

# Human Resource Management Strategies to Attract Generation Z: A Study of Interest Differences Between Europe and the Middle East

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**Submitted:** 04 September 2025    **Accepted:** 10 September 2025    **Published:** 17 September 2025

 <https://doi.org/10.63620/MKJGPSCD.2025.1027>

**Citation:** Soulaïman, M., Slyman, M., & Varga, E. (2025). Human Resource Management Strategies to Attract Generation Z: A Study of Interest Differences Between Europe and the Middle East. *J of Glob Perspect Soc Cult Dev*, 1(3), 01-08.

## Abstract

Generation Z is becoming one of the most influential groups in today's workforce, yet their expectations and values differ across regions. Understanding these differences is essential for organizations that aim to attract and retain young professionals. This study investigates how Human Resource (HR) strategies can meet the needs of Generation Z in Europe and the Middle East, two regions that differ strongly in their cultural and economic contexts. A mixed-methods approach was used to provide both breadth and depth. Quantitative data were collected through a survey of 204 participants, and qualitative insights were obtained from six semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics, Chi-Square test, and Mann-Whitney U test were used for analysis. The findings also reveal some stark differences: Gen Z respondents in Europe were more likely to rely on online job portals, express stronger interest in hybrid or remote work, and consider diversity, inclusion, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and sustainability as very important. When it came to social media networks, Middle East respondents used them more than their counterparts in the West, focusing on job security and financial stability, and were keener on office-based work. Regardless of these regional distinctions, however, both groups considered career progression opportunities and online recruitment tools to be equally important. The findings show that HR strategies cannot be applied in the same way everywhere. European strategies should emphasize flexibility and value-driven initiatives, while Middle Eastern strategies should stress stability, financial security, and trusted networks. These insights contribute to cross-regional HR research and provide practical guidance for organizations engaging the next generation of employees.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Human Resources, Digital Recruitment, Job Security, Flexibility, Cross-Cultural HR.

## Introduction

Generation Z, those born roughly between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is rapidly becoming one of the most decisive groups in the global workforce. As more members of this generation complete their education and enter professional life, they are reshaping how organizations must think about recruitment, work design, and long-term engagement. Unlike previous cohorts, Gen Z has grown up in a highly digital world. They are accustomed to using online platforms for communication, social interaction, and decision-making. This environment has strongly influenced their expectations in the labor market. They tend to value flexibility, digital connection, and sustainability, while

also continuing to care about stability and financial security. According to recent global workplace studies, Gen Z now makes up more than one-third of the workforce worldwide and is projected to dominate employment demographics by 2030 [1, 2]. The characteristics of Gen Z are not entirely uniform. They differ by context, region, and cultural background. However, they also found that some commonly held beliefs about this generation worldwide are myths – despite the universal emphasis on digital skills and a focus on career progression, work-life balance is seen differently depending on the region, and the number of people who change employers frequently has been exaggerated [3]. For instance, it is found that Gen Z in North America and Eu-

rope expect hybrid or work-from-home arrangements to be the norm among benefits, while in the Middle East, job stability and financial security are rated as more important than the rewards [4]. These patterns indicate that even though Gen Z is often described as a “global” generation, their workplace values remain diverse and rooted in their socio-economic environments.

Recruitment channels are one critical element for understanding Gen Z. Today’s young people are not in the habit of obtaining all of their information from career fairs, not traditional ones, not the classifieds either. Instead, they take jobs they find online. This may be via job boards, professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn, and, more recently, social media. According to studies, social media is now a significant influence on career decisions, especially in areas where relationships and networks matter [5]. It means that for employers, a recruitment strategy not only has to be digital, but it has to be made digital in a culturally relevant manner to those being targeted. In Europe, everyone uses formal job sites and trusts them; in the Middle East, a referral on WhatsApp, Instagram, or by your local community network carries much more value.

Another defining feature of Gen Z is their expectation for flexibility in the workplace. Flexibility does not only mean the possibility of remote work but also includes flexible schedules, hybrid models, and the ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities. Studies after the COVID-19 pandemic showed that hybrid work became the dominant model in many European countries and is increasingly seen as a requirement for younger employees [1]. At the same time, research in Middle Eastern contexts shows that office-based work remains highly valued, largely because of organizational cultures that emphasize visibility, hierarchy, and face-to-face trust [2]. The balance between flexibility and presence, therefore, becomes a cultural negotiation: Gen Z everywhere desires autonomy, but the way that autonomy is expressed differs by region.

Workplace values are also central to Gen Z’s identity as workers. Pan-European surveys show that diversity, inclusion, and CSR are no longer “nice-to-haves” but must-haves. Many of the young professionals I know say they would decline a job offer if an organization’s values didn’t match their own [2]. By contrast, Middle Eastern Gen Z values stability and financial benefits more highly, with CSR and sustainability coming second at times. This difference demonstrates the need for context-dependent HRM strategies. A company seeking to attract Gen Z in Europe might invest in sustainability programs, inclusive policies, and hybrid work systems, while one in the Middle East would need to foreground secure contracts, career progression, and family-oriented benefits. That being said, members of Gen Z have some shared expectations across regions. One of the most powerful motivators is still career advancement. Young people are looking for formalized opportunities for training, mentorship, and advancement. In the absence of such opportunities, they are frequently open to switching jobs. Meanwhile, digital recruitment and workplace technology are deemed the most fundamental. Globalization is thus on the one hand digitalizing, but at the same time it is also converging toward commonalities, although cultural issues unconsciously dictate priorities.

This study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature.

While extensive research has examined Generation Z in Western contexts such as Europe and North America, fewer studies have provided a direct comparison with the Middle East. However, two of these regions offer particularly interesting points of contrast: Europe has high levels of institutionalization and hence the most developed HR practices, compared to the Middle East, which is very different in terms of its cultural workplace norms, economic backdrop, and demographic dynamics. Body of knowledge and typical HRD problems. There is no such cross-regional analysis that hinders academic understanding and practical decision-making in HR. This research aims to bridge this gap and provide a nuanced view of Gen Z across different cultures by considering Europe and the Middle East.

- The objectives of this study are threefold:
  1. To explore the recruitment channels used by Generation Z in Europe and the Middle East.
  2. To analyze their preferences for work flexibility, including hybrid, remote, and office-based models.
  3. To examine the workplace values that shape their career decisions, such as job security, diversity, inclusion, and CSR.
- The following research questions were put out to direct this study:
  1. What are the primary determinants of Generation Z’s preference for HR strategies across Europe and the Middle East?
  2. How do contemporary recruitment channels (e.g., online job portals, social media) influence the attraction of Generation Z to HR roles in both regions?
  3. How does job flexibility, such as remote work and flexible working hours, influence Generation Z’s decisions regarding HR opportunities?
  4. How do values such as job security and corporate social responsibility (CSR) shape Gen Z’s choice of employers in Europe and the Middle East?
- From these questions, three hypotheses were developed:

H1: Generation Z in Europe is more likely to use modern hiring channels, such as online job platforms and social media, to find job opportunities, compared to Generation Z in the Middle East.

H2: Generation Z in Europe is more likely to prefer flexible work opportunities (remote work options and flexible working hours), compared to Generation Z in the Middle East.

H3: There are significant regional differences between Generation Z in Europe and the Middle East regarding key workplace values, such as the importance they place on job security, diversity and inclusion, CSR, and sustainability.

In conclusion, this introduction highlights the importance of research on Gen Z across geographies. It emphasizes their worldwide character but recognizes regional differences. It indicates the research void and presents the purposes, questions, and hypotheses of the study. In doing so, it sets the stage for a systematic comparison of HR strategies in Europe and the Middle East, and provides impetus for academics and practitioners dealing with the new workforce.

## Literature Review

### Recruitment Channels and Digitalization

Recruitment has come a long way in that time, and this has been strongly influenced by globalization and the digital age. Dema-

gogues: Print advertisements, career fairs Your father's channels are no longer dominant. "Digital natives" in Gen Z rely on on-line tools to investigate career options [6]. Research consistently suggests members of this age group use job websites and professional communities such as LinkedIn to find job opportunities and assess prospective employers [7].

Meanwhile, social media and the internet in general are playing an increasingly expanding role in recruitment. This resonates with research, which shows that it is not merely that social media encodes information, but that it maintains trust, shapes employer brand attitudes, and has an impact on application decisions [8, 9]. Social network-based recommendations continue to be very powerful in many markets, particularly in developing countries. Gen Z in some parts of the non-Western world considered social media a more trustworthy means of discovering "real" opportunities as opposed to formal channels [1]. Regional differences are also emphasized in the literature. Bencsik (2020) noted that in Central and Eastern Europe, structured ports are particularly favored by Gen Z and suggested that collectivist values among Middle Easterners enable them to rely on informal referrals and online communities. This is consistent with the work of who state that trust and loyalty are central HR practices in the Middle East, and where social networks are particularly strong [10]. These studies combined indicate that digital recruitment is indeed a global phenomenon, but the spread between formal job portals and social media differs by culture.

### **Work Flexibility and the Future of Employment**

Office lifestyle is another key issue for Gen Z; younger workers consider flexible working hours and locations as part of a standard package, not a special treat, as highlighte [1]. confirmed this by demonstrating that post-pandemic hybrid formats are the "new normal" in Western Europe and North America. Remote working is now one of the top choices for Gen Z job seekers, according to [2].

However, regional contrasts are also evident. Research found that Middle Eastern organizations are slower to adopt flexible practices, partly because of hierarchical management structures and cultural norms that emphasize physical presence [10, 11]. Support this observation, explaining that in societies like Turkey and Egypt, leadership and organizational culture remain strongly authority-driven, which limits acceptance of remote arrangements.

Still, there is evidence in some studies of increasing openness [12]. Kids around the Middle East, however, are becoming increasingly attuned to global norms and are beginning to expect greater flexibility. This transition is driven by technological innovation emphasized that HR technology tools help organizations lead hybrid teams effectively, despite traditional approaches being firmly entrenched in certain areas [13]. The overall literature seems to maintain that flexibility is a common requirement, but that it is expressed differently, as a right in Europe, and as an innovation to be gradually established in the Middle East.

### **Workplace Values: Job Security, CSR, Diversity, and Sustainability**

Values are at the core of what makes Gen Z distinctive. Studies across Europe show that diversity, inclusion, and corporate

social responsibility (CSR) are central to employment choices [14]. Described Gen Z as the "values-driven" generation, willing to reject jobs that conflict with personal beliefs [4]. Emphasized sustainability as a particularly strong concern in Asia and Europe, where younger workers are highly aware of climate change and environmental responsibility [15].

In contrast, literature from the Middle East points to a stronger emphasis on stability argue that job security remains the most important factor in HR decision-making for Gen Z in the region [10]. Similarly, highlight the importance of organizational loyalty and secure career paths in societies with strong collectivist traditions [11]. These findings suggest that, while Gen Z everywhere is global in outlook, regional values remain deeply rooted.

Another strand of literature looks at CSR and sustainability as competitive advantages. found that innovative HR practices integrating CSR help organizations attract Gen Z talent [4]. confirmed that Gen Z actively considers CSR in deciding whether to apply to or remain with a company [14]. Meanwhile, suggested that organizations failing to integrate such values risk losing credibility with younger employees [16]. In summary, these studies illustrate two different, yet not conflicting, aspects. Values of Gen Z in Europe associate with values like diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. Middle East Gen Z is more focused on security and financial stability. But both still want to see career progression and a chance to develop – again aligned with international studies [2, 3].

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Despite the burgeoning body of Generation Z literature, numerous voids in the literature persist. There have been many studies in the Western world, but few comparative studies between areas. To the best of my knowledge, while many papers cover one theme, such as recruitment or CSR, few consolidate different themes into a broader multi-country perspective. In addition, the majority of research is cross-sectional, looking at attitudes at one point in time, rather than changes in those attitudes as [17].

Two decades on, the leaning of recruitment in Europe and the Middle East follows that in previous studies, but peer reviewing offered integration, based on recruitment channels, flexibility, and values, of Europe and the Middle East more insight bridged into a conceptual framework. As it utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data, it adds to the literature in a balanced approach and offers practical implications for HRM practitioners and policy-makers.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

In order to explore the expectations of Europe and the Middle East Generation Z, the research used a mixed-methods approach. A mixed method was adopted since quantitative data on its own can uncover trends but often lacks the detail needed to explain underlying motivations, while qualitative results provide context and richness. Combining the two would lead to more robust and powerful conclusions [8]. The model combined quantitative data from surveys with qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews, thus ensuring an equilibrium of breadth and depth.

## Sample and Participants

The sample consisted of 204 survey respondents and six interview participants. Survey participants included 22.1% from Europe and 77.9% from the Middle East. Within the survey group, most respondents were between the ages of 26 and 28 (67.2%), followed by 22–25 years old (25%), and a smaller portion aged 18–21 (7.8%). In terms of educational attainment, 55.4% held a Bachelor's degree, 29.4% a Master's degree, 12.7% high school only, and 2.5% a Doctorate. This distribution suggests the findings mainly reflect the perspectives of late-stage Generation Z individuals, many of whom are either entering or already integrated into the workforce. In the interviews, as one example of a smaller sample study, three out of six participants were from Europe or the Middle East (the others were in Africa). This is not meant to be expanded to include more of the specific subjects and tests used in that country. Rather, it's intended to supply rich qualitative information that can illuminate or give context to some phenomena observed in the larger sample survey. Interviews were done by way of the web. They were tape-recorded with personal consent and later transcribed for analysis.

## Data Collection

The design of the survey instrument aimed to reflect critical aspects concerned with career choice among the Gen Z. Content ranged from job search source (job boards, social media, referrals, careers site, campus, job fairs), work mode preference (remote, hybrid, office), and values found at a place of employment (job security, diversity and inclusion, corporate social responsibility, sustainability). A mix of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions was used to make sure that structured responses were obtained, which could be statistically analyzed. The design of the survey drew on previous work on digital recruitment and Gen Z preferences [7].

Semi-structured interviews followed the same thematic framework, asking open-ended questions about how participants typically search for jobs, what type of work arrangement they prefer, and which values they prioritize when choosing an employer. Additional probes explored the reasons behind these choices, allowing participants to reflect on their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.

## Data Analysis

Statistical analysis. The database was analyzed using IBM SPSS 22 software. Distributions and statistics were used to describe demographic characteristics and general patterns of job search channels, work preferences, and workplace values. Chi-Square tests were applied to examine the differences of categorical variables (eg, job channels) and the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the ordinal variables (eg, workplace values) to test the hypotheses. The level of significance was 0.05. These are suitable tests for categorical or non-normally distributed data, and are in line with the nature of the responses obtained [19]. We conducted a thorough analysis and examination of interview transcripts for patterns. After several readings, recurring thoughts and themes were coded by hand. These codes were then combined to form larger themes, like "trust in referrals", "importance of flexibility", or "value for job security". Thematic results were compared with survey data to explain why certain responses came up in the interviews. Interpreting this mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence raised the reliability and

validity of our analysis by at least 100%" [18].

## Reliability and Validity

Precautions were also taken to improve the reliability and validity of the study. For the survey, items were pre-tested on a small number of participants to ensure clarity and relevance. During the interviews, an interview guide was employed to ensure some consistency among interviewees, although allowing for variation in the probes. A variety of methods were used to triangulate survey and interview data to increase reliability and reduce dependency on a single data source. Ethical issues such as informed consent and confidentiality were taken into account.

## Summary

The methodology was designed to balance statistical rigor with personal insights. The survey provided quantitative evidence of regional differences in Gen Z's employment expectations, while interviews added depth and nuance to these findings. The combination allowed for a more complete understanding of how HR strategies must be adapted to attract and retain Generation Z across diverse cultural settings.

## Results & Discussion

### Job Search Channels

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that Generation Z in Europe would rely more on online job portals, while Gen Z in the Middle East would depend more on social media for job searching. The survey results support this assumption in part. European respondents showed higher use of online job platforms such as LinkedIn, indeed, and Glassdoor, with 84.4% reporting frequent use, compared to 71.1% in the Middle East. Although the Chi-Square test indicated this difference was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), it suggests a clear preference for formalized recruitment portals in Europe.

By contrast, social media emerged as a much stronger recruitment channel in the Middle East. Almost half (46.5%) of Middle Eastern respondents reported that they had found or been offered jobs via social media platforms, compared to only 20% in Europe. This difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.001$ ), confirming the hypothesis. Other channels, such as networking and company career pages, were used in both regions but at similar rates. Job fairs, once a major recruitment tool, were nearly irrelevant, with less than 1% of respondents in either region relying on them.

The interviews provided further insight. One participant from Europe wrote, "I prefer to use job websites because I can apply directly and have a record of my system with them all in one place." And another mentioned the advantages of transparency: "In the case of platforms such as LinkedIn, it is easier to compare employers." But a Middle East respondent gave a different explanation: "I trust jobs that reach me through my network or social media. When a friend sends a link on WhatsApp or Instagram, you can be sure that it's reliable." These stories illustrate the different levels of trust that are found in different cultures. Moreover, in Ptolemaic societies, people place more emphasis on personal reference and less on formal written contracts [10].

The findings are further corroborated by the literature. The role of social networking media in global recruitment was highlight-

ed notes that whether Gen Z consumers engage with HR practices discriminately relies on their traditions claims that social media is not just a channel of information, it's a social filter that helps people trust Each of these findings is consistent with the findings of this study. As for Europe, more structured platforms prevail throughout, and in the Middle East, a social media personal recommendation is no small matter [7-9].

On the whole, H1 is partly supported. A more striking point of difference is monetary money. Europeans lean heavily towards online payment, while both places are greatly reliant on digital payment. The chief difference lies in the role of social media: essential in the Middle East but more so a replacement for networking hours in Europe. This means that HR managers need different strategies. European recruitment work must emphasize the use of job portals and websites designed for professionals, while in Middle Eastern recruitment, social media campaigns are preferred with community-based referral patterns as a natural result.

### Work Flexibility

The second hypothesis (H2) stated that Gen Z in Europe would prefer flexible working arrangements more strongly than their Middle Eastern peers. The survey findings confirm this trend. Hybrid work was the most popular choice in both regions, but with higher support in Europe (77.8%) compared to the Middle East (63.5%). Fully remote work was also more common in Europe (13.3%) than in the Middle East (11.3%). The most striking difference was in office-based work: 25.2% of Middle Eastern respondents preferred it, compared to only 8.9% in Europe. Although the Chi-Square test ( $p = 0.064$ ) fell short of statistical significance, the numbers reveal a clear regional pattern.

Interviews illustrated these differences. A European participant said, "Working from home saves me ten hours of commuting every week, and it makes me more productive." Another emphasized autonomy: "Remote work allows me to manage my tasks better." In the Middle East, however, participants stressed the value of presence: "Being in the office builds trust with my manager and shows respect," explained one respondent. Another noted, "I prefer the office because I feel isolated at home."

Literature also reflects this divide both reported that European Gen Z expect flexibility as a baseline condition [1, 7]. Confirmed that flexible work has become one of the main criteria for evaluating job offers [2]. In contrast, Harney and pointed out that Middle Eastern companies often retain traditional structures emphasizing hierarchy and face-to-face supervision [10, 11]. Added that in societies like Turkey and Egypt, authority-driven leadership limits remote work adoption.

However, signs of change are emerging [12]. find younger Middle Eastern employees increasingly being exposed to global standards and starting to clamour for flexibility. I very much like the changing trend. HR technologies and idea of hybrid models that don't hew to traditional practices [18]. In this respect, the author is optimistic. These findings lead to my conclusion that although everyone wants flexibility, not everyone gets it equally.

Therefore, H2 is partially supported. Hybrid work is the preference of Gen Z in both regions, but in Europe, it is more of a

remote plan, and there are actually staff in the office, still closer to the original office area for locations that employees want their offices in, if not precisely at home. HR managers need to keep that in mind. In Europe, not providing flexibility may lead young workers to leave; In the Middle Eastern countries, however, a gradual introduction of hybrid models and working modes is both practical and culturally acceptable.

### Workplace Values

The third hypothesis (H3) hypothesized that: differences between Europe and the Middle East concerning Gen Z workers 'workplace values. This hypothesis is powerfully substantiated by the survey: In diversity and inclusion, CSR (Corporate social responsibility) & sustainability, Three European respondents scored higher than those from the Middle East. Meanwhile, Middle Easterners prioritized job security and financial stability.

The Mann-Whitney U test confirmed these differences were statistically significant. For job security, Europeans had a mean rank of 120.5 compared to 97.4 for Middle Eastern participants ( $p = 0.011$ ). For diversity and inclusion, the difference was sharper ( $p = 0.002$ ). CSR produced the strongest result ( $p < 0.001$ ), with Europeans reporting much higher importance. Sustainability followed the same pattern, with significant differences at  $p < 0.001$ .

Interviews captured the personal meaning of these values. A European participant said, "I want to work for a company that really cares about the environment." Another emphasized: "A diverse team makes work more creative and fairer." By contrast, a Middle Eastern respondent said, "The first thing I think about is job security. If I cannot rely on the job, nothing else matters." Another added: "CSR is good, but for me, salary and benefits come first." These narratives illustrate how economic and cultural contexts shape values.

The literature reflects the same [14]. Showed that CSR strongly influences Gen Z's employment decisions [15]. Highlighted sustainability as a defining concern in Asia and Europe. Found that CSR-oriented HR practices attract younger workers. In contrast, Harney emphasized the enduring role of job security in Middle Eastern HR [17]. Warned that companies ignoring CSR risk will lose credibility with Gen Z, especially in Europe.

Taken together, H3 is strongly supported. The results show a dual priority: European Gen Z is more values-driven, while Middle Eastern Gen Z is more security-driven. For HR, the implication is straightforward. In Europe, employer branding should highlight CSR, diversity, and sustainability. In the Middle East, emphasis should be on stability, secure contracts, and financial benefits, with CSR positioned as an added advantage rather than a central feature.

### Summary

To provide a clear overview of the study's main findings, a summary table was created. While the detailed discussion above highlights the nuances of each hypothesis and the evidence supporting or rejecting it, the table below presents the results in a concise form. It links the research objectives, hypotheses, and tested channels or values with their acceptance or rejection status, along with the reasoning behind each outcome.

**Table 1:** (Source: author's own work)

Objective/Question	Hypothesis	Channel	Accepted/Rejected	Reasoning
Research Objective 1: To identify the primary determinants of Generation Z's preference for HR strategies across Europe and the Middle East.	H1	Job Web	Partially Accepted	Europeans use job web platforms slightly more than Middle Easterners.
		Social media	Accepted	Middle Easterners use social media significantly more than Europeans.
Research Objective 2: To examine how contemporary recruitment channels influence the attraction of Generation Z to HR roles in both regions.	H1	Networking	Accepted	Networking is equally important in both regions.
		Traditional Recruitment	Rejected	No significant difference in the use of traditional recruitment methods.
		Career Pages	Accepted	Similar use of career pages across regions.
		Job Fairs	Rejected	No significant difference in job fair usage.
Research Objective 3: To assess the preference for flexibility in job roles across regions.	H2	Work Type Preferences	Marginally Accepted	A trend towards flexible work preferences in Europe, but not fully statistically significant.
Research Objective 4: To evaluate the regional differences in values (job security, diversity, CSR) between Generation Z in Europe and the Middle East.	H3	Job Security	Accepted	Europeans place greater importance on career growth and professional development related to job security.
		Diversity	Accepted	Europeans value diversity more highly than Middle Easterners.
		CSR	Accepted	Europeans value CSR significantly more than Middle Easterners.
		Sustainability	Accepted	Europeans prioritize environmental sustainability more than Middle Easterners.

As shown in the Table, the study partially confirmed the first hypothesis (H1): online job portals were slightly more common in Europe, while social media was significantly more important in the Middle East. The second hypothesis (H2) was only marginally supported, with a visible trend toward flexibility in Europe but without strong statistical significance. The third hypothesis (H3) was strongly supported, as European respondents consistently valued diversity, CSR, and sustainability more than their Middle Eastern counterparts, who emphasized job security and stability. This summary reinforces the need for culturally sensitive HR strategies. European HR practices should focus on flexibility and values-driven policies, while Middle Eastern practices should highlight security, financial stability, and a trusted recruitment channel.

### Conclusion

This study explored how Gen Z in the Europe and Middle East region perceives recruitment channels, work flexibility, and workplace values, and implications of this for Human Resource

(HR) strategies. In a mixed-method study, it was found that by integrating survey data from 204 participants alongside six semi-structured interviews, 'Numerical Psychology' was provided with personal thoughts.

The results demonstrate clear contrasts between the two regions. In Europe, application tracking is the norm; hybrid and remote work is a given; and diversity, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and sustainability are strong factors influencing work choices. But in the Middle East, social media has a more central role in recruitment, office presence is more important, and job security and financial stability trump broader social values. These patterns are, however, at the surface of deeper cultural and economic organizations: Europe's digital infrastructure and progressive work policies have normalized flexibility and value-driven labor, while the Middle East emphasizes stable, hierarchical organizations based on trusted personal relationships.

At the same time, common ground exists. Across both regions,

Generation Z places a strong emphasis on career development, training opportunities, and digital tools for recruitment. These shared expectations suggest that while strategies must be culturally adapted, there are global trends that HR managers cannot ignore [3]. Notes, Gen Z is both the most global and the most diverse generation so far, meaning that HR must address universal themes while respecting local contexts. On a broader level, it demonstrates to us that HR strategies cannot be universal. Rather, successful strategies will combine innovation with respect for cultural context. This adds to academic debate by pointing towards the cross-regional heterogeneity of Gen Z and gives practical points of support for employers.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made for HR managers and policymakers:

#### Tailor Recruitment Strategies

In the European market, you should concentrate on looking for serious potential employees at official job websites and on professional network sites such as LinkedIn. And these are seen as trusted and effective by Gen Z candidates. In the Middle East, increase recruiting through social media outreach and local networking communities. Use channels like WhatsApp, Instagram, and local digital communities where young professionals are more trusting.

#### Equitable Flexible Work Policies by Context, not Country

Hybrid working in Europe should be an accepted norm, not just a nice-to-have. If they don't want to become uncompetitive in terms of the talent war for Generation Z, employers would do well to offer such flexibility [19]. A Step-by-step application of a flexible work policy should be introduced in the Middle East. Even as hybrid work becomes more common, the value of office time lingers. A blended model that respects familiar expectations but retains a certain measure of freedom should be the right way to go.

#### Align Employer Branding with Values

For European Gen Z, CSR, sustainability, and diversity programs must be central to employer branding. Companies should actively communicate their initiatives in these areas, as many young applicants will evaluate job offers based on alignment with personal values. For Middle Eastern Gen Z, job stability, financial rewards, and career progression should be emphasized. CSR can be presented as an additional benefit, but should not replace core assurances of security.

#### Invest in Career Development Globally

Whether you're in the U.S. or not, the possibility of promotion and upward mobility is a common desire among the working population. Training programs, mentorship, and career paths must be not only created but actively offered by organizations, with well-organized training and mentoring programs and clear, transparent career paths that illustrate how an individual can evolve through an organization over time. In taking such steps, organizations not only engage the interest of the all-important emerging Gen Z workforce, but also create a working environment in which staff are more likely to remain. This, in turn, greatly mitigates the negative impacts of costly employee turnover and results in a more stable and higher-performing work

environment.

### Leverage HR Technology

Both regions can benefit from technology-driven HR practices, from digital recruitment platforms to tools supporting hybrid work. As highlights, such tools help bridge cultural differences by providing transparency, efficiency, and adaptability [13]. These guidelines highlight the importance of context-specific HRD practices. Employers who acknowledge both the similarities and differences in Generation Z's expectations will be best placed to attract, engage, and keep hold of what is fast becoming a candidate pool of enormous potential. For policymakers, the findings imply that labor market policies need to move as well: while European policies have to continue to support flexible work arrangements and value-based employment, Middle Eastern policies should focus on building trust in digital recruitment and on increasing the availability of job security structures.

### Limitations and Future Research

Every research project has its limitations, and this study is no exception. While the findings contribute valuable insights into Generation Z's expectations and workplace values, several constraints should be acknowledged when interpreting the results. The first limitation concerns the sample composition. The survey included 204 participants, but the distribution was not balanced between the two regions: 77.9% were from the Middle East and only 22.1% from Europe. This imbalance means that regional comparisons may be influenced by the stronger representation of one group. Although statistical tests were used to reduce bias, a more even sample would strengthen the reliability of cross-regional differences [19, 20].

A second limitation relates to the nature of the data. The study relied on self-reported surveys and interviews. While these methods provide valuable personal perspectives, they are also subject to bias. Participants may overstate or understate certain views depending on social desirability, memory, or personal attitudes at the time of answering note, generational research often struggles with the gap between what people say and what they actually do in practice.

A third limitation is the cross-sectional design. The study captured Gen Z's expectations at a single point in time. However, workplace attitudes are dynamic and may shift as individuals gain more experience, as labor markets change, or as external shocks (e.g., pandemics or economic crises) reshape opportunities. A cross-sectional snapshot cannot show how preferences might evolve over time.

Another limitation concerns the scope of the regions studied. While Europe and the Middle East provide useful contrasts, they do not represent the full diversity of global Gen Z. Other regions—such as Asia, Africa, or Latin America—may reveal different patterns. For example, studies in Asia have shown that sustainability is a top concern for Gen Z, sometimes even more than in Europe. Without including these regions, the global generalizability of the findings remains limited.

Finally, the study's methodological choices should be considered. While the mixed-methods design strengthened validity, the interview sample was limited to only six participants. This small

number cannot represent all possible perspectives within the two regions. Instead, the interviews should be seen as illustrative rather than representative.

### Future Research

Building on these limitations, future studies could adopt several strategies. First, larger and more balanced samples across regions would improve the accuracy of cross-regional comparisons. Future research should ensure equal representation between Europe and the Middle East, and ideally expand to include other regions.

Second, longitudinal studies would provide a deeper understanding of how Gen Z's expectations change over time. Tracking the same individuals as they enter, establish, and advance in the workforce would reveal whether preferences for flexibility, job security, or CSR remain stable or evolve with experience.

Third, comparing different generations in the same regions—such as Millennials, Generation X, and Gen Z—would help distinguish what is truly unique about Gen Z. This would address the question of whether some expectations are generational or simply reflections of broader labor market changes.

Fourth, future studies could explore the role of organizational practices in shaping values. For example, do young employees change their views after working in companies that emphasize CSR or sustainability? Understanding how organizational context interacts with generational preferences would be highly valuable for HR practitioners.

Finally, research should look at policy implications. Governments and institutions play a major role in shaping labor market structures. Comparative studies examining how policy environments (e.g., labor laws, social benefits, digital infrastructure) influence Gen Z's expectations could add an important dimension to existing knowledge.

In conclusion, while this study has limitations in sample balance, methodology, and scope, it provides a foundation for further exploration. Future research that is broader, deeper, and more comparative will help build a more complete picture of Generation Z across regions and guide both organizations and policymakers in designing effective strategies for engaging the workforce of the future.

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