

Research Paper

Retaining Generation Z in India - A Work Values based HR Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In this study, Donald Super's Work Values Inventory (WVI) is used as a conceptual framework to investigate how work values affect employee retention among Generation Z in Indian firms. The study, which drew on semi-structured interviews with HR professionals from various industries, shows that intrinsic motivators like meaningful work, ongoing education, flexibility, and mental health support are strongly associated with Gen Z's retention (Super & Mann-Lincoln, 1962). Participants noted a shift in Gen Z's preferences toward impact-driven jobs and organizational alignment with personal values, even though extrinsic values like job security and financial rewards are still important (Leslie et al., 2021). The results highlight how Gen Z's professional expectations are changing, casting doubt on traditional retention tactics and highlighting the value of mentorship, autonomy, inclusive cultures, and hybrid work arrangements. A contextual HR training paradigm that is adapted to these generational changes is suggested by the study. The findings suggest that among Gen Z professionals in India, reevaluating retention through the prism of work values can improve long-term employee commitment and organizational engagement.

Keywords: *Generation Z, work values, employee retention, Indian workplaces, human resource strategies*

Generation Z, born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, constitutes a pivotal portion of the workforce, defined by distinct values, expectations, and professional goals. With this generation progressively joining the workforce, it is essential for organizations seeking to keep young talent to comprehend the influences that affect their employment decisions. Indian firms, especially, encounter the difficulty of adjusting to Gen Z's changing priorities, which focus on purpose-driven employment, flexibility, and chances for ongoing learning (Schroth, 2019). Conventional retention methods that worked for earlier generations might not be effective for Gen Z, requiring a more thorough understanding of their motivations and preferences. This research aims to unravel the factors influencing Gen Z's career decisions and analyze ways Indian companies can modify their retention strategies to meet these changing expectations.

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Organizations that provide leadership development programs, mental health services, and organized learning programs have better retention rates with this group. These results support the necessity for flexible employment models that give professional growth and technology innovation top priority in order to satisfy Gen Z's aspirations, and they are consistent with the body of research on intergenerational workforce management (Aggarwal, 2024).

Employee engagement and commitment are higher when employment is seen as meaningful, according to research (Sritresna & Ruangkanjanases, 2023). Technology integration is essential to sustaining engagement and productivity because digital fluency is also one of the best indicators of workplace performance for this group (Gubbi, 2024). Another important factor influencing Gen Z retention is financial security. Competitive pay and job security have a major impact on workplace satisfaction and retention, according to a study conducted on Gen Z workers in Bangladesh (Islam et al., 2023). However, studies conducted in the retail industry indicate that neither intrinsic nor extrinsic benefits significantly affect the retention of Gen Z workers (Randi, 2023). This suggests that although monetary rewards are important, they must be paired with other workplace perks like professional development and a supportive company culture.

Organizations are becoming increasingly concerned about employee retention, especially as more members of Generation Z enter the workforce. The necessity of fully grasping the elements affecting retention have been highlighted by the rapid changes in the work values, talent management techniques, and human resource strategies. Retaining talent promotes organizational stability and growth by lowering training and recruitment expenses while also guaranteeing business continuity (Oladapo, 2014). The importance of talent management in retaining employees has long been acknowledged.

Gen Z workers' choices for their workplaces also emphasize the value of adaptability, mental health, and ongoing feedback. Work-life balance, digital integration, and mental health support greatly increase Gen Z's inclination to stick with a company, according to a Thai study (Yusuk & Taweel Sangsong, 2023). Organizations must implement more flexible performance management techniques since Gen Z workers, in contrast to previous generations, need instant feedback rather than yearly performance reviews (Gubbi, 2024). Additionally, gender-based disparities in workplace preferences show that men in Gen Z place more emphasis on flexibility and career accomplishments, Attention has also been drawn to behavioral and psychological aspects of retention. According to Lopez and Martinez's (2023) investigation into the relationship between job satisfaction and mental health, employees who experience high levels of stress are more likely to look for other opportunities. Their study emphasizes how crucial mental health programs are to retention tactics. Wilson and Carter (2023) went on to stress the importance of alignment with organizational values and purpose, especially for Gen Z professionals who place a high value on meaningful work.

A comprehensive strategy that incorporates leadership, career development, organizational culture, talent management, and compensation plans is needed to retain Generation Z workers. Organizations can establish an atmosphere that meets the changing demands of this dynamic workforce segment by addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To explore the factors influencing Gen Z retention in Indian workplaces by analyzing HR perspectives, using Donald Super's Work Values Inventory as a framework.

Objectives

1. To analyze the relationship between work values and employee retention among Generation Z.
2. To identify the key work values that influence Gen Z employees' decision to stay or leave an organization from perspectives of HR Professionals.

Problem Statement

Indian businesses are finding it difficult to adjust to the changing work attitudes and expectations of Generation Z, who are becoming a sizable portion of the workforce. The workplace preferences and career motivations of this age might not be compatible with traditional employee retention tactics. Companies run the risk of high turnover rates and difficulties keeping a stable and motivated workforce if they don't have a strong understanding of what motivates Gen Z's work engagement and loyalty. By examining Gen Z's work values and their effect on retention, this study aims to close this gap.

Variables

Independent Variable

- Work Values of Generation Z Employees

Dependent Variable

- Employee Retention

Operational Definitions

1. **Work Values.** Work values refer to the fundamental beliefs and priorities that individuals seek in their professional lives, influencing their job choices, satisfaction, and long-term retention (Super & Mann-Lincoln, 1962). According to Rounds and Armstrong (2005), Donald Super's Work Values Inventory (WVI) divides work values into extrinsic (such as financial gain, job stability, prestige, and supervisory relationships) and intrinsic (such as intellectual stimulation, independence, creativity, and altruism) aspects. According to Super (1970), these values serve as a guide for an individual's expectations of their work and are predictive of both organizational commitment and career fulfillment.
2. **Employee Retention.** Employee retention refers to an organization's ability to keep its employees engaged and committed over time by meeting their work expectations, career aspirations, and personal values (Oladapo, 2014). Work-life balance, professional development, job happiness, and the fit between employees' values and company culture all have an impact on it (Dashdondog, 2023).

Research Design

An interview schedule consisting of 17 items was framed to analyse the different aspects of the factors that affect Employee Retention with a focus on Generation Z. We conducted a semi-structured interview, ensuring flexibility available with both participants and researchers to get an in-depth and holistic understanding of the requirements to minimize employee turnover with respect to Gen Z employees. We explored factors using Donald Super's Work Values Inventory, including Creativity, Management, Achievement,

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Supervisory Relations, Way of Life, Aesthetics, Associates, Intellectual Stimulation, Prestige, Surroundings, Security, Independence, Variety, Economic Return and Altruism (Super,1962).

Sampling Procedure

Human Resource Managers and Associates were contacted, and the purpose of the study was explained to them. Participants were chosen based on their skills and experience in managing a majority of Generation Z employees in the workplace, as well as their expertise in employee retention and talent management. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that only HR professionals with relevant insights were included in the study. To maintain industry diversity, professionals from sectors such as IT, healthcare, finance, consulting, education, and startups were considered.

Sample Description

Inclusion Criteria

- Must have a minimum of three years of experience in human resources, particularly in recruitment, employee engagement, or retention.
- Must have experience managing, mentoring, or working closely with a majority of Gen Z employees in their organization.
- Participants are required to be proficient in understanding and speaking English.

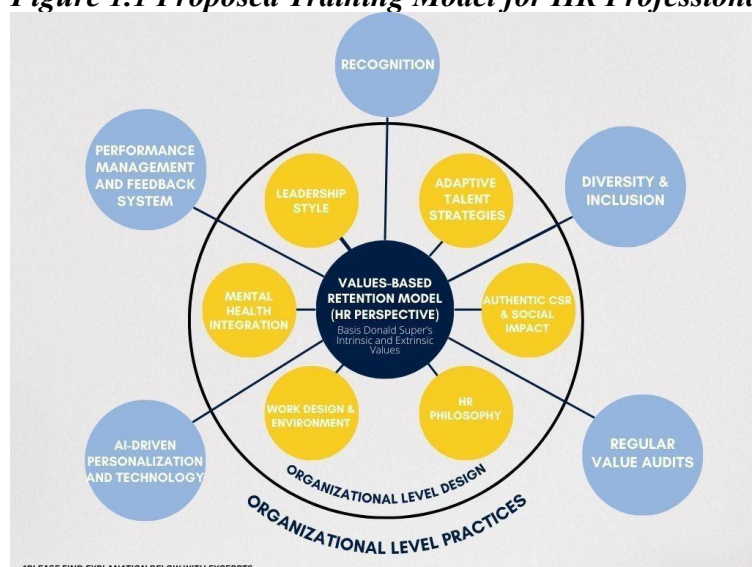
Exclusion Criteria

- HR professionals whose perspectives might introduce bias due to strong personal or organizational agendas unrelated to objective Gen Z retention research.
- Participants who are not comfortable with use of technology for the interview process.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study offers an advanced perspective on Gen Z's work ethics and aspirations in the Indian corporate setting. The outcomes, which are based on Super's Work Value Inventory, indicate that although both internal and external factors still influence job decisions, their relative importance is changing in reaction to modern day socioeconomic conditions. Though opinions on topics like work-life balance, financial stability, and job security differed, participants reported a significant preference for meaningful employment, ongoing learning, and workplace flexibility for Gen Z employees. This study advances our knowledge of Gen Z's changing expectations at work by pointing out significant changes in the way that motivation and job success are viewed. These insights offer a thorough examination of how Gen Z is changing job standards in India by incorporating viewpoints that both support and contradict the body of previous knowledge. Employers who want to engage this workforce must modify their talent management plans to reflect the new generation's changing goals.

Figure 1.1 Proposed Training Model for HR Professionals



The inner circle of the model represents the Organizational Level Designs, which are the structural and cultural pillars that support Gen Z's fundamental work values on a daily basis. These include workplace design, HR philosophy, CSR engagement, mental health integration, leadership style, talent development possibilities, and recognition systems. The intrinsic or extrinsic motivators listed in Super's Work Values Inventory are mapped to each of these components. For example, whereas performance-based recognition and financial clarity serve extrinsic requirements like success and financial return, transformational and empathetic leadership styles promote intrinsic values like autonomy, creativity, and relational culture. Initiatives like wellness-focused office design and hybrid work models also suit Gen Z's inclination for comfort and flexibility by striking a balance between their extrinsic demands for a high-quality workplace and their inner desire for work-life integration. These design components work together to create the immediate, experienced environment that either draws in or turns away Gen Z talent, making them the first line of defense for any effective retention plan.

The outer circle of the concept represents Organizational Level Practices, which serve as systemic enablers to uphold and support the inner circle's value-aligned design. These encompass more general HR tactics like data-driven learning customisation, inclusive talent mobility, adaptive performance management, ongoing cultural audits, and authentic CSR integration. These procedures guarantee that the internal design components are flexible and sensitive to the changing needs of Generation Z rather than being static or one-size-fits-all. For instance, internal job posting platforms and mentorship frameworks facilitate growth, variety, and long-term career vision—all essential characteristics for Gen Z—while open KPIs and individualized feedback loops encourage both recognition and fairness.

Additionally, organizations show their commitment to the individual and group requirements of this generation by investing in DEI and mental health policies and integrating tools like AI for career development. As a result, the outer circle acts as the dynamic framework that supports the inner experience, guaranteeing that Gen Z workers will remain involved as their professional identities develop in addition to feeling connected today.

CONCLUSION

This study offers insightful information about Gen Z professionals' psychological constructs, career expectations, and workplace practices. The way that Gen Z approaches professional development, job satisfaction, and career promotion poses special opportunities and difficulties to companies because they are a generation that has been influenced by fast technological breakthroughs and changing work dynamics. Although the results point to important patterns, limitations including the study's cross-sectional design and possible self-report bias suggest that more research is necessary. To further our understanding of Gen Z's changing role in the workforce, future research should include cross-cultural comparisons, industry-specific analysis, and longitudinal approaches. Organizations and legislators may create more effective plans to engage, assist, and retain Gen Z workers by addressing these factors, which will ultimately result in a more flexible and effective work environment.

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Conflict of Interest

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