

Identifying the Dominant Factors of Gen Z's Job Satisfaction through the Integration of Empirical Findings: Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and synthesize the factors that affect Generation Z's job satisfaction through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. This review analyzes 20 quantitative scientific articles published in the Scopus indexed journal Q1–Q4 quartile in the 2015–2025 range. The study selection process follows the PRISMA guidelines with the support of the Watase Uwake application to ensure transparency and replication of the literature screening procedure. The data obtained were then analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach to group the determinants of job satisfaction into organizational clusters, leadership, job characteristics, and individual psychological factors. The results of the study show that work flexibility is the most consistent determinant in increasing job satisfaction of Generation Z. Other factors that play a significant role include the quality of adaptive leadership, a fair reward system, career development opportunities, meaningful job design, and employee psychological well-being. In contrast, work stress, burnout, and job insecurity have consistently been shown to lower job satisfaction levels. This research makes a theoretical contribution by systematically mapping the determinants of job satisfaction of Generation Z and

integrating previously fragmented empirical findings, thereby strengthening the understanding of job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct in the context of the younger generation workforce.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the global workforce in the last decade shows a significant increase in Generation Z's participation in various sectors of modern organizations (Aggarwal, 2020). Generation Z as a digital-native group brings different work values, career expectations, and work environment preferences than previous generations (Kim et al., 2024). Job satisfaction is a central issue in human resource management because it acts as an indicator of employee welfare as well as a predictor of performance and workforce retention (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Previous research views job satisfaction as an individual's evaluative attitude towards the balance between personal expectations and organizational reality experienced in daily work activities (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Differences in generational characteristics cause the factors that shape Generation Z's job satisfaction are not always identical to previous generations (Attila, 2025). A number of cross-generational studies show that organizational failure to adapt management practices to Generation Z values contributes to low job satisfaction and increased intention to change jobs (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Therefore, a deep understanding of the determinants of Generation Z's job satisfaction is a strategic need for contemporary organizations (Tarigan et al., 2022). The focus of research on Generation Z is increasingly relevant given the dominance of this generation's population in the future labor market (Kim et al., 2024).

The empirical literature shows that Generation Z's job satisfaction is shaped by a combination of human resource practices, leadership qualities, job characteristics, as well as individual psychological conditions (Aggarwal et al., 2020). Organizational practices such as fair compensation, transparent reward systems, and performance recognition have been shown to significantly increase job satisfaction (Tarigan et al., 2022). In addition to financial factors, career development opportunities and ongoing training play a crucial role in building a positive

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perception of work (Achmad et al., 2023). Generation Z rates organizations based on how much the company supports their professional growth (Kim et al., 2024). Studies also show that non-monetary rewards such as a supportive work environment and learning opportunities have an equal or even stronger influence than financial compensation alone (Tarigan et al., 2022). When these development needs are met, job satisfaction increases and has an impact on employee loyalty (Achmad et al., 2023). On the other hand, limited career opportunities increase job dissatisfaction and intention to change organizations (Mahmoud et al., 2021). These findings indicate that Generation Z's job satisfaction is shaped by a holistic management approach, not just economic factors (Kim et al., 2024).

Leadership has also emerged as a key determinant of Generation Z's job satisfaction in various organizational contexts (Joseph et al., 2025). Ethical leadership builds trust and a perception of fairness that contributes directly to increased job satisfaction. Inclusive leadership that emphasizes appreciation for diversity increases employee esteem and psychological engagement (Katsaros, 2024). Transformational leadership strengthens intrinsic motivation and trust in leaders through inspirational vision and individual empowerment (Utomo et al., 2025). In the context of work digitalization, digital leadership has proven to be the dominant determinant that increases the flexibility and effectiveness of Generation Z (Anggiani & Fatonah, 2025). Adaptive leadership to technology reinforces the perception of an organization's support for the needs of digital-native employees. When leaders create a participatory work climate, job satisfaction increases significantly (Katsaros, 2024). The consistency of these findings confirms that leadership quality is the main foundation of Generation Z's positive work experience (Utomo et al., 2025).

In addition to organizational and leadership factors, job characteristics also shape Generation Z's job satisfaction substantially (Tran et al., 2024). Work flexibility has been shown to be the most consistent determinant in increasing job satisfaction and employee engagement (Jung, 2021). Generation Z shows a higher sensitivity to work-life balance than previous generations (Xia et al., 2023). Work autonomy increases intrinsic motivation as well as the perception of control over tasks (Tran et al., 2024). The meaning of work strengthens emotional attachment to the organization (Kim et al., 2025). A positive work environment creates psychological comfort and employee loyalty (Tarigan et al., 2022). In contrast, excessive workload and extreme work culture lower job satisfaction significantly (Chen et al., 2023). The combination of flexibility, autonomy, and a supportive environment forms a work experience that matches the values of Generation Z (Jung, 2021).

Individual psychological factors also play an important role in shaping Generation Z's job satisfaction (Tran et al., 2024). Intrinsic motivations such as a sense of accomplishment and self-growth significantly increase job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2025). Psychological capital, which includes optimism and resilience, strengthens a positive perception of work (Tran et al., 2024). When employees have strong psychological resources, they are better able to manage work stress (Mahmoud et al., 2021). However, work stress such as job insecurity and burnout consistently reduce job satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Job uncertainty increases anxiety which has a direct impact on negative perceptions of the organization (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Generation Z shows a higher vulnerability to psychological distress than previous generations (Attila, 2025). These findings confirm the importance of an organizational approach oriented to the psychological well-being of young employees (Mahmoud et al., 2024).

Although the literature has identified various determinants of Generation Z's job satisfaction, research is still fragmented and dominated by a cross-sectional approach (Śliwicki et al., 2025). Most studies test factors separately without comprehensive integration between determinants (Aggarwal et al., 2020). The industrial and cultural context is also still limited, with the dominance of the health and technology sectors (Kim et al., 2024). In addition, there have not been many studies that synthesize the consistency of the influence of each factor to determine the dominant determinant of Generation Z job satisfaction (Tran et al., 2024). The interaction between organizational and individual psychological factors is still rarely explored simultaneously (Utomo et al., 2025). Therefore, a systematic literature review approach is needed to systematically integrate empirical findings (Aggarwal et al., 2020). This study aims to identify

the factors influencing Generation Z's job satisfaction based on the scientific literature from 2015 to 2025 to determine the dominant determinants that are consistent in the literature, as well as map the direction of future research based on existing scientific gaps.

CASE AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This study uses Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a secondary research method that is systematically designed to identify, evaluate, and interpret all available evidence from articles relevant to a predetermined Research Question (RQ) (Kitchenham, 2007). The RQs in this study are:

1. What factors affect Generation Z's job satisfaction?
2. Which factor is most dominant and consistent in the literature?
3. How should future research directions be developed based on gaps found in previous studies?

Identification of Studies

The Systematic Literature Review in this study synthesized articles using the Watase UAKE application, which identifies web pages directly related to Scopus through a systematic literature review search using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) approach. The literature search process was carried out through the Scopus database using a combination of the keywords "job satisfaction", "work satisfaction", "employee satisfaction", and "Generation Z" or "Gen Z" to capture relevant publications in the range of 2015 to 2025. Here is the word cloud of the results of the article's keyword search.

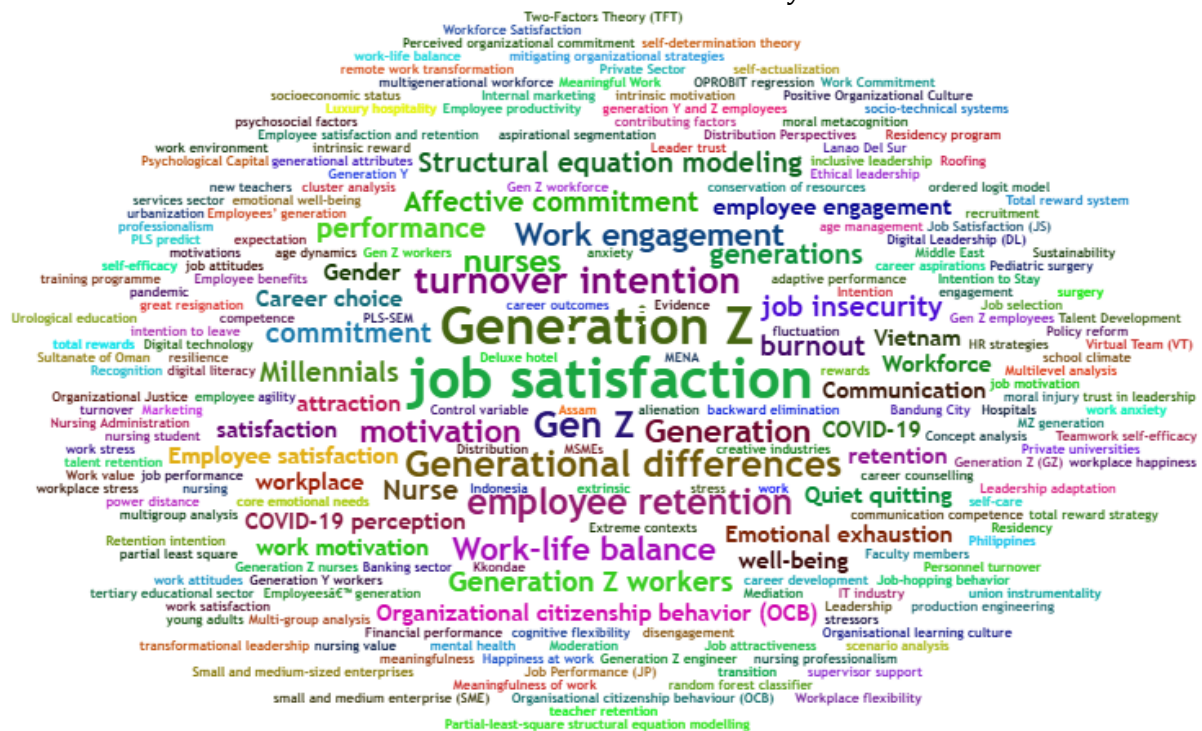


Figure1. Word Cloud from Article Keywords

Screened dan Retrieval

The screening stage is carried out based on inclusion criteria, namely: (1) scientific journal articles (not proceedings or editorials) with quantitative methods, (2) published between 2015 and 2025, (3) from Scopus Q1-Q4 journals, (4) articles have abstracts and (5) subjects of generation Z. The following is the process completed by Prisma in the form of identification, screening, and selection to produce a report in the form of a flowchart as shown in Figure 1 below:

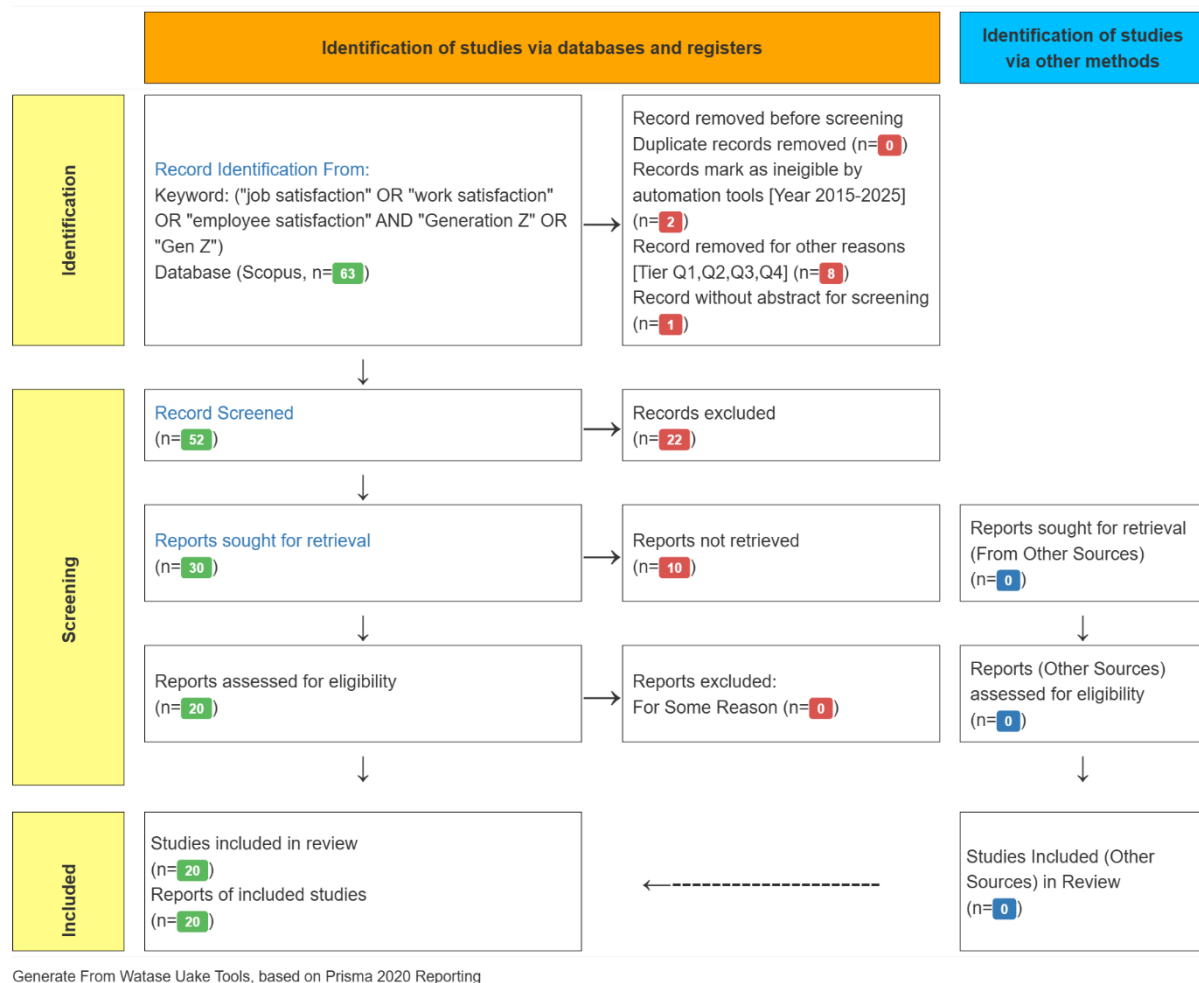


Figure 2. Result of the Watase UAKE Tool, based on the 2020 Prisma Report

At the screening stage, as many as 52 articles that had passed the initial identification were then selected through a review of titles and abstracts to ensure compliance with the research inclusion criteria. This process aims to screen articles that are really scientific journal articles with a quantitative approach, published in the range of 2015–2025, come from Scopus Q1–Q4 indexed journals, have abstracts, and use Generation Z research subjects. In addition, articles that although discussing job satisfaction but do not specifically use the subject of Generation Z were also issued. The results of the review showed that as many as 22 articles did not meet one or more of the inclusion criteria and were excluded from the next process. Thus, as many as 30 articles were declared relevant at the beginning and continued to the full-text search stage.

At the retrieval stage, as many as 30 articles that have passed the screening are searched to obtain complete text documents for a thorough feasibility evaluation. During the search process, it was found that 10 articles were not fully accessible due to doi.org journals could not be found and limited access to documents, so the articles were excluded from the analysis process. Furthermore, as many as 20 articles that were successfully obtained in the form of full text were assessed for eligibility to ensure methodological and substantive suitability with the research objectives. The results of the evaluation showed that all 20 articles met the inclusion criteria that had been set, so that all of them were included as the final study analyzed in the systematic literature review. This process ensures that only articles that are relevant, qualified, and appropriate to the focus of the research are used in the synthesis of findings. The summary table of research extraction results is as follows:

Table 1. Summary of Data Extraction from 20 Reviewed Articles

No	Source	Title	Journal	Journal Rank
1	Tran et al. (2025)	Determinants influencing job-hopping behavior and turnover intention an investigation among Gen Z in the marketing field	Asia Pacific Management Review	Q1
2	Utomo et al. (2025)	Performance Trust, efficacy, and job satisfaction as mediators	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	Q2
3	Joseph et al. (2025)	Exploring the influence of ethical leadership and culture on employee job satisfaction the moderating effects of age, gender, tenure, and organizational age	Humanities and Social Sciences Communications	Q2
4	Jang et al. (2025)	Navigating Kkondae bullying and power distance generational perspectives and workplace dynamics in South Korean higher education	Human Resource Development International	Q2
5	Priya & Christopher (2025)	Exploring the role of organisational learning culture in the relationship between teamwork self-efficacy and employee satisfaction Insights from the Indian IT Sector across generations - An application of PLS predict	Intangible Capital	Q3
6	Priya and Christopher (2025)	The impact of digital leadership and job satisfaction of Indonesian generation Z job performance in the work place	Intangible Capital	Q3
7	Marjerison et al. (2025)	Motivation, Urban Pressures, and the Limits of Satisfaction Insights into Employee Retention in a Changing Workforce	Systems	Q2
8	Attila (2025)	Sebészek közötti generációs különbségek a munkahelyi elégedettség és kiégés tükrében	Orvosi Hetilap	Q4
9	Kim et al. (2024)	How are new nurses satisfied with their jobs From the work value perspective of Generations Y and Z nurses	BMC Nursing	Q1
10	Katsaros (2024)	Gen Z Employee Adaptive Performance The Role of Inclusive Leadership and Workplace Happiness	Administrative Sciences	Q2
11	Mahmoud et al. (2024)	Examining generational differences as a moderator of extreme-context perception and its impact on work alienation organizational outcomes Implications for the workplace and remote work transformation	Scandinavian Journal of Psychology	Q1
12	Lee et al. (2023)	Moderating Role of Communication Competence in the Association between Professionalism and Job Satisfaction in Korean Millennial and Generation Z Nurses A Cross-Sectional Study	Healthcare	Q2
13	Do et al. (2023)	Antecedents of turnover intention among Gen z in Vietnam The mediating role of affective commitment	Cogent Business & Management	Q2
14	Chen et al. (2023)	Modeling the significance of work culture on burnout, satisfaction, and psychological distress among the Gen-Z workforce in an emerging country	Humanities and Social Sciences Communications	Q2
15	Lucas et al. (2023)	Roofing Distributor Employee Perception Workforce Attraction Retention and Need	Construction Economics and Building	Q3
16	(Tarigan et al. (2025)	Total reward system, job satisfaction and employee productivity on company financial performance evidence from Indonesian Generation Z workers	Journal of Asia Business Studies	Q1
17	Mahmoud et al. (2021)	Who's more vulnerable A generational investigation of COVID-19 perceptions effect on Organisational citizenship Behaviours in the MENA region job insecurity, burnout and job satisfaction as mediators	BMC Public Health	Q1

No	Source	Title	Journal	Journal Rank
18	Mahmoud et al. (2021)	Generational Effects of Workplace Flexibility on Work Engagement, Satisfaction, and Commitment in South Korean Deluxe Hotels	Sustainability	Q1
19	Aggarwal (2020)	Gen Z entering the workforce Restructuring HR policies and practices for fostering the task performance and organizational commitment	Journal of Public Affairs	Q2
20	Mahmoud et al. (2020)	A motivational standpoint of job insecurity effects on organizational citizenship behaviors A generational study	Scandinavian Journal of Psychology	Q1

Source: A Review Article in Watase Uwake (2026)

The research instrument in this SLR is in the form of data extraction sheets which include author information, year of publication, article title, publisher's journal and journal index. The analysis method in this study was carried out using a narrative synthesis approach, where the findings of each article were arranged into thematic groups based on the similarity of focus, method, and results (Creswell, 2016). The data collection procedure is carried out systematically by recording each factor tested on Generation Z's job satisfaction as well as the direction and strength of their relationship.

Geographic Distribution of Study

The geographical distribution of research is important to be analyzed in order to understand the distribution of the empirical context that is the basis for the synthesis of the findings of this systematic literature review. This analysis provides an overview of the countries or regions that are the most research locations related to Generation Z's job satisfaction and identify potential biases in cultural and organizational contexts. The following figure presents the distribution of the country of origin of the research sample analyzed in this systematic literature review.

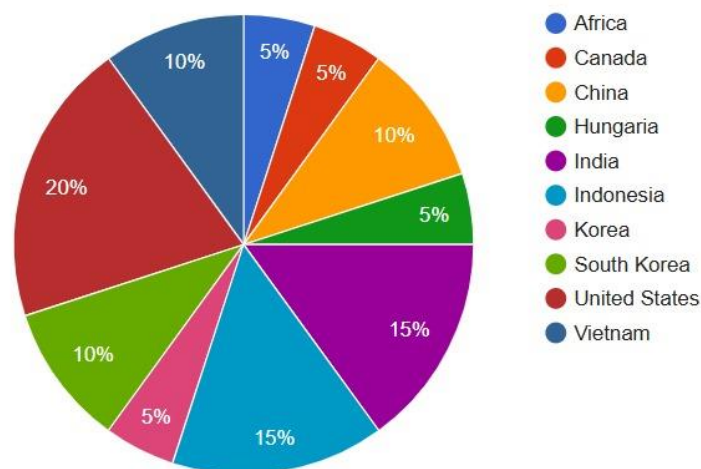


Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Study

Based on the geographical distribution of the study, studies related to Generation Z's job satisfaction are spread across several regions with different proportions. The United States is the country with the largest research contribution, showing high academic attention to the dynamics of the young workforce in the context of developed organizations (United States: 20% (Katsaros, 2024; Kim et al., 2024; Lucas et al., 2023; Mahmoud et al., 2023)). India and Indonesia occupy the next position with a proportion of 15% each, which indicates increasing research interest in developing countries with large young labour populations (India: (Joseph et al., 2025; Priya & Cristopher 2025; Anggarwal et al., 2020); Indonesia: (Anggraini & Fatonah, 2025; Utomo et al., 2025; Taringan et al. 2022)). China, South Korea, and Vietnam each accounted for about 10% of the total study, reflecting the research's focus on an Asian context that has characteristics of collectivist culture and rapid industrialization dynamics (China: (Marjerison et al., 2025; Chen et

al., 2023); South Korea: (Jang et al., 2025; Jung, 2021); Vietnam: (Tran et al., 2025; Do et al., 2023)).

In addition, Africa, Canada, Hungary, and Korea each have a contribution of around 5%, indicating that the study of Generation Z's job satisfaction is also starting to develop in various regions with diverse economic backgrounds and work systems (Africa: (Mahmoud et al. 2021); Canada: (Mahmoud et al. 2020); Hungary: (Farkas et al. 2025); Korea: (Lee et al., 2023)). This distribution indicates that the available literature is still dominated by a specific country context so generalization of findings needs to be done carefully. The dominance of studies from developed countries and some Asian countries shows the potential for biases in the context of modern organizations and the formal sector in understanding Generation Z's job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Factors Affecting Gen Z's Job Satisfaction

Various studies show that Generation Z's job satisfaction is influenced by a complex combination of organizational practices, job characteristics, leadership, as well as individual psychological factors (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Human resource practices that include fair compensation, a transparent reward system, and recognition of employee contributions have been shown to significantly increase job satisfaction (Aggarwal et al., 2022). In addition to financial factors, Generation Z highly values career development opportunities and ongoing training as a form of organizational investment in their professional future (Tarigan et al., 2022). Continuous learning opportunities strengthen the perception of job value thereby increasing long-term job satisfaction (Indriyani et al., 2023). A supportive and psychologically conducive work environment also plays a big role in shaping the positive work experience of Generation Z (Tarigan et al., 2022). Organizations that provide a collaborative work climate are able to increase the comfort and loyalty of young employees (Aggarwal et al., 2022). The combination of material and nonmaterial rewards forms the main foundation of Generation Z's job satisfaction (Tarigan et al., 2022). Thus, holistic organizational factors have proven to be the main determinants of job satisfaction of this generation (Indriyani et al., 2023).

Leadership has also emerged as a very consistent factor influencing Generation Z's job satisfaction (Shaji et al., 2025). Ethical leadership is able to build trust and a sense of justice that has a direct impact on increasing job satisfaction (Shaji et al., 2025). Inclusive leadership that emphasizes the psychological involvement of employees increases the sense of value in the organization (Katsaros, 2024). Transformational leadership has been proven to strengthen work motivation and employee trust in leadership (Utomo et al., 2025). In the context of work digitalization, digital leadership is a modern determinant that increases the flexibility and effectiveness of Generation Z (Sarfilianty & Fatonah, 2025). Adaptive leadership towards technology strengthens the perception of organizational support for the needs of the digital-native generation (Sarfilianty & Fatonah, 2025). When leaders are able to create a participatory work climate, job satisfaction increases significantly (Katsaros, 2024). This shows that leadership quality is a major pillar of Generation Z's work experience (Utomo et al., 2025).

Job characteristics also play a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's job satisfaction (Tran et al., 2024). Work flexibility has been shown to be one of the most powerful determinants in improving job satisfaction and employee engagement (Jung & Yoon, 2021). Generation Z shows a high preference for work-life balance compared to previous generations (Lucas et al., 2023). Work autonomy increases intrinsic motivation and the perception of control over work (Tran et al., 2024). The meaning of the task strengthens the employee's emotional attachment to their work (Kim et al., 2025). A positive work environment reinforces psychological comfort and security (Tarigan et al., 2022). In contrast, excessive workload and extreme work culture lower job satisfaction significantly (Chen et al., 2023). Thus, flexible and meaningful job design is a major determinant of Generation Z's job satisfaction (Jung & Yoon, 2021).

Individual psychological factors also strengthen or weaken Generation Z's job satisfaction (Tran et al., 2024). Intrinsic motivations such as a sense of accomplishment and self-growth significantly increase job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2025). Psychological capital, which includes optimism and resilience, strengthens a positive perception of work (Tran et al., 2024). When

employees have strong psychological resources, they are better able to manage work stress (Mahmoud et al., 2021). However, work stress such as job insecurity has been shown to consistently reduce job satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Job uncertainty increases anxiety which has a direct impact on negative perceptions of the organization (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Burnout is the main inhibiting factor in job satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Generation Z shows a higher vulnerability to psychological distress than previous generations (Farkas et al., 2025). Therefore, psychological well-being is an important element in shaping the job satisfaction of this generation (Mahmoud et al., 2024).

Individual work value is also an important determinant of Generation Z's job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2024). This generation prioritizes career growth and life balance over work status alone (Kim et al., 2024). Work values that are oriented towards self-development are positively correlated with job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2024). Economic factors are more dominant in the early phase of the career (Śliwicki et al., 2025). However, as professional development progresses, intrinsic factors increasingly determine job satisfaction (Śliwicki et al., 2025). Differences in values between generations explain variations in determinants of job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2024). When personal values align with the organization's culture, job satisfaction increases sustainably (Kim et al., 2024). This confirms the importance of value matching in Generation Z management (Śliwicki et al., 2025).

The Most Dominant and Consistent Factors in the Literature

The literature shows that work flexibility is the most consistent factor in increasing Generation Z's job satisfaction (Jung & Yoon, 2021). Work-life balance is a fundamental need of this generation (Lucas et al., 2023). Flexibility of time and location of work increases psychological comfort (Jung & Yoon, 2021). Job satisfaction increases when work does not sacrifice personal life (Lucas et al., 2023). This factor appears across industrial sectors (Tran et al., 2024). Flexibility also strengthens work engagement (Jung & Yoon, 2021). Therefore, work flexibility is a universal dominant determinant (Lucas et al., 2023). The consistency of these findings shows a shift in the value of modern work (Tran et al., 2024).

Quality leadership also emerged as a dominant determinant across studies (Shaji et al., 2025). Ethical leadership strengthens organizational trust (Shaji et al., 2025). Inclusive leadership improves psychological safety (Katsaros, 2024). Transformational leadership strengthens intrinsic motivation (Utomo et al., 2025). Digital leadership increases work effectiveness (Sarfilianty & Fatonah, 2025). All of these leadership styles show a consistent positive relationship with job satisfaction (Katsaros, 2024). Adaptive leadership is the key to Gen Z retention (Utomo et al., 2025). Thus, leadership quality is the main foundation of job satisfaction (Shaji et al., 2025).

Fair compensation and reward systems also consistently affect job satisfaction (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Monetary and nonmonetary rewards contribute significantly (Tarigan et al., 2022). Perceptions of compensatory fairness increase loyalty (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Career development strengthens long-term satisfaction (Indriyani et al., 2023). Learning culture strengthens the perception of job value (Indriyani et al., 2023). Promotion opportunities increase work motivation (Tarigan et al., 2022). This factor arises across cultural contexts (Kim et al., 2024). Therefore, compensation and career development are the second dominant determinants after flexibility (Aggarwal et al., 2022).

Future Research Directions Based on Research Gap

Although many determinants have been identified, most studies have been cross-sectional (Śliwicki et al., 2025). This approach has not been able to capture the dynamics of long-term job satisfaction (Śliwicki et al., 2025). Longitudinal research is still very limited (Katsaros, 2024). In fact, job satisfaction changes with career development (Śliwicki et al., 2025). Therefore, future studies will need to adopt a longitudinal design (Tran et al., 2024). This allows an understanding of the evolution of Gen Z's job satisfaction (Śliwicki et al., 2025). Long-term research is also able to identify causal factors more accurately (Katsaros, 2024). Thus, the longitudinal method is the main need for further research (Tran et al., 2024).

Additionally, most studies focus on specific sectors such as health or technology (Kim et al., 2024). Cross-industry generalizations are still limited (Tran et al., 2024). Future research

needs to cover the MSME sector and traditional industries (Lucas et al., 2023). Cultural variation is also not fully integrated (Farkas et al., 2025). Cross-border studies are still minimal (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Even though the cultural context affects the value of work (Kim et al., 2024). Therefore, multicontextual research is urgently needed (Tran et al., 2024). A comparative approach will enrich global understanding (Aggarwal et al., 2022).

The interaction between determinants is also still rarely studied comprehensively (Utomo et al., 2025). Most studies test simple direct relationships (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Multilevel and mediation models are still limited (Katsaros, 2024). In fact, job satisfaction is influenced by complex organizational systems (Tran et al., 2024). Future studies need to integrate individual, organizational, and leadership factors simultaneously (Utomo et al., 2025). A structural approach will provide a holistic picture (Aggarwal et al., 2022). This will increase the theoretical contribution of research (Katsaros, 2024). Thus, future research directions should be more integrative and contextual (Tran et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic literature review show that Generation Z's job satisfaction is shaped by a combination of organizational factors, leadership, job characteristics, and the psychological condition of individuals who interact with each other in a complex manner. Work flexibility emerged as the most consistent determinant in increasing Generation Z's job satisfaction, in line with the findings that work-life balance is a fundamental need of the digital-native generation (Jung & Yoon, 2021; Lucas et al., 2023). The preference for flexibility reflects a shift in work values from an orientation of stability towards quality of life and professional autonomy (Kim et al., 2024). These results reinforce the argument that traditional rigid work designs are increasingly less relevant for young workers (Tran et al., 2024). Thus, organizations that fail to accommodate flexibility risk experiencing low job satisfaction and high turnover of Generation Z employees (Mahmoud et al., 2024). The consistency of cross-sector findings confirms flexibility as the main foundation of this generation's positive work experience (Aggarwal et al., 2022). The significance of these findings lies in the need to transform the work policies of modern organizations to align with the values of the new generation.

In addition to flexibility, leadership quality has proven to be the dominant determinant of Generation Z's job satisfaction in various organizational contexts. Ethical leadership builds trust and a perception of fairness that has a direct impact on the work well-being of young employees (Shaji et al., 2025). Inclusive leadership strengthens psychological involvement and a sense of belonging in the work environment (Katsaros, 2024). Transformational leadership motivates employees through inspirational vision and individual empowerment (Utomo et al., 2025). In the era of digitalization, digital leadership is increasingly crucial in creating flexibility and effectiveness of work (Sarfilianty & Fatonah, 2025). The integration of these various leadership styles shows that Generation Z needs leaders who are not only technically competent but also adaptive, fair, and psychologically supportive. The main contribution of this SLR lies in the affirmation of leadership as a consistent but previously fragmented cluster of determinants in the empirical literature.

Career development-oriented organizational practices and fair reward systems also play a significant role in shaping Generation Z's job satisfaction. Training opportunities, continuous learning, and promotion opportunities are important determinants of the perception of job value (Indriyani et al., 2023). Generation Z views work as a long-term means of professional growth, not just a source of income (Kim et al., 2024). Non-monetary reward systems such as a supportive work environment have a comparable influence or even stronger than financial incentives (Aggarwal et al., 2022). These results confirm the paradigm shift in human resource management towards a holistic human development approach. Theoretically, these findings expand the understanding of job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct influenced by an organization's investment in employee potential.

Job characteristics have also been shown to be an important determinant of job satisfaction for Generation Z. Work autonomy increases intrinsic motivation and the perception of control over tasks (Tran et al., 2024). The meaning of work strengthens the employee's

emotional attachment to the organization (Kim et al., 2025). A positive work environment creates psychological comfort and employee loyalty (Tarigan et al., 2022). In contrast, extreme work cultures and excessive workloads consistently lower job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2023). These findings indicate that Generation Z's job satisfaction is not only influenced by what they receive from the organization, but also by how work is designed and experienced on a daily basis. The practical implication is the need for organizations to design work that is flexible, meaningful, and well-being oriented.

Individual psychological factors also strengthen or weaken the job satisfaction of Generation Z. Intrinsic motivation and psychological capital increase positive perceptions of work (Tran et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2025). Individuals with high resilience and optimism are better able to manage work pressure (Mahmoud et al., 2021). However, work stress such as job insecurity and burnout consistently reduce job satisfaction (Mahmoud et al., 2024). Generation Z shows a higher vulnerability to psychological distress than previous generations (Farkas et al., 2025). These findings confirm that strategies to improve job satisfaction should include mental well-being support, not just structural organizational improvements. An important contribution of this SLR is the integration of psychological factors as a key component of job satisfaction that was previously often treated as an additional variable.

CONCLUSION

The results of a systematic literature review show that Generation Z's job satisfaction is shaped by a combination of organizational factors, leadership, job characteristics, and individual psychological conditions that interact with each other. Work flexibility emerged as the most dominant and consistent determinant, reflecting the shift in the value of the digital-native generation that prioritized work-life balance and professional autonomy. In addition, adaptive leadership qualities including ethical, inclusive, transformational, and digital leadership have proven to be the main foundation of positive work experiences for Generation Z. Career development-oriented organizational practices, fair reward systems, and supportive work environments also strengthen job satisfaction in a sustainable manner.

The main contribution of this research lies in the holistic mapping of the determinants of job satisfaction of Generation Z that were previously fragmented in the empirical literature. By integrating organizational factors, leadership, job characteristics, and individual psychological aspects, this study expands the theoretical understanding of job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct in the context of the young workforce. These findings confirm that conventional compensation-based management approaches are no longer adequate, and need to be replaced by human resource management strategies oriented towards flexibility, human development, and psychological well-being.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although it makes an important contribution, this study has some limitations. First, most of the studies reviewed used a cross-sectional design so as not to capture long-term job satisfaction dynamics. Second, the industrial and cultural context is still limited by the dominance of certain sectors. Third, methodological variations between studies can affect the consistency of empirical findings. Fourth, complex interactions between determinants have not been fully explored in the previous literature. Therefore, future research is suggested adopting longitudinal designs, expanding industrial and cultural contexts, and developing multilevel models that integrate individual and organizational factors simultaneously.

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