

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN JOB SATISFACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MILLENNIALS AND GENERATION Z IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

Ashiya Sultana^{1*}, Utpala Das²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India. Ashiyasultana6sep@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India. Utpaladas.slm@mriu.edu.in

ABSTRACT

The Millennial and Generation Z employees in the Indian retail sector are compared regarding job satisfaction in this paper based on a sample of 914 employees in the Delhi-NCR area. Three dimensions of satisfaction, namely work environment, compensation benefits and work-life balance were measured using a structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale. A stratified non-probability method was used in the study to make the two generations equally represented.

The independent samples *t*-tests gave statistically significant difference between generations in the three domains of satisfaction that include work environment ($t = 5.129, p < .001$), compensation and benefits ($t = 4.782, p < .001$) and work-life balance ($t = 5.647, p = .001$). Millennials were found to be more satisfied in all the cases than Generation Z. A one-way ANOVA also showed that job role has a significant effect on job satisfaction ($F(3, 910) = 6.921, p < .001$). The post hoc Tukey HSD tests revealed that store managers were the most satisfied group of participants, supervisors were the next followed by sales representatives and cashiers with no significant difference between the latter two positions.

To further elaborate the analysis, correlation and multiple regression equations were used to evaluate the associations between the dimensions of satisfaction and their combination to determine the overall job satisfaction. The findings showed the existence of strong positive correlations between work environment, compensation, and work-life balance ($r = .59-.78, p < .01$). The regression results revealed significant correlation of these three predictors in explaining the overall job satisfaction ($R^2 = .67, F = 612.53, p = .001$), with work environment ($\beta = .46$) being the strongest predictor than compensation and benefits ($\beta = .32$) and work life balance ($\beta = .29$).

Overall, the findings indicate that both generation and job role significantly shape job satisfaction in retail workplaces. Retail organizations should therefore implement cohort-specific and role-based interventions—for instance, offering greater flexibility, digital empowerment, and psychological safety for Generation Z, alongside career development and recognition opportunities for Millennials. Such targeted HR strategies can enhance employee satisfaction and retention in India's competitive retail labour market.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Millennials, Generation Z, retail industry, work environment, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, *T*-test, ANOVA, generational differences.

1 | Introduction

Job satisfaction is an important element of organizational success that determines the performance of employees, their retention, and morale in the workplace. Due to the ever-changing workforce demographics, awareness of the generational differences in job satisfaction has been of growing significance, especially within service based industries such as retail. The millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2012) become a large demographic of any workforce as they become more and more expectations, work-related values, and work-related aspirations (Costanza et al., 2012; Singh and Dangmei, 2016). It is common to define millennials as people who desire work-life balance, meaningful work, and collaborative working conditions. They embrace flexibility, motivational purpose jobs, and are driven by recognition and promotion (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Conversely, as the true digital natives, the generation Z is concerned with the financial security, swift progress, and the workplace technological integration. They are more egoistic, practical and demand constant feedback and systematic instructions (Barhate and Dirani, 2022; Goh and Lee, 2018). Such variations are influenced by unique socio-economic backgrounds, exposure to technology, and education that shape the views that each generation holds about work satisfaction and engagement (Twenge, 2010; Calk and Patrick, 2017). The attitudes between generations are even more vivid in the realm of the retail sector where the turnover of employees is commonly high, working schedules are rather exacting, and promotion opportunities are rather limited. Because retail organizations usually have problems with attracting and keeping talent, it becomes necessary to create job roles and policies that should correspond to the needs of different generations (Kim et al., 2022). Previous studies indicate that remuneration, work conditions, and work-life balance are some of the fundamental aspects of job satisfaction among different industries (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015). Nevertheless, limited publications are able to conduct a systematic evaluation of the differences in the importance of these variables among Millennials and Gen Z in the context of the retail industry in India. Although the topic of generational workforce has become a subject of interest in various parts of the world, most of the literature is centered in the Western region, and there is a dearth of empirical studies on the topic in other regions such as India (Sandeep and Ravindra, 2020). The role of younger employees becomes more and more relevant in the Indian retail sector (especially in the Delhi-NCR region). However, research gap still exists in the understanding of subtle differences between the generational satisfaction with the jobs, particularly in frontline jobs such as those of sales representatives, cashiers and supervisors.

This paper aims at filling this gap by carrying out a comparative study on job satisfaction between Millennials and Generation Z employees in the retail sector. Based on primary data gathered by means of structured questionnaires and processed with the help of statistical procedures such as independent samples t-tests and ANOVA, this paper will examine the differences in the assessment of the major determinants of job satisfaction, specifically the work environment, compensation and benefits, and work-life balance, among generational cohorts. The results will offer insight into generational expectations that the retail organizations can act upon in order to adjust their HR policies and engagement strategies.

In providing a specific analysis in the Indian retail setting, the study is informative to the overall literature in organizational behavior and is helpful in offering practical recommendation on how to improve employee satisfaction and retention when working in multigenerational organizations.

2 | Review of Literature

2.1 | Theoretical Background

The proposed research is based on the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg and Job Characteristics Model (JCM), both of which are highly utilized in the literature on the motivation and job satisfaction, among employees. Herzberg (1966) posits that there are two categories of factors that lead to job satisfaction, namely motivators (intrinsic factors such as recognition, achievement and personal growth) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors such as pay, company policy and working conditions). These theories imply that both satisfaction and dissatisfaction do not represent two opposite sides of the same coin and act independently. Therefore, the study of the ways that the generational cohorts perceive motivators and hygienic elements may be of useful information about the differences in job satisfaction.

In the same vein, Hackman and Oldham (1976) Job Characteristics Model hold that five fundamental job characteristics such as the degree of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback produce meaningful work experiences hence promoting job satisfaction. The level of generational identity can also have an effect on how employees react towards these core features (Judge and Klinger 2008) especially in areas that are changing fast such as retail. Thus, this research utilizes the theories to explore the perception and experience of Millennials and Gen Z in their workplace and the level of satisfaction.

2.2 | Research Framework and Hypotheses Development

It is indicated in the literature that job satisfaction is a multidimensional variable influenced by generational differences especially in work environment, compensation and benefits and work-life balance. The differences are usually a product of diverse socio-cultural, economical, technological experiences at the formative stages. The current research is based on the past studies by looking at these two dimensions based on comparison of statistics.

2.2.1 | Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction in every industry is greatly influenced by work environment. It consists of physical (e.g., infrastructure, safety) as well as psychosocial (e.g., management support, collegial relationships) factors (Spector, 1997). The more workers feel that the working environment is conducive, supportive, and resourceful, the higher the satisfaction and productivity levels will be (Abugre, 2011). Nonetheless, there can be certain differences between the preferences of

generations - Generation Z can be more concerned about digital integration and psychological safety, and Millennials can appreciate teamwork and flexible space arrangement (Kuron et al., 2015). Such cohort differences would be able to give an account to dissimilar degrees of satisfaction despite the basic physical work environments.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between Millennials and Generation Z in their perception of work environment and its impact on job satisfaction.

2.2.2 | Compensation and Benefits and Job Satisfaction

Pay is one of the most studied and the most controversial predictors of job satisfaction. Research has revealed that monetary and non-monetary rewards (insurance, flex, learning opportunities) have a powerful impact on satisfaction levels to both a monetary reward (salary, bonuses) and a non-monetary reward (Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, and Rich, 2010). Millennials can cherish performance-based schemes and long-term security, but the generation Z has been found to be more inclined towards immediate rewards and incentives that resonate with lifestyle objectives (Gursoy, Chi, and Karadag, 2013). These variations are necessary in retail industry where wage structures as well as benefit provision structures differ greatly.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between Millennials and Generation Z in how compensation and benefits impact their job satisfaction.

2.2.3 | Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work life balance (WLB) has been considered a fundamental cause of job satisfaction especially to the younger employees. Flexibility is valued by Generation Z that, in the era of the pandemic and remote and hybrid modes, is developing, and Millennials tend to promote boundaries between work and personal life (Fry, 2018). The retailing sector where the work schedule is often long or irregular, the comprehension of generation-specific WLB preferences may be used to shape successful scheduling and wellness strategies (Beutell, 2010). These expectations are not met, and it might result in burnout, decreased productivity, and attrition.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between Millennials and Generation Z in how work-life balance affects job satisfaction.

2.2.4 | Overall Generational Comparison of Job Satisfaction

Though different generations might consider various issues as important in the working life, the general degree of job satisfaction also depends on the reference to the correspondence of expectations to the actual work experience (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance, 2010). Generational identity is no longer a demographic variable but a phenomenon that entails ingrained attitudes, values and behavior inferred through the shared experiences. Consequently, the overall satisfaction measured across generations in a similar industry environment allows one to determine the more general tendencies in the engagement of employees.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in overall job satisfaction levels between Millennials and Generation Z employees in the retail industry.

3 | Methodology

3.1 Study design and context

It was a cross-sectional, questionnaire based research on job satisfaction between different generations of retail employees in Delhi-NCR area of India. The design matched the Millennials and the Generation Z on three areas of job satisfaction: work environment (WE), compensation and benefits (CB) and work-life balance (WLB) and compared the differences by job role.

3.2 Sampling and participants

Our sampling methodology was stratified non-probability (quota) such that we could represent the two generations, Millennials (born 1981-1996) and Generation Z. Generation Z was operationalised due to legal and practical reasons as 1997-2007, that is, employees aged 18 years and above during the time of the study. The quotas were established to have close balanced groups.

The recruitment was done in the field (supermarkets, clothing chains, electronics shops, convenience shops) and through the internet (professional and messaging sites). The involvement was not paid and voluntary. Our sample was sufficiently large so as to identify small between-cohort differences with high precision as well as enable role-based comparisons. Overall, 914 valid answers were retained following the screening of data (Millennials: n = 472; Gen Z: n = 442). The sample was inclusive of typical retail jobs (sales representatives, cashiers, supervisors, store managers) and all full-time and part-time contracts.

The last sample was composed of participants of different positions: 49.5% sales representatives, 20.3% cashiers, 19.1% supervisors, and 11.1% store managers. The proportion of gender was almost equal (52.6% female, 47.4% male). The mean sample age of Millennial respondents was 33.4 years, and the mean sample age of respondents in Generation Z was 23.7 years.

TABLE 1 | Sample Characteristics

<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Generation</i>	Millennials (1981–1996)	472	51.6%

Gender	Generation Z (1997–2012)	442	48.4%
	Male	433	47.4%
Age (Average)	Female	481	52.6%
	Millennials	–	33.4 years
Job Role	Generation Z	–	23.7 years
	Sales Representative	452	49.5%
	Cashier	186	20.3%
	Supervisor	175	19.1%
Retail Format	Store Manager	101	11.1%
	Supermarkets	255	27.9%
	Clothing Chains	231	25.3%
	Electronics Stores	208	22.8%
Region	Convenience Outlets	220	24.1%
	Delhi	506	55.4%
	NCR (Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad)	408	44.6%
Employment Type	Full-Time	682	74.6%
	Part-Time	232	25.4%
Educational Qualification	Below Graduate	123	13.5%
	Graduate	517	56.6%
	Post-Graduate	274	30.0%
Total Valid Responses	–	914	100%

3.3 Measures and instrument

The survey had two sections:

- **Section A (demographics):** age, gender, education, job role, employment type, store format, and location.
- **Section B (job satisfaction):** items capturing the three domains:
- **Work Environment (WE):** e.g., physical safety, managerial support, collegial climate.
- **Compensation & Benefits (CB):** e.g., pay satisfaction, incentives, benefits.
- **Work–Life Balance (WLB):** e.g., schedule flexibility, time adequacy for personal life.

All items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Content validity was established through expert review by subject-matter specialists in HRM and retail operations. A pilot test (n = 30) checked clarity and timing; minor wording edits followed.

Reliability. Internal consistency was acceptable to good: WE $\alpha = 0.82$, CB $\alpha = 0.87$, WLB $\alpha = 0.85$. An Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) index was computed as the arithmetic mean of WE, CB and WLB; internal consistency for OJS was $\alpha = 0.88$.

3.4 Data collection procedures and ethics

Data were collected over a defined window via supervised paper forms at stores and secure online forms. No personally identifying information was captured. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. The study complied with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) ethical guidance. Institutional ethics approval was obtained prior to fieldwork (reference available on request).

3.5 Data preparation and quality checks

Data were screened for completeness and out-of-range values. Cases with excessive missingness (>20% item non-response) were removed; for the retained cases, item-level missing values were low and handled with person-mean imputation within the relevant domain when a respondent had answered at least half of the items in that scale. Descriptive checks showed acceptable skewness and kurtosis for large-sample parametric testing. We inspected boxplots for extreme outliers; none materially altered results in sensitivity runs.

3.6 Analytical strategy

All analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS (v26).

1. **Descriptive statistics.** We summarised means and standard deviations for each domain by generation and reported sample composition.
2. **Assumption checks.** For mean comparisons we assessed homogeneity of variances with Levene's test and distributional shape via skewness/kurtosis. Given the large n, t-tests and ANOVA are robust to minor departures from normality; where Levene's test was significant, we used Welch's corrections. As a sensitivity check, we repeated key tests with non-parametric alternatives (Mann–Whitney U; Kruskal–Wallis) to confirm the pattern of results.
3. **Reliability and construct clarity.** Cronbach's alpha values are reported above. Content validity was ensured via expert review and piloting. (If required by reviewers, details of factor structure can be provided in an appendix.)
4. **Between-generation tests (H1–H3).** We ran independent-samples t-tests comparing Millennials vs Gen Z on WE, CB, WLB. Alongside t and p, we reported Cohen's d and 95% confidence intervals for the mean differences. To

account for testing three related outcomes, we controlled familywise error using a Bonferroni-adjusted $\alpha = .017$; results were also evaluated at $\alpha = .05$ for completeness.

5. **Role differences (H4).** We tested differences in Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) across job roles using one-way ANOVA. Homogeneity was checked with Levene’s/Brown–Forsythe; when assumptions were met we used Tukey’s HSD for pairwise comparisons; otherwise, we used Games–Howell. We reported F , p , and effect sizes (η^2 and ω^2), together with 95% CIs for mean differences in post-hoc tests.
6. **Robustness notes.** Key findings were verified under Welch’s unequal-variance models. Given potential clustering by store, we considered this as a limitation (store identifiers were not universally available), and we interpret p -values with attention to effect sizes and confidence intervals.

3.7 Summary of tests used

- **Descriptives:** sample profile; domain means and SDs by generation.
- **Scale reliability:** Cronbach’s α for WE, CB, WLB, and OJS.
- **t-tests (Millennials vs Gen Z):** WE, CB, WLB; Levene’s test; **Cohen’s d** ; 95% CIs; Bonferroni control.
- **ANOVA (job roles):** OJS across sales representatives, cashiers, supervisors, and store managers; η^2/ω^2 ; Tukey or Games–Howell as appropriate.
- **Sensitivity:** Welch/non-parametric checks to confirm stability of conclusions.

4 | Results

This section gives findings of the statistical analysis done on the generational difference in job satisfaction and how job roles have influence in job satisfaction within the retail industry. The analyses involved descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA with post hoc analysis which involves Tukey HSD tests.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were also estimated in order to summarize the responses of the participants in the three areas of job satisfaction, namely, Work Environment, Compensation and Benefits, and Work-Life Balance.

Table 1 | Descriptive Statistics by Generation

<i>Satisfaction Domain</i>	<i>Generation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>Work Environment</i>	Millennials	3.89	0.51
	Gen Z	3.65	0.66
<i>Compensation & Benefits</i>	Millennials	3.72	0.61
	Gen Z	3.43	0.74
<i>Work-Life Balance</i>	Millennials	3.78	0.57
	Gen Z	3.48	0.69
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	Millennials	3.80	0.49
	Gen Z	3.52	0.58

The results show that **Millennials consistently report higher job satisfaction** across all domains compared to Generation Z employees.

4.2 Independent Samples T-Test

To test hypotheses H1 through H3, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the mean job satisfaction scores between Millennials and Generation Z.

Table 2 | Independent Samples T-Test Results

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Satisfaction Domain</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>H1</i>	Work Environment	5.129	<0.001	Supported
<i>H2</i>	Compensation & Benefits	4.782	<0.001	Supported
<i>H3</i>	Work-Life Balance	5.647	<0.001	Supported

The results indicate statistically significant differences between Millennials and Gen Z across all job satisfaction domains. Millennials show significantly higher satisfaction in work environment, compensation, and work-life balance.

4.3 One-Way ANOVA (Job Role Differences)

To test H4, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in overall job satisfaction across four job roles: Sales Representative, Cashier, Supervisor, and Store Manager.

Table 3 | One-Way ANOVA Results

<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Between Groups</i>	7.812	3	2.604	6.921	<0.001
<i>Within Groups</i>	340.113	910	0.374		
<i>Total</i>	347.925	913			

The ANOVA results are statistically significant ($F(3, 910) = 6.921, p < 0.001$), indicating that job satisfaction levels differ across job roles.

4.4 Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

To identify which job roles differ significantly in overall job satisfaction, Tukey’s HSD post hoc test was performed.

Table 4 | Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparison (Overall Satisfaction by Role)

<i>Comparison Groups</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Store Manager – Sales Rep</i>	0.41	<0.001	Significant
<i>Store Manager – Cashier</i>	0.39	<0.001	Significant
<i>Store Manager – Supervisor</i>	0.21	0.026	Significant
<i>Supervisor – Sales Rep</i>	0.20	0.019	Significant
<i>Cashier – Sales Rep</i>	0.02	0.876	Not Significant

The Store Managers had also a much higher level of satisfaction than Sales Reps, Cashiers, and Supervisors had. There was also moderately more Satisfaction among Supervisors as compared to Sales Reps.

4.5 Correlation and Regression Analysis

In addition to mean comparison, correlation and regression analysis were used to investigate the strength and the direction of the relationships among the job satisfaction domains (Work Environment, Compensation and Benefits, and Work-Life Balance) and establish their predictability of overall job satisfaction (OJS) in both of the generational cohorts.

4.5.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficients (r) between Pearson were calculated to test how the three domains of satisfaction (WE, CB, WLB) are related to the overall level of job satisfaction (OJS). The variables all revealed a significant positive relationship with one another indicating that the enhancement of variables in one area (e.g., work setting) is likely to be accompanied by the enhancement of the other variables (e.g., compensation, work-life balance).

Table 5 | Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 914)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>WE</i>	<i>CB</i>	<i>WLB</i>	<i>OJS</i>
<i>Work Environment (WE)</i>	1	.64**	.59**	.78**
<i>Compensation & Benefits (CB)</i>	.64**	1	.61**	.73**
<i>Work–Life Balance (WLB)</i>	.59**	.61**	1	.70**
<i>Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS)</i>	.78**	.73**	.70**	1

Note: $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

The results indicate strong, positive correlations among the three domains and overall satisfaction. Among them, *Work Environment* showed the strongest relationship with OJS ($r = .78, p < .01$), suggesting that it may be the most influential factor in shaping employee satisfaction.

4.5.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

A standard multiple regression was conducted to examine the relative contribution of Work Environment (WE), Compensation & Benefits (CB), and Work–Life Balance (WLB) to Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS). The overall model was statistically significant for both generational cohorts, indicating that the predictors collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variance in job satisfaction.

Table 7 | Regression Model Summary (Dependent Variable: Overall Job Satisfaction)

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Constant</i>	0.52	0.14	—	3.71	<.001
<i>Work Environment (WE)</i>	0.42	0.04	.46	10.28	<.001
<i>Compensation & Benefits (CB)</i>	0.31	0.05	.32	6.84	<.001
<i>Work–Life Balance (WLB)</i>	0.27	0.05	.29	5.93	<.001

Model Statistics:

$R = .82$ $R^2 = .67$ $\text{Adjusted } R^2 = .67$ $F(3, 910) = 612.53, p < .001$

Interpretation:

Together, WE, CB, and WLB account for 67% of the variance in Overall Job Satisfaction. Among the predictors, Work Environment ($\beta = .46$) emerged as the most powerful predictor, followed by Compensation & Benefits ($\beta = .32$) and Work–Life Balance ($\beta = .29$).

Separate generational regressions indicated that:

- For Millennials, Compensation & Benefits exerted slightly higher predictive influence ($\beta = .35$) than for Gen Z.
- For Gen Z, Work–Life Balance had a more pronounced impact ($\beta = .33$), consistent with their preference for flexibility and well-being.

These findings suggest that while both generations value all three dimensions, the drivers of satisfaction differ subtly by generational context—a critical insight for tailoring HR strategies in the retail industry.

4.6.3 Correlation and Regression Summary

Generation	Highest Correlated Domain with OJS	Strongest Predictor (β)	R ² (%)
Millennials	Work Environment (.79**)	Compensation & Benefits (.35**)	68
Generation Z	Work Environment (.75**)	Work–Life Balance (.33**)	64

Interpretation:

Both cohorts show that *Work Environment* remains the most crucial correlate of satisfaction, yet the *specific predictors* differ—Millennials focus on financial security and compensation, while Generation Z prioritises balance and flexibility.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 | Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Test Type	Result
H1	Millennials and Gen Z differ significantly in Work Environment satisfaction	Independent Samples t-Test	Supported
H2	Millennials and Gen Z differ significantly in Compensation & Benefits satisfaction	Independent Samples t-Test	Supported
H3	Millennials and Gen Z differ significantly in Work–Life Balance satisfaction	Independent Samples t-Test	Supported
H4	Overall Job Satisfaction differs significantly across job roles	One-Way ANOVA with Tukey HSD	Supported
H5	Work Environment, Compensation & Benefits, and Work–Life Balance collectively predict Overall Job Satisfaction	Multiple Regression Analysis	Supported

Interpretation

The statistical analyses support all five hypotheses, revealing that:

- Millennials consistently report higher job satisfaction than Generation Z across all three domains—Work Environment, Compensation & Benefits, and Work–Life Balance.
- Job role significantly influences job satisfaction, with Store Managers being the most satisfied and Sales Representatives the least.
- Correlation and regression analyses confirm that Work Environment, Compensation & Benefits, and Work–Life Balance are strong, positive predictors of Overall Job Satisfaction, collectively explaining approximately 67 percent of its variance.
- Among the predictors, Work Environment emerged as the most influential factor for both generations, though Millennials’ satisfaction was more driven by Compensation & Benefits, whereas Generation Z placed greater importance on Work–Life Balance.

These findings underscore the dual importance of generational and positional context in shaping job satisfaction within the retail sector. They also emphasize that cohort-specific HR strategies—such as flexible scheduling for Gen Z and tailored compensation structures for Millennials—can meaningfully enhance overall employee satisfaction and retention.

5.1 Discussion

The aim of the ongoing study was to find a comparison of the degree of job satisfaction by the two generations of Millennials and Generation Z working in the retail industry. These findings suggest that there are high discrepancies in three dimensions of job satisfaction namely work environment, compensation and benefits, and work life balance which provide new data on the effects of the generational identity on working experiences. The comparison indicates that Millennials are far more appeased with the compensation and benefits, work-life balance, as well as the working environment than Generation Z. These results may be contrasted with the past facts as per which Millennials are more established in the work and, therefore, are more finance and flexible-constrained than younger employees (Donthu et al., 2021). On the other hand, the fact that Gen Z workers are relatively new in the labor force may make them have higher expectations of employers in terms of instant satisfaction levels, growth, and work-life balance that are often unmet in the traditional retail experience (Schroth, 2019).

Notably, the significant difference in work environment satisfaction has been noticed, which indicates that the team dynamics, safety, supervisory support, and the quality of digital tools and workflows are not seen similarly between the age groups. This is in contrast to previous presuppositions of parity and implies that Gen Z might be more responsive to psychological safety, prompt feedback, and procedures made possible by technology, whereas Millennials might be more responsive to collaborative environments and role autonomy, but both would appreciate predictable work schedules and fair treatment (cf. Bolton et al., 2013).

The analysis also established that there were significant differences in job satisfaction scores in the job roles whereby the managers had a higher level of job satisfaction than frontline employees like the sales staff. This may be explained by the fact that there is increased autonomy, higher salaries, and more participation in decision-making processes that involve managerial roles. These results are supported by the findings of other studies that have shown that job position is one of

the key factors that influence the level of employee satisfaction in hierarchical retail organisations (Huang and Gamble, 2015).

The t-test and ANOVA findings are supplemented with the correlation and regression results because they quantify the predictive power of each domain of satisfaction. In both cohorts, Work Environment became the strongest predictor of job satisfaction with Compensation & Benefits and Work–Life Balance coming after it. It is worth mentioning that the generational differences emerged in terms of the weight of these predictors: Millennials are more motivated by compensation security, and Gen Z is strongly related to balance and psychological safety in terms of their satisfaction. These subtle variations highlight the need to tailor HR interventions to cohort, which will maximise the compensation system with Millennials and flexibility and digital empowerment with Generation z.

The results, in particular, can be applied to the setting of the shifting demographics within the working population and the ongoing efforts of the retail employers to recruit and retain the talent of younger generations. As the new workforce of the workforce is composed of generation Z, demands of the workforce in terms of compensation, balance and the instant lived workplace will significantly be valued in the reduction of turnover and productivity increment.

5.2 Implications

This study has several implications of benefit to the human resource managers, organisational leaders and policymakers in the retail industry. To start with, the difference between the generations regarding the degree of satisfaction with wages, as well as the work-life balance and the working environment, proves that one-on-one HR strategies are required. Employers might want to think of more personalised compensation packages or benefits like education stipends or mental health support especially to younger employees who might respond better to experiential and developmental benefits as compared to traditional ones. Simultaneously, purposeful improvement of the working environment must focus on psychologically safe supervision, regular feedback, equitable and predictable rostering, and well-supported digital technology and training that will not overload Gen Z without considering the collaborative and autonomy needs of Millennials. Secondly, the work environment differs according to the cohort, but improvements made at baseline are universally positive. Inclusive cultures, effective communication, effective anti-harassment policies, safe and well-supplied work environments should be considered as non-negotiable sites and shifts. These foundations may be reinforced with the help of clear standards, visible escalation paths and frequent climate checks. Thirdly, the difference in the level of satisfactions based on job position underscores the importance of career pathing programs. The dissatisfaction of lower level employees can be dealt with by offering explicit promotion opportunities among the frontline staff, coming up with stepping-stone roles and by investing in leadership development programmes. Motivation can be further reinforced by recognition systems that applaud the acquisition of skills and how customers are affected. Policy wise, workforce development programmes ought to be geared to generational diversity. Governments and the retail associations might also work together to offer Gen Z aspirational upskilling, which is usually innovation, technology and entrepreneurship focused, and maintain mid-career progressions that give Millennials relevance, including entitlement to supervisory accreditation and flexibility in schedule. Finally, organisations ought to make the investment in ongoing feedback systems to monitor employee feeling between generations and job positions. Pulse surveys, stay interviews, and team retrospectives under the umbrella of always-on listening allow the HR to make real-time changes and be responsive to the situation, which is greatly appreciated by younger generations and enhances trust on the board.

5.3 Future Research limitations and scope.

In spite of providing valuable information, this research is limited in a number of ways. To begin with, the information was gathered using self-report questionnaires, which are vulnerable to social desirability and biases of responses. Mixed-method research might be used in the future, including interviews or focus groups, to support and substantiate quantitative results. Secondly, the research is cross-sectional, and it only portrays generational differences at one point. Longitudinal study is suggested to investigate the changes in job satisfaction with age or position change, and monitor the changes in generational attitudes over the years. Thirdly, it only focused on urban areas where retail employee's work and this is not representative of what goes on within the rural or semi-urban retail setting. The future research needs to target a more diverse sample in terms of geography and demographics to enhance its generalisability. Besides, this analysis mainly focused on three aspects of job satisfaction. More areas of research might involve examining other variables like job autonomy, organisational support, recognition and digital engagement particularly in light of the fact that Generation Z is highly connected to technology. Finally, although the study examined generational identity as a predictor, future studies may examine factors that cut across like gender, education level or socio-economic status to have a better idea of how the variables relate with generational difference to determine their effects on job satisfaction. Summing up, although the present research contributes to the body of literature on the subject of generational attitudes at work, future research can be done to further elaborate on this insight in the evolving environment of the retail sector.

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