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## ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING MILLENNIAL AND GEN Z EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the factors influencing the engagement of Millennial and Generation Z employees within the complex and multicultural context of the global work environment. Employing a quantitative approach with a survey method, data were collected from 400 respondents working in multinational organizations with operations across various countries. Multiple regression analysis revealed that Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Technology and Virtual Collaboration, and Global Meaning and Impact of Work significantly affect Global Employee Engagement (Adjusted R Square =0.781,  $F(6,393)=238.472$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Among these factors, Adaptive Global Leadership ( $\beta = 0.321$ ) had the strongest influence, followed by Global Inclusive Culture ( $\beta = 0.268$ ) and Global Meaning and Impact of Work ( $\beta = 0.230$ ). These findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach in global talent management that considers various aspects of the work experience to enhance the engagement of young employees. This research provides valuable insights and evidence-based recommendations for multinational organizations in designing more effective strategies to foster the engagement of Millennials and Generation Z, ultimately contributing to sustainable competitive advantage

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and digital disruption, the international business landscape is undergoing a fundamental transformation, especially in the dynamics of human resources. The dominance of the Millennial Generation (born around 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born around 1997-2012) as the majority of the global workforce presents new imperatives for the often complex and multicultural work environment of multinational organizations. These two generations, having grown up in an era of information and seamless connectivity, bring with them a significantly different set of values, aspirations and work preferences than

previous generations. The success of global organizations depends not only on their ability to recruit talent from these two generations, but also on their ability to effectively nurture their engagement in the workplace.

Employee engagement, defined as the level of commitment and enthusiasm employees have for their work and organization (Kahn, 1990), has been widely recognized as a key driver of organizational performance, innovation, and talent retention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Engaged employees show high levels of energy and dedication to their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002), which is positively correlated with productivity, customer satisfaction, and organizational profitability. However, understanding and improving Millennial and Gen Z employee engagement in the context of the global work environment requires a deep understanding of the specific factors that influence them, which are often influenced by generational characteristics and the unique challenges of the global work environment.

Several relevant theories can be used to analyze the factors that influence employee engagement of these two generations. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, for example, highlights that individuals are motivated to meet different levels of needs, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization. For Millennials and Gen Z, the need for recognition, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for personal growth and development (which are associated with higher levels of needs) are often significant drivers of engagement. They seek jobs that not only provide decent compensation but also offer meaning and the opportunity to contribute to a larger purpose.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is also relevant, which states that individuals have basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and connectedness. A global work environment that provides Millennial and Gen Z employees with autonomy in their work, the opportunity to develop skills and feel competent, as well as a sense of connection to co-workers and organizational goals, is likely to increase their engagement. Work flexibility, learning and development opportunities, and an inclusive and collaborative company culture can fulfill these psychological needs.

In addition, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) explains that the relationship between employees and organizations is based on an exchange of resources. When employees feel that the organization provides fair support, recognition and opportunities, they tend to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement and commitment. In a global context, this means organizations need to ensure that their human resource management practices are fair and consistent across different geographical locations, while keeping in mind local cultural nuances.

In a global work environment, these factors interact with additional complexity. Cultural differences can affect the interpretation and prioritization of work values (Hofstede, 2001). Communication challenges across cultures and time zones can affect a sense of connectedness and team collaboration (Earley & Ang, 2003). The need to adapt to diverse work practices and the demands of global mobility can affect employees' work-life balance and stress levels. In addition, the role of technology in facilitating global communication and collaboration also affects how Millennial and Gen Z employees interact and feel engaged in their work.

The lack of a deep and theory-based understanding of the specific factors that significantly

influence Millennial and Gen Z employee engagement in the unique context of the global work environment can result in significant negative consequences for organizations. High turnover rates, decreased productivity and innovation, difficulty in attracting top talent, and potential loss of reputation as an employer of choice are some of the possible risks. Therefore, research that specifically analyzes the factors that directly and significantly influence Millennial and Gen Z employee engagement in a global work environment, with a strong theoretical foundation, is very important. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights and evidence-based recommendations for global organizations in designing more effective and relevant talent management strategies, creating work environments that actively encourage the engagement of these two generations, and ultimately, achieving sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic and challenging global marketplace.

Based on the foregoing, the author would like to conduct a study, entitled "Analysis of Factors Affecting Millennial and Gen Z Generation Employee Engagement in the Global Work Environment".

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Global Employee Engagement (Y)***

Employee engagement is conceptually defined as a positive, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor (high levels of energy and mental endurance while working), dedication (a sense of enthusiasm, significance, inspiration, pride, and challenge toward work), and absorption (full concentration and feeling engrossed while working, with the perception of time passing quickly) (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

### ***Global Career Development (X1)***

Global career development goes beyond mere promotion or increased responsibility in the current geographic location. Theoretically, it involves a series of processes and opportunities designed to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and experience in an international context. These include career trajectories that enable cross-border mobility, short- or long-term international assignments, participation in strategic global projects, opportunities to develop leadership competencies with a global perspective, and mentoring and coaching programs from leaders with extensive international experience. Boundaryless Career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and Protean Career (Hall, 1976) theories are relevant here, which emphasize that individuals, especially the younger generation, seek career paths that are flexible, self-directed, and often cross organizational and geographical boundaries.

### ***Global Work Flexibility (X2)***

Global work flexibility goes beyond flexible working arrangements in a single location. Theoretically, it encompasses the ability of employees to organize aspects of their work (time, place, manner) taking into account the demands and opportunities that arise from working in an international context. The Work-Life Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) are relevant here. Global flexibility can help employees manage the boundary between their work and personal lives, especially when working with different time zones or traveling internationally. The autonomy provided by flexibility can also increase intrinsic motivation and a sense of responsibility towards work.

***Global Inclusive Culture (X3)***

A globally inclusive culture goes beyond mere representation of demographic diversity. Theoretically, it creates an environment where all individuals, regardless of cultural background, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, feel valued, respected, supported, and have a strong sense of belonging within the global organization. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Belongingness Hypothesis (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) are relevant here. When employees feel inclusive, their social identity is valued, and the basic need to feel accepted is met, leading to higher engagement.

***Adaptive Global Leadership (X4)***

Adaptive Global Leadership goes beyond the ability to lead within a single cultural context. Theoretically, it refers to a leader's capacity to effectively lead and motivate culturally, geographically, and temporally diverse individuals and teams. It involves behavioral flexibility, a deep understanding of differences in cultural values and norms, the ability to build trust across borders, and expertise in facilitating effective communication and collaboration in an often ambiguous and complex global environment.

***Global Technology and Virtual Collaboration (X5)***

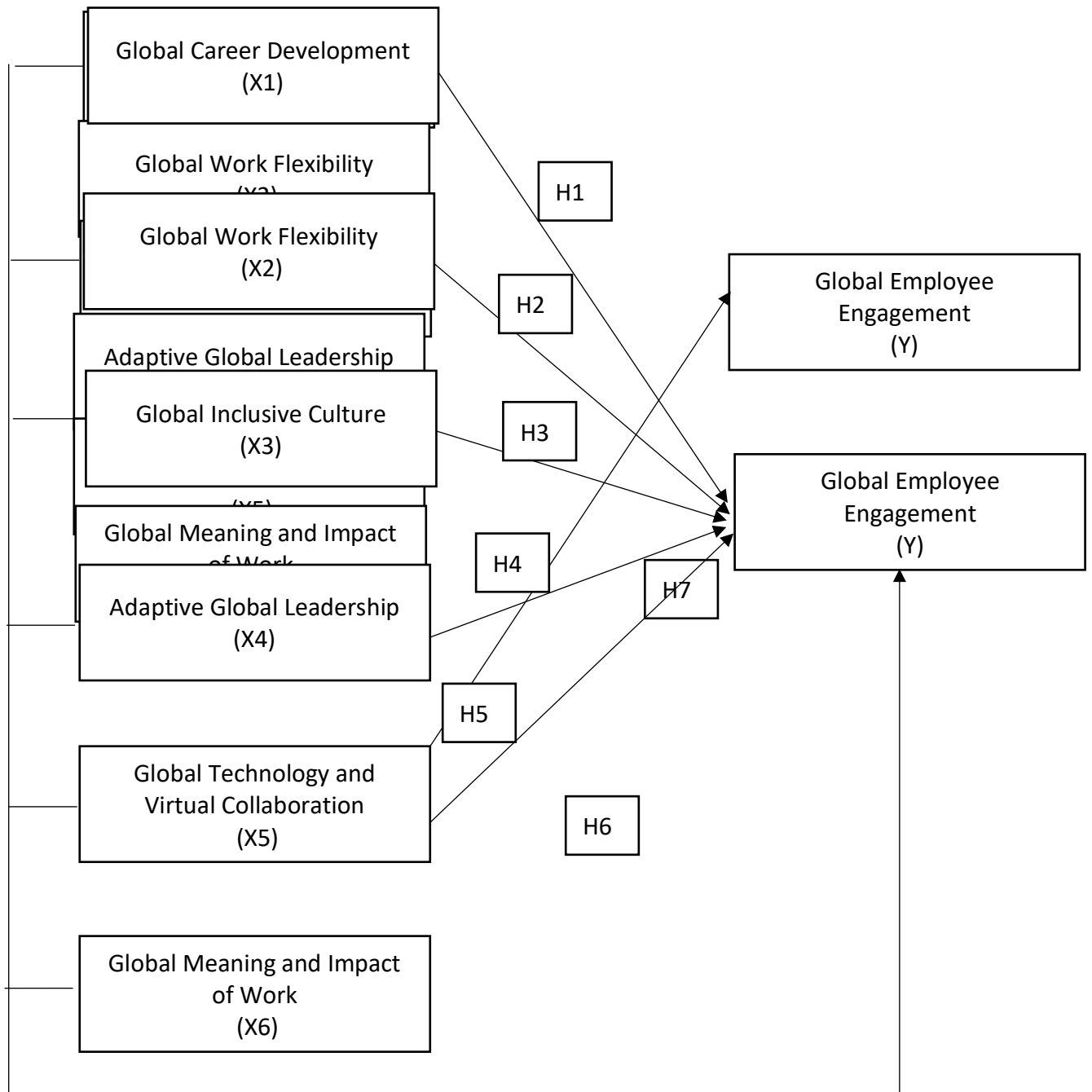
Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration refers to the digital infrastructure, communication tools, and software platforms that enable individuals and teams to work together effectively across geographic boundaries and time zones. It involves more than just the availability of technologies; it also includes how they are implemented, adopted, and used to facilitate meaningful interactions, build relationships, and achieve organizational goals in a global context. Daft and Lengel's (1986) Media Richness Theory: This theory states that communication effectiveness depends on the match between media richness (the amount of information that can be conveyed through a medium) and the complexity of the task or message. In global teams, the selection of appropriate virtual communication tools (e.g., email for routine information, video conferencing for complex discussions) is critical to avoid miscommunication and improve collaboration effectiveness.

***Global Meaning and Impact of Work (X6)***

Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale refers to employees' perception that their work contributes to the larger goals of the organization in an international context and has positive consequences that transcend local boundaries. It involves a sense of purpose, significance, and contribution to relevant global issues. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943): At the self-actualization level, individuals seek work that provides a sense of accomplishment, personal growth, and significant contribution to something larger than themselves. Jobs with global meaning and impact can fulfill this need.

Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory: Intrinsic motivation, which is related to a sense of interest, pleasure and meaning in work, is a powerful driver of engagement. When employees feel that their work aligns with their personal values and makes a meaningful contribution on a global scale, their intrinsic motivation increases.

## Conceptual Framework



## RESEARCH METHOD

### 1. Research Approach

This research will use a quantitative approach with a survey method. The quantitative

approach was chosen because it allows to collect data from a large sample and statistically analyze the relationship between the variables under study. The survey method will be used to collect data through structured questionnaires from Millennial and Gen Z employees working in multinational organizations with global operations.

## 2. Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2006: 72), "Population is a subject or object with certain characteristics that researchers identify to study it in a certain area and draw conclusions from it. The target population of this study are employees who belong to the Millennial Generation (born around 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born around 1997-2012) and currently work in multinational organizations with operations in at least two or more countries.

According to Sugiyono (2006: 73) selection is part of the size and characteristics of the population. The sampling techniques to be used are purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The sample will be determined using the Slovin formula to ensure adequate representation of the population. Given the global nature of the research, the target sample size will be strived to reach a minimum of 400 respondents to enable robust statistical analysis.

## 3. Data Collection Technique

When collecting data, primary data methods and questionnaires should be used.

## 4. Instrument Test

Before distributing questionnaires, interviews and documentation studies, researchers checked their validity and reliability.

## 5. Data Analysis Method

In this study, the data analysis method is quantitative data analysis method.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## a. Research Result

This study uses a quantitative data analysis model to determine the effect of independent variables (Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration, and the Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale) on the dependent variable (global employee engagement). The results of the study can be seen using the SPSS Statistics 25.0 for Windows test. The main materials of this research are information and statements received from respondents, which allow obtaining the information necessary for the analysis of the research problem to be developed. The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire.

The majority of respondents were Millennials (52.5%), with slightly less than half being Generation Z (47.5%). The gender distribution shows the dominance of men (57.5%) over women (42.5%). Most respondents have a Bachelor's degree (70.0%), followed by Master's degree (25.0%). More than a third of the respondents (37.5%) had worked in their current organization for less than two years, while 32.5% worked between 2 to 5 years, and 30.0% more than 5 years. In terms of current geographical location, the largest proportion of respondents are in Southeast Asia (37.5%), followed by Europe (25.0%) and North America (20.0%). The majority of respondents (45.0%) are involved in organizational operations in 2



to 3 countries.

The results of multiple regression analysis show that simultaneously, all six independent variables (Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration, and Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale) significantly predict Global Employee Engagement ( $F(6, 393) = 238.472, p < 0.001$ ). The model explained 78.5% of the variance in Global Employee Engagement (Adjusted R Square = 0.781).

Individually, all independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of Global Employee Engagement ( $p < 0.001$  for all predictors). The standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficient indicates the relative strength of each predictor. Adaptive Global Leadership had the strongest influence ( $\beta = 0.321$ ), followed by Global Inclusive Culture ( $\beta = 0.268$ ), Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale ( $\beta = 0.230$ ), Global Career Development ( $\beta = 0.196$ ), Global Work Flexibility ( $\beta = 0.135$ ), and Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration ( $\beta = 0.105$ ). The positive regression coefficients for all predictors indicate that an increase in each independent variable is significantly associated with an increase in Global Employee Engagement.

Based on the ANOVA output, the F-statistic value for this regression model is 110.087 with degrees of freedom (df) for regression of 6 and for residuals of 180. The significance value (Sig.) obtained is 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This significance value is well below the 0.05 threshold, which indicates that simultaneously or jointly, all six independent variables (Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration, and Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale) have a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable, Global Employee Engagement. In other words, the regression model is overall feasible to explain the variation in global employee engagement based on the factors studied.

The t test is conducted to test the partial effect of each independent variable on Global Employee Engagement, by controlling for the influence of other independent variables in the model.

- Global Career Development: The t-statistic value for Global Career Development is 6.379 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Global Career Development has a positive and statistically significant effect on Global Employee Engagement. Every one unit increase on the Global Career Development scale is predicted to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.185 units (based on coefficient B), assuming other variables are constant.
- Global Work Flexibility: The t-statistic value for Global Work Flexibility is 4.920 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Global Work Flexibility has a positive and statistically significant influence on Global Employee Engagement. Each one unit increase on the Global Work Flexibility scale is predicted to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.123 units, assuming other variables are constant.
- Global Inclusive Culture: The t-statistic value for Global Inclusive Culture is 7.758 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Global Inclusive Culture has a positive and statistically significant influence on Global Employee Engagement. Every one unit increase on the Global Inclusive Culture scale is predicted

to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.256 units, assuming other variables are constant.

- Adaptive Global Leadership: The t-statistic value for Adaptive Global Leadership is 8.432 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Adaptive Global Leadership has a positive and statistically significant influence on Global Employee Engagement. Each one unit increase on the Adaptive Global Leadership scale is predicted to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.312 units, assuming other variables are constant.
- Technology and Global Virtual Collaboration: The t-statistic value for Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration is 4.409 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration has a positive and statistically significant influence on Global Employee Engagement. Every one unit increase on the Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration scale is predicted to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.097 units, assuming other variables are constant.
- Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale: The t-statistic value for Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale is 7.267 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that partially, Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale has a positive and statistically significant influence on Global Employee Engagement. Each one unit increase on the Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale scale is predicted to increase Global Employee Engagement by 0.218 units, assuming other variables are constant.

Based on the Model Summary output, the R-squared ( $R^2$ ) value is 0.785. This means that about 78.5% of the variance in Global Employee Engagement can be explained simultaneously by the six independent variables studied (Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration, and Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale). The remaining ( $100\% - 78.5\% = 21.5\%$ ) variance in Global Employee Engagement is influenced by other factors not included in this research model. The Adjusted R-squared value of 0.781 provides a more conservative estimate of the variance explained, considering the number of predictors in the model and the sample size.

#### **b. Discussion**

This research aims to analyze the factors that significantly influence the level of employee engagement of Millennials and Generation Z in the context of an increasingly dynamic and complex global work environment. Through multiple regression analysis of data collected from 400 respondents working in various multinational organizations, this study successfully identified and quantified the unique contribution of six independent variables to Global Employee Engagement. Key findings show that collectively, Global Career Development, Global Work Flexibility, Global Inclusive Culture, Adaptive Global Leadership, Global Virtual Technology and Collaboration, and Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale, significantly predict variance in engagement by 78.5%. The implications of these findings have profound theoretical and practical relevance for understanding and managing young talent in the global work arena.



1) Adaptive Global Leadership: Key Pillars of Engagement

The results consistently ranked Adaptive Global Leadership as the strongest predictor of Global Employee Engagement. The significant beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.321$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) underscores the crucial role of leaders in navigating cross-cultural and geographic complexities. In a context where Millennials and Gen Z interact with diverse teams and face virtual communication challenges, leaders' ability to demonstrate cultural intelligence, build trust remotely, provide clear direction taking into account different perspectives, and inspire collaboration across borders becomes the foundation of engagement. These findings align with Transformational Leadership Theory and Cultural Intelligence Theory, which emphasize that effective leaders in a global context are able to create an inclusive vision, provide individualized support that is sensitive to cultural differences, and stimulate innovation through a deep understanding of multicultural dynamics. Organizational failure to develop leaders with adaptive global competencies has the potential to hinder engagement and increase the risk of losing young talent who seek a supportive leadership environment and understand the complexities of their global work.

2) Building a Foundation of Engagement Through a Globally Inclusive Culture

The Global Inclusive Culture variable also proved to be a significant driver of engagement ( $\beta = 0.268$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings confirm the importance of Social Identity Theory and the Ownership Hypothesis in the context of global organizations. Millennials and Gen Z, as a generation that grew up in the era of globalization and has a high awareness of diversity and equality issues, place great value on a work environment where they feel accepted, respected, and valued for their unique backgrounds. An inclusive culture reflected in fair policies, open communication practices, representation of diversity in leadership, and celebration of cultural differences actively fosters a strong sense of belonging and identification with the global organization. Conversely, organizations that fail to create an inclusive environment risk alienating young employees, reducing their sense of attachment, and ultimately affecting productivity and retention.

3) Bringing Purpose to Life Through the Meaning and Impact of Global Work

The significant contribution of Meaning and Impact of Work on a Global Scale to Global Employee Engagement ( $\beta = 0.230$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) underscores the strong intrinsic motivation among Millennials and Gen Z. In line with Maslow's Need Theory and Self-Determination Theory, these generations seek work not only for financial stability, but also for personal fulfillment through meaningful contributions to larger goals, especially in the context of global issues such as sustainability, cross-border innovation, and social impact. Organizations that effectively communicate how individual work contributes to the company's global mission and provide opportunities to engage in projects that have a positive impact will significantly increase young employees' sense of attachment and engagement. Deficiencies in articulating the meaning and impact of work on a global scale can lead to disengagement and a sense of lack of purpose among young employees..

4) Facilitating Growth Through Global Career Development

The positive and significant effect of Global Career Development on Global Employee

Engagement ( $\beta = 0.196$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms the relevance of Borderless Career Theory and Protean Career Theory. Millennials and Gen Z have high expectations of career growth and seek opportunities that allow them to develop skills, gain international experience, and move forward on a challenging and meaningful career trajectory. In a global context, this means organizations need to provide transparent career paths with opportunities for international assignments, participation in cross-cultural projects, and development of global leadership competencies. The absence of clear and attractive global career development opportunities can be a motivating factor for young employees to seek employment in other organizations that better accommodate their career aspirations..

5) Empowering Autonomy Through Global Work Flexibility

Global Work Flexibility also proved to be a significant driver of engagement ( $\beta = 0.135$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting the tenets of Social Exchange Theory and Work-Life Boundary Theory. The ability to have control over the time, place, and manner of work, especially in the context of work demands across time zones and cultures, gives Millennials and Gen Z a sense of autonomy and helps them integrate work and personal life effectively. Organizations that adopt supportive global remote working policies, flexible working hours, and hybrid working options that consider the needs of international collaboration will be better able to build engagement with young employees who value balance and flexibility. Lack of flexibility can lead to stress and decreased engagement, especially for a generation that has grown up with expectations of more adaptive work arrangements..

6) Connecting the World Through Technology and Global Virtual Collaboration

Finally, the role of Technology and Global Virtual Collaboration in influencing Global Employee Engagement ( $\beta = 0.105$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) underscores the importance of effective infrastructure and tools in facilitating interactions within global teams. For Millennials and Gen Z, who are digital natives, the availability of intuitive collaboration platforms, seamless communication tools, and adequate technological support for working across geographical boundaries is critical to building a sense of connection with international coworkers and feeling engaged in global projects. Organizations that fail to provide adequate technology infrastructure and do not support effective virtual collaboration risk creating communication barriers and reducing young employees' sense of engagement in global teams..

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that overall, this study successfully identified and confirmed the important role of various factors in influencing Millennial and Gen Z employee engagement in the global work environment. The findings underscore that organizations that want to successfully attract, engage and retain young talent in the era of globalization need to adopt a holistic approach that considers aspects of leadership, culture, job meaning, career opportunities, flexibility and technology. By understanding and responding to the unique needs and expectations of this generation in a global context, organizations can create a more attractive, productive and sustainable work

environment.

Based on the conclusions, the researcher's advice is that the success of multinational organizations in the global era depends heavily on their ability to attract, engage and retain the best talent from different generations. This research clearly shows that Millennial and Gen Z employee engagement in a global context is influenced by a series of interrelated factors, ranging from adaptive leadership to the availability of global career opportunities and work flexibility..

Organizations that proactively adopt the suggestions outlined above, focusing on developing inclusive global leaders, building a culture that values diversity, articulating the meaning and impact of work, providing clear global career paths, offering employee-centric work flexibility, and optimizing the use of technology for virtual collaboration, will be better positioned to create an engaging and empowering work environment for their young employees on a global scale.

Future research can continue to explore the complexities of global employee engagement by considering more in-depth contextual factors and using diverse research methodologies to gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding. However, the findings of this study provide a solid foundation for organizations to take concrete actions to improve the engagement of Millennials and Gen Z, who are valuable assets in the ever-evolving global business landscape. By investing in these pillars of engagement, organizations will not only improve retention and productivity, but also build a stronger, innovative and sustainable global work culture.

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