

Work ethics and performance of Generation Z employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro

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Abstract

Generation Z (Gen Z), the first digitally native cohort (born 1997–2012), is rapidly entering the global workforce and is projected to account for 40 percent of workers in less than a decade, with 65 percent already participating in the Philippine labor force. Using a descriptive correlational design and 197 Gen Z employees, this study explores the relationship between work ethics and job performance among Gen Z employees in the Local Government unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The findings reveal that Gen Z employees exhibit very high levels of work ethics and job performance, with a statistically significant positive correlation identified between ethical orientation and performance, particularly in core task execution and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). The analysis shows that counterproductive behaviors among this group are generally low and not significantly associated with their work ethics. This suggests that a strong work ethics may contribute to improved employee performance in public-sector organizations. The results imply that while ethical standards primarily drive Generation Z employees in the locality, there are identifiable areas for improvement in managing potential negative workplace behaviors. Furthermore, fostering a work environment that nurtures these values is crucial for sustaining and improving job performance in local government settings. Therefore, the Local Government Unit may invest in regular training programs focused on ethics, professional development, and the specific skills needed to enhance job performance. These programs may be tailored to the needs and learning styles of Gen Z employees, incorporating technology and interactive elements to maximize engagement and knowledge retention.

Keywords: better management, work ethics, work performance, Generation Z, counterproductive behaviors

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1. Introduction

Generation Z (Gen Z) comprises individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who are completing their higher education and entering the workforce (Son, 2022). This generation is considered the emerging pivotal workforce as they enter the labor force. According to his study, Gen Z is the most diverse and technologically sophisticated generation, making them the first “digitally native” generation, as they were born into a world in which data is ubiquitous. In the Philippines, Dagooc (2023) reported that 65 percent of Gen Z are already participating in the workforce. It is projected that, in less than 10 years, 40 percent of the workforce will comprise Gen Z. Regarding Gen Z's work ethics, they are observed to be concerned with their future careers and with moral and ethical conduct at work (Bulut & Maraba, 2021). Bulut & Maraba (2021) also state that this generation values financial stability, skill development, and job opportunities. The study of Knipp and Gallagher (2021) also provided some insights about the work ethic of Gen Z. According to this, the researchers found that older generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X) tend to have a higher level of centrality of work as compared with the younger generations (Millennials and Generation Z). Based on the conclusions, older generations demonstrate a greater work ethic than younger generations.

Regarding the work performance of Generation Z, Wulur and Andagi (2023) investigated the causes and implications of Gen Z employee performance. Based on their findings, several factors affect the job performance of Zoomers. Important components include the generation's use of digital tools and social media platforms, work-life balance, and employee engagement and satisfaction. In addition, aspects that lead to enhanced overall performance of this generation also include inclusive work cultures, a sense of belonging and freedom of speech, and a healthy workplace culture. The study by Wulur and Mandagi (2023) examined the effects of Gen Z employees' performance on overall organizational outcomes, and the findings indicated that Gen Z has a positive impact, contributing to increased productivity and effectiveness.

From another perspective, Generation Z employees' performance is associated with productivity, efficiency, and work (Wasserbauer & Saputra, 2024). As Gen Z is raised in the digital era, they tend to be highly familiar with the internet and technology; their digital skills enable them to use these tools and social media platforms in the workplace. Moreover, Wasserbauer and Saputra (2024) also see the following indicators of Gen Z employees' performance: flexibility/adaptability, creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, and feedback-seeking and continuous learning. According to the study, Gen Z is capable of adapting effectively to dynamic environments and prefers flexible work arrangements. In addition, this generation can engage in inventive thinking, propose alternative solutions, and introduce innovative perspectives into the workplace. Generation Z also collaborates in team environments and tends to seek feedback and engage in continuous learning and personal development to support personal growth (Wasserbauer & Saputra, 2024).

Work ethics affect an employee's job performance. Therefore, organizations must promote sound work practices among employees. The integration of Generation Z into the workforce has introduced transformative shifts in work ethics and organizational dynamics, particularly within public-sector institutions such as the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Shaped by rapid technological advancements, global crises, and heightened social consciousness, Gen Z employees prioritize purpose-driven work, digital fluency, and workplace flexibility, redefining traditional paradigms of productivity and engagement (Kristiana et al., 2025). As this cohort increasingly assumes roles in local governance, their distinct values—such as a commitment to social responsibility, sustainability, and inclusivity—align closely with the public sector's mission to foster community welfare and civic participation.

The entry of Gen Z into the workplace of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, presents not just opportunities but also challenges. Their entry also presents challenges, including balancing innovation with institutional continuity, addressing mental health needs, and bridging intergenerational gaps in work styles. This report examines how the LGU of San Jose can harness Gen Z's technological prowess, creative problem-solving, and ethical alignment to enhance public service delivery, while navigating retention concerns, mentorship demands, and evolving workplace expectations. By fostering adaptive policies, inclusive cultures, and supportive environments, the municipality can stand to unlock a new era of efficiency and community-centered governance driven by its youngest workforce. Despite foreign studies on the work ethics and job performance of Generation Z and other generations in the workplace, there is limited research in the Philippines on Gen Z and their work ethic and performance in the local context. The researchers checked available literature and journals. However, the lack of studies in this area presents an opportunity for researchers to explore this topic. As Gen Z enters the workforce, it is essential to gather data to understand their characteristics and performance as employees.

Research Objectives - This study aimed to determine the relationship between work ethics and the performance of Generation Z employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose. Specifically, it seeks to (1) determine the work ethics of Generation Z Employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose in terms of work itself, moral attitude towards work, and intrinsic motivation; (2) determine the performance of Generation Z Employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose in terms of task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behavior; and (3) examine the significant relationship between work ethics and the performance of Generation Z Employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose.

Significance of the Study - The study aims to examine the work ethics and performance of Gen Z employed in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The findings of this study will be significant not only for Gen Z employees but also for the LGU of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, policymakers, the general public, and future researchers. First, for Gen Z employees, their unique attitudes, values, and technological adaptability offer insights into how modern work ethics and performance evolve in the public sector. The LGU of San Jose is beneficial to the study because it provides a real-world, organized environment in which Generation Z's work ethic and performance can be meaningfully analyzed. The insights gained can help improve the efficiency of public services, employee management, and policy formulation within local government. For policymakers, this study will provide the authority, structure, and practical application needed to translate insights into Generation Z's work ethic and performance into effective workplace and governance policies. This role ensures that the study contributes to improving ethical standards, employee engagement, and organizational productivity. For the public, they provide valuable feedback, social expectations, and real-world assessments of Generation Z's work ethics and performance. Their involvement helps ensure that the study reflects authentic experiences, promotes accountability, and contributes to the development of a more ethical, people-centered workforce. Lastly, future researchers are beneficial because they extend, validate, and enhance the study of Generation Z's work ethics and performance. Their work ensures the continued development of knowledge, promotes improved workplace policies, and supports adaptation to the changing needs of the modern workforce.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study - This study focused on the work ethic of Gen Z employees and their performance in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. As aforementioned, this study was conducted in the municipality of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, from August to November 2025. The respondents are limited to Gen-Z employees currently employed by LGU San Jose, regardless of their employment status (Permanent, Contractual, Job Order, or Contract of Service Worker). A survey questionnaire on online platforms was used to gather the needed data for the study. In line with the research focus, this study examines two key variables: work ethic and work performance. Given these limitations, the following challenges may be encountered in conducting this research: First, the number of Gen Z workers is limited, thereby restricting the study's sample size. Second, there is limited available literature and studies that focus on this specific topic. Lastly, researchers also face time constraints due to several personal commitments.

2. Methodology

Research Design - A descriptive correlational research design was used to assess the work ethics of Gen-Z employees in LGU San Jose and their workplace performance. The goal of this design is to determine the extent of the relationship between variables as they naturally exist, rather than to establish a causal relationship between them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, descriptive research aimed to determine the work ethics and performance of Generation Z employees, whereas correlational research was used to test the significant relationship between two variables.

Respondents of the Study - The respondents of this study were Gen Z employees of the Local Government Unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. In this regard, employees aged 18-28 are the target respondents. In addition to permanent and coterminous employees, workers under job orders and contracts of service were included in the research. The researchers conducted a complete enumeration of 197 Gen Z employees, comprising 162 contractual, job order, and contract of service workers and 35 permanent Gen Z employees. This is based on the number of agency employees provided.

Research Instrument - A survey questionnaire served as the study's research instrument. The researchers adapted the questionnaire developed by Abun et al. (2022) to assess the work ethics and performance of Gen Z employees. To assess the validity of the adapted questionnaires, the researchers employed expert validity. Three experts from the graduate school department, who specialize in research and education, attended. All expert suggestions and comments were incorporated into this study prior to the final administration of the survey questionnaires.

Data Gathering Procedure - To obtain permission to conduct this study, researchers first draft a letter of communication to coordinate with the relevant authorities. The research adviser signed the letter. Upon approval, the researcher secured permission from the management of LGU San Jose. To ensure that all respondents are fully informed, a consent form was given. Survey questionnaires were administered in person by the researchers over 5 days. The collected data was tallied and tabulated. This data was analyzed using the statistical tools specified in the data analysis plan.

Statistical Treatment of the Data - Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to treat the data. For descriptive statistics, the weighted mean was used to assess the extent of work ethics among Generation Z Employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose. Moreover, to determine if there is a relationship between work ethics and the performance of Generation Z Employees, Pearson's r moment correlation was employed.

Ethical Considerations - Researchers follow strict ethical considerations. Related studies and literature were cited correctly. At all costs, plagiarism was not to be practiced in conducting this research. Researchers also obtained permission from the Local Government Unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, to conduct the survey. Regarding the survey questionnaire used in this study, proper citation was provided, as the researchers adapted a survey instrument from a previous study. There was also a consent form to be provided to respondents for their approval and to ensure the confidentiality of their participation in the study.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1

Mean Level of Work Ethics of Generation Z Employees in terms of Work Itself, Moral Attitude toward Work, and Intrinsic Motivation

Indicators: (Work Itself)	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I consider my occupational career to be one of the most essential activities in my life.	3.75	Very High
2. I believe that a person is known in society by the work he does.	3.10	High
3. I believe that a person is known in society by the work he does.	3.05	High

4. Even if I do not have to work to earn a living, I would still prefer to continue working.	3.30	Very High
5. I believe that work provides a powerful channel for expressing one's knowledge, abilities, and creativity.	3.70	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.38	Very High
Indicators: (Moral Attitude toward Work)		
1. I believe that even in this fast-changing world, sincerity, hard work, and integrity are still the key factors to my success in my work life.	3.80	Very High
2. I feel a moral obligation to give a full day's work for a full day's pay.	3.45	Very High
3. I believe that one should never be last for work unless there is a real emergency.	3.35	Very High
4. I believe that having strong ethics involves being reliable and accountable.	3.65	Very High
5. Even if it means risking my position, I am prepared to defend what is morally correct.	3.35	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.52	Very High
Indicators: (Intrinsic Motivation)		
1. A job well done is a reward in itself.	3.60	Very High
2. I welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility and challenge, as they contribute to my learning and growth.	3.80	Very High
3. I often set personal objectives that inspire me to do better at work.	3.60	Very High
4. I find purpose in my work when I see how it contributes to my own growth.	3.70	Very High
5. I am inspired to accomplish tasks because I take pride in my work.	3.50	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.64	Very High

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Level

Table 1 presents the mean levels of work ethics among Generation Z employees with respect to work itself, moral attitudes toward work, and intrinsic motivation. For the work itself, the highest mean of 3.75 indicates that respondents consider their occupational career one of the most essential activities in their lives, which falls within the "very high." It indicates that work is a significant part of their identity and experiences. This refers to studies on work centrality, which examine how important people consider work to be compared to other areas of their lives. For instance, Ziegler and Schlett (2016) found that individuals who place a high value on work perceive job satisfaction as a stronger attitude, which, in turn, has a greater impact on their work-related involvement and behavior. However, the concept that "a person is known in society by the work he or she does" received the lowest rating (mean = 3.05) and still falls under the High verbal description" category. Although this is the lowest score, it still indicates that respondents recognize the relevance of one's employment in shaping social identity. This is supported by Pignault et al. (2021), who highlighted that societal conceptions of work significantly influence how individuals understand their social positions and how they perceive others' perceptions of them. The fact that this item remains high suggests that Generation Z workers remain conscious of how work affects social standing, though less so than other work-value factors.

In terms of attitude toward work, respondents consistently showed strong agreement with the indicators examined in the study, as indicated by a composite mean score of 3.38, which is considered "very high." A very high rating indicates that the construct being evaluated, whether it relates to perceptions, practices, competences, engagement, or satisfaction, is not only present but also well-established among the participants. This pattern is consistent with Likert-scale study interpretation frameworks, which means that scores greater than 3.25 generally indicate very positive responses (Allen & Seaman, 2017). As a result, the findings suggest that the group under study already exhibits a well-reinforced habit or behavior considered typical. The results are also consistent with the literature, noting that strong work values enhance job performance. Kostek (2012) found that individuals with high work centrality are more likely to demonstrate commitment, diligence, and productive behavior in the workplace. The Very High overall rating suggests that respondents possess work ethics aligned with dependable performance and strong dedication to their roles. Therefore, the data imply that the workforce holds positive attitudes that may contribute to effective and efficient service in their respective institutions. The respondents' high rating of their career as "one of the most important activities in their life" shows that work is central to their identity and daily experience. This aligns with research on work centrality, which examines how important people perceive work to be relative to other life areas. Ziegler and Schlett (2016) found that those who highly value work perceive

job satisfaction as more important, which strongly influences their work behavior and engagement. This explains why the respondents value their careers: when work is central, it shapes how they feel about and behave at their jobs. A mean score of 3.35, rated "very high," indicates that respondents are strongly committed to defending what is morally right, even if doing so risks their positions. This finding supports Johnson's (2020) view that moral courage is key to maintaining organizational integrity and public trust. This determination underscores the importance of ethical responsibility, particularly when it may be easier to compromise. Staying true to moral standards under challenging situations demonstrates sincerity and a commitment to doing what is right.

Lastly, in terms of intrinsic motivation, Table 1 reports the highest mean of 3.80, indicating that they welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility and challenge and contribute to their learning and growth, which falls within the "very high category." Employees tend to accept jobs that offer more responsibility and challenge. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model suggests that job resources, such as autonomy, feedback, and growth opportunities, help counteract the stress of high job demands (Galankis & Tsitouri, 2022). Although the lowest mean of 3.50 falls within the very high range, respondents are motivated to complete tasks because they take pride in their work. For instance, a study conducted among Malaysian public servants discovered a substantial correlation between job motivation and intrinsic happiness, which encompasses pride, a sense of success, and fulfillment (Ismail & Razak, 2016). The overall composite mean of 3.64 (described as "very high"), reflecting both high responsiveness to challenges and a sense of pride at work, supports findings that a mix of job resources such as autonomy, meaningfulness, and support, along with reasonable job demands, encourages engagement and well-being. This leads to lasting satisfaction and better performance. According to Kwon and Kim (2019), an integrative review of employee engagement and innovative behavior indicates that when employees face challenges but have sufficient resources, they are more likely to engage, innovate, and remain committed. Similarly, job autonomy has been shown to help employees thrive at work, suggesting that with responsibility and independence, people not only meet demands but also grow, learn, and flourish (Li, 2018).

Table 2 presents the mean levels of work performance among Generation Z employees for task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behavior. For task performance, the highest mean of 3.70 was achieved when they planned their work to be completed on time, which falls within the very high range. Parke et al. (2017) found that, in a two-week study, workers who used what the authors call "time management planning" (TMP)—that is, making task lists, setting priorities, and scheduling tasks—performed better each day than on days when they did not plan. A recent study found that effective time management techniques significantly enhance work performance and reduce workplace stress. This implies that the lower but still high mean indicates a steady, consistent application of planning as a strategy, enabling workers to manage their workloads with direction and clarity, thereby supporting timely job completion. Meanwhile, Mata et al. (2021) found that effective time management techniques significantly enhance work performance and reduce workplace stress. This implies that the lower but still very high mean (3.55) indicates a steady, consistent application of planning as a strategy, allowing workers to manage their workload with direction and clarity, thereby supporting timely job completion. Furthermore, studies on the broader advantages of time management beyond output corroborate a composite mean of 3.62 (very high), reflecting the importance of on-time delivery and meticulous preparation. According to a 2021 meta-analysis, time management is more strongly correlated with well-being and lower distress than with performance (Aeon et al., 2021). This suggests that workers who plan effectively and complete tasks on schedule may also have increased job satisfaction, reduced time-related worry, and general psychological well-being, all of which may support their long-term consistency in planning and execution.

Table 2

Mean Level of Work Performance of Generation Z Employees in terms of Task Performance, Contextual Performance, and Counterproductive Behavior

Indicators: (Task Performance)	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time.	3.70	Very High
2. I created a well-organized plan that effectively guided me through the task.	3.55	Very High
3. I kept in mind the results that I have to achieve in my work.	3.55	Very High

4. I was able to separate the main issues from the side issues at work.	3.65	Very High
5. I knew how to set the right priorities.	3.65	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.62	Very High
Indicators: (Contextual Performance)		
1. I started a new task myself when my old ones were finished.	3.60	Very High
2. I took on a challenging work task when available.	3.40	Very High
3. I worked at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date.	3.70	Very High
4. I came up with creative solutions to new problems.	3.40	Very High
5. I knew how to solve difficult situations and setbacks quickly.	3.15	High
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.45	Very High
Indicators: (Counterproductive Behavior)		
1. I complained about unimportant matters at work.	2.05	Low
2. I focused on the negative aspects of a work situation rather than the positive ones.	1.90	Low
3. I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.	2.10	Low
4. I spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work.	1.85	Low
5. I managed to get out of a work task easily.	2.25	Low
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.03	Low

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Level

Table 2 also shows the highest mean of 3.70 for the item "They worked at keeping their job knowledge up-to-date," which falls within the very high category. Corresponds with studies by R and Newman (2021), which highlight the importance of CPD for professionals seeking to maintain their competence and relevance throughout their careers. Similarly, recent studies and conceptual works confirm that professional competence is built on CPD and purposeful updating of knowledge, particularly in domains where standards are changing rapidly. A mean score of 3.15 (High) on knowing how to solve difficult situations and recover quickly aligns with Lin's (2024) findings. Some researchers refer to this as "problem-solving efficacy," defined as the ability to apply knowledge and adapt under pressure. The recent study Developing problem-solving efficacy and job performance: Moderation of knowledge-oriented leadership explains that problem-solving efficacy connects employees' motivation to learn (learning goal orientation) with their job performance and is influenced by supportive leadership that promotes knowledge sharing and learning.

The overall composite mean of 3.45, classified as "very high," indicates a general tendency among respondents toward continuous learning and competence maintenance. This tendency aligns with findings from Ojha et al. (2025), who examined how knowledge management influences employee performance in higher education institutions. They found that robust knowledge management practices, such as creation, sharing, retention, and utilization, significantly enhance employee performance, especially when employees engage in continuous learning and creative use of knowledge. The composite mean reflects not only individual attitudes toward learning but also a workplace culture that supports ongoing development and adaptation. The data shows that respondents focus on keeping their job knowledge up to date and usually stay ready to perform well. Still, the lower average in quickly handling difficult situations suggests a potential gap. Even when professionals update their knowledge, they may struggle to apply it to rapid problem-solving under pressure. This finding aligns with the literature: formal or informal CPD often requires organizational support, such as knowledge-focused leadership, opportunities to apply new skills, and problem-solving training, to improve adaptive performance and resilience (Lin, 2024).

In addition, Table 2 found that employees "managed to get off from a work task easily" (mean = 2.25, low), suggesting they may be avoiding work or putting in minimal effort rather than participating fully. This matches research on Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). For example, a study of academic and administrative staff found that poor attendance, time wasting, low performance, and refusal of assignments all harmed institutional effectiveness (Gillian & Bennett, 2016). Employees who can "get off easily" from tasks may be showing withdrawal or slack behavior, which fits the definition of CWB and can harm organizational goals and performance standards. The lowest mean, 1.85 for "spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work," is also consistent with the literature on misbehaving or counterproductive behaviors, particularly the

"contextual" or interpersonal forms of CWB, in which employees vent negativity or dissatisfaction externally. According to a recent meta-analysis by Gillian and Bennett (2016), organizational cynicism is positively correlated with CWB: cynicism about the organization or leadership frequently results in covert behaviors like gossiping, complaining to outsiders, or damaging the organization's reputation. The low overall composite mean (2.03), which falls within the "low" range, indicates that employees generally engage in both task-avoidant behavior (putting off duties) and limited negative external discussion about work. This is typically in line with research showing that, although CWB and deviant behaviors do occur, they are frequently moderated by organizational context: even in the face of dissatisfaction, the likelihood of CWB is decreased by supportive leadership, fair management practices, and a clear ethical climate ("Influence of Managerial and Workplace Factors on Counterproductive Work Behavior Within Private Organizations," 2024).

Table 3
Correlation Coefficients and p-values for H₀

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Effect Size (r ²)	Critical Value	t-value	P-value	Interpretation
Work Ethics → Performance (Task Performance)	<i>r</i>					
Work Ethics (Work Itself)→ Performance (Task Performance)	0.630	0.397	2.080	3.717	<0.001	Highly Significant
Work Ethics (Moral attitude towards work) → Performance (Task Performance)	0.694	0.481	2.080	4.417	<0.001	Highly Significant
Work Ethics (Intrinsic Motivation) → Performance (Task Performance)	0.770	0.594	2.080	5.53	<0.001	Highly Significant
Work Ethics → Performance (Contextual Performance)						
Work Ethics (Work Itself)→ Performance (Contextual Performance)	0.507	0.257	2.080	2.695	0.014	Significant
Work Ethics (Moral attitude towards work) → Performance (Contextual Performance)	0.535	0.287	2.080	2.902	0.009	Significant
Work Ethics (Intrinsic Motivation)→ Performance (Contextual Performance)	0.505	0.255	2.080	2.681	0.014	Significant
Work Ethics → Performance (Counterproductive Performance)						
Work Ethics (Work Itself)→ Performance (Counterproductive Behavior)	-0.096	0.009	2.080	-0.442	0.660	Not Significant
Work Ethics (Moral attitude towards work)→ Performance (Counterproductive Behavior)	-0.390	0.152	2.080	-1.941	0.066	Not Significant
Work Ethics (Intrinsic Motivation)→ Performance (Counterproductive Behavior)	0.027	0.001	2.080	0.124	0.902	Not Significant
Work Ethics → Performance	0.499	0.249	2.080	2.639	0.015	Significant

Legend: p-value < 0.001 Highly Significant; p-value < 0.05 Significant p-value > 0.05 Not Significant

Table 3 shows the relationship between several aspects of employee performance and work ethic characteristics among Generation Z workers in the Local Government Unit of San Jose. The table includes sub rows for three work ethics aspects (Work Itself, Moral Attitude, Intrinsic Motivation) and is organized by performance outcome (task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive conduct). The Pearson's *r* (correlation coefficient), an effect-size label, the crucial *t*, the observed *t*, the *p*-value, and an interpretation (such as "Highly Significant," "Significant," or "Not Significant") are provided for every pairing in the table. The overall association between work ethic and performance is shown in the bottom row (*r* = 0.499, *p* = 0.015), indicating a moderately favorable correlation that is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that among Gen Z employees in the sample, higher work ethic scores are often associated with higher performance. Interpreting the overall *r* = 0.499 and *p* = 0.015: an *r* of 0.499 is a medium-to-large effect, meaning roughly that one can expect a meaningful positive association between work ethics and performance; as work ethics increase, so performs. The *p* = 0.015 indicates that this association is unlikely to be due to sampling error ($\alpha = 0.05$), so we reject the null hypothesis of no association. This empirical finding aligns with previous research demonstrating that generic work-ethic measures predict job performance, as evidenced by reviews and field studies reporting significant

positive correlations between work-ethic dimensions and employment outcomes (Salahudin et al., 2016).

The highly significant findings for task performance (Work Itself $r = 0.630$; Moral Attitude $r = 0.694$; Intrinsic Motivation $r = 0.770$; all $p < 0.001$) imply very strong positive relationships between these work-ethic facets and employees' core task accomplishment. These significant correlations, especially the very high link with intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.770$), align well with motivational theory and meta-analytic evidence showing intrinsic motivation is a robust predictor of higher quality and effortful work performance (SDT-based meta-analyses and reviews report consistently positive effects of self-determined/intrinsic motivation on workplace performance. In short, the results that intrinsic motivation and strong moral/work-itself orientations predict better task performance are supported by broader literature (Xue et al., 2022). The results marked as "Significant" for contextual performance (with moderate correlations of approximately 0.505–0.535 and p-values between 0.009–0.014) indicate that work ethic traits also encourage extra-role behaviors, such as helping, citizenship, and teamwork. This is logical: employees who value their work and have strong work ethics are more likely to engage in actions that benefit the organization voluntarily. This finding aligns with organizational research indicating that higher levels of contextual or organizational citizenship behaviors are associated with an ethical climate, shared organizational values, and positive work attitudes. These studies generally support the moderate but consistent correlations between work ethic and contextual performance (Benedicto & Caelian, 2021).

The results show that counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is not significantly related to the factors measured: Work Itself ($r = -0.096$, $p = 0.660$), Moral Attitude ($r = -0.390$, $p = 0.066$), and Intrinsic Motivation ($r = 0.027$, $p = 0.902$). Because these negative correlations are small or only marginally significant, a stronger work ethic does not clearly lead to lower CWB. The relationship may be weak or influenced by other factors, such as stress, job insecurity, perceived unfairness at work, or exclusion by coworkers. Recent studies on work ethic and CWB have yielded mixed findings: some show that a strong work ethic reduces CWB, whereas others find that this link depends on the work environment and individual circumstances, which may explain the lack of significant results for moral attitude. In particular, new research on Generation Z highlights that mental health and workplace pressures can affect whether positive work attitudes actually prevent negative behaviors. Therefore, these non-significant findings for CWB are expected and align with recent literature suggesting that the relationship between work ethic and CWB is not automatic but depends on situational factors (Misnan et al., 2024). Table 3 shows a clear and practically meaningful positive relationship between work ethics and employee performance among Gen Z in the Local Government Unit, especially for task and contextual performance, where effects range from moderate to large and are statistically robust. The non-significant findings for counterproductive behavior suggest a more complex picture: work ethic alone may not be sufficient to suppress deviance in the absence of favorable contextual conditions. Therefore, reject the null for the overall association ($r = 0.499$, $p = 0.015$) and for several subcomponents (notably task performance), but retain the null for the counterproductive outcomes. These empirical patterns are well supported by prior research showing strong links between intrinsic motivation/work ethic and performance, and they echo recent studies that treat the work ethic-CWB relationship as contingent on organizational and psychological moderators (Xue et al., 2022).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusion was drawn: the work ethics of Generation Z (Gen Z) employees in the Local Government Unit of San Jose are very high. In terms of moral attitude toward work and intrinsic motivation, the level of the respondents' work ethics is very high as well. The extent of work performance among Gen Z workers in the Local Government Unit of San Jose, in terms of task and contextual performance, is very high. On the contrary, respondents' work performance, as reflected in counterproductive behavior, is low. Given the results, the work ethics of Gen Z employees in terms of the work itself, moral attitudes towards work, and intrinsic motivation have a highly significant relationship with the respondents' job performance in terms of task performance. In addition, respondents' work ethic, as measured by the three aforementioned subvariables, is significantly related to their contextual job performance. On the other hand, there is no significant relationship between the three subvariables of work ethic and respondents' work performance in terms of counterproductive

behavior. Overall, the results indicate a significant relationship between work ethic and respondents' performances.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendation was presented: LGU San Jose may maintain its cultivation of effective workplace practices and management to improve employees' work ethics and performance within the organization. By providing a healthy and professional workplace, fostering effective communication, recognizing and rewarding employees' achievements, and offering growth opportunities, the work ethic of Gen Z may improve, which may positively impact their job performance. LGU San Jose may invest in regular training programs focused on ethics, professional development, and the specific skills needed to enhance job performance. These programs may be tailored to the needs and learning styles of Gen Z employees, incorporating technology and interactive elements to maximize engagement and knowledge retention. To maintain a high work ethics, Gen-Z employees must have a positive outlook toward their work, maintain a positive moral attitude toward work, and possess high intrinsic motivation. To maintain high work performance, Gen Z employees must be skilled in time management, organization, and problem-solving. Employees may also refrain from engaging in counterproductive behaviors. Future researchers may also consider conducting this research in other government agencies and private enterprises to improve the study's results. They may also use additional variables to provide more detailed information on Gen Z workers' ethics and workplace performance. Lastly, future researchers may consider conducting this research in other government agencies and private enterprises to improve the study's results. They may also use additional variables, such as the impact of technology, leadership styles, and organizational culture, to obtain more detailed information about Gen Z workers' workplace ethics and performance. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be employed to track changes in work ethics and performance over time, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Gen Z employees' behavior.

5. References

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