CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF GEN-Z

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GEN Z

Problem Statement:

Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is redefining workplace expectations with a focus on purpose, flexibility, diversity, and growth. This shift has exposed a disconnect: Gen Z often feels their career goals are overlooked, while employers struggle with attracting, retaining, and managing this talent. Addressing these challenges requires aligning workplace practices with Gen Z's values.

1. What:

The Problem: Gen Z faces barriers to securing roles aligned with their aspirations. Employers, in turn, find it challenging to attract and retain this talent, facing high turnover as a result.

2. Who:

Gen Z: Prefers purpose, flexibility, and growth, often leaving roles that don't meet these values.

Employers: Across industries, struggle with retaining Gen Z due to misalignment in expectations.

3. When:

Hiring: Difficulties arise if job roles and company values don't align with Gen Z's expectations.

Retention: Post-hiring, high turnover occurs if Gen Z's career growth, balance, and satisfaction needs aren't met.

4. Where:

Industries and Traditional Workplaces: Organizations with hierarchical structures or limited flexibility experience more significant challenges in retaining Gen Z.

5. Why:

Mismatch in Expectations: Gen Z values purpose, autonomy, and inclusivity, which often conflict with traditional work structures.

Communication Gaps: Lack of transparent feedback and growth discussions can lead Gen Z to feel undervalued and disengaged.

6. How:

- **Research and Dialogue**: Regular feedback sessions and surveys to understand Gen Z's goals.
- **Career Development and Flexibility**: Growth-oriented programs and flexible work models to align with Gen Z's desires.
- **Updated Recruitment Practices**: Align job roles and values with Gen Z's preferences for impact, inclusivity, and growth.

Data Points and Timeline:

- **2017-2020**: Gen Z enters the workforce valuing purpose over pay (74% in 2018), with 62% of employers struggling to attract this generation (2019).
- **2020-2022**: During COVID-19, 70% prioritize flexibility (2020), 67% seek continuous learning (2021), and 43% plan to leave roles if growth needs go unmet (2022).
- **2023-Present**: Companies emphasize career pathways, mentorship, and inclusive cultures to improve retention.

Aligning organizational practices with Gen Z's values—through flexible work, growth opportunities, and transparent feedback—can enhance retention and engagement. By addressing Gen Z's career aspirations, companies can foster a motivated workforce and build long-term success in an evolving job market.

## Gender Distribution of Respondents:

Findings: The gender distribution of the survey respondents reveals that 60.21% are male, while 39.71% are female, and 0.08% identify as other. This shows a clear gender skew in the responses, which is important to consider when analyzing preferences and career aspirations. A greater representation of males in the sample suggests that the analysis might be influenced by their career aspirations, while the underrepresentation of females could limit understanding of gender-specific challenges.
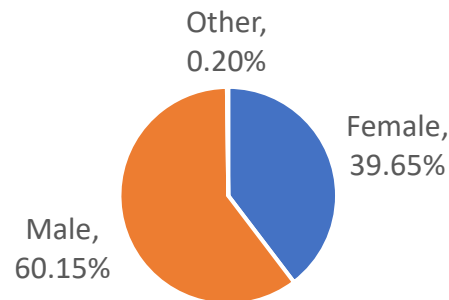
Implication: The overrepresentation of males might suggest a bias toward traditionally male-dominated industries or career paths, which could skew overall trends. Future surveys should aim for a more balanced gender distribution to gain a holistic view of career preferences across both genders.

## Interest in Education Abroad and Sponsorship:

Findings: A significant portion of respondents (45.92%) expressed interest in pursuing higher education abroad. Among those, 21.90% indicated that they would require sponsorship, while 32.18% were not interested in studying abroad.
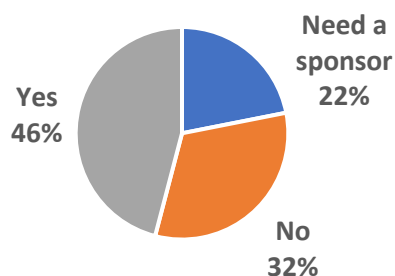
Implication: This indicates that a sizable number of young professionals are keen on international education, with a notable portion requiring financial assistance. Sponsorship could be an important consideration for organizations or government bodies supporting academic endeavors. The relatively large group (32.18%) not interested in studying abroad could be due to financial constraints, cultural preferences, or a focus on local career opportunities

Top Career Influences:

Findings: The survey revealed that parents are the most significant career influence, with 34.12% of respondents citing them as their primary source of guidance. Other key influences include world leaders (21.74%) and influencers (16.83%).
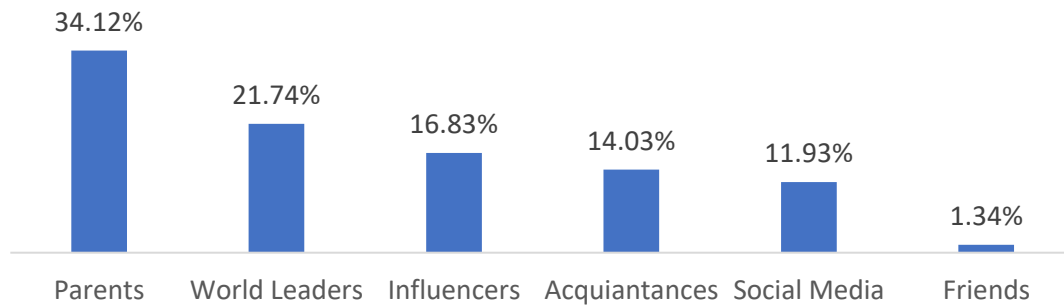
Implication: The prominence of parents as a career influence underscores the importance of familial expectations in career decisions. World leaders and influencers also play a notable role, especially in shaping aspirations toward leadership, entrepreneurship, or specific industries like technology and entertainment. This could suggest that individuals in India may be more likely to pursue careers that are deemed prestigious or impactful by influential figures

Career Influence by Gender:

Findings: The influence of career aspiration factors is more pronounced in males (60.21%) than in females (39.71%). For both genders, parents remain the strongest influence, but males tend to be more influenced by world leaders (22.56% vs. 17.01%) and influencers (17.39% vs. 15.13%).
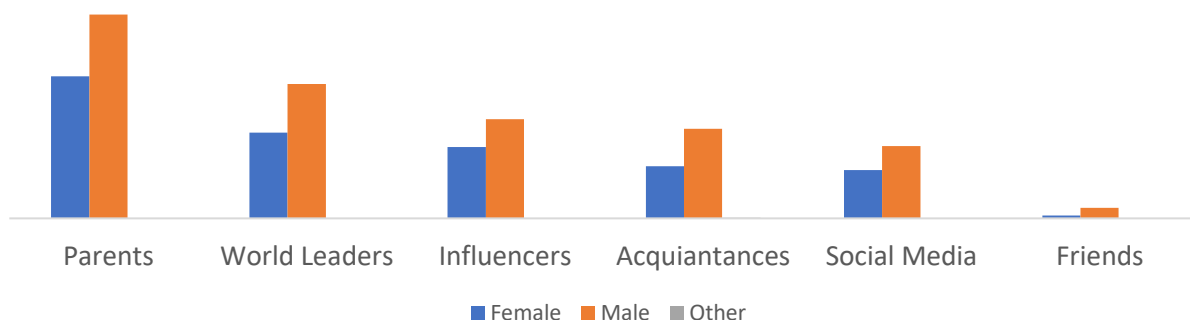
Implication: This indicates that males may be more inclined toward career paths that are inspired by prominent male figures in leadership or entertainment, while females may place a stronger emphasis on family-oriented career guidance. The gender disparity suggests a need for more targeted career guidance programs that account for these varying influences.

Willingness to Work for 3+ Years:

Findings: A majority (37.02%) of respondents are open to working for a company for at least 3 years, while 57.81% say their decision depends on the company's culture. Only a small portion (5.09%) is not interested in long-term employment.

Yes
37%

Depends on company culture
58%

No
5%
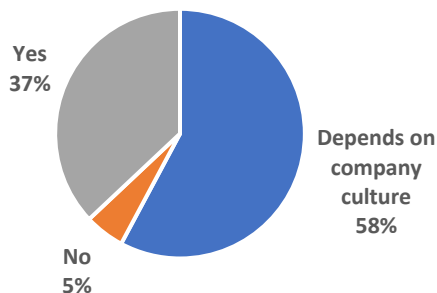
Implication: This suggests that work culture is a critical factor for retention. Organizations that focus on fostering positive, inclusive, and growth-oriented environments are likely to see better employee loyalty and retention. The relatively low percentage of individuals uninterested in staying long-term suggests that a focus on job satisfaction could significantly improve workforce stability.

## Preference for Socially Impactful Companies:

Findings: The majority of respondents (71.85%) prefer working for companies that focus on social impact. Only a small percentage (5.69%) is indifferent to the social responsibilities of their employer.

55.96%

5.69%   6.01%   14.24%   18.10%

1   2   3   4   5
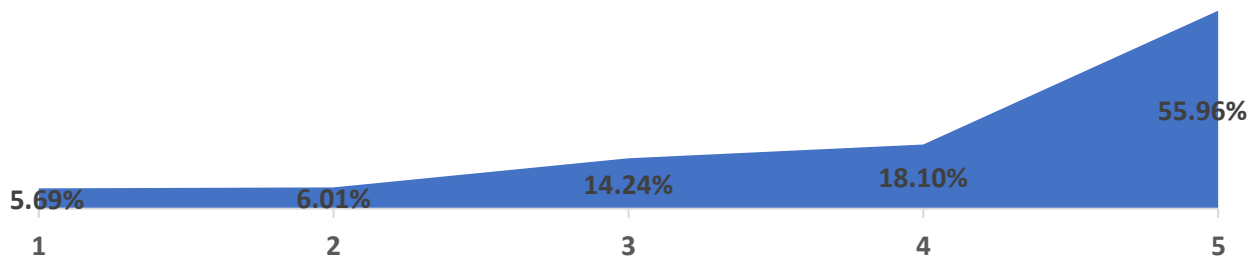
Implication: This trend indicates that millennials and Gen Z in India are increasingly drawn to organizations that prioritize corporate social responsibility (CSR). Employers who align themselves with social causes and sustainability initiatives will likely attract top talent. The strong preference for socially impactful companies could be indicative of the younger generation's growing awareness of global issues such as climate change, inequality, and community development.

Socially Impactful Work by Gender:

Findings: Males (60.15%) are somewhat more inclined toward working for companies without a social impact, compared to females (39.65%). However, a majority of both genders prefer companies that emphasize social causes.
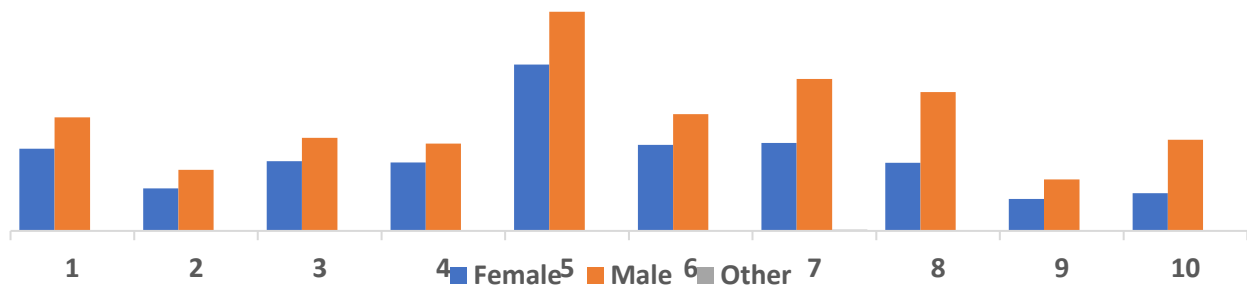
Implication: This could reflect different priorities between genders, with males possibly placing more emphasis on career advancement opportunities or compensation, whereas females may be more focused on values-driven employment. This data suggests that employers should consider a gender-responsive approach when positioning their CSR initiatives to attract diverse talent.

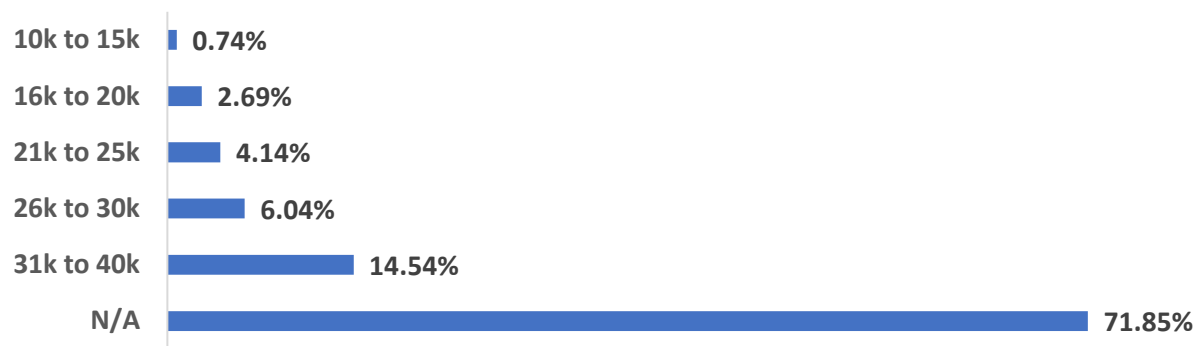## Expected Salary in First 3 Years:

Findings: A significant proportion of respondents (33.51%) expect to earn more than 50k in their first three years, followed by 19.63% expecting salaries between 41k to 50k.
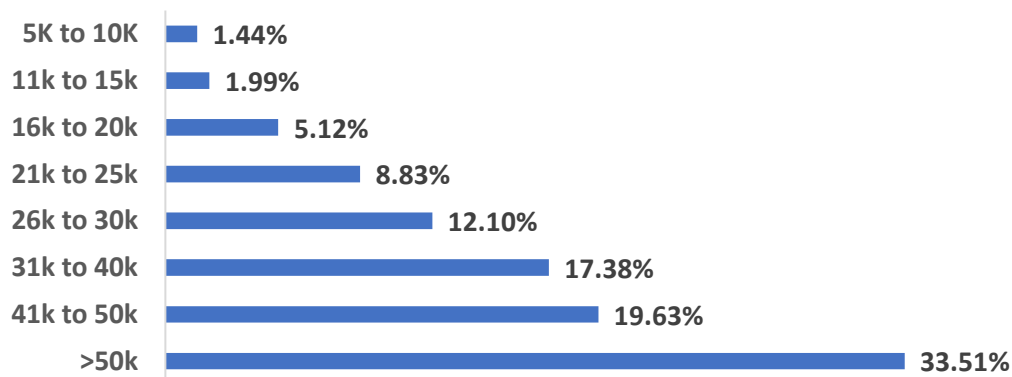
Implication: This reflects a high salary expectation for entry-level positions, which could be indicative of the growing costs of education, living, and personal aspirations. Employers in India may need to adjust their compensation packages for younger talent, particularly in industries where competition for skilled employees is high.
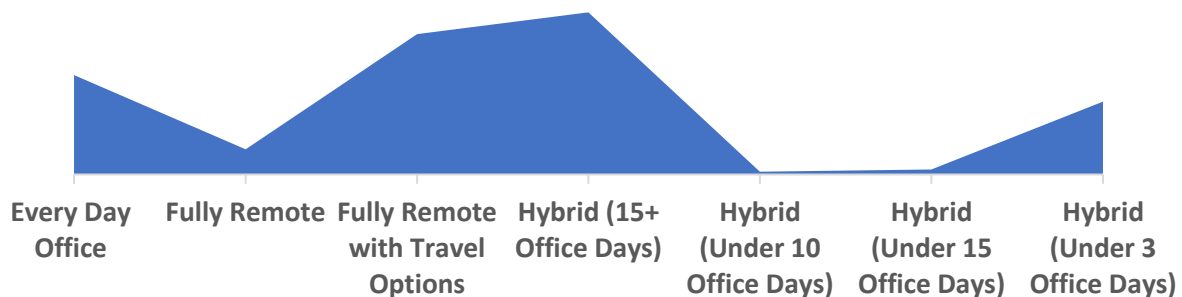
Expected Minimum Monthly Salary:

Findings: A large portion of respondents (71.85%) did not specify a minimum expected salary, suggesting a lack of clarity or perhaps an openness to negotiation. Among those who specified, 14.54% expect between 31k to 40k, and a smaller portion seeks more than 40k.

Range	Percentage
10k to 15k	0.74%
16k to 20k	2.69%
21k to 25k	4.14%
26k to 30k	6.04%
31k to 40k	14.54%
N/A	71.85%

Implication: This suggests that there is a significant portion of respondents who may not have strong expectations about their initial salaries or are still exploring job opportunities. For employers, this could indicate a flexibility in salary negotiations, especially for entry-level or fresh graduate positions.

**Preference for Remote Working:**

Findings: 47.94% of respondents prefer remote work, with 27.64% favoring fully remote work with travel options. A smaller percentage (31.91%) prefer a hybrid work setup with 15+ office days.

Every Day Office	Fully Remote	Fully Remote with Travel Options	Hybrid (15+ Office Days)	Hybrid (Under 10 Office Days)	Hybrid (Under 15 Office Days)	Hybrid (Under 3 Office Days)

Implication: Remote work is a highly preferred working arrangement, especially among younger professionals who may value flexibility and work-life balance. The relatively high preference for hybrid work suggests that some structure and face-to-face collaboration are still valued by a significant portion of the workforce.
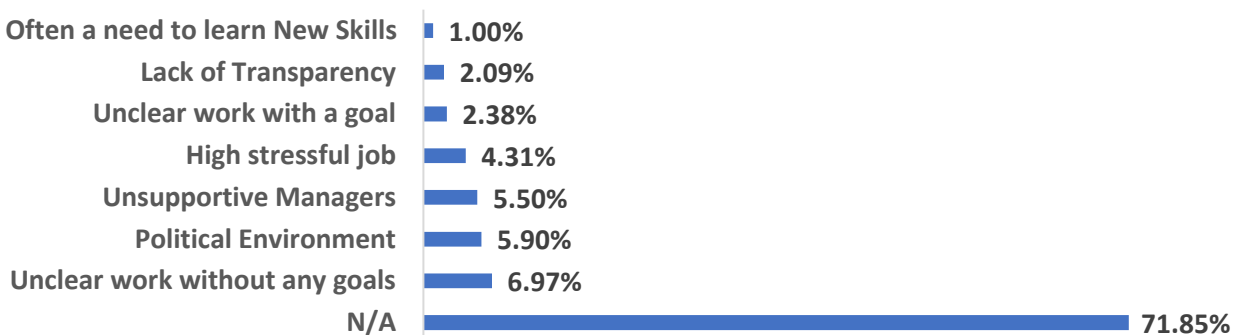
Preferred Working Hours:

Findings: 8 hours is the most preferred daily work duration (17.84%), though the majority (71.85%) did not specify their preference for work hours.
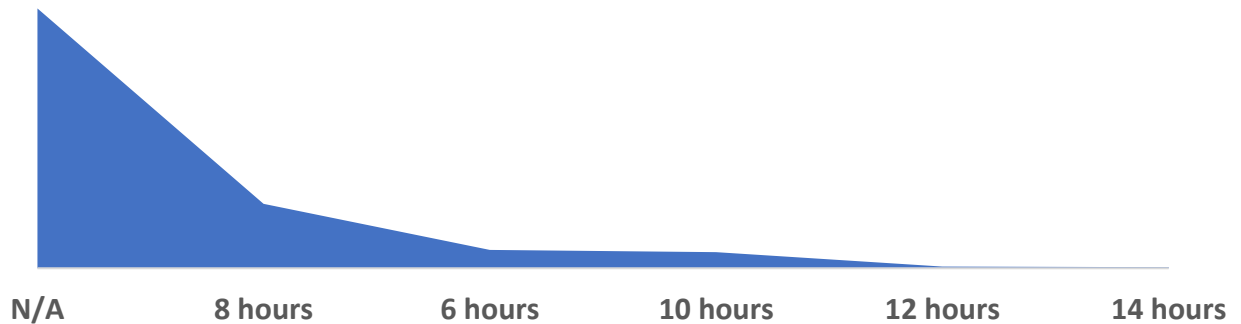
Implication: The preference for a standard 8-hour workday suggests that employees in India are generally inclined toward work-life balance. However, the lack of clarity from many respondents could indicate a lack of firm expectations or an openness to varying work schedules.

Common Work Frustrations:

Findings: The majority (71.85%) reported no specific frustrations at work. However, 6.97% mentioned unclear job expectations, and 5.90% cited workplace politics as common sources of frustration.

Often a need to learn New Skills	1.00%
Lack of Transparency	2.09%
Unclear work with a goal	2.38%
High stressful job	4.31%
Unsupportive Managers	5.50%
Political Environment	5.90%
Unclear work without any goals	6.97%
N/A	71.85%

Implication: A lack of clear job expectations and workplace politics can lead to job dissatisfaction and reduced productivity. Employers should focus on providing clear guidelines and fostering a transparent and inclusive work culture to address these common issues.

Willingness to Work Under an Abusive Manager:

Findings: 23.05% of respondents would not work under an abusive manager, and only 5.09% would be willing to endure such conditions.
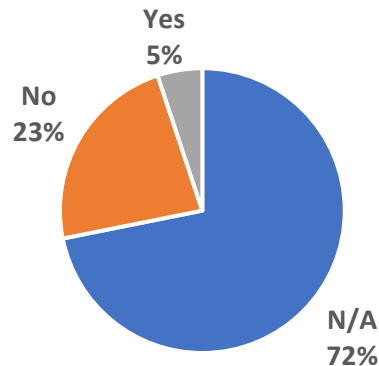
Implication: This underscores the importance of fostering a respectful and supportive work environment. An abusive managerial style can lead to high turnover and low morale, highlighting the need for leadership training and policies that promote a positive workplace culture.

## 15. Expected Salary After 5 Years:

Findings: A significant portion of respondents (23.32%) expects to earn over 151k after five years. Other respondents expect salaries between 71k to 110k.
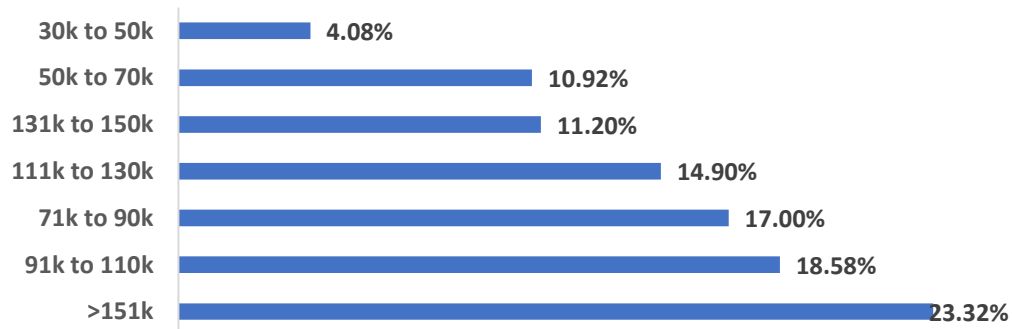
Implication: This indicates that employees have high expectations for career advancement and salary growth. Companies should offer clear career progression paths and salary reviews to meet these expectations.

Top Work Frustrations by Gender:

Findings: Males (46.92%) report a higher incidence of no specific work frustrations compared to females (29.06%). Common frustrations among both genders include unclear work goals and workplace politics.
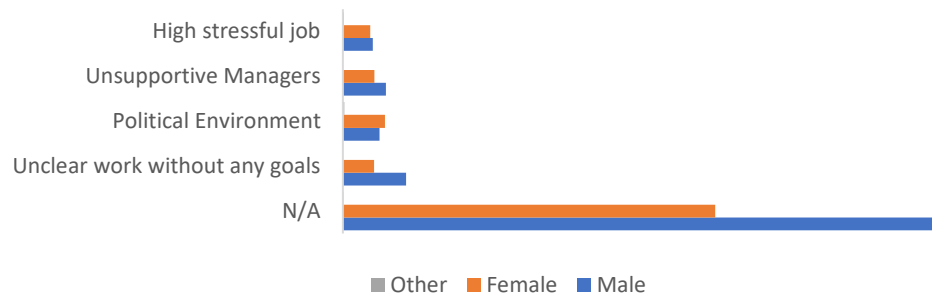
Implication: The gender differences in reported frustrations suggest that males may experience fewer day-to-day frustrations at work, potentially indicating a difference in work expectations or how frustrations are perceived. On the other hand, females may be more affected by factors like unclear goals and workplace politics, pointing to the need for clearer communication and a more supportive work environment for female employees. Addressing these frustrations could lead to increased overall job satisfaction and productivity.

Factors Boosting Work Happiness and Productivity in India:

A significant 71.85% of respondents did not attribute their happiness or productivity to specific factors. However, key contributors included passion-driven work (6.31%), a supportive manager (5.59%), meaningful impact (5.04%), competitive compensation (4.50%), a non-political environment (4.21%), and fewer working hours (2.50%).
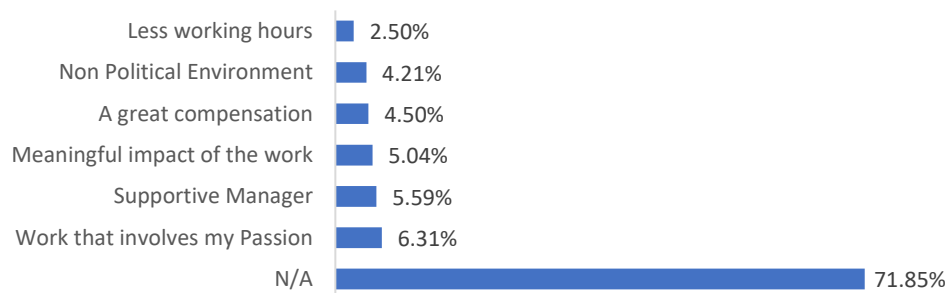
Implication: The high percentage (71.85%) of respondents who did not attribute their happiness or productivity to specific factors suggests that work satisfaction may be influenced by a broader, less tangible set of factors, such as general work culture or personal expectations. However, organizations can still enhance employee productivity and happiness by focusing on passion-

driven roles, supportive leadership, and ensuring meaningful work. Competitive compensation and a non-political work environment further contribute to employee satisfaction, suggesting that fostering a positive and balanced work environment is essential for boosting morale and performance.

Conclusion:

This report highlights the evolving career aspirations and workplace expectations of Gen Z, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for both employees and employers. As Gen Z enters the workforce, it becomes clear that they prioritize purpose, flexibility, growth opportunities, and work-life balance over traditional job perks like salary. However, there is a notable disconnect between Gen Z's aspirations and what many employers are currently offering, leading to high turnover rates and difficulty in attracting and retaining this talent.

Key findings suggest that employers must align their organizational practices with Gen Z's values to foster retention and engagement. Flexible work arrangements, career growth opportunities, and a strong focus on social impact are crucial to meeting the expectations of this new generation. The report also underscores the importance of understanding gender differences in career aspirations, work frustrations, and the need for work-life balance, as these factors can significantly affect job satisfaction and productivity.

By recognizing the unique preferences of Gen Z—such as a preference for purpose-driven work, transparent feedback, and non-political work environments—organizations can better cater to this demographic. Additionally, the insights into salary expectations, career influences, and the desire for socially responsible employers highlight areas where employers need to make strategic adjustments to attract and retain Gen Z talent.

In conclusion, addressing the mismatch between Gen Z's career goals and traditional workplace structures is essential for long-term success. Organizations that embrace flexible, growth-oriented, and inclusive cultures will not only enhance employee satisfaction but also position themselves to thrive in an increasingly competitive labor market. To build a motivated and engaged workforce, companies must invest in evolving their work cultures and recruitment practices to meet the aspirations of the next generation of professionals.