 (standard deviation = 5.42), status work value and colleague-oriented work value had a mean of 12 Analyses were done in order to test the differences between the sub-dimensions of the work values scale and the gender variable. No significant difference was observed in the study of intrinsic work values with regard to gender (t(274) = -0.421, p = 0.665). This result means that no specific intrinsic difference in work values exists between the male and female employees of the Generation Z. On the same note, no significant difference was found in the analysis of extrinsic work value and gender (p = 0.684). This is an indicator that there exists no significant difference in extrinsic work values among male and female workforce of Generation Z. The comparison of the values of altruistic work also showed that there was no significant difference between genders (p = 0.976). Thus, the perception of values of altruistic work has no tangible difference between male and female Generation Z workers.

Status and colleague-oriented work values were also analyzed in relation to gender (p = 0.338), which showed no significant difference as well. This observation indicates that no significant difference exists between male and female generation Z employees in regards to their understanding of status and work values that are oriented towards colleagues. On the same note, no gender difference existed in the analysis of social work values (p = 0.689). It means that male and female employees of Generation Z do not have a significant difference in their perceptions of the social work values. The intrinsic work values were assessed in our analysis by the age groups and the comparison of the intrinsic work values (p = 0.438) demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the age groups. This implies that intrinsic work values do not show any evident age gap among the employees under generation Z. Nonetheless, the extrinsic work values analysis against the age groups (p = 0.030) did not show any statistically significant differences. The fact means that Generation Z employees of various ages have a distinguishable difference in extrinsic work values.

In the case of altruistic work values (p = 0.227) there was no significant age difference. That is, the age difference in the values of altruistic work is not significant between various groups of employees belonging to Generation Z. As well, the comparison of age groups based on the status and colleague-oriented work values (p = 0.707) did not show a significant difference. This indicates that the age groups of the Generation Z employees do not seem to have any visible differences in the way they perceive status and colleague-oriented work value. Lastly, when comparing social work values between age groups (p = 0.229), the difference was not significant. This finding suggests that the perception of social work values does not significantly differ between the various age groups of employees of Generation Z. The academic conclusions obtain the fact that businesses have to study and comprehend Generation Z in a more detailed manner. Under these circumstances, businesses should reorganize their managerial vision, organizational cultures, work schedules, remunerations and rewards, learning and growth prospects, motivation techniques and where it is essential business cultures to suit the demands and expectations of Generation Z. There should be a review of not only pay policies but other income and reward systems as well.

True to a significant literature base, the current research finds out that Generation Z workers place high values on extrinsic work values as indicated by the relatively high average score of the same dimension. This observation is similar to that of Surugiu et al. (2025), Novel and Tresna (2025), and Nichols and Smith (2025) who claim that work motivation among Generation Z is still sensitive to financial stability, salary levels, and material rewards of economic nature. Likewise, Syafani et al. (2025) highlight the fact that fixed income and financial security are among the work values of this cohort, especially in the workplace with economic uncertainties. The high levels of extrinsic values in the current study could therefore be taken as the logical reaction to the macroeconomic fluctuations

and lack of job opportunities in developing or peripheral areas like Van. Meanwhile, the results are slightly inconsistent with the works, which describe Generation Z as mainly motivated by intrinsic and purposeful factors. As an example, Roy et al. (2025), Shokeen (2025), and Sihite and Damanik (2025) point out that Generation Z values meaningful work, personal realization, psychological health, and value congruence more than material rewards. Although intrinsic values cannot be discredited in the present study since the intrinsic work values are also characterized by a significant mean, it implies that extrinsic factors can be more important than the intrinsic motivation in some socio-economic settings. This contradiction highlights the need to incorporate into the contextualization of the generational work values instead of viewing Generation Z as a uniform global group. the findings of the study on career ambition, status orientation, and advancement desire are well aligned with the past studies. The conclusion that Gen Z employees have high career ambitions, are status a seekers, and want to hold positions in the work environment, coincides with Mishra and Awasthi (2025), Dwivedula (2025), and Nichols and Smith (2025) all of which state that Generation Z is highly career oriented, skills oriented, and power oriented. On the same note, Çiftçioğlu et al. (2019) and Şimşek (2019) indicate that the value of responsibility, the possibility to be at the forefront, and professional recognition are important to Generation Z, which supports the conclusion of the current study according to which the work-related values of status are an important constituent of the value system of this cohort.

The results of this study have a great deal of overlap with the general literature in the areas of work-life balance and flexibility. The fact that employees belonging to Generation Z want to have a work-life balance and appreciate the flexibility is aligned with Pózner and Kozaka (2025), Roy et al. (2025), and Shokeen (2025) who mention work-life balance as one of the distinctive features of how Generation Z workers perceive the work. This correspondence indicates that the willingness to maintain a balance between work and personal life is a powerful and inter-cultural characteristic of generation Z, as it is not limited by national or regional borders. Nonetheless, the paper demonstrates a subtle deviation of literature that undermines the importance of job experience and generational gap among Generation Z. The observation that work experience is a major distinguishing factor among extrinsic work values is not aligned with the literature that depicts the generation Z as rather uniform regarding expectations related to the work (e.g., Adıgüzel et al., 2014; Taş et al., 2017). Such discrepancy suggests that intra-generational heterogeneity, especially in terms of age cohorts and the accumulation of labor market experience, may be even greater than it has been thought before. In such a way, the current research adds to the literature in that it empirically proves that Generation Z cannot be viewed as a homogenous group, even in a rather limited age bracket. Moreover, the findings related to digital orientation and virtual environments use are also aligned with the description of Generation Z as digital natives (Bencsik et al., 2016; Deloitte Insights, 2017). The fact that Generation Z workers are likely to spend their free time in online worlds and get involved in the activities concerning professional development confirms the arguments of Dwivedula (2025) and Syafani et al. (2025), as they accentuate the role of technology in both the workplace and learning procedures. This intersection supports the idea that digital engagement is not a personal choice, but one of the main factors of the professional self of Generation Z. Unlike the research stating that the generation Z attaches little value to loyalty to the organization and has weak attachment to the status hierarchy (Çetin and Karalar, 2016; Surugiu et al., 2025), the current results demonstrate a rather high status and power orientation of the generation Z workers. This dissimilarity can be attributed to the labour market systems where upward mobility and status is key indicator of success and safety especially in areas where jobs are scarce. In this way, the research points at the potential of structural and institutional aspects to redefine generational trends in values.

Although this study contributed to the theoretical and practical understanding of the subject, it must be admitted that there are a number of limitations that must be mentioned when interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions. To start with, the analysis is based on cross-sectional survey data, and thus the researcher is not able to make causal conclusions about the correlation between demographic variables and work values. Although significant changes in the form of statistically significant differences, especially in terms of extrinsic work values by age category, were detected, the design does not permit investigating how the values of work change as time passes since employees of Generation Z have to accumulate experience on the labor market. It is longitudinal studies, then, that would be more appropriate in terms of the dynamic and developmental character of work values. Second, self-reported measures were used to collect the data, and they are prone to common method bias and social desirability effects. The respondents might have given answers based on the socially accepted attitudes instead of their actual preferences especially on the values of altruistic and social work. In spite of the fact that standardized and validated scales have been used, in the future studies, strong research can be enhanced with the help of mixed methods, i.e. qualitative interviews or behavioral data to triangulate the results. Third, the research targets only Gen Z workers, which, though being theoretically reasonable, restricts the extrapolation of the results to other generations. Consequently, not a single direct comparison could be made between the Generation Z and other generations (e.g., Millennials or Generation x). Comparative generational studies can further inform about the possibility of unique relative to general cohort-related life-cycle effects that could be the underlying cause of the observed patterns, particularly the age-related rise in extrinsic values. Another kind of limitation is the sample structure and setting of the study. The results are influenced by the level of socio-economic, cultural, and labor market under which the data were gathered. The context dependence of work values has been established; hence, variation in institutional environments, employment regimes and cultural values can lead to different outcomes.

External validity could be increased in future research in other countries or within other economic settings and cross-national comparison could be made.

The opportunities to be trained should be offered in accordance with the requirements of Generation Zers, and the support systems should be developed to promote their professional growth. When providing some changes to the corporate culture to the future employees, businesses are to remove the hierarchical boundaries and engage in a more democratic and horizontal structure of organization. Given that Generation Z is highly attached to technology, companies need to shape up their working environments in related dynamics and establish virtual environment where workers can use their free time efficiently. The bottom line is that the need to understand, recognize and appreciate Generation Z is more imperative to business since this generation is not only going to define the future of businesses, but also be the foundation of the future today itself.

On the one hand, seeing these findings combined, we can conclude that the work values of employees of Generation Z vary depending on demographic factors, and the age and experience, in particular, is a decisive factor in most cases, especially with extrinsic values. These results are in line with the literature that indicates that Generation Z is not a homogenous group and their values are defined by the experience they have in the labor market. In this way, the study contributes to the literature in a unique way, implying that the values of Generation Z in terms of work should be discussed not solely in the context of the generational approach but in the context of the perspective of life-cycle and experience. This paper explored the values of the Generation Z workers in their work in five aspects to directly address the research questions and compared them in terms of demographic characteristics. The results have shown that extrinsic values, in its turn, also rise with age and experience, whereas intrinsic, altruistic, and social values are more stable. This observation shows that no single profile can be made of the generation Z; their values on work are dynamic, experience sensitive and contextual. According to the results of the research, policymakers and managers will be able to work out strategies that make their careers clear, offer competitive pay and development, and establish more holistic systems of benefits and security to the workers whose experience increases to enhance the motivation levels of young employees. Therefore, the research provides practical contributions to the literature and practice.

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