Journal of Agricultural Education, 66(4), Article 13
https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.v66i4.3203

Exploring Work Expectations of National FFA Alumni Belonging to Generation Z

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Abstract

With the accelerating pace of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer retirements from the workforce, agricultural companies need to understand how to recruit and retain the next generation of workers. The generation currently entering the workforce has been labeled Generation Z. The purpose of this study was to explore the career expectations among National FFA members belonging to Generation Z and describe the relationship between the respondents' demographics and the factors associated with employer attractiveness. The population for this study were past FFA members between the ages of 18 and 25 who were a part of one of three groups: American FFA Degree recipients, FFA Alumni and Supporters, or Forever Blue Network. Data were collected in the spring of 2023. Conclusions include agricultural employers must incorporate the five workplace attractiveness values (social, development, economic, interest, application) into their organizational culture, policies, and practices; Generation Z employees who are unwilling to move for the job are less likely to be willing to meet company expectations beyond a typical work week. Agricultural employers can use this study to tailor their recruitment strategies, work expectations, and support mechanisms for Generation Z employees. Agriculture teachers can use this study in their preparation of School-Based Agricultural Education students for agricultural careers. This can help ensure the agricultural industry's growth and relevance by aligning education, career pathways, and employer engagement with the preferences of Generation Z.

Introduction

The United Nations (2017) projects that the world's population will reach 9.7 billion by 2050 leading to a need for a 70% increase in food production (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014). As such, the world's farmers will face significant challenges in meeting this increase in food demand, should these patterns materialize as expected (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2022).

Increased engagement of younger demographics in the global agricultural sector is required to confront the challenge of ensuring adequate food supplies for a growing population and a progressively interconnected economy (IFAD, 2014). Young people aged 12 to 27 in 2024, known as the Generation Z cohort, make up around 16 percent of the world's population and represent a sizeable pool of employees that, with the right skills, could help the agricultural industry meet its labor demands (Feldt et al., 2019).

USDA employment report summaries from 1980 to the present (Coulter et al., 1980, 1985, 1990; Fernandez et al., 2020; Goecker et al., 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015), show an increasing deficit of college graduates in food, agriculture, renewable natural resources compared to employment opportunities in these areas. Currently, this deficit is filled by graduates in related disciplines (Fernandez et al., 2020) who may

Note. Support for this research was provided by the National FFA Organization

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not begin employment with needed agricultural skills and experiences. To effectively meet the priorities of food security, sustainable energy, and environmental quality the U.S. needs more college graduates with a focus within food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and the environment (Goecker et al., 2015).

Despite the growing body of research on Generation Z, studies specifically examining the role of formal education in shaping their workplace expectations remain limited. Iorgulescu (2016) suggested that Generation Z shares several characteristics with Millennials, particularly in their expectations regarding workplace culture and support systems. Kuron et al. (2015) further highlighted the challenges associated with transitioning from academia to the professional workforce, attributing them to differences in sociological, cultural, and structural aspects between educational institutions and workplaces. Kuron et al. (2015) added that theories related to school-to-work transition and career development indicate that the shift from education to employment significantly shapes workplace expectations and career-related decisions.

As the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers in the workforce retire, Generation Z is currently entering the workplace. With this new generation in the workforce comes new workplace expectations. Moore et al. (2015) argued that expectations are people's ideas concerning what they believe the organization will offer in terms of salary, career advancement, job stability, benefits, and training. Others have found that expectations are related to concepts such as inspirational (Wong et al., 2008), beliefs (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008), or wants (Ng et al., 2010). Angeline (2011) highlighted that everyone in a generation might demonstrate certain expectations, work ethics, and actions shaped by significant life events, cultural background, and the sensory stimuli they encounter.

Given variations in work preferences and workplace expectations among different generations, employers must grasp the distinct preferences of Generation Z to promote efficient communication and foster a positive work atmosphere (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Schullery, 2013). A comprehensive understanding of the motivations of Generation Z is vital for boosting productivity within the workforce. Seifert et al. (2023) found significant differences between Baby Boomers and Generation Z in work ethic as measured by the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile. Dolot (2018) found that although Generation Z employees were willing to travel for work, they were not as willing to relocate for work. Additionally, Nurjanah and Indawati (2021) stated that Generation Z employees want employers to provide flexibility to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Our study focused on graduates of School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) who were a part of the Generation Z cohort. On the secondary level, SBAE with its three intra-curricular components of classroom instruction, experiential learning through supervised experiences, and leadership development through the National FFA Organization plays a role in the agriculture workforce pipeline. The integration of these three elements gives students the framework they need to acquire the life skills and subject matter that will equip them for adulthood, regardless of their desired career paths (Dailey et al., 2001). The objective of the National FFA Organization to equip students for agricultural careers may play a crucial role in offering educational opportunities to cultivate interest in agricultural professions (Wolf et al., 2020). Talbert and Balschweid (2006) affirmed that FFA members participated in college, community, and career preparation at higher rates than those who were not part of FFA. The career focus of agricultural education is supported by the FFA mission, which states "FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" (National FFA Organization, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The Attraction–Selection–Attrition (ASA) theory (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 2000) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. To understand employer attractiveness, researchers have

investigated the determinants that influence individuals' decisions to join or exit organizations. The ASA theory explains the concept of self-selection, positing that individuals are drawn to environments that align with their characteristics and depart from those that do not (Ritz & Waldner, 2011). Major features of the theory include values, work environment, nature of the job, and culture. Chapman et al. (2005) described the factors strongly correlated with job and workplace attractiveness: the types of work, working conditions, cultural norms, company image, employee-employer fit, and opinions of hiring process.

Bretz et al. (1989) utilized ASA theory in their inquiry, revealing a more intricate landscape of workforce homogeneity than previously presumed. In a similar vein, Schneider et al. (2000) employed ASA to investigate individual variances impacting organizational efficacy, whereas Ployhart et al. (2006) scrutinized its influence on the emergence of human capital. By describing the processes of attraction, selection, and attrition, ASA theory provides essential insights into the formation, maintenance, and evolution of organizational cultures. Nonetheless, organizations must navigate the intricate balance between nurturing resilience and addressing the constraints posed by diversity and flexibility.

Purpose & Research Questions

This study explored the career expectations among National FFA members belonging to Generation Z and aimed to describe the relationship between the respondents' demographics and the factors/values of employer attractiveness. Two research questions guided this study.

1. What factors of employer attractiveness are considered important to past FFA members belonging to Gen. Z?
2. What is the relationship between the respondents' demographics and the factors/values of employer attractiveness?

Methodology

The survey was conducted using Qualtrics and distributed to the sample via email addresses supplied by the National FFA Organization. The survey questions were approved by the Purdue University IRB for ethical purposes. We used Dillman et al. (2014) to guide survey construction and distribution. Contacts included a pre-notice email, an initial request to participate email, and three reminder emails. Following Dillman et al. recommendations, the subject line for each email was different. We also varied the day of week and time of day each email went out. Additionally, the National FFA Organization provided incentives in the form of 20 Amazon eGift Cards valued at $50 each awarded through random selection of respondents who entered the drawing.

The population for this study were past FFA members between the ages of 18 and 25 in 2022. The sampling frame was National FFA Organization databases of American FFA Degree recipients, FFA Alumni members, and Forever Blue Network subscribers. These three groups were chosen as they provided the largest databases of National FFA members who were out of high school and part of the Generation Z cohort. The National FFA through their Program Evaluation and Assessment Specialist, Programs and Events Division provided the researchers with 20,686 American FFA Degree, 2,000 FFA Alumni, and 1,796 Forever Blue Network email addresses. Any duplicate emails were removed, so participants were only in one group. We randomly selected recipients by FFA Region based on the proportion of National FFA members in each region to 2022 total national membership.

Sample size for each of the three groups was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula chart. We next adjusted to oversample because of expected undeliverable email addresses and less than 100% response rate. For a population of 20,686 American FFA Degree recipients, a sample size of 377 is required. We expected American FFA Degree recipients to have a high connection with FFA, so using an

expected response rate of 75%, we oversampled to 500. For FFA Alumni and Forever Blue Network members, we expected them to have lower connection with FFA, so used an expected response rate of 65%. For a population of 2,000 FFA Alumni, a sample size of 322 is required; however, we oversampled to 500. For a population of 1,796 Forever Blue Network members, a sample size of 317 is required; however, we oversampled to 500. This resulted in an overall sample of 1,500.

For American Degree recipients, we had 66 useable responses. For FFA Alumni members, we had 5 useable responses. For Forever Blue Network members, we had 73 useable responses. We combined all respondents into one file with 144 total responses for an overall 9.6% response rate. A study by Baruch and Holtom (2008) on survey response rate levels for published research has been used in social science research studies (e.g., Lamm & Priest, 2019) as justification for data analysis and study publication with low response rates such as ours. Due to the survey's low response rate, nonresponse error poses a danger to external validity. We used Lindner et al. (2001) Method 1, comparison of early to late respondents, to investigate this error. ANOVAs for the scales by demographic variables showed no statistical differences at the a priori .05 level.

Funding for this research was provided by a major agricultural company through the National FFA Organization. This company, other agricultural companies, National FFA staff, and university researchers provided input into the specific questions. The questions and response prompts within the questions reflected essential information agricultural employers wanted to know about these Generation Z participants. Neither the agricultural company nor National FFA Organization influenced data collection, analyses, and conclusions/recommendations for this study. The instrument consisted of three sections: demographics, Employer Attractiveness Scale, and workplace attraction questions.

Demographics included year of high school graduation, gender, ethnicity/race, whether received free lunch in high school as an indicator of socio-economic status, work/education status at 6-months post-high school graduation, permanent address location using zip code as an indication of rural/urban status, and willingness to move for a job. Responses were not forced choice, so not all respondents answered all questions.

Employer Attractiveness Scale (EmpAt), developed by Berthon et al. (2005), is a 25-item instrument to assess dimensions of employer attractiveness and career attractiveness/detractors. The scale is comprised of the following: Application factor which includes the capacity to assume duties that correspond with an individual's career goals and areas of interest; Development factor refers to the range of chances an employer provides to support personal and professional advancement; Economic factor is focused on the concrete financial advantages provided by an employer, encompassing salary, bonuses, job security, and other monetary perks; Interest factor pertains to the level of stimulation and engagement offered by an employer within the work environment; and Social factor which refers to the interpersonal and cultural components of the workplace, emphasizing the social environment and the quality of interactions between coworkers. Respondents were asked to rate each statement for how it reflects the attractiveness to them for working for an agricultural company. This section consisted of a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (To a very little extent) to 7 (To a very great extent).

We developed three construct scales from workplace attraction individual items. We used Cronbach's alpha as an indicator of scale reliability. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommended an alpha of 0.7 or higher as acceptable. One of our constructed scales had an alpha of .64. Some (Peterson, 1994; Taber, 2018) have stated that 0.6 or higher for exploratory studies is adequate. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a comprehensive review conducted by university faculty and National FFA Staff for both face and content validity. These people were selected based on their prior knowledge of the National FFA Organization, expertise in survey development, and educational background. Based on this review, some questions were reworded for clarity.

The Company Benefit Scale was derived from six items (company contribution to environmental sustainability; company impact/makes a difference in society; company values reflect my values; salary; benefits other than salary, e.g. insurance, retirement; personal fulfillment/I can make a difference) in response to the stem, *"I would choose a career with an agricultural company because of…"*. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.64. Respondents selected the number from 0 = not at all to 10 = essential that best fit how they valued the item in choosing an agricultural career.

The Company Expectations Scale was based on six items (work 40 hours per week; work 60-80 hours per week; work weekends; travel for multiple nights away from home; stay away from home for multiple weeks at a time; be available outside regular work hours/days for email, phone, video-conference) in response to the stem, *"What is the level you are willing to meet the expectation of a company?"*. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72. Respondents selected the number 1 = Never/Almost Never, 2 = Seldom/Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Usually/Most of the Time for the level they were willing to meet the expectation of a company.

The Workplace Conditions Scale was constructed from five items (physically safe; supportive of mental well-being; supportive of emotional well-being; supportive of parents, guardians, and caregivers with their family needs; supportive of workers with disabilities/special needs) in response to the stem, *"I would choose a career with an agricultural company because the workplace is…"*. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. Respondents selected the number from 0 = not at all to 10 = essential that best fit how they valued the item in choosing an agricultural career.

Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were used to address research question one. Independent samples *t* tests were conducted for each demographic variable with only two categories to address research question two. For Move Distance, which had more than two categories, Multivariate Analysis of Variance was conducted. Statistical significance was set a priori at .05. For the independent samples *t* tests, a Bonferroni correction changed the significance level needed to .01. To evaluate the practical significance of the results from this study, Cohen's *d* effect size values are reported.

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Respondents who experienced the spring 2020 COVID school closure as a high school student or college freshman were coded as Post-COVID (57%) while those graduating high school in 2018 or earlier were coded as Pre-COVID (43%). There were more female respondents (67%) than male respondents (32%), with less than 1% identifying as non-binary. Regarding ethnicity/race, 90.9% identified as White, 3.5% as Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx, and 1.4% each as Asian or Asian American and Biracial or Multiracial. The question about receiving free or reduced lunch at their schools was designed to assess the participants socioeconomic status. Concerning free lunch, 71% answered that they did not receive free lunch, while 27% indicated they did. Two-thirds were enrolled in a 4-year college at six months post-high school graduation. We used zip codes and Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes to categorize permanent home address as rural or urban. Three-fourths coded into an urban location. Respondents were asked "*If my employer required me to move to keep my position, I would be willing to move.*" The plurality of respondents selected were willing to move within their current state (32.6%), while 16.7% would resign rather than move.

Table 1

Respondents' Demographics (n = 144)

Variables	*Categories*	*f*	*%*
Year of Graduation			
	Pre-COVID (2018 or earlier)	62	43.0
	Post-COVID (2019-2022)	82	57.0
	Total	144	100
Gender			
	Female	97	67.4
	Male	46	31.9
	Non-Binary	1	0.7
	Total	144	100
Ethnicity/Race			
	American Indian/Alaska Native (recognized tribe member)	1	0.7
	Asian American	2	1.4
	Biracial/Multiracial	2	1.4
	Hispanic/Latino/Latinx	5	3.5
	Prefer not to answer	3	2.1
	White	131	90.9
	Total	144	100.0
Free Lunch			
	No	102	70.8
	Yes	39	27.1
	Prefer not to answer	3	2.1
	Total	144	100.0
Post-HS Status			
	Attended 4-year college/university	95	66.0
	Work, military, vocational/2-year college	49	34.0
	Total	144	100
Location			
	Urban	106	74.6
	Rural	36	25.4
	Total	142	100
Willingness to Move			
	Not Move, resign position	24	16.7
	Within current state	47	32.6
	Within current U.S region	26	18.0
	Anywhere in U.S.	25	17.4
	Internationally/To another country	22	15.3
	Total	144	100

Table 2 shows the respondents' EmpAt scale scores. The scales are arranged from the highest to the lowest mean. Social Value, which includes a positive working environment, had the highest Mean. Development Value, concerned with employee recognition, self-worth, and development; Economic Value, concerned with financial aspects such as competitive salaries, compensation packages, job security, and promotion opportunities; and Interest Value, those encompassing an interesting and demanding career and encouragement of innovation and creativity had lower means. Application Value, an employer providing employees with the opportunity to apply their expertise and share their knowledge with others, had the lowest mean. All five scales had at least one respondent with a mean of 7 which is the highest possible value. Even though Social Value had the highest mean, it had at least one respondent with a mean of 1 which is the lowest possible value.

Table 2

Respondents' EmpAt Scores

Scales	*n*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
Social Value	143	1	7	5.94	.90
Development Value	143	1.2	7	5.78	.89
Economic Value	144	1.2	7	5.77	.98
Interest Value	143	2	7	5.65	.96
Application Value	141	1.4	7	5.57	1.02

Note. Possible scale values: 1 = To a very little extent. 2 = To a little extent. 3 = To a small extent. 4 = to a moderate extent. 5 = To a large extent. 6 = To a great extent. 7 = To a very great extent.

Multivariate ANOVA was conducted for Move Distance and EmpAt scales. Independent samples *t* tests were conducted for other demographic variables and EmpAt scales. None were significant. Effect sizes were small.

Table 3 shows the Company Benefits Scale, which indicates the degree of emphasis respondents place on benefits provided by the company if respondents were choosing a career with the company. The scale mean was 7.62 with a standard deviation of 1.11, which was toward the essential end of the scale values.

Table 3

Reasons for Choosing an Agricultural Company

Scale	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's alpha
Company Benefits	138	7.62	1.11	.64

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. to 10= Essential.

Table 4 shows the Company Expectations Scale, which indicates the level of willingness respondents were to meet "above and beyond" expectations of an employer. The scale mean was 3.19 with a standard deviation of .69, which was in the sometimes range of scale values.

Table 4

Willingness to Meet Company's Expectations

Scale	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's alpha
Company Expectations	143	3.19	.69	.72

Note. Possible scale values: 1 = Never/Almost Never 2 = Seldom/Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Usually/Most of

Table 5 shows the Workplace Conditions Scale, which indicates the degree of emphasis respondents place on safety and supportiveness provided by the company if respondents were choosing a career with the company. The scale mean was 7.88 with a standard deviation of 1.65, which was toward the essential end of the scale.

Table 5

Workplace Conditions Scale

Scale	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's alpha
Workplace Conditions	142	7.88	1.65	.88

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. to 10: Essential

Tables 6 and 7 show the results of the comparison of respondents' Company Benefits Scale across the variables of gender, urban/rural location, education level, pre/post-COVID graduation status, ethnicity, free lunch status, and Move Distance. None of the variables were significant. All of the Cohen's *d* effect sizes were small.

Table 6

Respondents' Reasons for Choosing a Career with an Agricultural Company by Demographic Variables

Variables	Categories	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Gender							
	Female	95	7.73	1.13	1.851	.066	.341
	Male	43	7.35	1.05			
	Total	138	7.61	1.11			
Location							
	Urban	102	7.69	1.15	1.524	.130	.302
	Rural	34	7.36	0.97			
	Total	136	7.61	1.11			
Education							
	College	93	7.64	1.07	.360	.720	.065
	Other	45	7.57	1.20			
	Total	138	7.62	1.11			
COVID							
	Pre COVID	80	7.53	1.13	-1.069	.287	-.184
	Post COVID	58	7.74	1.09			
	Total	138	7.62	1.11			
Ethnicity							
	White	129	6.12	2.25	-.474	.636	-.149
	Other	11	6.55	3.24			
	Total	140	6.16	2.33			
Free lunch							
	Yes	38	7.78	1.24	1.035	.302	.198
	No	98	7.55	1.07			
	Total	136	7.62	1.12			

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. to 10= Essential.

Table 7

Respondents' Reasons for Choosing a Career with an Agricultural Company by Move Distance

Variable	Categories	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Move Distance						
	Not Move	21	7.71	1.22	1.540	.194
	Current state	26	7.40	1.02		
	Current U.S. region	24	7.39	1.09		
	Anywhere in U.S.	25	7.93	1.02		
	International	22	7.90	1.26		
	Total	138	7.62	1.11		

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. to 10= Essential.

Tables 8 and 9 show the results of the comparison of the Company Expectations Scale across the demographic variables. Move Distance was significant at the a priori .05 level. A Tukey HSD post-hoc test showed Not Move was statistically significantly different from International with the other categories not different. None of the other variables were significant. All of the Cohen's *d* effect sizes were small.

Table 8

Respondents' Willingness to Meet Company Expectations by Demographic Variables

Variables	Categories	*n*	*M*	SD	*t*	*p*	*d*
Gender							
	Female	97	3.19	.66	-.093	.926	-.017
	Male	45	3.21	.75			
	Total	142	3.20	.68			
Location							
	Urban	106	3.16	.71	-.977	.330	-.190
	Rural	35	3.29	.68			
	Total	141	3.19	.70			
Education							
	College	94	3.15	.67	-.950	.343	-.167
	Other	49	3.26	.74			
	Total	143	3.19	.69			
COVID							
	Pre COVID	82	3.09	.73	-1.920	.057	-.385
	Post COVID	61	3.32	.63			
	Total	143	3.19	.69			
Ethnicity							
	White	130	3.20	.69	.608	.544	.177
	Other	13	3.08	.77			
	Total	143	3.19	.69			
Free lunch							
	Yes	39	3.38	.76	2.019	.045	.381
	No	101	3.12	.65			
	Total	140	3.19	.69			

Note. Possible scale values: 1 = Never/Almost Never 2 = Seldom/Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Usually/Most of

Table 9

Respondents' Willingness to Meet Company Expectations by Move Distance

Variables	Categories	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Move Distance						
	Not Move	24	2.89_a	.73	2.560	.041
	Current state	46	3.09	.53		
	Current U.S. region	26	3.22	.64		
	Anywhere in U.S.	25	3.34	.70		
	International	22	3.51_a	.87		
	Total	143	3.19	.69		

Note. Possible scale values: 1 = Never/Almost Never 2 = Seldom/Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Usually/Most of

Note. Means with same subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level by Tukey HSD post hoc test.

Tables 10 and 11 show the results of the comparison of the Workplace Conditions Scale across the demographic variables. None of the variables were statistically significant. All of the Cohen's *d* effect sizes were small.

Table 10

Respondents' Workplace Conditions Scale Scores by Demographic Variables

Variables	Categories	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Gender							
	Female	96	8.04	1.66	1.807	.073	.326
	Male	45	7.51	1.62			
	Total	141	7.87	1.68			
Location							
	Urban	105	7.95	1.55	1.169	.244	.228
	Rural	35	7.58	1.93			
	Total	140	7.86	1.65			
Education							
	College	95	8.08	1.53	2.071	.040	.369
	Other	47	7.47	1.83			
	Total	142	7.88	1.65			
COVID							
	Pre COVID	83	7.79	1.75	-.752	.453	-.128
	Post COVID	59	8.00	1.51			
	Total	142	7.88	1.65			
Ethnicity							
	White	129	7.89	1.63	.384	.701	.112
	Other	13	7.71	1.93			
	Total	142	7.88	1.65			
Free lunch							
	Yes	39	8.07	1.77	.795	.428	.150
	No	100	7.83	1.59			
	Total	139	7.89	1.64			

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. To 10= Essential.

Table 11

Respondents' Workplace Conditions Scale Scores by Move Distance

Variable	Category	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Move Distance						
	Not Move	22	7.97	1.41	.776	.542
	Current state	47	7.91	1.46		
	Current U.S. region	26	7.39	1.97		
	Anywhere in U.S.	25	8.16	1.76		
	International	22	7.96	1.78		
	Total	142	7.88	1.65		

Note. Possible scale values: 0 = Not at all. To 10= Essential.

Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Because of the low response rate, the reader is cautioned not to make broad generalizations. Additionally, a greater percentage of our respondents than the population of FFA members were White and female. Conclusions and recommendations apply only to the population of National FFA past members in Generation Z represented by the respondents in this study. However, the results and conclusions from this study contribute to the existing body of literature as our study appears to be the first looking at Gen Z and agricultural companies.

Respondents viewed all five employer attractiveness values as large to great extent when looking at potential employers i.e., all five scales had means above 5.5 and below 6.0. From the study results, we can say that these FFA members in Generation Z expect companies to meet all values (social, development, economic, interest, and application) when looking at employer attractiveness. Additionally, Social Value, which includes a positive working environment and support from employers, had the highest mean. This supports Hershatter and Epstein, (2010) in which they examined the expectations of college students regarding the level of support they anticipated from prospective employers. This included factors such as job security, a positive work atmosphere, an appropriate level of challenge, and effective communication with their supervisor or mentor. Also, according to Ozkan and Solmaz (2015) the social environment plays a crucial role for Generation Z, who are accustomed to working in a team-oriented setting. Furthermore, being attracted to a supportive workplace (Social Value) was reinforced by Eger et al. (2019) where they found that their respondents attached the highest importance to Social Value. The impact of the social environment is a significant element in shaping the organizational culture as employees enter the business community.

Businesses can address all five values by incorporating these values into their organization's culture, policies, and practices. However, there were differences in the responses, which implies there are variations in how individuals see the values from their own distinct perspective i.e., at least one respondent had a mean scale score of 2 or lower for each of the five scales. Additionally, these FFA members in Generation Z would be attracted to a workplace that meets the five values regardless of their gender, ethnicity/race, social-economic status, or year of graduation. This is in line with the study by Krommendijk (2020) where he found that irrespective of generation or age, all five values are significant factors to consider when evaluating employer attractiveness or preferences.

The analysis of respondents' reasons for choosing a career with an agricultural company based on company benefits by various demographic variables revealed no significant differences among the variables. Similar to employer attractiveness, we concluded that company benefits are important to attracting Generation Z employees regardless of demographic differences. Overall, this finding indicates that Generation Z FFA members have similar reasons for pursuing careers in agriculture across various

demographic groups, highlighting the widespread appeal and stability of agricultural careers regardless of individual background or circumstances. This finding contrasts with Jelinski et al. (2008), who identified three key factors influencing entry into food animal-related practice: 1) rural background, 2) being male, and 3) respondents' self-assessment.

Regarding respondents' willingness to meet company expectations, the variable of Move Distance was statistically significant. No other variable was significant for the Company Expectations Scale. The FFA members in Generation Z who would resign before moving for their job were the least willing to "go above and beyond" for company expectations. However, those willing to move internationally were the most willing to meet company expectations. These company expectations include working 60 or more hours per week, working weekends, traveling away from home for work during the week, and being available for work-related tasks outside of regular work hours. This finding of some in Generation Z who are not willing to move for work is supported by Dolot (2018). While previous generations, such as Baby Boomers, often equated long years of service with loyalty to a company, Generation Z appears to prioritize independence and flexibility over traditional work norms. Rather than committing to standard work week expectations, they are more inclined to identify themselves as self-employed professionals with a continuous stream of freelance opportunities. Our conclusion that some Generation Z FFA Alumni are unwilling to move for work is supported by Nurjanah and Indawati (2021) who stated Generation Z employees place a high importance on maintaining proximity to their family, friends, and established local connections to help maintain a healthy work-life balance.

For respondents' perceptions of workplace conditions when choosing a career with an agricultural company none of the variables had statistically significant differences after applying the Bonferroni correction. Regardless of demographics, these Generation Z employees value a workplace that is physically safe and supportive of their well-being and needs. This suggests workplaces that align with these Generation Z employees' values may contribute to positive long-term career decisions.

Implications

For Practice

These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how demographic factors influence job preference, adding depth to existing theories on employer attractiveness. Agricultural companies should highlight their inclusivity and work-life balance policies to attract Generation Z workforce.

Attention should be paid that some of Generation Z are unwilling to move out of their current state, current U.S region, or outside the U.S. to meet company expectations. However, others are willing to travel internationally to meet company expectations. Therefore, agricultural companies may have to provide different support mechanisms and expectations to these two groups.

Recommendations

For Practice

Agricultural companies should be aware of the next generation (Gen Z) of employees' workplace attractiveness factors/preferences so that they can recruit and retain an appropriate workforce. This study showed that respondents did not differ in the five values by demographics; consequently, agricultural companies must base their work expectations for new Gen Z employees on all five values.

School-Based Agricultural Education teachers can use this study in their preparation of students for agricultural careers. This can help ensure agricultural industry's growth and relevance by aligning education, career pathways, and employer engagement with the preferences of Generation Z.

Future Research

This study was of FFA members who had graduated high school. Although Alumni and Supporters and Forever Blue Network are open to all, it may be that our respondents were more active in FFA than the typical high school School-Based Agricultural Education student. Further research should be done to see if a relationship exists between level of involvement in FFA experiences in high school and how members of Gen Z view workplace attractiveness. Future studies should be conducted with more diverse samples to validate and expand on these findings because the predominance of White, female respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings across more diverse populations of Generation Z.

The Pew Research Center (Dimock, 2019) is the foremost agency in research on generations. It is beginning to gather data on the generation born after Gen Z, currently referred to as Gen Alpha. As members of Gen Alpha enter middle and high school, it will be important to conduct workplace attractiveness research on this group.

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