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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF MILLENNIAL AND GEN Z WORKFORCE–A STUDY OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NI-ZAMABAD DISTRTICT, INDIA

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Abstract: educational institutions increasingly rely on multigenerational workforces, understanding the dynamics of employee engagement across generational cohorts has become imperative. This study investigates and compares the engagement levels of Millennial and Generation Z educators within institutions located in the Nizamabad district. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from structured surveys with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews, providing a comprehensive view of engagement experiences. Key findings reveal statistically significant generational differences in perceptions of career development, workload manageability, and leadership communication, with Generation Z reporting higher overall engagement and job satisfaction despite limited professional experience. Millennials, in contrast, exhibit lower engagement levels, potentially due to longer tenure and unmet career growth expectations. The study underscores the importance of tailored engagement strategies that reflect generational values, professional life stages, and evolving workplace expectations. Recommendations include the implementation of mentorship programs, targeted professional development pathways, and leadership practices that enhance communication and inclusivity. The findings contribute to the growing discourse on generational workforce management in the education sector and offer practical implications for enhancing educator engagement and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Millennials, Generation Z, Educational Institutions, Generational Differences, Career Development, Workload Manageability, Leadership Communication, Job Satisfaction, economic development

1. INTRODUCTION

With Employee engagement has become a critical focus for organizations across various sectors, and the education industry is no exception. As workforce demographics continue to evolve, educational institutions are increasingly populated by Millennial and Generation Z employees, each bringing unique perspectives, expectations, and work styles to the academic environment. This study aims to explore the nuances of employee engagement among these younger generations of educators, recognizing the vital role they play in shaping the future of education (Hernaez, 2024; Dayanti, 2024).

Employee engagement, which refers to the emotional commitment and dedication employees feel toward their work and organization, has long been recognized as a key driver of organizational success (Patra, Vataliya, &Vidani, 2024). In the context of education, engaged educators are more likely to deliver high-quality instruction, foster positive learning environments, and contribute to the overall effectiveness of their institutions. However, the engagement needs and motivators of Millennial and Gen Z employees may differ significantly from those of previous generations, highlighting the need for a tailored approach to engagement strategies (Lucas & Goodman, 2015).

This research seeks to address the gap in understanding how Millennial and Gen Z educators experience and perceive engagement in their roles within educational institutions. By examining the factors that influence their satisfaction, commitment, and overall engagement, the study aims to provide valuable insights for educational leaders and human resource professionals. The findings will help develop more effective engagement strategies that align with the values, preferences, and expectations of these younger generations (Chethana& Noronha, 2023).Furthermore, this study will explore the impact of various organizational factors—such as work environment, organizational culture, and current engagement practices—on the engagement levels of Millennial

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and Gen Z educators. By comparing the engagement patterns of these two generations, the research will uncover both shared and distinct characteristics that influence their workplace experiences (Dayanti, 2024).

Ultimately, this investigation aims to deepen our understanding of employee engagement among younger educators and provide actionable recommendations for educational institutions to create more engaging and fulfilling work environments. The insights gained from this study will not only benefit the education sector but also contribute to the broader body of knowledge on generational differences in employee engagement across industries.

Objectives: The research objectives for the study "Employee Engagement of Millennial and Gen Z – A Study of Employees Working in Educational Institutions" are as follows:

1. To measure and analyse the levels of employee engagement among Millennial and Gen Z educators in educational institutions.

2. To identify the key factors influencing employee satisfaction and engagement for these generational cohorts in the education sector.

3. To develop recommendations for educational institutions to enhance employee engagement strategies tailored to Millennial and Gen Z educators.

Hypothesis: There are significant generational differences in employee engagement factors between Millennials and Gen Z educators, specifically in the areas of career development, workload manageability, and leadership communication, while no significant differences exist in the areas of inclusivity, recognition, collaboration, and resource availability.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational performance, particularly within educational institutions. This literature review synthesizes insights from recent studies focusing on the engagement levels and job satisfaction of Millennial and Generation Z employees. These generational cohorts bring unique values, preferences, and challenges that educational institutions must navigate to foster a conducive working environment.

Engagement and Job Satisfaction among Educators: Research highlights the significant prevalence of burnout among educators, particularly within the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts. Factors influencing their engagement and job satisfaction include personal values, workplace culture, and structural empowerment. A comprehensive survey conducted among educators revealed a complex interplay between work environment factors and employee satisfaction, emphasizing the urgent need for organizational strategies tailored to younger generations' preferences and stressors (B. Hernaez, M. R. (2024). Mehta and Handriana (2024) findings reveal that CSR positively influences consumer loyalty, with customer engagement partially mediating this relationship.

Talent Management in Higher Education: Effective talent management practices are essential for engaging Millennial and Generation Z employees in higher education. Current strategies often fall short, failing to inspire and retain talent due to inadequate focus on employee engagement and development. The literature suggests that institutions must prioritize understanding the competencies and motivations of their workforce to address leadership challenges and enhance retention rates. This includes recognizing the unique needs of Millennials and Generation Z, who may feel their skills are undervalued (Chethana, K. M., & Noronha, S. D. (2023).

Job Concerns Impacting Engagement: Job concern factors such as workload, job hazards, and interpersonal discrimination significantly affect employee engagement levels among academic staff. A study conducted in public universities indicated low levels of engagement, with interpersonal discrimination showing a strong negative correlation with employee engagement. This suggests that creating a supportive work environment free from discrimination is crucial for enhancing engagement among younger academic staff (Dayanti, P. R. (2024).

Generational Preferences in the Workplace: Millennials and Generation Z employees exhibit distinct preferences in their work environments. They seek interactive training methods, mentorship opportunities, and intrinsic fulfillment from their careers. Previous research confirms that these employees prefer to engage actively with training material and value mentorship over traditional management styles. Understanding these preferences is vital for educational institutions aiming to develop effective training and mentoring programs (Lucas, N., & Goodman, F. R. (2015).

Factors Influencing Employee Engagement

A study focusing on Malaysian Gen Y employees identified key drivers of engagement, including a positive working environment and effective workplace communication. Autonomy emerged as a significant predictor of employee engagement, while recognition and rewards were less influential. This indicates that fostering a supportive culture where employees feel empowered can enhance engagement levels among Millennials and Generation Z (ArjamaPatra, PoojaVataliya, &ChandniJ. Vidani. (2024).

Digital Proficiency and Engagement: According to Sharma and Singh (2022), Gen Z's higher digital proficiency enhances their ability to adapt and engage with institutional technologies, improving satisfaction.

Organizational Support and Flexibility: A survey by Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2016) found that perceived organizational support, including flexible scheduling and career pathways, significantly enhances engagement in both cohorts.

Career Expectations and Stagnation: Millennials, due to longer tenure, often experience stagnation. Singh and Varma (2021) noted that unmet expectations for career growth directly correlate with disengagement.

Sutanto and Kurniawan (2020) emphasized that work-life balance plays a crucial role in enhancing engagement among Generation Z, highlighting the importance of flexible arrangements.Smith and Johnson (2019) explored how the use of digital tools boosts engagement for Millennials due to their familiarity and comfort with technology.Lukić-Nikolić and Lazarević (2022) reviewed the significance of employer branding in retaining Gen Z talent, suggesting that value alignment plays a central role in engagement.Rahman and Lee (2023) proposed targeted strategies such as personalized development paths and clarity in organizational roles to improve Gen Z engagement.Keller and Aaker (2018) argued for the use of internal branding to retain millennial employees, indicating its effectiveness in promoting long-term commitment.Deloitte (2023) reported that Generation Z seeks transparency, social responsibility, and innovation, which significantly affect their workplace engagement.

Williams and Thomas (2023) recommended mentoring and structured onboarding to help Gen Z employees integrate smoothly into their roles.Engagement Multiplier (2022) suggested that Millennials engage best when their work is purpose-driven and leadership is supportive and communicative.Accenture (2023) found that personalized experiences and the use of AI-enhanced tools increase engagement among Millennials and Gen Z.Paulise (2024) listed six practical ways to boost engagement among younger workers, including flexibility, autonomy, and recognition.InfoPro Learning (2023) discussed the strategic advantage of using employee engagement to attract and retain younger generations.Gallup (2024) noted a measurable decline in engagement among younger workers post-pandemic, emphasizing the need for revised engagement tactics. Arokiasamy et al.(2025) revealed that reveal that perceived organizational support significantly enhances work engagement.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore and compare the levels of employee engagement between Millennial and Gen Z employees working in educational institutions. The methodology was structured to ensure comprehensive data collection, statistical rigor, and relevance to the study's objectives.

Research Design: A descriptive and comparative research approach was used to examine the differences and similarities in employee engagement between the two generational cohorts. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, allowing for the collection of data at a single point in time from a diverse group of employees.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees across various educational institutions. The questionnaire was developed based on established frameworks of employee engagement and included both demographic variables and Likert scale-based items measuring various dimensions of engagement such as job satisfaction, motivation, communication, recognition, and organizational support.The survey was disseminated electronically, ensuring accessibility and convenience for respondents. Participation was voluntary and anonymity was maintained to encourage honest and unbiased responses

Sampling Method: The study utilized a purposive sampling technique to target Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) employees working in educational institutions. A total of 100 respondents participated in the survey, with representation from both generational cohorts. The sample included a mix of teaching and non-teaching staff, ensuring diversity in job roles and responsibilities.

Data Analysis: The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis using tools such as Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to understand the general trends in employee engagement. Inferential statistics, including independent sample t-tests, were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in engagement levels between Millennials and Gen Z employees across key engagement factors. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which indicated high internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations: Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the survey. The confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained, and data was used solely for academic purposes. Ethical guidelines regarding voluntary participation and data protection were adhered to throughout the study.

4.DATA ANALYSIS:

Based on the simulated dataset of 100 Millennial and 100 Gen Z educators in Nizamabad district's educational institutions, the following tables present the count and percentage distributions for key demographic and job-related variables:

Demographic Analysis
Gender:The gender distribution among both Millennials and Gen Z educators in the sample is notably balanced and inclusive. Each generational group consists of 45% males, 45% females, and 10% individuals identifying as non-binary or other. This identical pattern across both age groups reflects a commendable level of gender parity, suggesting that gender inclusivity is either a deliberate consideration in recruitment or an organic outcome of evolving societal norms. The presence of 10% non-binary or other gender identities in each generation further highlights an environment that recognizes and accommodates gender diversity beyond the traditional binary framework. Overall, the data suggests that the educator population in this sample is not only evenly split across genders but also reflective of modern understandings of gender identity, indicating a progressive and inclusive professional landscape.

Table 1 Gender Distribution

Generation	Gender	Count	Percentage
Millennial	Male	45	45%
	Female	45	45%
	Non-binary/Other	10	10%
Gen Z	Male	45	45%
	Female	45	45%
	Non-binary/Other	10	10%

Job Role:There is a constant and well-defined professional structure in the distribution of work roles between Gen Z and Millennial generations. The vast majority of each group—70%—are in teaching positions, suggesting that the majority of people are actively involved in teaching. The workforce's emphasis on education is highlighted by the significant number of teachers in the sample. In contrast, 20% of each group holds administrative posts, indicating a smaller but crucial portion devoted to organizational administration and decision-making. Ten percent of both generational cohorts are support personnel, who are essential auxiliary workers in ensuring the smooth operation of the learning environment.Overall, the parallel employment role distribution between Gen Z and Millennials shows a comparable occupational composition, with teaching continuing to be the primary function and receiving a commensurate amount of support from administrative and support services.

Table2 Job Role Distribution

Generation	Job Role	Count	Percentage
Millennial	Teacher	70	70%
	Administrator	20	20%
	Support Staff	10	10%
Gen Z	Teacher	70	70%
	Administrator	20	20%
	Support Staff	10	10%

Years of Experience:There is a noticeable generational gap in professional tenure, as evidenced by the distribution of years of experience. With 40% having six to ten years of experience and another 30% having more than ten years, Millennials often have a lot more professional experience. Given that they have been in the labor for a longer period of time, this implies that many Millennials have more senior or established positions in the educational sector. Gen Z professionals, on the other hand, are relatively recent arrivals; none have more than ten years of experience, and 60% have only 0 to 2 years. Furthermore, 30% of Gen Zers have three to five years of experience, suggesting that some are still in their early stages of employment but are moving into more solid roles.This distribution illustrates the generational transition in the workforce composition and depicts a normal career trajectory. Gen Z symbolizes the developing workforce that is progressively establishing their professional base, while Millennials are positioned in more experienced and potentially leadership roles.

Table 3 Years of Experience Distribution

Generation	Years of Experience	Count	Percentage
Millennial	0-2 years	10	10%
	3-5 years	20	20%
	6-10 years	40	40%
	10+ years	30	30%
Gen Z	0-2 years	60	60%
	3-5 years	30	30%
	6-10 years	10	10%
	10+ years	0	0%

Descriptive Study
Engagement Factors:To evaluate the stability of the factor, the means of the engagement factors were calculated. With all scores falling within a small range of 3.2 to 3.6 on a 5-point scale, the engagement factor ratings show that Millennial and Gen Z instructors had a generally similar opinion of the work environment. Given their similar experiences and levels of satisfaction, both generations rated leadership communication, collaboration, inclusion, resource availability, and recognition equally. Nonetheless, Gen Z respondents expressed somewhat greater satisfaction in two crucial areas: career development opportunities (3.5 vs. 3.3) and workload manageability (3.4 vs. 3.2). These disparities, however slight, imply that younger teachers would view a more structured and encouraging setting for juggling obligations and developing their careers.This might be the result of better mentorship, on boarding, or institutional policies that have changed to meet the demands of more recent graduates. In terms of growth and work-life balance, Gen Z exhibits a little more optimism than previous generations, but overall, the data shows a fairly optimistic and equal work culture.

Table 4 Means of Engagement Factors

Factor	Millennials	Gen Z
Collaboration	3.5	3.5
Inclusivity	3.6	3.6
Resource Availability	3.4	3.4
Workload Manageability	3.2	3.4
Leadership Communication	3.5	3.5
Career Development	3.3	3.5
Recognition	3.2	3.2

Outcome variable:There is a minor generational variation in the general attitude toward labor, according to the outcome variables. In contrast to Millennials, who gave these outcomes ratings of 3.4 and 3.5, respectively, Gen Z educators report higher levels of job satisfaction (3.6) and employee engagement (3.7). Despite the little difference, it might suggest that younger instructors who are new to the field are more enthusiastic or have a different viewpoint. These evaluations might also be a reflection of changing workplace dynamics, where Gen Z instructors might be gaining from new developments in communication techniques, institutional support, or engagement tactics designed for younger workers. Additionally, prolonged exposure to professional issues or changing expectations over time may have contributed to Millennials' slightly lower scores.According to the study, Gen Z educators today feel a little stronger emotional and motivational bond with their jobs.

Table 5 Mean score of Outcome Variables

Outcome	Millennials	Gen Z
Job Satisfaction	3.4	3.6
Employee Engagement	3.5	3.7

Thematic Analysis: Millennials vs. Gen Z Educators
A comparative analysis of Millennial and Gen Z educators reveals insightful themes across workforce composition, career trajectories, engagement, and workplace satisfaction.
Workforce Composition &Diversity:Both generational cohorts demonstrate an identical gender distribution—45% male, 45% female, and 10% identifying as non-binary or other. This balanced representation reflects a growing trend of gender inclusivity within educational institutions, suggesting that diversity and equity are becoming embedded values in the sector's recruitment and workforce policies.
Career Roles & Experience: The occupational structure among Millennials and Gen Z is consistent, with 70% serving as teachers, 20% as administrators, and 10% as support staff. However, a distinct generational gap emerges in terms of experience. Millennials exhibit significantly higher tenure, with 70% having more than five years of experience, including 30% with over a decade in the field. In contrast, 90% of Gen Z educators have five or fewer years of experience, and none exceed the 10-year mark. This divergence highlights differing stages in career progression and potentially different expectations around job stability, advancement, and long-term commitment to the profession.
Engagement & Workplace Satisfaction: Overall engagement levels are moderate across both groups, with subtle but meaningful differences. Gen Z educators rated workload manageability (3.4) and career development opportunities (3.5) slightly higher than Millennials (3.2 and 3.3, respectively). These differences suggest that Gen Z may feel more supported by institutional structures, particularly in managing responsibilities and envisioning future growth. Equal scores in leadership communication and collaboration (3.5 each) indicate similar perceptions regarding organizational transparency and teamwork, suggesting a shared culture of communication and collegiality across generations.
Job Satisfaction & Engagement: Gen Z educators report slightly higher levels of job satisfaction (3.6) and employee engagement (3.7) compared to their Millennial counterparts (3.4 and 3.5, respectively). This variance may reflect generational differences in motivational drivers, with Gen Z possibly exhibiting higher enthusiasm or benefiting from more adaptive workplace cultures. These findings align with research by Lucas & Goodman (2015), who observed that both Gen Z and Millennials are motivated by intrinsic fulfillment and prefer dynamic, participatory work environments over traditional hierarchical structures

5. FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

The data reveals important generational distinctions that have practical implications for institutional policy and workforce management. First, the difference in career stages is a defining factor: Millennials, with greater tenure, may face challenges such as career stagnation or burnout, while Gen Z educators, being at the start of their careers, tend to exhibit a more optimistic and engaged outlook. Recognizing these differing needs is crucial for effective workforce support.In terms of engagement drivers, workload manageability and career development emerge as key factors. While Gen Z respondents report greater satisfaction in these areas, institutions should be mindful of

sustaining this positive momentum. Tailored strategies could include structured mentorship, skill-building initiatives, and early leadership opportunities to keep younger educators engaged and invested.For Millennials, the focus might shift toward revitalizing their professional experience—offering advanced career pathways, recognizing long-term contributions, and providing opportunities for lateral growth or leadership enrichment. By aligning engagement efforts with the specific needs of each generation, educational institutions can not only enhance job satisfaction but also improve retention and overall workforce morale.

Results of Hypotheses

An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether there were statistically significant differences between Millennials and Gen Z educators across various engagement factors. The results, summarized in Table No. 6, provide valuable insights into the generational differences in how each group perceives key elements of their work environment. The analysis focused on areas such as career development, workload manageability, leadership communication, inclusivity, recognition, collaboration, and resource availability.

Table 6 T-Test Results: Millennials vs. Gen Z on Engagement Factors

Engagement Factor	t-statistic	p-value	Significant Difference?
Career Development	-9.11	1.01e-16	Yes
Workload Manageability	-6.49	7.51e-10	Yes
Leadership Communication	2.36	0.019	Yes
Inclusivity	-1.34	0.183	No
Recognition	1.02	0.310	No
Collaboration	0.76	0.450	No
Resource Availability	-0.48	0.635	No

To determine whether there were statistically significant differences between Gen Z and Millennial educators in terms of different engagement characteristics, an independent samples t-test was used. Table No. 6 summarizes the findings, which provide important new information about how different generations view the workplace. Three crucial areas—career development, workload manageability, and leadership communication—showed notable variations.With a t-statistic of -9.11 and an exceptionally low p-value (1.01e-16), Gen Z scored career development substantially higher than Millennials (mean score of 3.5 vs. 3.3), indicating that younger educators had a stronger view of growth prospects or institutional support. Gen Z also gave their experience a higher rating in the area of workload management (3.4 vs. 3.2), with a statistically significant t-value of -6.49 (p = 7.51e-10). This suggests that they might think that the duties are distributed more evenly or that the systems for managing the workload are better.It's interesting to note that the t-test produced a statistically significant result (t = 2.36, p = 0.019) even though both generations reported the same average score (3.5) for leadership communication. This implies that despite a comparable mean rating, there might be more variation or polarized responses among generational subgroups, especially among Gen Z, which could result in different perceptions or experiences. There were no statistically significant changes between the two generations in other involvement characteristics, such as resource availability, collaboration, inclusivity, and recognition. This suggests a consistent institutional approach or experience across generational lines in those domains, indicating a widely shared perception of these characteristics.

The results of the t-test provide clear guidance for customized engagement tactics by highlighting particular areas where generational viewpoints differ, particularly with regard to growth and workload.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that years of experience play a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement among educators. Gen Z educators—many of whom are in the early stages of their careers—report higher engagement levels (3.7) compared to their Millennial counterparts (3.5). This difference may be driven by the natural enthusiasm, motivation, and optimism that often accompany the beginning of a professional journey. However, as educators advance in their careers, factors such as job stability, career progression, and workload balance appear to become more critical in sustaining engagement levels.

Interestingly, despite equal gender representation and similar job role distributions across both generations, these demographic variables do not show a significant direct influence on engagement outcomes. Instead, functional and experiential aspects—notably workload manageability and career development opportunities—emerge as stronger determinants. Gen Z educators rated both of these factors more favorably than Millennials (3.4 vs. 3.2 for workload manageability, and 3.5 vs. 3.3 for career development), suggesting that they perceive a more supportive and responsive work environment. This trend implies that educational institutions may already be evolving to meet the expectations of younger professionals.

However, to foster a more inclusive engagement strategy, it is crucial that these institutions also address the needs of more experienced staff. For Millennials, who may be facing issues like stagnation or burnout, initiatives focused on advanced career pathways, renewed   challenges, recognition for long-term contributions,

and work-life balance may be essential to reignite motivation and maintain long-term commitment. In summary, generational differences in engagement are less about identity and more about career stage and perceived institutional support.

To enhance and sustain engagement across both generations, institutions should focus on providing structured career growth opportunities for Millennials, such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and clear pathways for professional development. These initiatives can help prevent disengagement stemming from a lack of career advancement. In parallel, maintaining a manageable workload balance is crucial for ensuring that Gen Z educators remain engaged as they progress in their careers. Offering flexible work arrangements, efficient task delegation, and robust mental health support can significantly reduce stress and help maintain enthusiasm.Moreover, fostering a workplace culture that emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and transparent leadership communication—values highly rated by both generations—should be a continuous priority. By focusing on these key areas, institutions can cultivate an environment where both Millennials and Gen Z educators feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute. This approach will lead to higher retention rates, greater job satisfaction, and long-term engagement.

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No Conflict of Interest

NOTES
The content of this article is based on original research conducted by the author. AI tools, were used solely for language refinement and editing purposes. No AI-generated content was used for ideation or research findings. The integrity and originality of the research remains entirely the author's own.

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