Today I'm going to talk about Generation Z's work life – they're a diverse and dynamic group, ranging from 12 to 27 years old this year. Some are still figuring out school, while others are already a few years deep into their careers.

A key trait of Gen Z employees is their focus on **work-life balance**. They're quick to leave a job that doesn't live up to their expectations, especially concerning salary and job satisfaction. This is a major shift from how previous generations viewed work.

I think this change is set against a backdrop of **rapid technological advances**. Think about the early 2000s: we saw the introduction of 3G, then 4G, and most recently, 5G in 2019, almost every decade, there will be new developments in Internet communications. Hardware is also developing rapidly: Nokia's Symbian system in 2001, the debut of the iPhone in 2007, and Huawei's smartphone launch in 2009 have all been changers. These developments have completely transformed how we access information and even how we dream about our future.

Generation Z, growing up with this tech evolution, is deeply influenced by **social media platforms** like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. These platforms are more than just entertainment; they're powerful sources of information and influence. Gen Z is exposed to a wide range of lifestyles, inspiring them to pursue careers that offer glamour and high earnings, such as becoming an 'Influencer'.

In China, Gen Z benefits from **increased educational opportunities and progressive parenting**. They have the freedom to explore various career paths – some move to new cities for fresh experiences, others embrace freelancing to pursue their passions online, and many still opt for traditional, stable jobs.

But work and life **pressures** still exist, the common advice of “pursues dreams, not money” might seem out of touch, especially when financial stability is uncertain. Despite having more career choices, Gen Z is under constant pressure – balancing work, life, and societal expectations. In East Asia, particularly in countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, the youth face significant challenges. **Japan's 'karoshi'** and **South Korea's 'Hell Joseon'** are stark examples of extreme work cultures that highlight the need for balance and mental well-being.

Because of the heavy work pressure, the **mental health** is a pressing issue for Gen Z. The relentless pace of modern work environments, combined with the influence of social media and digital life, leads to increased stress and anxiety. Young people feel the pressure to excel in competitive job markets, often facing the harsh reality of entry-level positions.

**Social media** adds to this complexity, fostering a culture of comparison and constant engagement. Gen Z is bombarded with images of success and perfection, leading to feelings of inadequacy and the 'fear of missing out', but a lot of time spent worrying reduces the time for real meaningful thinking. The 'always on' nature of digital technology disrupts sleep patterns, reduces real-life interactions, and limits physical activity.

In response, Gen Z is becoming more proactive about addressing these challenges. There's a growing focus on mental health awareness, self-care, and seeking professional help when needed. This generation is at the forefront of breaking down mental health stigmas and advocating for more supportive lifestyles.

**Globalization** has opened a world of opportunities for cross-border work, more young people are seeking opportunities abroad, driven by tough domestic job markets and the allure of diverse experiences. This trend likely influences why less than half of Gen Z in these regions are interested in owning fixed property, preferring the flexibility of living, and working in various locations.

The rise of **Artificial Intelligence** and **Machine Learning** in the job market is a changer. These technologies are creating new while also disrupting traditional jobs. For example, one of the projects I was involved in was a realise driverless vehicles, and it have been trialled in parts of Wuhan. This could make it possible for people to stop having to rely on drivers at some point in the future. Automation could replace roles in manufacturing, customer service, and some administrative areas, pushing the workforce to adapt and reskill.

The values of Gen Z in China and France differ significantly. In China, the collective interests and social harmony are prioritized, influenced by family and societal expectations. In France, individual freedom and self-expression are paramount, with a strong focus on personal rights and embracing diversity.

Furthermore, the rise of the gig economy and digital nomadism is particularly appealing to Gen Z. The flexibility and autonomy offered by these modes of work align well with their desire for a balanced lifestyle and the ability to work from anywhere in the world.

As we delve deeper into the global context, Gen Z are at the forefront of a significant shift in the global workforce. With their unique perspectives and experiences, they are redefining traditional concepts of work, success, and fulfilment.

In conclusion, Generation Z's story is about navigating a rapidly changing world, where technology, globalization, and personal values intersect. It's about finding their place in this world, striking a balance between their ambitions and well-being, and ultimately redefining what it means to live and work in the 21st century.