

VIRTUAL JOBS AS CHOICE AMONG GENERATION Z**Abadilla, Lemuel D.¹****Hugo, Shaina Jane F.²****Manzo, Jesus Adrian A.³****Pintor, Apple Erm⁴****Vale, Sweetie L.⁵**Graduate Students, College of Development Management, University of Southeastern Philippines
Mintal Campus, Davao City**ABSTRACT**

The technologically adept individuals of Generation Z have emerged as a significant demographic driving force of the shift towards digitalization in the labor market worldwide. This study was conducted to determine the factors influencing the preference of Generation Z for virtual jobs. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted from the survey among 150 Generation Z respondents with virtual jobs in Davao City. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were used in factor analysis to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, and a Scree Plot was used to graphically identify the optimal number of factors that can be extracted from the survey. Based on the findings, five key factors were determined to influence the preference of Generation Z for virtual jobs, viz: a) Empowered and Flexible Environment; b) Engaging and Rewarding Environment; c) Inclusive and Collaborative Environment; d) Nurturing and Growth-focused Environment; and e) Competitive and Stable Environment.

Keywords:

Virtual Jobs, Generation Z, job preference, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Davao City

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology and the shift towards digitalization worldwide have brought about significant changes in the traditional job market. The technologically adept individuals of Generation Z have emerged as a significant demographic driving force of this transformation. What remains poorly explored is why they shift towards virtual jobs. Knowing why this shift among Generation Z occurs and how such preferences might translate into different career patterns, organizational forms, or labor market arrangements can be crucial in designing relevant and sustainable employment strategies. The current research tries to fill the gap by exploring the motivations, expectations, and challenges arising from virtual jobs as a selection among Generation Z.

The labor market is evolving, boosting demand for IT specialists and professionals skilled in emerging technologies. Thus, workers must embrace continuous learning and adapt to flexible roles to stay relevant in the digital economy (Bannykh & Kostina, 2021). Modern employment has transformed with the rise of virtual jobs, including remote, hybrid, and fully online roles. Richards (2023) found that 87% of employees prefer remote or hybrid work options, primarily citing improved work-life balance and flexibility as the key reasons. Research shows remote work boosts job satisfaction, productivity, and employee retention while maintaining output. These models help create a cohesive company culture by promoting teamwork and supporting work-life balance (Bloom et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, the virtual job sector, which includes freelancing and customer service, has been experiencing steady growth driven by two key factors: advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Savic, 2020). The number of Filipino online workers is rising with the increasing availability of local and offshore opportunities (Villena, 2020).

Generation Z or Gen Z, iGen or postmillennial, represents individuals born between 1997 and 2012. As the most aspirational generation to date, Generation Z embraces the value of planning for the future and achieving long-term financial stability. They have an exceptional ability to pick up new software and platforms swiftly. They routinely apply digital tools to address problems. This translates into a need for modern, user-friendly technology in the workplace. Furthermore, they like collaborating in groups where ideas are freely exchanged, and diverse viewpoints are supported. Opportunities for remote employment, flexible scheduling, and separating work and personal life are all highly desired by this age (Resources for Employers, 2024).

Moreover, studies by Acharya (2019) and Kaakandikar and Gawande (2023) found that flexibility, opportunities, and financial considerations highlight the appeal of virtual jobs to the labor market. The opportunity to have more control over one's time to accommodate personal needs and spend more time with family, opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as cost savings and more earnings are only a few of these motivations to pursue online work. Maj's (2022) study further discussed that Generation Z performs better and is more satisfied in virtual teams than face-to-face ones. Their preference for virtual work is linked to higher cohesion and enjoyment. These findings reflect broader business trends that focus on employee well-being and flexibility, underscoring the benefits of virtual work for both satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

OBJECTIVE

This study was conducted to determine the factors influencing the preference of Generation Z for virtual jobs in Davao City.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Various studies and literature provide context on what Generation Z individuals value most when looking for work that can lead to a long-term commitment or satisfaction.

Empowered and Flexible Environment. Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022) suggest that Generation Z values personal development, mental well-being, and interpersonal relationships with loved ones more than their professional obligations.

This was supported by Prodanova and Kocarev (2022), who indicate that remote or virtual work contributes to enhanced autonomy, greater flexibility, improved time management, and a reduction in office-related disruptions.

Engaging and Rewarding Environment. Lallukka (2024) added that highly engaged employees often develop a strong sense of connection to their roles and the organization. This emotional bond fosters greater loyalty, improved team cohesion, and longer tenure.

Likewise, Gochangco et al. (2024) supported the Employee-Driven Recognition Program, which focuses on personalized rewards and uses digital platforms for instant recognition. It encourages peers to recognize each other's efforts, promoting a culture of appreciation.

Inclusive and Collaborative Environment. Hunt et al. (2018) mentioned that Generation Z individuals are increasingly finding value in inclusive and collaborative work environments, such as those found in virtual jobs, due to their diversity and global mindset.

Generation Z employees are found to seek jobs that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork and actively promote inclusivity, even in remote or virtual settings. Due to these considerations, Generation Z individuals can achieve a sense of belongingness and purpose, leading them to enhanced job satisfaction and commitment (Hunt et al., 2018).

Nurturing and Growth-focused Environment. Ridgard and Massyn (n.d.) state that customized approaches focusing on innovation, adaptability, and understanding the needs of Generation Z can greatly improve their skills. This leads to better productivity and long-term success. Creating a positive and inclusive work environment helps Gen Z employees thrive, allowing them to share their unique talents and perspectives. This boosts overall employee satisfaction and productivity, vital for attracting and keeping new talent.

Additionally, Maunula et al. (2024) highlight the need to support the new generation in the workforce. Mentoring and ongoing learning opportunities are essential as young professionals navigate a changing job market. This support helps them gain the skills needed to adapt and succeed.

Competitive and Stable Environment. Additionally, Kupczyk et al. (2021) state that Generation Z gives great importance to competitive remuneration. Generation Z expects their work performance to be compensated equitably which simply means that their salaries should be proportionate to their competence.

Acheampong (2020) also mentioned that additional benefits, such as financial benefits, are crucial to the employment decisions of Generation Z as they provide a sense of financial security, which can often alleviate concerns about job security.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on a sample of 150 (n=150) Gen Zs with virtual jobs in Davao City. Additionally, a quantitative study was conducted using a questionnaire with 30 items developed by the researcher that revolved around the dimensions of choice of virtual jobs among this demographic. The questionnaire was captured using a 5-point Likert scale. The resultant information gathered was efficiently processed by organizing it into a proper framework and subjected to inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Among the analytical methods applied, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was performed to measure the adequacy of partial correlations. Additionally, the correlation matrix's identity was verified by using Bartlett's

sphericity test. Lastly, the Scree Plot was employed, which is a line plot of eigenvalues examined to show the extent of the factors analyzed. (Shrestha, 2021).

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Presented in this chapter are the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as well as the interpretation and analysis of the respective results. Tables were used to illustrate the findings of this study, and the discussion and interpretation of tabular and graphical data were made for easy understanding.

Sampling Adequacy Requirement. This study employed Exploratory Factor Analysis to analyze the data gathered. Table 1 presents the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity used in factor analysis to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Shrestha (2021) states that a KMO test particularly intends to measure the adequacy of the sample size. Results show that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy has a value of 0.921, indicating adequate sampling. This further suggests a significant level of information overlap among the variables.

To supplement these findings, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity presented a chi-square value of 3106.664, a degree of freedom (df) value of 435, and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the variables are unrelated, which means that factor analysis is worthwhile for the dataset. (Shrestha, 2021).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3106.664
	df	435
	Sig.	.000

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

In Table 2, five factors have been identified by the EFA with corresponding eigenvalues of 13.735, 1.787, 1.470, 1.304, and 1.262. According to Shrestha (2021), eigenvalues represent the total variance that that specific factor can explain. An eigenvalue greater than one is considered significant, as it indicates that common variance is more present than unique variance explained by that factor.

By examining the variance percentages in the Total Variance Explained Table, it is observed that the first factor explains 13.679% of the total variance, accounting for a significant portion of the variability in the dataset. The second factor followed closely and explained 13.600% of the variance, the third factor explained 12.684%, the fourth factor explained 12.445%, and the fifth factor explained 11.994%. Though the first factor contributes the most to explaining the variance, the other four factors also had a significant impact.

In collective consideration of the five identified factors, they accounted for a total variance of 64.403%, as indicated in the table. This means that these five factors capture the majority of the underlying variation in the dataset, presenting a significant representation of the data's structure.

	Eigenvalues	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.735	13.735	45.783	45.783	4.104	13.679	13.679
2	1.787	1.787	5.958	51.741	4.080	13.600	27.279
3	1.470	1.470	4.901	56.642	3.805	12.684	39.964
4	1.304	1.304	4.347	60.989	3.734	12.445	52.409
5	1.262	1.262	4.208	65.197	3.598	11.994	64.403

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Rotated Component Matrix with 26 attributes. The analysis presented 26 items categorized into 5 factors. Out of the 30 items, four were excluded from the factorization. Figure 1 shows the Scree Plot used to graphically identify the optimal number of factors that can be extracted among the presented items. When a point where there is an "elbow" or a leveling of the plot appears in the graph, factor extraction should be stopped. (Shrestha, 2021).

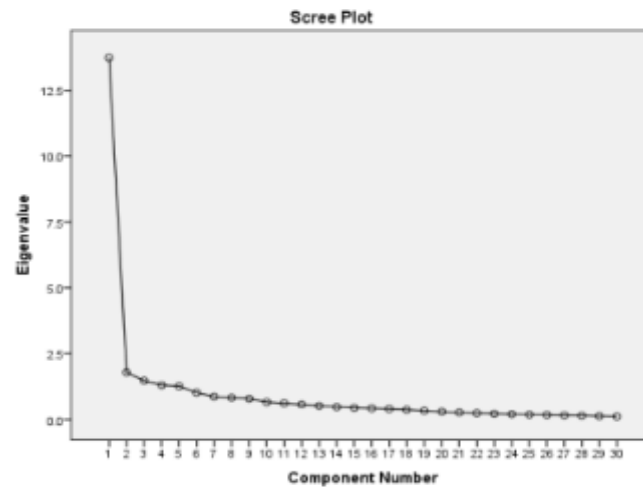


Figure 1. Scree Plot

Factors. This study was conducted to explore the factors that motivate Generation Z individuals to pursue virtual jobs.

Empowered and Flexible Environment. Table 3 shows the six items that fall under the first factor, the empowered and flexible environment, and their corresponding coefficients. As shown, the item 'I enjoy having the flexibility to run errands or attend personal appointments during work hours' obtained the highest loading coefficient of 0.748. The item 'I prefer not to be constantly monitored or micromanaged by my supervisors' obtained a loading coefficient of 0.725. The item 'I find the support and resources provided by virtual jobs for maintaining a healthy work-life balance helpful' obtained a loading coefficient of 0.704. The item 'I prefer the simple and fast recruitment process for virtual jobs' obtained a loading coefficient of 0.586. The item 'I find the virtual job culture supportive and encouraging' obtained a loading coefficient of 0.585. Furthermore, the item 'I believe that virtual jobs can help me build confidence and self-esteem' obtained a loading coefficient of 0.576. The choice of Generation Z for virtual jobs often centers on the desire for an empowered and flexible work environment that supports personal and professional growth. Virtual jobs cultivate a sense of trust and independence, enabling individuals to handle appointments and errands without the need for constant supervision. This work environment is both encouraging and supportive, and the tools that promote flexibility are well-regarded, helping to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, Gen Z views virtual jobs as opportunities for personal growth, significantly enhancing confidence and self-esteem.

This finding corroborates the conclusions drawn by Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022), which suggest that Generation Z places a higher value on personal development, mental well-being, and interpersonal relationships with loved ones than on their professional obligations. Furthermore, this aligns with the conclusions presented by Prodanova and Kocarev (2022), which indicate that remote or virtual work contributes to enhanced autonomy, greater flexibility, improved time management, and a reduction in office-related disruptions.

Item	Attributes	Factor Score	Factor
12	I enjoy having the flexibility to run errands or attend personal appointments during work hours.	0.748	Empowered and Flexible Environment
15	I prefer not to be constantly monitored or micromanaged by my supervisors.	0.725	
13	I find the support and resources provided by virtual jobs for maintaining a healthy work-life balance helpful.	0.704	
10	I prefer the simple and fast recruitment process for virtual jobs	0.586	
8	I find the virtual job culture supportive and encouraging.	0.585	
11	I believe that virtual jobs can help me build confidence and self-esteem.	0.576	

Table 3. Rotated Matrix with Group Attributes under Empowered and Flexible Environment

Engaging and Rewarding Environment. Table 4 shows the five items that fall under the second factor, the engaging and rewarding environment, and their corresponding coefficients. As shown, the item *'I find the daily challenges and problem-solving opportunities in virtual jobs rewarding'* obtained the highest loading coefficient of 0.744. The item *'I believe that virtual job experience can be transferable to other industries'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.713. The item *'I feel valued and appreciated by my employer in a virtual job setting'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.692. The item *'I find it easy to balance my work and personal life with virtual jobs'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.601. Furthermore, the item *'I find the fast-paced and dynamic nature of virtual jobs personally motivating'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.531.

Generation Z finds the daily challenges and problem-solving opportunities in virtual jobs rewarding, believes that virtual job experience can be transferable to other industries, and feels valued and appreciated by their employer in a virtual job setting. They find it easy to balance work and personal life with virtual jobs and find virtual jobs' fast-paced and dynamic nature personally motivating.

As virtual work evolves, organizations must adjust their strategies to sustain high levels of employee engagement, intrinsic motivation, and performance. It is about building a positive culture supporting professional and personal growth, even when working remotely. Virtual employees need to feel that there is potential for career progression, even in remote work settings. Providing them the flexibility to manage their own schedules and workflows promotes autonomy. When employees feel appreciated, they are more likely to remain with the organization and experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Moreover, engaged employees are more likely to be productive, innovative, and committed to their roles, while a rewarding environment boosts morale and retention.

This finding affirms with Lallukka et al. (2024) that employees who are highly engaged in their work often develop a strong sense of connection to their roles and the organization. This emotional bond fosters greater loyalty, improved team cohesion, and longer tenure. Furthermore, engaged employees are more inclined to recommend the organization to others, which can support both talent acquisition and retention efforts. Likewise, Gochangco et al. (2024) supported the Employee-Driven Recognition Program, which focuses on personalized rewards and uses digital platforms for instant recognition. It encourages peers to recognize each other's efforts, promoting a culture of appreciation. This approach aligns with the values of Generation Z which are individuality, social impact, and immediate feedback.

Item	Attributes	Factor Score	Factor
26	I find the daily challenges and problem-solving opportunities in virtual jobs rewarding.	0.744	Engaging and Rewarding Environment
24	I believe that virtual job experience can be transferable to other industries.	0.713	
27	I feel valued and appreciated by my employer in a virtual job setting.	0.692	
25	I find it easy to balance my work and personal life with virtual jobs.	0.601	
21	I find the fast-paced and dynamic nature of virtual jobs personally motivating.	0.531	

Table 4. Rotated Matrix with Group Attributes under Engaging and Rewarding Environment

Inclusive and Collaborative Environment. Table 5 shows the five items that fall under the third factor, the inclusive and collaborative environment, and their corresponding coefficients. As shown, the item *'I believe that the company is committed to creating a positive and inclusive work environment'* obtained the highest loading coefficient of 0.715. The item *'I value the opportunities for teamwork and collaboration in a virtual job setting'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.653. The item *'I find the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds personally enriching'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.643. The item *'I feel that the company values align with my own personal values'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.621. Furthermore, the item *'I enjoy helping others and making a positive impact through my work'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.533.

This suggests that Generation Z appreciates a company's commitment to a positive and inclusive work environment. Further, opportunities for teamwork and collaboration are valued, which involves interacting with people from different backgrounds. Feeling aligned with the company's values and satisfaction in making a positive impact by helping others makes virtual jobs more appealing to Generation Z.

Generation Z individuals are increasingly finding value in inclusive and collaborative work environments, such as those found in virtual jobs, due to their diversity and global mindset. Generation Z employees are found to seek jobs that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork and actively promote inclusivity, even in remote or virtual settings. The potential of virtual jobs to provide enriching, cross-cultural interactions align with these job aspirations, making them appealing to Generation Z. (Hunt et al., 2018).

Hunt et al. (2018) further affirm that due to these considerations, Generation Z individuals can achieve a sense of belongingness and purpose, leading them to enhanced job satisfaction and commitment. Moreover, virtual jobs can provide a platform for professional growth and personal development through meaningful connections and shared values. This proves that Generation Z finds an inclusive and collaborative work environment an integral factor in their job preference, career fulfillment, and motivation.

Item	Attributes	Factor Score	Factor
30	I believe that the company is committed to creating a positive and inclusive work environment.	0.715	Inclusive and Collaborative Environment
29	I value the opportunities for teamwork and collaboration in a virtual job setting.	0.653	
7	I find the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds personally enriching.	0.643	
9	I feel that the company values align with my own personal values.	0.621	
16	I enjoy helping others and making a positive impact through my work.	0.533	

Table 5. Rotated Matrix with Group Attributes under Inclusive and Collaborative Environment

Nurturing and Growth-focused Environment. Table 6 presents the five underlying indicators of the fourth factor, which is focused on a Nurturing and Growth-oriented Environment, along with their corresponding coefficients. The indicator with the highest coefficient is “*I value the opportunity to spend more time with family and friends*”, which has a coefficient of 0.773. The second highest indicator is “*I prefer a quiet and distraction-free environment for work*”, with a coefficient of 0.734. The third indicator is “*I appreciate the opportunities for skill development and learning new things from virtual jobs*”, which has a coefficient of 0.620. The indicator “*I value the opportunity to work from home or in remote locations with virtual jobs*” has a coefficient of 0.583. Lastly, the indicator “*I appreciate the diversity of people I interact with in a virtual job environment*” has the lowest coefficient at 0.559.

Therefore, Generation Z places a high value on the opportunity to spend more time with family and friends. They prefer a quiet and distraction-free environment for work. This generation appreciates the opportunities for skill development and learning new things from virtual jobs. They value the opportunity to work from home or in remote locations with virtual jobs. Additionally, they appreciate the diversity of people they interact with in a virtual job environment.

This study confirms the findings of Ridgard and Massyn (n.d.), which state that customized approaches focusing on innovation, adaptability, and understanding the needs of Generation Z can greatly improve their skills. This leads to better productivity and long-term success. Creating a positive and inclusive work environment helps Gen Z employees thrive, allowing them to share their unique talents and perspectives. This boosts overall employee satisfaction and productivity, which is vital for attracting and keeping new talent. Additionally, this study supports the work of Maunula et al. (2024) by highlighting the need to support the new generation in the workforce. Mentoring and ongoing learning opportunities are essential as young professionals navigate a changing job market. This support helps them gain the skills needed to adapt and succeed.

Item No.	Attributes	Factor Score	Factor
18	I value the opportunity to spend more time with family and friends.	0.773	Nurturing and Growth-Focused Environment
19	I prefer a quiet and distraction-free environment for work	0.734	
17	I appreciate the opportunities for skill development and learning new from virtual jobs.	0.620	
22	I value the opportunity to work from home or in remote locations with virtual jobs.	0.583	
20	I appreciate the diversity of people I interact with in a virtual job environment.	0.559	

Table 6. Rotated Matrix with Group Attributes under Nurturing and Growth-focused Environment

Competitive and Stable Environment. Table 7 shows the five items that fall under the fifth factor, the competitive and stable environment, and their corresponding coefficients. As shown, the item *'I am concerned about the long-term stability of virtual jobs.'* obtained the highest loading coefficient of 0.724. The item *'I find the compensation and benefits offered in virtual jobs competitive'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.712. The item *'I believe that working in virtual jobs can provide opportunities for career advancement'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.701. The item *'I appreciate the chance to develop my patience and resilience in a virtual job environment'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.654. Furthermore, the item *'I find the virtual job environment stimulating and challenging'* obtained a loading coefficient of 0.565.

This shows that though Generation Z is concerned about the long-term stability of virtual jobs, the competitiveness of compensation and benefits offered provides compromise to the concern. Additionally, opportunities for career advancement, patience, and resilience in virtual jobs appeal to Gen Z employees, further adding that virtual jobs can be both stimulating and challenging.

This is parallel with the discussion provided by Kupczyk et al. (2021), which states that Generation Z gives great importance to competitive remuneration. Generation Z expects their work performance to be compensated equitably which simply means that their salaries should be proportionate to their competence. Additionally, Acheampong (2020) mentioned that additional benefits, such as financial benefits, are crucial to the employment decisions of Generation Z as they provide a sense of financial security, which can often alleviate concerns about job security.

Item No.	Attributes	Factor Score	Factor
2	I am concerned about the long-term stability of virtual jobs.	0.724	Competitive and Stable Environment
4	I find the compensation and benefits offered in virtual jobs competitive.	0.712	
3	I believe that working in virtual jobs can provide opportunities for career advancement.	0.701	
1	I appreciate the chance to develop my patience and resilience in a virtual job environment	0.654	
6	I find the virtual job environment stimulating and challenging.	0.565	

Table 7. Rotated Matrix with Group Attributes under Competitive and Stable Environment

Framework Developed Based on Findings

Empowered and Flexible Environment. This factor is focused on autonomy, decision-making, and the ability of employees to shape their work experience. Further, this emphasizes the importance of adaptable work hours and locations, catering to individual schedules and preferences. Supported by Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022), this demonstrates that Generation Z values personal development, mental well-being, and interpersonal relationships with loved ones more than their professional obligations.

Engaging and Rewarding Environment. This factor highlights that engaged employees are more likely to be productive, innovative, and committed to their roles, while a rewarding environment boosts morale and retention.

Further, Lallukka et al. (2024) stated that highly engaged employees often develop a strong sense of connection to their roles and the organization.

Inclusive and Collaborative Environment. This factor is focused on diversity, equity, and the importance of creating a workplace where all voices are heard and valued. It emphasizes teamwork, communication, and sharing ideas among diverse groups of people within the workplace. Hunt et al. (2018) support that these considerations lead Generation Z individuals to achieve a sense of belongingness and purpose, eventually enhancing job satisfaction and commitment.

Nurturing and Growth-focused Environment. This factor is focused on creating a positive and inclusive work environment that helps Gen Z employees thrive, allowing them to share their unique talents and perspectives. This is confirmed by Ridgard and Massyn (n.d.), which state that customized approaches focusing on innovation, adaptability, and understanding the needs of Generation Z can greatly improve their skills.

Competitive and Stable Environment. This factor is focused on salary, benefits, and career advancement as critical components of employee satisfaction that counteract any concerns about job security in virtual work and address economic and organizational stability. This is supported by Kupczyk et al. (2021), stating that Generation Z employees expect their salaries to be proportionate to their competence.

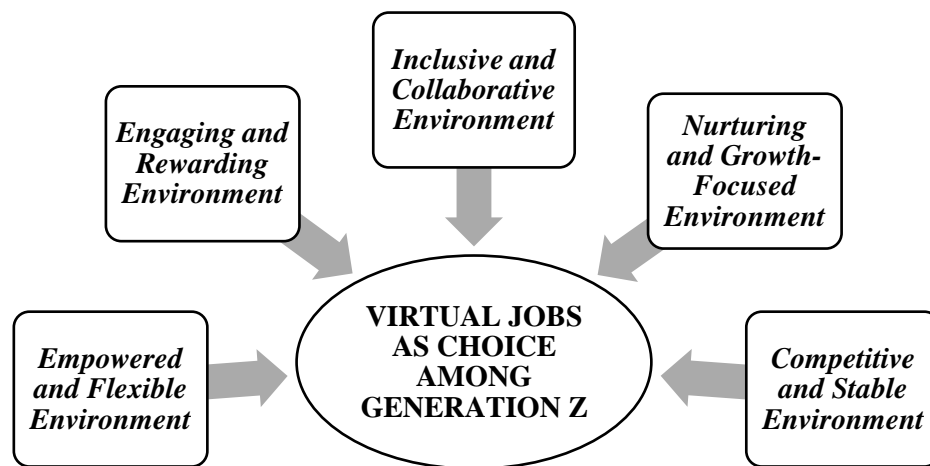


Figure 2. Factors that motivate Generation Z in choosing Virtual Jobs in Davao City

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, five key factors were determined to influence the preference of Generation Z for virtual jobs. Particularly, an empowered and flexible work environment, an engaging and rewarding work environment, an inclusive and collaborative work environment, a nurturing and growth-focused work environment, and a competitive and stable work environment are significantly preferable for Generation Z which leads to their choice of pursuing virtual jobs. Together, these factors shape the preference of Generation Z for virtual jobs, which highlights flexibility, personal growth, inclusivity, and a sense of purpose. Virtual job openings that align with these priorities will likely attract Gen Z workers successfully.

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