
Workplace Well-Being as a Priority for HR Strategy in the Context of Young Employees' Expectations

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Abstract:

Purpose: The research gap lies in the need for comprehensive insight into specific HR strategies that organizations can implement to create a mentally healthy work environment. This article examines the impact of employee perceptions of workplace well-being, in the context of generational differences, on HR strategies and presents new HR strategies to improve employee well-being. The paper addresses two questions: How do generational differences in perceptions of well-being influence HR strategies? and What changes should HR strategies in specific areas of human resources management implement to better incorporate workplace well-being?

Design/Methodology/Approach: To achieve the research objectives and identify effective strategies to improve employee well-being in the workplace, a literature review was conducted, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

Findings: Adding a generational perspective to HR strategy is crucial, as differences in the perception of workplace well-being between Generations Z and X influence the design of HR policies. Research shows that existing generational differences in the perception of workplace well-being among Generation X and Z employees are reflected in expectations regarding employer branding, organizational culture, internal communication, development and training, and the segmentation of well-being activities. Furthermore, the trend of workplace well-being in human resources management will become increasingly integrated with specific HRM functions in the coming years. This article presents proposed changes in the following areas of human resources management: recruitment and selection, employee evaluation, employee development, motivation and remuneration, interpersonal relationship management, communication, and work organization..

Practical implications: Managers will better understand the crucial role workplace well-being can play in improving productivity. These findings will help organizations and human resources (HR) departments understand the importance of employee well-being in the workplace.

Social implications: This research will help improve the personal and social lives of employees and managers by better understanding workplace well-being. This will have further economic implications, such as higher organizational performance.

Originality/Value: This research makes important scientific and practical contributions to workplace well-being. It is crucial to reassess areas of human resource management, such as recruitment and selection, employee assessment, employee development, motivation and remuneration, interpersonal relationship management, communication, and work organization, in the context of employee well-being perceptions across generations, to adapt

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to the new demands of the new work environment. An integrated approach that encompasses strategies within employer branding, organizational culture, internal communication, development and training, and the segmentation of well-being activities ensures improved workplace well-being.

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1. Introduction

Workplace well-being is becoming increasingly crucial to organizational success. Because employee engagement and well-being impact employee performance, this area is receiving increasing attention. The importance of well-being in an organizational context is becoming a valuable line of inquiry, and employee well-being has emerged as a key focus in business management.

Generation Z and Generation X differ significantly in their perceptions of workplace well-being. These differences stem from different life experiences, values, and expectations of work and employers. Adding a generational perspective to HR strategies is crucial, as the differences in well-being perceptions between Generation Z and Generation X influence the design of HR policies. HR strategies must consider generational diversity and design inclusive initiatives that address the needs of each group.

Employers' increased focus on the mental well-being of working people (both employees and the self-employed) will be driven by demographic trends, such as the rising share of Generation Z employees in the labor force and the declining share of Generation X employees. We are entering a decade in which generational differences in the workplace will become increasingly felt, not only culturally but, above all, strategically.

In today's dynamic and demanding work environment, workplace well-being is gaining increasing attention and importance. Although extensive research has been conducted on various aspects of well-being, the relationship between well-being and

the workplace remains a dynamic, evolving area that warrants further investigation. Furthermore, most existing literature focuses on challenges rather than providing solutions to improve workplace well-being (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023; Bluszcz and Chabior, 2023; Stuss, Zwiech, and Sánchez Teba, 2025).

A research gap exists in the need for comprehensive insight into the HR strategies organizations can implement to create a mentally healthy work environment. This study aims to fill this gap by holistically analyzing how employee perceptions of workplace well-being across generations impact HR strategies, in the context of generational differences, and by presenting new HR strategies to improve workplace well-being (Kuzmina *et al.*, 2023; Grima *et al.*, 2025).

The study addresses two questions: How do generational differences in perceptions of well-being impact HR strategies? and What changes should HR strategies in specific areas of human resources management implement to better incorporate workplace well-being?

To achieve the research objectives and identify effective strategies to improve employee well-being in the workplace, a comprehensive literature review will be conducted. This research will be based on a thorough review of existing literature on workplace well-being, including scientific articles, reports, books, case studies, and relevant organizational documents.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Generational Differences - Generations Z and X in the Labor Market

Research on workplace well-being highlights the importance of demographic and cultural perspectives. Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2012) is currently under 30 and constitutes approximately 20% of the working population in Poland. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, is currently aged 45-60.

It is estimated that they currently constitute approximately 30% of the economically active population in Poland. Over the next 10 years, these proportions will change significantly. By 2030, there will be twice as many Zs as Xs, and by 2035, Generation Z will be the main workforce in the Polish labor market.

In 2035, Generation Z will be aged 23-40, fully economically active. Their projected share in the labor market will be approximately 30-33%. Generation X, on the other hand, will be aged 55-70, most of whom will already be outside the labor market. Approximately 1.5-2 million people will remain professionally active, primarily in sectors requiring experience or in part-time/retirement work. This means that the Zs will increasingly influence organizational culture. Meanwhile, the Xs will be leaving the labor market.

Their expectations of the workplace will be different. HR strategies must consider generational diversity and design inclusive initiatives that address the needs of each groups.

2.2 Workplace Well-being and Generation Z and X Perceptions of Well-being

Although workplace well-being is a diverse concept that has been approached and defined differently across disciplines, the existing literature recognizes that the three main dimensions of general well-being – psychological, social, and contextual/physical – can also be applied to workplace well-being (Sundriyal and Kumar, 2014). Z Kolei, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has defined it as a bio-psycho-social construct encompassing physical, mental, and social health, addressing several issues related to different dimensions of employee well-being (Brauers, 2008).

Focusing on these three dimensions, it is worth noting that psychological well-being is related to individual and internal experiences or feelings (e.g., experiences of happiness and self-fulfillment), whereas social well-being refers to the quality and degree of individual interactions with peers, society, and nature. Psychological well-being has been defined as feeling good/experiencing fulfilment, and purpose. Well-being thus incorporates both hedonic concepts that focus on feeling good (e.g., satisfaction, engagement) and on the avoidance of pain (e.g., stress), as well as eudaimonic concepts that focus on the pursuit of meaning, fulfilment, and purpose (e.g., work-life balance and high-quality relationships).

Social well-being at work is defined as feeling embedded in meaningful communities and having short-term interactions and connections, as well as long-term relationships with others (Fisher, 2014). The sense of belonging, professional relationships, and social interactions are important within it. Contextual well-being is related to the environmental conditions that characterize individuals' lives and the workplace.

Like the general concept of well-being, workplace well-being can be articulated into individual or subjective, and social or objective levels. The first (individual or subjective) is based on three main elements: job satisfaction, the affective or emotional experience of work, and meaningful and purposeful work (De Neve and Ward, 2023). The second level of workplace well-being (social or objective) is also based on three main elements: a supportive team culture, excellent services provision, and professional development opportunities (Anderson *et al.*, 2021).

Workplace well-being can be organized around three main factors: positive affect, negative affect, and personal fulfillment at work (Demo and Paschoal, 2016).

Workplace well-being represents a turning point in human resource management (HRM) (Wright, Cropanzano, and Bonett, 2007). Based on the "happy, productive"

employee hypothesis (Peccei, Van De Voorde, and Van Veldhoven, 2013), it can be argued that workplace well-being positively impacts companies' financial performance.

In summary, workplace well-being can be briefly defined as "how we feel at work and about our work" (De Neve and Ward, 2023). The author proposes the following definition: workplace well-being is a positive experience of professional life.

Generation Z and Generation X differ significantly in their perceptions of workplace well-being. These differences stem from different life experiences, values, and expectations of work and employers.

Table 1. *Generational differences in the perception of workplace well-being*

Items	Generation Z	Generation X
Basic aspects of workplace well-being	Work is linked to meaningful work, mental health, flexibility, relationships, a supportive work environment, and alignment of work with personal values.	Work is linked to a source of stability and security.
Expectations from the employer	High transparency, quick feedback, a culture of openness, empathy, and compassion, and a work culture based on empathy, inclusiveness, and authenticity.	Supervisory authority, clear hierarchy, and employment stability.
Work style preferences	Prefers flexible hours, remote work, and task-oriented work.	Values on-site work, regularity, and an 8-hour workday.
Basic motivators	Personal development, atmosphere, gamification, work-life balance, recognition.	Financial bonuses, non-wage benefits, recognition, and advancement.
Work purpose	Work as a means to pursue passions and personal life	Work is a central element of professional and social life.

Source: *Own study.*

Generation Z values a healthy work culture, free from stress, bullying, and toxic relationships. They expect flexibility, for example, evening work if that works better for them. Furthermore, workplace well-being for them is about empathy and dialogue; benefits are not the only consideration; understanding their lifestyle and needs becomes crucial.

Generation X, on the other hand, prioritizes stability, loyalty, and job security. For them, workplace well-being means peace, predictability, good working conditions, and financial rewards. Generation X values the authority of their superiors, is less likely to question decisions, and prefers traditional work arrangements.

In summary, Generation Z associates workplace well-being with meaningful work, mental health, flexibility, relationships, and a work culture grounded in on empathy, inclusiveness, and authenticity. For Generation X, work is more likely to be a source of stability and security; comfort and predictability are paramount.

2.3 HR Strategies and the Perception of Well-Being at Work

HR strategies should address the planned actions an organization takes to improve workplace well-being. Simpson *et al.* (2024) argue that employee well-being interventions or strategies fall into two categories: primary and secondary. The authors argue that primary strategies provide employees with work-related resources, such as social support and job autonomy. In contrast, secondary strategies build employees' personal resources, such as resilience, to meet job demands.

Tabor-Błażewicz (2023) categorized strategies that improve social well-being in the workplace into three groups: processes, projects or programs, and attitudes. Processes are long-term initiatives, while projects or programs are typically short-term. Attitudes refer to initiatives that cultivate employee attitudes that support well-being.

3. Research Results and Discussion

Adding a generational perspective to HR strategy is crucial, as differences in well-being perceptions between Generations Z and X influence the design of HR policies. Below, we explore how these differences translate into HR strategies.

1. ***Employer branding, employee acquisition, and retention*** – Generation Z chooses an employer based on values, mission, and social impact. Generation X is guided by stability, company reputation, and benefits packages. Therefore, HR strategies must incorporate distinct narratives tailored to the expectations of individuals from different generations in employer brand communication. Onboarding processes must also be tailored to the needs of individuals from each generation.

Similarly, Cattermole (2019) notes that employees are typically attracted to organizations that have a strong employee value proposition. Attipoe *et al.* (2023) emphasize that an emphasis on workplace well-being enhances the employer brand. Top talent is attracted and recruited by organizations that value employee well-being. Ismail and Warrak (2019) argue that organizations that emphasize employee well-being tend to reduce turnover intentions. Nosratabadi *et al.* (2022) note that the onboarding stage helps employees integrate into the organizational culture by providing them with the necessary tools.

Similarly, Rani *et al.* (2024) note that onboarding is crucial for building working relationships and increasing a sense of belonging among new employees. This

demonstrates that onboarding, as a stage in the employee lifecycle, is crucial for increasing a sense of belonging and fostering work relationships, which are critical to workplace well-being.

2. **Organizational culture** – Generation Z values authenticity, inclusiveness, and openness. HR must therefore support leaders in building a culture of psychological safety. Generation X, on the other hand, prefers clear structures, predictability, and stability. This generation will expect HR to ensure transparency of policies and procedures. HR strategy should therefore balance innovation with tradition.

Der Kinderen (2023) described the concept of Eudaimonic Well-being Behavior, in which she positions "well-doing" as a route to "well-being" in the workplace. Eudaimonic well-being behaviors, she states, consist of personal growth, the pursuit of purpose, and positive relationship behaviors. She associates them with servant leadership and a workplace civility climate. Loose *et al.* (2025) indicated that transformational leadership is significantly related to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being among employees and general managers.

Sun *et al.* (2025) indicated that construction workers' job well-being increased when receiving and giving helping behaviors were balanced at higher levels, and partially emphasized that construction professionals experienced greater well-being at work when they received more help than they gave. Ménard and Brunet (2011) indicated that authenticity is positively correlated with well-being at work. The cognitive and behavioral components of authenticity at work explained a significant portion of the variance in each well-being outcome.

3. **Internal communication** – Generation Z expects transparent, fast, and empathetic communication, often via digital channels (Slack, Teams, social media). Furthermore, they are highly sensitive to criticism. Generation X prefers formal communication, such as emails, team meetings, and newsletters. HR strategy must therefore consider multi-channel communication and diverse styles of information reception.

Globočnik Žunac (2024) indicates that directing criticism in an inappropriate and unmodified manner significantly contributes to negative employee emotions. Willett *et al.* (2023) indicate that leadership communication contributes to a respectful workplace culture, which in turn positively affects employee engagement and workplace well-being.

4. **Development and training** – Generation Z expects dynamic, interactive learning formats, such as microlearning, gamification, and mentoring. Generation X, on the other hand, prefers traditional training, certifications, and workshops. HR should therefore implement hybrid competency development models.

Watson *et al.* (2018) also argue that training and development are closely linked to employee well-being. Muzaffar Zargar and Gani (2025) demonstrated that workplace well-being is a significant mediator in the relationship between talent development and employee performance. Xiang *et al.* (2024) identified six dimensions of workplace well-being, including self-drive, personalization, responsibility, tolerance, implementation, and identification.

5. ***Segmentation of well-being activities*** – HR must design diverse well-being programs tailored to the expectations of different age groups. Mobile apps, webinars, mental health days, mentoring, flexible work arrangements, and work-life balance will be important for Generation Z. However, stable health benefits, medical packages, an ergonomic work environment, and retirement plans will be crucial for Generation X.

Nimmi and Donald (2023) indicate that serious leisure is positively associated with workplace well-being and that the relationship is mediated by self-perceived employability. Stress moderates the relationship between serious leisure and self-perceived employability, such that the association is stronger at higher levels of stress.

Stress also moderates the mediating effect of self-perceived employability on the relationship between serious leisure and workplace well-being, such that the indirect effect of serious leisure on workplace well-being is stronger when stress levels are higher.

4. Proposals, Recommendations, and Final Conclusion

The trend of workplace well-being in human resources management will become increasingly integrated with specific HRM functions in the coming years. Below are proposed changes in specific areas of human resources management.

In the area of recruitment and selection, the author proposes considering organizational culture and company values at the recruitment stage. Furthermore, communication with candidates should prioritize transparency and psychological safety. Psychometric tools will be used to assess employee fit not only in terms of competencies but, above all, in terms of emotional well-being..

In the area of employee evaluation, regular development conversations (360-degree feedback, check-ins) will be introduced, with a focus on employee well-being. A strong emphasis will be placed on employee well-being through regular development conversations. Rapid feedback, often via digital channels, will also be crucial. Personalizing career paths will become essential, taking into account individual needs and work styles.

Soft skills will become crucial for employee development, including mental resilience, stress management, and empathy. The role of intergenerational mentoring, which works both ways – a younger person can also be a mentor, will increase. Employees will require mental health training. These training sessions will utilize webinars, podcasts, and consultations with psychologists and dietitians. Mobile apps will support healthy habits (e.g., diet, sleep, activity, and work-life balance).

Managers, in turn, will need training in empathetic management and compassion, empathetic leadership, servant leadership, building a culture of psychological safety, recognizing burnout signals, and intergenerational communication.

In the areas of motivation and rewards, well-being benefits, access to a psychologist, access to a dietitian, the organization of health days, and mental health subscriptions, these will gain greater importance.

Managers will need to place greater emphasis on positive motivation, recognition, and rewarding behaviors that support a culture of care and collaboration. Employee needs and values will be identified, and alignment between personal and organizational values will be established to improve well-being.

In the areas of interpersonal relationships and communication management, constant availability from superiors will be required. Authenticity and empathy will be demanded of superiors, and the role of leadership will shift from "control manager" to "supportive leader." It will be necessary to provide employees with opportunities to share their thoughts and solutions to problems, and to identify ways to resolve them.

Not only the message itself, but also the manner of delivery will be crucial; programs that improve intergenerational communication and build an inclusive culture will become essential. Attention will be paid to building a culture of openness, trust, and psychological safety, as well as implementing policies to counteract bullying and discrimination.

In the area of work organization, organizations will invest in programs that support mental health, counteract burnout, and promote work-life balance. Work environments will be designed to both promote regeneration (e.g., relaxation zones, mindfulness breaks) and nurture mental health.

Avoiding toxic relationships, bullying, stress, and the rat race will be crucial. Mental health sensors will be installed in the workplace, and individuals will be supported in coping with stress, increasing awareness of themselves and their surroundings, mitigating negative feelings related to work circumstances, focusing on their strengths, and improving self-confidence.

Furthermore, attention will be paid to reducing employee distraction and information overload. The role of flexible work arrangements will be expanded to enable flexible work schedules. Experiments will include four-day workweeks, shortened work hours, flexible hours, and asynchronous work.

Workplace well-being is critical to organizational success. It is intertwined with the performance and prosperity of organizations and individuals, and is associated with greater creativity, loyalty, and customer service. The need to focus on mental well-being, as understood by Generation Z, in people management, due to the generational shift occurring in the labor market, will force changes in specific functions and areas of people management in the coming years.

There will be a decisive shift in emphasis—from structure to relationships, from control to trust, from stability to adaptability. Moreover the growing role of AI will compound all this—and here we face a certain paradox, as Generation Z may fall victim to the digital revolution.

The paper addresses two questions. In answering the first question, "How do generational differences in the perception of well-being impact HR strategies?", it should be noted that incorporating a generational perspective into HR strategies is crucial, as differences in workplace well-being perceptions between Generations Z and X influence the design of HR policies.

Analyzing approaches to employer branding, employee acquisition, and retention, it can be concluded that Generation Z chooses an employer based on values, mission, and social impact. Generation X is guided by stability, company reputation, and benefits packages. HR strategy must therefore incorporate different narratives tailored to the expectations of individuals from different generations in employer brand communication.

Analyzing organizational culture, it can be seen that Generation Z values authenticity, inclusiveness, and openness, while Generation X prefers clear structures, predictability, and stability. HR must therefore support leaders in both building a culture of psychological safety and fostering transparency in policies and procedures. Analyzing internal communication, we can conclude that Generation Z expects transparent, fast, and empathetic communication, often via digital channels (Slack, Teams, social media), and is highly sensitive to criticism.

At the same time, Generation X prefers formal communication, such as emails, team meetings, and newsletters. HR strategy must therefore consider multi-channel communication and diverse styles of information reception. Analyzing development and training, we can see that Generation Z expects dynamic, interactive learning formats, such as microlearning, gamification, and mentoring, while Generation X prefers traditional training, certifications, and workshops. HR should therefore implement hybrid models of skill development.

Analyzing well-being activities, we can conclude that segmentation will be necessary. HR must design diverse well-being programs tailored to the expectations of different age groups. Mobile apps, webinars, mental health days, mentoring, flexible work arrangements, and work-life balance will be important for Generation X. However, stable health benefits, medical packages, an ergonomic work environment, and retirement programs will be crucial for Generation X.

In response to the second question, "What changes should HR strategies introduce in specific areas of human resources management to better address workplace well-being?" Necessary changes were identified across recruitment and selection, employee evaluation, employee development, motivation and remuneration, interpersonal relationships and communication management, and work organization. These proposals are described in detail in the Proposals and Recommendations section.

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