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Article

Perspectives and Realities of Disengagement Among Younger Generation Y and Z Workers in Contemporary Work Dynamics

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Abstract: The disengagement of younger workers, particularly from Generations Y and Z, is a growing concern in contemporary organizational environments. This study analyzes the factors influencing disengagement and the organizational strategies that can reduce its impact. A literature review was conducted, covering studies published between 2014 and 2024, with the selection of publications based on relevance, indexing, and thematic alignment. The findings indicate that disengagement results from a combination of factors. Firstly, job demand factors were identified, such as the misalignment between well-being policies and employee needs, excessive workloads, the absence of remote work and flexible schedules, challenges associated with digitalization and new technologies, economic insecurity, job instability, and frequent organizational changes. Secondly, job resource factors were also highlighted, including inadequate leadership, ineffective communication, limited professional development opportunities, and poorly structured evaluation and reward systems. These findings align with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. In addition, psychological factors were observed, namely, a lack of autonomy, experiences of injustice and inequality in the workplace, misalignment between personal values and organizational culture, and the presence of hostile or toxic environments, which correspond to the theoretical assumptions of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). To address disengagement, organizations should implement organizational strategies, such as physical and mental well-being programs, encourage regular breaks, promote healthy lifestyle campaigns, provide psychological support, and create ergonomic work environments. Additionally, they should foster professional growth through continuous training, mentoring, and transparent recognition and reward systems. Organizational communication must be open and effective, ensuring transparency and active employee participation. The adoption of remote work policies and flexible schedules, along with investments in technology and collaboration tools, also helps maintain engagement. These strategies promote employee satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment among workers, particularly those from Generations Y and Z, so organizations must adapt to the evolving expectations of the workforce to prevent long-term negative effects, such as decreased productivity and higher turnover, compromising their competitiveness and sustainability.

Keywords: employee engagement; disengagement; Generation Y workers; Generation Z workers; workplace; contributing factors; mitigating organizational strategies



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1. Introduction

Across the world, engagement or disengagement among workers, particularly within younger generations, namely Generation Y and Generation Z, constitutes essential dimensions of organizational behavior in the current context of workforce dynamics.

Engagement is defined as a psychological and emotional state of involvement of employees with their work, characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and immersion in work activities. Disengagement occurs when workers no longer demonstrate interest, motivation, or involvement in their roles. The transition between engagement and disengagement does not occur abruptly but rather as a continuous process, influenced by individual and organizational factors (Alessandri et al., 2018; Gumilang & Indrayanti, 2022; Hudiono & Sari, 2022).

Organizations thus face significant challenges in keeping these workers motivated, committed, and aligned with institutional goals in a context marked by technological transformations, labor flexibility, and changing individual priorities regarding professional life. Despite advances in research on work engagement and motivation, there remains a gap in the literature concerning the systematic understanding of the factors contributing to the disengagement of these generations, as well as the most effective organizational strategies to mitigate this phenomenon.

This study aims to address this gap by proposing a systematization and critical analysis of the personal and organizational factors that contribute to disengagement, along with the potential support mechanisms or suitable organizational strategies for its prevention and management within the organizational context. This is achieved by combining the theoretical foundations of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), by Deci and Ryan (1985). These models provide a theoretical basis for understanding how working conditions, organizational resources, and workers' psychological needs influence levels of engagement and disengagement.

The concept of work involvement and job disengagement has been widely studied from different theoretical and empirical perspectives and is often associated with an imbalance between job demands and the resources available to workers, particularly through the JD-R model and SDT. Although the topic of disengagement has been explored through these theoretical frameworks, no study to date has comprehensively addressed the challenges faced by Generation Y and Generation Z, who have grown up in a context of rapid technological advancement, profound cultural shifts, and new expectations regarding work.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), explains how job demands and resources influence workers' well-being and performance. Job demands are aspects of work that require continuous effort and may generate physical and psychological costs, such as a high workload, time pressure, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional demands. Job resources, on the other hand, are factors that help achieve objectives, reduce the impact of demands, and promote professional development, including autonomy, social support, growth opportunities, and constructive feedback. The balance between these demands and resources determines (or not) the level of motivation, engagement, and well-being of workers. Disengagement occurs when workers lose interest, motivation, and involvement in their work. In the Job Demands-Resources model, disengagement can result from an imbalance between high job demands and a lack of job resources. Excessive demands, such as a high workload, time pressure, and intense emotional demands, can lead to overload and demotivation, particularly when there are no adequate support mechanisms. Similarly, the absence of resources, such as autonomy, recognition, peer support, and growth opportunities, reduces workers' ability to cope with challenges, resulting in emotional and professional withdrawal. Disengagement is often

associated with burnout, especially in its emotional exhaustion dimension, where workers feel drained of energy to dedicate themselves to their work. Another factor contributing to disengagement is a lack of alignment with the organization's values. When workers do not identify with the organization's culture, mission, or objectives, they tend to feel disconnected and less motivated to invest effort in their roles.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by [Deci and Ryan \(1985\)](#), explores how internal and external factors influence human motivation, based on the premise that individuals have innate psychological needs, the fulfillment of which can be facilitated or hindered by their environment. The theory proposes that motivation varies along a continuum, from extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as rewards and punishments, to intrinsic motivation, based on personal interest and enjoyment. Within this framework, the theory identifies three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need for control over one's own actions and choices. Competence relates to the sense of effectiveness in handling challenges, reinforced by learning opportunities and positive feedback. Relatedness, in turn, involves the need to establish meaningful social connections, with interpersonal support being a key factor in motivation and well-being. Disengagement occurs when workers feel they lack control over their actions (low autonomy), do not feel capable of handling challenges (low competence), or do not perceive meaningful connections with others (low relatedness). Additionally, when motivation is predominantly extrinsic, engagement may be superficial and unsustainable, leading to disinterest over time. If there is no transition towards more autonomous forms of motivation, workers may ultimately disconnect from their activities.

Beyond the theoretical dimension, recent movements have emerged as indicators of growing dissatisfaction among younger workers regarding traditional working conditions. These movements reflect a deeper questioning of the relationship between effort and reward, with many young workers choosing to engage only minimally in their roles, avoiding any effort beyond what is strictly necessary. Accordingly, this study also explores new labor market trends that have significantly influenced how younger workers relate to their professional activities. These movements reveal a shift in the perception of the value of work, reflecting a departure from traditional engagement models based on high commitment and continuous productivity.

In the workplace, disengagement can manifest passively, through procrastination, decreased participation, and apathy, or actively, through resistance to change, reduced productivity, workplace absenteeism, or even the complete abandonment of an activity ([Aldabbas et al., 2023](#); [Hakanen et al., 2006](#); [Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2022](#); [Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2020](#)).

One of the actual current trends in the world of work is when employees disengage from their jobs and limit themselves to the bare minimum required, without making any additional effort, a phenomenon known as Quiet Quitting. The term Quiet Quitting emerged in the digital sphere in March 2022, introduced by Bryan Creely, a career coach and labor market influencer from Generation X in the United States, who coined the term while discussing an article about workers who were 'slowing down' at work, particularly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic ([Öztürk et al., 2023](#)). The hashtag #quietquitting quickly went viral on the social media platform TikTok, especially among younger workers. Although the term implies 'quitting', it does not necessarily mean leaving a job but rather a gradual and unannounced withdrawal from work responsibilities ([Hamouche et al., 2023](#); [Kachhap & Singh, 2024](#); [Liu-Lastres et al., 2024](#); [Mahand & Caldwell, 2023](#)).

Another movement, originating in China, emerged in 2021, known as 'tang ping', which literally translates as 'lying flat' and is characterized by resistance to social pressure to work long and exhausting hours at the expense of personal well-being ([Hsu, 2022](#); [Jingyi, 2022](#)).

Another viral movement on social media is called ‘I no longer dream of labor’, in which many users, mostly young people, share that they simply do not have a dream job.

However, the phenomena of ‘Quiet Quitting’, ‘Tang Ping’, and ‘I No Longer Dream of Labor’ are not the only shifts in the labor market. The ‘Great Dismissal’ and ‘Great Resignation’ have led to significant labor shortages, making it difficult to fill specific roles and having devastating effects in several countries during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Germany, Italy, Brazil, and the USA (Cossa et al., 2021).

The ‘Great Dismissal’ refers to a scenario in which many workers are laid off by their employers, usually due to economic crises or organizational restructuring, and it is often a consequence of external factors affecting companies, leading to widespread job losses and workforce restructuring (Marks, 2023). The ‘Great Resignation’ refers to a scenario in which workers voluntarily leave their jobs en masse, motivated by factors such as the pursuit of better work-life balance, career progression, or increased job satisfaction (Marks, 2023; Sheather & Slattery, 2021).

In addition to these phenomena, other terms have emerged in the labor market, primarily associated with younger workers and widely debated on social media, particularly as viral trends on TikTok.

One such case is ‘Bare Minimum Monday’. This expression describes a phenomenon where workers exert minimal effort on Mondays, viewing it as a day to ease into the workload at the start of the week. Thus, by reducing their expectations, workers may feel less anxious on Sunday evenings and less overloaded on Monday mornings, in line with the conclusions of the study by Butler et al. (2014).

A different example is the ‘Lazy Girl Job’, which is characterized as a movement for women, especially young women, promoting female empowerment and advocating for more flexible jobs, allowing them to prioritize their well-being and work-life balance. It should not be confused with the ‘Lazy Girl’ stereotype but rather seen as a way to challenge traditional social norms regarding work and gender expectations, corroborating the study by Rani and Priya (2023).

A further instance is ‘Rage Applying’, which refers to workers who are frustrated or dissatisfied with their current job (salaries, benefits, overload, ambiguity, lack of personal and professional prospects), who actively seek new opportunities and apply for other positions while still employed, in line with the study by Slaughter and Allen (2024).

Yet another phenomenon is ‘Quiet Ambition’, where workers, especially younger ones, choose to forgo the prestige or status associated with positions or titles in order to prioritize their work-life balance and, in some cases, their academic life. This expression also applies to professionals who choose to remain in technical careers, prioritizing learning and professional development over managerial roles, according to the conclusions of the study by Fournier et al. (2020).

Another illustration is ‘Loud Quitting’, where workers take ‘noisy’ actions and openly express their dissatisfaction with their work lives, with the intent of directly harming the organization. These workers, who tend to ‘noisily quit’, engage in behaviors that negatively impact organizations, such as resigning without warning, refusing to carry out tasks assigned to them, making inflammatory posts online, having unpleasant attitudes in public, and carrying out disruptive and potentially sabotaging actions, corroborating the study by Utkarsh et al. (2019).

More recently, another movement, known as ‘micro-retirement’, has gained popularity among younger workers, reflecting a paradigm shift in career management and work-life balance. Although the term was first introduced in 2007 (Ferriss, 2007), it has only recently become widespread, driven by viral content on TikTok and growing adoption among young professionals. This trend involves taking intentional breaks between jobs for rest,

self-discovery, and the pursuit of new experiences, in contrast to the traditional model of postponing leisure until formal retirement. These younger workers value mental well-being, personal growth, and meaningful experiences, favoring a more dynamic balance throughout their careers rather than pursuing a linear career trajectory (Ferriss, 2011).

This approach aligns with recent research on young workers' expectations in the labor market, which highlights their preference for greater flexibility, work-life balance, and continuous development (Kniffin et al., 2021; Schroth, 2019). Furthermore, these same authors suggest that enriching experiences and strategic breaks may increase professional motivation and reduce burnout, reinforcing the value of alternative approaches to career management. These trends therefore reflect a broader sociocultural transformation, in which the concept of professional success is redefined to include aspects such as quality of life, emotional well-being, and labor flexibility (Livingstone, 2017; Nichols, 2018; Twenge, 2017).

All of these phenomena share in common worker disengagement and, for this reason, deserve closer examination, as it is important to reflect on and redefine the value attributed to work, especially in today's world, where the nature of work has undergone profound transformations. In this context, the analysis of disengagement among Generation Y and Generation Z cannot be conducted in isolation; it requires the articulation of both personal and organizational factors to achieve a broader understanding. Thus, by integrating these trends with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the present study seeks to provide a more comprehensive view of workplace disengagement, identifying not only its causes but also its impacts and potential organizational solutions.

Unlike previous studies that examine disengagement from a limited perspective, focusing solely on selected organizational or individual psychological factors, this article systematizes the personal and organizational factors that influence the disengagement of Generation Y and Z workers in the workplace. It also incorporates appropriate support mechanisms or organizational strategies for its prevention and potential mitigation.

According to Kruse and Tata-Mbeng (2023), the implications of disengagement extend beyond individual dissatisfaction, as it affects the psychological and physiological well-being of workers, particularly among the younger segments of the workforce, with potential repercussions for overall worker performance, organizational effectiveness, and economic outcomes. It is therefore incumbent upon the study to examine whether there is a significant relationship between disengagement and younger generations of workers, such as Generation Y and Generation Z.

Generation Y individuals, also known as digital natives or 'Millennials', have grown up in a world shaped by rapidly evolving technology, where a significant portion of their activities takes place on digital screens. These individuals, born between 1981 and 1998, are currently aged between 27 and 44 and are more connected than previous generations, such as Generation X and Baby Boomers, with technology being an integral part of their daily lives (Azimi et al., 2021; Mahmoud et al., 2020; Thangavel et al., 2021). In the job market, Millennials are recognized as highly skilled, collaborative, and adaptable. They exhibit a strong collaborative mindset, thriving in team environments, exchanging ideas with colleagues, and continuously learning from their peers. Lifelong learning is a core aspect of their identity, and they demonstrate a remarkable ability to adapt to change.

Generation Z individuals, also known as 'Centennials' or 'Post-Millennials' (as well as 'iGen' or 'Zoomers'), were born between 1999 and 2010 and are currently under the age of 26. This generation is characterized by its proficiency in technology, which may appear to result in a reduced emphasis on interpersonal relationships. However, paradoxically, Generation Z individuals demonstrate a strong commitment to social issues

such as sustainability, gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, using digital platforms as a means of expression and mobilization (Mahmoud et al., 2020; Parry & Battista, 2019; Thangavel et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2024). In the job market, this youngest generation prefers to work independently and autonomously. It embodies diversity at its best, as these individuals grew up surrounded by classmates, friends, and family from various communities and expect to see the same level of inclusivity when they enter the workforce (Fenton, 2019).

As Aydin and Azizoglu (2022) point out, Generation Z individuals are described as impatient, courageous, and unafraid to be pioneers, demonstrating the ability to challenge existing ideas and the confidence to express their desire for work-life balance without exceeding their professional responsibilities. Compared to Generation Y, Generation Z individuals are portrayed as more inclined to break away from traditional norms and expectations, making them more likely to engage in behaviors such as disengagement.

Generation Z workers are expected to make up 75% of the global workforce by 2025, and they are projected to surpass Generation Y by 2050 (García et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2023). According to Formica and Sfodera (2022), these younger generations (Y and Z) constitute a substantial segment of the workforce, in which disengagement traits are prevalent. This suggests that many younger Millennials and Generation Z workers are not fully engaged in their work and may restrict themselves to fulfilling only the basic requirements of their job description. However, this disengagement is not limited to younger generations, such as Generation Y and Z. Recent studies indicate that workers from previous generations can also exhibit disengagement behaviors, particularly when dissatisfied with ineffective management within organizations (Agina et al., 2023; Chiesa et al., 2019; Khan & Khan, 2023; Oliveira & Cardoso, 2018).

According to the Gallup Report (2023, 2024), more than half of the global workforce (59% in 2023 and 62% in 2024) is disengaged. These disengaged workers, in practice, have no emotional commitment to their organization.

On the other hand, the majority of workers are no longer ‘addicted’ to work (the workaholic concept), as they have realized that this practice is not beneficial—either for the worker themselves, who may experience burnout and develop other serious health issues, or for the organization, where productivity can decline due to exhaustion and worker fatigue.

These reports reveal a worrying trend of disengagement in the workplace among workers across different regions of the world. Most regions have a significant proportion of ‘not engaged’ workers, with Europe leading this trend (72%), followed by Southeast Asia (68%). This data is crucial for understanding the phenomenon of disengagement, as a lack of worker engagement can negatively impact the work environment and, consequently, result in high costs due to lost productivity.

Despite its potential impact on society, academic inquiries into this topic remain limited. Although some studies exist in the literature, no research has comprehensively examined or explored their relationship with employee engagement.

The aim of this article is, therefore, to conduct a critical analysis of worker engagement, particularly in relation to younger generations (Y and Z), drawing on relevant literature to identify the factors contributing to engagement or disengagement, assess its implications for workers and organizations, and propose effective strategies for prevention and mitigation. These strategies may support the development of an action plan to sustain employee engagement.

As a result, two key research questions emerged, guiding this study:

RQ1 What factors influence worker disengagement?

RQ2 What organizational strategies can be implemented to minimize disengagement?

Following this contextualization of the topic and the presentation of the research questions, the methodology employed is outlined. Next, the factors influencing engagement and disengagement among younger employees are examined, followed by an analysis of organizational strategies aimed at fostering a healthy and positive work environment while mitigating workplace disengagement. Finally, the concluding remarks highlight the study's practical and theoretical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

2. Method

In the current work dynamics, marked by a fast pace and increasing pressure, workers' commitment to their jobs appears to have shifted more noticeably. For this reason, we saw the need to write an article that would enable us to compile information addressing the various questions raised above.

A literature review was thus conducted between April and December 2024, following these stages: identification of the topic; definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selected articles; evaluation of the selected articles and interpretation of their respective results; and presentation of final considerations.

The included publications were selected based on previously defined inclusion criteria, with the aim of ensuring the quality, relevance, and reliability of the studies analyzed. Only studies indexed in the Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases were considered, thereby ensuring academic rigor and peer-reviewed validation. The selection was based on the mandatory presence of the descriptors 'Employee Engagement', 'Employee Disengagement', 'Generation Y' (or Millennials), and 'Generation Z' in the titles, abstracts, or keywords, ensuring alignment with the research focus.

Publications authored by widely recognized researchers in the field of employee disengagement and generational dynamics in the labor market were included, with preference given to seminal studies. Priority was given to studies presenting well-structured theoretical frameworks or solid empirical evidence in order to support a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under analysis.

Only publications from the last 10 years (2014–2024) were considered to reflect the most recent labor market dynamics and the conceptual evolution of employee disengagement among Generations Y and Z. Exclusively scientific articles published in high impact and widely cited journals were included due to their credibility and influence in the field. However, innovative studies addressing emerging trends and contributing significantly to the advancement of knowledge were also considered.

The selection was limited to articles within the scientific area of 'Management and Social Sciences', ensuring coherence with the scope of the present study. Only publications written in English were included, given their wide dissemination in the international scientific community, which facilitates comparison between studies and ensures linguistic consistency in the analysis.

Additionally, in specific cases, studies that did not fully meet all the established criteria were included, provided they offered relevant theoretical or empirical contributions to the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

All publications meeting one or more of the following exclusion criteria were excluded. First, documents not classified as 'Article' were not considered; therefore, conference papers, reviews, book chapters, editorials, and any other types of publications not subject to peer review were excluded.

Second, studies that did not specifically and centrally address the disengagement of Generation Y and Z workers were eliminated. General publications on organizational

management that lacked a focused and in-depth discussion of the employee disengagement phenomenon were disregarded.

Whenever the same study was identified in more than one database, only the most complete version and/or the one indexed in the highest-impact database was retained in order to avoid duplication.

Finally, publications that focused exclusively on contexts unrelated to the workplace and did not establish an explicit connection with engagement and disengagement dynamics in organizational settings were also excluded.

It is acknowledged that the selection of publications, based on the previously defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, may be subject to certain methodological biases, namely publication, language, and indexing bias. The greater likelihood of publishing studies with positive results may influence the perceived significance of certain factors and organizational strategies to mitigate disengagement, making it more difficult to identify contradictory or neutral evidence. The exclusion of studies not published in English may also limit the diversity of perspectives, particularly in cultural contexts where the topic is discussed within specific frameworks that are not reflected in the Anglophone literature. Finally, the restriction of the selection process to specific databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, may have led to the exclusion of relevant studies available in other academic sources, including institutional repositories and journals not indexed in these platforms.

To minimize the identified methodological biases, several strategies were adopted throughout the review process. The analysis of findings was based on cross-validation across sources, through the systematic comparison of different studies, which reinforced consistency in identifying the factors associated with disengagement and the corresponding organizational mitigation strategies. Methodological diversity was also ensured by including both qualitative and quantitative studies in the review, allowing for a broader and more multidimensional approach to the phenomenon under analysis.

The process of identifying relevant publications was conducted by combining the following descriptors/keywords: Employee Engagement and Employee Disengagement, which were always searched together as mandatory terms, in the Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases. Additionally, the descriptors Generation Y (or Millennials) and Generation Z were included as the target population (workers) of this study. This initial search in the databases resulted in 253 publications.

It should be noted that, despite the existence of some publications on this subject in other databases (albeit limited), when considering only those indexed in Scopus or Web of Science and using the four mandatory descriptors for this study ('Employee Engagement' OR 'Employee Disengagement' AND 'Generation Y' OR 'Millennials' OR 'Generation Z'), no relevant publications were found, reinforcing the significance of this research gap.

Filters were applied based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This search yielded a total of 232 publications, namely 171 publications after applying the filters (Descriptors/Keywords, Publication period, Document type, Research area, and Language), along with 61 relevant publications to the topic outside the defined criteria. Table 1 outlines the methodology used for selecting the publications.

Following the initial selection of 232 articles, a systematic content analysis methodology was applied. An initial screening of titles and abstracts was conducted to assess the alignment of the articles with the research topic. This was followed by a review of abstracts and methodologies, which led to the removal of duplicate studies and the exclusion of those not directly addressing the subject.

Table 1. Methodology for publications selection.

			Number of Publications	
			Identified	Selected
Databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar				
Definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria	Descriptors/ Keywords	Principal Employee Engagement; Employee Disengagement	253	139
		Complementary Generation Y (or Millennials); Generation Z		
	Publication period	2014–2024	239	
	Document type	Article	205	
	Research area	Management and Social Sciences	172	
	Language	English	171	
Relevant publications on the topic outside the defined criteria			61	

After a full-text reading and qualitative evaluation, 139 articles were considered valid for analysis, allowing for the extraction of information deemed relevant to the study's aim and the research questions.

Subsequently, each article underwent a thematic coding process and was classified according to thematic categories such as personal and organizational factors, management practices, including organizational strategies to mitigate disengagement, and psychological impact.

Following this coding phase, a detailed qualitative review of the articles was conducted to identify consistent patterns, gaps, and divergences in the literature, as well as connections between the identified factors and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), including organizational strategies for mitigating disengagement. Finally, the factors were synthesized and categorized into three main groups, aligned with the JD-R and SDT theoretical models: (1) Job Demand Factors (JD-R), including workload, time pressure, and economic instability; (2) Job Resource Factors (JD-R), including leadership, communication, recognition, and professional development; and (3) Psychological Factors (SDT), including autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

3. Factors Influencing Worker Disengagement in Organizational Environments

In the current labor market dynamics, the paradigm has shifted. Workers are increasingly changing their attitudes toward work, showing signs of emotional disengagement, where work is no longer a priority (Hashiguchi et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018). Younger workers, particularly from Generations Y and Z, are the primary drivers of this shift, displaying a growing pattern of disengagement, marked by declining motivation, lower commitment, and an increased tendency to change jobs frequently (Patel et al., 2018; Trisandri & Iskandar, 2024). These workers have adapted to the uncertainty of the labor market, prioritizing values they consider more important, such as happiness, well-being, and alignment with personal causes (Smaliukienė & Bekešienė, 2020). Unlike their parents (from older generations, such as Generation X), who were more committed to their jobs, younger workers tend to prevent work from 'spilling over' into other aspects of their lives (Mahmoud et al., 2020; Smaliukienė & Bekešienė, 2020; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

Based on the selected articles and in response to the first research question (RQ1)—What factors influence worker disengagement?—several factors contributing to worker disengagement were identified, with potential negative impacts on the organization. These

factors are particularly prevalent among Generation Y and Z workers, who have distinct expectations and needs regarding the work environment (Hashiguchi et al., 2020; Trisandri & Iskandar, 2024).

Considering the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), the three main categories of factors identified in the 139 selected publications are presented below.

3.1. Job Demand Factors (JD-R)

3.1.1. Misalignment of Workplace Well-Being Policies

Organizational policies that fail to promote well-being, such as those neglecting a healthy work-life balance, contribute to worker dissatisfaction and demotivation, leading to reduced effort and engagement in job roles (Al-Hamdan et al., 2016; Bosma et al., 2021; Hardiyanto et al., 2019; Sriekaningsih et al., 2018). An organization's inability to adapt to workers' needs, particularly through a lack of emotional support, negatively impacts employee commitment and dedication, potentially resulting in disengagement (Hamouche et al., 2023; A. Lee et al., 2019; Sujit & Harani, 2024).

3.1.2. Excessive Workloads

Likewise, excessive workloads, by interfering with personal life and causing physical and emotional exhaustion (burnout), lead to a significant decline in worker motivation and commitment (Rani & Priya, 2023; Usniarti & Nuvriasari, 2024). This ongoing strain undermines employees' mental health and negatively affects their performance capacity, perpetuating a cycle of demotivation, disengagement, and decreased productivity (Deomedes & Adam, 2021; Gilbert et al., 2023; Jennen et al., 2020; Nabahani & Riyanto, 2020).

3.1.3. Absence of Options Such as Remote Work and Flexible Schedules

Additionally, the absence of options such as remote work and flexible schedules is often perceived by employees as a sign of organizational disregard, especially by Generation Y and Z workers, who highly value workplace flexibility and the ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal interests. This perception negatively affects job satisfaction and reduces their level of engagement in their roles (Hakim, 2023; Jamal et al., 2023; Janovac et al., 2018; Jung & Yoon, 2021; Purwatiningsih & Sawitri, 2021; Smaliukienė & Bekešienė, 2020; Waworuntu et al., 2022).

3.1.4. Digitization and New Technologies in the Labor Market

Another influential factor is the change in the labor market driven by digitization, new technologies, and the expansion of remote work, which are redefining how workers engage with their roles and organizations. These transformations particularly affect Generation Y and Z workers, who are more familiar with digital technologies and expect companies to adopt modern tools that optimize productivity and encourage collaboration. However, while the transition to more flexible work formats presents new opportunities, it can also create challenges that, if poorly managed, lead to feelings of isolation, loss of connection with the team, and decreased organizational commitment. Generation Y and Z workers value flexibility but also need to feel integrated into their teams and aligned with the organizational culture. The absence of initiatives that promote interaction among employees can result in emotional detachment and, consequently, disengagement (Grunt et al., 2021; Mihardjo et al., 2019; Pietrantoni et al., 2024; Simanjuntak, 2023; Tokunova et al., 2024).

3.1.5. Economic Insecurity and Job Instability

Economic insecurity and job instability are also critical factors for Generation Y and Z workers, especially during periods of uncertainty. Generation Y workers, who have experienced economic crises and difficulties accessing the job market, tend to value organizations that provide stability and opportunities for career progression. Generation Z workers, on the other hand, show a stronger inclination towards flexible and independent work models, such as the gig economy—a labor market model based on temporary, freelance, or short-term service contracts, often mediated by digital platforms, without traditional employment ties. These workers perceive job instability as a factor that drives them to explore more dynamic alternatives, such as remote work and entrepreneurship (Bentzen et al., 2020; Charkhabi, 2019; Duggan et al., 2019; Giorgi et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2021; Nath et al., 2023; Peterson & Crittenden, 2024; Russo & Terraneo, 2020; Usniarti & Nuvriasari, 2024).

3.1.6. Frequent Organizational Changes

Frequent organizational changes, such as restructuring, mergers, or acquisitions, can undermine the sense of stability and trust among Generation Y and Z workers. Generation Y workers, who are already accustomed to technological transformations and new work models, may demonstrate some resilience, provided there is transparent communication regarding the changes. However, Generation Z workers, who value more agile and adaptable structures, tend to experience frustration and demotivation when organizational changes do not result in concrete improvements or when uncertainty persists (Chaudhry, 2024; Edwards & Clinton, 2022; Ivanović & Ivančević, 2018; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016).

3.2. Job Resources Factors (JD-R)

3.2.1. Inadequate Leadership

Several studies indicate that inadequate leadership can be a determining factor in worker disengagement (e.g., Ågotnes et al., 2018; Breevaart et al., 2014; Italiani et al., 2022; Joaquim et al., 2023; A. Lee et al., 2019; Moore et al., 2019; Setyaningsih & Indonesia, 2018). When leaders fail to provide clear guidance, constructive feedback, and adequate recognition, workers tend to experience frustration and demotivation (Al Zaydan et al., 2021; Kılıç & Günsel, 2019). While previous generations were more accustomed to rigid hierarchical structures and traditional leadership models, Generation Y and Z workers expect a more participative leadership style, characterized by frequent recognition and opportunities for development. When faced with authoritarian or indifferent leadership, Generation Y and Z workers tend to emotionally disengage from their work, which can lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and a higher propensity to seek new opportunities that better align with their professional and personal expectations (Ibtisam et al., 2024; Jung & Yoon, 2021; Kutlák, 2019; Mason & Brougham, 2020; Mihardjo et al., 2019).

3.2.2. Lack of Effective Communication

The absence of clear, transparent, and effective communication from leadership and within organizations can create uncertainty regarding objectives and expectations, as well as misunderstandings, frustrations, and a sense of disconnection. These factors lead workers to reduce their effort investment and commitment to professional performance. This reality becomes even more evident among Generation Y and Z workers, who value open communication, continuous feedback, and a collaborative work environment where they feel heard and recognized. Generation Y workers, accustomed to a constant flow of digital information and a frequent feedback culture, may interpret the lack of effective communication as a sign of disorganization or a lack of appreciation. In contrast, Generation

Z workers, who grew up in a highly digitalized environment, expect communication to be direct, interactive, and immediate. The lack of effective digital communication channels for internal communication can result in a perceived disconnect from leadership and the company's strategic vision (Alfina & Mardhiyah, 2023; Cardon et al., 2019; Gignac et al., 2020; J. J. Lee & Meng, 2021; Sanmas et al., 2024).

3.2.3. Lack of Professional Development and Training Opportunities

The lack of professional development opportunities, career progression prospects, and investment in continuous training—whether due to professional stagnation, the absence of promotion opportunities, or insufficient investment in employee learning and growth—compromises motivation and performance, leading workers to adopt a minimal level of commitment solely to maintain their jobs. This professional stagnation has an even greater impact on Generation Y and Z workers, as they are characterized by a growth-oriented mindset and constantly seek ways to enhance their professional skills. They highly value a dynamic, structured career path filled with continuous development opportunities. The perception of stagnation often prompts them to seek new job opportunities where they can expand their competencies and advance their careers. Likewise, these workers expect well-defined career plans, effective mentoring programs, and regular training opportunities through courses, certifications, and continuous learning programs that enable them to develop professionally and acquire new skills. When they perceive that these opportunities are limited or non-existent, that career progression is determined exclusively by tenure rather than merit, or that their potential is not being fully utilized, they experience increasing frustration and dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction gradually leads to disengagement from their roles, prompting them to seek alternatives in the job market (Anika & Nurhayati, 2021; Boadi et al., 2020; Farivar et al., 2023; Järström et al., 2020; Kruse & Tata-Mbeng, 2023; Leitão et al., 2019; Nipper & Wingerden, 2018; Orujaliyev, 2024; Sirojudin & Wijoyo, 2024; Wiroko & Evanytha, 2019; Yahya et al., 2018).

3.2.4. Inadequate Performance Evaluation and Reward Systems

Another factor that can lead to worker disengagement is dissatisfaction with performance evaluation and reward systems. A lack of transparency, fairness, and equity in these processes, combined with the perception that efforts are not properly recognized or rewarded, generates frustration and resentment. Generation Y and Z workers require recognition for their performance to remain motivated and committed to the organization. When they perceive that performance evaluation criteria are subjective or unclear, or that additional efforts are not properly valued, they tend to invest less effort and limit themselves to fulfilling only the minimum requirements, avoiding engagement beyond what is strictly necessary (Adamovic, 2023; Akinsola et al., 2024; Alfina & Mardhiyah, 2023; Doghan, 2019; Hareendrakumar et al., 2020; Hassan, 2022; Rehman et al., 2019; Rusdi & Rahadi, 2024; Sikira et al., 2024; Sriekaningsih et al., 2018; Tarigan et al., 2022; Umer et al., 2016; Wei, 2018).

3.3. Psychological Factors (STD)

3.3.1. Lack of Autonomy in the Workplace

The absence of autonomy in the workplace, reflected in the excessive restriction of decision-making and task management, generates frustration and a sense of devaluation among employees, leading them to adopt a minimal performance approach, fulfilling only the basic requirements of their role. For Generation Y and Z workers, who grew up in a context of greater independence and adaptability, where freedom of expression and autonomy in decision-making are highly valued, excessively hierarchical work environments, where their ideas and suggestions are not considered, result in a significant

loss of motivation and detachment from organizational goals (Kruse & Tata-Mbeng, 2023; Pandey & Chauhan, 2021).

3.3.2. Workplace Injustice, Inequality, and Lack of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The sense of injustice and inequality in the workplace, along with the lack of organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion, stemming from perceived unfair or discriminatory treatment, undermines employee motivation and commitment to the organization, potentially leading to reduced productivity and disengagement from their roles. This factor has a particularly significant impact on Generation Y and Z workers, who demonstrate increased sensitivity to issues related to justice and equity in the workplace. These younger generations value transparency in corporate policies and reject organizational cultures that perpetuate favoritism or inequalities related to gender, race, or age. Generation Y workers value inclusive work environments where representation and equity are prioritized, considering these aspects fundamental to fostering a positive organizational culture. Meanwhile, Generation Z workers, who are highly engaged in social causes and advocates for justice, may experience emotional detachment and a loss of connection if they perceive that the organization does not demonstrate an authentic commitment to diversity. This can lead them to seek opportunities in organizations that align with their values (Agina et al., 2023; Aysola et al., 2018; Chakrabarti et al., 2024; Gilbert et al., 2023; Jung et al., 2021; Mellacher & Scheuer, 2020; Murdoch, 2021; Sharma & Sharma, 2015; Smaliukienė & Bekešienė, 2020; Trisandri & Iskandar, 2024).

3.3.3. Misalignment Between Personal Values and Organizational Culture

The lack of alignment between personal values and organizational culture also directly influences the engagement levels of Generation Y and Z workers. Generation Y workers tend to seek organizations that respect work-life balance and promote sustainability and corporate social responsibility practices. Meanwhile, Generation Z workers, who are highly critical of organizations' environmental and social impact, may experience emotional disengagement when they perceive discrepancies between an organization's discourse and its actions (Alfina & Mardhiyah, 2023; Guo et al., 2022; Italiani et al., 2022; Lesmana et al., 2023; Mileva & Hristova, 2022; Srikaningsih et al., 2018; Tan et al., 2024).

3.3.4. Hostile or Toxic Organizational Environment

A hostile or toxic organizational environment, where harassment or bullying prevails, has a significant impact on worker disengagement. Generation Y workers value collaborative and inclusive workplaces and are less tolerant of authoritarian leadership or rigid hierarchies. Meanwhile, Generation Z workers, who have high expectations regarding workplace well-being, tend to quickly leave dysfunctional environments and often publicly expose poor corporate practices, using digital platforms to report abuse or discrimination (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022; Giorgi et al., 2020; Mileva & Hristova, 2022; Ningrum et al., 2023; Praningrum et al., 2023; Raiu, 2020; Scharp et al., 2021).

As observed, worker disengagement among Generation Y and Z stems from a combination of organizational, cultural, and structural factors that directly influence their motivation and commitment. Therefore, organizations must adopt strategies that promote employee engagement, regardless of generation or age, to improve the work environment.

To prevent disengagement, organizations should implement measures that foster healthy and positive work environments, as these not only benefit individual organizations but also contribute to a more sustainable society as a whole. Such initiatives create a positive impact not only on workers' lives but also on their families and surrounding communities.

4. Organizational Strategies to Mitigate Employee Disengagement

Employee disengagement, characterized by the intentional reduction of effort and involvement, represents a significant challenge for contemporary organizations. Disengaged employees tend to be less productive, have higher absenteeism rates, and contribute less to innovation and continuous improvement. This scenario can create a vicious cycle, where the disengagement of some employees negatively influences others, fostering a culture of apathy and demotivation. In turn, this adversely affects cohesion and collaboration within the organization (Ullah et al., 2018; Zeidan & Itani, 2020).

The cumulative impact of this behavior can be devastating for organizations, not only in terms of immediate performance but also in their ability to attract and retain talent in the long term, as disengagement contributes to increased turnover. The departure of experienced employees can demoralize the remaining workforce, leading to a negative impact on team morale (S. Lee, 2017; Rahmayani et al., 2023; Yaseen, 2020).

This high turnover represents a significant financial burden for organizations, as it results in a continuous need to recruit and train new employees. Moreover, constant employee turnover introduces a frequent influx of new staff, which can disrupt team cohesion and slow organizational progress, ultimately negatively affecting productivity (Hom et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022).

Inadequate management of worker disengagement can, therefore, lead to a downward spiral of disengagement. Since employee disengagement is one of the greatest challenges for modern organizations, as it directly impacts productivity and organizational effectiveness, organizations must mitigate these negative effects by developing effective and proactive strategies to re-engage their employees and foster a stimulating and motivating work environment. The key is to implement effective strategies that mitigate this behavior while promoting both individual well-being and organizational productivity. This requires adopting a holistic approach that considers both employees' needs and the organization's goals.

Therefore, based on the factors identified in the previous section that contribute to disengagement and to address Research Question 2—RQ2: What organizational strategies can be implemented to minimize disengagement?—the following section presents key organizational mitigation strategies.

4.1. Physical and Mental Health Programs

4.1.1. Promotion of Physical and Mental Well-Being

To mitigate disengagement and significantly enhance employee well-being, organizations can implement a range of programs that promote physical and mental health. Priya et al. (2024) support this statement by discussing how the hospitality industry leverages transformational digital technologies and tools to enhance workplace wellness. Technological innovations such as AI-powered chatbots, virtual assistants, wearable devices, gamification, virtual/augmented reality, and digital peer support networks to transform employee wellness programs by providing real-time support, stress management, meditation, ergonomics, fitness tracking, and fostering a positive work culture. For instance, Marriott's TakeCare staff wellness program, Hyatt's Colleague Wellbeing Council, Accor's Lifeworks Total Wellbeing app, and Royal Caribbean's Wellness Works program are designed to support employees' physical and mental health (Priya et al., 2024).

Several initiatives may include workplace gymnastics, aimed at reducing muscle tension, improving posture, and increasing energy levels. According to Miragaia and Aleixo (2021), workplace gymnastics can enhance overall employee well-being, health, and motivation, which in turn positively impacts organizational productivity. This can be

achieved through short physical exercise sessions conducted during working hours under the guidance of a physical education professional.

Additionally, yoga and meditation sessions can help alleviate stress, improve concentration, and enhance overall well-being (Priya et al., 2024). Regular physical activity interventions, such as yoga, exercise, and walking, have been shown to improve psychological well-being in workplace settings. These interventions can be effective in reducing stress and enhancing overall mental health (Abdin et al., 2018). These sessions can be offered either in person or online, depending on employee needs. Other initiatives include exercise incentive programs such as gym membership subsidies, walking/running groups, fitness challenges among employees, and corporate sports events.

The success of workplace exercise initiatives heavily depends on organizational factors, particularly leadership support for well-being. When employees, essentially the younger employees, perceive their employer's intentions as genuine and caring, they are more likely to participate in exercise programs (Little et al., 2020). Implementing policies that support work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and mental health can significantly improve employee well-being (Kusuma Dwi Wikka et al., 2024). The hybrid work model allows these generations to integrate physical activity into their daily routines more easily. This flexibility helps overcome one of the major barriers to regular exercise, which is finding the time to engage in physical activity (Gilson et al., 2022; Schönig & Geibel, 2024). Virtual exercise programs offer the convenience of working out from home. According to Oginni et al. (2024), virtual exercise programs can be as effective as traditional in person programs in improving health metrics (e.g., blood pressure).

Generation Y and Z workers highly value workplaces that prioritize their physical and mental well-being, considering such programs a reflection of the organization's commitment to its employees. Furthermore, these generations actively seek a balance between professional and personal life. They also favor flexible exercise programs, whether in person or virtual, as many of them prefer hybrid work models.

4.1.2. Encouraging Regular Breaks and Rest Areas

Another key aspect is the promotion of regular breaks during working hours. Regular breaks are essential for maintaining both physical and mental health. They help reduce stress, prevent fatigue, and improve overall well-being (Walker et al., 2023). Encouraging employees to stand up, stretch, and clear their minds can help maintain energy levels and improve concentration throughout the day. According to Nastasi et al. (2023), short, frequent breaks (5–20 min) can be highly effective. These breaks can involve simple activities such as stretching or walking. In a study conducted by Vieten et al. (2023) in Germany, logistic regression analyses were performed using five health complaints as the dependent variables: back pain and lower back pain, pain in the neck and shoulder region, general tiredness, faintness or fatigue, physical exhaustion, and emotional exhaustion. A significant portion of employees frequently skipped their work breaks (29%) and experienced interruptions during their breaks (16%). Regularly skipping work breaks was significantly and positively (i.e., harmfully) associated with all five health complaints. Similarly, frequent interruptions of work breaks were significantly linked to most health complaints, except for neck and shoulder pain. Additionally, longer meal break duration was significantly and negatively (i.e., beneficially) associated with physical exhaustion.

Implementing structured break schedules can help ensure employees take necessary breaks. This can include scheduled short breaks and longer breaks during extended working hours (Yi et al., 2020). Yi et al. (2020, p. 1) empirically analyze the relationship between productivity and breaks. The results showed that productivity improved during the 30 min before the start of a break, which mainly resulted from employees' expectations

of the upcoming break and the alleviation of any negative emotions due to their current work. It was also found that productivity declined during the 30 min after the end of a break due to the dominating effect of forgetting the recent rest and having a disordered work rhythm in the manufacturing environment. Additionally, it was noticed that a lighter workload mitigated the negative post-break impact on productivity while reinforcing the pre-break positive impact on productivity. The results imply that managers should schedule breaks for employees and appropriately reduce their workload to improve productivity.

Additionally, organizations can create comfortable rest areas where employees can relax during breaks. Comfortable rest areas provide employees with a space to relax and recharge, which is essential for maintaining mental and physical health. These areas can help reduce stress and prevent burnout, leading to improved overall well-being (Walker et al., 2023). Access to comfortable rest areas can enhance productivity by allowing employees to take effective breaks. When employees feel rested, they are more focused and engaged in their work, leading to better performance (Bishop et al., 2022; Nastasi et al., 2023; Dang et al., 2023).

Generation Y and Z workers perceive breaks not just as moments of rest but also as opportunities to recharge their creativity and enhance productivity. They appreciate work models that encourage short, regular breaks, especially since these generations tend to value autonomy and efficiency in the workplace. Furthermore, they also favor well-designed rest areas, as these reinforce the idea of a human-centered work environment that prioritizes employee well-being.

4.1.3. Health Campaigns and Healthy Lifestyle Habits

Health campaigns can significantly improve employee well-being by promoting healthy lifestyle habits, such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and stress management. These initiatives can lead to better physical and mental health outcomes for employees (Walker et al., 2023). Healthier employees tend to be more productive. By encouraging healthy habits, organizations can reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, leading to improved overall performance and efficiency (Nastasi et al., 2023; Dang et al., 2023). For example, balanced eating campaigns aim to encourage healthy diets that boost employees' energy levels and overall health. These initiatives can be implemented through nutrition workshops, the availability of healthy options in workplace canteens and vending machines, and the distribution of informational materials on balanced eating.

Workshops, seminars, and informational materials can educate employees on topics such as nutrition, exercise, and mental health strategies. Employees value easy access to nutritious food options in the workplace and consider initiatives such as nutrition workshops a significant benefit. Initiatives that focus on educating employees about healthy eating habits, meal planning, and the importance of hydration can promote better dietary choices. This can include cooking demonstrations or nutrition workshops (Vieten et al., 2023; Yi et al., 2020). Consumers, including Gen Y and Z, increasingly expect food production processes to limit negative environmental impacts and consider social concerns. Generally, consumers prefer domestic and local food products, associating them with better quality, safety, and environmental friendliness (Thøgersen, 2023).

A strong concern for healthy eating is a defining characteristic of Generation Y and Z workers, who actively seek balanced and sustainable food choices in their daily lives. Additionally, transparency regarding the origin of food products and an organization's commitment to sustainable food practices can positively impact their level of engagement and workplace motivation.

4.1.4. Adopting an Ergonomic and Comfortable Work Environment

Another aspect is providing a work environment that is ergonomically designed to promote both the physical comfort and mental well-being of employees. This includes selecting appropriate furniture (e.g., adjustable chairs, height-adjustable desks, and footrests) and optimizing the layout of the physical workspace to ensure easy access to different work areas and adequate lighting—both natural and artificial (Ahmadi Charkhabi et al., 2019; Chim, 2019; Walker et al., 2023). Ahmadi Charkhabi et al. (2019, pp. 1–2) research “was to study the effect of redesigned workstations on SIL [Speech Interference Level] among bank tellers. Twelve workstations were redesigned and installed after measuring the sound and calculating the Speech Interference Level and calculating the distance between customer and employee.” [...] “According to the results of this study, redesigning work stations and environmental interventions in open plan offices can influence SIL and improve the speech intelligibility, that it can prevent errors and increase concentration and reduce fatigue by peoples’ privacy and controlling annoying sound sources. Finally, it can be said that the workstation redesign and layout can improve the acoustic working environment”.

Although creating an ergonomic work environment requires a significant initial investment, the long-term benefits for employee health and productivity outweigh the costs. Maintaining optimal working conditions requires an ongoing commitment, involving regular assessments and continuous updates to furniture and ergonomic practices. Identifying areas for improvement and deploying effective measures can enhance working conditions, which in turn supports business growth and employee comfort (Górny, 2019; Salvadorinho et al., 2025).

Generation Y and Z workers tend to value modern, adaptable, and flexible workspaces that allow for different configurations depending on the task at hand. They appreciate the ability to choose between various types of furniture and personalize their work environment according to individual preferences. Moreover, the suitability of remote workspaces has become an increasing concern, with many organizations being evaluated based on the support they provide to employees in hybrid or remote setups.

4.1.5. Psychological Support and the Normalization of Mental Well-Being

Another aspect is access to psychological support services, which aim to provide emotional assistance and help employees navigate personal and professional challenges. Organizations can establish partnerships with psychologists and therapists, offering free or subsidized sessions, as well as creating dedicated employee support programs. However, the effectiveness of these psychological support initiatives depends on fostering an organizational culture that values and normalizes seeking emotional help. Providing education on mental health symptoms, accommodations, and coping strategies can improve knowledge and reduce self-stigma among employees. This approach has been shown to increase self-efficacy and reduce presenteeism (Faller et al., 2023). These authors tested an online psychoeducation course for 89 people with depression and anxiety to see if it helped with workplace accommodations. Participants who took the course improved in knowledge about accommodations, self-confidence, and work performance compared to those who did not. Both groups showed less self-stigma and were more likely to disclose their condition over time, especially when supported by their organization and supervisors. However, there was no difference between groups in using accommodations, improving symptoms, workplace relationships, or feeling comfortable with disclosure.

Szeto et al. (2019) stated that campaigns such as “Opening Minds” in Canada have developed tools and measures to assess and reduce workplace stigma. These authors found that 44% of working adults have experienced or currently have a mental health problem, with 16.5% having been treated for a mental illness, a rate that rises to 27.7% for

those with extremely stressful jobs. These authors too found that only 26% of employees believe their supervisor can effectively support mental health issues, and 44% of managers have not received any mental health training. Workplace programs that reduce stigma and improve mental health knowledge could increase help-seeking and create a more supportive work environment.

Employees may often feel reluctant to use mental health services due to the associated stigma. For this reason, organizations must not only provide these resources but also actively work to destigmatize mental health concerns and ensure that these programs are fully integrated into the organizational culture (Dewa et al., 2020).

Generation Y and Z individuals place great importance on emotional well-being and the ability to seek support without fear of judgment. While they appreciate the availability of psychological counseling within companies, the most decisive factor is their perception of an open and inclusive organizational culture. They also highly value the normalization of mental health discussions and the implementation of proactive strategies to prevent and address burnout.

4.2. Professional Development and Recognition Programs

4.2.1. Promotion of Training and Skills Development

To demonstrate their commitment to the continuous growth of their employees, organizations can facilitate access to training courses and skills development programs, covering both technical and behavioral competencies. This approach not only enhances employee qualifications but also fosters greater engagement and loyalty to the organization. To achieve this, companies should offer a diverse range of courses, including job-specific training as well as soft skills development (e.g., effective communication, leadership, time management, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence), for professional performance and team dynamics. According to Kumah (2024), the organizations should leverage learning theories such as adult learning, behavioral, cognitive, social learning, and experiential learning to design training programs that cater to diverse learning needs. This approach helps in fostering employee engagement and promoting a positive organizational culture. Understanding and applying these theories allows organizations to create targeted training and development programs that meet diverse learning needs, enhance employee engagement, and strengthen organizational culture. Human resources and learning and development professionals must have a strong understanding of these theories to design effective programs that drive positive outcomes. By using theoretical frameworks, organizations can foster a culture of continuous learning and boost employee motivation and engagement.

To improve accessibility, organizations can utilize e-learning platforms, allowing employees to access training at any time and from any location, making it easier to balance learning with daily responsibilities. Additionally, offering subsidies for external courses or professional certifications can encourage continuous development (Shirokov, 2020). According to Da Silva et al. (2021), innovative teaching methodologies, such as the Educational Testbed 4.0, can be used to develop specific soft skills required for Industry 4.0. This includes teamwork, communication, and creativity, which are essential for the future workforce. These authors show that 90% to 95% of participants reported improvements in teamwork and communication after applying the Educational Testbed 4.0 method, which combines Flipped Classroom (FC) and Project-Based Learning (PBL). Additionally, 85% of participants highlighted gains in problem-solving skills, and 80% reported increased confidence in handling professional challenges. The findings confirm that this educational approach effectively enhances key competencies needed for Industry 4.0.

Moreover, organizations can implement mentoring and coaching programs to support employees' professional growth. Mentoring involves ongoing guidance from experienced professionals, who help employees develop their careers by providing practical advice and assisting in defining professional goals. Coaching, on the other hand, helps employees identify and overcome specific challenges, enhance their performance, and achieve targeted professional objectives through personalized one-on-one sessions with qualified coaches. According to [Trawver et al. \(2021\)](#), mentoring and coaching programs have been shown to significantly enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention rates. These programs help employees grow, gain visibility, and access resources, which in turn support their career development and organizational commitment ([Munde et al., 2020](#)). These authors conducted a study where they examined the impact of employee mentoring and mentoring programs on talent development within organizations. It surveyed 50 human resources professionals from large industries to identify the types of mentoring systems in place, the objectives of these programs, and their influence on talent development. The findings confirm a significant relationship between mentoring and employee talent growth, highlighting the importance of structured mentoring programs in enhancing workforce capabilities.

[Baral et al. \(2024\)](#) analyzed 251 professionals from the aquatic sector within the USDA Forest Service and found that approximately 70% of participants had mentors. Job satisfaction followed a U-shaped trajectory throughout the professional lifecycle, being highest at early (28%) and late (22%) career stages. Early-career professionals placed greater importance on formal mentoring programs (66%) compared to those at the end of their careers (41%). Similarly, 69% of employees in entry-level positions considered structured mentoring programs relevant, in contrast with 45% of senior professionals. The most valued competencies in the context of mentoring were technical skills (mean score of 3.99), followed by project management (3.94) and communication (3.93). Mentoring was associated with benefits such as increased confidence, professional recognition, and preparation for promotions, especially among professionals at junior and mid-level positions. However, access to mentoring was perceived as limited at these levels, with average satisfaction ratings falling below 3 on a satisfaction scale. Only 41% of late-career professionals felt encouraged to seek mentors, compared to 66% of those in the early stages of their careers. These findings suggest that mentoring contributes to professional development, career advancement, and job satisfaction, being especially valued by employees in the early phases of their professional trajectory. Nonetheless, access barriers remain, highlighting the need for mentoring programs tailored to different career stages and for greater supervisor involvement in promoting such practices.

However, these initiatives require careful planning and a substantial investment of time and resources, which can be challenging for organizations with limited budgets. Thus, before implementing any training program, it is crucial to conduct a detailed analysis of both employee and organizational needs. This ensures that the courses provided align with the organization's strategic goals and employees' career aspirations.

Furthermore, organizations should establish an annual training and professional development calendar, allowing employees to plan their participation in advance. These initiatives demand significant resources, including hiring qualified trainers; developing high quality content; acquiring suitable technological tools; and ensuring the necessary infrastructure, such as training rooms, technological equipment, and e-learning platforms.

According to [Saxena \(2024\)](#) and [Chillakuri and Mahanandia \(2018\)](#), the Generation Y and Z workers highly value continuous learning and personal development. They appreciate access to dynamic, interactive, and adaptable courses, particularly through digital formats, which are often considered a major factor in their decision to join and

remain with an organization. Additionally, flexibility in accessing knowledge is a top priority for these generations, as they value the ability to learn at their own pace and balance training with other aspects of their lives. Mentoring and coaching programs are particularly appealing, as they offer tailored growth opportunities aligned with their career ambitions. The predictability and structure of training programs are also highly valued, as they enable better time management. Furthermore, these generations expect organizations to make a genuine and long-term investment in professional development, ensuring that it has a meaningful impact on their career trajectories.

4.2.2. Recognition and Reward Programs and Performance Management

Establishing recognition and reward programs that encourage productivity can reinforce positive behaviors and increase employee engagement. These programs may include various forms of recognition, such as monetary rewards, certificates of merit, professional development opportunities, and additional days off, among others. However, these programs do not foster an overly competitive or stressful work environment. While healthy competition can be beneficial, it must be balanced with collaboration and teamwork to cultivate a positive and supportive organizational culture.

Moreover, offering bonuses, salary increases, promotions, and other incentives based on individual performance and contributions can serve as effective strategies to keep employees motivated and engaged. However, these incentives must be equitable and transparent, with clearly communicated criteria for awarding them to all employees. Additionally, incentives should not be perceived solely as financial rewards but also as a meaningful acknowledgment of employees' effort and dedication.

Considering what has been said, in a study conducted by [Dizon and Monsura \(2021\)](#), the results indicate that factors such as performance-based incentives, real wages, the interaction effects of performance-based incentives, and implementation-related dummy variables can have a statistically significant impact on employee performance ratings. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers responsible for reward and compensation systems reinforce performance-based incentives to enhance employee performance.

Similarly, when evaluating performance, setting clear and achievable goals that align with organizational objectives can ensure that everyone is working toward the same vision. Performance management tools, such as Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), can be used to monitor and evaluate employee progress. These tools help employees recognize the impact of their work on the organization's overall objectives, strengthening their sense of purpose and belonging.

In addition, providing constructive and timely feedback can help keep employees motivated and committed. However, feedback must be specific, focused on observable behaviors, and accompanied by suggestions for improvement. Regular feedback sessions, rather than limiting evaluations to annual performance appraisals, allow for ongoing adjustments and support. Frequent discussions help resolve issues promptly and guide employees in the right direction. Constructive feedback positively impacts job satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) intentions. Employees who receive constructive feedback feel more respected and perceive greater opportunities for advancement, leading to better moods at work and stronger OCB intentions. According to the study done by [Tagliabue et al. \(2020\)](#), the results obtained suggest that feedback has a small but consistent positive effect on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), indicating that providing feedback can enhance employees' willingness to go beyond their formal job duties. However, the high heterogeneity among the studies ($I^2 = 94.6\%$) suggests that the relationship between feedback and OCB may vary depending on contextual factors. The varying effect sizes based on feedback type (e.g., positive/negative, normative, pub-

lic/private) imply that the quality and delivery of feedback are important for influencing OCB. The presence of publication bias (confirmed by the Egger regression test) indicates that some positive results may be overrepresented, calling for cautious interpretation. Therefore, organizations should focus not only on increasing the frequency of feedback but also on improving its quality, perceived usefulness, and constructiveness to maximize its impact on employee behavior.

To prevent performance management practices and recognition programs from creating an overly competitive environment, organizations can implement work-life balance policies, promote an inclusive work culture, and offer emotional and psychological support to employees. According to [Tsvetkova et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Tatar et al. \(2023\)](#), the platforms used for feedback and performance tracking should prioritize transparency and empower employees rather than act as surveillance tools. When young employees feel they are being trusted to manage their own performance without overbearing oversight, they tend to be more engaged and proactive in their work. Conversely, excessive digital oversight can lead employees to feel micromanaged, triggering negative emotional responses and a decline in productivity.

Generation Y and Z workers appreciate recognition for their performance, but they place greater value on the significance of their work and its impact on the organization and society. However, these workers value meritocracy, provided that the criteria are clear and well-defined. As a result, transparent evaluation criteria reinforce the belief in meritocracy, which in turn boosts motivation by ensuring that employees feel recognized and fairly rewarded for their efforts. This approach not only enhances job satisfaction but also improves overall organizational performance. Meritocracy's association with performance-based rewards and the employees' perception of fairness is fundamental to fostering motivation in the workplace. A transparent evaluation process not only motivates employees but also reinforces a culture of performance and accountability within organizations. In line with this expectation, they prefer frequent and constructive feedback, favoring open and two-way communication. They also appreciate the use of digital performance monitoring tools, as long as these do not create a sense of micromanagement. This aspect is particularly significant, as Generation Y and Z workers recognize the benefits of digital tools for tracking performance but also highly value workplace autonomy. If these tools lead to excessive control or constant surveillance, they can foster a perception of distrust, reducing motivation and engagement. These generations prefer goal-oriented work rather than being monitored for every minor task, as constant scrutiny can create stress and hinder productivity. Therefore, organizations must balance effective performance tracking with fostering a sense of independence, ensuring that digital monitoring tools support productivity without undermining employee trust and autonomy.

4.3. Communication Programs and Organizational Flexibility

4.3.1. Culture of Open and Transparent Communication

Clear and transparent communication contributes to an environment of openness, ensuring that everyone is aware of the organization's goals, challenges, and progress. This approach can reduce feelings of disconnection and demotivation, which are factors that frequently lead to employee disengagement. When employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions without fear of retaliation, trust between different hierarchical levels is strengthened, promoting long-term commitment. The exchange of ideas and open dialogue encourage cross-departmental collaboration, resulting in more innovative and effective solutions. A workplace that recognizes and values everyone's contributions is more likely to foster creativity, enhancing both job satisfaction and a sense of belonging ([Cardon et al., 2019](#)).

To establish a culture of open communication, organizations should hold regular meetings to track project progress, align expectations, and resolve outstanding issues. These meetings should provide equal opportunities for all team members to actively participate. Frequent one-on-one sessions between leadership and employees should be structured to address topics such as feedback, professional development, and specific concerns. Utilizing internal communication tools facilitates the instant exchange of information, while anonymous feedback systems provide a safe channel for employees to voice concerns or suggestions without fear of repercussions. However, collecting feedback alone is insufficient. Organizations must implement concrete measures based on employees' insights and concerns. When leadership effectively communicates the decisions made in response to feedback and provides a rationale for these actions, it fosters a cycle of trust and continuous improvement (Hanson, 2022).

Resistance to change is a common challenge, but it can be mitigated through training and awareness initiatives that emphasize the benefits of open communication. Leaders should set a strong example by demonstrating a willingness to listen and share information. Additionally, communication strategies must be tailored to the specific needs of different age groups to prevent disengagement and promote a more cohesive work environment (Yilmaz, 2023).

The successful implementation of communication strategies requires a genuine commitment from organizational leadership. Without sufficient support and a culture that prioritizes transparency, any improvements to communication channels risk being superficial and ineffective. For organizations to fully capitalize on the advantages of structured communication, a comprehensive approach is necessary—one that includes training, the allocation of appropriate resources, and a cultural shift toward greater collaboration. Effective communication should not be regarded solely as a critical tool during crises but rather as an ongoing practice that is fully embedded in the organization's culture (Cardon et al., 2019; Erickson, 2021).

Girrbach (2024) analyzed the communication behavior and leadership preferences of Generation Z in a professional setting. Results showed that 70% of Generation Z employees experience high levels of personal insecurity when communicating with superiors, primarily due to the constant flow of information, increased social media consumption, and unrealistic beauty standards, which cause self-doubt (77% strongly agree, 23% agree). This insecurity leads to inhibited communication, negatively affecting transparency, innovation, and team efficiency. The study found that appreciative and trust-promoting leadership, characterized by support from superiors (46% strongly agree, 38% agree), respect for performance (76% strongly agree, 23% agree), empathy, and open communication, can significantly improve communication behavior and trust. Transparent and consistent leadership builds trust and enhances employee loyalty (76% strongly agree, 23% agree) and productivity (70% strongly agree, 30% agree). The study concludes that Human Resource Management 4.0 (HRM 4.0), focusing on employee appreciation and well-being, attracting and retaining Generation Z talent, and sustaining long-term company performance.

Shorey et al. (2024) analyzed communication preferences and behaviors among Generation Z in the digital era. Despite growing up with digital communication platforms such as in-app messaging, video calls, and social media, Generation Z still prefers face-to-face communication (77%), followed by text messaging (54%) and direct messaging (47%). Email (17%) was the least preferred method. Regionally, in person communication remained the top choice except in Confucian and African regions, where direct messaging was more popular. The social media platforms most frequently used were Instagram (31%), WhatsApp (23%), and YouTube (12%), with variations across regions. Miscommunication due to the use of slang and abbreviations, lack of nonverbal cues, and accidental misdirected

responses were identified as challenges. Additionally, social media use was linked to issues with self-worth, limited social skills, narrow worldviews, and vulnerability to scams. The study concludes that while digital communication dominates, face-to-face interactions remain essential for connection, and balanced communication strategies are needed to mitigate the risks of excessive online interaction.

Generation Y and Z workers value transparency and authenticity in corporate communication. They expect organizations to maintain an open and reciprocal dialogue, where they can actively participate and have their ideas acknowledged. A lack of clear communication can lead to rapid disengagement. These employees also appreciate efficiency and interactivity in communication. They prefer brief and goal-oriented meetings, as well as digital tools that enable seamless and real-time interaction. Moreover, they seek continuous and constructive feedback, rather than occasional formal evaluations. They also tend to resist rigid hierarchies and top-down communication models. Instead, they prefer a collaborative work environment, where communication is horizontal and open, allowing them to feel like integral members of the organization.

4.3.2. Adoption of Remote Work Policies and Flexible Working Hours

The introduction of remote work policies and flexible working hours has proven to be an effective response to the modern needs of workers. These policies facilitate a better balance between personal, family, and professional life, contributing to higher employee satisfaction and engagement. However, flexible working policies must be supported by a mindset that values employee autonomy and responsibility, fostering mutual trust between staff and leadership. Additionally, promoting virtual integration events, holding regular meetings, and providing continuous feedback can enhance team cohesion and strengthen professional relationships (Jung & Yoon, 2021).

The possibility of remote work offers employees greater flexibility to manage their schedules more effectively, reducing long commuting times and allowing for a more comfortable working environment tailored to their personal needs. However, the effectiveness of this approach largely depends on the organization's ability to manage remote teams and maintain team cohesion from a distance. Managing remote teams requires new skills and adaptations, both in leadership and among employees. Both leaders and employees must be prepared to navigate a virtual work environment effectively, which includes the ability to communicate clearly, set measurable goals, and maintain team motivation (Campos García et al., 2024; Radonić et al., 2021).

Dangaiso et al. (2024) examined the effects of employee remuneration, remote working, and flexible scheduling on job satisfaction and employee loyalty among frontline staff at three public universities in Zimbabwe, using data from 327 valid responses. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) confirmed that remote working ($\beta = 0.509, p < 0.001$) and flexible scheduling ($\beta = 0.394, p < 0.001$) had a stronger positive effect on job satisfaction than employee remuneration ($\beta = 0.126, p = 0.023$). Employee job satisfaction significantly influenced employee loyalty ($\beta = 0.776, p < 0.001$), explaining 60.3% of the variability in loyalty intentions. The study concluded that while remuneration positively impacts job satisfaction, work-life balance through remote work and flexible scheduling plays a more substantial role in enhancing employee satisfaction and retention in the post-COVID-19 period. Recommendations included adopting more flexible work models and reinforcing supportive policies to increase employee motivation and loyalty.

Waldrep et al. (2024) analyzed the preferences for remote and hybrid work among American workers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, based on 52 in-depth interviews with dual-earner households with children. Most participants reported increased job satisfaction and productivity from remote work due to greater schedule control, flexibility,

and elimination of commute time. While some preferred to remain fully remote, others favored a hybrid arrangement to balance flexibility with in person collaboration. However, respondents with jobs poorly suited to remote work (e.g., teaching) expressed dissatisfaction and preferred returning to in person work. Parents, particularly mothers, valued the ability to manage work and childcare simultaneously. Workers' willingness to change jobs to maintain remote or hybrid arrangements highlights the growing importance of flexible work models in post-pandemic work culture. The study concludes that understanding workers' preferences is key to developing sustainable and effective work policies.

Baša et al. (2023) applied a questionnaire survey, and 160 valid responses were collected. The study explored the main workplace motivations of Generations Y and Z, including their preferred working hours, work type, form of work, and company size. The findings revealed many similarities in the work attitudes of both generations. Higher salaries, recognition, and a positive work environment were confirmed as strong motivational factors for both Generation Y and Z. Regarding company size, they showed a tendency to prefer working for a private enterprise or a medium-sized company. In terms of work type, most participants from both generations favored a combination of physical and intellectual work. Both generations also expressed a preference for flexible working hours.

Based on these examples, it can be noted that the Generation Y and Z workers highly value flexibility and autonomy, considering them decisive factors when choosing an organization. Remote work and flexible schedules are seen as ways to enhance productivity and reduce stress, allowing for greater personalization of the professional experience. The absence of these policies can lead to disengagement and a higher turnover rate.

4.3.3. Investment in Technology and Collaboration Tools

To overcome the challenges of remote working, organizations must invest in technology and collaboration tools. Video conferencing software, project management platforms, and real-time collaboration applications are essential for ensuring that teams can communicate and collaborate effectively, regardless of location. These technological resources facilitate information sharing, task management, and project coordination, promoting a cohesive and productive work environment (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Kumar & Kumar, 2022).

To implement these policies and transform the work experience, organizations must invest in technology and tools that facilitate employees' work, significantly improving operational efficiency and employee satisfaction. Collaboration tools, project management software, and the automation of repetitive tasks can reduce manual workloads, allowing employees to focus on more strategic and creative tasks (Bulgurcu et al., 2024).

This investment not only enhances employees' daily work but also demonstrates the organization's commitment to providing the best possible resources for their success. To this end, adequate training in the use of these technologies should be provided to ensure that all employees can fully utilize the available resources. Training sessions, online tutorials, and face-to-face workshops are some of the ways organizations can ensure that employees are well-prepared to use new tools (Bhushan, 2023; Shirokov, 2020).

Banit et al. (2023) examined the dynamics of digital collaboration among virtual project teams in transdisciplinary educational settings. It highlighted the importance of establishing consistent communication channels, collaboration rules, and team spirit to improve efficiency and reduce misunderstandings. Key tools for virtual collaboration included team collaboration software (e.g., Miro, Microsoft SharePoint), project management tools (e.g., Asana, Trello), video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams), and idea management systems (e.g., Brightidea, IdeaScale). Social engineering was identified as a crucial element for influencing team behavior, shaping values, and improving team

performance without technical means. Recommendations included implementing 'smart feedback' technologies, regular team meetings, and developing team spirit through digital platforms. The study concludes that effective virtual team management requires clear communication structures, social engineering techniques, and adaptive collaboration tools to enhance team cohesion and performance.

Baker et al. (2024) explored the impact of remote work on team dynamics and management strategies using data from 300 employees and 50 managers across various industries. Results showed that remote work led to a shift toward asynchronous communication (e.g., emails, messaging apps), reducing immediate feedback and causing communication delays. Team cohesion initially declined but stabilized after implementing virtual team-building activities and regular check-ins. Regression analysis revealed that communication frequency ($\beta = 0.45$), leadership style ($\beta = 0.35$), and use of collaborative tools ($\beta = 0.30$) significantly influenced team cohesion. Factor analysis identified key drivers of cohesion, including technological readiness (loading = 0.80), work-life balance (loading = 0.77), and organizational support (loading = 0.76). Machine learning (Random Forest) showed high predictive accuracy ($R^2 = 0.85$) for team cohesion based on communication, leadership, and collaborative tool use. Network analysis highlighted moderate interconnectivity (average degree = 4.6, density = 0.34). The study concludes that effective leadership, structured communication, and supportive work environments are essential for sustaining team cohesion and productivity in remote settings.

Ongoing training also enables employees to stay up to date with the latest features and best practices. However, the implementation of new technologies must be accompanied by careful change management to prevent resistance and ensure successful adoption. Effective change management involves clearly communicating the benefits of new technologies, listening to employee concerns, and providing ongoing support throughout the transition (Bhushan, 2023; Momin & Ali, 2023; Shirokov, 2020).

Generation Y and Z workers expect organizations to utilize advanced technology to optimize work processes and enhance collaboration. The absence of modern tools may be perceived as a sign of stagnation or a lack of investment in employee well-being. The integration of intuitive and efficient technology is considered a key factor in productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, these workers place high value on professional development and expect organizations to offer regular learning opportunities. A lack of investment in training may be seen as a barrier to career growth, leading to demotivation.

As digital natives, these individuals quickly adapt to virtual environments and technological changes, but they expect a transparent and participatory approach. Resistance arises when changes are imposed without prior consultation or adequate training.

4.4. Challenges in Implementing Organizational Strategies to Mitigate Employee Disengagement

Although the proposed organizational strategies to reduce disengagement among Generation Y and Z workers show significant potential to enhance motivation and engagement, their implementation faces both organizational and sector-specific challenges.

Workplace wellness programs must be implemented on an ongoing basis rather than as a temporary response to crises. Likewise, organizational strategies to mitigate disengagement should be part of a holistic approach that includes other well-being initiatives and should not be viewed as an isolated solution. Thus, employee engagement programs require a serious commitment and substantial resources from organizations, something that not all are willing or able to provide. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on fostering innovative organizational commitment and adopting a personalized approach that considers the diverse needs and expectations of employees.

Successful wellness programs are those that are integrated into the business strategy and company culture, ensuring they are not just temporary responses to crises but ongoing initiatives (Davis et al., 2020). Programs should include physical, mental, and social wellness components rather than focusing solely on physical health. This holistic approach can lead to improved overall well-being and teamwork (Rajashekar & Jain, 2024).

Despite these efforts, engagement initiatives are often implemented in a superficial or sporadic manner, which can limit their long-term effectiveness. Moreover, the cultural and individual differences among employees must be taken into account when developing these initiatives to ensure that the strategies are adaptable and relevant to everyone. Additionally, such employee engagement initiatives require continuous effort and a genuine commitment from organizational leadership. Without strong leadership support and a sustained focus on employee well-being and development, any attempt to increase engagement may fail to achieve its full potential.

Engaging employees in the design and implementation of wellness programs can enhance their relevance and effectiveness. This participatory approach ensures that programs meet the diverse needs of the workforce (Hammerback et al., 2021; Keller et al., 2022). Programs should consider the diverse backgrounds and needs of employees. Diversity management can enhance employee engagement and innovation, contributing to the overall success of wellness initiatives (Elamin et al., 2024; Luu et al., 2019).

Elamin et al. (2024) explored the impact of diversity management on innovative work behavior (IWB) and the mediating role of employee engagement in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), based on data from 120 individuals in various service organizations. Findings confirmed that diversity management significantly influences employee engagement ($\beta = 0.769, p < 0.001$) and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.611, p < 0.001$). Employee engagement also positively affects innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.829, p < 0.001$), explaining 67.1% of the variance in IWB. Mediation analysis revealed that employee engagement fully mediates the relationship between diversity management and IWB, indicating that diversity management drives innovation by enhancing employee involvement. The study concludes that effective diversity management fosters a culture of innovation and suggests investing in diversity training, promoting inclusion, and encouraging collaboration to leverage the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Luu et al. (2019) examined how diversity-oriented HR practices influence employee work engagement through the development of a diversity climate using data from 1174 employees and 136 managers in Vietnam-based manufacturing firms. Findings showed that diversity-oriented HR practices positively influence work engagement ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.01$), with diversity climate acting as a significant mediator ($\beta = 0.37, p < 0.001$). Diversity-oriented leadership was found to weaken the positive relationship between diversity-oriented HR practices and work engagement ($\beta = -0.28, p < 0.01$), while age diversity ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.01$), gender diversity ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$), and expertise diversity ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$) strengthened the relationship. However, professional tenure diversity had no significant effect ($\beta = 0.09, p > 0.10$). The study concludes that fostering a diversity climate through targeted HR practices enhances work engagement, but the effectiveness can vary based on leadership style and group composition.

Another example was the study of C. C. Lee et al. (2022), which analyzed the impact of transformational leadership, work-life balance (WLB), autonomy, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) on employee motivation and retention across Generations X, Y, and Z using 489 survey responses collected via Amazon Mechanical Turk. The findings showed that transformational leadership was the only factor significantly affecting retention for all three generations. For Generation X, only WLB influenced intrinsic motivation, while for Generation Y, both transformational leadership and autonomy had a significant impact.

For Generation Z, intrinsic motivation was influenced by transformational leadership, CSR, and autonomy. Across all generations, intrinsic motivation was significantly linked to employee retention. The study highlights the importance of considering generational differences when designing employee motivation and retention strategies.

According to [Bocean et al. \(2023\)](#), work-life balance (WLB) policies significantly enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction. A balanced work-life scenario leads to higher satisfaction, increased motivation, and reduced turnover intentions. These authors analyzed the relationship between work-life balance (WLB), personal and professional satisfaction, motivation, and employee turnover among 452 Romanian employees. Results confirmed that work-life equilibrium positively impacts personal and professional satisfaction and enhances employee motivation, while disequilibrium increases dissatisfaction and turnover intention. Achieving WLB improved employee engagement, commitment, and performance. Conversely, an imbalance led to increased stress, lower satisfaction, and a higher tendency to leave the organization. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated WLB challenges due to increased remote work and blurred boundaries between work and personal life. However, organizational support and flexible work arrangements positively influenced WLB. The study emphasizes the need for employers to adopt strategies promoting work-life balance to boost employee retention and satisfaction.

Moreover, flexible work is frequently cited as an effective solution to enhance engagement, particularly among Generation Y and Z workers, who value autonomy and work-life balance. However, sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, education, and essential services face structural constraints that hinder the adoption of remote or flexible work models. Healthcare professionals, for instance, depend on direct interaction with patients, while industrial workers are required to operate specialized machinery in physical locations. To address these limitations, organizations may adopt alternative solutions that promote greater flexibility and responsiveness to workers' needs. One possible approach is the implementation of rotating shift schedules, allowing different shifts to be organized in a way that offers increased flexibility within operational constraints. Additionally, the adoption of hybrid work models may be feasible for administrative roles in sectors requiring partial physical presence, providing a balance between remote and on-site work. Another strategy involves the flexibilization of breaks and working hours, granting workers greater autonomy within regulatory and organizational boundaries, thereby supporting the reconciliation of professional and personal life.

Likewise, the implementation of well-being programs, such as psychological support, improved working conditions, and stress reduction initiatives, may face barriers related to costs, infrastructure, and organizational resistance. Small and medium-sized enterprises, for instance, may lack the budget to offer services such as psychological counseling or adequate ergonomic spaces. To overcome these limitations, certain strategies can be adopted to promote employee well-being and satisfaction. One approach involves establishing partnerships with health and wellness institutions, enabling access to specialized external support. In addition, the implementation of low-cost solutions, such as mindfulness programs and the encouragement of restorative breaks, may contribute to stress reduction and improved work-life balance. Furthermore, the promotion of social well-being initiatives, including collective activities that strengthen interpersonal connections among workers, can foster a more cohesive and motivating organizational environment.

A recognition culture plays a key role in maintaining employee engagement, particularly among Generation Y and Z workers, who value continuous feedback and transparency in career progression. However, some organizations still operate under traditional management models, in which performance appreciation is limited to annual appraisal cycles and daily efforts often go unnoticed. To overcome this barrier, companies may implement

measures that strengthen the culture of recognition within the organization. One effective strategy involves training leaders to promote more frequent recognition, incorporating positive feedback as a standardized organizational practice. In parallel, the creation of informal recognition mechanisms, such as public praise and symbolic reward systems, can contribute to enhancing motivation and employee involvement. Moreover, the use of digital tools can streamline this process through interactive platforms that highlight both individual and collective performance, making recognition more accessible and integrated into the organizational daily routine.

The implementation of the proposed organizational strategies to reduce disengagement requires an adaptive approach, taking into account the sectoral and structural constraints of each organization. By acknowledging and anticipating the challenges associated with the adoption of such measures, it becomes possible to design more realistic and effective solutions, aligned with the specific characteristics of different work environments.

5. Final Considerations

This article discusses worker disengagement in the workplace, particularly among younger generations (Generation Y and Z). This behavior has evolved as employees' expectations of work and the organizational environment change, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing its causes and consequences.

Several factors contribute to worker disengagement and its growing prevalence. Among the main factors identified, highlighted in the literature, the disengagement of Generation Y and Z workers is influenced by a combination of organizational, cultural, and structural aspects that directly affect their motivation and commitment.

The job demand factors from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model are the misalignment of workplace well-being policies, where excessive workloads and inflexible work arrangements negatively impact job satisfaction. Another factor is the rapid digitization of the labor market and the expansion of remote work, which while offering flexibility, also introduces challenges such as isolation and decreased organizational commitment. Additionally, economic insecurity and job instability contribute to disengagement, with Generation Y seeking stable employment opportunities, while Generation Z often explores flexible and independent work models. Frequent organizational changes, such as mergers or restructuring, also create uncertainty, impacting engagement levels.

The job resources factors, also according to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, are inadequate leadership, particularly the absence of participative management and recognition, which contributes significantly to emotional detachment. Similarly, ineffective communication within organizations creates uncertainty and frustration, exacerbating disengagement. Dissatisfaction with performance evaluation and reward systems, particularly when perceived as unfair or lacking transparency, diminishes motivation and fosters disengagement. Additionally, the scarcity of professional development opportunities, career progression, and continuous training leads to stagnation and reduced engagement, pushing workers to seek alternative opportunities.

Psychological factors, confirmed by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), show that a lack of autonomy in decision-making processes also generates frustration, as younger workers expect environments that value their input and independence. Workplace injustice, inequality, and the absence of genuine diversity and inclusion initiatives further alienate these generations, who place high value on fairness and transparency in corporate cultures. Moreover, a lack of alignment between personal values and organizational culture reinforces emotional detachment, particularly when sustainability and social responsibility practices are not prioritized. A hostile or toxic work environment, characterized by harass-

ment or bullying, further exacerbates disengagement, as these generations demonstrate lower tolerance for dysfunctional corporate cultures.

Addressing these factors requires organizations to implement strategies that enhance employee satisfaction, foster a positive work environment, and ensure alignment with the evolving expectations of Generation Y and Z workers.

Given the unique characteristics and motivations of younger generations (Y and Z), known for their technological proficiency and expectations of an inclusive and diverse work environment, among other characteristics, organizations must implement effective strategies to mitigate employee disengagement. This article suggests several approaches, including the implementation of physical and mental well-being programs, such as workplace exercise sessions, yoga and meditation classes, incentives for physical activity, and the creation of well-designed rest areas. Additionally, promoting healthy lifestyle campaigns and adopting ergonomically optimized work environments can contribute to enhanced employee well-being. Psychological support services and the normalization of mental health discussions are also recommended, with initiatives such as access to counseling services and the establishment of an organizational culture that prioritizes emotional well-being. Furthermore, organizations should provide continuous learning opportunities, mentoring and coaching programs, and incentives for obtaining professional certifications. The implementation of structured and transparent recognition and reward systems can further enhance employee motivation and commitment. Moreover, open and transparent communication, facilitated through regular meetings, continuous feedback systems, and interactive digital tools, strengthens trust and aligns organizational objectives with employee expectations. The adoption of flexible work policies, including remote work arrangements and adaptable schedules, as well as investments in technology and collaboration tools, addresses the preferences of Generations Y and Z for greater autonomy and work-life balance. However, these initiatives must be supported by robust change management frameworks to ensure their effective and sustained implementation. Therefore, the adoption of strategic, data-driven engagement initiatives, combined with a genuine organizational commitment, can mitigate the effects of disengagement and foster a more dynamic, innovative, and resilient work environment for younger generations.

Therefore, this research provides guidance for organizations and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in this field, offering new perspectives and significant insights for theory, practice, and society as a whole.

This study offers theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions. From a theoretical perspective, it advances the understanding of disengagement factors by introducing an integrated model that connects job demand factors and job resource factors, as explained by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, and psychological factors, as explained by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This integrated framework provides a nuanced explanation of the reasons behind certain patterns of disengagement, particularly among younger workers (Generations Y and Z), offering a more comprehensive understanding of how structural and psychological elements interact to influence motivation and engagement.

In terms of practical contribution, the findings translate into actionable strategies for organizations to enhance motivation and engagement among Generation Y and Z workers. By aligning organizational practices with the specific motivators of these generations, the study provides a roadmap for mitigating disengagement. Identifying the signs of disengagement and understanding the factors contributing to this phenomenon can help organizations implement effective strategies preventively and proactively, fostering employee engagement and enhancing productivity. In doing so, organizations can avoid or mitigate silent employee disengagement.

From a methodological perspective, the structured approach used to extract and categorize the factors reinforces the study's rigor and replicability. The triangulation of data from multiple sources and validation through peer-reviewed literature further strengthen the reliability and validity of the findings, ensuring that the results are both theoretically grounded and practically applicable.

Limitations and Future Research

However, some limitations can be identified in this study. One of the main constraints is the emphasis placed on younger generations, such as Generation Y and Z, which limits a more in-depth analysis of workers from other age groups and generations, including Generation X and Baby Boomers. Additionally, the strategies identified may require adaptation to specific contexts, as trends and external factors highlighted in the analysis are subject to change over time, potentially affecting the validity and relevance of the proposed strategies.

In addition, other methodological limitations must be acknowledged in the present study. The literature selection was restricted to articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, which may have led to the exclusion of relevant studies published in other sources. Furthermore, the exclusion of articles not published in English may have reduced the diversity of international perspectives on workplace disengagement, limiting the understanding of cultural and contextual nuances of the phenomenon. It is also important to note that this study did not include primary data, relying exclusively on secondary sources. Therefore, future empirical validation is essential and could be conducted through alternative methodologies, such as case studies, longitudinal research, surveys, interviews, or controlled experiments, in order to deepen and complement the findings of this investigation.

These limitations highlight the need for more comprehensive and in-depth studies to achieve a more complete understanding of disengagement. Several proposals for future research can be considered to address this gap. One approach would be to delve deeper into various aspects associated with the subject, such as including workers from different age groups and cultural backgrounds, to better understand how disengagement manifests across diverse populations and work environments.

Additionally, conducting comparative studies between organizations that have implemented strategies to mitigate disengagement and those that have not would allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of these approaches and the identification of best practices.

Another proposal is the implementation of organizational strategies explored through case studies in organizations from different sectors. This would allow for a better understanding of how management practices aimed at mitigating disengagement can be adapted to specific contexts, as well as the challenges that arise during their application in distinct organizational settings.

Similarly, exploring the impact of cultural and organizational diversity is essential, as disengagement may manifest differently across sectors and regions. International collaboration and data sharing could further contribute to a clearer global picture of disengagement.

Longitudinal research would be another way of tracking the evolution of disengagement over time, helping to identify possible trends or changes in its causes and consequences within the workplace, as well as how organizational policies impact employee engagement levels.

Quantitative and qualitative surveys, through questionnaires and/or interviews with Generation Y and Z workers, could be conducted to understand their perceptions of engagement and disengagement, allowing for the empirical validation of the factors identified in this study.

Controlled experiments testing the organizational mitigation strategies identified in this study could assess their effectiveness in reducing disengagement, increasing engagement and motivation, and improving productivity.

Finally, for a more comprehensive understanding of workplace disengagement, future research should integrate interdisciplinary approaches that combine, for example, organizational psychology, sociology, and economics. Such an approach may offer deeper insight into the relationship between organizational culture, working conditions, and work-related motivation and satisfaction.

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