Commitment of Generation Z Employees – Diagnosis, Expectations, and Courses of Action

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Abstract:

Aim: The aim of the article was to determine the level of engagement of Generation Z and to indicate directions for actions aimed at consciously shaping it within the organisation.

Methodology: A literature review and analysis of the results of a survey among students of the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business were conducted. The study was based on a typology of commitment: to the organisation, work, profession, and supervisor.

Results: The respondents declared a high level of commitment. The largest percentage of the respondents declared commitment to their work, followed by commitment to their supervisor, while commitment to the organisation received the lowest percentage of responses. Women were more likely to indicate commitment to their work and profession; men were more attached to their superiors.

Implications and recommendations: Organisations should support engagement through mentoring, employee participation in management, and promoting social and environmental responsibility. It is

important to create incentive systems that reward environmental activity, which can support the integration of young employees with the company's mission.

Originality/value: The engagement model used allows for comprehensive assessment of Generation Z preferences in terms of attachment to the organisation, their work, their profession, and their supervisor. It also enabled the identification of key motivational factors in these areas that support the engagement of young employees, allowing for the design of effective management measures.

Keywords: Generation Z, commitment, expectations

1. Introduction

Commitment – one of the main determinants of effective organisational functioning – can be shaped in organisational space, i.e. there can be conscious and intentional actions within an organisation whereby employees behave and take actions that demonstrate their commitment.

According to some forecasts, by 2028 representatives of Generation Z will account for 58% of the global workforce (Kincentric Polska, 2022). Intense discussion about the characteristics of this generation, has resulted in a number of empirical studies indicating its difference (specificity) compared to previous generations.

The aim of the article was to identify the level of commitment of Generation Z and to indicate activities aimed at its conscious and purposeful shaping in an organisation.

The study asked the following research questions:

1. What is the overall level of Gen Z commitment?
2. What is the level of commitment in the organisation, work, profession, and towards the supervisor?
3. Which of the expectations declared by Gen Z are worth taking into account when shaping the commitment of this generation?

Against the background of the results of this survey, the results of other researchers were discussed, which made it possible to identify the expectations of Gen Z employees, the implementation of which should be treated as a direction (guideline) for undertakings aimed at building their commitment.

2. Characteristics of Generation Z

Today there are four generations in the market: Baby Boomers (BB), Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, which is of interest to this study, and to highlight its distinctiveness, the author also synthetically characterised the earlier generations (see Table 1).

The generation of Baby Boomers is characterised primarily by high loyalty to work, but also by attachment to hierarchy (recognition of authority figures) and clear rules. Boomers are independent, patient, committed, and they prefer traditional methods of providing work and acquiring knowledge. Generation X, shaped by the crisis of the 1970s, values stable work that enables success, and its representatives are reliable, independent, and function well in groups; they are also independent in their decision-making. Generation Y, raised in the age of modern technology, values diversity, creativity and innovation. Members of Gen Y are accustomed to multitasking, they can efficiently perform many tasks simultaneously, access information quickly, and are eager to create communities, yet need their independence, but at the same time look for someone in their environment to mentor them. They show greater flexibility and openness to change, a willingness to learn and a reluctance to make long-term commitments (Hysa, 2016).

With regard to Generation Z, they are individuals whose emergence dates back to 1995, 2000 and 2001. However, 2000 or later, is most often taken as the limit of their date of birth, although some researchers place the beginning of Generation Z to 1995 and sometimes even back to the 1990s (Przybylski, 2023). Generation Z comprises those raised in the digital age, which has become their identity and which enables them to function – work, study, and communicate – from anywhere at any time (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Gen Z have a strong need for professional and personal development, and at the same time know exactly how their professional development should take place; they would like to develop a successful career quickly, effortlessly, without having to build it by small steps (Klaffke, 2014). Hysa (2016) indicated that Gen Z do not care about stability at work, but rather seek variety, and they are discouraged by routine. They are eager to communicate with culturally different people, want to go on foreign internships, constantly change and improve processes and try new methods of work. Wiktorowicz et al. (2016) found that Generation Z is distinguished by its openness to new experiences, creativity and innovation, and its members prefer a learning as well as development model in line with the 'just in time' principle, meaning that they expect quick access to knowledge and tools (preferably online) and demand respect from their employers. Gabrielova & Buchko (2021) stated that Generation Z looks at leadership issues in a different way than the previous generations. The literature suggests that Gen Z show particular interest in the transformational style of leadership, characterized by the creation of a welcoming and inclusive work culture, high emotional intelligence of leaders, their commitment, mentoring, competence and promotion of equality (McGaha, 2018).

Table 1. Expectations of employees of different generations

Employee expectations	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
1	2	3	4	5
Careers	− Traditional career, usually realized in one company (low professional and geographic mobility)	− Working often as part of a multi-year employment with one company − Patiently waiting for a promotion or raise	− Expectation of a fast career − Parallel careers − Careers without borders	− Expectation of a fast career (willingly in multinational companies) − Need for quick results with low effort
Expected gratification	− Long-term gratification (stable employment, recognition) − Material rewards (e.g. bonuses) are important, but symbolic recognition (diplomas, acknowledgments) is also important	− Motivation derived from a sense of satisfaction and job satisfaction, high position and prestige	− Quick, well-paying jobs − Prefer immediate recognition (they are less patient with long-term rewards)	− Giving up a sufficiently high salary in favour of a good working atmosphere − Benefits that promote work-life balance
Work-life balance	− Willingness to accept the rules imposed by the organisation (orientation to the welfare of the employer) − Willingness to indiscriminately "stay after hours"	− Need to balance, but only in retirement − Appreciate leisure time, but show willingness to stay at work if necessary − Workaholism and job burnout are common	− Work is not the most important value − Great need for flexibility and work-life balance	− Strong need for flexibility and work-life balance − Adjusting work hours to fit a busy schedule

1	2	3	4	5
Changing jobs	− It is purely a necessity (long--term employment is preferred here) − High loyalty to the profession and the workplace	− Is a clear necessity − Fear of losing the positions achieved	− Is a daily occurrence (high occupational mobility) − Ease of adaptation, openness to change	− Resignation from jobs that do not meet their needs and expectations − Loyalty dependent on respecting their interests
Expectations of work and working conditions	− Job stabilisation − Humanisation of work − Gender equality − Aversion to new technologies − Individual work/eventual cooperation	− Stability, quiet, non--challenging work − Stability of employment − Reluctance to new technologies − Teamwork	− Flexibility and openness to change, − Reluctance to long-term − Ventures or commitments − High need to surround oneself with electronics − Expectations for growth, opportunities to develop creativity − Openness at work	− Strong need to surround themselves with electronics (they equate the real world with the virtual world) − Teamwork − Flexible working hours − Need to develop under the guidance of a mentor
Training and development	− Training and development as a condition for job retention − Resistance to change, so it is difficult to motivate them to acquire new skills	− Training treated as an anchor for employment, enabling job stability	− Continuing education is a way of life − It sees a high rate of knowledge acquisition	− Continuing education − Preference for self--education − Striving for increasingly higher qualifications
Decision-making	− Need for independence, participation	− Independence in making − In making decisions	− Need for independence, but surrounded by someone who could mentor them	− The need for autonomy under the guidance of a mentor − Preference for teamwork (collective responsibility) than individual work − Relatively low autonomy hinders full autonomy
Working time	− Traditional working time organisation model, 8 hours a day in a fixed time frame	− Traditional model of working time organisation. 8 hours a day in a fixed time frame	− Flexible forms of working time organisation	− Flexible forms of working time organisation

Source: own elaboration based on (Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013; Hysa, 2016; Lipka & Król, 2017; Jagoda, 2016;, Godlewska--Majkowska & Lipiec, 2018; Wiktorowicz et al., 2016).

3. Commitment as a Theoretical Construct

Commitment is described and operationalised in many different ways. As noted by Laguna et al. (2015), of particular interest among researchers are two concepts. First, organisational commitment described by Meyer and Allen (1991), who distinguished three of its components, i.e. affective commitment (an

employee's emotional attachment to the organisation), continuance commitment (an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation), and normative commitment (a sense of moral obligation to remain in the organisation). The second concept is of work commitment, proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002), in which commitment is defined as an employee's positive state of mind consisting of three factors: vigour (high levels of energy during work and resistance to distractions), devotion to work (feeling positive emotions during work and believing in its meaning and value), and preoccupation with work (concentration and focus on work).

An interesting overview of the development of concepts relating to organisational commitment was presented by Adamska-Chudzińska & Andraszak (2023). Chronologically, they highlighted three distinctive stages; the first includes the initial studies of the subject, initiated by Becker, who defined this type of commitment as a kind of investment. The second stage is characterised by texts that show a change – no longer writing exclusively about benefits, but about psychological attachment to and identification with the organisation. The third stage in the development of the concept of organisational commitment is the treatment of the concept as a multidimensional category in the studies by O'Reilly et al. (cf. Adamska-Chudzińska & Andraszak, 2023). A multifaceted view of commitment was presented by Boshoff & Mels (2000), who took the position that employee commitment can manifest itself in four forms: commitment to the organisation (employee identification with the company's mission, values, as well as goals and objectives), commitment to the job (performing daily tasks to a high standard), commitment to the profession (strong identification with individual career development goals and consistently following one's own career path), and commitment to the supervisor (identification with superiors and co-workers).

According to Kahna (1990), commitment is a certain state in which an individual expresses him/herself physically, emotionally and cognitively while performing tasks. Sharma & Anupama (2010) emphasised the joy with which an engaged employee performs his or her tasks, pointing out that commitment is a reflection of the employee's positive perception of the work, as well as the conditions under which it is performed, the organisation itself and others working.

Research on commitment indicated that it is related to work efficiency and productivity (Bakker & Bal, 2010). As a result of high levels of commitment, employees show low absenteeism, promote the organisation externally, and achieve high levels of productivity by mobilising co-workers by their example and attitude (Lewicka, 2017; Juchnowicz, 2010b).

4. Methodology

The research aimed to determine in which attitudes and behaviors the respondents' commitment is manifested. To this end, the respondents were presented with the following statements on which they were asked to take a position (Boshoff & Mels, 2000):

1. I identify with the company's mission, valued values, and goals and objectives (commitment to the organisation).
2. I perform daily tasks at a level that satisfies management (commitment to work).
3. I identify with individual goals for professional development, while consistently pursuing career paths (commitment to the profession).
4. I identify with my superiors and co-workers (commitment to the supervisor).

The choice of the indicated types of commitment was dictated by their multidimensional nature, allowing a comprehensive analysis of the perceptions of Gen Z representatives in the context of personal preferences related to specific areas of professional activity, such as organisation, work, profession and/or supervisor. The adopted analysis model made it possible to identify and understand the motivational potential of those of the aforementioned areas that prompt young employees to get involved. Thus, it provides a basis for determining the direction of managerial actions, enabling the

conscious design and implementation of strategies to support the development of employees and their active participation in the life of the company

This article presents the results of a pilot study aimed at verifying the usefulness of the research tool. The author conducted the survey among professionally active WUEB students from the Faculty of Production Engineering (part-time, first-year master's degree programme). In the first stage of the research a survey was developed and prepared in MS Forms. The survey consisted of a section identifying the demographics of the respondents, including age, gender, length of service, among others. The main part of the survey consisted of closed questions, using a five-point Likert scale.

The selection of people for the study was purposive. The prerequisites for participation in the study were age (20-25 years) and work experience (less than five years). It was assumed that these variables would result in a high level of motivation and commitment due to the fascination linked with the first work experience. The resulting diagnosis is expected to provide employers with insights into areas and ways of shaping Gen Z commitment.

It was planned that 150 students would participate in the survey, but only 54 students returned the questionnaire. Not all the questionnaires were completed and some did not meet all the assumed criteria. The final results regarded 47 respondents. The second stage of the research was to be in-depth interviews.

Since the research sample was unrepresentative, the author did not generalise the results to the entire Gen Z population.

5.   Results

In total 62% of women and 38% of men participated in the survey. The respondents were aged between 20 and 25 (20-year-olds made up the smallest percentage at 2%, 21-year-olds − 6%, 22-year--olds − 28%, 23-year-olds − 30%, 24-year-olds − 26%, 25-year-olds − 9%). The respondents were employed in lower-level management positions (17%) as well executive positions in the administrative sector (43%) and in the production sector (40%). They classified their enterprises as high technology (43%) and low technology (57%), and 64% of respondents declared the Polish origin of the capital of the enterprise where they were employed, 23% − foreign, and 13% mixed. Attention was also paid to the size of the enterprise, 60% of respondents worked in organisations with more than 250 employees, 4% − 101-250 persons, 17% from 51 to100, 9% from 10 to 50 , and 11% − 1 to 9 persons.

First, the respondents answered the question: Are you engaged in your work? It was found that the Gen Z representatives declared a high level of commitment. As can be seen, the percentage of positive answers, i.e. "rather yes" and "definitely yes," prevailed in both groups of the respondents. Gender clearly did not differentiate the respondents' indications. Commitment to the organisation was declared by 67% of men and 69% of women (Figure 1), commitment to work by 88% of men and 96% of women (Figure 2), commitment to the profession by 78% of men and 72% of women (Figure 3), and commitment to the social environment by 84% of men and 72% of women (Figure 4).

With regard to the first type of commitment − commitment to the organisation (Figure 1) − attention was drawn not only to the high indications of positive responses, but also to those in which the respondents of both genders indicated that it was difficult for them to say whether they identified with the company's mission, cherished values and goals and objectives (28%).

Analysing Gen Z's commitment to work, understood as performing tasks at a level that satisfies executives, it can be noted that women were slightly more likely than men to answer "definitely yes," the indications being 17% and 6%, respectively. At the same time, 17% of men gave the answer "difficult to say" (Figure 2).
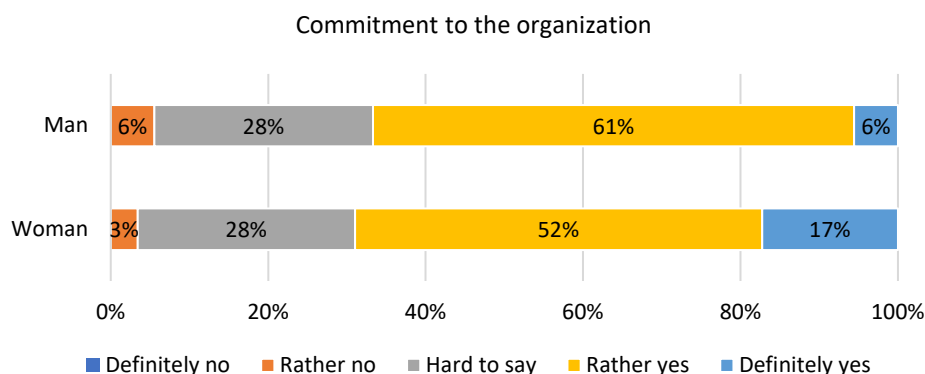
Commitment to the organization

Figure 1. Declared level of commitment to the organisation – the perspective of men and women

Source: own study.
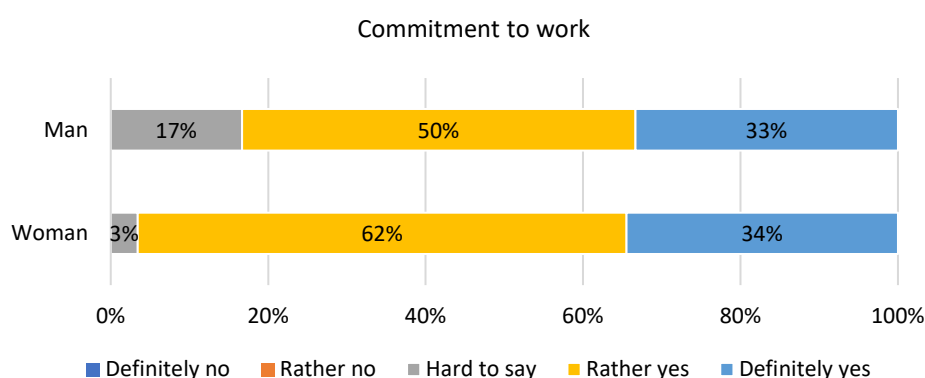
Commitment to work

Figure 1. Declared level of commitment to work – the perspective of men and women

Source: own study.

In the analysed group there was also a high percentage of responses regarding identification with individual professional development goals and consistency in following a career path (commitment to the profession), where 78% of women and 72% of men gave positive answers. Note that 10% of men gave a "rather no" answer (Figure 3).

Commitment to the profession

Figure 2. Declared level of commitment to the profession – the perspective of men and women

Source: own study.

Commitment to the supervisor

Figure. 3. Declared level of commitment to the supervisor – the perspective of men and women

Source: own study.

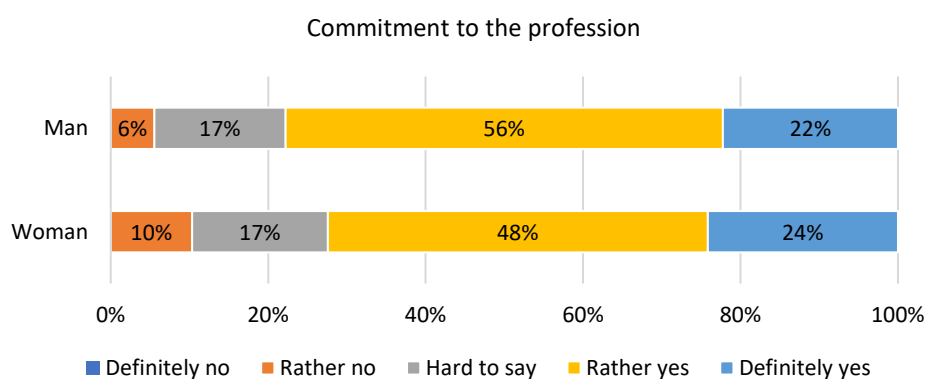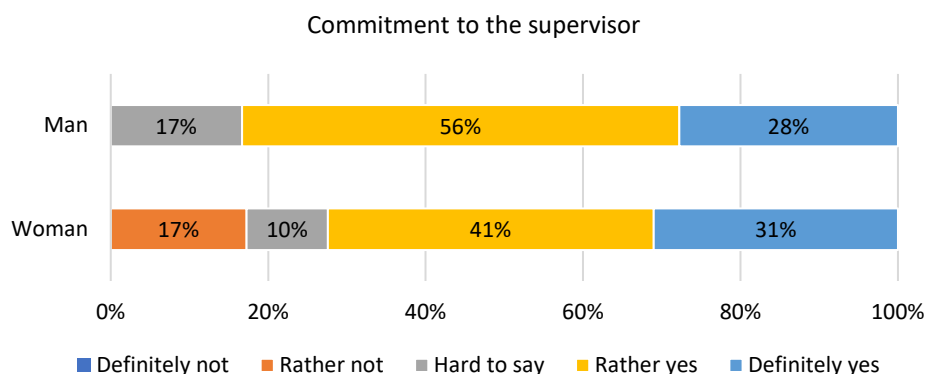With regard to identification with superiors and co-workers, and thus commitment to the supervisor (Figure 4), it can be noted that men were slightly more positive about their commitment to the supervisor (indications 12% higher than in the women's group). Moreover, 17% of the female respondents indicated that they tended not to identify with their superiors and co-workers, nevertheless, as with other types of commitment, there were very high indications of positive responses in both groups of the respondents.

6. Discussion

These results stand in stark contrast to those of other authors who studied the relationship between generational affiliation and factors affecting their commitment, according to which, representatives of Gen Z (under 25) tend to be the least involved (Dziopak-Strach, 2018). The average level of commitment increases in the following age brackets, reaching the highest level in workers of pre-retirement age (Juchnowicz, 2010a; Lewicka, 2017). This was confirmed by Kordbacheh et al. (2014), who showed that representatives of older generations were characterised by higher levels of commitment to work. They pointed out that the younger generation had low levels of intrinsic motivation, which explains the low level of commitment, whereas Lapoint and Liprie-Spence (2017) found that employee commitment was correlated with seniority. Nancherla (2013) corroborated these results, indicating that commitment increases as job tenure increases. According to a survey conducted by (Juchnowicz, 2014), employees showed the highest level of commitment in the first year of employment.

The results of this study can be explained by the fact that the respondents – whose job tenure was usually less than a year or 1-2 years – are in a period of fascination with having their first job, with high levels of energy, and no frustration caused by previous experiences or the desire to present themselves in a good light to their employer. Unlike the authors cited above, the research was conducted after the pandemic period, which affected the hierarchy of needs and expectations of people from all generations. It is likely that the sudden shift to remote work mode, social alienation, and the risk of losing one's job, caused by the deteriorating economic performance of companies, also revised the attitudes of employees of the youngest generation.

6.1. Commitment to the Organisation

The study published by Kincentric Polska (2022) stated that the pandemic and its effects, on the one hand, caused young employees (before the age of 25) to feel more connected to their workplace than older generations. Willingness to stay with their organisation increased the most in this generational group (up 11%, about 5% in other groups). The commitment of the young employees was related both

to their short tenure, and thus the fear that they would be the first to lose their jobs, but also to changes in the organisations themselves – which – the respondents indicated, caused companies to become more efficient as a result of the pandemic, to execute their processes more efficiently (up 11 percentage points), and to become more effective in their structures (up 9 percentage points). The young people saw these changes as new career opportunities (up 6 percentage points), whereas other generational groups saw no increase or even a decrease. Despite these changes, positive in the opinion of Gen Z, 50% of them still did not feel sufficiently engaged. It appears that their greater commitment would be fostered by building their sense of influence in shaping their own future, as well as the future of the world. For representatives of Gen Z, it is very important what impact the organisation they work for has on business, society and the environment. They are looking for employers with whom they can create visions of the future (consistent with their value system), and want the ideas and solutions they propose to be implemented so they can grow. In this context, it is worth referring to a survey conducted in 2019on a group of 120 part-time and postgraduate students at the University of Lodz and the Technical University of Lodz, which showed that Generation Z (average age 25) expected, among other things, a wider range of green HRM activities from the companies they work for. As many as 65% of the respondents believed that such measures were currently used too little or far too little (Różanska-Binczyk et al., 2020). Another survey (Różanska-Binczyk, 2022) conducted in 2021 on a sample of 52 respondents aged 21-26 showed that Gen Z, in addition to the company's industry and prestige, also paid special attention to whether the company undertakes corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, among other things, and whether it cares about the social and environmental aspects of its operation. It was found that the vast majority of the respondents would not choose to take a job if the potential employer was not active in these areas, and were even willing to receive a lower salary in order to work for a pro-environment company that employed people with similar values. As they pointed out, work becomes more satisfying when it has a positive impact on environmental issues. Moreover, young people expect companies to provide training and participate in conferences that raise environmental awareness. It should also be noted that the incentive system rewards (mainly through monetary rewards) the environmental activity of employees, especially that which translates into improved environmental performance of the company. Thus, as can be seen, the pro-environmental activity of a company with young employees is an important element affecting the organisation's ability to attract and retain representatives of Generation Z in the company.

6.2. Commitment to Work

Employers are trying to build a favourable work environment, and practice shows that companies are changing their hiring processes to adapt to the expectations of Generation Z. Candidates are presenting their expectations to the employer during interviews, rather than the other way around, as was the case before. With the emergence of Generation Z in the labour market, the debate over the four-day work week (which nearly three-quarters of Poles appear to support) has also begun. More is also heard about the phenomenon known as "Bare minimum Monday" which involves employees cutting back on their basic duties on Mondays. They start the day a little later and focus on simple, routine activities that support their well-being. The goal is to start the work week gently and avoid taking on the most demanding tasks (Perzanowska, 2024).

The literature indicates that for Generation Z, having just any job is not enough. What matters is passion, doing things they love (Gocłowska, 2019), and what matters is the opportunity to achieve personal satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2021). However, for Gen Z, "work is not an end in itself" – it is a means to an end, which is self-development. According to a 2020 Ernst and Young survey, regardless of gender, Generation Z expects a work-life balance. Men and women reported almost equal expectations in terms of flexible working hours, acquiescence to absenteeism motivated by the need to pursue personal interests, and opportunities to work remotely (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Fodor & Jäckel (2018) indicated that organisations that promote and promise work-life balance are more likely to attract and retain employees from the Z generation, who believe that one of the prerequisites

for maintaining health, well-being and satisfaction with life and work is maintaining the right relationship between the professional and private spheres. For them, work-life balance means a greater opportunity to develop and pursue passions (INZJWSH, 2023). Ławińska & Korombel (2023) indicated that Gen Z representatives would like to work for companies where the atmosphere is friendly, stress levels are low, pay rises are awarded at least once a year, employment is stable and secure, and working hours are flexible. In addition, they want work that is in line with their interests and will guarantee a sense of meaning.

There is growing interest in the labour market in the phenomenon referred to as "Quiet Quitting" (Lipinski & Koczy, 2023), which involves limiting work commitment to the absolute contractual minimum, with no additional effort beyond standard working hours. This trend, widespread in the US since the late 2021, has gained particular popularity among Generation Z rejecting the cult of work and preferring satisfactory work-life balance. Social media are influential in spreading the trend, where young people share experiences and seek support, which often leads to reflections on the relationship between employee and employer. "Quiet quitting" is a response to the need to protect against job burnout and to seek a more balanced approach to work.

6.3. Commitment to the Profession

The literature presents slightly different positions on Generation Z's commitment in their profession. Thus, for example, a study by Gajda (2017) conducted among 186 full-time undergraduate students, revealed that young people, as they themselves indicated, did not consider themselves lazy as they started work from their teenage years to make a career choice/reach fulfillment (65%). As many as 62% of students combined work and study to develop professionally and gain new experiences, while only 20% made this decision in order to become independent and not rely on their parents' financial support. As the author pointed out, although the young generation is ambitious, for them work was only an addition to life, in which, they declared, there should also be room for a social life and not just a 'whirlwind' of tasks. According to the survey, this was reason why more than half of the respondents did not want to work more than twelve hours a day, while admitting that they were open to completing tasks but without having to build a career for years. As many as 73% of young people valued their work (they saw a sense of purpose and meaning in doing it), but were willing to combine their goals with those of the company, provided they reaped the benefits associated with achieving them. Among other things, they also wanted to acquire and develop new competencies, but counted on the support of mentors when doing so.

The results obtained regarding commitment to their profession corresponded with a nationwide survey on a group of nearly 1,300 people (students, undergraduates and graduates from schools of various types). It was stated that Generation Z, unlike Generation Y, was focused more on personal rather than professional development. For Generation Y, a natural attitude was the need to build a fast and attractive career path. Among the representatives of this generation, the so-called "One Wrong Move" syndrome was evident, which means that they were ready with full commitment and dedication to pursue successive, high-profile professional tasks – often at the expense of their private lives – agreeing to participate in the so-called rat race. Generation Z prioritises private-life goals, including pursuing their own passions and interests, over career and achieving professional success. At the same time, they expect work to be a factor supporting them in "self-oriented" activities, to facilitate the realisation of personal plans related to, for example, travelling, pursuing hobbies, personal development, etc. (INZJWSH, 2023).

6.4. Commitment to the Supervisor

Generation Z, according to the INZJWSH report (2023) and contrary to many stereotypical beliefs, are not people closed to building social relationships. Gen Z declare a high need to both create and develop such relationships in the workplace, which need to be based on ethics, mutual openness, respect and

understanding. This applies to both horizontal relationships (with co-workers) and vertical relationships (with superiors). The need to build relations at work was also evidenced (indirectly) by the respondents' declarations regarding remote work. When asked if they would like to pursue their career exclusively through remote work, only 6% responded "definitely yes", while for 16% this was "rather yes", whereas 43% of respondents answered "definitely not" and 25% "rather not."

As other research showed, representatives of Generation Z also have some idea regarding the qualities of their supervisor, but they also articulated requirements that differed from those of earlier generations. According to the report "Zoomers at Work. That is, how Generation Z conquers the job market in Poland" (Piotrowska, 2022), for 32%, meeting their future supervisor was an important part of the recruitment process, and for 27% this was even a determinant of the final acceptance of a job offer. A good supervisor is one who is empathetic, open to the other party's perspective, and able to listen and provide feedback. Generation Z expects a participative management style, wants to be listened to and have an impact on the surrounding reality, and seeks a direct conversation with the supervisor about the results of their work. The report showed that, according to 18% of the respondents, a successful relationship with their supervisor leads them to stay with the company longer than two years. It is also worth citing a study (Ławińska & Korombel, 2023) conducted among students in Poland in 2021, which among other things, was designed to identify Gen Z expectations towards their managers and working conditions. It appears that among the most desirable qualities of a supervisor were the ability to motivate, honesty, communication skills, creativity and a partnership approach to employees as all these qualities were indicated by 30% or more of the respondents. Other researchers singled out a slightly different set of qualities of a supervisor, such as: showing respect (66%), individual treatment (55%), kindness (54%), tolerance (49%), willingness to help (45%), openness (42%) and partnership (39%). The authors of the survey noted that these qualities related directly to the sphere of social relations, the quality of which – including those in their workplace – was a priority for Gen Z. The qualities of superiors relating to the area of professional competence were far less important (e.g. professionalism was important to 16% of the respondents, and reliability to only 8%) (INZJWSH, 2023). Aggarwal et al. (2020) indicated that Gen Z individuals were more inclined towards the concept of "working with" rather than "working for." In practice, this means that they prefer working in a team and with a leader, instead of subordination to a hierarchical manager. In their view, Generation Z is more open to good relations with co-workers and leaders than other generations. Dobrowolski et al. (2022) suggested that Generation Z was more intrinsically motivated to achieve their goals and therefore preferred a different leadership style. In this context, Riksen & Spies (2023) pointed out that Generation Z valued certain interpersonal qualities (soft skills) in their leaders more than previous generations, referring to, for example, communication or relationship-building skills. Generation Z prefers a transformational leadership style, a leader who creates a positive and inclusive culture, demonstrates a high level of emotional intelligence, provides ongoing mentoring (Pietroń--Pyszczek & Borowska, 2022) is committed, highly competent and promotes equality (McGaha, 2018).

7.   Conclusions

The research showed that in the early stages of their working lives (the respondents had been working for less than five years), Gen Z representatives reported high levels of commitment. The study examined commitment to the organisation, to the job, to their profession and also commitment to the supervisor. In this cross-section, the respondents rated lowest their level of identification with the company's mission, values and goals (commitment to the organisation). This was found as a cause for concern, especially as there are publications indicating that, from the perspective of a company's business interests, organisational commitment should be given particular importance, as it is expressed in the employee's identification with the company's goals and values, sense of belonging and readiness to take action for the benefit of the organisation. Employees with organisational commitment are highly active and proactive, available, loyal, feel proud to work for the company and have less need to change jobs.

The convergence of organisational values with those preferred by Gen Z is therefore important. In view of this, managers should have knowledge of the needs of the younger generation, because, as the characteristics of Gen Zetas described in the literature show, their loyalty, their willingness to stay with the organisation and become involved in its affairs, is underpinned by the realisation of their expectations. They are more focused on corporate social responsibility than the previous one, and expect transparency and pro-environmental actions from the organisation. Gen Z value authentic interpersonal relationships and individualism, manifested in the pursuit of their own passions. Equality and inclusivity also feature prominently in their value system, and they are very sensitive to issues of discrimination. Naturally, an integral part of their lives is the technology they want to surround themselves with. What they expect from managers is the ability to build a sphere of social relationships, to motivate, or to provide mentoring support, which nevertheless allows for autonomy.

An employer that purposefully and consciously shapes the engagement of Generation Z employees is one that offers benefits tailored to individual needs with the option to re-select them when those needs change and offers a pay rise at least once a year. Companies that are able to eliminate stress and increase the level of empathy of direct supervisors will increase their chances of creating a friendly working atmosphere, which stands high in the hierarchy of Gen Z expectations. This requires the construction of procedures and tools to identify sources of stress not only directly related to the workplace, and open and transparent communication in which the leader provides employees with the opportunity to express their opinions and suggestions.

Managers whose teams are starting to be dominated by young employees should therefore bear in mind that failing to meet their needs leads to a reduction in their level of commitment and, consequently, a drop in productivity, manifested by the phenomenon of so-called 'silent departures'. In this context, the author recognised that the biggest challenge is to find a solution to a situation in which a young employee declares a high level of commitment to work, but is accompanied by a feeling of fatigue.

The author believes that shaping the engagement of generation Z should be based on the idea that the workplace is an area of self-development, self-realisation and a space for self-expression, where, with the support of a mentor, employees' awareness of and responsibility for the organisation, but also their sense of belonging to that organisation, is developed.

A limitation of this research was obtaining results from students at only one university and the small research sample. When considering future research directions, it is worthwhile to look for correlations between the educational profile and declared employee expectations and work engagement factors. Future research should focus on in-depth analyses of the diversity of the group analysed. It can be assumed that the function performed (managerial, executive), the characteristics of the company in which they started their career (industry, sector, capital, size) may be factors differentiating expectations and involvement of young people.

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Zaangażowanie pracowników pokolenia Z – diagnoza, oczekiwania, kierunki działań

Streszczenie

Cel: Celem artykułu jest określenie poziomu zaangażowania przedstawicieli pokolenia Z oraz wskazanie kierunków działań służących jego świadomemu kształtowaniu w organizacji.

Metodologia: Przeprowadzono przegląd literatury oraz analizę wyników badania ankietowego wśród studentów Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu. Badanie oparto na typologii zaangażowania w organizację, pracę, zawód i w relacje z przełożonym.

Wyniki: Respondenci deklarowali wysoki poziom zaangażowania. Najwyższy odsetek respondentów zadeklarował zaangażowanie w pracę, na drugim miejscu znalazło się zaangażowanie w relacje z przełożonym; zaangażowanie w organizację uzyskało najniższy odsetek deklaracji. Kobiety częściej deklarowały zaangażowanie w pracę i w zawód; mężczyźni bardziej pozytywnie oceniali swoje zaangażowanie w relacje z przełożonym.

Wnioski i rekomendacje: Organizacje powinny wspierać zaangażowanie m.in. poprzez mentoring, partycypację pracowników w zarządzaniu oraz promowanie odpowiedzialności społecznej i środowiskowej. Istotne jest tworzenie systemów motywacyjnych premiujących aktywność ekologiczną, co może wspierać integrację młodych pracowników z misją firmy.

Oryginalność/wartość: Zastosowany model zaangażowania pozwala na kompleksową ocenę preferencji przedstawicieli Pokolenia Z w kontekście przywiązania do organizacji, wykonywanej pracy, zawodu i przełożonego. Umożliwił także identyfikację kluczowych czynników motywacyjnych w tych obszarach, które wspierają zaangażowanie młodych pracowników, umożliwiając projektowanie skutecznych działań zarządczych.

Słowa kluczowe: Pokolenie Z, zaangażowanie, oczekiwania