**Under Standing the Career Aspirations of Generation Z**

**Introduction:**

​The performance of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) in the workforce has been influenced by various factors, including mental health challenges, workplace expectations, and employment trends. Utilizing the 5W1H framework— Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How? —provides a comprehensive analysis of their current performance.

**Who?**

Gen Z is the most ethnically diverse and digitally proficient generation, bringing unique perspectives and skills to the workplace. Their familiarity with technology positions them well for roles requiring digital literacy.​

**What?**

Recent studies indicate that Gen Z employees face significant mental health challenges impacting their productivity. In the UK, Gen Z workers reportedly lose approximately one workday each week due to mental health issues, totaling an average of 54 nonproductive days annually. Additionally, a survey of U.S. business leaders found that many perceive Gen Z hires as unprepared for the workplace, citing concerns about communication skills and professionalism.

**When?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health issues among Gen Z, leading to increased absenteeism. Younger workers are more likely to take sick days due to burnout, anxiety, and depression compared to older colleagues. ​

**Where?**

In the UK, youth worklessness has reached a ten-year high, with 1.2 million individuals aged 16 to 24 either unemployed or not seeking work, partly due to rising mental health issues post-pandemic. Conversely, in the U.S., some Gen Z workers are embracing corporate jobs, appreciating the stability and benefits these roles offer. ​

**Why?**

The mental health struggles of Gen Z are influenced by factors such as climate change, socio-political issues, and the aftermath of the pandemic. Their heightened awareness and prioritization of mental health lead them to take time off work, contrasting with previous generations. ​

**How?**

To support Gen Z employees, employers can implement flexible work arrangements, provide mental health resources, and foster inclusive workplace cultures. Regular check-ins and personalized support can help address their unique needs, potentially improving productivity and job satisfaction.

In summary, while Gen Z brings valuable skills to the workforce, addressing their mental health challenges and aligning workplace environments with their expectations are crucial for enhancing their performance and engagement.

**Conclusion:**

The current performance of Generation Z in the workforce presents both challenges and opportunities. While they bring digital proficiency, diversity, and a strong sense of purpose to their roles, they also face significant mental health struggles that impact productivity. The pandemic, socio-political uncertainties, and evolving work expectations have contributed to increased absenteeism and workplace disengagement.