Factors Influencing Workplace Well-Being Among Generation Z Employees: A Scoping Review Protocol

Zamralita, Reza Fahlevi, Anastasia Putri Leleng Wilis
Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia

Research on Generation Z at work has expanded rapidly since the cohort began entering the labor force around 2015, yet the evidence base remains fragmented in ways that limit its usefulness for organizations and human resource management (HRM). Birth-year definitions of the cohort are inconsistent, workplace well-being is operationalized through heterogeneous constructs and instruments, and findings are dispersed across designs, sectors, and countries. This article presents the protocol for a scoping review that will map the factors influencing workplace well-being among Generation Z employees and chart how the cohort and the well-being construct are defined and measured across the literature. Following the framework of Arksey and O'Malley as advanced by Levac et al. and by Joanna Briggs Institute guidance, and reporting in accordance with PRISMA-ScR, six databases (PsycINFO, Web of Science, Scopus, MEDLINE, PubMed, and ScienceDirect) will be searched for English-language empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. Workplace well-being is bounded in advance as four construct families: hedonic, eudaimonic, work engagement, and work-related ill-being. Two reviewers will screen and chart records independently. Reported factors will first be classified with a four-level taxonomy (individual, job, organizational, and contextual) grounded in job demands–resources and conservation of resources theory; a separate inductive thematic analysis will examine unclassifiable factors and stated definitions of workplace well-being. As a protocol, this article reports no empirical findings; the review questions, eligibility criteria, search strategy, screening and charting procedures, and synthesis plan are specified in advance of execution. Implications for HRM and directions for future syntheses are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Employees perform best when they experience positive psychological well-being, which shapes both individual performance and broader organizational outcomes. As organizations compete in volatile and fast-changing markets, workforce well-being has shifted from a welfare concern to a strategic priority for human resource management (HRM). Within this workforce, Generation Z has moved from a prospective to an actual

Author info: Correspondence should be sent to Zamralita Zamralita,
Email: zamralita@fpsi.untar.ac.id contact
North American Journal of Psychology, 2026, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2742-2759
© *NAJP* https://doi.org/10.65696/001c.174640

presence. On the widely used Pew Research Center definition, Generation Z comprises those born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), meaning its earliest members began entering paid employment around 2015 and now form a growing share of entry-level and early-career staff. The cohort is projected to constitute close to a third of some national workforces by 2030, and its members are commonly described as digital natives whose expectations of work differ from those of preceding generations (Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021; Vieira et al., 2024).

Research on Generation Z at work has expanded quickly alongside this demographic shift, but the evidence base is fragmented in ways that limit its usefulness. Three problems are apparent: inconsistent definition of the cohort, heterogeneous operationalization of the outcome, and dispersion of findings across designs, sectors, and countries. Each is considered in turn below.

Generation Z in the Workplace

The most basic problem is definitional. Although Pew's 1997–2012 boundary is frequently cited (Dimock, 2019; Vieira et al., 2024), primary studies draw cohort boundaries anywhere from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. Katsaros (2024), for instance, defines the cohort as those born between 1995 and 2012, and many studies assert a Generation Z label without stating any birth-year range at all. Because generational cohorts are defined by shared formative context rather than by a fixed biological marker, and because most generational research has been conducted in Western settings and criticized for describing other regions inaccurately (Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021), samples labeled "Generation Z" are not always comparable. A finding reported for the cohort in one study may concern a materially different age band, or a differently constituted population, in another. This is not a trivial reporting lapse; it bears directly on whether accumulated findings describe the same people.

Conceptualizing Workplace Well-Being

A second problem concerns the outcome itself. Workplace well-being is operationalized through heterogeneous constructs and instruments. Some studies measure well-being as such, drawing on hedonic (subjective) or eudaimonic (psychological) traditions (Ryff, 2023); others substitute job satisfaction, work engagement, or reversed negative indicators such as burnout and work-related distress, and treat these as interchangeable proxies. Reviews of Generation Z work attitudes routinely fold job satisfaction, engagement, motivation, and mental health into a single loosely bounded notion of well-being (Waworuntu et al., 2022), and empirical work reflects the same spread. Studies variously operationalize the construct as workplace happiness comprising engagement, satisfaction, and commitment (Katsaros, 2024), as work engagement and its antecedents

(Rachmadini & Riyanto, 2020), as burnout (Putri & Dudija, 2024), and as technology-related strain in digital work (Marsh et al., 2024). Large comparative surveys report that Generation Z shows lower job satisfaction than older cohorts while simultaneously placing heavier weight on purpose, flexibility, and mental-health provision (Nichols & Smith, 2025). The method therefore fixes the boundaries of the construct before any record is screened, while still charting how each included study defines and measures it.

Dispersion Across Designs, Sectors, and Countries

A third problem is dispersion. Evidence on Generation Z employees is spread across quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods designs; across sectors ranging from hospitality and retail to telecommunications and the creative industries; and across many countries, with a substantial share appearing outside the psychology literature in management, business, and hospitality journals (Katsaros, 2024; Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021; Vieira et al., 2024). The geographic center of gravity is notably Asian, with a large volume of recent work from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and elsewhere alongside studies from Europe (Katsaros, 2024; Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021; Zahra et al., 2025). Studies also vary in whether they sample Generation Z exclusively or embed the cohort within a mixed-generation sample and report disaggregated results (Nichols & Smith, 2025; Waworuntu et al., 2022). This dispersion makes it difficult to see, at a glance, which factors have been examined, in which settings, and with what consistency.

Previous Reviews and the Evidence Gap

Existing reviews do not fully resolve these problems, because they generally ask a different question. Some focus on generational differences in work values and expectations, or on the attraction and retention of Generation Z talent through employer branding (Vieira et al., 2024); others examine well-being or work–life balance across mixed generational groups (Waworuntu et al., 2022). A recent scoping review offers a broad overview of Generation Z in the workplace across characteristics, expectations, and challenges (Zahra et al., 2025), but it does not focus specifically on well-being as an outcome, nor does it systematically chart how well-being is defined and measured or how reported factors map onto an established demands-and-resources taxonomy. No review, to the authors' knowledge, has mapped the factors influencing workplace well-being specifically among Generation Z employees while also charting how the cohort and the well-being construct are operationalized across that literature.

This gap matters for both research and practice. For research, without a map of how Generation Z and well-being are operationalized, it is impossible to judge whether the field is ready for the kind of focused synthesis that would weigh the strength of findings. For HRM practice,

initiatives aimed at younger employees are being designed against an evidence base whose boundaries and consistency are unclear; knowing which factors have been studied, and how well, is a precondition for prioritizing where to act.

Theoretical Framework

Two established theories provide the organizing taxonomy for charting factors. Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory distinguishes job demands, which require sustained effort and may deplete the employee, from job resources and personal resources, which are functional in achieving goals and in buffering demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Conservation of Resources (COR) theory holds that people strive to gain, retain, and protect valued resources, and that stress arises when resources are threatened or lost, or when their investment fails to yield return (Hobfoll, 1989). Self-determination theory further frames well-being as contingent on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). Together these frameworks allow reported factors to be classified at the individual, job, organizational, and contextual levels while remaining open to factors that resist such classification. The taxonomy and its operational definitions are presented in Table 4.

The Present Review

A scoping review is the appropriate response to the three problems identified above. Scoping reviews are designed to map the extent, range, and nature of evidence, to clarify concepts and definitions, and to identify gaps, rather than to answer a narrowly focused question about the effect of an intervention (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018). Where a body of literature uses inconsistent definitions and heterogeneous measures, mapping is the necessary first step: a review that graded the strength of findings would be aggregating results that are not yet demonstrably about the same thing, whereas a scoping review can document that inconsistency and establish whether comparability exists at all (Munn et al., 2018).

Accordingly, the aim of this scoping review is to map the factors influencing workplace well-being among Generation Z employees and to chart how the cohort and the well-being construct are defined and measured across the literature. Using the Population, Concept, and Context (PCC) framework recommended for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020), the population is Generation Z employees, the concept is factors influencing workplace well-being (bounded as set out under operational definition of workplace well-being), and the context is workplace and organizational settings across all sectors and countries. The review questions are as follows:

- What factors have been identified in the literature as influencing workplace well-being among Generation Z employees?
- How is Generation Z defined and operationalized, and how is workplace well-being conceptualized and measured, across the included studies?
- How can the reported factors be categorized at the individual, job, organizational, and contextual levels, and which theoretical frameworks have been applied?
- What research gaps emerge from the resulting evidence map?

METHOD

This article reports a protocol prepared in advance of execution. It specifies the review questions, eligibility criteria, information sources, search strategy, screening and charting procedures, and synthesis plan so that the conduct of the review can be evaluated against what was planned.

Review Framework

A scoping review is an appropriate method for mapping existing evidence in a given field (Peters et al., 2020). This review follows the framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005), as advanced by Levac et al. (2010) and by the Joanna Briggs Institute (Peters et al., 2020), and reports in accordance with the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR; Tricco et al., 2018), with the flow of records reported using the PRISMA 2020 diagram adapted for scoping reviews (Page et al., 2021). Joanna Briggs Institute guidance specifies six methodological steps: (a) review question identification, (b) protocol development, (c) search strategy, (d) study selection, (e) data extraction, and (f) analysis and presentation of results (Peters et al., 2020). Each is specified below.

Protocol and Registration

The review questions were developed by analyzing gaps in the literature and the objectives of the study, using the PCC framework to ensure focus (Peters et al., 2020). Once the review questions were formulated, the authors registered the protocol before conducting the review, as recommended by Peters et al. (2020). The protocol was registered on the Open Science Framework on July 21, 2026, and is available at https://osf.io/wzq7n/overview. PROSPERO does not accept registrations of scoping reviews, which is why the Open Science Framework was used.

Following peer review, the protocol was amended in three respects: PsycINFO and Web of Science were added to the information sources, the boundaries of the workplace well-being concept were defined more narrowly, and the synthesis plan was revised to separate taxonomy-based

categorization from thematic analysis. The amendment is recorded on the Open Science Framework record, which retains the originally registered version. No database had been searched when the amendment was made.

Operational Definition of Workplace Well-Being

Workplace well-being is a broad term, so its boundaries are fixed in advance. In this review, workplace well-being refers to an employee's positive and negative psychological states and functioning in relation to work. Four construct families count as workplace well-being outcomes: (a) hedonic or subjective well-being at work, including work-related affect and happiness; (b) eudaimonic or psychological well-being at work, including flourishing and thriving (Deci et al., 2017; Ryff, 2023); (c) work engagement, the positive work-related state in the JD-R tradition; and (d) work-related ill-being, namely burnout, work-related or occupational stress, and psychological distress attributed to work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Engagement and burnout are included because the review's taxonomy is grounded in JD-R theory, which treats them as the motivational and health-impairment outcomes of demands and resources.

Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work motivation, performance, and turnover intention are treated as adjacent constructs rather than as well-being outcomes. A study measuring job satisfaction is eligible only when its authors explicitly frame satisfaction as an indicator of well-being; such studies will be charted as a separately flagged family, "satisfaction framed as well-being." Quality of work life, general life satisfaction, and mental health unrelated to work are excluded. These boundaries prevent the review from becoming a general review of Generation Z job attitudes while allowing the review to document instances in which adjacent constructs are explicitly used as indicators of workplace well-being.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were specified in advance and are shown in Table 1. The three conceptual blocks map onto the PCC elements, and the concept row applies the operational definition above. Publication year, language, and the conceptual blocks are operationalized in the query strings; the remaining criteria are applied at screening.

Table 1
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Focus	Research focused on factors influencing workplace well-being among Generation Z employees	Research not focused on workplace well-being, or on determinants of it, among Generation Z
Population	Generation Z employees, or mixed-cohort samples reporting disaggregated Generation Z results	Non-working students, unemployed persons, or job seekers; mixed-generation samples without disaggregation
Concept	A stated link between at least one factor and a workplace well-being outcome: hedonic, eudaimonic, work engagement, work-related ill-being, or satisfaction explicitly framed by the authors as a well-being indicator	Studies measuring well-being without linking it to any factor; adjacent outcomes not framed as well-being (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work motivation, performance, turnover intention); quality of work life; life satisfaction or mental health unrelated to work
Context	Workplace and organizational settings, all sectors and countries	Life domains other than work; non-organizational settings
Research design	Primary empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)	Non-empirical publication types: editorials, commentaries, letters, conference abstracts without data, conceptual papers, and reviews
Article retrieval	The complete article is readily	Complete article is neither accessible nor retrievable

	accessible and retrievable	
Time frame	Published 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2025	Published before 2015
Language	Published in English	Publications in non-English languages

Note. Criteria are applied sequentially at title-and-abstract screening and again at full-text review. PCC = Population, Concept, and Context.

Information Sources

The search will be conducted across six information sources: PsycINFO (via EBSCOhost), Web of Science Core Collection, Scopus, MEDLINE (via EBSCOhost), PubMed, and ScienceDirect. PsycINFO and Web of Science were added following peer review to address the risk of missing psychology and multidisciplinary literature. Because these two sources are not available under the authors' institutional subscriptions, a collaborating researcher at a partner institution with access to both will run the searches using platform-adapted versions of the approved strategy. The collaborator will return the exported records and a search log documenting the platform, search date, field tags, filters, and number of records retrieved. The authors will review the adapted strings before execution. Reference lists of all included studies and relevant prior reviews identified during screening will also be hand-searched. All retrieved records will be imported into Mendeley Reference Manager for automatic and manual deduplication, including inspection of potential PubMed–MEDLINE duplicates.

Search Strategy

The search strategy was developed from the PCC framework and consists of three concept blocks combined with AND; synonyms within each block are combined with OR and truncated where appropriate. The third block is designed to maximize retrieval of studies using the operationalized well-being construct while retaining terms for adjacent constructs that may be explicitly framed by their authors as well-being indicators. The core string is: ("generation z" OR "gen z" OR "generation-z" OR "igen" OR "post-millennial*" OR "zoomer*") AND (employee* OR worker* OR workforce OR staff OR "young professional*" OR intern*) AND ("well-being" OR wellbeing OR "well being" OR "workplace well-being" OR "employee well-being" OR "psychological well-being" OR "subjective well-being" OR "work engagement" OR "employee engagement" OR "workplace happiness" OR happiness OR burnout OR "work-related stress" OR "occupational stress" OR "psychological distress" OR flourishing OR thriving OR "job

satisfaction"). Job satisfaction will be retained at retrieval because some studies may explicitly frame it as a well-being indicator; eligibility will then be determined using the Concept criterion in Table 1. The string will be adapted to the syntax and field tags of each information source. Full adapted strings, search dates, and retrieval counts will be reported in an online appendix to the completed review.

Selection of Sources of Evidence

Study selection will be initiated by exporting the deduplicated records to Rayyan (https://rayyan.ai), where reviewers decide which articles to include by reference to the criteria in Table 1. Selection will be carried out by two reviewers working independently in Rayyan's blind mode. Before full screening, both reviewers will independently screen the first 50 records and compute Cohen's kappa; full screening begins only once substantial agreement is reached, defined as a kappa of at least .60, with observed agreement and the prevalence-adjusted bias-adjusted kappa reported alongside, because kappa is unstable under the skewed marginals expected at this stage. The first stage of screening will involve titles and abstracts; articles that do not align with the inclusion criteria will be excluded. In the second stage, a full-text review will be carried out using the same criteria, and the single primary reason for each full-text exclusion will be recorded. Any disagreement regarding inclusion will be resolved through discussion between the first and second reviewers; if discrepancies remain, they will be escalated to a third reviewer, who provides the final decision (Peters et al., 2020). The flow of records through the review will be reported in a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram adapted for scoping reviews (Page et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018), presented as Figure 1 of the completed review.

Data Charting Process and Data Items

Data charting will be carried out following study selection. In scoping reviews, charted data are commonly organized in tables or diagrams to create a structured overview of the evidence base, which helps in identifying key concepts and research gaps (Cooper et al., 2021). The charting table should present key information, including authors, references, and results relevant to the review questions (Peters et al., 2020). A charting form will be piloted on the first five included studies and revised before full charting, consistent with the iterative approach recommended by Levac et al. (2010). Dual independent charting will apply to the interpretive fields, namely factor rows, Generation Z operationalization, and well-being conceptualization and measurement,

while descriptive fields will be charted by one reviewer and verified by another. The fields to be charted are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Data Charting Fields

Field	Content charted
Study identification	Author(s), publication year, journal, and disciplinary field
Geographic location	Country or countries in which data were collected
Design and method	Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods; cross-sectional, longitudinal, or experimental
Sector and setting	Industry or occupational sector of the sampled organization(s)
Sample	Number of participants, age range, gender distribution, and whether the sample is exclusively Generation Z
Generation Z operationalization	Stated birth-year boundaries, source cited for the boundary, or absence of any stated definition
Well-being conceptualization	Construct family (hedonic, eudaimonic, work engagement, work-related ill-being, or satisfaction framed as well-being) and the definition stated by the authors
Well-being measurement	Instrument name, number of items, response format, reported reliability, and language or cultural adaptation
Reported factors	Each factor examined in relation to the well-being outcome, recorded verbatim as labeled by the source study
Factor classification	Assignment to the individual, job, organizational, or contextual level, or flagged as unclassifiable
Theoretical framework	Theory explicitly invoked by the source study, or recorded as none stated

Note. Interpretive fields (Generation Z operationalization, well-being conceptualization and measurement, reported factors, and factor classification) will be charted independently by two reviewers.

Critical Appraisal of Individual Sources

Consistent with PRISMA-ScR optional item 12 and with Munn et al. (2018), critical appraisal of individual sources will not be conducted. Mapping the extent and characteristics of evidence does not require weighing its strength, and with cohort definitions and well-being measures

as inconsistent as expected, appraising the internal validity of individual studies would grade a body of work whose comparability is not yet established. The consequence is stated plainly here and will be repeated in the results and discussion of the completed review: the map will show which factors have been studied, not which findings to believe.

Synthesis of Results

The synthesis consists of three analytic operations. They are kept separate because they answer different questions and follow different logic, and Table 3 shows which operation serves which review question.

Descriptive analysis will summarize the characteristics of the included studies, offering an overview of existing research on workplace well-being among Generation Z employees, including counts and cross-tabulations by publication year, country, sector, design, well-being construct family, and instrument. It will also tabulate stated birth-year boundaries against their cited sources.

Taxonomy-based categorization is deductive. Each reported factor, recorded verbatim as labeled by its source study, will be assigned to one level of the four-level taxonomy in Table 4 according to the operational definitions given there. A factor is classed by the level at which the source study operationalized it. Decision rules will be written into a coding guide, piloted with the charting form on the first five included studies, and revised before full charting. Factors that fit no level will be flagged as unclassifiable and retained. This step is classification and counting. It does not generate themes, and its output is the frequency of factors at each level, not an interpretation of them. Two reviewers will classify independently, disagreements will be resolved as described for study selection, and the agreement will be reported.

Thematic analysis is a separate, inductive analytic step following Braun and Clarke (2006). It will be applied only to material that is not adequately represented by the deductive taxonomy: (a) factors flagged as unclassifiable and (b) the definitions of workplace well-being reported by source studies in their own words. Thematic analysis will not be used to reclassify factors that have already been assigned to a taxonomy level. The first author will familiarize themselves with the material, generate initial codes, and develop candidate themes; the second author will review and challenge the coding and candidate themes, and themes will be refined through discussion. The resulting themes will be reported separately from the taxonomy-based frequency map. Thus, taxonomy-based categorization answers “where does a reported factor belong?” whereas thematic analysis answers “what recurring meaning or pattern is present in material that

cannot be adequately classified?" The two analytic outputs will not be merged.

No statistical pooling, meta-analysis, or vote counting will be performed; frequency counts describe research attention, not weight of evidence. The evidence map for the fourth review question will be built by cross-tabulating the taxonomy levels against well-being construct family, sector, and country. The classification taxonomy is given in Table 4.

Table 3
Themes and Sub-Themes for Analysis

Review question	**Analytic approach**	**Output**
RQ1: Factors identified	Descriptive analysis; taxonomy-based categorization of charted factors	Frequency of factors by taxonomy level; factors as labeled by their sources
RQ2: Definition and measurement	Descriptive tabulation of birth-year boundaries, construct families, and instruments; inductive thematic analysis of stated well-being definitions	Definitional map; measurement map; themes in how well-being is defined
RQ3: Categorization and theory	Taxonomy-based categorization (deductive); inductive thematic analysis of unclassifiable factors only; tabulation of theories invoked	Classification by level; separately reported themes; table of frameworks applied
RQ4: Research gaps	Cross-tabulation of taxonomy levels against construct family, sector, and country	Evidence map showing concentrations and gaps

Note. RQ = review question. Taxonomy-based categorization and thematic analysis are separate steps and are not combined.

Table 4
Four-Level Taxonomy for Classifying Reported Factors

Level	Definition	Illustrative factors
Individual	Personal characteristics and personal resources residing within the employee	Self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, psychological capital, age, tenure, education, personality traits
Job	Demands and resources embedded in the design and content of the work itself	Workload, time pressure, emotional demands, role ambiguity, autonomy, task variety, performance feedback, technostress
Organizational	Features of the employing organization and its social environment	Leadership style, supervisor and coworker support, organizational culture, career development opportunities, compensation and benefits, flexible work arrangements, mental-health provision
Contextual	Conditions external to the employing organization that shape the work and the resources available to employees	Labor-market conditions, economic uncertainty, national culture and norms, labor regulation and legal protection, pandemic-related disruption, societal expectations about work

Note. The taxonomy is grounded in job demands–resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Illustrative factors are indicative rather than exhaustive; factors that cannot be assigned to any level will be retained and reported separately.

Current Status of The Review

As a protocol, this article reports no empirical findings. At the time of writing, the protocol has been registered on the Open Science Framework (July 21, 2026) and amended in response to peer review, and no database searches have been executed. Searching will begin in November 2026, as set out in the timeline below.

The completed review will report the following outputs. First, a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram adapted for scoping reviews will document the number of records identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and included, with reasons for full-text exclusions (Page et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018). Second, a study-characteristics table will summarize the included studies by author, year, country, sector, design, sample, and well-being outcome. Third, a definitional map will tabulate the birth-year boundaries used to define Generation Z against their cited sources,

together with the proportion of studies that state no boundary at all. Fourth, a measurement map will tabulate well-being construct families against the instruments used to operationalize them. Fifth, an evidence map will display the reported factors organized by the four-level taxonomy in Table 4, cross-tabulated against well-being construct family, so that concentrations and gaps in research attention are visible at a glance. Sixth, a completed PRISMA-ScR checklist will be provided as supplementary material.

The anticipated timeline is as follows: searching and deduplication in November 2026; title-and-abstract screening in December 2026 and January 2027; full-text review in February and March 2027; charting and synthesis in April and May 2027; and submission of the completed review in July 2027. Any deviation from the registered protocol will be documented on the Open Science Framework record and reported explicitly in the completed review.

DISCUSSION

This protocol specifies a scoping review that will map the factors influencing workplace well-being among Generation Z employees and chart how the cohort and the well-being construct are defined and measured. Its value lies less in any single answer it will produce than in making the state of a rapidly growing literature legible, so that subsequent work can be built on a documented rather than an assumed foundation.

Anticipated Contributions to Theory and Research

Three contributions are anticipated. First, by charting birth-year boundaries against their cited sources, the review will make explicit the extent to which studies labeled as concerning Generation Z address comparable populations. If boundaries prove as inconsistent as the introduction suggests, this is itself a finding with direct implications for how future primary studies should report their samples. Second, by tabulating well-being construct families against instruments, the review will show whether the field is measuring one construct or several under a shared label, which determines whether a subsequent meta-analytic synthesis is defensible. Third, by organizing reported factors within the JD-R and COR taxonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Hobfoll, 1989), the review will show where research attention has concentrated and which levels of the taxonomy remain thinly populated. It is plausible, given the composition of the existing literature, that organizational-level factors such as leadership and flexibility will be heavily represented while contextual-level factors receive comparatively little attention, but this is an expectation to be tested by the map rather than a claim advanced here.

Implications for Human Resource Management Practice

For practitioners, the completed review will function as a stocktake rather than a set of recommendations. By showing which factors have been examined and how the cohort and well-being have been defined, it will help HRM identify where usable evidence exists and where initiatives for younger employees would be operating ahead of the evidence base. This distinction matters: an intervention targeting a factor that has been studied repeatedly across sectors stands on different ground from one targeting a factor examined in a single study of a single organization. Because critical appraisal will not be conducted, the map will not indicate which findings are most trustworthy, and practitioners should treat it as a guide to where to look rather than as a warrant for any particular intervention.

Strengths and Limitations of the Protocol

The principal strengths of this protocol are its prospective registration, with the post-review amendment documented, its adherence to established scoping review guidance (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2020) and reporting standards (Tricco et al., 2018), its search of six databases that include PsycINFO and Web of Science, its use of dual independent screening and charting with a pre-specified agreement threshold, and its explicit theoretical grounding for the charting taxonomy.

Several limitations are acknowledged in advance. First, no management- or business-specific index (for example, Business Source Complete) is searched, so relevant records in management and business outlets may still be missed; Scopus and Web of Science cover many of these journals, and hand-searching of reference lists partially but not fully offsets the gap. Second, restricting inclusion to English-language publications will exclude work published in other languages, which is a particular concern given the volume of Generation Z research produced in Asian countries where English is not the primary language of publication. Third, critical appraisal will not be conducted, so the review cannot speak to the quality or trustworthiness of the evidence it maps. Fourth, the heterogeneity of cohort definitions that motivates this review also constrains it: studies that do not report birth-year boundaries must be included on the basis of their own labeling, which imports the very ambiguity the review sets out to document. Fifth, classification of factors into the four-level taxonomy involves interpretive judgment; dual independent charting of interpretive fields mitigates but does not eliminate this. Sixth, the bounded definition of workplace well-being means that studies which use job satisfaction as a proxy without framing it as well-being, or which never use well-being terms in their titles, abstracts, or keywords, will not be retrieved. The review maps workplace well-being as defined here, not every attitude outcome studied in Generation Z employees.

In conclusion, research on Generation Z at work has accumulated quickly, but accumulation is not the same as consolidation. Before the field can weigh what it knows about the well-being of its youngest employees, it needs a clear account of what has been studied, in whom, and by what measures. This protocol specifies how that account will be produced.

REFERENCES

Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *8*(1), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *22*(3), 273–285. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Cooper, S., Cant, R., Kelly, M., Levett-Jones, T., McKenna, L., Seaton, P., & Bogossian, F. (2021). An evidence-based checklist for improving scoping review quality. *Clinical Nursing Research*, *30*(3), 230–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/1054773819846024

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of a science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *4*, 19–43. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113108

Dimock, M. (2019). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, *44*(3), 513–524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513

Katsaros, K. K. (2024). Gen Z employee adaptive performance: The role of inclusive leadership and workplace happiness. *Administrative Sciences*, *14*(8), Article 163. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14080163

Levac, D., Colquhoun, H., & O'Brien, K. K. (2010). Scoping studies: Advancing the methodology. *Implementation Science*, *5*, Article 69. https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-5-69

Marsh, E., Vallejos, E. P., & Spence, A. (2024). Overloaded by information or worried about missing out on it: A quantitative study of stress, burnout, and mental health implications in the digital workplace. *Sustainability*, *16*(19), Article 8776. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16198776

Munn, Z., Peters, M. D. J., Stern, C., Tufanaru, C., McArthur, A., & Aromataris, E. (2018). Systematic review or scoping review? Guidance for authors when choosing between a systematic or scoping review approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*, Article 143. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0611-x

Nichols, A., & Smith, S. M. (2025). What do Gen Z really want from a workplace? *Strategic HR Review*, *24*(2), 75–79. https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-10-2024-0082

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., … Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, *372*, Article n71. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Peters, M. D. J., Marnie, C., Tricco, A. C., Pollock, D., Munn, Z., Alexander, L., McInerney, P., Godfrey, C. M., & Khalil, H. (2020). Updated methodological guidance for the conduct of scoping reviews. *JBI Evidence Synthesis*, *18*(10), 2119–2126. https://doi.org/10.11124/JBIES-20-00167

Putri, R. A., & Dudija, N. (2024). Burnout among Generation Z employees. *International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, *3*(6), 348–353. https://doi.org/10.56472/25835238/IRJEMS-V3I6P138

Rachmadini, F., & Riyanto, S. (2020). The impact of work-life balance on employee engagement in Generation Z. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *25*(5), 62–66. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2505106266

Ryff, C. D. (2023). Contributions of eudaimonic well-being to mental health practice. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, *27*(4), 276–293. https://doi.org/10.1108/MHSI-12-2022-0091

Sakdiyakorn, M., Golubovskaya, M., & Solnet, D. (2021). Understanding Generation Z through collective consciousness: Impacts for hospitality work and employment. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *94*, Article 102822. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102822

Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., Moher, D., Peters, M. D. J., Horsley, T., Weeks, L., Hempel, S., Akl, E. A., Chang, C., McGowan, J., Stewart, L., Hartling, L., Aldcroft, A., Wilson, M. G., Garritty, C., … Straus, S. E. (2018). PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *169*(7), 467–473. https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0850

Vieira, J., Gomes da Costa, C., & Santos, V. (2024). Talent management and Generation Z: A systematic literature review through the lens of employer branding. *Administrative Sciences*, *14*(3), Article 49. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14030049

Waworuntu, E. C., Kainde, S. J. R., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). Work-life balance, job satisfaction and performance among Millennial and Gen Z employees: A systematic review. *Society*, *10*(2), 286–300. https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v10i2.464

Zahra, Y., Handoyo, S., & Fajrianthi, F. (2025). A comprehensive overview of Generation Z in the workplace: Insights from a scoping review. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *51*, Article a2263. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v51i0.2263