



THE EVOLUTION OF LOYALTY: A THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF GEN Z'S ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z is a significant workforce population whose perceptions on organizational loyalty and commitment differ from the traditional expectations of long-term organizational employment. Existing studies suggest that Gen Z employees prioritize meaningful work, career growth, work-life balance, well-being, and value alignment, resulting in a more conditional and reciprocal form of organizational commitment (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2022; Gajda, 2024). As organizations continue to experience challenges in retaining young talent, understanding the evolving nature of Gen Z loyalty has become increasingly important. This thematic literature review aims to synthesize existing research on Generation Z's organizational commitment and retention and to identify the factors shaping their workplace loyalty. Relevant literature published between 2020 and 2026 was gathered from databases and repositories including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ProQuest, MDPI, Sage Journals, and other peer-reviewed sources. Studies were selected based on their relevance to Generation Z workplace behavior, organizational commitment, employee retention, and related workplace factors. The review identified three major themes: (1) the evolving nature of loyalty and organizational commitment, (2) job mobility and retention behavior, and (3) organizational factors shaping commitment, particularly leadership, culture, and well-being. Findings indicate that Gen Z's loyalty is increasingly conditional, experience-based, and influenced by reciprocal employer–employee relationships. However, significant gaps remain regarding integrated theoretical frameworks, longitudinal research, and context-specific studies, particularly within the Philippine workplace setting. Future research should address these gaps to develop more effective retention strategies for the emerging workforce.

Keywords: Employee retention; Generation Z; job hopping, organizational commitment; work-life balance.

INTRODUCTION

For decades, the psychological contract between employer and employee was built on a simple premise: in exchange for dedication and long-term tenure, the organization would provide job security and steady career progression. Organizational loyalty was traditionally measured by the number of years an employee stayed with a single company. However, as Generation Z—individuals born roughly between the mid-1990s and early 2010s—enters the workforce



in large numbers, this traditional paradigm is undergoing a profound transformation. Gen Z is stepping into a professional landscape drastically different from that of their predecessors, shaped by rapid technological advancement, the normalization of remote work, and the economic uncertainties of a post-pandemic world. Consequently, this cohort is challenging long-held assumptions about workplace commitment, sparking a critical conversation about what it means to be loyal to an organization today. A prevalent narrative in both popular media and early organizational studies portrays Gen Z as flighty or disloyal, pointing to their apparent propensity for "job hopping." However, emerging literature suggests that this behavior is not a symptom of disloyalty, but rather a reflection of a shifting value system. Ozkan and Solmaz (2022) emphasize that Gen Z's organizational commitment is heavily influenced by distinct workplace expectations, where alignment with personal values, purpose-driven work, and psychological well-being take precedence over mere job security. Similarly, global workforce reports indicate that when faced with environments that fail to support their growth or respect their boundaries, Gen Z employees are highly willing to mobilize (Deloitte, 2024). Loyalty, it appears, has not disappeared among the younger generation; rather, it has evolved from an obligatory, long-term attachment into a conditional and reciprocal agreement. Understanding this evolution is of critical importance in the field of Human Resource Behavior and organizational management. The inability to retain young talent carries significant financial and operational consequences, including high recruitment costs, loss of institutional knowledge, and decreased team cohesion. As Gajda (2024) notes, Gen Z employees evaluate work based on fairness, development, and alignment with personal goals. Therefore, traditional retention strategies such as promising long-term stability or relying on rigid hierarchical structures are no longer sufficient. Organizations, educational institutions training future managers, and public administrators shaping labor policies must pivot toward adaptive, employee-centric approaches that acknowledge the conditional nature of modern commitment (Almeida et al., 2024). Failure to understand the drivers behind Gen Z's job mobility and commitment risks creating a disengaged workforce and a persistent talent drain. Despite the growing body of literature on Generation Z in the workplace, a fragmented understanding persists. Many studies examine isolated variables such as job satisfaction or leadership styles without providing a holistic view of how these factors interact to shape the "new loyalty." Furthermore, there remains a need to clarify the "job-hopping paradox": how Gen Z employees can be highly mobile while still demonstrating strong commitment to their professions and personal growth (Aurelia & Rahmawati, 2026). This fragmentation highlights a significant research gap: the absence of an integrated framework that comprehensively explains how value alignment, job mobility, and organizational factors collectively shape Gen Z's conditional loyalty. To address this gap, this thematic literature review aims to synthesize current research on Gen Z's organizational commitment and retention by examining key patterns and interconnected factors across studies. Specifically, this review seeks to trace the evolving nature of loyalty from traditional tenure to conditional commitment, analyze the drivers of job mobility and retention behavior, and evaluate the organizational factors—such as leadership, culture, and well-being—that shape Gen Z's workplace commitment. Guided by these objectives, this review asks: How does Generation Z redefine organizational loyalty compared to traditional paradigms? What are the primary factors driving their job mobility and retention? And how do organizational factors shape their conditional commitment? Ultimately, by answering these questions, this review provides a comprehensive framework that bridges the gap between traditional organizational theories and the contemporary realities of the youngest segment of the workforce, offering significant practical implications for organizations striving to retain emerging talent.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

This study employed a thematic literature review, following a narrative synthesis approach, to examine and integrate existing research on Generation Z's organizational commitment and retention. This type of review is appropriate because the study aims to identify patterns, trends, agreements, and contradictions across multiple studies rather than to statistically combine findings. The thematic approach enabled the researchers to organize the literature into three key themes: (1) the evolving nature of loyalty and organizational commitment, (2) job mobility and retention behavior, and (3) workplace environment, leadership, and employee experience. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how Gen Z's loyalty is increasingly conditional and shaped by workplace factors.



Databases Used

Relevant literature was retrieved from widely recognized academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. These databases were selected to ensure access to credible, peer-reviewed journal articles and high-quality academic sources. Using multiple databases improved the comprehensiveness of the review and ensured coverage across different disciplines such as management, human resource studies, and organizational behavior.

Keywords and Search Strings

The search process used a combination of keywords and Boolean operators to refine the results. The primary keywords included: "Generation Z," "organizational commitment," "employee retention," "job mobility," "job hopping," "leadership," "workplace environment," "employee experience," "work-life balance," and "organizational culture." These keywords were systematically combined into search strings such as "Generation Z AND organizational commitment," "Gen Z AND job mobility OR job hopping," "employee retention AND leadership AND Generation Z," and "workplace environment AND Generation Z AND engagement." The use of these combinations ensured that the retrieved studies were closely aligned with the research objectives and the thematic focus of the study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure quality and relevance, specific criteria were applied. Studies were included if they were (1) peer-reviewed journal articles or credible academic reports, (2) published between 2015 and 2025, (3) written in English, and (4) focused on Generation Z employees in relation to organizational commitment, retention, job mobility, or workplace factors such as leadership, culture, and well-being. Both empirical and theoretical studies were considered, provided they contributed meaningful insights.

Studies were excluded if they were non-scholarly sources such as blogs or opinion articles, lacked empirical or theoretical contribution, or were duplicates across databases. Articles that focused on other generations without clear relevance to Generation Z or those unrelated to organizational behavior were also removed.

Timeframe

The review focused on literature published between 2015 and 2025, ensuring that the findings reflect recent developments. This timeframe is appropriate because Generation Z has only recently entered the workforce, and contemporary studies better capture evolving workplace expectations, digital transformation, and post-pandemic work trends.

Screening Process

A structured screening process inspired by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework was used to enhance transparency and rigor. The process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

In the identification stage, a broad pool of studies was gathered from the selected databases using the defined keywords and search strings.

In the screening stage, titles and abstracts were reviewed to remove studies that were clearly irrelevant to Generation Z, organizational commitment, or retention.



In the eligibility stage, full-text articles were carefully evaluated based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and quality.

Finally, in the inclusion stage, the selected studies were finalized and prepared for analysis.

Data Extraction and Thematic Analysis

Following the inclusion stage, a data extraction process was conducted to systematically gather key information from each study. This included details such as author, year of publication, research focus, methodology, and key findings related to Gen Z's organizational commitment and retention.

The extracted data were then analyzed using thematic analysis, which is central to this study. Findings from the selected literature were grouped into the three major themes: (1) evolving loyalty and organizational commitment, (2) job mobility and retention behavior, and (3) workplace environment, leadership, and employee experience. This process involved comparing results across studies, identifying recurring patterns, and highlighting agreements as well as contradictions.

Through this approach, the study was able to synthesize diverse findings into a coherent understanding of Generation Z's workplace behavior. The combination of a PRISMA-inspired screening process and thematic analysis ensured that the review was both systematic in selection and analytical in interpretation. This methodology is appropriate for examining the complex and evolving nature of Gen Z's loyalty, which is shaped by multiple interconnected organizational and personal factors.

THEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This thematic review synthesizes existing literature on Generation Z's organizational commitment and retention by examining key patterns across studies. It focuses on three key themes: the evolving nature of loyalty and organizational commitment among Gen Z; job mobility and retention behavior; and organizational factors shaping commitment such as leadership, culture, and well-being. These themes highlight how Gen Z's loyalty is increasingly conditional and shaped by workplace factors, influencing their decision to stay or leave organizations.

Theme 1: Evolving Nature of Loyalty and Organizational Commitment Among Gen Z

Across the reviewed literature, loyalty among Generation Z is no longer understood mainly as long-term tenure or staying with one organization for many years. Instead, it is increasingly described as conditional, value-based, and shaped by the quality of workplace experience. This shows a shift from traditional organizational loyalty to a more flexible form of commitment, where Gen Z employees remain loyal when organizations provide growth, meaningful work, fair treatment, and alignment with personal values. In this sense, loyalty is not disappearing; rather, it is being redefined according to what employees experience and receive from the organization.

A strong agreement across studies is that Gen Z commitment depends on reciprocity. They are willing to give effort, engagement, and loyalty when they feel that the organization also invests in them. Factors such as development opportunities, recognition, supportive leadership, work-life balance, and a positive work environment repeatedly appear as important conditions for commitment. This suggests that Gen Z does not view loyalty as an obligation, but as a mutual relationship between employer and employee. When organizations fail to provide these expectations, commitment weakens and employees become more open to leaving.



Another major trend is the shift from loyalty to the organization toward loyalty to personal growth and career identity. The Psikologika article highlights that job hopping among Gen Z should not automatically be interpreted as disloyalty, because many Gen Z employees remain committed to their profession, skills, and long-term career direction even when they move between organizations. This means that loyalty is moving away from “staying in one company” and becoming more connected to self-improvement, meaningful contribution, and career advancement. The literature also shows that Gen Z’s organizational commitment is influenced by affective experiences at work. Positive workplace experiences, such as empowerment, employee voice, and supportive digital leadership, can strengthen affective commitment or emotional attachment to the organization. This is important because it shows that Gen Z is not purely practical or transactional. They can still develop emotional commitment, but this often depends on whether the organization creates a workplace where they feel heard, supported, and included.

However, there are also contradictions in the literature. Some studies emphasize that Gen Z has weaker organizational attachment and a higher tendency to change jobs, while others show that they can still demonstrate strong commitment when the right conditions are present. For example, research on competence development and turnover intentions shows that development practices can reduce turnover through affective commitment, although generational differences may affect how this relationship works. This suggests that Gen Z’s loyalty is not absent, but more dependent on whether organizations provide meaningful reasons to stay.

Work values also play an important role in explaining this change. Research comparing Generation Y and Generation Z shows that cognitive and affective work values are positively related to organizational commitment. This supports the idea that Gen Z’s loyalty is shaped by whether the organization matches their expectations and values. When work values such as learning, fairness, autonomy, purpose, and supportive relationships are present, commitment becomes stronger. When these values are missing, organizational attachment becomes weaker.

Another emerging agreement is that well-being and security still matter, but not always in the traditional sense. Studies on Gen Z organizational commitment show that job security, training and development, and mental well-being can positively influence commitment. Interestingly, compensation does not always appear as the strongest direct predictor, suggesting that Gen Z’s loyalty is influenced by broader workplace conditions rather than salary alone. This does not mean pay is unimportant, but it shows that retention and commitment are also tied to psychological safety, development, and overall employee well-being.

Overall, the evolving nature of loyalty among Generation Z reflects a major shift in organizational commitment. Across studies, loyalty is increasingly presented as conditional, reciprocal, and experience-based. Gen Z employees may appear less loyal when measured by tenure alone, but the literature suggests that they are “differently loyal.” They commit when organizations support their growth, respect their values, and provide meaningful work experiences. Therefore, organizations that want to retain Gen Z employees must move beyond traditional loyalty strategies and focus instead on development, recognition, well-being, supportive leadership, and value alignment.

Theme 2: Job Mobility and Retention Behavior in the Gen Z Workforce

Job mobility is one of the most common issues discussed in relation to Generation Z employees. In simple terms, job mobility refers to the tendency of employees to move from one job or organization to another. For Gen Z, this is often described as “job hopping,” especially when employees leave after a short period of employment. However, across the reviewed literature, job mobility among Gen Z should not be understood simply as a lack of loyalty. Instead, it reflects a changing view of work, career growth, and organizational commitment. Gen Z employees are not necessarily unwilling to stay in one organization; rather, they are more likely to stay when they feel that the organization supports their personal goals, professional development, values, and well-being.

A common agreement across the studies is that Gen Z’s retention behavior is strongly influenced by job satisfaction. When young employees feel satisfied with their work, they are less likely to consider leaving. Job satisfaction, in this



context, is not limited to enjoying the job itself. It includes fair compensation, healthy working conditions, supportive leadership, career opportunities, work-life balance, and a sense of purpose. Several studies show that when these factors are present, Gen Z employees are more likely to develop organizational commitment. On the other hand, when the workplace fails to provide these conditions, employees may begin to search for better opportunities elsewhere.

One important trend in the literature is that Gen Z employees tend to view job mobility as a practical career decision. Unlike traditional views of loyalty, where employees were expected to remain with one employer for many years, Gen Z appears to be more open to changing jobs if it helps them grow faster, earn better compensation, or find a healthier work environment. This does not automatically mean that they are disloyal. Instead, it suggests that loyalty has become more conditional. Gen Z employees may commit to an organization, but they also expect the organization to commit to their growth, fair treatment, and well-being. If this mutual commitment is missing, job mobility becomes a reasonable option for them.

Career development is one of the strongest reasons behind Gen Z's job mobility. Across the studies, Gen Z employees are often described as growth-oriented. They value training, skill development, promotion opportunities, and clear career paths. When they feel stuck in a position with limited learning or advancement, they may choose to leave. This shows that retention is not only about preventing employees from resigning; it is also about giving them reasons to imagine a future in the organization. Companies that fail to provide career direction may experience higher turnover because Gen Z employees may look for other workplaces that offer better opportunities.

Compensation also remains an important factor in retention behavior. While Gen Z is often associated with valuing purpose, flexibility, and meaningful work, the reviewed studies show that salary and benefits still matter. However, Gen Z does not only look at the amount of compensation. They also consider whether pay is fair, transparent, and aligned with the promises made by the employer. For example, some studies on job hopping suggest that dissatisfaction may occur when organizations promise incentives, growth, or rewards during hiring but fail to deliver them after employment begins. This can damage trust and increase the possibility of turnover. In this sense, compensation is connected not only to money but also to fairness and honesty.

Work-life balance is another major factor that affects Gen Z retention. The literature consistently shows that Gen Z employees value personal time, flexibility, and mental well-being. They are more likely to stay in organizations that respect boundaries and provide manageable workloads. Deloitte's 2024 survey also supports this trend, showing that work-life balance remains a top priority for Gen Z and millennials when choosing an employer. This suggests that Gen Z employees do not judge a job only by salary or position. They also consider whether the job allows them to maintain a healthy life outside work. When organizations ignore work-life balance, employees may become stressed, disengaged, or more willing to leave.

At the same time, the literature shows a possible contradiction in how job mobility is viewed. From the perspective of employers, frequent job changes can be a problem because they create recruitment costs, training costs, and loss of skills or knowledge. High turnover can also affect team performance and workplace stability. However, from the perspective of Gen Z employees, job hopping may be seen as a way to improve their career, escape unhealthy workplaces, or find better alignment with their values. This contradiction is important because it shows that job mobility is not always a sign of irresponsibility. Sometimes, it is a response to unmet expectations or poor organizational practices.

Organizational commitment still plays an important role in reducing turnover intention among Gen Z employees. However, the nature of commitment may be changing. Traditional loyalty was often based on long-term attachment or obligation to the company. For Gen Z, commitment appears to be more connected to the value they receive from the organization. Some studies suggest that Gen Z employees may stay when they believe the organization provides



important resources such as financial stability, professional growth, meaningful work, and supportive relationships. This means that commitment is not automatic; it must be earned and maintained by the organization.

The studies also show that meaningful work and organizational support contribute to retention. Gen Z employees are more likely to remain engaged when they feel that their work has purpose and that the organization values their contribution. Supportive leadership, open communication, recognition, and positive workplace relationships help strengthen their connection to the organization. When employees feel ignored, unsupported, or disconnected from the purpose of their work, they may become less committed and more open to leaving.

Overall, the literature suggests that Gen Z's job mobility and retention behavior are shaped by a combination of career, financial, personal, and value-based factors. The strongest agreement across the studies is that Gen Z employees are more likely to stay when they experience job satisfaction, career growth, fair compensation, work-life balance, meaningful work, and supportive leadership. The main contradiction is that employers may view job hopping as a problem, while Gen Z employees may view it as a practical way to seek better opportunities. The emerging trend is that loyalty among Gen Z is not disappearing, but it is becoming more selective and reciprocal.

In conclusion, job mobility among Gen Z workers reflects the changing meaning of organizational loyalty. Gen Z employees do not simply stay because they are expected to. They stay when they believe the organization is still worth staying for. Therefore, companies that want to retain Gen Z employees must go beyond traditional retention strategies. They need to provide fair rewards, clear career paths, flexible work arrangements, meaningful work, and a positive employee experience. For Human Resource Behavior, this theme shows that understanding Gen Z retention requires looking not only at why employees leave, but also at what makes them willing to stay.

Theme 3: Organizational Factors Shaping Gen Z's Commitment: Leadership, Culture, and Well-being

Generation Z's loyalty to their organizations has evolved along with changes in workplace expectations, leadership styles, and organizational values. In contrast to previous generations, who associated loyalty with long-term tenure at a company and their duty to the organization, Gen Z has come to view being committed to their organization as being tied to having meaningful work experiences, flexible work environments, having leadership that is supportive, and taking care of themselves as an employee. There are a number of studies that show the commitment of Gen Z employees to their organizations is influenced not only by traditional forms of reward, but more by the work environment that promotes employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, and work-life balance. Therefore, organizations trying to retain Gen Z workers will need to implement a more adaptive, employee-centric style of management.

The literature consistently indicates that leadership is a primary factor influencing the commitment and retention of Gen Z employees. Transformational leadership has been linked with greater levels of employee engagement, emotional attachment, and loyalty towards the organization. Leaders who inspire, mentor, and involve employees in the decision-making processes will have more highly regarded working relationships with their Gen Z employees and a greater sense of community among their Gen Z employees. Research shows that younger employees will respond well to leadership that demonstrates empathy, transparency, collaboration, and support, as opposed to rigid authority and hierarchical control. This illustrates the preference that Gen Z employees have for participative leadership and open communication within the workplace.

Digital leadership is very important for Gen Z employees as they look to develop their workplace experience. Gen Z employees are digital natives and thus expect their leaders and organizations to use technology effectively in communication, collaboration, and organizational processes. Several studies have indicated that digital leaders provide innovation, accessibility, and flexibility within organizations which enhance employee engagement and commitment. Leaders who find the right balance between using technology efficiently with using human-centered management practices will have improved success at establishing trust and developing an organizational attachment



with younger employees. At the same time, some studies suggest that reliance on digital systems alone may hinder the development of interpersonal relationships and reduce the emotional bond between employees and their organization; this contradiction demonstrates how essential it is to find a balance between technological advancement and genuine workplace interaction.

The relationship between leadership and organizational commitment is further enhanced through employee engagement which has been shown to be one of the most significant factors impact retention and loyalty. Employees who feel valued, recognized and part of the organization are more likely to stay engaged with their organization. Leadership practices that promote mentoring, continuous learning and professional development provide additional support for increasing the level of engagement of Gen Z employees. There is also empirical evidence that younger generations of people consider engaging activities and opportunities for development as more important than traditional incentives. Therefore, companies focused on the continuous development and engagement of employees will be able to attract Generation Z and maintain its long-term commitment to the organization.

Organizational culture is another significant variable affecting employment intention and retention among young professionals. According to numerous sources, an inclusive, collaborative, and values-based organizational culture positively affects organizational commitment of employees. The members of Gen Z will be more loyal to those companies that hold similar views and demonstrate the alignment between their own values, social identity, and career goals. Work environments, which foster diversity, innovation, equity, and communication, can help employees develop stronger emotional and psychological ties with the company. At the same time, bureaucratic structures of companies can negatively affect employees' commitment and intentions to quit the organization.

Research on employment intentions proves that Gen Z is likely to evaluate the organizational culture of companies and make career decisions based on it. Organizational reputation, ethicality, and relations among employees become critical in this regard since they can determine future intentions of young individuals. The increase in commitment and loyalty to their organizations from Gen Z employees might have more to do with the alignment between their values and experiences at work rather than just security to their job.

To help define this shift in how Gen Z sees commitment to an employer, it may be helpful to explore the evolving definition of their "dream career" as demonstrated in the most recent workforce studies that clearly show this cohort is no longer primarily motivated by a secure occupation. Rather, they are focused on making an impact by developing a career that has meaning and fulfills both their creativity and purpose-based priorities. As such, employers can consider their organizational commitment to this group based on the extent to which they provide opportunities for career development, creativity, personal growth and innovative contributions. Employers who provide meaningful work experiences and the ability to grow as an individual will stand a better chance of retaining employees in this generation, meaning that their commitment results more from fulfilling their identity and having career satisfaction than it does from any other reason.

Another aspect influencing employer commitment and retention across multiple generations of workers is their ability to offer employees work/life balance and flexibility in terms of the work schedule and the work environment. Multiple studies show that flexible work arrangements positively impact job satisfaction, engagement, and employee wellbeing. Therefore, Gen Z employees have a higher preference for organizations that provide them with freedom in how they schedule themselves to work because they place importance on balancing the commitments they make professionally with those they make personally. The use of flexible work arrangements is linked to reducing work-related stress, achieving better mental health, and ultimately developing greater loyalty to the organization. These findings have become more pronounced with the pandemic as many organizations continued to use remote/hybrid arrangements to conduct business operations. The evidence shows that Employee Work-life Balance drives Employee Satisfaction leading to strengthening Organizational Commitment.



The desire of Gen Z employees is to not accept heavy workload, burnout, and unhealthy work habits with the focus of working for an organization that has Mental Health support, Wellness programs, and sustainable work practices. More literature is pointing to the impact of employee well-being as a strategic organizational focus for sustaining a stable workforce and retaining talent. In spite of the strong endorsement of flex-work by employees, there is conflicting evidence with respect to the long-term results of flex-work on Organizational Commitment. Some studies support that flexible working arrangements are equal to increasing employees' level of autonomy and satisfaction, which subsequently leads to greater retention and engagement. Other studies show that too much flexibility/remote work may reduce the amount of face-to-face interaction, therefore lowering team coherence and emotional attachment to the organization's culture. Employees who primarily work from home can have less connection to their team due to the decrease in face-to-face interaction. Therefore, the evidence shows that flexibility alone does not create commitment; it is also necessary that organizations provide opportunities to collaborate, communicate and build relationships.

Research shows that the development of loyalty in Generation Z employees is influenced by many interconnected organizational variables including: leadership, workplace culture; work-life balance and overall well-being. Leadership styles that are supportive and provide engagement with their employees enhance both engagement and attachment to the organization. Inclusionary workplace cultures create a sense of belonging and value alignment that provides connection with the organization. Work-life balance, flexible working arrangements and overall workplace wellness contribute to employee satisfaction and retention; however, excessive flexibility can diminish an employee's sense of inter-personal connection if not actively managed. Therefore, in order for organizations to be successful in retaining their Generation Z employees they must move away from traditional management practices and adopt adaptive, supportive and purpose-driven workplace practices.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

The reviewed literature shows that Generation Z's organizational loyalty is changing from the traditional idea of long-term tenure to a more conditional and experience-based form of commitment. Across the three themes, studies generally agree that Gen Z employees are not necessarily disloyal; rather, they are more selective in choosing organizations that support their values, growth, well-being, and career goals. Ozkan and Solmaz (2022) emphasize that Gen Z's organizational commitment is influenced by workplace expectations and values, while Gajda (2024) highlights that Gen Z employees tend to evaluate work based on whether it provides development, fairness, and alignment with personal goals. Similarly, Deloitte (2024) reports that Gen Z and millennials continue to prioritize work-life balance, purpose, and values when making career decisions. Together, these studies strengthen the argument that loyalty among Gen Z is not disappearing but evolving.

One major strength of the existing studies is that they provide a timely and relevant discussion of Gen Z in the workplace. The studies capture the shift in employee expectations, especially in relation to job mobility, retention, leadership, culture, and well-being. For example, Aurelia and Rahmawati (2026) explain the job-hopping paradox by showing that mobility among Gen Z may still reflect commitment to career growth and occupational identity rather than simple disloyalty. This supports the idea that Gen Z workers may leave organizations not because they lack commitment, but because they are committed to their own development. Likewise, Suryani and Hartono (2023) and Prasetyo and Wulandari (2023) suggest that job satisfaction and organizational commitment can reduce turnover intention among Gen Z employees. These findings are useful because they show that retention is still possible when organizations provide meaningful reasons for employees to stay.

Another strength is that the literature identifies several consistent factors that shape Gen Z commitment. Across studies, career development, fair compensation, work-life balance, supportive leadership, meaningful work, and positive organizational culture repeatedly appear as important drivers of retention. Almeida, Santos, and Monteiro (2024) emphasize the role of work environment and leadership, while Zhang and Chen (2024) discuss how workplace factors affect Gen Z employees' commitment and retention. These findings support the third theme of the review,



which argues that leadership, culture, and well-being are not secondary concerns but central elements in shaping Gen Z's organizational loyalty. The use of both academic studies and industry-based reports, such as Deloitte (2024) and Randstad (2025), also gives the review a broader view of the topic by combining scholarly findings with current workforce trends.

However, the existing literature also has weaknesses. One limitation is that some studies tend to present Gen Z as a single, uniform group. Although generational studies are helpful, they may overlook differences in culture, economic background, industry, educational level, and employment status. Not all Gen Z employees have the same opportunities or reasons for leaving or staying. For example, a Gen Z employee in a startup, a public institution, a sales organization, or a multinational company may experience commitment and retention differently. Another weakness is that some discussions of Gen Z loyalty rely heavily on common descriptions such as "job hoppers," "digital natives," or "purpose-driven workers." While these descriptions may be partly true, they can oversimplify the behavior of an entire generation.

Methodologically, many of the reviewed studies appear to rely on surveys, self-reported data, and cross-sectional research designs. These methods are useful for identifying relationships among job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and turnover intention, as seen in Sari and Pratama (2023), Hidayat and Nurhadi (2023), and the 2025 study on work-life balance and career development. However, they may not fully explain how Gen Z loyalty develops over time. Since commitment and retention are long-term processes, there is a need for more longitudinal studies that follow Gen Z employees across different career stages. Qualitative studies are also needed to better understand the personal meanings behind job mobility, especially because job hopping may have different motivations depending on the employee's context.

There are also theoretical gaps in the literature. Many studies discuss organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, but not all of them clearly connect their findings to established theories. For instance, Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment is often relevant, especially in explaining affective, continuance, and normative commitment, but some studies do not fully explain how these forms of commitment apply specifically to Gen Z. Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness theory may also help explain why employees stay, but more research is needed to connect this theory to Gen Z's changing expectations. Current literature suggests that Gen Z's loyalty may be more reciprocal, conditional, and values-based, but there is still a need for stronger theoretical models that explain this "new loyalty" more clearly.

Contextual gaps are also evident. Much of the available literature comes from international or non-Philippine settings, such as studies conducted in Indonesia, Europe, or broader global surveys. While these studies are useful, their findings may not fully represent the experiences of Filipino Gen Z employees. The Philippine workplace context is shaped by unique factors such as family obligations, economic pressures, underemployment, contractual work, migration aspirations, and strong respect for authority. These factors may influence how Filipino Gen Z employees understand loyalty, job mobility, and organizational commitment. For example, Filipino employees may value career growth and well-being, but practical concerns such as job security, family support, and income stability may also strongly affect their decision to stay or leave.

Overall, the literature provides a strong foundation for understanding Gen Z's evolving loyalty, but it also shows the need for deeper and more context-specific research. Existing studies agree that Gen Z retention is influenced by meaningful work, fair rewards, career development, work-life balance, and supportive leadership. However, there are still gaps in methodology, theory, and local context. Future research should examine Gen Z employees in Philippine organizations and explore how cultural, economic, and organizational realities shape their commitment. This would help develop retention strategies that are not only based on global assumptions about Gen Z but also grounded in the actual experiences of Filipino young workers.



RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Despite the wide range of studies examining Generation Z's organizational commitment and retention, several important gaps remain. While the literature consistently shows that Gen Z's loyalty is conditional, value-driven, and influenced by workplace experiences, many studies focus on isolated variables, resulting in a fragmented understanding of the phenomenon.

One key gap is the lack of an integrated explanation of loyalty formation. Existing research highlights multiple influencing factors such as job satisfaction, work motivation, leadership style, competence development, work values, and well-being. However, these factors are often studied independently, making it difficult to understand how they collectively shape Gen Z's commitment. What is missing is a holistic perspective that explains how these elements interact to influence loyalty and retention. Future research should focus on developing integrative models that combine personal, organizational, and environmental factors into a single framework.

Another gap lies in the limited exploration of the job-hopping paradox. While several studies recognize that job mobility is common among Gen Z and does not necessarily indicate disloyalty, there is still insufficient research explaining how employees can be both mobile and committed at the same time. The distinction between organizational commitment and occupational or career-based commitment remains unclear. Further investigation is needed to understand whether Gen Z's loyalty is shifting toward their profession rather than their employer, and how this affects retention outcomes.

The literature also lacks a long-term perspective. Most studies focus on short-term indicators such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and immediate workplace experiences. There is limited research examining how Gen Z's commitment evolves over time as they gain experience and progress in their careers. It remains unclear whether conditional loyalty is a stable generational trait or a temporary phase. Future studies should adopt longitudinal approaches to better understand how loyalty develops and changes across different career stages.

Another important gap is the inconsistent findings regarding emotional and practical commitment. Some studies suggest that Gen Z is more driven by practical factors such as compensation, career growth, and work-life balance, while others highlight the importance of affective commitment through leadership, engagement, and meaningful work. This contradiction indicates that the relationship between emotional and practical commitment is not yet fully understood. Further research is needed to examine how these two forms of commitment interact and which conditions strengthen each type.

In addition, there is a gap between theoretical findings and practical application. Although many studies identify factors that influence Gen Z's loyalty, fewer provide clear and actionable strategies for organizations to improve retention. This limits the usefulness of existing research for managers and organizations dealing with high turnover among young employees. Future research should focus on translating theoretical insights into evidence-based practices that organizations can implement.

There is also limited attention to context-specific factors, particularly in non-Western or developing country settings. Much of the existing literature is based on generalized or international contexts, which may not fully capture the influence of cultural values, economic conditions, and labor market differences. More localized research is needed to better understand how Gen Z's commitment varies across different environments.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to provide a thematic and integrative analysis of Generation Z's organizational commitment and retention. By synthesizing multiple studies across themes, this research will examine how key factors such as job mobility, leadership, work environment, and personal values interact to shape loyalty. It will also clarify the concept of conditional commitment and explore how organizational and occupational commitment coexist. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's



evolving loyalty and offer insights that can help organizations develop more adaptive and effective retention strategies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

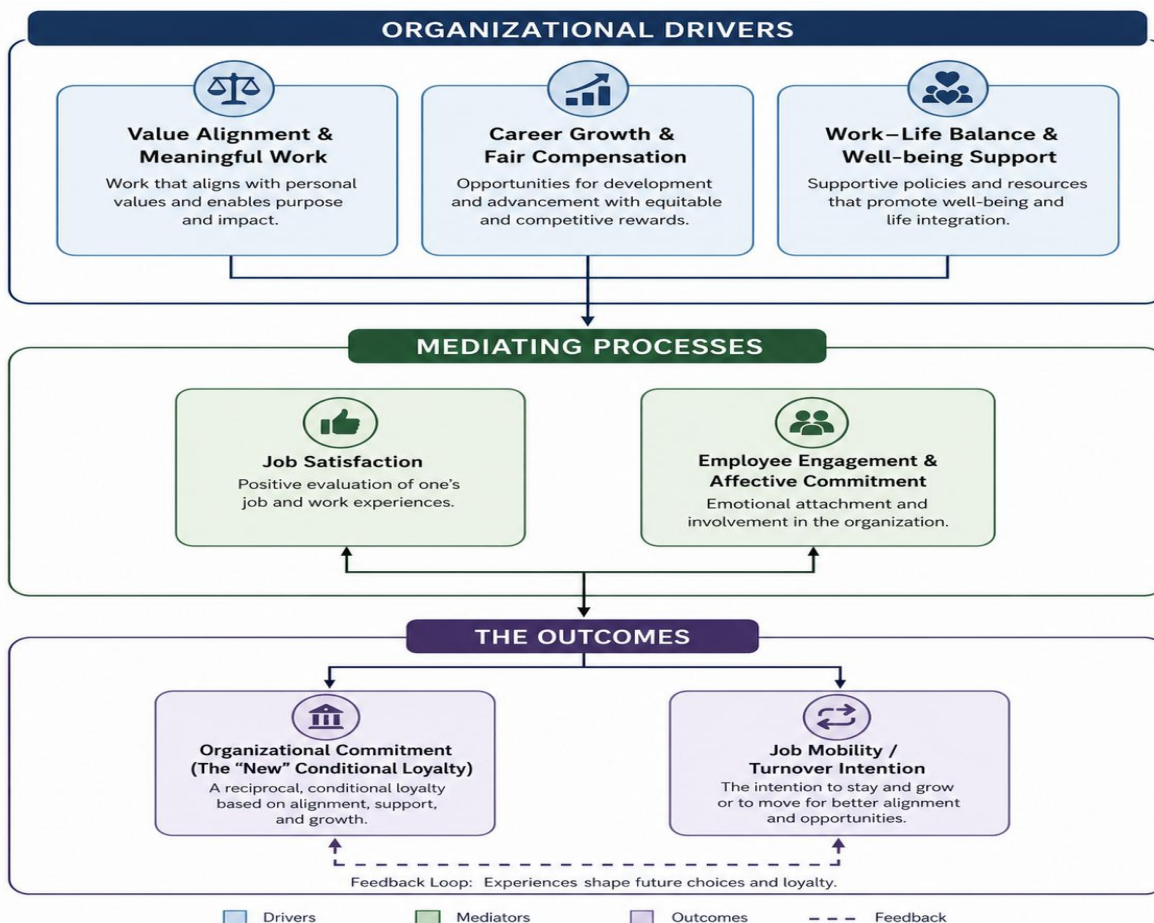


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for The Evolution of Gen Z's Organizational Loyalty

The conceptual framework illustrates how organizational drivers influence Gen Z employees' organizational commitment and retention behavior. It begins with three key workplace factors: value alignment and meaningful work, career growth and fair compensation, and work-life balance and well-being support. These drivers represent the conditions that Gen Z employees commonly consider when deciding whether to remain in or leave an organization. When these needs are met, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, employee engagement, and affective commitment.

These mediating processes then lead to two possible outcomes: organizational commitment or job mobility and turnover intention. Positive workplace experiences may result in the "new" conditional loyalty, where Gen Z employees remain committed as long as the organization continues to support their values, growth, compensation, and well-being. However, when these expectations are not fulfilled, they may consider moving to another organization that offers better alignment and opportunities. The feedback loop shows that past workplace experiences can influence future career decisions and loyalty.

CONCLUSION



This thematic literature review reveals that Generation Z is not a disloyal cohort, but rather one that fundamentally redefines loyalty as conditional, reciprocal, and experience-based. The traditional paradigm of organizational commitment measured by long-term tenure and unwavering obligation has been replaced by a new psychological contract where loyalty must be actively earned. Across the reviewed literature, several major insights emerge. First, Gen Z's commitment is deeply value-driven; they require alignment between their personal beliefs and the organization's purpose. Second, the so-called "job-hopping" phenomenon is not a symptom of flightiness, but a strategic, practical career decision utilized when workplaces fail to provide career development, fair compensation, or work-life balance. Third, organizational factors particularly empathetic leadership, inclusive cultures, and holistic well-being initiatives are not mere perks but foundational requirements that mediate job satisfaction and affective commitment, ultimately dictating retention outcomes.

Understanding this evolution of loyalty is imperative for the field of Human Resource Behavior and organizational management today. The financial and operational toll of high turnover ranging from escalating recruitment costs to the loss of institutional knowledge demands a paradigm shift. Organizations can no longer rely on traditional retention strategies like long-term job security or rigid hierarchical loyalty. Instead, they must adopt adaptive, employee-centric approaches that respond to Gen Z's demand for mutual investment. Failure to recognize the conditional nature of this generation's commitment risks persistent talent drain, workforce disengagement, and a loss of competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving labor market.

While this review consolidates the current understanding of Gen Z's workplace behavior, it also underscores the necessity for further investigation. Future research must move beyond fragmented, cross-sectional studies to embrace longitudinal designs that track how Gen Z's loyalty evolves across different life and career stages. Crucially, there is a pressing need for context-specific inquiries, particularly within the Philippine setting. The distinct Filipino cultural dynamics such as *pakikisama* and strong familial obligations coupled with local economic realities like contractualization, may significantly alter how conditional loyalty is expressed and practiced. Developing integrative theoretical models that combine traditional commitment frameworks with modern, boundaryless career theories will be essential, equipping organizations with actionable, culturally grounded strategies to sustain the workforce of the future.

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