

Problem Statement: Understanding Career Aspirations of Gen Z Using 5W1H Framework

Introduction

The career aspirations of Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, are shaping the future of work. As a researcher, my interest in this topic stems from my experience mentoring Gen Z students, where I observed their unique priorities, such as flexibility and purpose-driven careers. This study aims to systematically explore these aspirations using the 5W1H framework (What, Why, Who, Where, When, How) to provide insights for employers, educators, and policymakers. By addressing this, we can better align opportunities with Gen Z's expectations.

Personal Experience

As an academic advisor, I've worked with Gen Z students navigating career choices. Many expressed a desire for jobs that offer remote work and align with personal values, like sustainability. However, I noticed a gap in structured data about their broader aspirations. This motivated me to design a study to capture these insights, ensuring my approach is informed by real-world interactions while addressing the need for comprehensive research.

1. What

The objective is to explore Gen Z's career aspirations, including preferred industries, work-life balance expectations, and attitudes toward remote work. The study will identify key motivators behind their career choices, such as financial stability or social impact.

2. Why

Understanding Gen Z's aspirations is critical as they enter the workforce in large numbers. Companies struggle to attract them without knowing their priorities, and educational institutions need data to tailor programs. This research will inform strategies to support Gen Z's career success.

3. Who

The study targets Gen Z individuals (born 1997–2012), including students and early-career professionals. Perspectives from employers and educators will also be included to contextualize findings. The sample will aim for diversity in background and experience.

4. Where

Research will be conducted primarily in the United States, focusing on urban hubs like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Online surveys will allow broader participation, with potential expansion to other countries if feasible.

5. When

The study will commence in June 2025 and conclude within six months, by December 2025. Data collection will span three months, followed by two months of analysis and reporting.

6. How

Data will be gathered through online surveys with structured questions on career goals and preferences, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with 20 participants. Analysis will use statistical software to identify trends, ensuring participant confidentiality.

Conclusion

This study will provide actionable insights into Gen Z's career aspirations, leveraging the 5W1H framework for clarity and focus. By combining personal observations with rigorous research, it aims to bridge gaps between Gen Z's expectations and workplace opportunities.