

ENGAGING GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES IN INDIAN IT SECTOR: THE ROLE OF JOB CRAFTING

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z, the youngest generation has a new set of workplace expectations, presenting an amalgam of challenges and opportunities for employers in India. Emergence and proliferation of Generation Z as newest workplace employees necessitate further research on employee engagement. Those who can comprehensibly engage Generation Z employees will be able to strengthen their future by building a valuable road map. IT companies of India are looking for ways to fully engage this new influx of young demographic dividend. Much has been researched about Millennials, but there is limited evidence on how to engage the upcoming Generation Z employees for effective results. In incorporating structural equation modelling on 209 employees, this paper came up with the finding that job crafting offered to Generation Z employees has a positive and significant impact on employee engagement. However, job crafting did not produce any significant impact on affective commitment, a unique finding that exemplifies the pandemic crisis. The model offers a logical ground suggesting that job crafting is a strong predictor of employee engagement in the Indian IT sector in context of the newest generation of workers. The implications for theory and practice as well as its limitations and future research directions conclude the paper.

KEYWORDS: *Affective Commitment, Employee Engagement, Generation Z, Job Crafting, Structural Equation Modelling.*

INTRODUCTION

With new generation emerging over time, it is important to capture the new insights of the newer generation towards the workplace practices. Of particular interest in this research is the new generation cohort- Generation Z. They have just entered the workforce (Deas, 2019) and thus it is an opportune time to study, as it is extremely relevant for HR managers and leaders to figure out ways to leverage employee engagement, as this unique generation has a new set of priorities and expectations. They are now entering the workforce with a new voice and the ability to create a

change for betterment. It is vital to understand that every generation has distinctive needs that are related to the workplace (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

Generation Z, also termed as 'Generation Me' (Bennett et al., 2012), Digital Natives (Prensky, 2012), 'Internet Generation' (Walker & Lewis, 2009), and 'Mobile Mavens' (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015) is an intriguing generation cohort and refers to those born after 1995 (Fister Gale, 2015; Lanier, 2017; Wood 2013). They are the post Millennials who are ready to explore the workplaces and constitute the biggest chunk of the population pie chart (Miller & Lu, 2018). They are determined to make their own paths and enrich their life with experiences. Having grown up in an environment of diversity, profuse opportunities, collaboration through virtual connectivity, they expect everything to happen instantly. They have never known a world without the internet and are constantly hooked on the online social handles. They are avid users of technology and digital tools (Fister Gale, 2015) and are curious, creative, entrepreneurial in nature and less driven by money (Schawbel, 2014). They feel valued when their opinions are heard (Slavin, 2015) and want to build their own things and create an impact. The research by Pew Research Centre (2014) came up with a finding that they are far more accepting and open-minded generation ever. It constitutes the most educated and sophisticated people (Karasek & Hysa, 2020). They are considered as initiators who love to work with challenges around, have a practical outlook, and are extremely ambitious (Bencsick et al., 2016) with an ability to do multi-tasking while being productive at the same time (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). They look forward to working in a collaborative environment (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and resolve the issues for a better today.

IT SECTOR IN INDIA

Information technology has a significant role to play in the Indian economy, as it employed more than 4.5 million people in 2021. According to Gartner, the IT spending in India is estimated to reach US \$ 98.5 billion in 2022. As per National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) reports, the IT and BPM sector in India is estimated at about US \$ 177 billion in 2019 and is expected to be US \$ 350 billion by 2025. Moreover, India has been able to attract investors from major countries in the form of foreign direct investment worth US \$ 44.91 billion in March 2020. For instance, Microsoft is coming with great investments in India for building products and services for boosting digital innovation. IT also contributes to the maximum in the Indian service industry. In 2020, it produced 8% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) alone. The IT industry service exports from India accounted for 149.1 billion US dollars in 2021. The emergence of new technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, data analytics, cloud computing, blockchain, social media, and virtual tools have opened a pool of opportunities for the youth of India. Working independently, remotely with great degree of flexibility are now the set of requirements of the global young talent pool amid pandemic crisis (Haak- Saheem, 2020). Considering this inevitable nature of the industry, it is extremely important to have employees that are engaged and motivated in the IT sector. Many IT giants are eager to know the ways to foster employee engagement, in order to motivate and retain the employees in the long run. Considering the change in workplace practices after the onset of pandemic crisis, it is important to make employee-friendly work practices for effective results (Sadhna et al., 2020).

It is now an opportune time to study the factors that influence employees of Generation Z towards employee engagement, resulting in organizational success. Due to their recent entry at the workplace, no much work is available in the literature, it is, therefore, important to offer pragmatic recommendations that employers can use to redraft employee engagement drivers, so that they resonate closely with Generation Z. Organizations need to realize that the same rules for employee engagement for all the generation will not work. The benefits of empowering employees by working on work engagement have been discussed for more than half of the century (Argyris, 1957). Companies hoping to compete and remain competitive, must consider employee engagement for getting the desired results.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The nature of work in organizations is becoming complex, dynamic, much more flexible, and virtual. There is an increasing trend to know the impact of workplace practices for engaging and retaining employees in the long run. HR managers are now redrafting the company's HR practices and policies to build a more engaging and motivating culture for the benefit of the organization and its employees. Particularly, South Asian countries need to integrate effective HR practices to gain competitive advantage on regional, national and global level (Wajeeth, 2020).

The benefits of empowering employees by enhancing work engagement are crucial elements to consider in any organization (Argyris, 1957). If employees find a good match with their goals and values, they tend to exhibit a higher degree of engagement and commitment. Engaged employees are as described as 'self-in-roles employees' as in the role performances, they are attentive, focused, and connected. The need of the hour today is to engage and retain workers effectively, especially when it comes to Generation Z, which is quite vocal about what they want and what they don't want. The main contribution of the theoretical part lies in the application of Kahn's engagement theory (1990). Kahn defined employee engagement as "harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". Nancy R. Lockwood (2007) defined work engagement as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in the organization, how hard they work and how long they stay." It also refers to "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Albrecht (2010) described employee engagement as the willingness to work for attaining the given work goals and also the organizational goals. Shuch & Wollard (2010) explained employee engagement in a well-integrated manner as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed towards organizational outcomes.". In other words, employee engagement as an amalgam of psychological state and behaviour, which acts as a clear line of sight for determining organization's future in terms of achieving its mission and goals. Anitha (2014) defined employee engagement as "the level of commitment and involvement employees have towards their organization and its values". Kahn's employee engagement theory is unique, as it encompasses the rational choice of an employee to contribute their true self while deriving meaning from their work. Kahn's work has been referred by many researchers highlighting how employees feel about their work, as well as their work environment (Mone et al., 2011; Saks

&Gruman, 2014). According to all these findings, if employees are engaged at the workplace, they exhibit their full selves including aspects related to cognition, emotion, and physical into the performance of a role. Therefore, employee engagement is a vital factor to consider as it leads to organizational success, and gaining competitive advantage. It is also linked with innovation and organizational effectiveness. For losses and low productivity, many organizations consider 'engagement gap' as the important reason. Interestingly, employee engagement is considered as a high order motivational construct as it much more than job satisfaction and job involvement (Christian et al., 2011).

Renowned companies in India and abroad have started conducting surveys and studies to foster the employee engagement drivers, as employee engagement is strongly associated with reduced turnover (Christian et al., 2011). Employee engagement also leads to the right kind of workplace experience that eventually results in meaningful work (Pandita, 2019). Many employers driving radical changes in the organization have reported lack of meaningful engagement leading to frustration at the workplace (Bennett et al., 2018). The results of Friesenbichler & Selenko (2017) also claimed that employee engagement leads to better firm performance and influence the work behaviour in a positive way. Forbes 500 companies have considered employee engagement as a significant attribute and numerous researchers have claimed that employee engagement helps organizations gain a competitive advantage (Christian et al., 2011). By keeping employees engaged, employees feel valued in the organization which results in employee wellbeing (Shantz et al., 2016). The organizations having engaged employees enjoy good perception and attention in the corporate landscape (Barik & Kochar, 2017).

JOB CRAFTING

Employee engagement and job crafting together can make a robust HR system. Research has shown that job crafting leads to employee engagement and job performance (Robledo et al., 2019). Traditional job work design consists of a top-down creation of work (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), wherein managers decide the tasks for their subordinates (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Job enrichment encourages redesigning of the job to make it free from monotony and redundant work. Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) coined the term job crafting that offers opportunities to employees to design their jobs, while considering their skills, values, interests, and available resources. It refers to the bottom-up approach, where employees are given autonomy to design or change the elements of job and relationships related to work and social environment. This opportunity enables the employees to design their jobs as per their own preferences based on their performance and abilities. The findings of prior research revealed that employees' job crafting has a positive effect on employees' task performance (Tim et al., 2015). Through job crafting, organizations can assist employees in balancing job demands and resources, leading to employee wellbeing (Sen, 2018). When employees are given the freedom to design their jobs, they are more likely to develop a higher level of enthusiasm and pride. It further assists employees to identify themselves with the value of the organization, while developing a bond leading to organizational commitment (Minda & Mudlo-Glagolska, 2019). Job crafting has a positive effect on adaptive and proactive behaviour (Baik et al., 2018), and it assists the employees to manage the squeeze effectively during organizational change (Petrout et al., 2018).

Organizations that are looking forward to increasing employee engagement believe in optimizing work designs (Eldor et al., 2020; Shantz et al., 2016). Previous research associated job crafting with enhanced work effectiveness, work performance, and work engagement (Park et al., 2020; Petrou et al., 2015, Petrou et al., 2012, Tim set al., 2012).

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment refers to the feelings and beliefs of the employees at their workplace about the organization as a whole. The three main dimensions of organizational commitment are affective commitment, commitment continuance, and normative commitment. Employees with strong affective commitment will work in the organizations as they want to, employees with continuance commitment will work because they need to and eventually employees with normative commitment will stay because they ought to. Employees having affective commitment are emotionally involved with the employers and are willing to do things beyond their job description (Purba et al., 2015). This research is on the affective dimension of the organizational commitment that is associated with employees' beliefs, identification, and involvement in their respective organization. Affective commitment refers to the employees' attachment and involvement at their workplaces (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Navarro et al., 2018). Wang & Zhang (2020) identified affective commitment as the crucial component of organizational commitment as it refers to the employees' emotions attached to the organizational values. Mercurio (2015) argued that affective commitment is an actual commitment as it evolves within the employee on its own. Prior studies have highlighted the strong correlation between affective commitment and lower turnover, leading to an increase in organizational performance (Moldogaziev & Silvia, 2015). Researchers have recognized affective commitment with organizational outcomes (Aggarwal et al., 2020; Chang & Chen, 2011; Kehoe & Wright, 2013;) such as employee performance (Martini et al., 2018). Study by Kim and Beehr (2018) states that strong job crafting is positively related to organizational commitment. Also, some of the studies done in the past have provided concrete evidence of job crafting relating to work commitment and lower turnover intention (Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018). The recent research by Oprea et al. (2022) highlighted that job crafting reduces the employees' intention to leave the organization.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Recent researches relating to generational cohorts have claimed that Generation Z employees will call for robust changes in the workplace. Generation Z will constitute 20% of the workforce in the next four years. Bloomberg Report claims that Generation Z accounts for 32% of the global population, out of which 472 million are from India. According to the UN, India has the world's largest youth population with 64% of the working-age group (2020). Revising and revamping strategies to engage Generation Z is inevitable, in order to effectively utilize this workforce. By developing effective HR practices and HRM systems, a variety of workplace challenges can be addressed to attract and retain this young talent. Many organizations have already started their research in this direction. Also, Generation Z prefers to select employers very carefully, as they are constantly looking for flexibility, openness, transparency, and meaningful work. Now contemporary workplaces need to redefine their way of doing work for being effective across a wide range of contexts, as Generation Z employees do not look for pay checks only, but they also look for personal fulfilment (Aggarwal et al., 2020). Companies are

therefore searching for employee engagement opportunities to get the most out of Generation Z employees.

The study makes three contributions to the existing literature. First, this research is the first of its kind to explore HR work design practices for engaging Generation Z. Second the study is an attempt to know how interesting elements of job crafting create a favourable work culture conducive for these youngest employees. In other words, the paper is an attempt to indicate the inevitable need of offering job crafting to always engage Generation Z employees in the IT sector of India. Lastly, the research highlighted significant findings on the association between job crafting and affective commitment.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

For researchers, practitioners, and academicians, it is crucial to understand this smartphone Generation Z as they are completely different from other generations in terms of time management, behaviour, and attitudes. The keywords that define this generation are freedom, integrity, speed, innovation, and customization. Though extensive and interesting research is done on Millennials- Generation Y in the past, now it is essential to understand that what worked for the previous generation cohort in the past might not work for evolving Generation Z employees. Workplaces have a huge opportunity to take advantage of this unique demographic dividend, to keep them engaged, and make a win-win proposition. The objective of the paper is to find drivers of employee engagement to engage the youngest generation cohort- Generation Z at IT workplace in India. This pertinent empirical study aims to explore the relationship between job crafting and employee engagement and studies its impact on affective commitment. The two main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the enablers of Generation Z employees' engagement in Indian IT sector.
2. To assess the relationship of job crafting with employee engagement and affective commitment.

Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Job crafting offered to Generation Z employees has a positive and significant impact on employee engagement

H2: Job crafting offered to Generation Z employees has a positive and significant impact on affective commitment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a questionnaire to collect primary data from Generation Z employees in Delhi, NCR for testing the proposed hypotheses and validate the same. For this study, random sampling was implemented on Generation Z employees working in IT companies in Delhi, NCR region. It took five months to complete the data collection process from November 2021- March 2022. The structured questionnaire was distributed to 487 employees. After performing the initial screening, 285 respondents were dropped due to missing data and unengaged responses. However, only those participants who mentioned 'yes' to the screening questions namely – whether they are working as full-time employees with the organization? Whether they grew up with smart gadgets and computers, whether their age was between 20-27 years and whether they

are aware of workplace practices in their respective organization? Were admitted to the main sample.

The first section of the questionnaire incorporates age, gender, education, designation, experience, income and region. The second section contains three constructs adapted from literature having different scales of measurement. Following are the details of the scale used:

Job crafting: Job crafting was measured with a scale adapted from Tims et al. (2012). Some of the items are “I try to develop my capabilities, “I ask colleagues for advice”. Answering categories ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The Cronbach alpha of this factor was 0.884, which validated the reliability of the scale.

Employee engagement: Employee engagement was measured with the scale adapted from the Utrecht work engagement scale. Some of the items are “At my work, I feel bursting with energy at work”, “My job inspires me”. Answering categories ranged from 0 (never) to 6 (always). The Cronbach alpha of this factor was 0.917, which validated the reliability of the scale.

Affective commitment: It was measured with a scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1996). Some of the adapted items are “I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”, “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning”. Answering categories ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The Cronbach alpha of this factor was 0.864, which validated the reliability of the scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the participants were male (65.1%), while 34.9% of the respondents were female. The majority of the respondents were aged between 22-26 years (69.4%), while 30.6% of the respondents were in the age group 19-21 years. 81.3% of the respondents were single, while 18.7% were married. Most of them were graduates (64.1%), followed by postgraduates (23%) and other qualifications (12.9%). All the respondents were working in lower-level management as Trainee (16.2%), Inside Sales Representative (58.9%) and Assistant Manager(24.9%).The maximum number of participants were having an income between 3-5 lakhs (65.1%), followed by above 5 lakhs (19.6%) and less than 3 lakhs (15.3%). Finally, most of the respondents were from Noida (31.6%), followed by Gurugram (28.7%), Faridabad (21.5%) and Delhi (18.2%).Table 1 depicts the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Categorical Construct	Item	Frequency (n=209)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	73	34.9
	Male	136	65.1
Age	19-21 years	64	30.6
	22-26years	145	69.4
Marital Status	Single	170	81.3
	Married	39	18.7
Education	Postgraduate	48	23
	Graduate	134	64.1
	Others	27	12.9

Designation	Assistant Manager	52	24.9
	Inside sales representatives	123	58.9
	Trainee	34	16.2
Experience	Less than 2 years	59	28.2
	2-4 years	101	48.4
	Above 4 years	49	23.4
Income	Less than 3 lakhs	32	15.3
	3 lakhs to 5 lakhs	136	65.1
	5 lakhs and above	41	19.6
Region	Delhi	38	18.2
	Noida	66	31.6
	Gurugram	60	28.7
	Faridabad	45	21.5

Note: Source: Author's compilation

The data analysis section was performed under two stages. In the first stage, a preliminary analysis was done to check the suitability of the data. Before reaching out to the respondents, the pre-testing of the questionnaire was done by two subject experts for enhancing the content validity. Thereafter, a pilot study on 72 sample size was conducted. Afterward minor modifications for better clarity were gauged for deriving effective results on the main sample. In the second stage, exploratory factor analysis was performed, followed by confirmatory factor analysis to validate the extracted factors. The two purposes of using EFA were to check whether the items are loaded correctly on the corresponding factors and to confirm the number of factors extracted by eigen values (Hair et al., 1998). A total of 32 variables from three constructs were identified from the existing literature. It resulted in three clear factors with 18 variables, and the rest were deleted due to low factor loadings.

Preliminary analysis was done including the multivariate outliers (Byrne, 2010) by using Mahalanobis Distance (D^2). The results did not show any multivariate outliers. Preliminary analysis also included the checking of normality of data with the help of skewness and kurtosis. The results of descriptive analysis reflected value for each statement within the prescribed range of ± 2 (Garson, 2012). Hence, there was no issue in the normality in data. To identify common method bias, the data was collected at two stages. In the first stage, the data was collected for independent variables with a gap of two weeks, followed by data collection of dependent variables namely employee engagement and affective commitment. It was conducted to minimize the effect of Common Method Bias (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009). All the manifested variables were constraint to unrotated one single factor using exploratory factor analysis, exhibiting a variance of 24.87%, not exceeding 50% of the total variance reflecting the absence of CMB.

As suggested by Cautin and Lilienfeld (2015), the proposed associations need to be justified scientifically. Considering this, EFA was applied using Maximum Likelihood as an extraction method based on eigen values greater than one (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Also, it helped to analyse the goodness of fit for factor solution (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Varimax method of orthogonal rotation was employed to extract the factors. The values of Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity came out as .848, which is more than the cut-off value

of 0.6 (Kaiser&Rice, 1974) and is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. The results of EFA showed that all the variables have standardized factor loading exceeding 0.5 (Guadagnoli &Velicer, 1988). The results of EFA rendered three distinct factors namely ‘job crafting’, ‘employee engagement’, and ‘affective commitment’, explaining 65.61 % of the variance, which exceeded the minimum acceptable critical value (Osborne, 2008).

To test the proposed hypothesized model, the reliability and the validity of the measurement model are established. The reliability of the factors is estimated by Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and its validity is established using Gaskin’s validity toolkit estimates. A result of Table 2 indicates high internal consistency as, as the coefficient of composite reliability (CR) is more than the critical value of 0.7, for each unobserved variable (Nunnally &Bernstein, 1967). Also, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all the constructs is more than 0.5, and the standardized factor loadings for all the items also exceed 0.5. As mentioned by Fornell& Larcker (1981), for having convergent validity the value of CR should be more than the value of 0.7, AVE should be more than 0.5 and CR should be more than AVE. Therefore, the proposed relationships supportand confirm the presence of convergent validity, as mentioned in Table 2.

TABLE 2: MEASUREMENT MODEL

Construct		Operationalization	Mean	SD	Loadings	CR	AVE	Source
Job crafting	JC1	I try to develop my capabilities.	3.32	0.88	0.57	0.88	0.55	Tims et al. (2012)
	JC2	I try to develop myself professionally.	3.39	0.87	0.58			
	JC3	I try to learn new things at work.	3.31	1.02	0.62			
	JC4	I decide on my own how I do things.	3.20	0.87	0.51			
	JC5	When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as project co-worker.	3.21	0.85	0.69			
	JC6	When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects.	3.35	0.85	0.63			

	JC7	I try to make my work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between the aspects of my job.	3.24	0.85	0.61			
Employee engagement	EE1	I am bursting with energy at work.	3.31	0.97	0.69	0.91	0.60	Schaufeli et al.(2002)
	EE2	I am enthusiastic about my job.	3.37	0.97	0.73			
	EE3	My job inspires me.	3.58	0.85	0.66			
	EE4	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	3.75	1.01	0.67			
	EE5	I feel happy when I work intensely.	3.70	1.05	0.72			
	EE6	I am proud of work that I do.	3.61	1.10	0.63			
	EE7	I get carried away when In working.	3.60	1.02	0.61			
Affective commitment	AC1	I would be happy to spend the rest of my career here.	4.23	0.81	0.78	0.87	0.62	Allen and Meyer (1996).
	AC2	I enjoy discussing organization with people.	4.29	0.83	0.69			
	AC3	I really feel as if the organization problems are my own.	4.12	0.87	0.72			
	AC4	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning.	4.23	0.95	0.68			

Thereafter, the discriminant validity was verified by methods based on a cut-off value of 0.85 (Kline, 2015) and the square root of AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results mentioned in Table 3 represent that both criteria are met for supporting the discriminant validity.

TABLE 3: DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	CR	AVE	JV	EE	AC
JC	0.878	0.546	0.739		
EE	0.912	0.599	0.127	0.774	
AC	0.866	0.620	-0.055	0.036	0.787

Abbreviations: JC, job crafting; EE, employee engagement; AC, affective commitment

Note: Bold off diagonal value represents the square root of AVE.

The proposed relationships were evaluated using the structural equation modelling technique (SEM). Considering model fit indices (CMIN/DF= 2.322; AGFI= 0.828; GFI= 0.871; CFI=0.926), the structural model had an acceptable fit. Table 4 depicts that one out of two hypotheses was supported, H1 (job crafting offered to Generation Z employees has a positive and significant impact on employee engagement). However, H2 (job crafting offered to Generation Z employees has no significant impact on affective commitment).

TABLE 4: STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

	Relationships	Estimate	S.E.	p-value	Decision
H1	EE<--- JC	.140	.083	.042	Accepted
H2	AC<---JC	-.068	.075	0.330	Not accepted

Note: Source: Author's Compilation

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study brings into focus the workplace practice that influences employee engagement of Generation Z and how we can nurture this generation of change-makers. It is widely accepted that having engaged employees is critical to organizational effectiveness and workplace productivity. The study enriches the literature by providing more systematic insights about Generation Z, which is now a considerate segment at the workplaces that hold the key to sustained success.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study has contributed theoretically and empirically in advancing previous research by offering two key takeaways for theory. First, the paper offers pioneer insights into engaging Generation Z employees by fostering job crafting. Second, the analysis of the second hypothesis reveals that there is no significant relationship between job crafting and affective commitment, in context to Generation Z employees in Indian IT sector. The findings further suggest that job crafting and employee engagement can be reinvigorated for enhancing workplace outcomes. Also, this study is the first of its kind to examine the workplace practices and its association with employee engagement in context to Generation Z employees, which has not been raised in previous research for enhancing or inhibiting workplace outcomes.

Through the lens of Kahn's employee engagement, the study suggests that job crafting is extremely crucial for Generation Z employees. The results derived in this study, yielded a good fit and explained a considerable amount of variance in the predicted variables. Previous research

has examined the drivers of employee engagement for Millennials, but this present research is about new young job entrants. The findings also suggest an elaboration of Kahn's employee engagement theory to acknowledge the drivers of employee engagement more explicitly and on the extended range of outcomes (Pradhan et al., 2018). As stated by Albrecht et al. (2018), it is important to identify processes to build sustainable organizational engagement capability. Thus, this paper identified job crafting as one of the ways to foster employee engagement of Generation Z employees.

The study makes a meaningful contribution to the employee engagement theories in the field of human resource management. These dimensions have received scarce scholarly attention, this paper has answered the call of (Filatrovi & Attiq, 2020), and where in it was suggested to find the drivers of employee engagement of Generation Z. Thus, the proposed study can extend this work, by accentuating the relationship from an employee perspective. This research, therefore, can unfold the reality, making it extremely relevant and useful for academicians and practitioners, who are keen to understand how job crafting influences employee engagement, as Generation Z employees have distinct needs and priorities. However, the study has revealed a completely different result in the Indian context stating that job crafting does not have a significant impact on affective commitment, unlike the research findings of Minda & Kasprzak (2018) and Wang et al. (2018). There are possible reasons for this finding. First, Generation Z employees are also known as a job hopper generation (Nabahani & Riyanto 2020) as they tend to switch jobs quite often and isn't afraid to take new steps at a fast pace. Second, this research was carried out in 2021 and 2022, wherein employees were working remotely in hybrid models using virtual communication. It is significant to know that virtual communication is leading to workplace loneliness and a lower degree of affective commitment (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study sheds light on the new ways of dealing with Generation Z employees in the IT sector, as now offering a high salary is now an old way to motivate and retain potential employees (Morgan, 2014). The study proposes a strategic approach to analyse how HR managers and employers re-imagine the future of work and can stay ahead of the game by providing Generation Z with the work practices that they are looking for. HR managers and employers should consider job crafting opportunities at the workplace to have a highly engaged young workforce. By providing freedom and flexibility in relation to job crafting, Generation Z employees will be able to feel aligned with organizational values and overall goals. Also, Generation Z employees are more demanding than their previous generations. By integrating job crafting with the work profiles, they are most likely to be more engaged, leading to better workplace productivity. They clearly do not fit in the 'one size fits all approach', as they are constantly looking for workplace practices that suit them. It is time to redefine the notion of work by incorporating the purpose in their work by job crafting. This would help employers in gaining highly engaged employees who genuinely want to work for a win-win proposition. Employee engagement should be made an end-to-end practice for Generation Z by effectively clubbing innovative processes.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Though findings provide implications for driving Generation Z employees' engagement, it has some limitations that should pave the way for future research. First, cross-sectional data can be

considered to validate the findings having respondents across India. Second, longitudinal studies can be undertaken in the years ahead to come up with interesting findings related to reciprocal relationships, change patterns, and casual direction (Williams & Podsakoff, 1989). Third, for having unique responses of generation cohort, the study on multiple contexts in Asia, America, Europe, and Oceania including cross-sample comparison and other forms of regression bases can be conducted. Fourth, future studies could delve into the antecedents of employee engagement apart from job crafting in various sectors. Perhaps, new avenues need to be explored to identify several actionable tactics to attract and continuously develop a talent pipeline focusing on the engaging Generation Z employees. Finally, further research on mediating effect of relevant constructs is suggested by employing quantitative as well as qualitative analysis in the employee engagement domain.

CONCLUSION

The way employees are engaged, clearly influences various relevant metrics. This pioneering study will help employers to figure out the art of getting along better with Generation Z employees and driving them by offering them a new frame of reference. The empirically derived result reflects the baseline practices essential for managers and researchers. It also highlights how organizations need to adapt to Generation Z preferences and workplace expectations. The study suggests the importance of engaging Generation Z employees, considering the shifting values of today's workforce. The analysis delves at length into the job crafting and its impact on employee engagement, for sustaining this generation that can bring the change, as they hold the key to the future of the corporate landscape. The results derived in this study offer job crafting to optimize employee engagement, in order to evolve the young demographic dividend, while attaining the desired organizational goals.

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