
Expectations and Requirements of Generation Z towards Salary

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Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of the study was to identify, analyze and diagnose the expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the level of remuneration.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In order to verify the thesis and answer the research questions, the method of literature analysis and criticism, the method of diagnostic survey and statistical methods were used. The study was based on a survey questionnaire, based on the opinions of 2234 people from generation Z. Random sampling was used. Relationships between variables were examined using the chi-square test. Column proportion tests were used to determine significant differences in responses between individuals with different education and place of residence. A value of 0.05 was used as the level of significance.

Findings: Conducted empirical exploration indicates that the level of expectations and requirements regarding the level of remuneration of generation Z should be considered above average. More than one third of respondents from generation Z have expectations above the national average gross salary in Poland in the enterprise sector, despite the fact that they have just started their professional career.

Practical Implications: The practical business implications are primarily concerned with the use of research findings in the selection process for Generation Z organizations.

Originality/value: It turned out that education and place of residence significantly differentiate the expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the salary level.

Keywords: Generation Z, salary, expectations, requirements.

JEL classification: J24, M12.

Paper Type: Research study.

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1. Introduction

An analysis of the literature on Generation Z has shown that there has been some change in their expectations of work/service and employer, including remuneration. This is due to the fact that generational affiliation has a significant impact on the approach to work, the way of motivation, communication styles, the level of competence, work experience, the ability to use technology, as well as the formation of their own professional and life goals and ways to achieve them (Rogozinska-Pawelczyk, 2014). Generation Z, born after 1990 and before 2000 (Lain-Kennedy, 2007; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and Chomątowska, 2014; Hardey, 2011; Zydel 2010; Reszko, 2015), is a digital generation and represents a great capital for modern organizations, especially in view of the ongoing fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0). It has many advantages that are at the center of characteristics desired in any organization, such as multitasking and creativity.

Employers' interest in generation Z is also due to the huge shortage of workers in the labor market (International Labour Organization, 2021; Manpower Group, 2018; Manpower Group, 2021). The struggle for a generation Z employee forces everyone, to act non-standard in the selection of personnel. Especially since, as research confirms, traditional practices used in the process of recruiting an employee to work, their evaluation or motivation, do not bring the expected results in the case of the youngest generation (Rynkiewicz, 2014). Often employers attempt to recruit Generation Z employees by offering them higher salaries. However, there is a lack of research indicating what are the expectations and requirements of generation Z in this regard.

The diagnosed knowledge gap in this area is due to the fact that generation Z is just entering the labor market. In response to this demand, the research described in this paper was undertaken. The conducted empirical exploration was aimed at finding an answer to the research problem, which took the form of the question, what are the expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the level of remuneration? A hypothesis was formulated based on the statement that "education and place of residence significantly differentiate expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the level of salary". Expectations and requirements were understood in this study, according to the definition contained in the PWN Dictionary of Polish Language. Expectations are assumptions, hopes and desires, while requirements are a set of conditions that someone or something must meet (Słownik języka polskiego, 2002).

2. Characteristics of Generation Z and their Expectations and Requirements Regarding Remuneration - A Literature Review

Conducted research on the expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the level of remuneration required a characterization of this generation. In light of the subject literature, it was found that:

- They are not afraid of constant changes, having a lot of information from the world of the Internet, which is often the main or even the only source of finding solutions to the problems that have arisen (Rusak, 2013).
- They treat Internet access as a window to the world, which provides unlimited access to information and contact with peers, especially through social media (Wziątek-Staśko, 2015).
- They acquire information about competitors, the company's environment, and other information about market behavior or hiring processes from the web much more easily and quickly (Kotarbinski, 2015).
- They have better knowledge of foreign languages and new technologies than other generations. They also seem to be more resistant to stress and better organized.
- They are not afraid of risk and do not think in a schematic way, they learn quickly and make new friends (there are no cultural and geographical borders for them).
- They are characterized by great directness and conviction that the world belongs to the brave. By the realities created in the labor market, they are wildly determined and have a realistic and materialistic attitude to life (Rosa, 2013).
- They are more demanding than representatives of previous generations. They have no problem looking for new employment, hiring across the country or taking advantage of the international labor market (Wawer, 2013).

The researchers selected the advantages and disadvantages of generation Z. These are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Advantages and disadvantages of Generation Z*

Advantages	Disadvantages
Knowledge of foreign languages, good aptitude for working in an international environment, openness to change, social-emotional intelligence.	Impatience and lack of ability to cooperate, immaturity, and entitlement.
Self-confidence, independence, self-reliance, and individualism.	The conviction of infallibility, selfishness, overestimation of one's own abilities, ill-tempered criticism.
The ability to search for and select the most valuable information, they feel comfortable in the world of new technologies and virtual contact.	Superficial analysis of information and problems with verbal communication.
The desire to learn and grow, unlimited access to education, ambition.	No professional experience.
Versatility and multitasking.	Cunning and Internet Addiction.

Source: *Own elaboration based on (Berkup, 2014; McCrindle, 2014; Wziątek-Staśko, 2015; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska 2014).*

It turns out that representatives of Generation Z are a diverse and internally divided group. It is a generation in which many different characteristics, aspirations and attitudes intersect (Euromonitor International, 2011; Happen Group, 2014). It is not uncommon to see contradictory characteristics in their case. These are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Conflicting characteristics of Generation Z.

Features	Description	Extreme contradictions
They are very adept at using technology to communicate.	Unlimited communication with the world (modern technology), creating an online area 24/7 on all possible communicators.	Prefer electronic communication more than traditional communication. Low quality communication that is based on acronyms and symbols.
The Internet is the primary and most important source of information in every area of life.	They want to know everything immediately. They get a lot of information from the Internet and trust it blindly. At the same time, they make a superficial assessment of the content of this information. They think they know everything.	Low competence in analyzing and evaluating the reliability of acquired content.
They live and thrive in a virtual world filled with new technology.	A generation born into a digital world without boundaries or limitations. They cannot accept that the world around them is not governed by the same laws.	Through modern technology, often isolated from the problems of the real world and people.
A generation of singletons, loners, and individualists.	The "we" generation. Open to problems in the real world provided they experience them on phone, computer or tablet screens. Raised socially by games and social media. They don't really know what they have to fight for and against whom.	They are sensitive to the problems of the modern world. They are characterized by openness and pro-sociality.
Able to multi-task at one time.	The computerized world has prepared them to accomplish several tasks in parallel. Unfortunately, the way they approach and complete the task is generally shallow. Shifting their attention from task to task hinders their thinking, causes trouble concentrating and impairs them cognitively.	Susceptible to all sorts of distractions, they have trouble concentrating and completing tasks on time.
They want to contribute and be important. They are success and promotion oriented. Challenges are important to them.	They see no reason to cling to the logic of previous generations (analog vs. digital world). They value good organization and speed over diligence and reliability. Cunning is more important than intelligence and education. There is no sowing, cultivating, or tending - they get straight down to harvesting.	They are not willing to sacrifice work at the expense of personal comfort. They are low-energy and often lazy. They are strangers to the traditional work ethic. They don't know the reasons to be courteous, punctual and tactful.
Convinced that respect is naturally due to them. Have a strong need for recognition from others.	They know what respect is and what power it has - they are sensitive to its lack towards themselves. Towards others - age, position or seniority is not the same as obligatory showing of respect.	Restrained in showing respect - they judge for themselves whether someone deserves it.

They are developed beyond their age because they have grown up too fast.	Overprotective, yet often absent parents (technological advances and career drives) meant that they had to grow up quickly. Unfortunately, biological development often did not go hand in hand with emotional development. They are poorly prepared to face real and serious problems.	In the full biological-emotional construct, they never really grew up.
They are characterized by courage, independence and self-confidence as well as claiming.	From an early age, parents watch over them and control every stage of their lives (overprotectiveness). They are told that they can have anything they want because they are one of a kind. Unfortunately, when confronted with reality, they often need people with more professional and life experience.	They have a need for support, protection and safety.

Source: Own elaboration based on (Zydel, 2010, s. 65; Bruzzese, 2013; Carr, 2013; Rymaszewicz, 2015; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014).

Salary is important to generation Z (Moczydlowska, 2016). Of course, it is also important to other generations (Employer Brand Research 2019). However, generation Z gives it great importance. This is indicated by numerous research results (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and Chomątowska, 2014). Remuneration is a key factor of motivation for generation Z (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and Chomątowska, 2014; Fazlagić, 2008). Besides, generation Z expects an equitable link between work performance and the level of remuneration received (Borges *et al.*, 2010). Wants to be paid a salary commensurate with their competence. They expect to be respected, given a chance to develop and to be taken seriously. They have courage as well as self-confidence. They want to have and achieve everything immediately (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and Chomątowska, 2014).

According to an international study conducted on more than 20,000 representatives of generation Z (including more than 1,000 from Poland), the most expected aspects of their employment are attractive salary and benefits (66% of respondents) (Employer Brand Research, 2019). A review of the literature on expectations and requirements of generation Z with regard to remuneration leads to the conclusion that it is a key factor for them.

3. Materials and Methods

In order to verify the thesis and answer the research questions, the method of literature analysis and criticism, the method of diagnostic survey and statistical methods were used. A quantitative-qualitative study was conducted in Lower Silesia, based on a questionnaire survey, among 2234 people from generation Z. 81% of them were still students. 8% were students. The structure of the respondents in terms of education was as follows, 5% had basic education, 5% had secondary education, and 1% had higher education. 91% were not working. Some of them already had work experience, although 64% had never worked before. 60% of the

respondents lived in medium cities (20-100 thousand), 22% in rural areas, 11% in small cities (less than 20 thousand), and 6% in large cities (more than 200 thousand).

Random sampling of the research sample was used. Twenty-three of the 28 authorities (counties) were drawn using statistical software, and as part of the 2019 military qualification, questionnaires were distributed for completion through the Military Complementary Headquarters to representatives of Generation Z who showed up to fulfill their statutory obligation. The respondents were asked to specify their current expectations and requirements for remuneration (gross in PLN). The respondents answered by indicating the salary ranges they were interested in, i.e., 2500-3000 -3001-3500 -3501-4500 -4501-5500 -5501-6500 -above 6501. The statistically significant relationships between the respondents' expectations and requirements for salary (gross in PLN) and place of residence and education were examined using the chi-square test.

In order to conclude that the variable "salary expectations and requirements" and the variable "place of residence" are not independent it was checked which rows and columns cause such a relationship. In the column ratio test table, each category of variable in a column is assigned a letter key. In the case of the variable "salary expectations and requirements" the categories: 2500-3000 PLN, 3001-3500 PLN, 3501-4500 PLN, 4501-5500 PLN, 5501-6500 PLN above 6501 PLN were assigned consecutive letters A, B, C, D, E, F. For each pair of columns, column proportions were compared using the chi-square test. Six sets of column proportion tests were performed, one for each level of the variable. Since there were 6 levels of this variable in each set of tests, $(6*4)/2 = 12$ pairs of columns were compared, using Bonferroni corrections to adjust for significance values. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller proportion was placed under the category with the larger proportion. This allowed us to conclude that e.g., the proportion of people residing in a medium city with salary expectations and requirements above PLN 6500 is significantly higher than the proportion of people with such salary expectations and requirements "residing in a small city". The significance level was assumed to be 0.05 (sign * $p < 0.05$). Calculations were performed using the statistical program R ver. 3.6.0, and IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.

4. Expectations and Demands of Generation Z towards Salary - Results of Empirical Research

Attractive salary turned out to be the most important expectation towards work and employer of generation Z. 35% of respondents expect remuneration of more than PLN 6500 gross, 17% at the level of PLN 5501-6500 gross, 22% at the level of PLN 3501-4500 gross (Table 3). Conducted research indicates that generation Z has quite high expectations regarding remuneration, especially in relation to the national average salary in Poland as of July 19, 2021 in the enterprise sector, amounting to PLN 5775.25 gross. At the same time, it should be emphasized that generation Z is just starting its professional career, and more than one third of them have higher

salary expectations than the national average. It was decided to identify the expectations of respondents from generation Z, taking into account the criterion of education and place of residence.

Table 3. Generation Z's expectations and requirements for salary (N=2234).

Expected salary (PLN)	All	
	Numbers	% of N in column
2500–3000	20	1
3001–3500	176	8
3501–4500	488	22
4501–5500	388	17
5501–6500	379	17
above 6501	783	35,1
Total	2234	100

Source: Own research.

Data concerning this issue are shown in Tables 4 and 5. It turned out that the highest salary expectations are held by students (Table 4). It can be assumed that their expectations are so high because they have not yet been verified in practice.

Table 4. Respondents' salary expectations, taking into account the criterion of education (N=2234).

Expected salary (PLN)	Student		University student		Vocational education		Secondary education		Higher education	
	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N
2500–3000	13	1	4	2	0	0	3	3	0	0
3001–3500	146	8	8	4	5	4	13	12	4	17
3501–4500	345	19	7	4	90	76	35	33	11	46
4501–5500	317	18	44	24	8	7	17	16	2	8
5501–6500	308	17	52	29	5	4	14	13	0	0
above 6501	677	37	65	36	10	8	24	23	7	29
Total	1806	100	180	100	118	100	106	100	24	100

Source: Own research.

People living in medium-sized cities have the highest salary expectations. 38% of them expect wages exceeding PLN 6501 gross and 17% in the range of PLN 5501-6500 gross. Salary expectations and requirements of people residing in rural areas and cities of different sizes are presented in Table 5.

In order to determine whether differences in respondents' responses, across the above groups, as to salary are statistically significant, column proportion tests were conducted. These allow us to determine the relative ordering of categories of a categorical variable in the columns according to the proportion of categories of a categorical variable in the rows. The independence test assumes that the variables under study are independent of each other, i.e., the proportions are the same for all columns, and any observed discrepancy is due to random variation. Using the chi-

square statistic, the total discrepancy between the observed cell numbers and the expected numbers was measured assuming that the column proportions in all columns are equal. After analyzing the results of the chi-square test, it was found that education and place of residence significantly differentiate the expectations and demands of Generation Z with respect to salary (Table 6).

Table 5. Respondents' expectations regarding salary, taking into account the criterion of place of residence (N=2234)

Expected salary (PLN)	Village		Small town (less than 20,000)		Medium city (20-100 thousand)		Large city (more than 200 thousand)	
	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N	Numbers	% of N
2500–3000	10	2	6	2	2	0	0	0
3001–3500	34	7	14	6	104	8	23	17
3501–4500	96	19	54	22	304	23	34	25
4501–5500	106	21	60	25	188	14	28	21
5501–6500	83	17	45	18	232	17	15	11
above 6501	167	34	65	27	506	38	34	25
Total	496	100	244	100	1336	100	134	100

Source: Own research.

Table 6. Statistically significant differences between respondents' salary expectations (gross in PLN) in terms of gender, place of residence, education and experience in military service (N=2234)

Please specify your current salary expectations (gross in PLN)		Place of residence	Education
		Chi-square	80,754
	df	15	20
	significance	,000*	,000*

Source: Own research.

In order to determine the occurring significant differences in salary expectations and requirements across the different levels analyzed, more detailed analyses were conducted, the results of which are presented in Table 7. In the column ratio test table, each category of the variable in the column was assigned a letter key. The variable "salary expectations and requirements" categories: 2500-3000 PLN, 3001-3500 PLN, 3501-4500 PLN, 4501-5500 PLN, 5501-6500 PLN, above 6501 PLN were assigned consecutive letters A, B, C, D, E, F.

For each pair of columns, column proportions were compared using the chi-square test. For each significant pair, the key of the category with lower proportion was placed under the category with higher proportion (Table 7). We found that people with basic education are significantly more likely to have salary expectations of 3501-4500 than students, college students, people with secondary and higher education.

Table 7. Statistically significant correlations between respondents' salary expectations (gross in PLN) and place of residence, education and military service experience based on chi-square test (N=2234)

Expected salary (PLN)	Village	Small town (less than 20,000)	Medium city (20-100 thousand)	Miasto dsudentuzie (powyzej 200 tys.)	Student	University student	Vocational education	Secondary education	Higher education
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
2500–3000	C	C							
3001–3500				A B C					
3501–4500					B		A B D E	A B	A B
4501–5500	C	C			C	C			
5501–6500					C	A C D			
above 6501			B D		C D	C		C	C

Source: Own research.

Those with a high school education are significantly more likely to have salary expectations and demands:

- at the 3501-4500 level than pupils and students,
- at the level of more than 6501 than those with vocational education.

People with higher education are significantly more likely to have salary expectations:

- at the level above 6501 than people with basic education,
- at the level of 3501-4500 than pupils and students.

This allowed us to conclude that people residing in medium-sized cities (20-100 thousand) are significantly more likely to have salary expectations above PLN 6500 gross than those residing in large cities (over 200 thousand) and small towns (under 20 thousand).

Students have significantly more frequent expectations and requirements with respect to remuneration:

- in the range of PLN 4501-5500 than persons with basic education,
- between PLN 5501-6500 than students and persons with secondary and basic education,
- in the range above PLN 6501 than persons with basic education.

Students are significantly more likely to have salary expectations and requirements:

- in the range of 3501-4500 than students,
- in the range of 4501-5500 and 5501-6500 than those with basic education,
- in the range above PLN 6501 than persons with secondary and basic education.

Persons from rural areas and small towns have significantly more frequent expectations regarding the level of salary at PLN 4501-5500 gross than persons residing in medium-sized towns.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

A comprehensive analysis of the conducted research allows us to formulate the following conclusions:

1. Attractive remuneration turned out to be the key expectation towards work and employer of generation Z. Their level of expectations and requirements regarding the level of remuneration should be considered as above average. More than one third of the respondents from generation Z have expectations above the national average gross salary in Poland in the enterprise sector, despite the fact that they have just started their professional career.
2. Significantly more often people residing in medium-sized cities (20-100 thousand) have expectations and requirements regarding gross remuneration exceeding PLN 6,500 than people residing in large cities (over 200 thousand) and small towns (under 20 thousand). People from rural areas and small towns have significantly more frequent expectations with respect to remuneration at the level of PLN 4501-5500 gross than people residing in medium-sized cities.
3. University students have significantly higher expectations with respect to remuneration:
 - in the range of PLN 4501-5500 (than persons with basic education),
 - between PLN 5501-6500 (than students and persons with secondary and basic education),
 - in the range of PLN 6501+ (than persons with basic education).
4. Students have significantly more frequent expectations with respect to remuneration:
 - in the range of 3501-4500 (than university students),
 - in the range 4501-5500 and 5501-6500 (than persons with basic education),
 - in the range above PLN 6501 than persons with secondary and basic education.
5. Education and place of residence significantly differentiate the expectations and requirements of generation Z towards the level of remuneration.

The results of the conducted research indicate that the expectations and requirements of generation Z in relation to remuneration have increased in recent years. Research published in 2017 indicated that 49% of the surveyed generation Z expected their future employer to pay up to 3,000 PLN net (4,130 PLN gross), and 22% up to 5,000 PLN net (6966 PLN gross) (Aterima 2017). On the other hand, 70% of the surveyed

representatives of generation Z described in this study have expectations of salary at the level of more than 4501 PLN gross, and 35% above 6501 PLN gross.

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