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Generation Z in the Workplace: The Effects of Gen Z Socialization on Workplace Preferences

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ABSTRACT :

Gen Z is redefining work expectations and preferences, bringing new perspectives that challenge traditional employment structures. Unlike previous generations, they prioritize flexibility, favoring remote or hybrid work options over rigid structures. They seek purpose driven jobs, preferring organizations that align with their values by offering meaningful work, flexible work structures and mental wellness programs. While these traits can enhance workplace innovation and efficiency, they also introduce complexities in organizational structures, leadership approaches, and employee engagement strategies. This study therefore sought to examine the effects of Gen Z socialization on workplace preferences among undergraduate finalists of Moi University, Kenya. The theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study included the generational theory and the Person - Environment Fit theory. The study was anchored on the quantitative research approach under the positivist philosophical worldview. Explanatory research design was adopted whereas stratified and simple random sampling techniques guided the process of respondents' identification. The study population comprised of 4,045 undergraduate finalists in five selected schools from where respondents were selected. The sample size of the study was 364 respondents computed using Yamane's (1967) Formula. Data collection was done by use of a structured questionnaire. The information obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation and simple regression analyses were done to test the research hypothesis. The study established that Gen Z socialization (β = .257, p = .000, r=.257, R^2=0.063, F=18.87) significantly influenced workplace preferences. This *study therefore concludes that Gen Z socialization positively influence workplace preferences.* It is hoped that the findings of this study will help organizations better understand the expectations of the emerging workforce in respect of the Gen Z employees. In addition, the findings will offer invaluable suggestions to employers on how best to deploy organizational dynamics such as structure, culture, task design and career development among others in such a way as to attract Gen Z employees.

Key Words: Generations, Gen Z socialization, workplace preferences, organizational structure, culture, behaviour, task design.

Introduction

The modern workplace is experiencing significant shifts with the entry of Generation Z (Gen Z) into the labour market. Gen Z, broadly defined as individuals born between the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2010s, has been shaped by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and evolving social and economic structures (Dimock, 2019). Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is characterized by high digital literacy, a preference for flexibility, and a strong inclination towards purpose driven work (Scroth, 2019). As organizations seek to attract and retain this new workforce, understanding their socialization patterns and expectations is essential for effective workforce planning and management.

In addition, workplace preferences among Gen Z professionals are evolving, with increased emphasis on positive organizational culture, work life balance, career development opportunities, and fair compensation (Twenge 2017). Understanding these preferences is critical for organizations aiming to foster job satisfaction, engagement, and long-term retention. While extensive research on generational differences and workplace preferences has been conducted in western contexts, studies on Gen Z in the African labour market remains limited.

This study, therefore, examines the effects of Gen Z socialization on workplace preferences among undergraduate finalists in selected schools of Moi University, Kenya.

Statement of the problem

The entry of Generation Z (Gen Z) into the workforce is reshaping workplace dynamics, as this cohort exhibits distinct values and unique career expectations (Scroth, 2019). Unlike older employees, Gen Z professionals prioritize flexible work arrangements, positive organizational culture, career development opportunities, and work-life balance (Twenge, 2017). In view of this, employers face increasing challenges in attracting and retaining young talent due to misalignment between traditional workplace structures and Gen Zs evolving expectations (Bui et al., 2021). Implementing a shift to Gen Z compatibility in organizations while keeping current employees engaged requires a significant change and restructuring of management approaches and

systems. This change enhances overall business performance, establishing a holacracy that emphasizes skills, abilities, and concepts, instead of structures and hierarchy. Creating a flexible and horizontal organizational framework that enables Gen Z to excel in a varied, multicultural workforce is essential for positioning organizations advantageously in the constantly changing future.

Similarly, while studies in Western contexts have explored generational differences in workplace behaviour, there is lack of research on the specific effects of Gen Z characteristics - such as their socialization on workplace preferences within the Kenyan labor market. Without a clear understanding of these influences, organizations may struggle to design work environments that align with the expectations of this emerging workforce.

This study seeks to examine the effects of Gen Z socialization on workplace preferences among undergraduate finalists in selected schools of Moi University, Kenya. By demonstrating how Gen Z socialization shape job expectations, organizational culture preferences, and career priorities, the research aims to provide insights that would inform employers, educators and policy makers in enhancing workforce engagement and productivity.

Objective and Hypothesis of the study

The following was the objective and hypothesis of the study:

O_1: To analyze the effects of Gen Z socialization on workplace preferences among undergraduate finalists in selected schools of Moi University, Kenya;

HO_1: Gen Z socialization has no significant effect on workplace preferences among undergraduate finalists in selected schools of Moi University, Kenya.

Literature review

Workplaces worldwide are witnessing a demographic change as the initial group of Generation Z (Gen Z) enters the global labor market (Fuchs et al., 2024). Born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, Generation Z is predicted to constitute approximately 27% of the labor force by 2025 (Koop, 2021). As per UN estimates, Gen Z constitutes the largest generation globally, making up 23.64% of the total population in 2021. As a result, this transition represents a major alteration in the workplace since 27% of employees will be individuals who have no memory of a world before the internet (Barjami, 2024).

The entry of Gen Z into the workforce has generated considerable attention from academics, employers, and policymakers. Being the newest generational group to join the workforce, Gen Z shows distinctive traits influenced by swift technological progress, globalization, and changing social norms, which require a more profound comprehension of their job preparedness and preferences (Leslie et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2009; Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2018, Barjami, 2024).

In contrast to earlier generations, Gen Z is reshaping work expectations and preferences, introducing fresh viewpoints that contest conventional employment frameworks. They emphasize flexibility, preferring remote or hybrid work arrangements instead of strict regimes. They look for jobs with a purpose, favoring companies that resonate with their values by providing meaningful roles, work-life balance, and mental health initiatives (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Ruhil et al., 2020; Marron, 2015). As a result, welcoming and supportive work environments are very appealing to Gen Z. The influence of Gen Z employees is significant, necessitating adjustments that may be essential for their attraction, recruitment, and retention. As demographic changes continue, employers encounter a market where employees hold the upper hand, and a deeper comprehension of Gen Z workplace preferences could provide an edge in the "war for talent" (Skýpalová et al., 2023).

Workplace preferences denote the conditions, surroundings, and characteristics that employees value when selecting or assessing a workplace. It shows what people prioritize in their workplace, including organizational culture, job responsibilities, advantages, and chances for career advancement. For example, Gen Z favor a supportive workplace where all individuals are appreciated and treated equitably (Skýpalová et al., 2023). Gen Z is reshaping work expectations and desires, introducing fresh viewpoints that question conventional employment frameworks. In contrast to earlier generations, they value flexibility, preferring remote or hybrid work arrangements instead of fixed schedules. They look for jobs with a purpose, favoring companies that match their values and provide significant work. Moreover, work-life balance and mental health programs are vital in Gen Z's career decisions, leading them to favor inclusive and supportive workplaces (Leslie et al., 2021; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Ruhil et al., 2020).

Moreover, Gen Z prioritizes professional development, ongoing education, and regular feedback, anticipating transparent routes for career progression. Being digital natives, they favor technology-oriented settings that promote creativity and teamwork (Marron, 2015; Singh & Dangmei, 2016; Gibson et al., 2009). Appreciating these changing workplace preferences is essential for employers hoping to attract, engage, and retain Gen Z talent in the current competitive job market. Gen Z socialization influence a diverse array of work expectations. Studies show that this generation focuses heavily on intrinsic values such as personal growth and upward mobility. (de Boer et al., 2021).

To understand Gen Z socialization and how they influence workplace preferences, it is essential to outline the general characteristics of the other generations. This is essential in order to place the current study within the wider context of generational studies and workplace dynamics.

Urwin and Parry (2017) state that the existing population is divided into five generational cohorts: Veterans (1925-1942); Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960); Generation X (born 1961-1981); Generation Y or Millennials (born after 1982) (Strauss & Howe, 1991) and Generation Z or Post-Millennials (born after 2001) (Williams & Page, 2011). These groups display distinct traits that shape their work ethic and expectations about jobs.

The Baby Boomer cohort, born from 1946 to 1964 (Pew Research Center, 2018), is noted for its emphasis on traditional values, faith, and customs rather than on change (Berezan et al., 2018; Mintel, 2019a; Leslie et al., 2021). Growing up in the period following World War II, they are frequently characterized as idealistic, competitive, and hopeful. Baby Boomers emphasize self-improvement, question authority, and are recognized for their robust work ethic, which can sometimes result in workaholic tendencies. They appreciate in-person communication and reciprocal relationships within their work environment (Knapp et al., 2017). Having experienced major historical moments including the Vietnam War, the civil rights movements, political

assassinations, and the Watergate scandal (Bradford, 1963), along with cultural changes like Woodstock (Adams, 2000) and the counterculture movement (Niemec, 2000), this generation was heavily engaged in political and social activism. Baby Boomers are now approaching retirement.

Generation X, born from 1965 to 1980 (Pew Research Center, 2018), is recognized for its self-reliance, critical thinking, and business-oriented attitude (Berezan et al., 2018; Mintel, 2016). Having grown up as "latchkey kids" because of soaring divorce rates and more mothers joining the workforce, Gen Xers developed self-sufficiency and adaptability early on. They don't anticipate permanent employment with one company, favor direct communication, and have an aversion to micromanagement (Knapp et al., 2017). This generation was also referred to as the "baby bust" generation because its population is smaller in comparison to the Baby Boomers. Possessing a robust sense of ingenuity, they tirelessly tackle significant challenges but do not exhibit blind loyalty to organizations, opting to leave positions for improved opportunities when need arises (Karp et al., 2002).

Millennials, known as Generation Y, were born from 1981 to 1995 (Pew Research Center, 2018) and are the initial generation to have grown with the internet, ubiquitous media exposure, and globalization (Liesem, 2017). They possess a high level of education, with 40% of U.S. Millennials having bachelor's degrees, and are community-oriented, tech-savvy, and realistic. In the professional environment, they favor coaching rather than conventional management and value challenging tasks more than salary or job stability (Knapp et al., 2017). Millennials exhibit similarities with Gen X, notably in their appreciation for teamwork, diversity, and flexibility Zemke, (2000). Influenced by technological progress and evolving family dynamics (Niemec, 2000; Kersten, 2002), they are recognized for their positivity and skill in adapting to change efficiently.

Gen Z Socialization and Workplace Preferences

The distinct socialization experiences of Generation Z, formed by digital connectivity and changing social frameworks, greatly affect their workplace expectations and preferences. Understanding these dynamics is essential for organizations aiming to establish settings that connect with this demographic. Generation Z shows worry about how the widespread use of smart technology might affect social interactions, suggesting a need for improved social skills (Ngoc et al., 2022). It is noted that this generation prioritizes education and financial responsibility more than those before them, while also showing increased diversity in race and ethnicity (Ngoc et al., 2022). Recent conversations indicate that the belief system of this generation might play a larger role in shaping their actions than their cultural origins (Farrell & Phungsoonthorn, 2020). Generation Z members usually value shared interests more than social status or academic achievements, frequently viewing themselves as trendsetters instead of followers. This generation depends more on their own emotions and preferences instead of just conforming to mainstream views. This differs from previous generations and is made possible by the extensive information accessible online and the sophisticated technology they have access to (Madan & Madan, 2018).

Lyons et al. (2018) carried out a survey of graduates from 2017 and 2018 who had worked for Accenture the year before. Their research showed that Generation Z links job retention to aspects like mentorship, structured training, engaging and challenging tasks, and a distinct progression for skill enhancement from the beginning of their employment. Moreover, the research indicated that 54% of workers believed their abilities were not fully utilized, leading them to look for other job options. The report emphasized that the inability of organizations to successfully incorporate Gen Z employees resulted from a poor comprehension of their needs and values (Lyons et al., 2018).

Additionally, Gen Z pointed to poor onboarding methods as the main factor for leaving their jobs within the initial six months (Schroth, 2019). A study of top companies revealed that 87% of Gen Z workers who joined the workforce believed they did not possess the essential tools to carry out their jobs efficiently (Schroth, 2019). In a recent study with 5,000 employees, Audi found that younger generations look for appealing employers that offer security, financial stability, and career advancement opportunities, as well as a healthy work-life balance, flexible work options, acknowledgment, and support from management. Numerous participants also indicated a readiness to partake in international efforts, even for an extended duration (Klein et al., 2017).

Gen Z's social interactions are marked by a tendency for open, non-committal relationships and numerous online connections. This affects their interactions at work, where they value flexibility and independence (Turner, 2015). Research indicates that Gen Z workers appreciate workplaces that provide remote work opportunities and flexible hours, enabling them to maintain a balance between their careers and personal lives. Their ease with digital communication also makes them favor workplaces that employ technology for collaboration and interaction (Fromm & Read, 2018). For example, a study by Lancaster and Stillman (2010) shows that Gen Z workers tend to be happier in environments that provide multiple communication options, such as instant messaging and video calls.

The growing occurrence of single-parent households and blended families has influenced Gen Z's perceptions of work-life balance and family relationships. Research indicates that Gen Z workers tend to favor employers that provide family-oriented policies and supportive systems (Seemiller & Grace, 2021). They look for organizations that recognize and support their personal obligations, including flexible parental leave and childcare assistance. Research conducted by Ng, Lyons, and Schweitzer (2012) emphasizes that Gen Z workers greatly appreciate companies that show compassion and consideration for their family requirements.

Social interactions among Gen Zs are significantly shaped by the influencer culture, with online figures impacting their ideals and goals. This affects their expectations in the workplace, as they frequently desire genuine and transparent leadership (Parry & Hurst, 2019). Empirical studies show that Gen Z workers tend to be more engaged and motivated by leaders who are authentic, approachable, and show dedication to their personal and career growth. They are attracted to companies that promote an environment of guidance and coaching, allowing them to gain knowledge from seasoned experts (Smith, 2019). Research by Robles (2012) highlights the significance of strong communication and interpersonal abilities in leadership, since Gen Z workers appreciate leaders who are accessible and attentive.

The decline of conventional social standards has prompted Gen Z to adopt diversity and inclusivity. Research indicates that Generation Z workers tend to feel more satisfied in environments that embrace diversity in its various aspects (Cogin, 2012). They look for groups that encourage open communication, appreciation, and cultural understanding. Gen Z workers are increasingly drawn to organizations that prioritize robust diversity and inclusion efforts, including employee resource groups and diversity training initiatives (Bridgstock, 2009) leading to a sense of organizational citizenship.

Theoretical framework

Generational theory

The concept of generations has become highly popular in marketing and organizational management. Occasionally, the theory of generations appears to assert itself as a new management paradigm, but in reality, it operates under the ambit of sociological knowledge (Melnic, 2022). Generations are frequently characterized as social or birth groups that experience distinct socio-cultural events that shape their development (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Neves & Casimiro, 2018). The term 'generation' denotes a repeated cycle of offspring born over specific years, typically spanning 15-20 years (Almog and Almog, 2013). Strauss and Howe (1991) described a generation as clusters of individuals of varying ages influenced by evolving factors that mold their shared experiences and values. Although the subtleties of each generation's tastes and culture have sparked discussion, it is widely accepted that these differing expectations are evident in diverse manners within the workplace (Wong et al., 2008). Various generations hold unique views on what constitutes a quality work environment, such as noted by Leslie et al. (2021).

The idea of generations arose in sociology to comprehend social change and conflict, with two theoretical methods to define generations (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). The 'social forces' perspective is based on Karl Mannheim's theories, positing that generations emerge from specific historical occurrences and embody a collective with a common set of perceptions, as well as a shared mode of existence and knowledge (Bristow, 2016; Eyerman & Turner, 1998). The 'cohort' method is based on the research of Norman B. Ryder (Ryder, 1965), who recognized generations as age-defined groups that encounter major events around the same period in their lives. Both approaches share the insight that the historical context in which individuals are born and grow influences the formation of groups. Twenge (2023) observes that "The time period in which you were born significantly affects your behaviors, attitudes, values, and personality characteristics." In reality, the time of one's birth influences their personality and outlook more than the family socialization. Recognizing generational differences is crucial for comprehending family dynamics, the workplace, mental health, political views, economic strategies, marketing, and public discussions (Balon, 2023).

Person-Environment Fit Theory

The Person-Environment (P-E) Fit Theory, initially developed by French, Rodgers, and Cobb in 1974 and subsequently enhanced by Caplan (1987) and Kristof (1996), serves as a core framework in vocational psychology and organizational behavior. It indicates that factors like job satisfaction, performance, and well-being are affected by how well an individual's traits align with their work environment. This theory offers an extensive framework for examining how Generation Z's unique characteristics engage with different workplace environments, ultimately shaping their job preferences.

French et al. (1974) established the foundation by suggesting that stress and discontent occur when there is a mismatch between an individual and their surroundings. Caplan (1987) and subsequently Kristof (1996) built on this by identifying several dimensions of fit, including person-job (P-J) fit, person-organization (P-O) fit, person-group (P-G) fit, and person-supervisor (P-S) fit. The core principle of the theory is that ideal results—like engagement, satisfaction, and commitment—are attained when a person's needs, values, goals, and skills match the demands, values, and resources of their environment (Kristof, 1996).
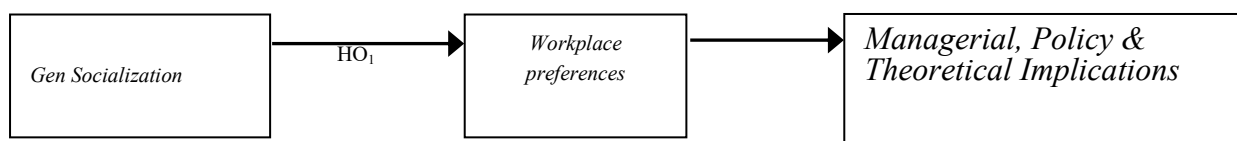
Two main types of fit are highlighted: supplementary fit and complementary fit. Supplementary fit happens when a person and their surroundings possess comparable traits, like values or personality characteristics. Complementary fit happens when a person's skills align with the environment's requirements or when the environment offers resources to fulfill the person's needs. These dimensions together affect how effectively a person adapts to and flourishes in a particular environment.

Although it is widely accepted, the P-E Fit Theory has faced criticism on multiple levels. A significant criticism relates to the subjectivity of fit perceptions, potentially causing differences between perceived and real fit (Edwards, 1996). Moreover, the theory posits reciprocal adaptability between the individual and the environment, which might not apply in stringent organizational cultures or for those with restricted job mobility. Another criticism is that the theory frequently prioritizes individual results (e.g., satisfaction, stress) rather than organizational results (e.g., innovation, productivity), which may restrict its effectiveness in strategic workforce planning. Additionally, empirical research can occasionally produce inconsistent findings because of differing definitions and operationalizations of "fit," which complicates generalization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

The P-E Fit Theory acts as a significant and efficient framework in this study as it explains the nexus between Gen Z values and their choice of workplace preferences. Gen Z qualities such as digital proficiency, a liking for flexible workplace settings, focus on meaningful careers, strong demands for work-life balance, and a wish for inclusive and principled organizational cultures signify their "individual" aspect of the fit model.

The "environment" aspect, in this context, pertains to various frameworks, cultures, and job positions in organizational settings. For instance, a digitally adept Gen Z worker may favor a vibrant, innovation-oriented company featuring collaborative environments and opportunities for remote work. The P-E Fit Theory suggests that a person would feel more satisfied and engaged in a setting that aligns with their preferences—a supplementary fit regarding common values and a complementary fit concerning technological resources and adaptable policies.

Conceptual Framework

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┌─────────────────────┐         ┌──────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│                     │   HO₁   │    Workplace     │         │  Managerial, Policy &   │
│  Gen Socialization  │ ──────> │   preferences    │ ──────> │ Theoretical Implications│
│                     │         │                  │         │                         │
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Source: Author, 2025

The conceptual framework attempts to explain the relationship between Gen Z socialization patterns and their workplace preferences. From the literature review, it is evident that Gen Z socialization patterns which include deteriorating social norms, the rise of the influencer culture, and single parentage among others influence their work approach ultimately affecting their choices in so far as workplace dynamics are concerned. These choices eventually determine the managerial decisions that organizations would have to adopt in order to attract and retain Gen Z talent. Such decisions would shape the policy guidelines of the organization.

Methodology

The study was anchored on the quantitative research approach under the positivist philosophical worldview. Explanatory research design was adopted whereas stratified and simple random sampling techniques guided the process of respondents' identification. The study population comprised of 4,045 undergraduate finalists in five selected schools from where respondents were selected. The sample size of the study was 364 respondents computed using Yamane's (1967) formula. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The information obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation and multiple regression models were used to test the research hypothesis.

Findings and Discussion

Response Rate

The research collected data from 364 participants who are final-year undergraduates from selected schools at Moi University in Kenya through a structured questionnaire. A sum of 276 were gathered, and 268 questionnaires were completely filled out, which satisfied the set criteria for analysis. This suggested a response rate of 73.6%. Out of the 8 that failed to meet the necessary standards, 5 were incomplete, and 3 respondents indicated they were not Gen Zs, making them irrelevant for the study's objectives. Consequently, they were excluded from the final analysis. Out of 364, the total questionnaires that were excluded from the final analysis were 96. This indicated a non-response rate of 23.4%. Nix et al. (2019) state that a response rate of 50% is sufficient, 60% is considered good, and 70% is regarded as very good. This indicates that the 73.6% response rate achieved in this research is sufficient for analysis as well as for drawing conclusions and making recommendations from the study.

Response Rate

Distributed questionnaires	Received questionnaires	Usable questionnaires	Response Rate
364	276	268	73.6

Descriptive Analysis of the Study

This subsection displays the results obtained from examining the descriptive statistics. The study highlights the main factors, which are analyzed systematically. These variables consist of the independent variables (Gen Z socialization) and the dependent variable (workplace preferences) among final-year undergraduates at Moi University, Kenya. Important descriptive statistics presented consist of standard deviation, mean, and percentages. Various Gen Z Socialization indicators were explored using short concise statements on which respondents were to rate their responses on a five likert scale. In total 10 indicators were utilized. The results are as shown in the table below.

Descriptive Statistics on Gen Z Socialization

Statements	Mean	SD
Open and non-committal relationships influence Gen Z's preference for flexible work arrangements over long-term commitments.	4.19	0.917
Multiple online relationships shape Gen Z's preference for digital communication and remote collaboration in the workplace.	4.35	0.915
The rise of single parentage/patchwork families affects Gen Z's preference for family-friendly	4.00	1.067

workplace policies and benefits.		
Influencer culture drives Gen Z's preference for workplaces that allow personal branding and social media engagement.	3.93	1.077
Decreasing social norms influence Gen Z's preference for informal and relaxed workplace cultures.	3.71	1.230
Aggregate mean and Std. Dev	**4.05**	**1.041**

The results indicate that open and non-committal relationships affect Gen Z's inclination for flexible work situations instead of long-term commitments reflected in a mean score of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.917. This suggests that the majority of participants recognized that Gen Z's inclination to steer clear of strict, long-term obligations in personal relationships also influences their workplace preferences, positioning flexibility as a crucial element in job choice. These results correspond with Twenge's (2023) research, which indicated that Gen Zs value independence and work-life balance more than conventional career paths, choosing the gig economy roles and freelance positions instead of stable jobs. The significant consensus in this research underscores the necessity for organizations to adopt hybrid and remote work approaches to draw in and keep Gen Z talent.

Moreover, several online interactions influencing Gen Z's inclination towards digital communication and telecommuting in professional settings attained the greatest level of consensus, with an average score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.915. This indicates that Gen Z, raised in a time characterized by digital interactions, is more at ease with virtual work settings than older generations. Research conducted by Prensky (2019) suggests that Gen Z workers excel in environments that utilize digital communication platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom to boost productivity and teamwork.

The results additionally showed that the increase in single parenting and blended families influences Gen Z's desire for family-oriented workplace policies and benefits, yielding a mean score of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 1.067. This shows that Gen Z workers appreciate employers that provide parental leave, childcare assistance, and flexible work hours to support various family dynamics. Previous research by Arnett (2021) suggests that Gen Z workers, shaped by their experiences in unconventional family environments, anticipate inclusive policies that acknowledge various caregiving roles. Organizations that do not adjust to these expectations might face challenges in retaining talent and ensuring employee satisfaction among younger employees.

Additionally, the rise of influencer culture received a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.077. This implies that Gen Zs anticipate their employers to back their online visibility, enabling them to display their work and personal brand through social media. A study by Vaynerchuk (2022) indicates that Gen Z employees consider personal branding an important career advantage and favor organizations that offer social media-friendly settings. The relatively large standard deviation suggests differing views among respondents, likely owing to variations in industry expectations and company guidelines regarding social media usage.

Ultimately, the reduction of social norms affecting Gen Z's inclination towards casual and laid-back work environments recorded the lowest average score of 3.71, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.230. Although remaining above the neutral point, this observation indicates that even though a considerable number of Gen Z workers prefer informal dress codes, open-plan offices, and adaptable hierarchies, a portion of those surveyed might still appreciate organized corporate environments. This corresponds with findings from Lyons and Kuron (2018), suggesting that Generation Z values a mix of independence and security, where casual settings exist alongside traditional regimes.

The results indicate that Gen Z's job preferences are significantly influenced by their social experiences, requiring organizations to modify policies to meet these new workforce demands. The findings are consistent with earlier studies by Deal and Levenson (2021), which indicated that organizations meeting Gen Z demands for digital, flexible, and socially inclusive environments generally experience greater employee engagement and retention levels. To attract and keep Gen Z talent, organizations should prioritize flexibility, digital communication, family-oriented policies, and opportunities for personal branding in a well-rounded workplace culture.

Correlation Analysis

This section provides results on the correlation analysis between the independent and dependent variables. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to compute the correlations between the independent variable (Gen Z socialization) and the dependent variable (workplace preferences). The findings are shown in the table below.

Summary of Pearson's Correlations

		Gen Z Socialization	Gen Z Workplace preferences
Gen Z Socialization	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	268	

			1
Gen Z Workplace preferences	Pearson Correlation	.257**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	268	268

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that Gen Z socialization ($r = .257^{**}$, $p = .000$, $n = 268$) have a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with workplace preferences. This suggests that Gen Z workplace preferences are influenced by their socialization patterns meaning that organizations that align their workplace dynamics with these patterns may attract and retain Gen Z talent.

Hypotheses Testing

In this study hypothesis testing was done through inferential analysis using a linear regression model to establish the statistical relationship between Gen Z socialization and workplace preferences. The main aspects covered herein include, the model summary, the ANOVA tests and the regression coefficients. The inferential results are presented below.

Model Summary for Gen Z Socialization

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.257a	.066	.063	.55819

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gen Z Socialization

As shown in the model summary the R^2 value for the model is 0.063. This indicates that Gen Z socialization explains approximately 6.3% of the variation in workplace preferences. While this percentage is relatively low, it suggests that socialization plays a role in shaping workplace preferences.

ANOVA for Gen Z Socialization

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.879	1	5.879	18.870	.000b
	Residual	82.878	266	.312		
	Total	88.757	267			

a. Dependent Variable: work place preferences
b. Predictors: (Constant), Gen Z Socialization

The ANOVA test results reveal that the F-statistic for the model is 18.870, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the model is statistically significant, implying that Gen Z socialization has a meaningful impact on workplace preferences. These findings align with previous research by Lyons & Kuron (2014), which highlighted that generational socialization patterns shape work expectations and organizational culture preferences. A study by Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) highlighted how socialization among younger employees shapes their expectations and interactions in professional settings.

Coefficients on Gen Z Socialization

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.392	.217		15.603	.000
	Gen Z Socialization	.231	.053	.257	4.344	.000

a. Dependent Variable: workplace preferences

The regression coefficient results show that the constant value is 3.392. This implies that if Gen Z socialization and other factors are held constant, workplace preferences would still exist at a baseline level of 3.392. The Beta (β) coefficient for Gen Z socialization is 0.231, with a standardized coefficient of 0.257. This suggests that a unit increase in Gen Z socialization leads to a 25.7% increase in workplace preferences. The p-value for Gen Z socialization is 0.000, which is below the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This confirms that there is a significant and positive relationship between Gen Z socialization and workplace preferences.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (HO_1) is rejected, affirming that Gen Z Socialization has a significant positive influence on Workplace Preferences.

These results are consistent with studies by Twenge (2017), which found that Gen Z employees prefer workplaces that reflect their socialization experiences, including collaborative environments, inclusivity, and digital engagement. Deal et al. (2010) emphasized that social interactions among Gen

Z employees influence their work-related expectations, communication styles, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that Gen Z socialization is significant in driving what Gen Zs seek in a workplace. Organizations looking to attract and retain this generation should recognize and adapt to these socialization patterns moving beyond generic strategies to embracing environments that resonate with Gen Z's unique attributes.

Implications

Policy makers in education and employment sectors could utilize the findings of this study to develop policies and guidelines that support the integration of Gen Z into the workforce. This includes promoting learning spaces and workplace environments that align with Gen Z socialization patterns.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on generational studies and workplace preferences. Further research could explore other factors influencing workplace preferences beyond the scope of this study.

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