Gen Z at Work in Central and Eastern Europe

Socioeconomic, Technological and Cultural Contexts

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First published 2026

ISBN: 978-1-041-08821-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-041-08822-6 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-64711-9 (ebk)

Chapter 6

Methodological Foundations and Descriptive Insights from a Work-From-Anywhere Survey of Generation Z among Students from Poland, Czechia, and Estonia

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DOI: 10.4324/9781003647119-7

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

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Adam Oleksiuk

6.1 Introduction

The contemporary labour market is undergoing dynamic and far-reaching transformations driven by globalisation, the rapid development of digital technologies, and shifting employee expectations. One of the most significant trends emerging in this context is the "work from anywhere" (WFA) model. This flexible work approach extends beyond traditional remote working by allowing employees to perform their duties from any location with adequate technological access and connectivity. WFA aligns with the growing demand for autonomy, work-life balance, and personalised work environments among younger generations (Bednorz, 2024; Fauziyah et al., 2024; Malti & Wamba, 2023; Tran et al., 2022).

While WFA features prominently in current debates on the future of work, it represents only one aspect of a broader transformation in work models. Generation Z, shaped by digital culture and constant connectivity, is entering the labour market at a time when alternative forms of work are becoming more widespread. Their digital fluency and openness to change make them a natural target group for analysing readiness to adopt new arrangements (Barhate & Dirani, 2022; Vieira et al., 2024). However, their views extend beyond remote or WFA formats to include distinct preferences for office-based, hybrid, or other flexible solutions. These perspectives may vary significantly depending on cultural background, level of digitalisation, and expectations towards employers.

This chapter presents the results of a quantitative survey conducted among Generation Z students from three countries – Poland, Czechia, and Estonia – who are entering the labour market. These countries represent varying levels of digital transformation and labour market flexibility, providing a rich comparative backdrop. The study explores not only perceived attractiveness and challenges of the WFA model but also wider preferences concerning work modalities, including traditional office work, hybrid models, and remote work. It further investigates expectations towards employers, as well as the competencies the respondents consider necessary to succeed in different work settings.

The chapter outlines the methodological framework of the study and presents descriptive statistics that illustrate how young people perceive different forms of

DOI: 10.4324/9781003647119-7

work. These insights can contribute to understanding upcoming labour market trends and underscore the need for organisations to tailor their strategies to generational and national differences in work-related attitudes.

6.2 Literature review

The emergence of the WFA model is closely linked to digital transformation, increased connectivity, and evolving notions of workplace flexibility. Literature suggests that WFA is particularly well suited to knowledge-based sectors and has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which served as a global experiment in remote work (Choudhury, 2020; Fauziyah et al., 2024; Gratton, 2021). Researchers have highlighted WFA's potential to improve productivity, reduce commuting stress, and provide better alignment with individual lifestyles (Anggarini & Prihasnowo, 2023; De Almeida et al., 2023; Parker et al., 2022).

Although interest in Generation Z's position in the labour market has grown in recent years, scholarly research on this topic remains relatively fragmented and unevenly distributed across regions. Existing studies tend to focus either on general cohort characteristics or isolated aspects such as digital readiness, value shifts, or intergenerational conflict in the workplace (Schrotch, 2019). While interest in Generation Z as employees is increasing, there remains as employees is increasing, there remains a scarcity of large-scale or cross-cultural studies, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe (Cilliers, 2017). Moreover, relatively few studies link the labour market preferences of Generation Z to broader contextual factors such as digital infrastructure or institutional culture. This chapter addresses this research gap by presenting comparative data from three countries at different stages of digital transformation.

For Generation Z, the appeal of WFA is rooted in their digital nativeness and expectation of autonomy. Studies show that Generation Z workers are more likely to value flexibility, independence in task execution, and alignment of work with personal values (Nguyen Ngoc et al., 2022; Parsakia et al., 2023). These preferences are consistent with self-determination theory, which emphasises the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in shaping motivation and engagement (Leslie et al., 2021).

In considering what shapes the preferences of young people regarding work arrangements, research suggests that factors such as personality traits, place of residence, and early work experience play an important role. For example, higher openness to experience and conscientiousness are associated with more positive attitudes towards flexible and remote work (Jo & Lee, 2022). Meanwhile, residence in digitally advanced urban areas increases access to high-speed internet, collaborative spaces, and flexible employers, which in turn fosters more favourable perceptions of hybrid or remote work (Eurofound, 2020). Early job experience – whether internships or part-time work – has also been found to influence young people's expectations regarding autonomy, communication, and support in virtual settings (Dawn et al., 2023). These factors interact in shaping how Generation Z envisions their future in the labour market.

However, research also warns of potential drawbacks of the WFA model, including social isolation, challenges in maintaining a sense of team belonging, and reduced visibility in the workplace (McKinsey, 2023; Schoellbauer et al., 2024). These risks are particularly salient for early-career employees who rely on feedback and mentoring. Moreover, employee experience under the WFA model may differ depending on the support offered by organisations – access to technology, flexibility in scheduling, and clarity of expectations are key (White & Bottorff, 2024; York, 2024).

Cultural and national factors also play an important role in shaping WFA adoption. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, societies with high individualism, such as Estonia, may be more receptive to remote and autonomous working models, whereas countries with more hierarchical organisational cultures, such as Poland, may show greater attachment to traditional work structures (Hofstede et al., 2010). This theoretical framework helps explain the variation in remote work preferences observed across different contexts.

Empirical data on digital readiness reinforces these cultural insights. Estonia consistently ranks as a leader in e-government, digital competencies, and cloud adoption, whereas Poland has shown relatively slower progress in digital transformation, especially among SMEs (DESI, 2022; Eurostat, 2024). The Czech Republic presents a mixed picture: high levels of e-commerce and digital business activity, yet room for growth in digital public services. These differences are likely to influence not only attitudes towards WFA but also perceived feasibility, expectations of employer support, and the required skills.

The current study builds on this literature by examining how students from these three countries perceive WFA in practice. It investigates how national context, digital fluency, and self-perceived competencies influence their preferences, attitudes, and future work aspirations. Particular attention is given to autonomy, flexibility, work-life balance, and the role of employer support. By linking cultural and technological factors with the expectations of Generation Z, this chapter contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding of remote work's evolving landscape.

6.3 Methodology

The aim of this study was to explore the attitudes of Generation Z among students towards the "work from anywhere" trend, which is increasingly gaining prominence in the global labour market. The research focused on understanding how digital-native students perceive the flexibility and challenges of remote work models and their readiness to embrace them in their future careers.

The study employed a purposive sampling method, targeting undergraduate and graduate students from leading economic universities in three countries: Poland, the Czechia, and Estonia. These countries were selected due to their varying levels of digital transformation and adoption of remote work practices, providing a diverse socio-economic backdrop for the research.

A total of 213 students took part in the study: 126 from the SGH Warsaw School of Economics (Poland), 43 from the Estonian Business School (Estonia), and 44

from the Prague University of Economics and Business (Czech Republic). The students were selected based on their enrolment in economics and management programs, ensuring that the participants had relevant educational backgrounds for discussing topics related to the future of work.

The data was collected using an electronic survey distributed via the Forms platform. The survey was structured to cover various aspects of the WFA model, including digital competency, career aspirations, and attitudes towards sustainability in remote work environments. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions and 6 demographic questions. The questionnaire consisted solely of closed-ended questions, including 7-point Likert scale items, allowing for a quantitative analysis of the respondents' attitudes and preferences.

The following statistical measures were used in the study: N – count, M – mean, SD – standard deviation, Q1 – first quartile, Me – median, Q3 – third quartile, and Mo – mode. The significance of differences in ratings between more than two groups was tested using the Kruskal–Wallis test. In cases where statistically significant differences between the groups were found, post hoc testing was conducted using the multiple comparisons of mean ranks test. A non-parametric test was chosen because the variables analysed did not meet the assumption of normal distribution. This assumption was verified using the Shapiro–Wilk test. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted for all statistical analyses, which were conducted using SPSS software.

The survey was conducted between March and June 2024, with participation open to all students within the selected universities. The invitation to take part was sent electronically to ensure wide accessibility. Since participation was voluntary, the data represents the opinions of students who chose to engage with the survey, which may limit the representativeness of the results.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise the overall trends in the responses. Responses were categorised and analysed by country to find any significant differences in attitudes towards the "work from anywhere" trend.

A limitation of this study is the self-selection bias due to the voluntary nature of the survey, meaning the results may reflect the views of more engaged or digitally oriented students. Additionally, the focus on students from only three countries limits the generalisability of the findings to other regions or educational contexts. However, the diversity of the selected countries offers valuable insights into Generation Z's attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe.

The survey was conducted anonymously, and participation was voluntary. All responses were processed in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the European Union.

6.3.1 Analysis of the research sample

A total of 213 respondents took part in the study. Their mean age was 21.6 years, with a standard deviation of 3.75 years. At least 25% of the respondents were aged 20 years, at least half of the respondents were aged 21 years, and at least 25% of

Table 6.1 Measures of central tendency and dispersion

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Age:	213	21.6	3.75	20.0	21.0	23.0	20.0

Age of respondents (in years). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode
Source: Author's own study

the respondents were aged 23 years or older. Most respondents were aged 20 years. The youngest respondents were aged 18 (7 people) (Table 6.1).

Women predominated among the respondents (nearly 55%), the percentage of men was 44%, the remaining respondents declared another gender (1%). More than half of the respondents came from Poland (59%), the other respondents came from the Czech Republic (20%) and Estonia (21%). Nearly 9% of respondents lived in rural areas, 14% of respondents lived in small towns with up to 20 000 inhabitants, a large percentage of respondents lived in medium-sized towns with 20 000 to 500 000 inhabitants (32%), nearly 7% of respondents lived in metropolitan areas with 500 000 to 1 million inhabitants, and the largest number of people lived in metropolitan areas with more than 1 million inhabitants (39%). Most respondents were just doing their first degree (75%) and 25% of respondents were in their second degree. The majority of people were unmarried or in a civil partnership (68%), 31% of respondents were married or in a civil partnership, and two respondents did not specify their relationship status (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Sociodemographic data of respondents, n = 213

		N	*%*
Gender	Man	94	44.1%
	Woman	117	54.9%
	Other	2	0.9%
Country of origin	Poland	126	59.2%
	Czechia	43	20.2%
	Estonia	44	20.7%
Place of origin	Rural area	18	8.5%
	Small urban area (till 20 000)	30	14.1%
	Medium-sized urban area (above 20 000 to 500 000)	68	31.9%
	Metropolitan area (above 500 000–1mln.)	14	6.6%
	Large metropolitan area (above 1 mln.)	83	39.0%
Current study level	Bachelor (1st. cycle)	159	74.6%
	Master (2nd. cycle)	54	25.4%
Relationship status	Single	145	68.1%
	Married/relationship	66	31.0%
	Other	2	0.9%

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.3 The distribution of the answers to the individual questions

		N	*%*
Have you ever worked professionally?	Yes	185	86.9%
	No	22	10.3%
	Maybe	6	2.8%
Have you ever worked remotely?	Yes	149	70.0%
	No	41	19.2%
	Other	23	10.8%

Source: Author's own study

6.4 Analysis of the survey questions

Nearly 87% of respondents had ever worked professionally, 10% of respondents had not worked, and 3% of respondents selected the "maybe" option. Remotely, 70% of respondents had ever worked (Table 6.3).

Respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point scale their preference for the working system they would like to work in, where a rating of 1 meant that the particular system was strongly disliked and a rating of 7 meant that the particular system was strongly preferred. The ratings were then averaged and sorted in descending order from most preferred to least preferred working system. On this basis, it was found that respondents would most prefer to work in a mixed system (both in the office and remotely) (mean score of 6.0), less preferred was remote working (4.2), and least preferred was working only in the office (3.0) (Table 6.4).

On a similar basis, respondents had to select their preference for the environment in which they work (7-point scale, 1 – strongly prefer not, 7 – strongly prefer). Slightly more often, respondents preferred to work from home (mean score of 4.8), less often to work from anywhere but their permanent residence (4.7) (Table 6.5).

The most important factors influencing work preference are work-life balance (6.1), flexibility (6.0), and career advancement (5.8). Less important factors are job security (5.3) and the collaboration opportunities (4.8) (Table 6.6).

Using a 7-point scale, respondents were asked to comment on their expectations of future work, where a score of 1 meant that the respondent strongly disagreed

Table 6.4 Rating of preferences for each work arrangement in the respondent's future job

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Hybrid	211	6.0	1.54	5.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Fully remote	206	4.2	1.89	3.0	4.0	6.0	5.0
Only in office	203	3.0	1.67	2.0	3.0	4.0	1.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly dislike, 7 – strongly prefer). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.5 Rating of preferences for the following remote work environments

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Work from home. Here, the home is considered a place of your permanent residence (longer than one year).	211	4.8	1.64	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Work from anywhere (WFA) except your home. It can include places where you can reside temporarily (shorter than one year in each), like hotel rooms or rented apartments.	213	4.7	1.86	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly not prefer, 7 – strongly prefer). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode
Source: Author's own study

with the statement in question, and a score of 2 meant that the respondent strongly agreed with the statement in question. The ratings were then averaged and sorted in descending order from the statements with which the respondent most agreed to the statements with which the respondent least identified.

On this basis, it was found that the most common expectations of a future job were to cope with the job (mean 5.8), a sense of choice and freedom to decide how to do one's future job (5.8), being able to decide on work methods and tasks (5.6) and an expectation of feeling competent and able to handle tasks (5.5). To a lesser extent, the respondent was expected to feel connected to colleagues and be part of a community (5.2), support and meaningful relationships with colleagues (5.1). There was less frequent worry that the future job might put pressure to act in a way that was contrary to the respondent's preferences (4.4). Even more rarely was the respondent worried about feeling isolated from others (3.8). The fewest number of respondents worried that they might be incompetent in their future job (3.7) (Table 6.7).

Respondents on a scale of 1 to 7 had to rate how attractive they found the idea of combining work and travel, where a rating of 1 meant that the idea was unattractive and a rating of 7 meant that the idea was very attractive. The average rating

Table 6.6 The most important factors influencing the preferred work arrangement

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Work-life balance	212	6.1	1.33	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Flexibility	212	6.0	1.18	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Career advancement	211	5.8	1.16	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Job security	211	5.3	1.43	4.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Collaboration opportunities	212	4.8	1.44	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – utterly unimportant, 7 – very important). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode
Source: Author's own study

Table 6.7 Respondents' attitudes regarding hypothetical future work

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
I expect to feel confident in my ability to perform well in my future job	213	5.8	1.09	5.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
I expect to have a sense of choice and freedom in deciding how to do my future work	213	5.8	1.13	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
In my future job, I anticipate being able to make decisions about my work methods and tasks	212	5.6	1.09	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
I anticipate feeling competent and capable in handling tasks in my future work	213	5.5	1.41	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
I expect to feel connected with colleagues and to be part of a community in my future work	210	5.2	1.48	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
In my future job, I anticipate having supportive and meaningful relationships with my coworkers	213	5.1	1.54	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
I worry that my future job might pressure me to act in ways that conflict with my preferences	213	4.4	1.74	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I worry about feeling isolated or disconnected from others in my future work	212	3.8	1.88	2.0	4.0	5.0	2.0
I am concerned that I might not feel competent in my future job role	210	3.7	1.77	2.0	4.0	5.0	2.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

was 5.6, with a standard deviation of 1.58. At least 75% of the respondents gave a rating of no less than 5, at least half of the respondents gave a rating of no less than 6, and at least 25% of the respondents gave a rating of no less than 7 (Table 6.8).

Respondents had to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 what they thought about working away from home. On this basis, it was found that respondents were most likely to say that working away from home would be enjoyable (5.4), slightly less likely to think that such an idea of work would be attractive to them (5.3). The least

Table 6.8 Rating of the appeal of combining work with travelling

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Rate:	213	5.6	1.58	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – not appealing, 7 – very appealing). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.9 Respondents' opinion on the idea of working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
I think that WFA would be enjoyable	212	5.4	1.53	4.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
The idea of WFA is attractive to me	211	5.3	1.60	4.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
WFA would be beneficial for my work-life balance	212	5.2	1.73	4.0	5.0	7.0	7.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly dislike, 7 – strongly prefer). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

frequent claim was that such a job would be beneficial for work-life balance (5.2) (Table 6.9).

Respondents had to show what skills and qualities were needed for remote working and WFA, off-site. On this basis, it was found that, according to the respondents, the most important qualities were self-discipline (6.2) and skilful time management (6.2). The following were considered less useful qualities: adaptability (5.6), technical skills (5.3) (Table 6.10).

Respondents had to use a 7-point scale to rate the extent to which they agreed with certain statements about working away from home, where the highest rating of 7 meant they strongly agreed with the statement. The ratings were then averaged, and the statements were sorted according to them, from those with which they most strongly agreed to those with which they least agreed.

The most frequent statements that respondents agreed with were that they expected a high degree of independence and autonomy in their day-to-day work (mean score of 5.4), that in such a job a sense of community with co-workers might be more difficult without regular personal interaction (5.2), that the flexibility to change their work environment would positively influence their creativity (5.2), that such a job would help them balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively (5.1), that such a job would positively influence

Table 6.10 Rating of the importance of individual skills and traits for remote work and working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Self-discipline	212	6.2	1.04	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Time management	212	6.2	1.04	6.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Adaptability	212	5.6	1.25	5.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
Technical skills (computer software knowledge, remote communication software)	212	5.3	1.29	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Communication skills	212	5.2	1.39	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – not important, 7 – extremely important). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

their motivation (5.0), and that it would provide them with unique opportunities for professional and personal development (5.0).

Slightly less frequently, they felt that they may encounter technical problems or unreliable internet access in some locations (4.8), that they may be less visible to management and colleagues and therefore this may affect their professional relationships and team dynamics (4.8), that dealing with time zone differences may hinder effective communication with my team (4.8), that the availability and quality of the support and resources that I need may vary depending on where I choose to work (4.8), that they value the potential for significant commuting savings and the ability to live in more accessible areas (4.8), that there is a risk of feeling isolated due to fewer face-to-face interactions with colleagues (4.7), that they are concerned that blurring the boundaries between work and personal life can be challenging (4.6).

They were least likely to think that working remotely would help reduce their impact on the environment by reducing their commute (4.5), that working remotely might limit their visibility and professional development opportunities (4.2), that remotely keeping in touch with their company culture and values might be difficult (4.0) (Table 6.11).

Respondents most often felt that the rules of working away from home would be clear and understandable to them (mean score of 5.3), that remote working would be flexible for them, and they would be happy to implement it in their work (5.3). It is also important to respondents that people important to them would support their decision to choose such work (5.2). They also believed that such a job would increase their job satisfaction (5.1), that learning such a job would be easy for them (5.0), and that doing such a job would be easy for them (4.9). In contrast, they were less likely to say that WFA would make it easier for them to perform tasks effectively (4.6), that the opinion of their co-workers would encourage them to work in such a mode (4.5), that such work would improve their overall productivity (4.5) and that people who influence their behaviour think I should work in such a mode (4.2) (Table 6.12).

Respondents had to rate on a 7-point scale the importance of each factor in choosing a remote working location. The ratings were then averaged, and the factors were sorted by average in descending order, from the most important factors to the least important factors.

For respondents, the most important factors were accommodation options (mean score of 6.0), telecommunications infrastructure (5.9), cost of living at the workplace (5.8), and atmosphere of the location (5.8). Less important factors are language skills (5.5), weather/climate (5.3), and local culture (5.0). The least important factors are: access to coworking spaces (4.7), cultural offer (4.5), local cuisine (4.5), tourist and recreational attractions (4.3), and knowledge of the place (4.3) (Table 6.13).

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of specific forms of support from employers when working remotely. According to respondents, the most important forms of support were: flexible working hours (mean score of 6.2) and technology tools (6.0). A slightly less important form of support

Table 6.11 Respondents' level of agreement with the following statements about working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
I anticipate a high level of autonomy and independence in my daily work	213	5.4	1.23	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Creating a sense of community with colleagues might be harder without regular in-person interactions	212	5.2	1.57	4.5	6.0	6.0	6.0
The flexibility to change my working environment will positively influence my creativity	213	5.2	1.49	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
WFA will help balance my work demands with personal life more effectively	213	5.1	1.54	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
The flexibility to change my work environment will positively influence my motivation	211	5.0	1.52	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
WFA will provide unique opportunities for my career and personal development	213	5.0	1.46	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I might encounter technical issues or unreliable internet access in some locations	212	4.8	1.48	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Being less visible to management and colleagues might affect my professional relationships and team dynamics	213	4.8	1.54	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Dealing with time zone differences could hinder effective communication with my team	213	4.8	1.50	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
The availability and quality of support and resources I need could vary depending on where I choose to work	213	4.8	1.35	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I value the potential for significant savings on commuting and the opportunity to live in more affordable areas	212	4.8	1.62	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
There's a risk of feeling isolated due to less face-to-face interactions with colleagues	213	4.7	1.78	3.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
I'm concerned that blurring work and personal life boundaries might be challenging	213	4.6	1.66	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Working remotely will contribute to reducing environmental impacts by less commuting	212	4.5	1.73	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I worry that working remotely could limit my visibility and opportunities for career advancement	212	4.2	1.80	3.0	4.0	6.0	5.0
Staying connected with my company's culture and values remotely might be difficult	210	4.0	1.74	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.12 Respondents' level of agreement with the following statements regarding working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
WFA principles would be clear and understandable to me	212	5.3	1.30	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
I would find WFA to be flexible to implement to my job	209	5.3	1.36	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Individuals who are important to me would support my decision to WFA	212	5.2	1.51	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
I believe WFA will increase my job satisfaction	212	5.1	1.69	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Learning to WFA effectively will be easy for me	210	5.0	1.56	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I would find it easy to do my job in WFA mode	210	4.9	1.63	4.0	5.0	6.0	4.0
WFA would make it easier for me to complete my tasks efficiently	212	4.6	1.61	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
The opinion of my peers/colleagues would encourage me to WFA	209	4.5	1.66	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
WFA will enhance my overall work productivity	212	4.5	1.62	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
People who influence my behaviour think that I should work from anywhere	211	4.2	1.70	3.0	4.0	6.0	4.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.13 Rating of the importance of individual factors in choosing a work location for working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Accommodation possibilities	211	6.0	1.17	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Telecommunication infrastructure	211	5.9	1.19	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Cost of living in working destination	211	5.8	1.28	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Place atmosphere	209	5.8	1.28	5.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
Language proficiency	209	5.5	1.39	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Weather/climate	211	5.3	1.64	4.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Local culture	211	5.0	1.48	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Access to co-working spaces	210	4.7	1.69	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Cultural offerings (events, festivals, museums, galleries...)	211	4.5	1.68	3.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Local kitchen (food)	211	4.5	1.80	3.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Tourist and recreation attractions	211	4.3	1.60	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
Familiarity with the place (previous visits, social bonds)	210	4.3	1.74	3.0	4.0	6.0	4.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – not important, 7 – extremely important). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.14 Rating of the importance of individual forms of support from employers in remote work and working from anywhere (WFA)

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Flexible working hours	211	6.2	0.97	6.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Technological tools	211	6.0	1.11	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Financial support for home office setup	210	5.7	1.38	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0
Training to remote work	211	5.0	1.56	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Regular check-ins	210	5.0	1.54	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – not important, 7 – extremely important). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

was financial support for setting up a home office (5.7), and the least important forms of support were training for remote working (5.0) and regular check-in (5.0) (Table 6.14).

Respondents were most likely to feel confident that they could manage their work responsibilities from anywhere (5.3), that they had the necessary resources (e.g., technology, space) to work effectively from anywhere (5.2). Less frequently, respondents felt that they would choose to work in this way (4.8), and that they intend to work in this way as often as possible (4.7). The least frequent respondents stated that external factors do not limit their ability to work remotely (4.5) and that, in the future, they plan to adopt such a system of work as their primary mode of work (4.3) (Table 6.15).

Table 6.15 Level of agreement with the following statements regarding the adoption of working from anywhere (WFA) in the respondent's future job

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
I feel confident in my ability to manage my work responsibilities from any location	212	5.3	1.48	4.0	6.0	6.5	6.0
I have the necessary resources (e.g., technology, space) to work from anywhere effectively	212	5.2	1.53	4.0	5.5	6.0	6.0
Assuming I have the choice, I predict that I would choose WFA	211	4.8	1.83	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
I intend to work in WFA mode as often as it will be possible	212	4.7	1.77	4.0	5.0	6.0	4.0
External factors (e.g., organisational policies) would not hinder my ability to WFA	210	4.5	1.49	4.0	4.5	6.0	4.0
I plan to adopt WFA as my primary work arrangement in the future	212	4.3	1.85	3.0	4.5	6.0	5.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

Table 6.16 Self-perception of the respondent

	N	*Me*	*SD*	Q_1	*Me*	Q_3	*Mo*
Sympathetic, warm	213	5.5	1.17	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Open to new experiences, complex	212	5.5	1.27	5.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
Dependable, self-disciplined	213	5.3	1.22	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Calm, emotionally stable	213	4.9	1.55	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Extraverted, enthusiastic	213	4.5	1.55	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
Critical, quarrelsome	213	4.2	1.60	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
Reserved, quiet	213	4.1	1.70	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
Anxious, easily upset	213	3.5	1.62	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.0
Conventional, uncreative	213	2.9	1.58	2.0	3.0	4.0	2.0
Disorganized, careless	213	2.8	1.59	1.0	3.0	4.0	1.0

Ratings from 1 to 7 (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). *N* – count, *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, Q_1 – first quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – third quartile, *Mo* – mode

Source: Author's own study

The respondents were also presented with various character traits and then asked to rate, using a 7-point scale, which traits could be attributed to them, and which could not. Respondents were most likely to say that they were agreeable (5.5), open to new experiences (5.5), and reliable and disciplined (5.3). Less frequently, they considered themselves calm and emotionally stable (4.9), extroverted, enthusiastic (4.5), critical, argumentative (4.2), withdrawn, quiet (4.1). The least frequent respondents thought they were anxious and easily upset (3.5), not creative (2.9), and disorganised and careless (2.8) (Table 6.16).

6.5 Conclusions and discussion

This study provides new insights into the work preferences, competencies, and expectations of Generation Z in Poland, Czechia, and Estonia regarding the work model. The findings confirm that while the hybrid model is the most preferred work arrangement across all three countries, there are clear national distinctions that reflect varying degrees of digital maturity, cultural attitudes, and labour market dynamics.

Estonian students exhibit the strongest orientation towards remote and WFA models. Their preference for autonomy, flexibility, and the opportunity to combine work with travel aligns with existing literature that emphasises Estonia's advanced digital infrastructure and openness to innovation (European Commission, 2022; Eurostat, 2024). Respondents from Estonia also showed the highest self-perceived readiness to work independently, supported by strong time management and self-discipline. These characteristics are essential for successful WFA engagement and mirror Estonia's broader societal emphasis on digital competence and personal responsibility.

In contrast, Polish students tend to adopt a more cautious stance towards fully remote work, favouring hybrid arrangements. This suggests a continued reliance on face-to-face collaboration, organisational structure, and managerial support.

Despite Poland's growing digital economy, students' emphasis on technical competencies and desire for employer-provided training and clear guidance indicate an adaptation gap between enterprise-level digital progress and individual digital readiness. These findings underscore the importance of structured onboarding and professional development opportunities for young professionals in Poland.

Czech students occupy a middle ground. While they show openness to remote work, they still value traditional forms of collaboration and in-person interaction. Their preferences suggest a pragmatic approach that balances flexibility with structured career growth. Czech respondents were more similar to their Polish peers in terms of preferring hybrid work, but more aligned with Estonian students regarding valuing personal autonomy and the creative potential of WFA settings.

Across all countries, Generation Z values work-life balance, flexibility, and career development as primary factors when evaluating remote or hybrid work arrangements. These results resonate with the literature on motivational theories (Leslie et al., 2021) and the changing nature of employee expectations in digital environments (Choudhury, 2020; Gratton, 2021). Concerns about isolation, reduced visibility, and maintaining a sense of belonging were present but ranked lower than benefits such as autonomy, creativity, and work satisfaction.

Importantly, the data confirms that WFA readiness is not merely a function of digital tools or infrastructure. Rather, it is closely tied to perceived personal competencies (especially self-discipline and time management), support from one's social environment, and cultural attitudes towards independence and flexibility. This insight reinforces the importance of integrating soft-skill development into educational programs aimed at preparing students for the future of work.

The implications of this study extend beyond the academic context. Policymakers and higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe should consider how digital competencies, support systems, and flexible work arrangements can be better aligned to meet the expectations of emerging professionals. Employers should recognise the varying levels of readiness and adapt their human resource strategies accordingly – investing in personalised support, remote infrastructure, and leadership practices that empower younger workers across diverse digital environments.

These cross-national differences may be further understood in the context of each country's institutional and cultural setting. In Poland, the cautious approach to fully remote work may be influenced by a more hierarchical and structured organisational culture, as well as a traditionally lower level of trust in autonomous work arrangements. This is further reinforced by uneven digitalisation across sectors and the slower integration of ICT and soft-skill development into university curricula, particularly outside major urban centres. In contrast, Estonia's strategic focus on digital transformation – reflected in its global leadership in e-governance, digital identity systems, and early education in informatics – contributes to students' stronger readiness for WFA and higher self-confidence in managing remote work responsibilities. Czechia occupies an intermediate position, combining relatively strong digital business indicators with a more cautious organisational culture that values in-person collaboration and structured onboarding. These national

characteristics suggest that cultural, institutional, and infrastructural variables jointly shape how Generation Z perceives flexible work, and they should be considered when designing educational policies and HR strategies in Central and Eastern Europe (European Commission, 2022; Hofstede et al., 2010; OECD, 2023).

Generation Z in Central and Eastern Europe is broadly supportive of flexible work models, but national context plays a crucial role in shaping the form and intensity of this support. Estonia represents a digitally mature, autonomy-driven approach to WFA; Poland demonstrates a cautious yet evolving hybrid orientation; and Czechia balances openness to flexibility with structural stability. The future of work in this region will depend not only on continued investment in technology but also on policies and practices that support generational aspirations for independence, meaningful work, and career growth.

Overall, this chapter highlights the critical intersection between generational aspirations and national digital capacity, offering a roadmap for organisations, educators, and policymakers navigating the future of work in Central and Eastern Europe

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