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The Evolution of Recruitment Markets

A Comparative Analysis of Traditional vs. Modern Approaches and the Impact of Generation Z

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Abstract

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The effectiveness of recruitment strategies has become a critical concern in the past decades, as organizations increasingly compete for top talent, especially among younger cohorts such as Generation Z. This study looks comprehensively at how modern recruitment approaches, such as employer branding and social media engagement, are reshaping and showing a new way in talent acquisition and recruitment strategies. The research question looks at the way in which these modern methods compare to traditional recruitment practices in attracting and retaining young talent in today's workforce. To examine these perspectives, a quantitative survey targeting Generation Z and Millennials was conducted across multiple social media channels. The survey questions covered various aspects, such as workplace flexibility, corporate values, and digital recruitment preferences, gathering data that offered nuanced insights into the expectations and motivations of the job seekers. The findings provide valuable perspectives to ongoing analyses around evolving recruitment methods and workforce expectations. This study highlights the importance of adapting recruitment strategies to align with emerging workforce values, while future research might explore how Generation Alpha may further transform the recruitment landscape.

Keywords: Modern Recruitment strategies, Employer Branding, Talent Acquisition, Generation Z, Employee Engagement

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Glossary

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

EB Employment Branding

TA Talent Acquisition

1 Introduction

This thesis dives into a comprehensive exploration of the evolution of recruitment markets, undertaking a comparative analysis of traditional versus modern approaches, with a specific focus on the impact of Generation Z. The research question that drives this thesis is: ‘How do organizations recognize the effectiveness of modern methods compared to traditional strategies in attracting and retaining top talent with the younger generation?’

The direction of talent acquisition (TA) has faced a significant shift in recent years, navigating the transition from an employer-centric model to one directed by the expectations and preferences of candidates. (Ramchandani & Singh, 2020). This paradigm shift towards recruitment where candidates come first is not only a result of the dynamic nature of the modern workforce but is significantly shaped by the entrance of Generation Z into the professional arena. Representing the first fully tech-savvy generation, Generation Z brings with it a unique set of values, expectations and behaviours that are leaving a lasting mark on the modern recruitment processes (Pearcy, 2023; Siebers 2022).

The selection of the topic as the focus of this thesis arises from the profound transformations reshaping the landscape of talent acquisition. In a world struck by unprecedented technological advancements, shifting workplace dynamics, and the entrance of the younger generation into the professional field, understanding how organizations attract, engage, and retain top talent has become crucial. With the economic situation apparently in a decline phase and lacking stability, it is even more important for organizations to look at their employer branding (EB) and talent acquisition (TA) strategies, to maintain and attract the best talent possible.

In the past, recruitment practices used to be characterized by a top-down approach, where organizations administer the control of the process, dominating the terms to potential candidates (Sahay, 2015). Today, the rise of

the digital world and social media together has led the way to an era where candidates show off unprecedented influence. The democratization of information and the access to it has empowered job seekers, allowing them to conscientiously assist their professional records and make better informed decisions about potential employers. This has given rise to what is now commonly referred to as a candidate-focused recruitment market, a stage that addresses the pivotal role candidates play when looking at the recruitment process (Du & Li, 2018).

2 The evolution of Recruitment markets

2.1 Statement of the problem

As organizations try to engage with the complexities of this evolving recruitment landscape, challenges arise. Traditional recruitment methodologies, employed by organisations firmly attached to outdated strategies, struggle with the idea of the dynamic and digitally influenced approaches that define the modern practice of talent acquisition (Geeta, Shivani, & Ravindra, 2021). Concurrently, Generation Z entering the workforce with a different set of expectations and behaviours has necessitated an ongoing re-evaluation of ever-changing recruitment requirements. Thus, this multifaced problem created by a confluence of evolving recruitment strategies and the influence of Generation Z demands careful examination.

There is a noticeable gap existing in the understanding of how traditional and modern recruitment strategies intersect and coexist. Furthermore, another unexplored specific development influencing the modern recruitment practices is the impact of Generation Z. This research is seeking to address these gaps, looking deeply into the elaborations of the evolution of recruitment strategies aiming to straighten out the complexities between historical practices, contemporary approaches, and the unique ways of thinking of Generation Z candidates.

2.2 Objectives of the study

There are three primary objectives set out in this research. Firstly, it aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of recruitment strategies, investigating deeply into the historical roots and dissecting those contemporary manifestations of older practices. Secondly, there will be a comparative assessment of traditional and modern approaches employed by organizations in talent acquisition. Thus, by comparing these approaches, the research will delineate the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities linked with each.

Thirdly, the most crucial part of the research will endeavour to assess the distinct influences of Generation Z on recruitment practices. It will aim to uncover the ways in which Generation Z shapes and transforms the dynamics of recruitment strategies, by going through a focused examination of this generation's values, expectations, and preferences.

To address the goal of this research, it is not sufficient to report the shifts in recruitment practices. To provide useful information and insights for organizations traveling this ever-evolving landscape of talent acquisition requires taking those historical perspectives, contemporary trends, and the unique sets of Generation Z together. This research aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion around the optimization of recruitment strategies in a dynamically evolving professional environment.

3 Literature review

3.1 Historical perspectives on recruitment & exploration of traditional recruitment methods

When looking at the evolution of recruitment markets and practices, it can be seen as a rapidly changing landscape included with threads of tradition, innovation and adaptation (Phadtare, 2023). For unraveling the complex dynamics of the present recruitment landscape, it is crucial to understand the historical perspectives that provide essential context and understanding towards today's standards and behaviours. In examining the traditional methods, the intricacies of a system where organizations were leaders on the recruitment funnel will be unravelled.

Looking back to the very beginning of recruitment markets and their associated practices, recruitment had a hierarchical structure where organizations were directing the processes (Phadtare, 2023). Technological advancements were limited, and the flow of information was controlled by a selected few. Traditional methods, such as newspaper advertisements, job fairs and reliance on personal networks, were structuring the era where information flow was more controlled (Sivabalan, Yazdanifard, & Ismail, 2014). Organizations were placing strategically advertisements in local and national newspapers. In this way organizations shaped the employment opportunities, and job seekers followed directed paths in their recruitment processes when pursuing new career opportunities. The mindset and goal were to look at employer's needs, which were reflected in detailed job descriptions, outlining briefly qualifications and expectations of wanted workforce. It goes without saying that traditional recruitment had the emphasis on showcasing the organization's requirements, placing the employer firmly in the driver's seat (Sivabalan, Yazdanifard, & Ismail, 2014).

When looking at the application and selection processes of traditional recruitment methods it can be seen as a tightly structured and often linear

trajectory (Sivabalan, Yazdanifard, & Ismail, 2014). While job seekers were submitting physical applications and resumes, the organizations, in turn, carefully reviewed these materials to shortlist candidates. The goal was to align job seekers with criteria outlined in job descriptions. This structured and linear approach, limited the exploration of candidates beyond what was clearly specified.

During this earlier period, radio and television broadcasting first introduced new dimensions to recruitment practices, thus changing the advertising methods. This amplified the reach and visibility of job opportunities, making it easier for candidates to investigate and compare. Nevertheless, the main core of traditional recruitment practices stayed in a top-down approach, where organizations guided candidates through well-structured and organized application and selection processes (Phadtare, 2023).

3.2 Review of key milestones in the transition to modern recruitment practices

Significant changes to the recruitment practices can be seen in the late 20th century due to the proliferation of the internet and digital technologies (Phadtare, 2023). A pivotal milestone was marked when the online job boards emerged. Suddenly, the job seekers had all-time access to the opportunities, altering the asymmetric distribution of information that had long been favourable to employers (Picardi, 2020). This shift laid the foundations of a model where candidates were actively participating in directing the journey to their professional destinies.

Following the establishment and embedding of the online job boards as the dominant advertising platforms, social media platforms emerged in the early 21st century. This accelerated the transition towards candidate-focused recruitment. Online platforms like LinkedIn, launched in 2003, gave a space for individual professionals to tell about their skills, experiences and preferences. In this way, the traditional resume-centric approach was further enhanced. Consequently, employers had to shift their actions and began to actively

engage with candidates in the online platforms and social media channels, thus creating a more dynamic and interactive recruitment process (Bongarzone, Chatterjee, & Schanne, 2022).

The rise of job search sites where people can anonymously give comments of their past and current work places, for example Glassdoor (Dube & Zhu, 2021), have improved intelligence-gathering for candidates by providing real insights for organizations as workplaces. As a result, candidates have important information of organizational cultures and employee experiences. This has made a significant, transparent shift in the recruitment practices. It is a defining feature of the modern recruitment landscape, having organizations carefully think of their TA practices and EB picture to attract top talent (Picardi, C. A. 2020.)

As organizations needed to adapt to these changes, the focus has been shifting from merely filling positions towards creating a compelling EB and fostering positive TA experiences. The candidate has become the central figure in recruitment, giving a signal for organizations to open their minds towards a more candidate-driven approach in their recruitment processes (Picardi, 2020).

Furthermore, TA and EB are crucial in today's modern recruitment processes because they directly influence an organization's ability to attract and retain top talent. TA has evolved from simply filling positions to strategically identifying and nurturing candidates who align with the organization's long-term goals. Meanwhile, a strong EB shapes how potential employees perceive the organization, highlighting its culture, values, and employee experience. Together, TA and EB create a seamless, positive experience for job seekers, making the organization more appealing and competitive in attracting high-quality candidates in an otherwise crowded job market (Rana, Agarwal, & Sharma, 2021).

3.3 Talent acquisition impacted by modern approaches

Three main contemporary approaches which have shaped the evolution of recruitment strategies are digital platforms, the power of social media and prioritization of employer branding (TestGorilla, 2024). This section of the thesis will dive more deeply into these modern approaches, providing a comprehensive examination of their impact on talent acquisition and the importance of employer branding.

3.3.1 Digital platforms in recruitment

When it comes to transcending the limitation of traditional methods, pivotal tools towards modern talent acquisition have been the digital platforms (Paramita, 2020). Those platforms serve as virtual hubs for connecting employers and candidates. Advantages of these platforms for organizations include a seamless exchange of information, allowing organizations to showcase their culture, values and vision, together with career opportunities. Thus, when looking at the advantages for job seekers, worth mentioning are navigating an extensive selection of different roles, applying to the positions with easy access, and gaining more knowledge and insight regarding the possible employers (Paramita, 2020).

Furthermore, a variety of platforms are used in the digital world, and they have their own advantages and challenges. With digital platforms organizations can reach a wider audience, enabling them to reach diverse and global talent pools from all over the world. Digitality has given users a constant visibility, therefore there is real-time interaction, which creates among employers and candidates a dynamic place to communicate effectively (Jay, 2024). Information gathered from the candidate can sometimes feel niche. Thus, digital platforms usually have analytical tools to help employers with respect to decision-making. Nevertheless, with easy access and worldwide visibility, there are associated challenges. When there are limitations on the amount of information to be shared, initially this can overwhelm candidates, making it challenging to sift

through relevant details. Another thing to keep in mind is that competition on digital platforms can be intense, as their accessibility is easy, therefore motivating more candidates to participate and consider recruitments (Jay, 2024). Thus, in organizations eyes digital platforms can create a high quantity of work during recruitment processes.

3.3.2 Social media recruitment

As a result of social media's evolution into an environment which is part of everyday life, the integration to talent acquisition strategies has marked a paradigm shift in how organizations connect with potential candidates (Rana, Agarwal, & Sharma, 2021). Social media channels are not only platforms where organizations can broadcast job openings; they also help to build and reinforce employer brands. Certainly, employer branding has become a crucial part of organizations talent acquisition strategies, with different social media platforms enabling organizations to find space to craft and showcase their employer brand, attracting candidates aligned with their values (Saks, & Gruman, 2021). Additionally, organizations can engage with candidates effectively through comments, messages, and shared content, which will foster a sense of community already in the early stage of any recruitment process.

However, organizations need to take care of maintaining authenticity in social media content in support of their employer branding. It is crucial to strike a balance between curated content and authentic representation towards genuine employer brand (Rana, Agarwal, & Sharma, 2021). Without apparently authentic content, responses are likely to be lukewarm at best. Platform users aim to find authentic material in social media platforms, to get the real picture of the things they want to familiarise themselves with (Reis, Braga, & Trullen 2017). This is especially important for successful talent acquisition.

3.3.3 Evolution of employer branding and conclusion for modern approaches



Figure 1: A set of recommended recruitment strategies (Rajpal 2024)

The examination of the 10 principles outlined in today's recruitment strategies by Rajpal (2024), illustrated in Figure 1, underscores the paramount importance of building a strong employer brand. Employer branding, once considered a peripheral concern, has now emerged as a central principle of modern recruitment strategies (Rana, Agarwal, & Sharma, 2021). It entails how organizations present themselves as employers, accentuating their culture, values, and distinctive offerings. By cultivating a robust employer brand, organizations can effectively attract top talent candidates who seek alignment with their organizational values, thereby bolstering their talent pool and retaining existing top talent (Coyle-Shapiro, & Conway, 2015). Moreover, a positive employer brand contributes to higher employee satisfaction and retention rates, ultimately fostering a thriving and engaged workforce.

Maintaining a strong employer brand necessitates consistent engagement across various channels, with a keen focus on detail and regular updates. Consistency in messaging and responsiveness to feedback, including negative feedback, are critical aspects of safeguarding brand perception and reputation. Organizations must recognize the power of feedback from candidates and actively address concerns to uphold their employer brand integrity. (Geeta, Shivani, & Ravindra, 2021).

The advantages of modern recruitment strategies are evident, offering organizations a multitude of opportunities to connect with the talent pool. Real-time engagement with candidates facilitates faster and more cost-effective recruitment processes. Furthermore, the cultivation of a compelling employer narrative is becoming increasingly crucial, given the shifting mindset towards approach which is more candidate driven. (Bongarzone, Chatterjee, & Schanne, 2022). In today's competitive landscape, organizations must craft narratives that resonate with candidates, addressing their aspirations, values, and career goals.





To conclude, the evolution of modern approaches in talent acquisition is an ongoing process, deeply intertwined with the digital era's rapid changes. The future of recruitment will continue to evolve, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence, data analytics, AI solutions, and evolving social media trends. (Bongarzone, Chatterjee, & Schanne, 2022). Organizations navigating this dynamic landscape must remain adaptive and agile, continually updating their recruitment strategies to meet the ever-changing expectations of the contemporary workforce. To stay ahead the curve and attract top talent in an increasingly competitive market, organizations must embrace innovation and leverage emerging technologies.

3.4 Impact of Generation Z in the workforce

Generation Z is a cohort born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, who are increasingly stepping into the workforce (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Hence the

influence of Generation Z in the professional world is a phenomenon that demands careful examination. Generation Z brings to the table distinctive characteristics, values and expectations which necessitate a refinement of understanding. This group of young people has given a rise to a hypercognitive generation that adeptly collects and cross-references diverse sources of information while seamlessly integrating virtual and offline experiences (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Based on this assumption, this section will look at the multifaceted impact of Generation Z on the workplace, and specifically how they are actively shaping the recruitment landscape and giving new behavioural perspectives.

3.4.1 Characteristics, values and expectations of Generation Z

				
	Baby boomer 1940–59	Gen X 1960–79	Gen Y (millennial) 1980–94	Gen Z 1995–2010
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postwar • Dictatorship and repression in Brazil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political transition • Capitalism and meritocracy dominate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalization • Economic stability • Emergence of internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility and multiple realities • Social networks • Digital natives
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idealism • Revolutionary • Collectivist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materialistic • Competitive • Individualistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalist • Questioning • Oriented to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undefined ID • “Communaholic” • “Dialoguer” • Realistic
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideology • Vinyl and movies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status • Brands and cars • Luxury articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Festivals and travel • Flagships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniqueness • Unlimited • Ethical

McKinsey&Company

Figure 2: Defining features of generational cohorts (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Generations are shaped not only by their chronological birth years but also by the historical and cultural contexts in which they come of age. The baby boomer

generation, spanning from 1940 to 1959, was born into a world reshaped by the aftermath of World War II. This period of post-war recovery, growing prosperity and optimism fuelled a consumer culture where material possessions became symbols of success and ideology. Baby boomers, therefore, often expressed their values and beliefs through their consumption patterns, seeking to align themselves with societal ideals through their purchases.

Following the baby boomers, Generation X emerged in the deafening social landscape of the 1960s and 1970s. This generation witnessed rapid technological advancements, economic uncertainties, and shifting social norms. As a result, Generation Xers developed a more cynical and pragmatic outlook, prioritizing individualism and self-reliance. For them, consumption became a means of asserting status independence in a rapidly changing world. They were drawn to brands and products that reflected their aspirations for success and autonomy (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

The millennial generation, born between 1980 and 1994, entered adulthood amidst the rise of globalization, the advent of the internet, and profound social and economic transformations. Unlike their predecessors, millennials were less interested in material possessions and more focused on accumulating experiences. They valued travel, adventure, and personal growth, seeking meaningful and authentic connections with the world around them. This shift in consumption patterns gave rise to trends such as the sharing economy, where access to experiences trumped ownership of goods (Zelazko, 2024).

In contrast, Generation Z, born from the mid-1990s onwards, has grown up in a digital age characterized by unprecedented access to information and connectivity. This generation is marked by its scepticism towards traditional institutions and its relentless pursuit of truth and authenticity. Generation Z's consumption habits reflect their desire for genuine experiences and meaningful connections. They are drawn to brands and products that align with their values. Moreover, Generation Z is highly diverse and inclusive, embracing a multitude of identities and perspectives. This openness to diversity extends to their

consumption choices, as they seek out brands that reflect their values and resonate with their beliefs (Paggi & Clowes, 2021).

Overall, each generation's behavioural patterns reflect the unique historical, social, and cultural contexts in which they came of age. By understanding these generational differences, businesses and employers more generally can tailor their strategies to effectively engage and connect with diverse generation segments (Niezurawska, Kycia, & Niemczynowicz, 2023).

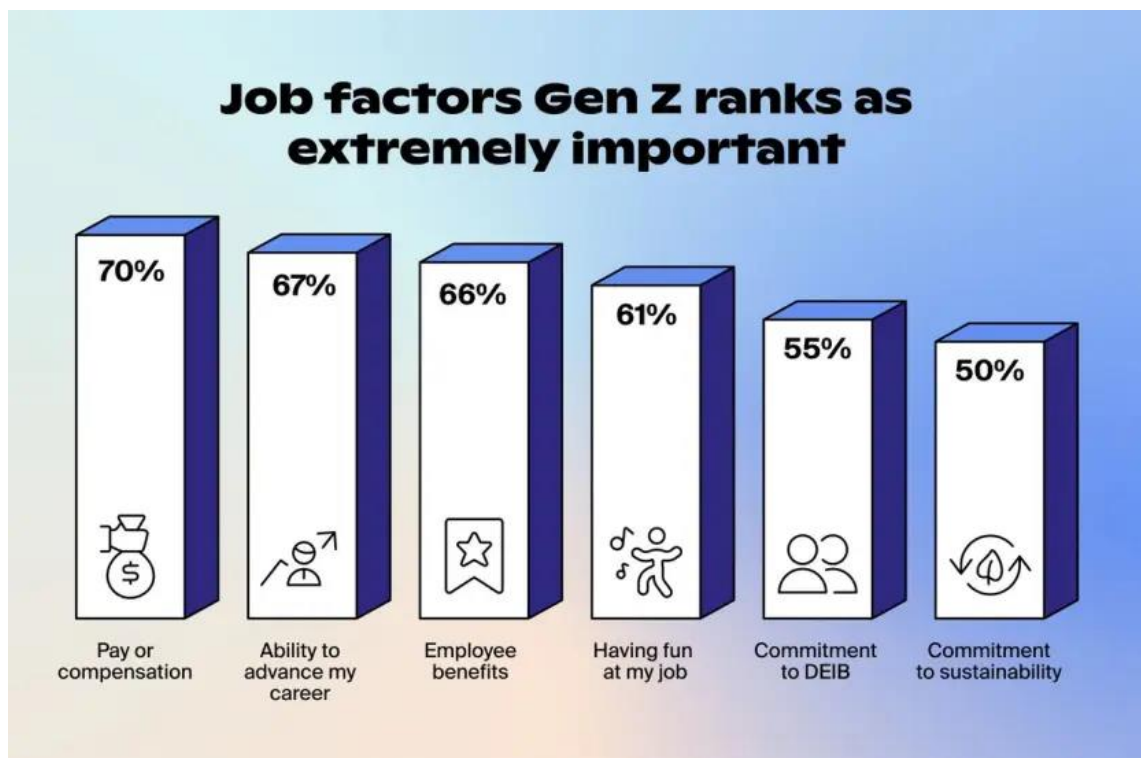


Figure 3: Typical professional goals characteristic of Generation Z (Handshake Blog, n.d.)

Building upon the characteristics outlined by Paggi and Clowes (2021), Generation Z possesses a unique set of traits that have been shaped by the rapid advancements in technology, significant economic shifts, and the increasing interconnectedness of the global landscape. This generation, often referred to as digital natives, has seamlessly integrated technology into their daily lives from a young age, making them inherently tech-savvy. Their familiarity with digital platforms, social media, and instant communication has

not only shaped their behaviours but also influenced their expectations and preferences, particularly in the context of the workplace (Siebers 2022).

As depicted in Figure 3, Generation Z places a high value on personal development in the workplace. Unlike previous generations, whose focus may have been on job security, Generation Z prioritizes authenticity, diversity, and social responsibility (Niezurawska, Kycia, & Niemczynowicz, 2023.) They seek workplaces that align with their values, placing a premium on transparency and a sense of purpose in their professional endeavours. For them, meaningful work is essential, alongside flexibility and opportunities for continuous learning and skill development.

This shift in priorities reflects the evolving attitudes and aspirations of Generation Z, who are entering the workforce with a desire to make a positive impact and contribute to organizations that share their values. Employers must recognize and adapt to these changing dynamics to attract and retain top talent from this generation. By fostering a culture of transparency, purpose-driven work, and ongoing learning opportunities, organizations can appeal to the values and preferences of Generation Z, creating an environment where both employees and businesses thrive (Visma, 2023).

3.4.2 Shaping norms & impacting the recruitment markets

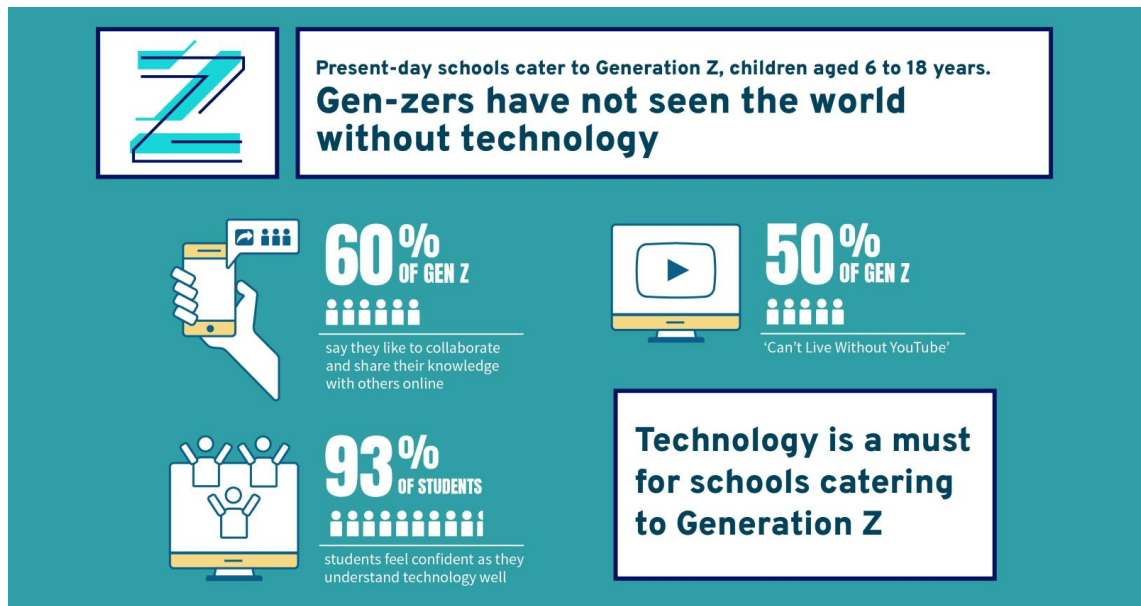


Figure 4: Implications of Generation Z worldview (GIIS Team, 2018)

The prevalent influence of digital norms on Generation Z's behaviour is undeniable, as they have been immersed in a world where technology is everywhere and integral to daily life. This influence extends to their expectations in the recruitment process, where streamlined and tech-savvy application processes are preferred. Generation Z gravitates towards platforms that offer efficient and transparent communication, reflecting their comfort with digital interfaces and their desire for seamless experiences (Paggi & Clowes, 2021).

Furthermore, the decision-making process of Generation Z is significantly shaped by their commitment to diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. These values are not merely lip service but deeply ingrained principles that guide their choices and actions. As such, organizations must align their practices with these values to resonate with Generation Z candidates and employees effectively (Paggi & Clowes, 2021).

In today's interconnected world, social media plays an essential role in shaping perceptions and facilitating connections. Organizations must recognize the

importance of maintaining a strong presence on popular social media platforms to engage with Generation Z effectively. Active participation on these platforms allows organizations to showcase their culture, values, and opportunities, thereby enhancing their appeal to this digitally savvy generation (Paggi & Clowes, 2021).

The impact of Generation Z on the workforce is transformative, necessitating a recalibration of established norms and a reimagination of recruitment strategies. Organizations that embrace the values and expectations of Generation Z stand to benefit from a diverse, dynamic, and innovation-driven workforce. By fostering an inclusive and progressive work environment that resonates with Generation Z's values, organizations can attract and retain top talent from this generation, driving growth and success in the rapidly evolving business landscape (Kingsley, 2023).

4 Methodology – research

For deeper understanding of the evolution of recruitment strategies and the impact of Generation Z, the study will include more detailed research towards the outlook. In this chapter the study will provide a multifaced understanding of the research question, with focus on the selection of quantitative element as chosen method.

4.1 Research design

The choice of research design serves as the framework upon which the entire study is built. To gather as much information and details of the evolution of recruitment markets with the unique influence of Generation Z, a large scaled survey was chosen as a research methodology. The decision to use the survey was driven by the need to gather empirical data that could offer objective insights into how modern recruitment strategies compare to traditional methods, and how these approaches resonate with the generations, especially the younger one.

Quantitative research well suits this study, because it allows for the precise measurement of variables such as job satisfaction, recruitment preferences, and perceptions of employer branding (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Strange, 2020). By utilizing a structured survey, this approach enabled the collection of data from a broad cross-section of individuals, providing statistically significant results that can be generalized across a larger population. This is particularly important in understanding Generation Z's behaviour and preferences, given their diverse backgrounds and varying levels of exposure to different recruitment practices.

The survey, the primary tool of data collection, was meticulously designed to capture a wide range of variables relevant to the research question. Questions were formulated to assess respondents' experiences with both traditional and modern recruitment methods, their expectation from employers, and the factors they consider most important in their job search.

4.1.1 Quantitative element: Survey

The survey serves as the quantitative backbone of the research, allowing for the systematic collection of data from a large scale (O’Leary, 2004). The survey employed here is meticulously designed to gather insights into different Generation group behaviours and preferences in the workforce. Given its quantitative nature, the survey cannot discover rich narratives, personal experiences, and nuanced perspectives, thereby offering a depth of understanding beyond what quantitative data alone can reveal. Nevertheless, with quantitative data it is possible to establish a clearer framework that highlights fundamental features of the target population with respect to the central research question.

The survey was aimed to reach a wide range of the target group and give deeper understanding based on the responses to the research questions. It offered a structured and efficient means of gathering data from a larger population, which is crucial for understanding broad trends and patterns, especially in a diverse demographic like Generation Z. This generation, characterized by its digital fluency and unique workplace expectations, requires a method that can capture their collective attitudes and behaviours effectively. The survey allowed for the collection of standardized data, enabling the analysis of correlations and differences across various segments within Generation Z, such as educational background, industry preference, and career aspirations.

The ability to reach respondents online also made the survey particularly suited for Generation Z, who are more likely to engage with digital content. In sum, the survey method was selected because it offered a scalable, flexible, and data-rich approach to understanding the distinct characteristics of Generation Z within the workforce, providing a solid foundation for both descriptive and inferential analysis.

4.2 Samplings and participants

The survey was shared across multiple social media platforms, specifically targeting age groups that align with the scope of this research, including Generation Z and Millennials. The researcher belonging to the same demographic, it allowed for a more tailored distribution of the survey to relevant participants. Social media channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram were chosen where the survey to be shared, due to their accessibility to these age groups and their relevance as platforms frequently used for professional networking and career-related discussions.

The survey gathered successfully responses from 45 participants in total, with a balanced representation of both Generation Z and Millennials. This sample size, while modest, provided valuable insights into the characteristics of Generation Z in the workforce. Though the respondents themselves were also from older generations, their observations and interactions with Generation Z within the workplace offered a broader understanding of how this younger cohort behaves, communicates, and values work-life balance and dynamics. Furthermore, the sample size is substantial enough to paint a reasonably detailed picture of the generational differences and recruitment expectations as they pertain to the study's research question.

The survey questions were carefully designed to capture a range of behavioural and attitudinal data, focusing on key areas such as communication preferences, values in the workplace, and perceptions of modern recruitment strategies. For example, questions like, 'How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues and supervisors?' and 'What factors influenced your decision to accept your current job?' provided a clear lens into the evolving nature of work communication and career decision-making processes. Respondents were encouraged to select multiple answers where applicable, ensuring their feedback reflected the diverse communication tools and preferences available in today's more digital workplaces.

Furthermore, other questions such as, 'How important is workplace flexibility to you?' helped gather essential data on a defining trait of modern workforce preferences, especially among Generation Z, who are known for prioritizing work-life balance. These questions facilitated a nuanced understanding of how different generations view recruitment strategies, and they revealed critical insights into the desires and expectations of Generation Z and Millennial employees.

The responses collected provided a rich dataset, offering quantitative insights and highlighting qualitative trends that align with the research question. Specifically, the survey authorized a comparison of traditional vs. modern recruitment methods from the perspectives of two older generations, reflecting on their experiences with and observations of Generation Z in the workplace. The results were particularly useful for evaluating the effectiveness of contemporary recruitment approaches in attracting younger talent, and how these strategies cater to the unique expectations of Generation Z and Millennials.

Generally, the survey served as a vital tool in not only understanding the views of Generation Z and Millennials but also in generating relevant insights into the Generation Z workforce, particularly concerning their recruitment experiences, communication preferences, and expectations for workplace culture. These findings are crucial in shaping the final discussion, analysis and conclusions of this study.

5 Findings

In this section, findings gathered from the survey will be presented and analysed. The survey included questions which explored various aspects of the employment decision-making process, communication preferences, and workplace expectations. The chosen questions were intended to capture key factors influencing how Generation Z interacts with the modern recruitment landscape and their overall values in a professional setting. Anonymous participants were asked to reflect on their job search experiences, the platforms they use for researching potential employers, the types of workplace flexibility they value most, and their communication and feedback preferences.

By analysing and presenting the responses, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the generational perspectives on recruitment strategies. This analysis will help identify the implications of current recruitment trends for organizations seeking to attract and retain younger talent. Furthermore, the results will offer valuable data to address the research question 'How do organizations recognize the effectiveness of modern methods compared to traditional strategies in attracting and retaining top talent within the younger generation?' and contribute to a broader understanding of how modern recruitment strategies are evolving in response to the changing expectations of the workforce.

5.1 Survey results

Please indicate to which generational group do you belong?

45 vastausta

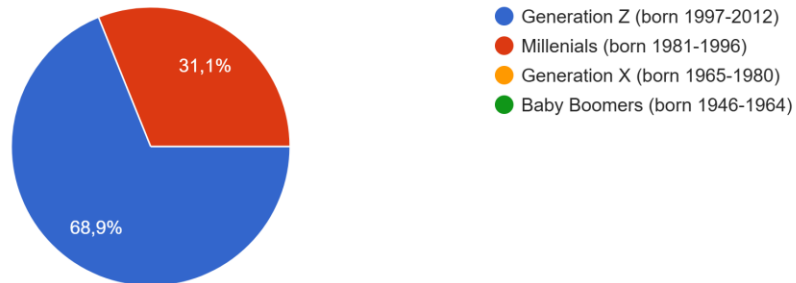


Figure 5: Distribution of generation cohorts in survey

One of the key demographic questions in the survey asked participants to identify which generational group they belong to, providing a clear breakdown of the generational outcome of the respondents. The two strongest groups represented were Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). Out of the 45 total respondents, 31 respondents (68,9%) were from Generation Z and 14 respondents (31,1%) from Millennials.

This distribution is particularly relevant when addressing the research question of the thesis. The Generation Z representation is crucial because this generation is reshaping the recruitment landscape currently, as established in the literature review. Generation Z has grown up with digital platforms and social media as central elements of their lives. The larger portion of Generation Z respondents promises to offer direct insights into how effective modern recruitment strategies are in appealing to this group, which is highly responsive to employer branding, real-time engagement, and flexibility in the workplace.

By contrast, the 31.1% Millennial respondents provide an opportunity to assess the evolving impact of modern methods against a group that experienced both traditional and emerging recruitment strategies. Millennials were among the first to engage with online job boards and social media recruitment but also have

experience with more traditional methods like job fairs and newspaper ads. Their perspective offers a comparative backdrop to Generation Z, highlighting shifts in expectations and the growing importance of digitalization in recruitment processes.

This mix of generational responses allows organizations to gauge the effectiveness of modern recruitment methods compared to more traditional strategies. For Generation Z, the survey results shed light on how features such as digital job boards, social media outreach, and employer branding resonate with them. For Millennials, the survey provides a retrospective view, indicating whether modern strategies align better with the shifting demands of a younger workforce or if traditional methods still hold value in retaining talent.

The representation of these two generations offers a more comprehensive view of how modern recruitment practices are perceived across age groups, providing crucial insights into the effectiveness of these methods, subject to the limitations of a small sample size. This data supports the thesis's exploration of recruitment evolution, as it allows for a direct comparison between generations and highlights the shift in expectations toward more dynamic, flexible, and tech-driven recruitment approaches.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is a company's culture and values to you when considering potential job opportunities?

45 vastausta

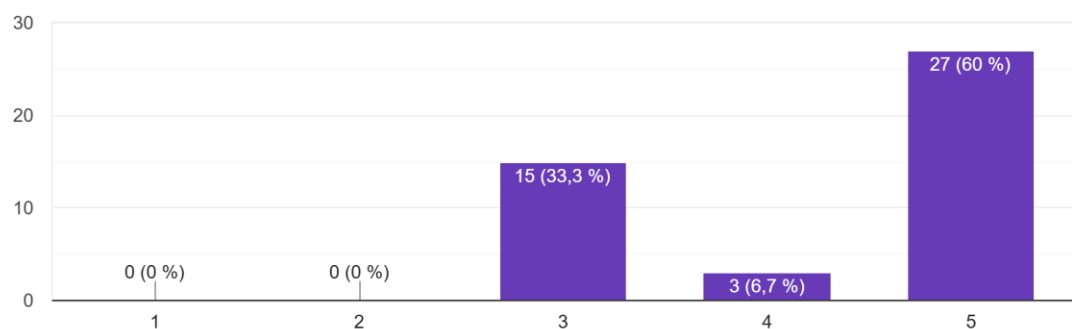


Figure 6: Survey respondents' views of employers' values and culture

This survey question sought to gauge how significant a company's culture and values are to potential job candidates when evaluating job opportunities. The responses reveal an overwhelming emphasis on the importance of these factors: 15 respondents (33.3%) rated the importance as 3 on the scale, 3 respondents (6.7%) rated it as 4 on the scale, and 27 respondents (60%) rated it the highest possible rating of 5.

This distribution demonstrates that for a significant majority of participants, particularly those who rated company culture and values at 5, these elements are crucial when considering employment. 60% of respondents consider a company's culture and values as paramount, reflecting a shift in job-seeker priorities that aligns with modern recruitment trends.

The finding that the majority ranked this factor at the highest possible level suggests that organizations need to prioritize strong employer branding and clearly communicate their culture and values to attract top talent. As recruitment has shifted towards a more candidate-driven market, candidates, especially from younger generations, are seeking employers who align with their personal beliefs and values. This is consistent with trends observed in Generation Z, where transparency, authenticity, and social responsibility are increasingly pivotal in job decisions.

The 33.3% of respondents who selected a neutral score of 3 reflect a more moderate approach. These individuals may value a company's culture but do not necessarily consider it the primary factor in decision-making. Their responses could suggest that while culture is important, other aspects such as salary, benefits, or career development opportunities also weigh heavily in their decisions.

The 6.7% who selected a score of 4 indicate that a smaller group also places high importance on culture, though not to the same degree as those who rated it a 5. This slight variation suggests that these respondents appreciate cultural

alignment but may put slightly more emphasis on other factors when considering job offers.

This data highlights a significant shift in modern recruitment practices, where traditional methods that solely focus on job descriptions and compensation packages may no longer be sufficient. Instead, organizations must recognize the growing importance of culture and values as central to the employer branding strategy. A company's culture – its stance on work-life balance, diversity and inclusion, and corporate responsibility – has become a critical differentiator in the eyes of job seekers.

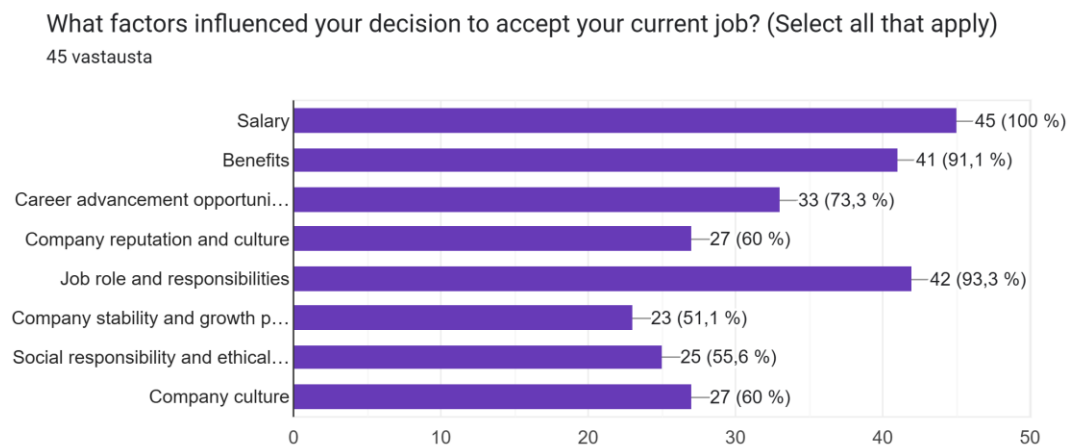


Figure 7: Factors influencing survey respondents' acceptance of job offers

The survey question 'What factors influenced your decision to accept your current job?' and its results present a comprehensive view of the factors that shape employment decisions for both generations of Generation Z and Millennials. It reveals several key insights into the decision-making processes of both when choosing employment.

Thus, the fact that every respondent chose salary highlights that financial compensation remains a crucial factor for both generations. While younger workers such as Generation Z are often viewed as prioritizing other factors, this result emphasizes that salary continues to be a non-negotiable criterion for job

acceptance. Then benefits, selected by 91.1%, further reinforces the importance of comprehensive compensation packages. Today's job seekers expect not just competitive pay, but also additional perks such as health insurance, retirement payments, and wellness support – elements that contribute to a better work-life balance, in an era where earlier welfare state provision is no longer as generous.

Career advancement opportunities were highlighted by 73.3% of respondents, reflecting a strong desire for professional growth. Both Millennials and Generation Z value roles that offer upward mobility and personal development, signalling that modern job seekers prioritize long-term career potential over mere job security. This trend underscores the shift away from older models, where staying with one company for decades was common. For organizations, this means that providing clear paths for advancement is key to attracting top talent from these younger generations.

Job role and responsibilities, chosen by 93.3%, emerged as another decisive factor, indicating that clear and meaningful work descriptions play a significant role in employment decisions. Generation Z, in particular, seeks roles where their work has purpose and aligns with their values, while Millennials are similarly focused on understanding how their work contributes to the broader mission of the organization.

Company reputation and culture (60%) and social responsibility and ethical practices (55.6%) also ranked high, especially among Generation Z. This generation, raised in a digital world that emphasizes transparency and inclusivity, expects organizations to demonstrate authentic values. A company's stance on social issues, ethical behaviour, and overall reputation significantly impacts its ability to attract younger talent. Millennials, as well, prioritize working for companies that align with their personal ethics and have positive workplace cultures.

Lastly, the company stability and growth potential characteristic was selected by just over half (51.1%) of respondents. While still important, this suggests that younger generations are more willing to trade long-term stability for opportunities at innovative and flexible companies. This trend may reflect the economic realities that shaped Millennials, as well as Generation Z's desire to be part of forward-thinking organizations.

These results reveal that traditional factors like salary and benefits remain key, career growth, company culture, and alignment with values are increasingly central to job decisions for both Millennials and Generation Z. These insights reflect the importance of modern recruitment strategies that emphasize employer branding, career development, and ethical practices, as these elements are critical to attracting and retaining younger generations of talent in today's workforce.

How frequently do you use social media platforms to research potential employers or job opportunities?

45 vastausta

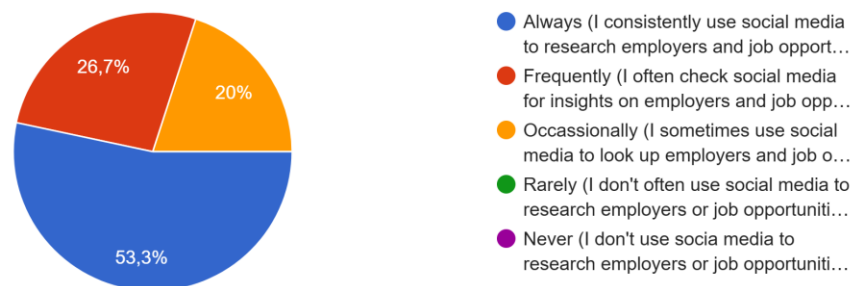


Figure 8: Respondents' use of social media platforms when researching employers and job opportunities

The high percentage of respondents choosing 'Always', especially those from Generation Z, who always use social media for every occasion, indicates a deep connection to digital platforms. As digital natives, Generation Z is accustomed to using platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and TikTok to assess company culture, values, and employee experiences. For them, authenticity and

transparency are crucial, and social media offers real-time, unfiltered information that helps them determine whether an organization aligns with their values and expectations.

The 26.7% who use social media frequently also reflect a shift in how job seekers engage with employers, even when not actively seeking a job. These individuals may engage in passive job searching, keeping an eye on opportunities that fit their long-term goals. Meanwhile, the 20% who use it occasionally may still rely on more traditional methods like job boards but acknowledge the growing role of social media in recruitment.

In conclusion, the results highlight the importance of a strong social media presence for organizations. With Generation Z's reliance on digital platforms for employer research, companies must ensure they presents an authentic, transparent image to retain and attract potential employees in a competitive job market.

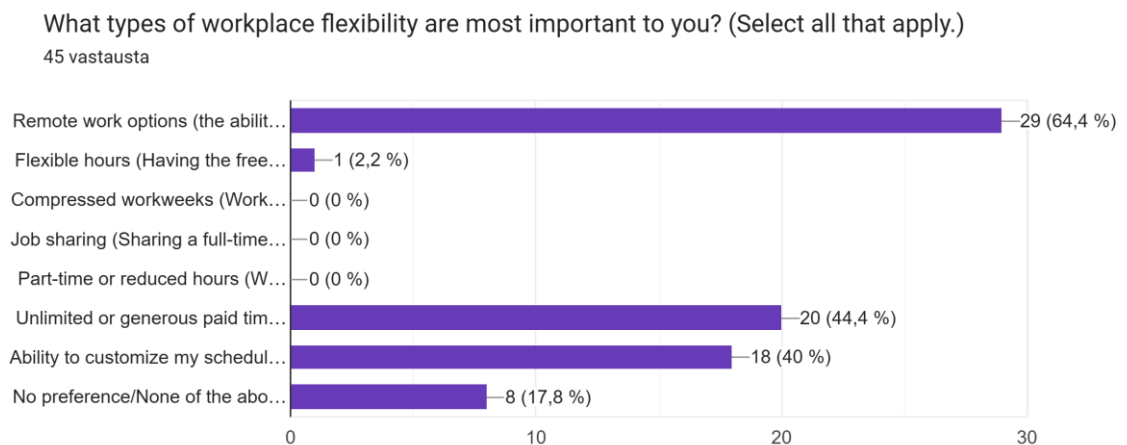


Figure 9: Respondents' views of workplace flexibility

Generation Z's and Millennials' strong preference for remote work reflects their comfort with digital technologies and their desire for work-life balance. As digital natives, they are accustomed to working from anywhere, valuing autonomy over the traditional office environment. The 44.4% favouring generous time off

underscores their focus on personal well-being and mental health, which are highly prioritized in this generation. Additionally, the 40% who value schedule customization suggest a preference for flexibility and control over their workday, wanting to adapt their hours to fit their personal lives and productivity patterns.

The low response to traditional flexible options like compressed work weeks and job-sharing signals a shift in priorities, with remote and customizable work arrangements taking precedence in today's workforce, especially for Generation Z. These results highlight the need for organizations to offer more adaptive work environments to attract and retain younger talent effectively.

How do you prefer to receive feedback and recognition in the workplace?

45 vastausta

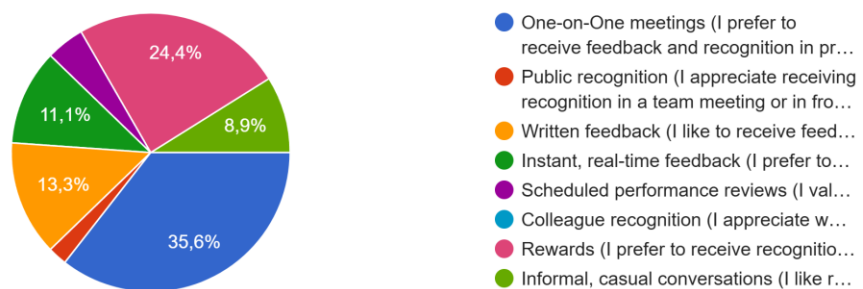


Figure 10: Respondents' preferences regarding feedback and recognition at work

Occasionally, strong preference for one-on-one meetings reflects respondents' desire for personalized, constructive feedback in a more intimate, supportive setting. This aligns with their focus on personal growth and development, as they tend to seek direct guidance from supervisors. The 24.4% who value rewards likely emphasize tangible recognition for their efforts, linking feedback to visible incentives. Their lower preference for public recognition and scheduled performance reviews suggests that Generation Z seeks ongoing, private acknowledgment, rather than infrequent or potentially uncomfortable public displays.

The preference for written feedback and real-time feedback indicates Generation Z's appreciation for clarity and immediacy, valuing actionable insights that allow them to adjust and improve swiftly. These results suggest that organizations should focus on offering consistent, personalized feedback mechanisms to engage and retain younger talent effectively.

Have you ever turned down a job offer due to concerns about the company's values or ethics?
45 vastausta

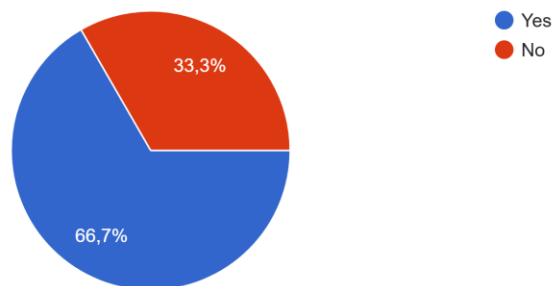


Figure 11: Respondents' rejections of job offers due to values or ethics clashes

This high percentage of respondents who have declined job offers due to ethical concerns highlights a significant trend, particularly among Generation Z and Millennials, who are known for their value-driven approach to employment. For these younger generations, the alignment of personal values with the company's ethical stance is critical. They are more likely to research and evaluate a company's social responsibility, sustainability practices, diversity, and inclusivity before committing to a role. Generation Z, in particular, is highly attuned to corporate ethics, given their upbringing in a hyper-connected world where information about company practices is readily accessible through social media and other platforms.

Millennials, while slightly older, have also been influenced by global discussions on ethics, corporate transparency, and social justice movements. This shared value-driven mindset between Generation Z and Millennials explains why so many have turned down offers based on ethical concerns. Companies that fail to demonstrate authentic commitment to ethical practices risk losing out on top

talent from these generations, who place a premium on working for socially responsible and ethically sound organizations.

Do you prioritize work-life balance in your career decisions?

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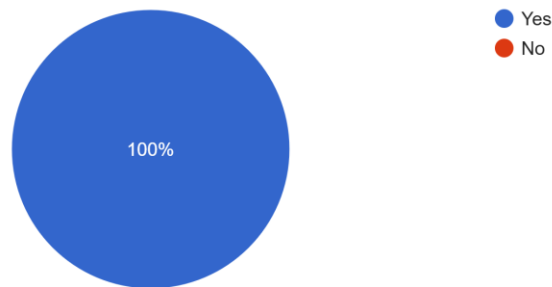


Figure 12: Respondents' views of the significance of work-life balance

Certainly, with all 45 respondents answering yes, the survey clearly emphasizes the importance of work-life balance for both Generation Z and Millennials in the modern workforce. This result is reflective of broader generational shifts in workplace values, where well-being and personal fulfilment are becoming as crucial as professional success.

For Generation Z, the integration of work and life is a priority due to their upbringing in a digital age where the lines between work and personal life are increasingly blurred. They tend to seek flexible work environments that allow them to maintain a healthy balance, emphasizing the need for remote work options and customizable schedules. This generation values the freedom to pursue personal interests, and they are more likely to prioritize employers who offer flexible working conditions to accommodate their lifestyle preferences.

Thus, both generations, Gen Z and Millennials, view work-life balance as a non-negotiable aspect of their employment decisions, reflecting a shift towards a human-centred approach to career choices, where personal well-being and professional responsibilities are harmonized. Employers who fail to provide this

balance may struggle to attract and retain talent from these value-driven generations.

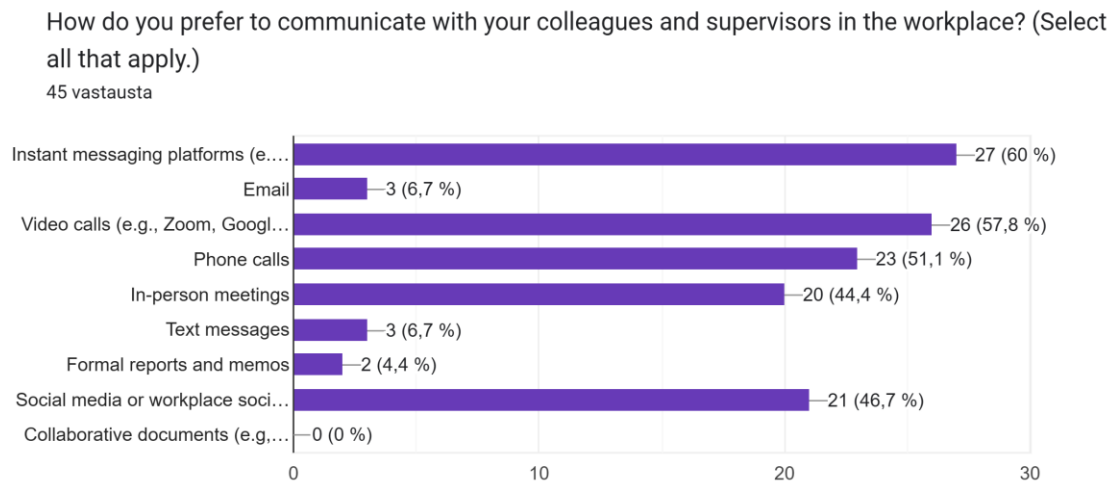


Figure 13: Respondents' preferred communication channels at work

Alternatively, these answers give key insights into Generation Z's and Millennials' communication preferences. The top choices reveal a clear preference for fast and direct communication methods among both generations.

For Generation Z, the dominance of instant messaging platforms highlights their preference for real-time, informal communication that allows for quick decision-making and collaboration. Thus, the relatively low preference for email (6.7%) and formal reports and memos (4.4%) among both generations reflects the broader shift away from traditional, formal methods of communication towards more immediate and interactive channels. Similarly, the low use of text messages (6.7%) suggests that both generations prefer workplace tools that are more collaborative and integrated, as opposed to personal texting, which might feel more disconnected from the professional environment.

The noticeable use of social media and workplace social networks (46.7%) further highlights how both generations are comfortable with blurring the lines between personal and professional platforms, particularly Generation Z, who

often turn to these networks for informal updates and team engagement. For both groups, the ability to communicate fluidly across different platforms is essential for collaboration, especially in increasingly flexible and remote work environments.

Overall, these preferences underscore a desire for agile, flexible communication in the workplace that prioritizes speed, convenience, and real-time interaction – traits that are essential to attracting and retaining top talent from both Generation Z and Millennials. Employers that foster these preferences by integrating diverse communication tools are likely to create a more collaborative and responsive workplace environment, which is crucial for employee satisfaction and productivity.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is sustainability and corporate social responsibility to you when evaluating potential employers?

45 vastausta

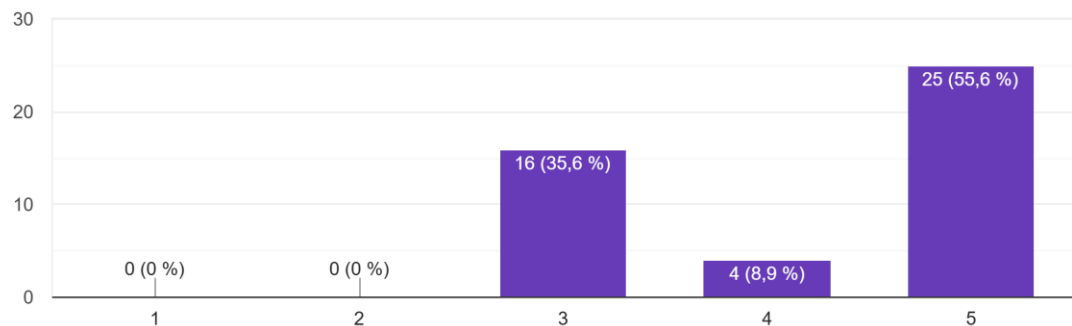
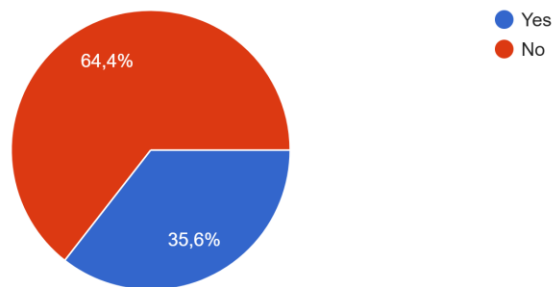


Figure 14: Respondents' views regarding sustainability and corporate social responsibility as employer attributes

From the results above, it can be clearly said that organizations that integrate sustainability into their employer branding and recruitment processes can more effectively attract and retain top talent, particularly from Generation Z, who prioritize ethical alignment with employers.

Overall, these responses underscore a critical shift in the workforce, where sustainability and CSR have evolved from being secondary considerations to primary decision-making factors for younger generations. As the findings suggest, companies looking to engage with both Generation Z and Millennials will need to adopt and clearly communicate their sustainability initiatives and corporate social responsibilities to remain competitive in attracting the best talent in today's socially conscious job market.

Have you ever participated in employer-sponsored professional development or training programmes?
45 vastausta



If you answered yes to last question, did these programs influence your decision to stay with the company?
45 vastausta

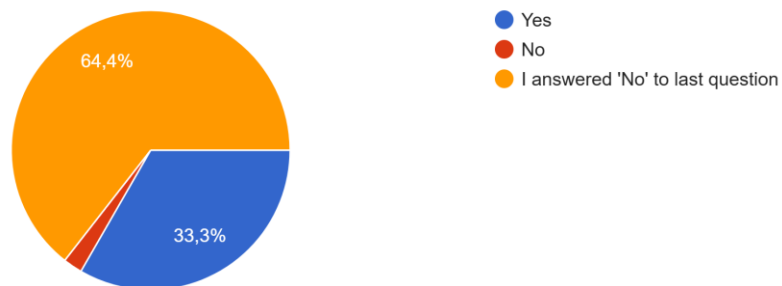


Figure 15: Respondents' participation in training and development programmes

The relatively low participation rate in professional development programs – where 64.4% said they hadn't participated – can be attributed to several factors, particularly differences between Generation Z and Millennials in their career

stages and priorities. For Generation Z, many are still early in their careers, and some may not have had the opportunity to take part in formal training or development programs. Additionally, Generation Z's focus on self-directed learning, often through online courses and digital platforms, may mean they seek professional growth outside traditional employer-sponsored routes. This generation is tech-savvy and accustomed to quickly acquiring new skills on their own, which could explain their lower engagement with formal, employer-led programs (Siebers 2022).

The fact that 33.3% of those who did participate in these programs reported that they influenced their decision to stay with the company underscores the importance of professional development in employee retention. This is particularly relevant for Millennials, who tend to value opportunities for career advancement and skill development. For Generation Z, while still early in their careers, participation in such programs can offer them a clear path for growth and signal that the company is invested in their future. This aligns with their desire for ongoing learning and the need for a workplace that supports personal development.

Interestingly, only 2.2% reported that these programs did not influence their decision to stay, suggesting that when companies invest in employee development, it tends to have a positive impact on retention. However, the fact that a majority of respondents (64.4%) had not participated in such programs signals an opportunity for organizations to improve in this area. Both Millennials and Generation Z are generations that value learning and development – Millennials to advance in their careers and Generation Z to continuously upskill and adapt in a rapidly changing job market.

These findings highlight the importance of professional development as a modern recruitment and retention strategy. While traditional strategies may not have placed as much emphasis on continuous development, the modern workforce, particularly Generation Z, expects learning opportunities as a key of their employment experience. Organizations that offer robust development

programs not only attract younger talent but are more likely to retain them, as this generation seeks employers who invest in their growth and future career prospects.

Ultimately, this data shows a clear correlation between employer-sponsored training and employee retention and suggests that organizations that fail to provide such opportunities may struggle to keep top talent from Generation Z and Millennials. As the workforce continues to evolve, companies will need to prioritize personal and professional development to meet the expectations of these younger generations.

6 Discussion

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the survey with the insights drawn from the literature review, evaluating both the alignment and divergence between the data collected from Generation Z and Millennial respondents and the established knowledge on modern recruitment practices. Throughout this comparative analysis, it will be assessed how well the survey findings validate or challenge previous research, namely regarding the effectiveness of modern recruitment strategies in attracting and retaining top talent among younger generations. This discussion will framework the stage for the subsequent conclusion by framing key themes that support or confronts the thesis's core argument.

6.1 Insights drawn from the literature review: Importance of Employer Branding and Values

The survey found that sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are significant to respondents when looking at potential employers. More than 55% rated these factors as 'very important' (scale 5), corroborating the literature that highlights employer branding (EB) centred around ethical values as critical aspect of modern recruitment. Authors, such as Niezurawska, Kycia, and X (2023), emphasized that Generation Z places a stage on authenticity, social responsibility, and a company's impact on society. This finding is reinforced by the Millennial group in the survey, who also demonstrated strong alignment with CSR values, though Generation Z's emphasis on these issues appears even more pronounced.

Furthermore, employer-sponsored professional development programs were explored in both the literature and the survey. The findings, where only 35.6% of respondents had participated in such programs but 33.3% indicated they influenced their decision to stay, align with research suggesting that career development opportunities play a significant role in talent retention. This validates the assertion by authors such as Paggi & Clowes (2021), who argued

that ongoing learning and growth are key factors in employee engagement, particularly for younger generations. While the overall participation rate in development programs remains low, the importance of these programs in retaining top talent is clear.

6.2 Differences: How workplace flexibility and communication preferences set the roles

The survey data also highlighted some differences that diverge from traditional expectations outlined in earlier research. For example, remote work options were selected as the most important form of workplace flexibility by 64.4% of respondents, far outpacing other options such as flexible hours or compressed workweeks. This preference for remote work underlines a notable shift in expectations from traditional workplace flexibility models, where Millennials and earlier generations tended to prioritize flexible scheduling over the location of work. This preference is particularly strong among Generation Z, who, as digital natives, have grown accustomed to virtual environments and expect technological integration into their professional lives.

In addition, communication preferences in the survey revealed a tendency towards instant messaging platforms (60%) and video calls (57.8), with less emphasis on email or formal communication methods. This diverges from earlier assumptions in the literature, which suggested that younger employees still value some traditional forms of communication, particularly Millennials who may have been more familiar with email-based communication in earlier career stages. The strong preference for real-time, informal communication is a distinctive trait of Generation Z, confirming their demand for immediacy, efficiency, and transparent communication in workplace settings.

6.3 Verifications and perceptions: Work-life balance and ethical concerns

One of the most notable consistencies between the survey results and the literature is the overwhelming consensus on the importance of work-life

balance. Every single respondent (100%) indicated that they prioritize work-life balance in their career decisions. This finding is not surprising, but it serves as a strong validation of existing research, showing that both Generation Z and Millennials share similar values when it comes to balancing professional and personal lives.

Another aligned point is the ethical concerns raised by respondents, where 66.7% stated that they had turned down a job offer due to concerns about a company's values or ethics. This demonstrates the high level of scrutiny that younger generations apply when selecting employers, confirming earlier literature that Generation Z is not only interested in securing employment but is also actively seeking companies that align with their ethical and social values. This highlights the need for companies to carefully foster their employer branding (EB) around these values, as ethical missteps could have tangible consequences in terms of lost talent.

6.4 Combining survey insights into the literature: Implications for modern recruitment

The data gathered through the survey provides clear evidence that modern recruitment strategies, particularly those focusing on employer branding, flexibility, and ethical practices, are more effective than traditional strategies in attracting and retaining younger talent. The prioritization of CSR and flexibility, along with strong preferences for transparent and direct communication, illustrates that companies need to continually adapt their practices to meet the evolving expectations of Generation Z and Millennials.

The findings also suggest that while traditional factors such as salary and benefits remain influential (as evidenced by the 100% and 91.1% responses, respectively), they are no longer enough to secure talent in isolation. Younger generations are looking for a holistic employment experience – one that integrates personal values, professional growth, and work-life balance. The literature's focus on these modern values is confirmed by the survey data,

reinforcing that organizations failing to prioritize these areas may struggle to compete for top talent.

6.5 Limitations

While the findings of this thesis provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of modern recruitment strategies for attracting and retaining Generation Z and Millennials, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. These limitations may affect the generalizability of the results and suggest directions for future research.

Firstly, sample size and demographics. The survey's sample size of 45 respondents, while sufficient to generate some trends and observations, limits the extent to which these findings can be generalized to the broader population. Although the respondents represented both Generation Z and Millennials, a larger and more diverse sample, including participants from various industries, geographic locations, and educational backgrounds, would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the recruitment preferences of these generations. Additionally, the survey was conducted predominantly via social media channels, which may have resulted in a sample that is more digitally inclined than the general population.

The reliance of self-reported data is another limitation of this research. While surveys are effective for gathering subjective insights, respondents may not always provide accurate reflections of their experiences, preferences, or behaviours due to biases such as social desirability or recall bias. For instance, respondents might overstate their interest in values such as corporate social responsibility or workplace flexibility because these are socially valued traits, even if these factors did not significantly influence their real-world decision-making. Furthermore, the study design was cross-sectional, meaning it captured data at a single point in time rather than over a longer period. This limits the ability to assess how preferences for recruitment strategies may

evolve as Generation Z and Millennials advance their careers or as workplace trends continue to shift.

Also, the study used quantitative data, and while this allowed for the analysis of trends, it may have limited the depth of understanding regarding the motivations and experiences behind the responses. A mixed-methods approach that incorporates qualitative interviews or focus groups could offer richer, more nuanced insights into the reasons why respondents prioritize certain factors in their job decisions.

In sum, while the study offers a strong foundation for understanding the recruitment preferences of Generation Z and Millennials, its findings should be interpreted with these limitations in mind. Future research that addresses these limitations would provide a more comprehensive picture of how modern recruitment strategies affect younger generations.

7 Conclusion

This thesis addressed the research question 'How do organizations recognize the effectiveness of modern methods compared to traditional strategies in attracting and retaining top talent with the younger generation?'. Through an analysis of existing literature and findings from the survey conducted among Generation Z and Millennial respondents. Several key insights have emerged, shedding light on the ways organizations adapt their recruitment and retention strategies to meet the expectations of younger talent in the work industry.

It can be confirmed from the findings that modern recruitment methods, which leverage digital platforms, social media, and employer branding, have become highly effective in appealing to Generation Z and Millennials. Most respondents highlighted the importance of factors such as workplace flexibility, corporate social responsibility, and company culture when making job decisions, reflecting a shift in priorities compared. Traditional methods, like job security and stability, while still relevant, are no longer the primary drivers for these generations. Instead, flexibility, innovation, and a strong alignment between personal values and organization characteristics are the defining factors in attracting top talent today.

The survey results demonstrate that company culture and values play a critical role in recruitment, with over 60% of respondents ranking them as highly important when considering job opportunities. This finding aligns with the literature review, where authors have discussed the growing significance of employer branding and the need for organizations to cultivate a positive and authentic organization image. Generation Z seeks transparency and a sense of purpose in their work, making sustainability and social responsibility crucial elements in the decision-making process. This preference for value-driven employment opportunities marks a departure from traditional recruitment strategies that focused primarily on salary and job security.

In terms of retention, the survey revealed mixed results. While a significant portion of respondents have participated in employer-sponsored professional development programs, there was less consensus on the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting long-term loyalty. Only 35.6% of respondents had engaged in such programs, and of those, not all felt it influenced their decision to stay with the company. This suggests that while modern recruitment strategies are effective at attracting younger employees, retention may require a more personalized approach that goes beyond offering training programs to include ongoing career growth, mentorship, and meaningful recognition of employee contributions.

Moreover, the overwhelming reliance on social media as a tool for researching potential employers (53.3% of respondents always use it, while 26.7% frequently do) emphasizes the importance of a strong and active online presence. Organizations that fail to maintain a dynamic social media presence risk missing out on top talent, as Generation Z and Millennials increasingly turn to these platforms to assess company culture, values, and overall appeal. Traditional recruitment channels, such as job boards or employment agencies, are no longer sufficient for engaging with the younger workforce, further reinforcing the need for a shift toward digital-first strategies.

The research also highlighted the growing demand for workplace flexibility, with 64.4% of respondents prioritizing remote work options and many valuing the ability to customize their schedules. This finding echoes broader trends in the post-pandemic workplace, where flexibility has become a key differentiator for employers. While traditional models of fixed work hours and office-based roles still exist, they are less attractive to the younger generations, thus who prioritize work-life balance and autonomy. Reflecting on the entire research process, organizations must continue evolving their recruitment strategies to align with the evolving preferences of Generation Z and Millennials. Employer branding, social media engagement, and flexible work arrangements are no longer just competitive advantages but necessities in today's talent market. Companies that embrace these modern strategies are more likely to attract and retain top

talent from younger generations, while those relying solely on traditional methods risk being left behind.

While this thesis has explored the effectiveness of modern recruitment strategies in attracting Generation Z and Millennials, future research could expand the scope by considering the long-term impact of these strategies on employee engagement. A more qualitative type of survey would be able to add to the level and scope of detail provided, as mentioned above. Additionally, as Generation Alpha begins to enter the workforce in the coming years, it will be crucial to study how this new generation's expectations may differ from their predecessors. Given Generation Alpha's deeper immersion in technology and digital platforms from an early age, they may bring even more pronounced demands for flexibility, technological integration, and value-driven work environments. Understanding these dynamics will be essential for organizations to stay competitive in an ever-evolving talent landscape.

In conclusion, modern recruitment methods have proven to be more effective in attracting the younger generation than traditional strategies, particularly when organizations focus on building a strong employer brand, promoting values such as flexibility and social responsibility, and engaging talent through digital channels. However, the retention of this younger workforce may require further innovation in how companies approach career development and employee engagement, ensuring that their evolving needs and preferences are continually met.

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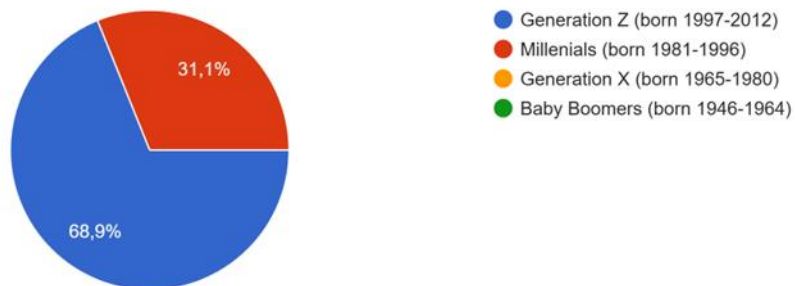
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Appendices

The survey questions

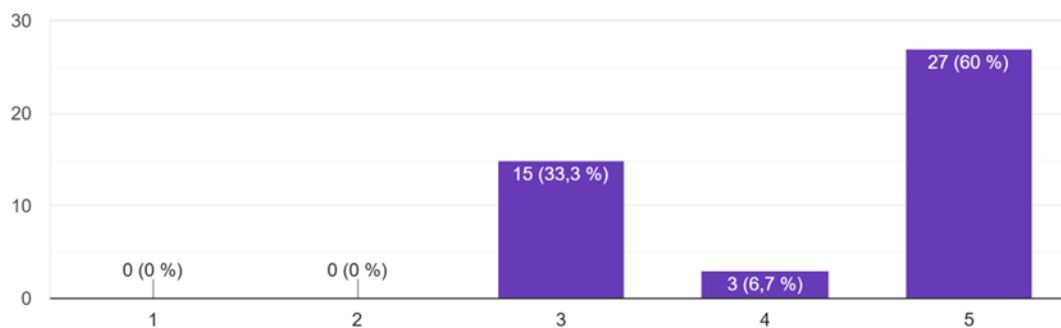
Please indicate to which generational group do you belong?

45 vastausta



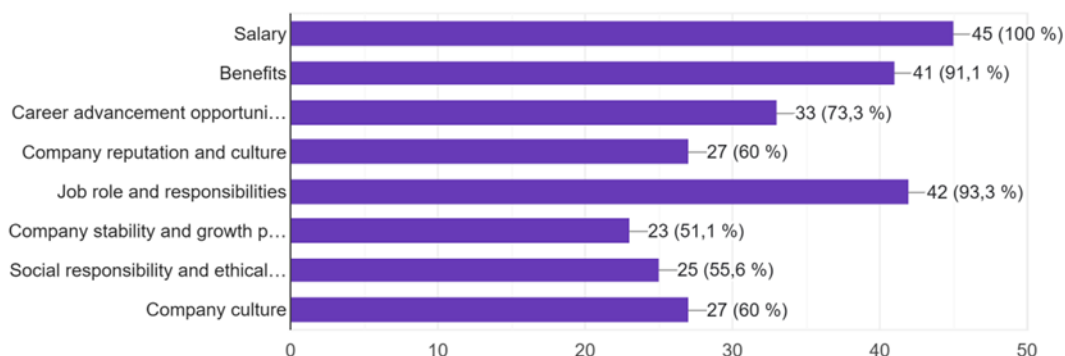
On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is a company's culture and values to you when considering potential job opportunities?

45 vastausta



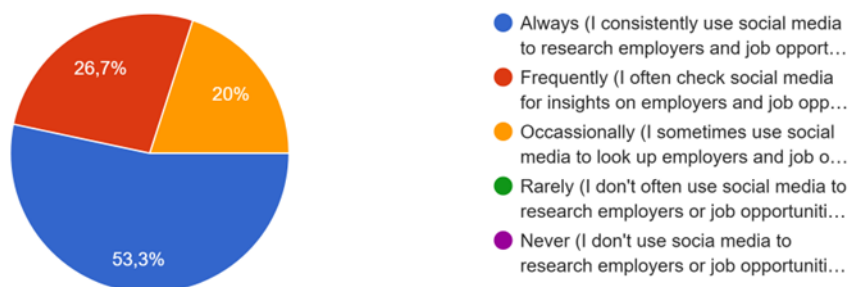
What factors influenced your decision to accept your current job? (Select all that apply)

45 vastausta



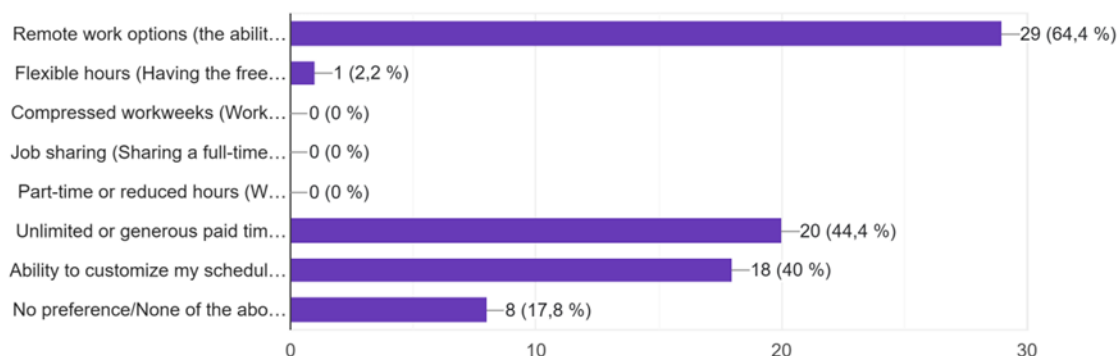
How frequently do you use social media platforms to research potential employers or job opportunities?

45 vastausta



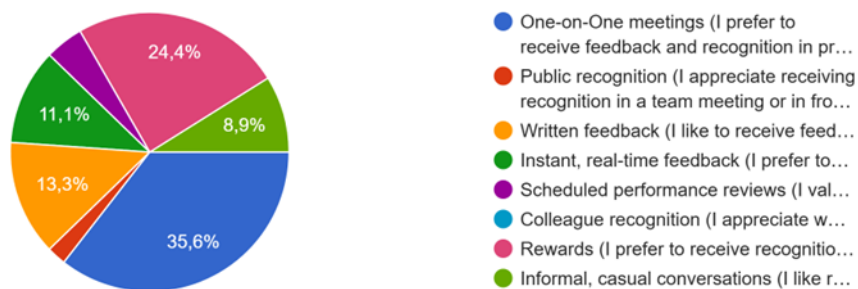
What types of workplace flexibility are most important to you? (Select all that apply.)

45 vastausta



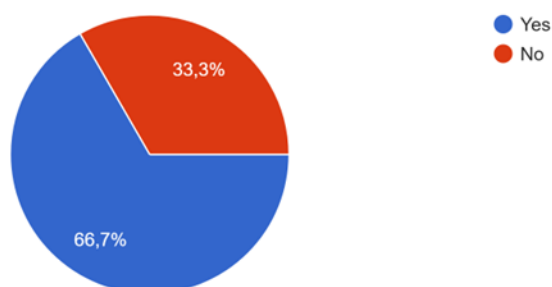
How do you prefer to receive feedback and recognition in the workplace?

45 vastausta



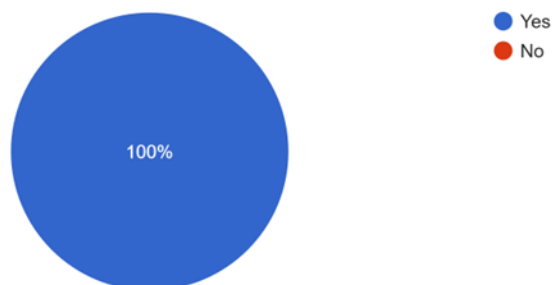
Have you ever turned down a job offer due to concerns about the company's values or ethics?

45 vastausta



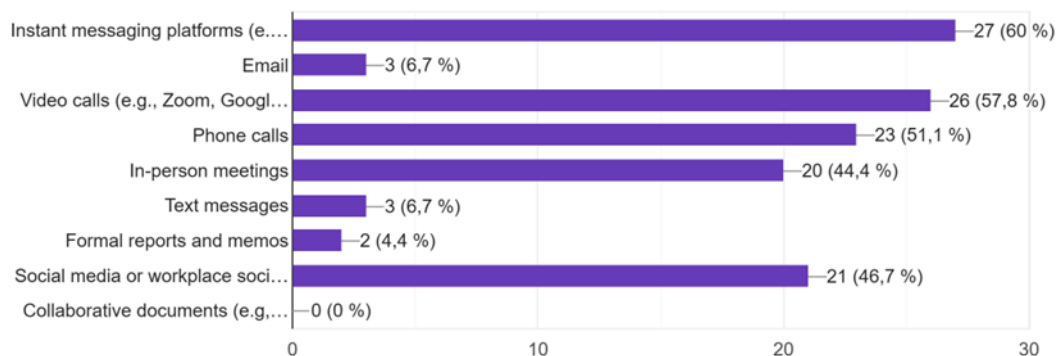
Do you prioritize work-life balance in your career decisions?

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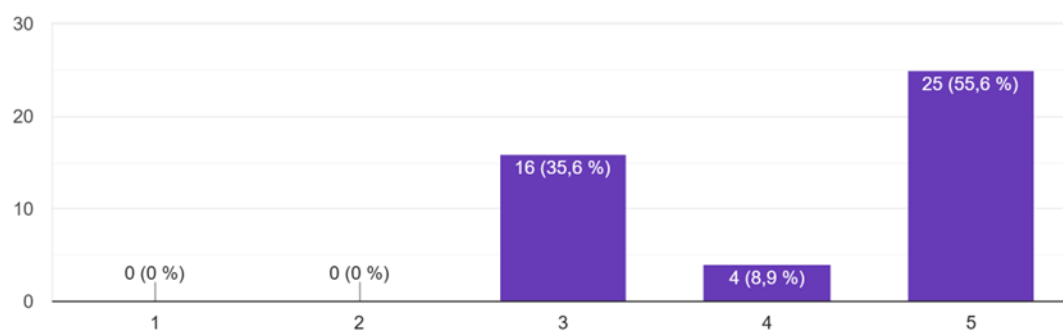
How do you prefer to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors in the workplace? (Select all that apply.)

45 vastausta



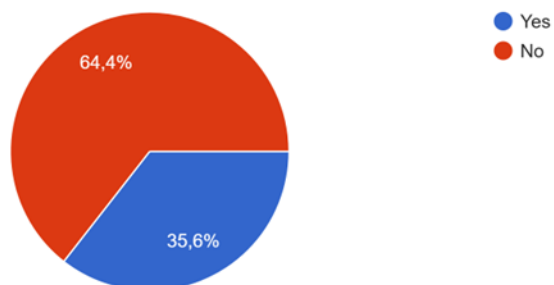
On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is sustainability and corporate social responsibility to you when evaluating potential employers?

45 vastausta



Have you ever participated in employer-sponsored professional development or training programmes?

45 vastausta



If you answered yes to last question, did these programs influence your decision to stay with the company?

45 vastausta

