

CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATIONS OF EMPLOYEE COACHING FOR GENERATION Z SALES PROFESSIONALS

Garrett HART

Marymount University, Arlington, VA, USA
gwh94945@marymount.edu

ABSTRACT

The engagement and retention of Generation Z (Gen Z) employees have become pressing concerns for organizations, particularly as they continue to face labor shortages and high turnover in the wake of COVID-19. With trends such as “quiet quitting” and reassessments of work–life priorities reshaping the workforce, companies are struggling to engage and retain Gen Z employees in meaningful and fulfilling roles. Customer-facing sales positions show turnover rates of more than 30%, which imposes substantial financial and operational costs on organizations since replacing an employee can cost up to 150% of the employee’s annual salary. This high turnover threatens organizational sustainability and profitability, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to attract and retain Gen Z talent. This paper reviews the current research to explore the practical potential for tailored coaching and leadership strategies to meet Gen Z’s unique preferences for autonomy, continuous feedback, and career growth in high-turnover environments such as sales. The findings of this study can be used to foster a resilient workforce capable of meeting the evolving demands of the post-pandemic workplace.

KEYWORDS: continuous feedback, employee retention, Generation Z, performance management, workplace coaching

1. Introduction

The topic of retaining and engaging Generation Z (Gen Z) employees, born between 1997 and 2012, has become increasingly relevant amid shifts in employment dynamics triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Worker shortages, high resignation rates, and disengagement trends such as “quiet quitting” have compelled companies to rethink how they attract, engage, and retain employees (Becker, 2021). These trends signal Gen Z’s reassessment of work-life priorities and heightened demand for meaningful and fulfilling roles (Zhong et al., 2023). Now a growing segment of the workforce, Gen Z presents unique challenges for organizations, particularly in customer-

facing sales roles where turnover rates are high. The financial and operational burden of replacing Gen Z employees, and the resulting disruptions to organizational stability, underscore the need for retention strategies that align with this generation’s expectations (Indiyati et al., 2023).

Existing research has identified key workplace factors that impact Gen Z’s motivation and commitment, including opportunities for meaningful work, flexibility, and professional development (Becker, 2021; Indiyati et al., 2023). However, a comprehensive understanding of how leadership and coaching strategies can address these specific needs within sales environments is lacking. Leadership strategies such as strengths-based coaching

and personalized feedback have positively impacted employee engagement and well-being across various industries (Breevaart & van Woerkom, 2024; Coimbra & Proença, 2022), but there is little research on how these strategies apply to Gen Z employees in sales – a field with unique job demands and performance pressures (Dahling et al., 2016; Jayathilake et al., 2021). To address this gap, this study examines how leadership strategies and coaching interventions can improve motivation, job satisfaction, and retention among Gen Z sales employees.

The next section outlines the problem statement of this research and the novelty and importance of this study. The methodology section describes the research objectives and the study's design, data collection, and analytical framework. The results section presents key findings from the literature review pertaining to Gen Z workplace expectations, leadership strategies, and coaching approaches. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for sales leadership and organizations, as well as practical recommendations for improving Gen Z employee engagement and retention. The final section offers conclusions, explains the limitations of the study, and proposes future research directions.

2. Problem Statement, Novelty, Originality, and Importance of this Study

Turnover rates among Gen Z sales employees exceed 30%, which imposes significant operational and financial burdens on organizations (Dick, 2019). Replacing these employees can cost up to 150% of their annual salaries, which underscores the substantial financial impact of high turnover on business sustainability and profitability. A key challenge is the mismatch between coaching methodologies and Gen Z's workplace needs, along with a lack of research on how to effectively adapt

coaching and leadership strategies to them. Existing research has yet to fully explore the potential of tailored coaching approaches to influence Gen Z's motivation, job satisfaction, and retention in customer-facing roles, especially in high-turnover fields such as sales (Lan et al., 2020). This research gap limits organizations' ability to implement coaching strategies that resonate with Gen Z's desires for autonomy, continuous feedback, and career growth – factors critical for engagement and for engagement and retention of Gen Z employees.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on how coaching strategies tailored to Gen Z's unique workplace needs can directly address high turnover rates in customer-facing sales roles. While substantial research exists on coaching methodologies and generational differences in the workplace, little attention has been paid to aligning specific coaching techniques with Gen Z's preferences for autonomy, continuous feedback, and career growth. Therefore, this narrative literature review synthesizes theoretical and practical insights to explore the challenges that organizations face in retaining Gen Z sales employees. This approach provides actionable solutions to enhance employee satisfaction and retention and increase organizational stability, while advancing the scholarly understanding of how adaptive coaching strategies can fulfill the evolving needs of this new generation in high-turnover environments.

3. Methods

This study employed a narrative literature review to examine how tailored coaching approaches can improve Gen Z employees' motivation and job satisfaction, thereby increasing retention in customer-facing sales roles (Lan et al., 2020). This method was selected for its ability to synthesize diverse theoretical perspectives while allowing for a nuanced interpretation

of context-dependent phenomena related to Gen Z workplace dynamics (Becker, 2021; Popaitoon, 2022). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolving challenges organizations face in retaining Gen Z talent in high-turnover sales environments (Dick, 2019).

3.1. Research Objectives

The research objectives for this study emerged from the identified gaps in the understanding of Gen Z workplace needs (Zhong et al., 2023). The primary aim was to address the critical challenge of sales position turnover rates exceeding 30% (Dick, 2019). Specifically, the study examined how coaching methodologies could address Gen Z's unique preferences for autonomy, continuous feedback, and career growth (Jayathilake et al., 2021). The study synthesized existing research on leadership approaches and coaching interventions that could enhance motivation and job satisfaction in customer-facing roles (Dahling et al., 2016).

3.2. Literature Search and Selection

This review examined research on Gen Z workplace behaviors (Popaitoon, 2022), coaching effectiveness in sales (Coimbra & Proença, 2022), and retention strategies in customer-facing roles (Jayathilake et al., 2021). Studies on leadership approaches, employee engagement, and strengths-based coaching were prioritized for their relevance to motivation and retention (Breevaart & van Woerkom, 2024; Coimbra & Proença, 2022).

The search was conducted across Google Scholar, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, and SpringerLink, using Boolean operators to refine queries such as "Generation Z employee retention" and "sales coaching strategies". Peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2008 and 2024 were included, while pre-2008 studies (unless seminal), non-academic sources, and marketing/pharmaceuticals-focused research were excluded.

The search yielded N = 85 sources, reduced to 76 after duplicate removal and abstract screening. Full-text evaluation refined the selection to N = 63 sources for inclusion.

3.3. Analytical Approach

This study employed an iterative thematic analysis, where literature was reviewed, coded, and categorized to identify recurring themes in Gen Z workplace dynamics (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Articles were read in full, and insights were manually grouped into themes such as coaching effectiveness, leadership impact, and workplace expectations (Dahling et al., 2016; Jayathilake et al., 2021).

Themes were cross-checked against theoretical frameworks, including Leader-Member Exchange, Strengths-Based Development, and Positive Organizational Scholarship, to ensure consistency with established research (Becker, 2021; Zhong et al., 2023). This approach allowed for a systematic synthesis of findings, reinforcing the study's conclusions.

4. Results

The narrative review identified four key coaching strategies for Gen Z sales professionals: structured feedback, autonomy-supportive coaching, goal-setting techniques, and relationship-building, each influencing engagement, motivation, and performance (Lan et al., 2020; Rivera et al., 2021). Research indicates that real-time feedback improves motivation through immediate reinforcement, while autonomy-supportive coaching enhances job satisfaction and commitment when paired with clear expectations (Dahling et al., 2016; Naim, 2021). However, excessive autonomy without structured guidance can reduce accountability, particularly in roles managed through performance metrics (Coimbra & Proença, 2022; Lungu et al., 2021). Studies suggest that goal setting improves performance consistency, while

relationship-building fosters trust and engagement (Becker, 2021; Popaitoon, 2022). These findings indicate that a balanced coaching approach combining autonomy with structured support enhances motivation, engagement, and long-term retention in sales roles (Popaitoon, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Schroth, 2019).

4.1. Gen Z Workplace Preferences and Dynamics

Research shows that Gen Z prioritizes meaningful work and career development, which directly influences job satisfaction and retention levels (Lan et al., 2020). Gen Z employees also prioritize autonomy and structured feedback and value flexibility, inclusivity, and work-life balance. These preferences influence their levels of motivation, engagement, and commitment, prompting organizations to adopt flatter hierarchies and enhance collaboration (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Zhong et al., 2023). Research suggests that organizations fostering autonomy and career growth for Gen Z employees achieve higher levels of engagement and retention, as these factors align with Gen Z's preference for meaningful work (Popaitoon, 2022; Schroth, 2019). Furthermore, some studies highlight workplace flexibility as a driver of satisfaction and retention, while others warn that a lack of structure may undermine organizational cohesion and efficiency (Lin & Wang, 2022; Schroth, 2019). Excessive flexibility without clear guidelines can disrupt workflow and hinder productivity (Dimock, 2019; Skýpalová et al., 2023). Therefore, while Gen Z values independence, unstructured autonomy may weaken accountability, especially in sales roles that rely on measurable outcomes (Dahling et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2011).

Studies indicate that balancing autonomy with structured guidance improves engagement and commitment, particularly in performance-driven roles (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Popaitoon, 2022).

Organizations that pair structured feedback with adaptable environments align with Gen Z's expectations while maintaining performance standards (Becker, 2021; Popaitoon, 2022). By balancing flexibility and accountability, organizations can better support Gen Z employees, improving engagement, motivation, and long-term retention (Popaitoon, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Schroth, 2019).

4.2. Challenges of the Sales Environment

High turnover and disengagement among Gen Z sales employees create significant financial and operational burdens for organizations, disrupt customer relationships, and weaken organizational effectiveness (Aldabbas & Bettayeb, 2024; Dick, 2019). However, some studies argue that high turnover in sales is not exclusive to Gen Z but rather a longstanding industry challenge driven by performance-based pressures and incentive structures (Dahling et al., 2016; Jayathilake et al., 2021). While these challenges affect all generations, the need for organizations to address workplace expectations specific to Gen Z remains an important consideration (Dahling et al., 2016; Lan et al., 2020).

Gen Z's preference for ongoing, constructive feedback challenges organizations that rely on traditional performance evaluation cycles (Rivera et al., 2021). Research suggests that real-time feedback reduces disengagement and strengthens performance (Naim, 2021). However, excessive feedback may create a dependency on external validation, limiting employees' ability to develop independent problem-solving skills (Coimbra & Proença, 2022; Lungu et al., 2021). Studies recommend structured yet flexible feedback systems that balance autonomy with accountability to sustain engagement while reinforcing performance expectations (Becker, 2021; Jayathilake et al., 2021). Research shows that continuous feedback

systems align well with Gen Z's preference for regular communication and development opportunities (Marodin et al., 2023). Thus, implementing such systems could help address the high turnover rate and disengagement among Gen Z sales employees.

4.3. Organizational Implementation Factors

Research demonstrates that successful employee coaching implementation requires strong leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships to improve engagement and retention (Jansson & Kangas, 2024; Ribič & Marič, 2023). Studies indicate that high-quality LMX relationships foster trust and open communication, which strengthens workplace cohesion (Coimbra & Proença, 2022). However, some findings suggest that excessively close LMX relationships may result in perceptions of favoritism, undermining team cohesion and perceptions of workplace fairness (Joo et al., 2012). Research supports that balancing autonomy with accountability is crucial for effective coaching implementation (Dahling et al., 2016).

4.4. Effective Coaching Approaches

The evidence indicates that when strengths-based development (SBD) is integrated into coaching programs, it significantly enhances job engagement and satisfaction (Bratty & Dennis, 2024). The Goal, Reality, Options, and Will (GROW) model effectively aligns personal and professional objectives, fostering accountability and commitment (Albers et al., 2023). Furthermore, cognitive behavioral coaching (CBC) reduces anxiety and improves performance in high-stress roles, making it particularly effective for managing employees in sales environments (Lungu et al., 2021).

The GROW Model: The GROW model, with its four stages – goal (defining objectives), reality (assessing the current situation), options (exploring solutions), and will (creating actionable steps) – aligns

personal growth with organizational success (Armson et al., 2019). Research demonstrates that coaching models such as GROW enhance engagement and motivation by helping employees align their personal and professional objectives, fostering accountability and commitment (Albers et al., 2023). By implementing the GROW model, organizations can create a development-focused culture that improves individual and organizational performance and empowers employees to address challenges with purpose and satisfaction.

This model is particularly effective for Gen Z employees, who value structured development and career progression paths (Aldabbas & Bettayeb, 2024). Studies indicate that using GROW to align individual aspirations with organizational goals fosters intrinsic motivation, enhances job satisfaction, and reduces turnover in high-turnover roles such as sales (Leach, 2020; Zhong et al., 2023). By fostering a sense of ownership and providing tools for employees to actively manage their career progression, GROW helps create loyalty and accountability (Armson et al., 2019). Organizations adopting GROW as part of their coaching strategy can address Gen Z's workplace expectations, ensuring long-term engagement and sustainable success in a competitive talent market (Albers et al., 2023).

Cognitive Behavioral Coaching: CBC enhances resilience and performance by addressing negative thought patterns through self-reflection, cognitive restructuring, and goal setting (Lungu et al., 2021). Research shows that emotional regulation, a core focus of CBC, reduces anxiety and improves performance in high-stress roles, making it particularly effective for employees in sales environments (Khakpoor, 2019). By reframing challenges and fostering adaptive responses, CBC helps employees develop a resilient mindset, which is essential in competitive workplaces. Organizations integrating CBC into coaching programs cultivate a culture of accountability and high

performance, aligning employee growth with organizational success.

CBC aligns well with Gen Z employees' focus on personal development and mental well-being, because it provides tools to manage stress and maintain adaptability in demanding roles (Dudija & Apriliansyah, 2024). For instance, CBC enables Gen Z sales reps to reframe setbacks as growth opportunities, allowing them to sustain motivation and focus. Studies show that CBC is effective even when delivered digitally, appealing to the tech-savvy nature of Gen Z employees (Lungu et al., 2021). By fostering emotional resilience and cognitive flexibility, CBC contributes to building a supportive culture that enhances engagement, reduces turnover, and promotes sustainable organizational success (Dudija & Apriliansyah, 2024).

4.5. Theoretical Foundations

Positive organizational scholarship (POS), the broaden-and-build theory, and SBD each offer insights into coaching strategies to increase Gen Z motivation, engagement, and performance. Research findings indicate that POS fosters workplace environments that enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness by prioritizing supportive interactions and recognizing individual strengths (Azila-Gbetor et al., 2023; Hollis & Cogburn, 2023). The broaden-and-build theory explains how positive emotions strengthen adaptability, problem-solving, and resilience, reinforcing the importance of psychological safety in sustaining workplace engagement (Peñalver et al., 2019). Studies on SBD highlight the benefits of aligning job roles with employees' natural talents and capabilities to increase motivation, satisfaction, and employee retention (Bratty & Dennis, 2024; Ferguson & Lockman, 2024). These findings suggest that using these theoretical frameworks to create coaching strategies creates environments where employees remain engaged, develop

skills, and contribute to long-term organizational success.

Positive Organizational Scholarship – POS explores how positive workplace practices enhance employee performance and well-being. Research indicates that organizations developing employee strengths and maintaining positive interactions create environments that boost motivation and engagement (Azila-Gbetor et al., 2023; Hollis & Cogburn, 2023). Furthermore, employees who perceive leadership as supportive report higher levels of satisfaction and commitment, leading to long-term retention and resilience (Aldabbas & Bettayeb, 2024). Organizations that integrate appreciation-based recognition into strengths-based coaching build trust, reinforce psychological support, strengthen workplace relationships, and improve performance (Peláez et al., 2020). These findings suggest that POS provides a framework for creating a positive organizational culture that promotes employee well-being and long-term success.

Broaden-and-Build Theory – Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory explains how positive emotions enhance adaptability, resilience, and problem-solving in professional settings. Research suggests that employees who experience positive emotional states demonstrate greater flexibility in handling challenges and collaborate more effectively (Peñalver et al., 2019; Wei-Lun et al., 2014). A sense of psychological safety also encourages employees to engage in creative problem-solving and take risks that support innovation and professional growth (Dorrance-Hall & Gettings, 2023). Coaching strategies that incorporate positive reinforcement strengthen motivation and reinforce constructive behaviors, which leads to improved employee engagement (Johnson et al., 2021). These findings suggest that the broaden-and-build theory can be used to create a workplace culture that enhances employee resilience and innovation, ultimately improving long-term organizational outcomes.

Strengths-Based Development – SBD aligns job roles with employee capabilities. Research suggests that workplaces structured around employee strengths report higher engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction (Bratty & Dennis, 2024; Ferguson & Lockman, 2024). Studies indicate that a strengths-based leadership approach improves employee retention by ensuring that employees feel valued and positioned for success within their roles (Bratty & Dennis, 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Organizations implementing SBD improve performance consistency and long-term workplace satisfaction (Ferguson & Lockman, 2024). These findings indicate that SBD is a practical framework for organizations aiming to align employee satisfaction with sustained performance and retention.

5. Discussion

5.1. *The Impact of Continuous Feedback and Autonomy on Retention*

Continuous, real-time feedback is critical for retaining Gen Z employees, who seek frequent, constructive input to foster engagement and support their development in the workplace (SHRM, 2022). Rivera et al. (2021) suggested that traditional performance reviews may not meet the needs of younger employees, who require continuous feedback to help them stay motivated and aligned with organizational goals. The findings of a beverage distribution company study demonstrated that regular shop-floor performance feedback significantly boosted employee motivation and engagement, underscoring the effectiveness of real-time feedback in maintaining a satisfied and productive workforce (Marodin et al., 2023). In sales roles, where rapid adaptation is crucial, timely feedback empowers Gen Z employees to meet personal and organizational objectives by responding promptly to challenges. Therefore, organizations that implement continuous

feedback mechanisms can better support Gen Z's need for growth and connection and enhance employee retention in high-turnover positions (Popaitoon, 2022).

Alongside providing regular feedback, giving employees autonomy is essential for retaining Gen Z employees, who place a high value on personal agency and empowerment in their roles (Liu et al., 2011). Liu et al. found that autonomy coupled with feedback enhanced engagement across age groups and was particularly appealing to younger workers seeking more control over their tasks and decision-making. As the workforce shifts toward a flexible Work 4.0 model, organizations prioritizing autonomy alongside continuous feedback can build stronger retention among Gen Z employees (Lin & Wang, 2022). Giving sales employees autonomy can allow these employees to handle customer interactions and solve problems promptly, while providing frequent feedback can ensure that they stay aligned with organizational goals (Popaitoon, 2022). Organizations implementing these practices for their Gen Z workforce can foster a sense of purpose and satisfaction, reduce turnover, increase loyalty, and improve long-term performance (Becker, 2021).

5.2. *The Role of Leadership in Coaching Employees and Creating a Healthy Culture*

Transformational leadership is instrumental in fostering a positive workplace culture by enhancing engagement and motivation. According to Avey et al. (2008), this leadership style emphasizes personalized development and positive reinforcement and is closely linked to the creation of a supportive work environment and increased employee satisfaction. Peláez et al. (2020) found that, when used as part of transformational leadership, strengths-based coaching significantly boosts employee engagement and resilience by creating a

foundation of trust and open communication. For example, leaders who offer tailored feedback and encouragement through regular coaching sessions build a culture that values personal growth and well-being, which helps employees feel connected and appreciated within the organization (Breevaart & van Woerkom, 2024). By fostering this collaborative environment, transformational leaders cultivate healthy workplace cultures that support individual fulfillment while enhancing the retention and productivity essential for long-term organizational success (Avey et al., 2008).

Transformational leadership also effectively bridges the gap between Gen Z's expectations and traditional management structures. Transformational leadership's focus on empowerment and emotional support aligns well with Gen Z employees' preferences for autonomy, frequent feedback, and meaningful work (Črešnar & Nedelko, 2020). By fostering a culture of inclusion and shared purpose, with open communication and collaborative goal setting, transformational leaders help mitigate Gen Z employees' feelings of disconnection within traditional hierarchies (Peláez et al., 2020). For instance, transformational leaders may invite Gen Z team members to participate in decision-making to foster a sense of ownership and alignment with organizational goals (Esteves et al., 2024). By adopting inclusive practices, transformational leaders can boost Gen Z's engagement and job satisfaction while reducing turnover to strengthen resilience in an organization's dynamic workforce (Peláez et al., 2020).

5.3. Leader – Member Exchange Theory

Ribič and Marič (2023) and Jansson and Kangas (2024) emphasized that high-quality LMX relationships enhance employee engagement and retention by fostering trust and open communication, which strengthens workplace cohesion.

Thus, LMX relationships founded on trust and transparent communication bolster employees' sense of belonging and commitment to organizational objectives. Liu et al. (2011) and Peláez et al. (2020) highlighted that strong LMX relationships encourage innovation and engagement by granting Gen Z employees greater autonomy in decision-making. Therefore, strong LMX relationships align with Gen Z's preference for frequent feedback and workplace autonomy.

However, Joo et al. (2012) and Coimbra and Proença (2022) cautioned that excessively close LMX relationships may result in perceptions of favoritism or unrealistic expectations, undermining team cohesion and perceptions of workplace fairness. They underlined that the effectiveness of LMX depends on a manager's ability to balance autonomy with accountability. Furthermore, Dahling et al. (2016) and Özgünay (2023) argued that autonomy alone is insufficient without structured goal setting and performance monitoring to ensure alignment with organizational priorities. To maximize the benefits of LMX, Basadur et al. (2014) and Peláez et al. (2020) recommended structured coaching interventions that reinforce goal achievement and skill development.

5.4. Organizational Benefits of a Tailored Coaching Strategy

Tailored coaching strengthens workforce stability by reducing turnover rates and increasing employee loyalty. Studies show that coaching tailored to individual competencies and career goals improves retention by meeting specific developmental needs, which enhances job satisfaction (Basadur et al., 2014). Similarly, Jung et al. (2023) highlighted that coaching by leaders significantly reduces employee turnover intentions, particularly in environments where job stability is a concern. Organizations that foster a culture of appreciation and support by creating personalized coaching experiences

that nurture employees' unique career aspirations build loyalty and satisfaction (Jung et al., 2023). This approach reduces turnover costs and bolsters workforce resilience and long-term organizational stability (Basadur et al., 2014) and success.

Tailored coaching strategies also improve sales performance and customer satisfaction by equipping employees with relevant, customer-focused skills. Coimbra and Proença (2022) demonstrated that coaching by managers on sales techniques and customer engagement increases salesforce effectiveness, which directly enhances customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer-oriented coaching improves individual performance and positively contributes to financial and non-financial metrics (Koshksaray et al., 2020). Additionally, feedback-based coaching helps align employee efforts with customer expectations by improving service quality (Latham et al., 2008). Through tailored coaching that emphasizes customer engagement, organizations can foster loyalty, promote growth, and gain a competitive advantage in the market (Coimbra & Proença, 2022).

As well as enhancing customer satisfaction, tailored coaching strategies enhance employee engagement and well-being, which are essential for sustaining high performance and employee retention. Research indicates that when coaching aligns with individual needs and personal growth goals, employees experience greater job satisfaction and motivation (Theeboom et al., 2014). This personalized approach fosters a supportive work environment that values employees' unique contributions while helping them embrace challenges and thrive. For example, coaching that includes goal setting and regular progress assessments encourages employees to take ownership of their roles so that they view obstacles as opportunities for growth (Theeboom et al., 2014). Organizations that invest in tailored coaching strategies cultivate continuous improvement, boost engagement, and drive individual success

and long-term organizational performance (Theeboom et al., 2014).

5.5. Implications for Practice

For Sales Leaders – Coaching that allows employee autonomy empowers sales reps to take ownership of their goals, improving motivation and accountability. Studies show that autonomy allows reps to use creativity and judgment in pursuing their objectives, leading to greater empowerment and more consistent performance (Dahling et al., 2016; Tzeng et al., 2021). For instance, goal-setting sessions that align personal targets with company objectives foster ownership and increase drive (Esquivel et al., 2016). Regular feedback complements autonomy by supporting continuous development, with frequent, high-quality feedback closely tied to goal attainment (Dahling et al., 2016). Structured check-ins provide employees with constructive insights and create a culture of trust, enabling reps to refine their approaches and adapt to changing demands (Atkinson et al., 2021; Tzeng et al., 2021).

Integrating personal growth opportunities into coaching further enhances motivation, retention, and performance. Authentic leadership motivates sales reps through role modeling and self-development guidance (Azanza et al., 2018). Workshops and mentorship programs help reps develop competencies aligned with their career aspirations, fostering job satisfaction and loyalty (Coimbra & Proença, 2022; Lau et al., 2016). By incorporating feedback and promoting autonomy and growth, sales leaders build a high-performing salesforce and reduce turnover, strengthening the organization's competitive edge and ensuring long-term success.

For Organizations – Companies must transition from traditional hierarchies to flexible, employee-centered practices to meet the evolving needs of a multigenerational workforce. Flatter

organizational structures foster innovation, responsiveness, and empowerment through open communication and inclusive decision-making (Reitzig, 2022). These structures appeal to Gen Z employees, who value collaboration and want to make visible contributions, while fostering adaptability that reduces turnover and enhances workforce resilience (Flinchbaugh et al., 2018; Kumar, 2015; Pandita et al., 2023). Organizations can better respond to both market changes and employee expectations by adopting adaptable structures, creating a more engaged and productive workforce.

A management approach that is generationally sensitive is essential to engage diverse employees with varied communication preferences and leadership expectations (Bennett et al., 2012). Sustainable human resources practices, including creating flexible roles and personalized development opportunities, support these differences, fostering satisfaction and loyalty (Vraňaková et al., 2021). For example, Gen Z employees often seek rapid career advancement and purposeful work, while older generations prioritize stability and work-life balance (Zhong et al., 2023). Addressing these needs through inclusive policies strengthens productivity and organizational cohesion.

Tailored coaching strategies further enhance employee engagement by addressing Gen Z's desire for autonomy, real-time feedback, and meaningful work. High-quality LMX relationships foster mutual respect, helping employees adapt to dynamic challenges while maintaining alignment with organizational goals (Coimbra & Proença, 2022; Özgünay, 2023). Studies show that continuous feedback and personalized development plans align with Gen Z's values, reduce turnover, and increase satisfaction, cultivating a motivated, stable workforce (Dahling et al., 2016; Marodin et al., 2023). These strategies help organizations achieve

sustainable success by meeting workforce expectations and enhancing customer satisfaction.

5.6. Recommendations and Best Practices

Embed Coaching in Career Development Planning – Coaching should be integrated as a core part of each employee's career development plan. Managers should partner with employees to create clear, actionable goals that align with the organization's goals and the individual's desired career path. Regular coaching sessions should include milestones, provide resources for skills development, and offer guidance on navigating career progression. By helping employees set and achieve career goals, coaching encourages employees to engage with the company over the long term and invest in their personal growth.

Utilize Strengths-Based Development in Coaching – Employees can leverage their talents to maximize their potential by focusing on their strengths rather than their weaknesses. SBD involves identifying an employee's natural abilities (e.g., via CliftonStrengths) and aligning tasks and goals with these strengths. Coaches can provide opportunities for employees to use and refine their strengths to enhance job satisfaction, increase engagement, and promote higher performance. This empowerment from within can make employees feel more confident and capable in their roles.

Incorporate Continuous Feedback into Performance Management – Continuous feedback fosters a sense of belonging and ensures alignment with team goals. Hence, organizations must move beyond traditional annual performance reviews to conducting regular feedback sessions throughout the year to provide timely insights into performance and development areas. Employees can adjust their behaviors quickly in a culture of ongoing feedback, feel more aligned with team goals, and understand how their

contributions impact the organization. This approach allows for course corrections, celebrates successes promptly, and minimizes the anxiety caused by infrequent reviews.

Integrate Goal Setting and Reflection in Coaching – Effective coaching incorporates goal setting and reflective practices by encouraging employees to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals that align with their career objectives and organizational goals. SMART goals state specifically what is to be achieved, measure progress, are achievable within the employee's capacity, are relevant to the employee's role and the organization's objectives, and are time-bound to provide a clear deadline. Reflection is equally critical since it allows employees to assess their progress, learn from their experiences, and refine their approach. Regular self-reflection, guided by the coach, builds accountability, enhances self-awareness, and fosters resilience.

Customize Performance Management Using Individual Development Plans – Individual development plans are tailored frameworks combining employee goals and performance management strategies co-created by employees and coaches to meet specific objectives. They include timelines and actionable steps for achieving goals. Individual development plans ensure that performance expectations are aligned with each employee's strengths, career goals, and personal development to provide a highly personalized approach to growth and accountability.

Provide Access to Coaching Tools and Training – Managers must be equipped with training and tools to support effective coaching conversations, goal setting, and feedback delivery. Investing in coaching workshops, digital platforms, and skill-building sessions can help all leaders effectively engage in coaching practices. For instance, digital performance management software can facilitate

consistent feedback, track progress, and serve as a platform for employees and coaches to set and review goals.

Incorporate Employee Feedback on Coaching Effectiveness – Organizations can regularly solicit employee feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching initiatives. Gathering insights through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one feedback allows the organization to adapt coaching practices to meet employee needs better. Employee input can ensure that coaching remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with the evolving expectations of the workforce.

6. Conclusion

The engagement and retention of Gen Z employees in sales roles requires coaching strategies that integrate structured feedback, autonomy-supportive leadership, and SBD. High turnover in customer-facing sales positions reinforces the need for coaching that sustains motivation while balancing autonomy and accountability. Gen Z employees value continuous development, real-time feedback, and alignment between personal and professional growth opportunities, making these strategies essential for long-term workforce stability.

This study's original contribution lies in its integration of leadership and coaching models within a sales-specific context, addressing a gap in the existing research. While previous studies have examined broad generational work preferences, this research focused on coaching strategies tailored to sales environments, where employees experience unique performance pressures and engagement challenges. By synthesizing theoretical models with practical applications, this study established a framework for leadership strategies that align with Gen Z's workplace expectations.

The findings have implications for sales leaders, human resources professionals, and organizational decision-

makers. Implementing real-time feedback mechanisms, coaching strategies that balance autonomy with structured guidance, and strengths-based leadership can improve workforce retention and mitigate the operational and financial strain of high turnover. Without such strategies, businesses risk continued disengagement and costly employee attrition in customer-facing sales roles.

6.1. Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting its findings. As a narrative literature review, it synthesizes existing research but does not generate primary empirical data, which limits its ability to assess the direct effectiveness of coaching interventions in practice. Additionally, restricting the review to English-language sources published between 2014 and 2024 may have excluded relevant non-English studies and foundational research. Furthermore, while this study focuses on coaching strategies for Gen Z employees in sales, it does not account for potential industry-specific variations that may influence the applicability of these strategies across different sectors.

Future research should employ action research methodologies to assess the practical implementation of coaching strategies in real-world sales environments. This approach integrates research with direct intervention, enabling organizations to iteratively refine coaching frameworks through a cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Given Gen Z's preference for autonomy, career development, and continuous feedback, action research would provide real-time adaptability, allowing coaching strategies to be continuously evaluated and adjusted based on organizational needs and employee responses.

Additionally, longitudinal and mixed-method studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of coaching interventions on motivation, engagement, and retention. By tracking employees over extended periods, researchers can determine how coaching strategies contribute to sustained job satisfaction and commitment, providing empirical validation for their effectiveness. As organizations continue to navigate workforce retention challenges, further exploration of customized coaching models will be essential for building a resilient and engaged sales workforce.

REFERENCES

- Albers, N., Hizli, B., Scheltinga, B.L., Meijer, E., & Brinkman, W.P. (2023). Setting physical activity goals with a virtual coach: Vicarious experiences, personalization and acceptance. *Journal of Medical Systems*, 47 (1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10916-022-01899-9>.
- Aldabbas, H., & Bettayeb, A. (2024). The influence of psychological climate for caring and perceived insider status on the relationship between managerial caring and positive employee well-being. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 14 (1), 1-21. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v14i1.2815>.
- Armson, H., Lockyer, J.M., Zetkovic, M., Könings, K.D., & Sargeant, J. (2019). Identifying coaching skills to improve feedback use in postgraduate medical education. *Medical Education*, 53 (5), 477-493. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13818>.
- Atkinson, A., Watling, C.J., & Brand, P.L.P. (2021). Feedback and coaching. *European Journal of Pediatrics*, 181 (2), 441-446. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00431-021-04118-8>.

Avey, J.B., Luthans, F., Smith, R.M., & Palmer, N.F. (2008). Impact of positive psychological capital on employee well-being over time. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 15* (1), 17-28. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016998>.

Azanza, G., Gorgievski, M.J., Moriano, J.A., & Molero, F. (2018). Influencing salespeople's work outcomes through authentic leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 39* (7), 926-944. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/loj-05-2017-0113>.

Azila-Gbettor, E.M., Honyenuga, B.Q., Atatsi, E.A., Laryea, C.N.A., & Quarshie, A.N.K. (2023). Reviewing the influence of positive leadership on worker well-being: A comprehensive analysis. *Heliyon, 10* (2), Article e24134. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e24134>.

Basadur, M., Gelade, G.A., & Basadur, T. (2014). Creative problem-solving process styles, cognitive work demands, and organizational adaptability. *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, 50* (1), 80-99. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886313508433>.

Becker, K.L. (2021). We want connection and we do not mean wi-fi: Examining the impacts of Covid-19 on Gen Z's work and employment outcomes. *Management Research Review, 45* (5), 684-699. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/mrr-01-2021-0052>.

Bennett, J., Pitt, M., & Price, S. (2012). Understanding the impact of generational issues in the workplace. *Facilities, 30* (7/8), 278-288. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/02632771211220086>.

Bratty, A.J., & Dennis, N.C. (2024). The efficacy of employee strengths interventions on desirable workplace outcomes. *Current Psychology, 43* (18), 16514-16532. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05607-9>.

Breevaart, K., & van Woerkom, M. (2024). Building employee engagement and resilience through strengths-based leadership. *Spanish Journal of Psychology*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/sjp.2024.281>.

Coimbra, J., & Proença, T. (2022). Managerial coaching and sales performance: The influence of salesforce approaches and organisational demands. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 72* (10), 3076-3094. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijppm-10-2021-0620>.

Črešnar, R., & Nedelko, Z. (2020). Understanding future leaders: How are personal values of generations Y and Z tailored to leadership in industry 4.0? *Sustainability, 12* (11), 4417. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12114417>.

Dahling, J.J., Taylor, S.R., Chau, S.L., & Dwight, S.A. (2016). Does coaching matter? A multilevel model linking managerial coaching skill and frequency to sales goal attainment. *Personnel Psychology, 69* (4), 863-894. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12123>.

Dick, S.D. (2019). *A study of the generational differences in work values of Generations X, Y, and Z* [Doctoral dissertation]. Northcentral University.

Dimock, M. (2019). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end, and Generation Z begins*. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

Dorrance-Hall, E., & Gettings, P. (2023). Resilience processes buffer the negative associations between marginalizing communication and career outcomes for women in male-dominated workplaces. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 51* (6), 640-661. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2023.2178854>.

Dudija, N., & Apriliansyah, M.D. (2024). Psychological well-being among Generation Z employees: A literature review. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management, 12* (8). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijrm/v12i08.gp01>.

Esquivel, G.V., González, M.L., & Chávez, J.R. (2016). Ethical leadership and organizational outcomes: An empirical study in Latin America. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 133 (4), 679-692. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2338-y>.

Esteves, F., Coelho, R., & Martins, P. (2024). Emotional regulation in leadership: A meta-analytic review. *Leadership Quarterly*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2024.101680>.

Ferguson, C.L., & Lockman, J.A. (2024). Advancing doctoral student professional development through a strengths-based cohort program. *Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/sgpe-01-2024-0006>.

Flinchbaugh, C., Valenzuela, M.A., & Li, P. (2018). Developing employee socio-technical flexibility in a multigenerational workforce. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 24 (4), 567-587. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/JMO.2016.38>.

Hollis, J., & Cogburn, M. (2023). Positive organizational scholarship from a psychotherapeutic perspective. *Open Journal of Psychiatry*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpsych.2023.132008>.

Indiyati, D., Saraswati, F., & Khansha, L. (2023). The impact of career development and job satisfaction on Gen-Z employee retention in manufacturing companies in the Karawang region. *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research*, 7 (12), 1-10. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.37502/IJSMR.2024.71207>.

Jansson, L.J., & Kangas, H. (2024). The art of staying in touch – Exploring daily feedback interactions between a leader and a subordinate in remote work. *Personnel Review*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-04-2023-0301>.

Jayathilake, H.D., Daud, D., Eaw, H.C., & Annuar, N. (2021). Employee development and retention of Generation-Z employees in the post-COVID-19 workplace: A conceptual framework. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 28 (7), 2343-2364. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-06-2020-0311>.

Johnson, L.K., Nadler, R., Carswell, J., & Minda, J.P. (2021). Using the broaden-and-build theory to test a model of mindfulness, affect, and stress. *Mindfulness*, 12 (7), 1696-1707. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01633-5>.

Joo, B.K., Yoon, H.J., & Jeung, C.W. (2012). The effects of core self-evaluations and transformational leadership on organizational commitment. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 33 (6), 564-582. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731211253028>.

Jouali, Y., Jouali, J., & El Aboudi, S. (2024). Strengthening resilience and coping through coaching: The impact of behavioural, cognitive, and emotional skills. *Environment & Social Psychology*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.59429/esp.v9i8.2789>.

Jung, J., Kim, B.-J., & Kim, M.-J. (2023). The effect of unstable job on employee's turnover intention: The importance of coaching leadership. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1068293. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1068293>.

Kachhap, V., & Singh, T. (2024). Quiet quitting: A comprehensive exploration of hidden problems. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 38 (5), 23-26. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-10-2023-0214>.

Khakpoor, S., Saed, O., & Kian, A.A. (2019). Emotion regulation as the mediator of reductions in anxiety and depression in the Unified Protocol (UP) for transdiagnostic treatment of emotional disorders: Double-blind randomized clinical trial. *Trends in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1590/2237-6089-2018-0074>.

Koshksaray, A.A., Ardakani, A., Ghasemnejad, N., & Azbari, A.Q. (2020). The effect of customer orientation coaching on employee's individual performance and financial and

non-financial performance. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, 13 (3), 437-469. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-04-2019-0169>.

Kumar, S. (2015). Strategic flexibility: The evolving paradigm of strategic management. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 16 (2), 113-114. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40171-015-0095-z>.

Lan, J., Huo, Y., Cai, Z., Wong, C.S., Chen, Z., & Lam, W. (2020). Uncovering the impact of triadic relationships within a team on job performance: An application of balance theory in predicting feedback-seeking behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 93 (3), 654-686. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12310>.

Latham, G.P., Borgogni, L., & Petitta, L. (2008). Goal setting and performance management in the public sector. *International Public Management Journal*, 11 (4), 385-403. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967490802491087>.

Lau, C., Ford, J.S., Van Lieshout, R.J., Saperson, K., McConnell, M., & McCabe, R.E. (2016). Developing mentoring competency: Does a one-session training workshop have impact? *Academic Psychiatry*, 40 (3), 493-500. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-016-0537-8>.

Leach, S. (2020). Behavioural coaching: The GROW model. In J. Passmore (Ed.), *The coaches' handbook: The complete practitioner guide for professional coaches* (pp. 175-190). Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003089889-21>.

Lin, L., & Wang, K.J. (2022). Talent retention of new generations for sustainable employment relationships in Work 4.0 era – Assessment by fuzzy Delphi method. *Sustainability*, 14 (18), Article 1535. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141811535>.

Liu, D., Zhang, S., Wang, L., & Lee, T.W. (2011). The effects of autonomy and empowerment on employee turnover: Test of a multilevel model in teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96 (5), 931-945. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/A0024518>.

Lungu, A., Boone, M.S., Chen, S.Y., Chen, C.E., & Walser, R.D. (2021). Effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral coaching program delivered via video in real world settings. *Telemedicine and e-Health*, 27 (1), 47-54. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2019.0313>.

Marodin, G.A., Tortorella, G., Saurin, T.A., & Marcon, E. (2023). Shop floor performance feedback, employee's motivation and engagement: Study of a beverage distribution company. *Management Decision*, 61 (6), 1535-1553. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/md-03-2022-0271>.

Naim, M.F. (2021). Exploring learning preferences of Gen Z employees: A conceptual analysis. In T. Gerhardt & P.J. Annon (Eds.), *Applications of work integrated learning among Gen Z and Y students* (pp. 1-20). IGI Global. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-6440-0.CH001>.

Özgünay, P. (2023). New generation workstyles: A review on Generation Z working areas. *Social Science Development Journal*, 8 (1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.31567/ssd.807>.

Pandita, D., Agarwal, Y.M., & Vapiwala, F. (2023). Fostering the sustainability of organizational learning: Reviewing the role of Gen-Z employees. *Industrial and Commercial Training*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/ict-09-2022-0064>.

Peláez, M.J., Coó, C., & Salanova, M. (2020). Facilitating work engagement and performance through strengths-based micro-coaching: A controlled trial study. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 21 (4), 1265-1284. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00127-5>.

Peñalver, J., Salanova, M., Martínez, I.M., & Schaufeli, W.B. (2019). Happy-productive groups: How positive affect links to performance through social resources. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 14 (3), 377-392. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1402076>.

Popaitoon, P. (2022). Fostering work meaningfulness for sustainable human resources: A study of Generation Z. *Sustainability*, 14 (6), Article 3626. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063626>.

Reitzig, M. (2022). How to get better at flatter designs: Considerations for shaping and leading organizations with less hierarchy. *Journal of Organization Design*, 11 (1), 5-10. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41469-022-00109-7>.

Reyes Liske, J.M., & Holladay, C.L. (2016). Evaluating coaching's effect: Competencies, career mobility and retention. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37 (5), 564-582. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-12-2014-0244>.

Ribič, T., & Marič, M. (2023). Leader's possession of linguistic intelligence in relation to leader-member exchange theory. *Journal of Intelligence*, 11 (5), Article 92. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11050092>.

Rivera, M., Qiu, L., Kumar, S., & Petrucci, T. (2021). Are traditional performance reviews outdated? An empirical analysis on continuous, real-time feedback in the workplace. *Information Systems Research*, 32 (2), 517-540. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2020.0979>.

Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, Article 101860. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>.

Schroth, H. (2019). Are you ready for Gen Z in the workplace? *California Management Review*, 61 (3), 5-18. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619841006>.

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). (2022). *Report: HR pros rank top reasons for turnover*. Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/report-hr-pros-rank-top-reasons-turnover>.

Skýpalová, R., Stojanová, H., Troger, H., & Caha, Z. (2023). Human resource management across generations within the context of world of Work 4.0. *Emerging Science Journal*, 7 (3), 843-853. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.28991/ESJ-2023-07-03-013>.

Society for Human Resource Management. (2022). *Meeting the challenge: Engaging Generation Z employees in the workplace*. Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools>.

Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & Van Vianen, A.E.M. (2014). Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9 (1), 1-18. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.837499>.

Tzeng, A., Bruno, B., Cooperrider, J., Dinardo, P.B., & Baird, R.C. (2021). A structured peer assessment method with regular reinforcement promotes longitudinal self-perceived development of medical students' feedback skills. *Medical Science Educator*, 31, 445-453. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40670-021-01242-W>.

Vraňáková, N., Babel'ová, Z.G., & Chlpeková, A. (2021). Sustainable human resource management and generational diversity: The importance of the age management pillars. *Sustainability*, 13 (15), Article 8496. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158496>.

Wang, J., Van Woerkom, M., Breevaart, K., Bakker, A.B., & Xu, S. (2023). Strengths-based leadership and employee work engagement: A multi-source study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 142, Article 103859. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2023.103859>.

Zhong, X., Al Mamun, A., Masukujjaman, M., Rahman, M.K., Gao, J., & Yang, Q. (2023). Modelling the significance of organizational conditions on quiet quitting intention among Gen Z workforce in an emerging economy. *Scientific Reports*, 13 (1), Article 15438. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-42591-3>.