

# Investigating the Relationship between Workplace Expectations and Turnover Intention Mindset among Romanian Students as Representatives of Generation Z\*

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## Abstract

In the age of the digital revolution, attracting and retaining the youngest generation of employees, namely Generation Z, has emerged as a critical concern for organizations. The present study theoretically and empirically explores the relationship between workplace expectations and turnover intention mindset using a sample of 308 students as representatives of Generation Z in Romania. Our results indicate that work-life balance, work dynamics, and work rewards – promotions, each explain a significant proportion of variability in turnover intention mindset. Still, these relationships are moderated by work experience and work meaningfulness. Accordingly, we provide new insights into exploring differences in Romanian students as representatives of Generation Z members' turnover intention mindset through workplace expectations. We also provide practical recommendations for business leaders.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Romania, Workplace expectations, Turnover intention mindset  
**JEL Codes:** M10, M12

## Introduction

Whenever a new generation enters the workplace, organizations experience a shift in the way they function due to mindsets, values, beliefs, behaviours, and expectations brought into the work arena by the incoming generation (Gabrielova/Buchko, 2021). Presently, the organizational space is experiencing the dawn of Generation Z which comprises those born between 1995–2010. The disruptions this entry creates are critical because two other considerable forces sharpen them: on the one hand, the considerable disruptions brought by technological and digital transformations that have been at play in the workplace for some time, and on the other hand, the new normal caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the entry of Generation Z into the labour market marks

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the overlapping of three generations at work. These factors generate substantial transformations and new perspectives on work and employment (Subramony/Solnet/Groth/Yagil/Hartley/Beomcheol/Golubovskaya, 2018). In this context, keeping employees in the organization is emerging as evermore critical for organizations.

Although turnover as a phenomenon is a reality in the workplace (Bolt/Winter-ton/Cafferkey, 2022), studies show that it has become more prevalent among the employees belonging to the Millennial generation (those born between 1980–1994) to the point that in the post-pandemic reality it is described in terms of the “Great Resignation” and the “Big Quit” (Ivanovic/Ivancevic, 2018; Kuzior/Kettler/Rabă, 2022). As managers struggle with the challenge of retaining Millennials, they are also faced with the challenge of integrating the new generation in the workplace, namely Generation Z (Meier/Crocker, 2010; Twenge, 2010, 2017). The questions on everyone’s mind are whether this new generation of the workforce will be a generation of job “stayers” or job “leavers”, what their expectations from the workplace are, and how will these expectations influence their relationship with the workplace (Hom/Mitchell/Lee/Griffeth, 2012; Woo/Allen, 2014; Garthe/Hasselhorn, 2021; Bolt et al., 2022). Understanding work-related expectations within generational cohorts, especially the youngest of generations – Generation Z, may help minimize turnover (Morrell/Abston, 2019).

Our study strives to shed light on whether, how, and which Generation Z’s workplace expectations (WEs) impact their turnover intentions. This should be of particular importance for managers because considering workplace expectations of this generation may curtail mismanagement and consequently improve organizational performance (Hansen/Leuty, 2012), and may enhance organizations’ and managers’ effectiveness in recruitment, retention, and reward plans (Campbell/Twenge/Campbell, 2017).

Such a study is significant in a changing context in which no research has specifically focused before (i.e., the Romanian context). Romania, a member state of the European Union since 2007, has long been a go-to market for cheap labour for multinational corporations looking to establish operations in Europe. In recent years, Romania has been facing a persistent labour shortage regarding the number of employees and workforce quality (Vasile/BobocGhiță/Băncescu/Săseanu, 2020). The persistent negative demographic trend and the massive external migration of this EU country (Chivu/Georgescu/Bratiloveanu/Băncescu, 2020) have generated increased tension in the labour market. Current studies estimate that four out of five employers face difficulty filling vacant jobs (Chivu et al., 2020). Albeit our study was undertaken in a specific socio-economic context, the fact that these young individuals who are about to enter professional life, have grown up in a globalized world and that they are more mobile than any

previous generations (Scholz/Rennig, 2019) makes such a research endeavour compelling and relevant for researchers and practitioners in other parts of Europe as well.

It is essential to note at this point that it can be challenging for young individuals who are still students to imagine what factors might potentially bring them to a decision to leave or remain with an employer in the future. This makes turnover intention and WEs difficult to measure in Generation Z students. Given the special status of Generation Z members, who have limited workplace experience due to their age, we cannot talk about actual established behaviour (Chicca/Shellenbarger, 2018). Nevertheless, one can explore the general belief, the lens or framework through which these individuals view their employment, and their relationship with a job. In this study, we used the syntagma 'turnover intention mindset' (hereby TIM) to refer to the general belief of the respondents towards staying or leaving a job. Approaching the concept of turnover within the framework offered by the concept of mindsets responds to calls in the literature to embed mindset theory in workplace research (Murphy/Reeves, 2019) in order to better understand organizational life, performance, and employee psychology (Heslin/Latham/VandeWalle, 2005; Heslin/VandeWalle, 2008; Rattan/Dweck, 2018; Rattan/Ozgumus, 2019; Canning/Murphy/Emerson/Chatman/Dweck/Kray, 2020).

Our study also aims to answer research calls in the literature regarding the need for a deeper understanding of Generation Z in the context of the workplace (e.g. (Holm/Rowe/Brady/White-Perkins, 2017; Goh/Lee, 2018; Schroth, 2019; Scholz/Rennig, 2019). Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate the effects of WEs on TIM among Generation Z members. More specifically, we aimed to examine the relationship between several WEs and TIM, and to study the interrelations between gender and work experience, on one hand, and WEs on the other hand, using a sample of Romanian students as representatives of Generation Z. We approach the concepts of WEs and TIM within the theoretical justification of Construal Level Theory (CLT), which argues that the degree of psychological distance that people experience at the time of making a decision influences their view on things (Trope/Liberman, 2010). From this perspective, we can understand how an individual makes assessments, evaluations, and decisions about events or objects that are not „here and now.” According to the CTL, a person's prediction depends on their abstract representation of the future (e.g., the mental representation of their future job), which readily guides intentions. As employment is a rather distant activity in the case of Generation Z, according to CLT arguments, desirability considerations play a more predominant role in the decisions related to this aspect (Benschop/Nuijten/Keil/Rohde/Lee/Commandeur, 2021). Hence, CLT offers a fruitful framework to explore the concepts of work expectations and turnover intention among a group of individuals who are

becoming highly important in the workplace but have limited experience with the reality of the workplace.

In the next section we will review the existing literature on the characteristics of Generation Z, as well as the concepts of TIM and WEs in the specific case of this generation. Following the literature review, the paper will focus on the research methodology. Thereafter, the analysis results are presented in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. The final section will discuss the implications and limitations of this study, suggestions for future research, and we will end with some conclusions.

## Review of scientific literature

### *Characteristics of Generation Z*

Although generational research is not an „exact science” and “generation” as a research construct is a “fuzzy” concept (Costanza/Finkelstein, 2015; Campbell et al., 2017), researchers in this field point out that this construct is still meaningful, valuable, and essential in research endeavours (Campbell et al., 2017; Scholz/Rennig, 2019). Acknowledging that generational research “is atheoretical and plagued by methodological problems”, Brink and colleagues (2015, p. 335) argue that it would be hasty of researchers to dismiss the generation construct too quickly and that those who are inclined to do this have overly narrow arguments and overly stated conclusions. Moreover, the concept of generation represents a bridge between research and practice as it is heavily relied upon by practitioners, consultants, marketers, and the media who deal with this subject (Parry/Urwin, 2011; Scholz/Rennig, 2019).

This study uses the term “Generation Z” to indicate a group of people who share birth years (i.e., 1995–2010), a similar cultural context, and similar significant, influential events at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Digital disruption and rapid advancement of technology are considered determinative life events for Generation Z members. Through broadband Internet access, smartphones, and an online connection, Generation Z experiences extensive access to more information than any other generation at their age in the formative years. This aspect may explain their propensity towards multitasking and absorbing information from multiple sources, especially digital ones (Seemiller/Grace, 2017). Along with technological advancement, Generation Z characteristics are influenced by their exposure to the 2007 global financial crisis, climate change, and a range of unfair societal situations. While not all social issues are linked to technology, technology can amplify Gen Zs’ struggles. With so much of their professional and personal life tied to digital technology (Seemiller/Grace, 2017) Generation Z appears to be more individualistic (Chicca/Shellenbarger, 2018) and less social (Twenge/Spitzberg/Campbell, 2019). At the same time, they seem to focus on independence and gaining autonomy

(Twenge, 2017) while searching for convenience and immediacy coupled with fun (Bartczak/Szymankowska, 2019). Generation Z members seem to be open-minded and comfortable with differences (Seemiller/Grace, 2017), expressing themselves vocally through unique and exclusive friendships (Chicca/Shellenbarger, 2018). On the other hand, they seem more concerned with emotional, physical, and financial safety (Lukianoff/Haidt, 2018). The constant digital consumption and dependence on digital communication (Spears/Zobac/Spillane/Thomas, 2015; Scholz/Rennig, 2019) may lead to technology addiction and a higher risk for mental health issues (Twenge, 2017).

According to Schroder (2021), the wide range of influences that shape a generation configures people's minds when they are young. Influences create beliefs understood as convictions generally accepted to be true. When these beliefs are internalized as values or standards of behavior, they remain relatively stable during the transition from university to the workforce (Kuron/Lyons/Schweitzer/Ng, 2015). In addition, Cugin (2012) pointed out that generational characteristics and values can influence generation members to prefer some aspects of work that motivate and retain them.

### *The theoretical framework of turnover intention mindset*

In the quest to enhance understanding of what drives individuals to stay in a job or to leave it, studies are increasingly focusing on turnover intention (Lee/Idris/Tuckey, 2019), defined as "the disposition of thinking and planning to leave an organisation, a job, or a profession voluntarily" (Botezat/Fotea/Marici/Fotea, 2020, p. 72). Turnover intention is a multi-stage process that contains psychological, cognitive, and behavioural components. Especially the cognitive component has been interpreted as "intention," which means "desire" (Harris, 2005) or "thought" (Castle/Engberg/Anderson/Men, 2007). A large body of research reports that intentions are one of the most effective predictors of behaviour in general. Specifically, the intention to quit a job is strongly related to turnover (Griffeth/Hom/Gaertner, 2000; Holtom/Mitchell/Lee/Eberly, 2008; Woo/Allen, 2014).

For the reasons that we have already outlined, regarding the particular context of Generation Z, in this study we have used the syntagma "turnover intention mindset" (TIM) to explore the general belief of respondents towards staying or leaving a job. This is relevant as the concept of employment is a mental schema that develops over time (Kassin/Fein/Markus, 2010). It is pivotal in organizing and giving meaning to certain workplace expectations.

Mindsets have been studied considerably as a psychological construct, especially among students and in educational contexts (Schroder, 2021), to understand how a belief held by a person about themselves and others impacts the behaviour and performance of that person (Holden/LaMar/Bauer, 2021). In the

psychological realm, mindsets are viewed as fundamental assumptions or beliefs that people have (Murphy/Reeves, 2019). Dweck (1986, 1999; Dweck/Yeager, 2019) argues that mindsets are embedded in people's interpretation of their contexts and that, like other beliefs, they form on the foundation of experiences (Rattan/Ozgunus, 2019).

More recently, mindsets theory has been applied to the organisational context, and researchers argue the importance of identifying and catering to the mindsets of employees to better understand the underlying beliefs of their motivations, efforts, and behaviours (Murphy/Reeves, 2019; Rattan/Ozgunus, 2019; Canning et al., 2020). Hom et al. (2012) used the language of mindsets when they developed the concept of proximal withdrawal states, arguing that employees can be characterized by "leaving or staying mind-sets" (p.835) and that considering both ends of states is useful in obtaining a more complete picture of organisational participation. Along the same lines, Steel (2002) argues that the job-searching process is a continuum and that individuals have, at any given time, a certain position on that continuum – from not searching at all to passively scanning for opportunities, to actively searching for a job or already having an offer in hand.

In light of these developments in the turnover intention and mindset literature, we propose that TIM can be viewed as a belief about "staying or leaving" a job, a lens that Generation Z has regarding the timeframe they apply to keeping a job, the extent to which they believe that the same job should be held for a longer or shorter time (Bolt et al., 2022; Garthe/Hasselhorn, 2021).

### *Workplace expectations*

Around 1998, when the Millennial generation entered the workplace, employers were faced with a changed set of expectations and behaviours from their employees (Gagné et al., 2015; Ng/Lyons/Schweitzer, 2017) and since then, the research and discussions have been dominated by the need to meet these expectations (Scholz/Rennig, 2019). As Generation Z enters the workplace, employers are again faced with a new pressing issue (Miller/Lu, 2018). While some researchers argue that this generation is a vastly different generational cohort (Seemiller/Grace, 2017) there is also an acknowledgment of the similarities between Generation Z and the Millennial generation (Schroth, 2019). Given that Generation Z is just entering the workplace, employers and researchers have little experience with them in this context. Therefore, it is natural that a starting point in understanding them would be to understand the similarities they share with the generation closest to them, the Millennials (Iorgulescu, 2016; Goh/Lee, 2018; Scholz/Rennig, 2019; Schroth, 2019; Kleine/Schmitt/Wisse, 2021). Previous research identifies the following common WEs among Millennial employees: (1) guidance and support (Martin, 2005); (2) independence/defined

career path (De Hauw/De Vos, 2010); (3) interesting and challenging job content (De Hauw/De Vos, 2010) with dynamic tasks (Kultalahti/Viitala, 2015); (4) meaningfulness (Dries/Pepermans/De Kerpel, 2008); (5) salary (De Hauw/De Vos, 2010; Dries et al., 2008), instant bonuses and various benefits (Hurst/Good, 2009), career progression and advancement (Broadbridge/Maxwell/Ogden, 2007; Wong/Gardiner/Lang/Coulon, 2008; De Hauw/De Vos, 2010); (6) job security (Dries et al., 2008; De Hauw/De Vos, 2010); (7) work-life balance (Cennamo/Gardner, 2008; Kultalahti/Viitala, 2015).

According to Lent et al. (2017), expectations are an essential cognitive motivator enabling the goal-action-outcome process. Brown and Cinamon (2016) and Grow and Yang (2018) indicate that unmet workplace expectations generate behavioural consequences, such as turnover. We formulated our first research question on the grounds that the extant literature largely considers turnover intention as a response to unrealized workplace expectations (e.g., Creed/Saporta, 2003; Brown/Thomas/Bosselman, 2015). Our first research question and the corresponding hypotheses are as follows:

*RQ1. Which WEs are associated with TIM among Generation Z members?*

For RQ1, we formulated the following hypotheses:

*H1a: Work guidance and support have a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Workplace social support* and its effects on employee behaviour and performance are emphasized by human resource management research with an increasing focus, in recent years, on the informal employee perceptions regarding support at work (Kossek/Pichler/Bodner/Hammer, 2011) such as the supervisor's sympathetic attitude and his/her relatedness. The concept of workplace social support includes both the idea of feeling cared for and appreciated and *having access to needed help* (Viswesvaran/Sanchez/Fisher, 1999). General supervisor support is highlighted by multiple studies as a critical WE (Burr/Moncada/Berthelsen/Nübling/Dupret/Perez, 2018; Glavin/Schieman, 2010; Moncada/Utzet/Molinero/Llorens/Moreno/Galtés/Navarro, 2014) with a significant impact on engagement (Xanthopoulou/Bakker/Demerouti/Schaufeli, 2009) and turnover intention (Murray/Toulson/Legg, 2011; Kurtessis/Eisenberger/Ford/Bufardi/Stewart/Adis, 2017; Lee et al., 2019). Given that Generation Z has less experience in the labour market (Schroth, 2019) it may present a deficit of specific skills required in the workplace (Goh/Lee, 2018).

*H1b: Work autonomy has a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Autonomy* is characterised in the literature as a basic human psychological need that must be met and a job resource that can absorb some of the negative effects of job demands (Schaufeli/Taris, 2014). Work autonomy reflects the extent to



which the job offers discretion and freedom to the employee over the timing and pace of tasks, the methods used in performing the tasks, and decision-making (Morgeson/Humphrey, 2006). Consistently, studies show the positive effect of work autonomy on employee engagement and proactivity (Van den Broeck/Van Ruysseveldt/Smulders/De Witte, 2011; Schaufeli/Taris, 2014; Van Veldhoven/Dorenbosch/Breugelmans/Van De Voorde, 2017). Also, perceived work autonomy (discretion over major aspects of the job) was found to lead to a sense of learning and work purpose (Buzzetto-Hollywood/Alade, 2018) and to enhance self-efficacy, controlling for the extent of prior involvement in career exploration activities (Kleine et al., 2021). Generation Z is perceived as more individualistic in learning, interpersonal interaction, and communication (Chicca/Shellenbarger, 2018) and seems characterised by independence and the desire to be in control (Twenge, 2017).

*H1c: Work dynamic has a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Work dynamic* is reflected in the degree of variety in the job regarding skills required, predictability, and complexity (Grant/Ashford, 2008). It has been indicated to be an explanatory factor for employees' turnover intentions by Veldhoven and Meijman (1994). It was also found among the factors that facilitate the creation of conditions for building identification and loyalty for young employees (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2020). Generation Z seems to be characterised by a low level of compliance with a standard work program, repetitive tasks, or standard procedures (Goh/Lee, 2018; Schroth, 2019). They appear to easily accept geographical distance or different zones in relation to a job offer or the team/company in which they could work (Seemiller/Grace, 2017). Also, they persevere in the undertakings they assume when they are motivated, but at the same time, they seem to get bored rather quickly in their activities (Bartczak/Szymankowska, 2019).

*H1d: Work meaningfulness has a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Work meaningfulness* reflects the perceived significance, importance, and greatness of the work performed (Rosso/Dekas/Wrzesniewski, 2010). Studies highlight work meaningfulness as the most critical resource to mitigate adverse employee work outcomes (Hoang, 2014) and found it negatively related to turnover intentions (Arnoux-Nicolas/Sovet/Lhotellier/Di Fabio/Bernaud, 2016). Generation Z wants to do work that matters (Seemiller/Grace, 2017) in companies that embrace corporate social responsibility (Goh/Lee, 2018). One of their concerns is to experience meaningfulness in work, and that is a critical component that can keep Generation Z motivated and engaged (Bailey/Lips-Wiersma/Madden/Yeoman/Thompson/Chalofsky, 2019).

*H1e: Work rewards have a statistically significant effect on TIM.*



*Work rewards* are part of the reality of the workplace and represent outcomes of the employment relationship that are perceived as valuable by the employee (Rai/Ghosh/Chauhan/Singh, 2018). They can include monetary and non-monetary opportunities or recognition. Studies in this area indicate that rewards show a strong association with both the intent to leave and actual turnover (Brown et al., 2015). Generation Z seems to value hard work and wishes to be rewarded for it (Schwieger/Ladwig, 2018). As this generation has never experienced a booming economy, they seem to pay more attention to money (Moore/Jones/Frazier, 2017). Also, they tend to expect immediate rewards in promotion and pay (Schroth, 2019).

*H1f: Job security has a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Job security* represents the extent to which the organization ensures stable employment (Yousef, 1998) and has emerged as another critical factor for recruiting and retaining employees in previous research (Mihalca/Mengelkamp/Brendea/Metz, 2022). Perceptions of job security were found to improve well-being (Schroth, 2019). Generation Z grew up in a culture of safety built by overprotective parents, and they seem more cautious and concerned with emotional, physical, and financial safety (Lukianoff/Haidt, 2018).

*H1g: Work-life balance has a statistically significant effect on TIM.*

*Work-life balance* refers to how much time spent on the job affects the time dedicated to personal life (Pace/Sciotto, 2021). Work flexibility, associated with the work-life balance concept, reduces human resources risk (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2020). The work-life imbalance experienced by employees is found to negatively impact employees' attitudes and behaviour, more than other factors, such as management behaviour or salary levels (Fayyazi/Aslani, 2015). For Generation Z, free time and personal experiences play a very important role in their development, and they seek to have fun and happiness in the workplace (Ozkan/Solmaz, 2015).

Several studies were conducted on the potential *moderating effects of socio-demographic variables on turnover intention* (Jha, 2009; Peltokorpi/Allen/Froese, 2015; Ng et al., 2017). Empirical research found gender differences in turnover intention and gender has also been examined in an extensive study related to Millennials (e.g., Jha, 2009; Ng et al., 2017). This encourages us to consider gender as a moderator variable in our study related to Generation Z students. We found support for using work experience as a moderator in a study conducted by Brennan et al. (2002), investigating the links between work experience during higher education and experiences within the labour market in the UK. Accordingly, "work experience related to studying appears to have a positive impact on most aspects of employment activity post-graduation; in areas such

as preparing graduates for work and meeting their expectations, there was a positive association” (Brennan/Blaskó/Little/Woodley, 2002, p. 5). Considering these aspects, we formulated the second research question and corresponding hypotheses:

*RQ2. Do gender and work experience moderate the relationship between different WEs and TIM?*

*H2a. We expect a moderating effect of gender on the relationship between WEs and TIM.*

*H2b. We expect a moderating effect of work experience on the relationship between WEs and TIM.*

## Research Methodology

### Sample

To test our hypotheses and answer our research questions, we collected data from 411 students from Romania, Generation Z members who study in the Western part of the country. Although the participants are studying in the Western part of Romania, they are residents in different regions of the country and main counties such as Iasi, Suceava, Cluj, Satu-Mare, Hunedoara, Dambovita, Botosani, and Brasov. It can be argued that respondent characteristics are similar to other youngsters of their generation in Romania due to rather homogenous traits of Romanian people in general across all regions of the country. According to David et al. (2015), there are “only a few statistically significant differences for neuroticism and agreeableness between the eight regions, but they were related to just one of the facets comprising each of the broader traits” (p.42). Moreover, the constant connectivity, online lifestyle, and continual culturalization via social media are eroding the physical and cultural boundaries.

As representatives of Generation Z, we surveyed students born in 1995 or later with no exclusion criteria regarding enrolment status, the field of study, gender, and current work experience. The main factor when deciding on the sample was the age of the respondents (younger than ~24 years old at the time of data collection). Students in Romania generally graduate from a bachelor program at approximately 22 years old, which fits into the Generation Z age range. Moreover, due to a deficit in the labour force in Romania, many students are being recruited by employers during their studies, thus starting to accumulate work experience. The early exposure to the labour market makes them suitable for the purpose of this study. Using students as a research sample when investigating job-related aspects has support in the literature. For example, in a recent study by Mihalca et al. (2022), the authors collected and analysed the data from 199 Romanian first-year students with the aim of “gaining an understanding of what

the most attractive job and organisational attributes for both prospective and current employees are.” (p. 4).

The data collection was carried out in February 2019 using a survey constructed and disseminated using the online platform Qualtrics. The survey reached 575 students, but the response rate was 71,47 % (411 respondents). From the total of 411 respondents to the study, a total of 349 (84.91 %) of the cases were complete. Essentially, the missing data analysis showed that only 16.09 % of the participants had missing values on the variables of interest. This 16.09 % of the participants had dropped the survey at some point, leaving more than 20 % of the questions unanswered. These missing data seem to be missing completely at random, meaning that removing them from further analysis would not lead to biased results. For these reasons, we decided to perform listwise deletion of the missing cases. Of the 349 respondents, 41 were born before 1995. Since the population of interest in this study is Gen Z, we removed these cases from subsequent analyses. Thus, the final dataset contained the complete responses of 308 individuals to 53 variables of interest. Some sample demographics are presented in Appendix 1. 67.9 % of the respondents were female and 91,9 % were bachelor students. Regarding work experience, 51.9 had less than 1-year of experience, the remaining 49.1 % had between 1 – 5 years of work experience. Only 2 participants had 5 or more years of work experience; thus, this category was merged with the previous one (‘3–4 years’) in subsequent analyses.

### Measures

Each of the WEs included in this study was operationalized using existing measures from the extant literature:

- (1) *work guidance and support* – 9 items measuring the importance placed by respondents on receiving emotional (sympathy, caring, relatedness), instrumental (tangible assistance) and structural support (availability of people who provide help). Measure based on Glavin and Schieman (2010); Burr et al. (2018); Moncada et al. (2014).
- (2) *work autonomy* – 9 items measuring the importance attributed by respondents to having freedom, and discretion or control over the method and pace of her job, based on Veldhoven and Meijman (1994); Schaufli and Taris, (2014).
- (3) *work dynamics* – 6 items measuring the importance placed by respondents on the degree to which the job offers variety, the opportunity to use his/her creativity, and makes full use of the respondent’s skills (Veldhoven/Meijman, 1994; Grant/Ashford, 2008).
- (4) *work meaningfulness* – 7 items measuring the importance attributed by respondents to have a job that is important, impactful, and benefits some greater good (Rosso et al., 2010; Hoang, 2014; Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016)

- (5) *work rewards* – 12 items measuring the importance placed by respondents on receiving rewards (Falola/Ibidunni/Olokundun, 2014).
- (6) *job security* – 3 items measuring the importance attributed by the respondents to having a secure job, generating a stable income, and a steady career path (Watt/Richardson, 2007).
- (7) *work-life balance* – 3 items measuring the importance placed by respondents on having a job that allows for personal time (Watt/Richardson, 2007).

All the items pertaining to WEs were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

The *turnover intention mindset* (TIM) measure, which was the outcome variable in our study, was developed in line with Steel's (2000) evolutionary model of turnover, Hom et al (2012) proximal withdrawal state, and Woo and Allen's (2013) inductive theory of stayers and leavers to measure students' mental representations of turnover intention. Specifically, the measure was operationalized with 4 items assessing their view on the timeframe to hold a job and job search (constant job search / switch jobs yearly / hold a job for a maximum of three years / stay at least five years with an organisation).

For all measured items, all responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

For consistency and continuity, all the variables were re-coded to a 5-point Likert scale from 0 to 4.

### *Data analysis*

First, we ran several basic descriptive analyses on the variables of interest to see how the participants' responses were distributed across the response categories. Second, we conducted reliability and principal component analyses (PCA) on all sets of items to investigate whether they can be reliably used as (unidimensional) scales. These preliminary analyses (not tabulated) indicated that it was appropriate to represent the participants' responses to these items by means of a summary score for each scale. We computed participants' scores as the average of their responses to the items for interpretation purposes. In this way, the unit of measurement of the items (i.e, Likert scale from 0 to 4) was reflected in the participants' scale scores. The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) index of sampling adequacy had values larger than 0.6 for all measures, and Bartlett's test of sphericity had corresponding *p*-values below .05 for all measures. Thus, PCA was suitable for these data.

To test our hypotheses, we estimated a series of multiple linear regression models. Specifically, we regressed TIM on gender, work experience, WEs (mean-centred), and all the two-way mean-centred interactions between these variables. In order to assess the added value of including interaction effects in

the regression model, we first regressed TIM on gender, work experience, and the WEs (Model 1). Then, we added all the pairwise interactions between gender, work experience, and WEs in the model (Model 2) and tested whether the amount of variability explained by these interaction effects above and beyond what was already explained by the main effects was statistically significant.

The moderation effects hypothesised in *H2a* and *H2b* were characterised statistically as the interaction effects of WEs and gender (*H2a*), and of WEs and work experience (*H2b*), on TIM, and their statistical significance is reflected by the regression coefficients of said interactions. All analyses were conducted using the SPSS v. 26 software.

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

In Appendix 2 we provide detailed descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation) for the participants' scores on the measures of WEs and TIM. The average scores for WEs ranged between 2.90 (Work rewards – recognition) and 3.71 (Work rewards – promotion). On average, participants rated these aspects as being important to them, at least to some extent. Work rewards – promotion had the highest average rating and a relatively low standard deviation which means that this aspect was consistently rated as highly important. Work rewards – recognition had the lowest average rating and the largest amount of variability (about 3/4 of a category) among workplace expectations. Thus, although, on average, participants rated this aspect as “Important”, their ratings were less consistent.

Concerning the outcome variable of this study (TIM), it had a mean of 1.95 and a standard deviation of 0.73. Thus, even though, on average, the participants scored “Neutral” on the TIM scale, about 95 % of them scored between 0.52 (halfway between “Totally disagree” and “Disagree”) and 3.38 (halfway between “Agree” and “Totally agree”). Although our sample was relatively neutral, on average, concerning TIM, the variability in the scores was large. It is precisely this variability in TIM that we were interested in explaining. Specifically, we aimed to investigate the extent to which the variability in TIM among Generation Z members can be explained by their WEs, gender, and work experience.

### *Principal component analysis results*

The exploratory analysis we conducted showed that the empirical data yielded one component for most measures, and all the items were reliable and functioned well within their scale. This means that, for each respondent, a single score could be used to summarise their responses to the TIM measure and

the measures assessing different aspects of WEs. Three exceptions were found, and the solution was to exclude one item from the *Work dynamics* scale and one item from the *TIM* scale and to split the variable *Work rewards* into the following components: *Work rewards – financial*, *Work rewards – recognition*, and *Work rewards – promotion*. Appendix 3 shows the reliability indices for all the measures and Appendix 4 shows, for each measure, the short versions of the item content and some item-test statistics. The extracted components explained between 50.7 % and 76.6 % of the total variance.

*Explaining variability in TIM among generation Z members*

The outcome variable, *TIM*, was statistically significantly associated with the following variables: *gender* ( $\eta=.14$ ), *Work autonomy* ( $r = 0.178$ ), *Work dynamics* ( $r = 0.184$ ), *Work meaningfulness* ( $r = 0.120$ ), *Work rewards – financial* ( $r = 0.120$ ), and *Work rewards – recognition* ( $r = 0.262$ ). The predictor intercorrelations did not indicate any multicollinearity issues, that is, the correlations among predictor variables were not too high (not tabulated).

Thus, we estimated two regression models: Model 1 included *TIM* as the outcome and *gender* (women as the reference category), *work experience* (dummy-coded, with “no work experience” as the reference category), and *WEs* (mean-centred) as predictors. In order to assess the added value of including interaction effects, we fitted a second model (Model 2), which included the variables in Model 1 and all the pairwise interactions between them. The model summary of the two estimated regression models is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Model summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> adj.	SE	R <sup>2</sup> change	F change	df1	df2	Sig.
Model 1	0.363 <sup>a</sup>	0.132	0.090	0.697	0.132	3.170	14	294	<0.001
Model 2	0.666 <sup>b</sup>	0.444	0.183	0.661	0.312	1.398	84	209	0.029

<sup>a</sup> Model 1 has as predictors Gender, Work experience (dummy-coded), and WE.  
<sup>b</sup> Model 2 has as predictors Gender, Work experience (dummy-coded), WE, and the pairwise interactions between these variables.

Gender, work experience, and WEs together explain a significant percentage of the variability in *TIM* (i.e., 13 %, Model 1). Adding the pairwise interactions between these variables to the model (Model 2) increases the percentage of explained variance to 44 %, which is significantly higher than what is explained by Model 1. However, Model 2 is much less parsimonious, as shown by the large discrepancy between  $R^2$  and the adjusted  $R^2$ . Hence, the adjusted  $R^2$  is a more accurate estimate of the proportion of explained variance. As such, the model with *gender*, *work experience*, *WEs*, and their pairwise interactions explain 18 % of the variability in *TIM*. According to Cohen’s (1992) guidelines, this is a



medium-to-large effect. The regression model is statistically significant at the 5 % significance level, with  $F(98, 209) = 1.703, p = .001$ . Therefore, we selected this linear model to explain the variability in TIM. The model coefficients for the statistically significant predictors are shown below (Table 2).

Table 2. Regression coefficients\*

Effect	B	SE(B)	Beta	t	Partial correlation
Intercept	1.65	0.125		13.21***	
Work meaningfulness	0.04	0.259	0.033	0.17	0.01
Work rewards Promotions	0.28	0.317	0.172	0.89	0.06
Work dynamics	-0.20	0.227	-0.160	-0.87	-0.06
Work-life balance	0.76	0.291	0.461	2.61**	0.18
Work experience Internships	0.19	0.149	0.111	1.24	0.09
Work experience Less 1 year	0.05	0.154	0.030	0.32	0.02
Work experience 1–2 years	0.23	0.171	0.124	1.35	0.09
Work experience > 3 years	-0.18	0.301	-0.065	-0.61	-0.04
Work-life balance * Work experience Internships	-1.10	0.258	-0.335	-3.08**	-0.21
Work-life balance * Work experience Less 1 year	-1.28	0.396	-0.359	-3.22***	-0.22
Work-life balance * Work experience 1–2 years	-1.04	0.431	-0.293	-2.31*	-0.16
Work dynamics * Work experience Less 1 year	0.58	0.292	0.234	1.98*	0.14
Work meaningfulness * Work rewards Promotions	-1.03	0.327	-0.386	-3.14**	-0.21

As the standardised (Beta) coefficients show, *Work-life balance* has the largest relative importance in explaining *TIM*, and this main effect is statistically significant. This finding confirms our hypothesis *H1g*. Regarding the main effects of the remaining WEs, our data did not support hypotheses *H1a* (the effect of *Work guidance and support*), *H1b* (the effect of *Work autonomy*), and *H1f* (the effect of *Job security*).

Interestingly, *Work meaningfulness* (hypothesis *H1d*) only has a statistically significant effect on *TIM* in interaction with a facet of *Work rewards*, namely *Promotions*. Still, we will explore this interaction effect from the perspective of the latter variable. Hypothesis *H1e* was partially supported via the interaction effect mentioned above. Specifically, the effect of *Work rewards – promotions* decrease linearly as individuals’ rating of *Work meaningfulness* increases. In other words, people who rate *Work rewards-promotions* highly also tend to constantly search for new job opportunities, but only if they give low ratings to work meaningfulness. To illustrate this, we show the slope of *Work rewards – promotions* for different levels of *Work meaningfulness* (Figure 3). It can be seen

that the effect of *Work rewards – promotions* is positive for individuals with low ratings on *Work meaningfulness* but decreases for individuals with high ratings on *Work meaningfulness*.

Regarding hypothesis *H1c*, our data does not show support for a significant main effect of *Work dynamic* on *TIM*.

Concerning the demographic variables, we did not find significant differences between males and females on their expected scores on the TIM scale, and gender did not emerge as a moderator for the relationships between WEs and TIM (*H2a*). Also, *work experience* alone did not explain a significant proportion of the variability in TIM. Still, it did so in combination with other variables, namely Work-life balance, and Work dynamics, bringing partial support for our hypothesis *H2b*. Figure 1 depicts the effect of Work-life balance on TIM, for different levels of work experience. Specifically, for individuals without work experience/Internships only, there is a strong positive correlation between how much they value work-life balance and their willingness to leave a job in favour of another. For those with work experience of less than two years, the relationship between how much they value work-life balance, and their turnover mindset becomes negative. Finally, for individuals with more than three years of work experience, the effect of Work-life balance on TIM is statistically nonsignificant.

The relationship between Work dynamics and TIM is only statistically significant in the group of individuals with less than one year of work experience (Figure 2). Only this category of individuals tends to search for new job opportunities and are willing to change jobs if they value work dynamics to a large extent.

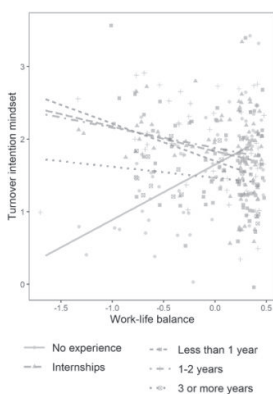


Figure 1. Partial residuals plot depicting the effect of Work-life balance on Turnover Intention Mindset, for different levels of Work experience.

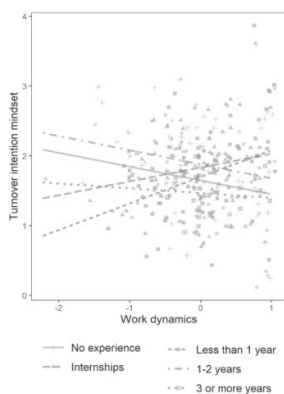


Figure 2. Partial residuals plot depicting the effect of Work dynamics on Turnover Intention Mindset, for different levels of Work experience.

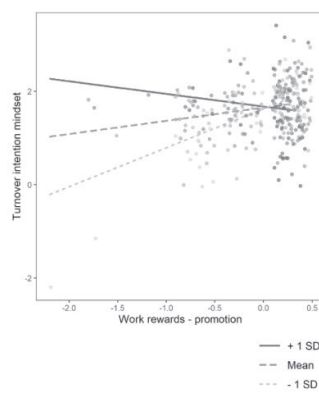


Figure 3. Partial residuals plot depicting the effect of Work rewards - promotions on Turnover Intention Mindset, for different levels of Work meaningfulness (mean, + 1 standard deviation, - 1 standard deviation).

The estimated final model fits the data reasonably well. The residuals are normally distributed with a standard error of 0.662, and there are no influential outliers. In terms of linearity and homoscedasticity, the residual plots showed some violations in some instances, but a regression model with polynomial terms did not improve model fit significantly [ $F(12, 278) = 1.574, p = 0.099$ ].

## Discussions

This study examined how and which different WEs (i.e., work guidance and support, work autonomy, work dynamics, work meaningfulness, work rewards – financial, recognition, and promotion, job security, and work-life balance) impact TIM, using students as representatives of Generation Z. Our results show that our proposed model with the above-mentioned nine WEs, gender, work experience, and their pairwise interactions explains the variability in TIM to a large extent (a medium-to-large effect).

Findings from the multiple regression model indicated that *Work-life balance* has the largest relative importance in explaining *TIM*. Although Generation Z is just entering the labour market, the expectation for work-life balance is already an important topic as reported by different studies (Goh/Lee, 2018; Ozkan/Solmaz, 2015; Schroth, 2019). Recently, Stankiewicz-Mróz (2020) found that the issue of Gen Z's work-life balance is connected with their interest in flexible work hours and preoccupation with their mental health (Gabrielova/Buchko, 2021). Broadening the understanding of work-life balance to the pre-work experience stage of Generation Z could help explain the tendency to procrastinate taking a job and the ease of quitting the job shortly after taking it, which are the main challenges Romanian employers face. This aspect is even more important in the Romanian context due to the workforce crisis and the low participation rate of youths in the labour market, which cripples the business environment (Dodescu/Botezat/Constăncioară/Pop-Cohuț, 2021).

The impact of work-life balance and work dynamics on TIM was moderated by work experience. As such, we found that for individuals with little work experience, work-life balance and work dynamics had a strong positive effect on their TIM. As work experience increases, the effect of work-life balance on TIM changes: in the case of individuals with 1- 2 years of work experience, the relationship between how much they value work-life balance, and their TIM becomes negative. Surprisingly, our results reveal that for individuals with more than three years of work experience, there is no association between how much they value work-life balance and how willing they are to constantly search for new job opportunities. Some studies indicate that students' lack of work experience may lead to unrealistic expectations from the hypothetical job (e.g., Mihalca et al., 2022). Regardless of whether these expectations are unrealistic or not, the important aspect is that they exist in the mind of first job seekers.

Thus, they need to be tackled by managers and HR professionals, be it through anticipatory socialisation (Petry/Treisch/Bullinger, 2020) or be met at their face value. Moreover, past studies suggest that Generation Z employees have no problem staying loyal to their profession but are not as committed to organisations, especially if their needs are not being met (Chillakuri/Mahanandia, 2018). This indicates that as individuals grow in their work experience, they obtain a more complete view of the job (Petry et al. 2020), which may lead to a dilution of emphasis placed on different expectations (e.g., work-life balance and work dynamics). These results also align with the CLT framework regarding the psychological distance and the salience of desirability and feasibility criteria used by individuals when making decisions regarding future scenarios. The more distant an activity is, the criteria related to desires and wishes will prevail in the decision-making process (e.g., the high desirability for work-life balance expectation in the case of least experienced respondents). This means that the more distant employment is, individuals think of it in terms of their desires (the desire to have a good work-life balance and dynamism in the job). The closer the activity is to the individual, the feasibility criteria or the perception regarding the means to reach a goal overrides desirability. As for the lack of effect of work-life balance on TIM for more experienced Gen Z members, according to the CLT, a plausible explanation could be that generalised goals such as work-life balance can be circumvented by more pragmatic objectives (e.g., work rewards).

A noteworthy finding is that work meaningfulness acts as a deterrent for the relationship between promotion expectations and TIM: individuals for whom work meaningfulness is important are less likely to constantly search for work opportunities if their promotion expectations are not met. Our finding is convergent with studies that have found that meaningful work is a significant psychological resource (Humphrey/Nahrgang/Morgeson, 2007) with a demonstrated role in mediating adverse working conditions and turnover intentions (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016). Nevertheless, some studies have found that raising individuals aware of what they find meaningful might lead them to search for meaning outside the workplace rather than within it (Thory, 2016).

## Limitations, implications and future research directions

This study has several limitations. First, the design of the research was built around self-reported data, therefore, the study is subject to the limitations of this specific research design. Further studies should approach this topic using other research designs that allow bypassing the limitations associated with self-reported data. For example, policy capturing methodology based on alternative scenarios (Karren/Barringer, 2002; Nokes/Hodgkinson, 2017) or structured card sort ranking technique (Saunders/Altinay/Riordan, 2009), which allow an indirect

assessment of variables. A diversification of research designs around the topic of workplace expectations and turnover intentions in the case of Generation Z is likely to yield more insight and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

A second limitation of this study regards the relatively small sample ( $n=308$ ) consisting predominantly of students who are studying in the western part of Romania. We acknowledge that students, although members of Generation Z themselves, are not the entirety of this generation but rather a subpopulation. For this reason, we have referred to them as “representatives of generation Z” throughout the paper. Future research should employ a larger and more representative sample of Generation Z members, including a greater number of employed individuals and individuals who are neither in employment nor in education or training. Such research could investigate what effect a sample of non-students Generation Z members may have on the relationships we examined. Also, other demographics, such as marital status or having children, should be included in analysing the relationship between WEs and TIM, especially concerning work-life balance.

Third, the WEs included in this study were selected as they emerged in the literature as the most frequently used in analysing turnover intentions among Millennials, the closest generation to Generation Z. However, based on our findings, it could be that some WEs other than those we considered are more strongly related to TIM in the case of this new generation of employees. Further research could aim to identify these WEs and explore other personal characteristics that impact the TIM of Generation Z members.

Finally, this study is based on a Romanian sample of representatives of Generation Z. Therefore, we caution researchers and practitioners regarding the generalisation of our results to other countries. Although Generation Z is connected to the Internet and is considered the first truly global generation, some studies argue that global does not mean identical (Scholtz/Renning, 2019). Therefore, future research should also consider cultural identity and the extent to which findings from other countries are in line with our findings.

Regarding implications for management theory, our study enhances the understanding of which WEs are important for Gen` Z prospective applicants and how certain expectations influence their TIM. At the same time, part of our model explains the effect of WEs and of work experience on TIM, and to a certain extent contributes to opening the “black box” of future turnover intentions. Embedding TIM to the study of Generation Z's intentions to stay or leave a job provides a new research perspective for generational and turnover literature. The existing research on the turnover of new generations considered unmet WEs (Brown et al., 2015; Brown/Cinamon, 2016; Grow/Yang, 2018) but did not go further to explore their effects on TIM in the specific case of Generation Z. Our approach is in line with a fast-growing interest, in the management

literature, in examining Generation Z's presence in the workplace (e.g., (Grow/Yang, 2018; Schroth, 2019; Garthe/Hasselhorn, 2021; Bolt et al., 2022) but more research is required to fully understand how the links from WEs to various stayer-leaver intentions may differ across individuals. Further examination of the relationship between different WEs and TIM could develop insight into which WEs are scored best by Gen` Z prospective applicants when they are asked to rate them against each other and how perceptions of these expectations are combined with a certain propensity towards TIM. This is especially important because graduates are more likely to consider multiple job offers simultaneously, mainly in labour markets facing the problem of having more job openings than available job seekers, such as in Romania. Future research could also consider a longitudinal study investigating the complex relationship between WEs and TIM over time. Thus, it would be worthwhile to assess a multiple-point study that can potentially provide insights into Generation Z` WEs across different levels of work experience (i.e., from no experience to more than three years' experience).

Concerning practical implications, our findings can be used to improve the attraction and retention of Gen Z members in organisations. Particular aspects of workplace adjustment can be facilitated by strategic uses of different WEs and can help to improve valuable workforce acquisition. For example, the finding that students as representatives of Generation Z place more emphasis on work-life balance, suggests that it could be fruitful to highlight flexible work hours in the company's job offer to attract and retain the youngest employees (Stankiewicz-Mr  z, 2020; Gabrielova/Buchko, 2021). Another result of our study suggests that there is value in attending to meaningful work in turnover prevention (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016). Practitioners would likely benefit from awareness of these findings to ensure prospective applicants` expectations relating to meaningful work are sufficiently addressed through visits, stages of practical work, and internships. Such management of work meaningfulness would be beneficial for organisations because work meaningfulness is a work value greatly pursued by employees and leads to important outcome variables, including reduced turnover (Rosso et al., 2010; Hoang, 2014).

Nevertheless, organisations should communicate realistic job previews to prospective applicants, in order for them to adjust their WEs to the realities of the labor market. Internship programs have been found to provide authentic job-related experience and to facilitate the effective use of different skills to complete the tasks of a job (Tolentino/Sibunruang/Garcia, 2019). Therefore, to facilitate the development of realistic WEs of prospective applicants, organisations could provide more internship opportunities to students.

In conclusion, this study brings to the forefront of research and practises the timely moment of reflection regarding a generational change that will take place in the organisational scape. As Generation Z is now starting to enter the work-



place, it is the right time to alert organisations about their characteristics, needs, and expectations. Knowing the opportunities and challenges brought by this “totally different generation” (Scholz/Rennig, 2019) and formulating a response and adaptation for organisations to it, are only possible by gaining a deeper understanding of Generation Z. This study aims to be a step in this direction.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample demographics

Variable	Level	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Gender	Female	209	67.9	67.9
	Male	99	32.1	100.0
Birth year	2001	20	6.5	6.5
	2000	83	26.9	33.4
	1999	91	29.5	62.9
	1998	69	22.4	85.3
	1997	20	6.5	91.8
	1996	18	5.8	97.6
	1995	7	2.3	100.0
Study level	Bachelor	283	91.9	91.9
	Master	25	8.1	100.0
Work experience	No experience	67	21.8	21.8
	Internships	79	25.6	47.4
	Less than 1 year	81	26.3	73.7
	1-2 years	59	19.2	92.9
	3-4 years	20	6.5	99.4
	5 years or more <sup>a</sup>	2	0.6	100.0

<sup>a</sup> This category was merged with the ‘3-4 years’ category due to too few observations.

## Appendix 2. Study` main variables along with their sources

Variable	Sources
<b>Work guidance and support in work</b> , with 9 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important it is for you that your boss:</i> 1. Listens to your ideas and opinions; 2. Thanks you for the work you do; 3. Gives you positive feedback and guidance; 4. Says and does something to make you feel pride in your work; 5. Is willing to listen to your problem at work, if needed; 6. Offers you help and support, if needed; 7. Talks to you about how well you carry out your work; 8. To be able to discuss openly with your boss; 9. To be friends with your boss.	Glavin and Schieman (2010) Burr et al. (2018) Moncada et al. (2014)
<b>Work independence</b> , with 8 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. To have the freedom to perform your duties; 2. To have an influence on the planning of your work; 3. To be able to influence the processes by which you do your work; 4. To decide for yourself how you perform your work; 5. To be able to interrupt your work if you think it is necessary; 6. To determine the order of your work-tasks yourself; 7. To participate in decisions about when something should be finished; 8. To determine yourself how much time you spend on a specific activity.	Veldhoven and Meijman (1994)
<b>Work dynamic</b> , with 6 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. To perform the same activities always; 2. Your work to require creativity; 3. Your work to be varied/diverse; 4. Your work to require your input; 5. To make sufficient use of your skills and abilities; 6. To have enough variety in your work.	Veldhoven and Meijman (1994)
<b>Work meaningfulness</b> , with 7 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. To be able to have a real contribution to accomplishing the mission of the organization; 2. Your work to be an important part of your unit's/team success; 3. To personally consider that what you do in your job is important; 4. To work in an organization that has a great vision; 5. To know that your work has an impact on others; 6. To know that your work has an impact on others; 7. To bring your contribution to something important, something greater than yourself.	Britt et al. (2001) Hoang (2014)

<b>Work rewards</b> , with 12 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. Base salary; 2. Possibility to receive commissions and bonuses; 3. Possibility to receive salary increases; 4. Benefits packages; 5. Receiving free/subsidized meals, coffee, tea, snacks; 6. Receiving appreciation certificates, trophies, plaques, work anniversary gifts; 7. Public recognition of your contribution and performance (verbal, informal).; 8. Informal gatherings with colleagues (parties, picnic, after-work get together); 9. Job rotation; 10. Advancement opportunities; 11. Opportunities for personal development and growth; 12. Opportunities to get involved in extra-job interesting activities.	Falola et al., (2014)
<b>Workplace security</b> , with 3 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. The job to offer you a steady career path; 2. The job to offer you a reliable income; 3. The job to be a secure one.	Watt and Richardson (2007)
<b>Work-life balance</b> , with 3 items - <i>When you consider a job, how important is for you each of the following aspects:</i> 1. The number of work hours a week to allow for enough free time; 2. The daily work schedule to fit with your family and social responsibilities; 3. To be able to take days off according to your personal and your family's needs.	Watt and Richardson (2007)
<b>Turnover intention mindset (TIM)</b> , with 4 items – <i>Agreement with:</i> 1. the constant search for new job opportunities; 2. switch jobs every year; 3. stay at the same job maximum three years; 4. stay at least five years in the same organization.	Self-constructed in spirit with McIntyre et al., 2004; Chicca/Shellenbarger 2018; Bazzy et al. (2019; Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2020

Note: For all items, all responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) but in the analysis the variables were re-coded to a 5-point Likert scale from 0 to 4. Likert scales that start from 0 are more convenient for computation and interpretation purposes.

Appendix 3. Descriptive statistics for the measures of TIM and WE

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Turnover intention mindset	0.00	4.00	1.95	0.73
Work guidance and support	1.71	4.00	3.45	0.45
Work independence	1.43	4.00	3.15	0.56
Work dynamics	0.80	4.00	3.02	0.59
Work meaningfulness	1.25	4.00	3.22	0.54
Work rewards – financial	1.40	4.00	3.43	0.51
Work rewards – recognition	0.20	4.00	2.90	0.72
Work rewards – promotion	1.50	4.00	3.71	0.45
Job security	0.33	4.00	3.50	0.51
Work-life balance	2.00	4.00	3.65	0.44

Appendix 4. Reliability indices and scale statistics for each measure

Measure	N	# of items	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Turnover intention mindset	308	4	.67
Work guidance and support	308	7	.83
Work independence	308	7	.85
Work dynamics	308	5	.80
Work meaningfulness	308	4	.72
Work rewards – financial	308	5	.80
Work rewards – recognition	308	5	.80
Work rewards – promotion	308	2	.71
Personal utility value – job security	308	3	.64
Personal utility value – work-life balance	308	3	.69

Appendix 5. Item content, item statistics, and item-test statistics for all measures.

Measure	Item	Item statistics		Item-test statistics	
		Mean	Std. dev.	Item-rest correlation	$\alpha$ if item deleted
Turnover Intention mindset	Constant search for new job opportunities. (Q19.1_1)	2.72	0.945	.282	.704
	Switch jobs every year. (Q19.1_2)	1.21	1.090	.623	.478
	Stay at same job maximum 3 yrs. (Q19.1_3)	1.78	1.097	.644	.460
	Stay at least 5 yrs. in same organization. (Q19.1_4)	2.11	0.978	.295	.700
Guidance and support	Boss considers your ideas and opinions. (Q6.1_1)	3.46	0.600	.485	.827
	Boss expresses gratitude for your work. (Q6.1_2)	3.36	0.702	.613	.807
	Boss provides positive feedback, guidance. (Q6.1_3)	3.57	0.540	.599	.811
	Boss makes you feel proud of your work. (Q6.1_4)	3.36	0.702	.628	.805
	Boss listens to difficulties you encounter in your work. (Q6.1_5)	3.53	0.584	.614	.808
	Boss provides help and support with tasks. (Q6.1_6)	3.52	0.612	.642	.803
	Boss discusses with you your work outcomes. (Q6.1_7)	3.36	0.677	.526	.822



Measure	Item	Item statistics		Item-test statistics	
		Mean	Std. dev.	Item-rest correlation	$\alpha$ if item deleted
Work independence	Freedom in how you conduct work. (Q7.1_1)	3.34	0.606	.579	.840
	Influence work planning. (Q7.1_2)	3.26	0.687	.570	.840
	Decide how your tasks are carried out. (Q7.1_4)	3.22	0.725	.645	.830
	Take a break when needed. (Q7.1_5)	3.19	0.844	.542	.846
	Decide the order of your tasks. (Q7.1_6)	2.95	0.901	.708	.820
	Have input on establishing deadlines. (Q7.1_7)	3.01	0.815	.670	.826
	Decide how much time you spend on each task. (Q7.1_8)	3.11	0.753	.632	.831
Work dynamics	Work is creative. (Q8.1_2)	3.07	0.878	.552	.775
	Work is diverse. (Q8.1_3)	3.10	0.765	.633	.747
	Work requires my input. (Q8.1_4)	2.79	0.807	.578	.764
	Work requires that I use my abilities at their maximum. (Q8.1_5)	3.28	0.723	.583	.763
	Work involves enough change. (Q8.1_6)	2.88	0.773	.581	.763
Work meaningfulness	Contribute to organizations' mission. (Q9.1_1)	3.11	0.715	.489	.662
	Work is crucial to team's success. (Q9.1_2)	3.29	0.635	.606	.604
	I consider my work important. (Q9.1_3)	3.46	0.676	.521	.645
	Co-workers consider my work important. (Q9.1_4)	3.01	0.888	.442	.711
Financial rewards	Salary (Q11.1_1)	3.52	0.596	.491	.781
	Bonuses (Q11.1_2)	3.46	0.627	.709	.717
	Possibility of salary increase (Q11.1_3)	3.66	0.533	.563	.765
	Other benefits and allowances (health insurance, holiday allowance, etc.) (Q11.1_4)	3.43	0.707	.683	.720
	Free meals, drinks and snacks (Q11.1_5)	3.08	0.929	.529	.795
Recognition and socializing	Being awarded with gifts, certificates, recommendations, etc. (Q11.1_6)	2.87	1.032	.652	.743
	Public recognition (Q11.1_7)	2.83	1.008	.618	.755
	Social events (Q11.1_8)	2.94	0.975	.603	.760
	Possibility of job rotation (Q11.1_9)	2.65	0.976	.578	.757
	Possibility of extra-job activities (Q11.1_12)	3.21	0.819	.483	.794

Measure	Item	Item statistics		Item-test statistics	
		Mean	Std. dev.	Item-rest correlation	$\alpha$ if item deleted
Promotion and development	Opportunities for promotion (Q11.1_10)	3.70	0.507	.545	NA
	Opportunities for learning and development (Q11.1_11)	3.71	0.508	.545	NA
Personal utility value – job security	Job should be a solid path for my career. (Q12.1_1)	3.50	0.628	.505	.469
	Salary should be decent. (Q12.1_2)	3.69	0.503	.482	.541
	Job should be definite. (Q12.1_3)	3.31	0.847	.430	.635
Personal utility value – work/life balance	Working hours allows sufficient personal time. (Q13.1_1)	3.64	0.574	.482	.626
	Flexible working hours (Q13.1_2)	3.65	0.536	.557	.535
	Holidays and days off can be planned conveniently. (Q13.1_3)	3.67	0.584	.479	.632