



Workplace Expectations of Gen Z Students

Nisha Leonara D ^{1*}, Christi Anandan C R ²

¹ Research Scholar, P.G. & Research Department of Social Work, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur District, TN – India

² Asst. Professor, P.G. & Research Department of Social Work, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur District, TN – India

* Corresponding Author: Nisha Leonara D

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-6641

Impact Factor (RSIF): 8.56

Volume: 05

Issue: 02

March-April 2026

Received: 14-01-2026

Accepted: 13-02-2026

Published: 12-03-2026

Page No: 94-99

Abstract

Gen Z represents the emerging workforce and their expectations from the workplace are significantly different from previous generations. Understanding their workplace expectations is essential for organizations to design effective work environments and management strategies. The present study aims to examine the workplace expectations of Gen Z students with respect to positive work culture, diversity and inclusion, supportive leadership, respectful communication, teamwork preference, work-life balance, and career growth. The study adopted a descriptive research design and simple random sampling method. Primary data were collected from 50 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation analysis with the help of SPSS software. The findings reveal that most of the respondents have high expectations regarding positive work culture and teamwork (50%), followed by diversity and inclusion (48%), supportive leadership (46%), respectful communication (46%), and career growth (46%). The t-test results indicate a significant gender difference only in the dimension of positive work culture, while other dimensions show no significant difference. ANOVA results reveal that career aspirations do not significantly influence workplace expectations of Gen Z students. Correlation analysis shows a positive relationship between age and positive work culture expectations. The study concludes that organizations must focus on creating inclusive, supportive, and balanced work environments to attract and retain Gen Z employees.'

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMOR.2026.5.2.94-99>

Keywords: Gen Z (Generation) Workplace Expectations, Work Culture, Leadership, Work-Life Balance, Career Growth, Diversity and Inclusion

Introduction

Gen Z is defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Gen Z employees entering the workforce have distinct expectations regarding work environment and practices. Gen Z is unlike other preceding generations of employees who do not consider work environment an essential factor. Organizations of today must be aware of Gen Z employees' expectations to attract and retain Gen Z employees.

Employee expectations regarding work environment play an essential role in determining employee satisfaction and productivity. Gen Z employees consider positive work environment an essential factor. Gen Z employees consider positive work environment to be characterized by positive work culture, communication style, and teamwork. Gen Z employees also consider positive work environment to be characterized by diversity and equality. Gen Z employees consider positive leadership and career growth opportunities to be essential for career growth.

Understanding Gen Z employees' expectations is essential to adapt work environment to meet Gen Z employees' expectations. Hence, this study aims to examine Gen Z employees' expectations regarding work environment and determine the impact of demographic factors such as gender, career aspiration, and age on Gen Z employees' expectations.

Review of Literature

Several studies have been done to understand the expectations and preferences of Generation Z in a working context, as this generation is slowly entering the workforce and building the future of organizations. Jean M. Twenge (2010) investigated the generational differences in terms of expectations in a working context. The study found that Gen Z is more focused on a work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, and meaningful work compared to previous generations. The study indicated that Gen Z workers expect organizations to provide a conducive working environment for their development. David Stillman and Jonah Stillman (2017) investigated Gen Z characteristics in a working context. The study found that Gen Z workers value transparency, integration of technology, and inclusive working cultures. The study indicated that Gen Z workers prefer working in organizations where their ideas are valued and there is open communication between management and workers. Bruce Tulgan (2015) explored Gen Z expectations in a working context. The study found that Gen Z workers expect organizations to provide a sense of direction from their supervisors and opportunities for career development. The study indicated that Gen Z workers value working in teams and collaborative working environments. Deloitte India (2022), in its study on the expectations and career aspirations of Gen Z employees in India, reported that "Gen Z employees are highly passionate about achieving a better work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and continuous learning opportunities." The study results revealed that "Gen Z respondents are more positive about organizations that foster diversity, inclusion, and leadership behaviors." It is important for organizations to embrace modern ways of working in order to attract and retain Gen Z employees. The study conducted by Ramakrishnan & Balamurugan (2018) focused on the workplace expectations of Gen Z students in India. The research was conducted on factors such as career growth, organizational culture, leadership, and work-life balance. The results indicated that Gen Z students prefer workplaces with a supportive management style, a collaborative work culture, and opportunities for career growth. The study highlights the importance of creating a work environment that can cater to the expectations of the new generation of employees.

Methodology

Aim

To study the expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplace preferences.

Objectives

- To evaluate the extent of expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplace preferences.
- To investigate the relationship between the gender of the respondents and the expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplaces.
- To evaluate the relationship between the career aspirations of the respondents and their expectations of Gen Z students.
- To investigate the relationship between the age of the respondents and their expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplaces.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and their expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplaces.
2. There is no significant relationship between the age of the respondents and their expectations of Gen Z students.
3. There is no significant difference between the career aspirations of the respondents and their expectations of Gen Z students.

Research Design

The descriptive research design has been adopted to conduct the study on the expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplaces. Descriptive research design helps the researcher to systematically describe and analyze the perceptions, expectations, and attitudes of the respondents toward their workplaces.

Analysis and Interpretation

For this study, different statistical analyses were computed using SPSS Version 21 to understand the expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future expectations about their workplaces. The data obtained from the students were analyzed using suitable statistical methods such as percentage analysis, t-test, ANOVA (F-test), and correlation analysis to interpret the responses of Gen Z students regarding different aspects of their expectations about their workplaces, such as positive work culture, diversity and inclusion, support from the leadership, respect for communication, preference for team work, work-life balance, and career growth, among others.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their overall Workplace Expectation of Gen Z

Dimensions	Workplace Expectation of Gen Z					
	Low		Moderate		High	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
Positive work culture	16	32.0	9	18.0	25	50.0
Diversity And Inclusion	15	30.0	11	22.0	24	48.0
Supportive Leadership	12	24.0	15	30.0	23	46.0
Respectful Communication	12	24.0	15	30.0	23	46.0
Teamwork Preference	14	28.0	11	22.0	25	50.0
Work-life balance	14	28.0	15	30.0	21	42.0
Career Growth	15	30.0	12	24.0	23	46.0

From the above table, it is observed that the workplace expectations of Gen Z students vary in different dimensions related to their future workplace preferences. In terms of positive work culture, 32% of respondents fall under low level, 18% of respondents fall under moderate level, and the majority of respondents, i.e., 50%, fall under high level. This shows that half of the respondents highly value positive work culture in their future workplace. In terms of diversity and inclusion, 30% of respondents fall under low level, 22% of respondents fall under moderate level, and 48% of respondents fall under high level. This shows that a high

percentage of Gen Z students highly value diversity and inclusion in their future workplace. In terms of supportive leadership, 24% of respondents fall under low level, 30% of respondents fall under moderate level, and 46% of respondents fall under high level. This shows that Gen Z students highly value supportive leadership in their future workplace. Similarly, in terms of respectful communication, 24% of respondents fall under low level, 30% of respondents fall under moderate level, and 46% of respondents fall under high level. In the dimension of teamwork preference, 28% of the respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their Positive work culture

Factors	Key findings related to Positive work culture									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
Prefer to work in an organization promotes a work culture	6	12.0	6	12.0	16	32.0	12	24.0	10	20.0
Supportive work atmosphere	7	14.0	2	4.0	10	20.0	21	42.0	10	20.0
Mutual respect among colleagues in the workplace	5	10.0	6	12.0	10	20.0	18	36.0	11	22.0
Positive work culture	5	10.0	5	10.0	10	20.0	17	34.0	13	26.0
Workplace encourage employee well-being	5	10.0	9	18.0	16	32.0	16	32.0	4	8.0

Table 4.12 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on positive work culture. With regard to the positive work culture statement "Prefer to work in an organization that promotes a positive work culture," 32 percent of respondents are neutral, whereas 24 percent agree and 20 percent strongly agree. Similarly, with regard to supportive work atmosphere, most of the respondents (42 percent) agree and 20 percent strongly agree. With regard to mutual respect among colleagues, 36 percent agree and 22 percent strongly agree. Similarly, with regard to positive work culture, 34 percent agree and 26 percent strongly agree. With regard to

workplace encouragement of employee well-being, 32 percent agree and 8 percent strongly agree, whereas 32 percent are neutral.

H₀ - There is no significant relationship between positive work culture and workplace expectations of Gen Z students.

H₁ - There is a significant relationship between positive work culture and workplace expectations of Gen Z students.

Result:

From the above analysis, it is clear most of the students either agree or strongly agree with positive work culture.

Table 3: 't' – Test based on the Gender of the respondents and with the workplace Expectation of Gen Z students

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	Statistical Inference
Positive work culture					
Female (26)	18.423	3.6241	.7107	48	Sig.=.014, P<0.05 Significant
Male (24)	15.292	4.9561	1.0117	41.913	Sig.=.015, P<0.05 Significant
Diversity and Inclusion					
Female (26)	18.115	3.4447	.6756	48	Sig.=.255, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	16.750	4.8745	.9950	41.065	Sig.=.263, P>0.05 Not Significant
Supportive Leadership					
Female (26)	18.462	3.6903	.7237	48	Sig.=.063, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	16.375	4.0734	.8315	46.498	Sig.=.065, P>0.05 Not Significant
Respectful Communication					
Female (26)	17.500	3.8704	.7590	48	Sig.=.697, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	17.042	4.3984	.8978	42.657	Sig.=.658, P>0.05 Not Significant
Teamwork Preference					
Female (26)	18.500	3.3136	.6499	48	Sig.=.260, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	17.250	4.3961	.8974	47.975	Sig.=.266, P>0.05 Not Significant
Work-Life Balance					
Female (26)	18.000	4.3174	.8467	48	Sig.=.619, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	17.417	3.8889	.7938	47.975	Sig.=.618, P>0.05 Not Significant
Career Growth					
Female (26)	18.269	3.7369	.7329	48	Sig.=.606, P>0.05 Not Significant
Male (24)	17.708	3.8951	.7951	47.284	Sig.=.606, P>0.05 Not Significant

From Table 4:19 above, it is evident that there is a significant difference between the two genders in the Positive Work Culture dimension ($p < 0.05$), where the female group has a higher mean (18.423) compared to the male group (15.292). This implies that the female group has a more positive perception of the work culture compared to the male group. However, in all the other dimensions—Diversity and Inclusion, Supportive Leadership, Respectful Communication Teamwork Preference, Work-Life Balance, and Career Growth—the p-values are all higher than 0.05. This implies that there is no significant difference between the two genders in the other dimensions. Moreover, the means are close in all the dimensions. This implies that the two genders have the same perception in all the dimensions. It can therefore be concluded that the gender factor does not

contribute much in the perception of the work culture in the workplace.

H0: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents in the dimensions of workplace culture (Positive Work Culture, Diversity and Inclusion, Supportive Leadership, Respectful Communication Teamwork Preference, Work-Life Balance, and Career Growth).

H1: There is a significant difference between male and female respondents in the dimensions of workplace culture.

Result:

The null hypothesis (H0) is partially rejected for Positive Work Culture and fully accepted for all other dimensions. The results indicate that except for positive work culture, males and females share similar perceptions about workplace culture.

Table 4: 'F' – Test based on the Department of the respondents and with overall Workplace Expectations of Gen Z students

Variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Statistical Inference
Positive work culture	Between Groups	21.194	2	10.597	.501	Sig. =0.609, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	994.486	47	21.159		
	Total	1015.680	49			
Diversity and Inclusion	Between Groups	12.483	2	6.241	.344	Sig. =0.711, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	853.938	47	18.169		
	Total	866.420	49			
Supportive Leadership	Between Groups	8.955	2	4.477	.274	Sig. =0.761, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	767.465	47	16.329		
	Total	776.420	49			
Respectful Communication	Between Groups	4.142	2	2.071	.119	Sig. =0.888, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	817.938	47	17.403		
	Total	822.080	49			
Teamwork Preference	Between Groups	9.118	2	4.559	.294	Sig. =0.747, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	729.382	47	15.519		
	Total		49			
Work Life Balance	Between Groups	41.302	2	20.651	1.250	Sig. =0.296, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	776.778	47	16.527		
	Total		49			
Career Growth	Between Groups	9.563	2	4.781	.325	Sig. =0.724, P>0.05 Not Significant
	Within Groups	692.438	47	14.733		
	Total	702.000	49			

The F-test (ANOVA) was performed to test whether there is a significant difference in expectations in the workplace among Gen Z students based on the department of the respondents. The results of the test show that for positive work culture ($p = 0.609$), diversity and inclusion ($p = 0.711$), supportive leadership ($p = 0.761$), respectful communication ($p = 0.888$), teamwork preference ($p = 0.747$), work-life balance ($p = 0.296$), and career growth ($p = 0.724$), all p-values are greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no significant difference in expectations in the workplace among respondents from different departments. Although there are slight variations in mean square values, there is no notable difference among the groups.

H0: There is no significant difference in the workplace

expectations of Gen Z students based on the department of the respondents.

H1: There is a significant difference in the workplace expectations of Gen Z students based on the department of the respondents.

Result: Since all the p-values of all the variables are more than 0.05, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significance of the department of the respondents on the workplace expectations of Gen Z students regarding their future workplace expectations. It is found that all the variations of the departments are only numerical.

Table 5: Correlation between the age of the respondents and with the overall Work Expectation of Gen Z

Variable	Correlation Value	Statistical Inference
Positive work culture	.412**	P<0.05 Significant
Inclusion and Diversity	.262	P>0.05 Not Significant
Supportive and Leadership	.206	P>0.05 Not Significant
Respectful Communication	.068	P>0.05 Not Significant
Teamwork Preference	.040	P>0.05 Not Significant
Work -life balance	.063	P>0.05 Not Significant
Career Growth	.151	P>0.05 Not Significant

Table 4.27 presents the correlation analysis results between the age of the respondents and the workplace expectations of Gen Z students for their future preferences. The results indicate that positive work culture has a correlation value of 0.412 with $p < 0.05$, which means there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the age of the students and their expectations for a positive work culture. This means that as the age of the students increases, their expectations for a positive work culture will also increase. However, the results also indicate that the correlation value for diversity and inclusion (0.262), supportive leadership (0.206), respectful communication (0.068), teamwork preference (0.040), work-life balance (0.063), and career growth (0.151) are not statistically significant, as their p-values are more than 0.05. This means that the age of the students has no impact on their expectations for these dimensions in the workplace.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the age of the respondents and the workplace expectations of Gen Z students.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the age of the respondents and the workplace expectations of Gen Z students.

Result: As the positive work culture has a p-value of less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀) has been rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H₁) has been accepted. But the null hypothesis has been accepted for the remaining dimensions, as the p-values are more than 0.05. Hence, the conclusion drawn on the basis of the results obtained is that the age factor has shown significant results only with the positive work culture, and the age factor has no significant impact on the remaining dimensions of the workplace expectations of the Gen Z students.

Major Findings

The results of the study on Workplace Expectations of Gen Z Students for Future Workplace Preference revealed that the level of workplace expectations is high, as all 100% of the respondents belong to a high level of overall workplace expectations. Among the various dimensions of workplace expectations, positive work culture and teamwork preference (50%) had the highest level of expectations, followed by diversity and inclusion (48%), supportive leadership (46%), respectful communication (46%), and career growth (46%). Work-life balance had relatively low expectations compared to other dimensions, with 42%. Moreover, results of the t-test revealed that there is a significant difference in workplace expectations between male and female students only in positive work culture, whereas in other dimensions there are no significant differences. In addition, results of the ANOVA test revealed that there are no significant differences in workplace expectations in terms of departments and career aspirations of students. Moreover, results of correlation

analysis revealed that positive work culture is significantly related to age, whereas in other dimensions there are weak and insignificant relationships. In summary, it is revealed that positive work culture, supportive leadership, and teamwork are important factors that influence workplace expectations of Gen Z students.

Suggestions

Based on the results obtained in the study on Workplace Expectations of Gen Z Students for Future Workplace Preference, the following suggestions can be made for the organization to attract and retain young Gen Z employees in the future workforce. Organizations need to establish a good work culture with emphasis on mutual respect, inclusiveness, and the well-being of the employees. Organizations need to encourage diversity and inclusion in the work environment, and the employees should be respected and appreciated despite their backgrounds. Organizations need to establish good leadership styles and respectful communication with the employees. Organizations need to encourage teamwork and cooperation among the employees to enhance their productivity and sense of belongingness. Organizations need to ensure career advancement opportunities and training programs for the young Gen Z employees to enable them to fulfill their career aspirations. Finally, the organization needs to ensure work-life balance for the employees to enhance their job satisfaction, which will be useful in retaining young Gen Z employees in the future workforce.

Conclusion

The present study aims to investigate the expectations of Gen Z students about their future workplaces. From the findings, it is evident that the overall expectations of Gen Z students about their future workplaces are high, as all the students have shown high expectations about their future workplaces. The findings of this study indicate that positive work culture, preference for teamwork, positive leadership, diversity and inclusion, respect for communication, and career growth are some of the factors that play an important role in influencing the expectations of Gen Z students about their future workplaces. On the other hand, work-life balance has been found to be low, indicating that the organization needs to focus more on maintaining a better work-life balance for Gen Z students.

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How to Cite This Article

Leonara ND, Anandan CCR. Workplace expectations of Gen Z students. *Int J Manag Organ Res*. 2026 Mar–Apr;5(2):94–99. doi:10.54660/IJMOR.2026.5.2.94-99.

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