

# Balancing Work, Family, and Personal Life in the Mexican Context: The Future of Work for the “COVID-19 Generation”



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**Abstract** Intergenerational talent management—i.e., attracting and retaining employees across generations and with different motivations—is one of companies’ greatest challenges. The expectations that recent generations bring with them have pushed culture in the direction of work-family balance, which is now seen as a key tool for human resources departments in charge of creating support mechanisms to attract and retain the next generation of workers. This trend has been reinforced by the changes brought about in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to this shift, and inspired by the challenges that our “new normal” posits, this chapter presents research results from a survey conducted in Mexico with respondents from generations Y and Z. The survey results offer important insight into how these generations perceive work-life balance, as well as the expectations that young Mexicans between the ages of 18 and 30 hold in terms of family and work.

**Keywords** Generations Y and Z · Human resource management · Mexico · Work-family balance

**JEL Classification** M12 · Z13

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Significant debate around the future of work has emerged in large part based on the complex challenges that dizzying technological change has presented in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic, for its part, has brought about once in a generation changes to the work environment, thereby reviving discussion about the future of different generations working together in the same workplace, together with questions of what each generation will demand from companies in the short-term, once the pandemic has passed (Foroohar 2020). The youngest generations—especially digital natives—took to remote work like “a duck to water” (Raišienė et al. 2020). While, as we will see in this chapter, work-life balance trends have been on the rise in recent years, the coronavirus pandemic has accelerated this process, breaking down many barriers, especially cultural ones. As a result, many organizations are already beginning to work on the various approaches that they need to retain not only the generations currently in the office, but also the ones to come, which is already being called “the COVID-19 Generation” (Rudolph and Zacker 2020; Twenge 2020) or “Generation Crown” (Frometa 2020).

In this context, talent management has become an imperative for human resources departments charged with creating support mechanisms aimed at retaining multiple generations with diverse expectations and motivations (Costanza et al. 2012; Díaz et al. 2017). Along with the different types of diversity inherent to the labor market—including gender, race, socioeconomic status, etc. (Barak 2013; Shen et al. 2009)—companies today face the increasingly problematic challenge of intergenerational management since a total of four generations are currently engaged in the labor market (Davis 2014; Las Heras and Destefano 2011; Kelan et al. 2009). Furthermore, companies are tasked with attracting and retaining young employees for the health and sustainability of business, and this task has been neither simple nor straightforward. As the workforce has evolved, so have these employees’ expectations, which have prompted organizations to try to improve people’s lives equitably and ethically (Deloitte 2020). Generations Y and Z’s motivations and expectations have contributed to the creation of a culture consistent with work-family balance, as expressed in several decades of theoretical development (Grzywacz and Carlson 2007; Sturges and Guest 2004) and evidenced in a wide range of organizational policies (Cegarra-Leiva et al. 2012; Haar and Spell 2004).

Indeed, companies all around the world are currently focusing on combining family life with the demands of the work world (Crawford et al. 2019; Powell et al. 2019). The integration of family and work aims to improve people’s quality of life by facilitating compatibility among life’s diverse spheres, including commitments to loved ones, work, and free time. This balance should be understood as harmonious engagement in the different roles that each person exercises both in the family and

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in the work environment throughout their life span (Debeljuh and Ordóñez 2019). And this is no small matter because the family is of strategic importance for society; in addition to connecting people to the social structures in which they participate, it generates a more humane way of life (Bosch et al. 2016).

With this context in mind, we aim to specifically study the difficulties of intergenerational talent management and focus specifically on generation Y and Z in Mexico. Prior research in Mexico on this topic is limited. We will present results from a survey of young people between 18 and 30 years old in Mexico that corresponds to 24.2% of the economically active population (Merca2.0 2014). Also, discuss the results with implications for how the youngest working generations perceive work-life balance and their expectations of family and work life, thus hoping to bolster companies' efforts to attract and retain that talent bracket in Mexico.

### **Work-Life Balance and Generational Divides: Framework**

Work-life balance is a multifaceted construction supported by several decades of theory (Grzywacz and Carlson 2007; Allen et al. 2013; Kelly et al. 2008). Evidence from the literature points to a positive relationship between the enrichment of work and adequately balanced family life (Grzywacz and Marks 2000; Thompson and Prottas 2005; van Steenbergen et al. 2007; Voydanoff 2004) for achieving the firm's goals. Motivating factors and feedback (Hackman and Oldham 1976), autonomy associated with time management (Voydanoff 2004), task variety (Barnett et al. 1992), flexibility, and freedom are all believed (Boudreau et al. 2015), among other factors, to contribute to the enrichment of work and family.

The phenomenon of an intergenerational workforce has been the object of recent study; however, consensus still lacks regarding its conception and behavioral features. Of course, it is a complex matter since each generation has differences and particularities; based on the time they were born, people face diverse cultural, political, and social contexts, and they conceive of relationships with their employers and peers differently. In addition to the above, the generation gap is getting bigger, with age gaps that exceed 20 years in some cases. This age difference impacts aspects like communication, the use of technology, motivation, recruitment, and incentives, among other things. As a consequence, managing multiple generations has become both a great challenge and an opportunity for organizations.

Before describing the characteristics and traits associated with the different generations currently in the workforce, we must first define what is understood by generation (Díaz et al. 2017). For Ogg and Bonvalet (2006) a generational group is an age group that shares a set of training experiences throughout its history that distinguish it from its predecessors.

Four generations currently coexist in the workforce as follows: (1) Baby Boomers born between 1951 and 1964, (2) Generation X born between 1965 and 1980, (3) Generation Y born between 1981 and 2000 (Ogg and Bonvalet 2006), and (4) Generation Z born from 2000 to 2014 (see Table 1). As noted, this phenomenon leads to a greater diversity of expectations, experiences, and motivations, and therefore to greater challenges for companies to manage.

**Table 1** Classification of the various generations (according to year of birth)

Generation	Birth year range
Traditionalist	Before 1946
Baby Boomer (BB)	1947–1964
Generation X	1965–1980
Generation Y (Millennials)	1981–1999
Generation Z	2000–2014
Generation Alfa	2015–Actual
“COVID-19 Generation”	–

Source: Authors’ elaboration

The most representative characteristics of these four generations are presented below:

#### *Baby Boomers*

Baby boomers were born after World War II; their upbringing was marked by demographic explosion and the postwar period. They were largely raised by young mothers, mostly traditional and conservative housewives (Díaz-Sarmiento et al. 2017). At work, they are traditionalist, rigid and structured, but they also have great vision and knowledge. They are committed to their work and motivated by financial reward. They consider work as a way of being and existing, seeing it as stable, long-term, addictive, and a place to register achievements. They believe in work, as well as the status it lends them and the trajectory associated with it (Forbes 2015). They stand out for their security and independence. They are mostly members of large families and do not spend much time on leisure and recreation, however, they value spending time with family and following traditions; likewise, they consider people’s education to be important. They are active, concerned about their health and interested in the digital world (Merca2 2014).

#### *Generation X*

This generation grew up without computers and witnessed the transformation from analog to digital technology during adulthood. They were the first part of the workforce to become familiar with computers. They are considered a “sandwich” generation: at work, they are usually under baby boomers and, lead Generation Y employees; at home, they take care of their parents and their millennial children (Universum 2017). Current generation X professionals are characterized as mature and well prepared; they take on responsibility and make up much of the current job market. Work occupies an essential place in their self-definition, and they value recognition and feedback from bosses, as well as their relationships with colleagues and peers (Díaz-Sarmiento et al. 2017). They are tired of the vision and mission statements written by their predecessors (Zemke et al. 2013) and rather focus on highlighting their motivations and projections in their work. Seeing work only as work, they seek a balance between their personal and work life (Marshall 2004).

### *Generation Y*

This generation, also called millennials, was the first generation born in the world of technology. Millennials shape and, at the same time, are shaped by the world of work; in other words, they are redefining the employer-employee relationship. Children of parents whose jobs became less secure from the 1970s through the 1990s entered the labor market during an almost unprecedented global recession that resulted in high youth unemployment rates, rapid changes in business cycles, and increased demand for new skills. They are highly competent in digital knowledge, quickly learning new IT tools and devices. They are mindful of social relationships, easily accepting cultural differences and really enjoying a fast-paced life (Krishnan et al. 2012; Bencsik et al. 2016). They are flexible and do not like to plan for long periods, enjoying today and often questioning traditional values. Their experiences determine their decisions and actions (Bittner et al. 2013; Bencsik et al. 2016). For the most part, this generation is already present in the job market; they have college degrees and work together with baby boomers, generation X and, to a lesser extent, generation Z. If they feel stifled, they will quickly change jobs. They are characterized by multitasking, i.e., by a multifaceted and distributed attention span (Bencsik et al. 2016). For them, the concepts of success, career, and money are a top priority because they have learned what it takes to advance in the consumer society (Tari 2010). Their communication occurs mainly in virtual space and their online presence is endless. They are motivated to push, advance, and achieve success; work is a priority for them, while the family remains in the background. Having free time and relaxation is inevitably important to them and they have very wide and diverse desires. Ultimately, it is important for them to work where they want and do what they enjoy.

### *Generation Z*

Generation Z was born in a fully technological world; as a result, the digital world is highly present for them with technological devices wholly integrated into their lives and an omnipresent online environment (Bencsik et al. 2016), which is why they are sometimes known as the Facebook generation, digital natives or sometimes the iGeneration (Tari 2010). They have grown up in an uncertain and complex environment that defines their point of view on work, education, and the world. Compared to previous generations, certain forms of socialization are very difficult for them; they are practical, quite intelligent and they like to take the initiative. They are more impatient and more agile than their predecessors and continually seek new challenges and impulses. They are not afraid of continuous change and have a lot of information at hand; in effect, they try to solve everything on the Internet (Tari 2011; Bencsik et al. 2016). They have different expectations of the workplace and are more ambitious and enterprising than millennials. They learn quickly and are often self-taught, which makes them much more irreverent than their colleagues. Their technical and linguistic knowledge is quite developed, making them an excellent workforce.

### *Generation Alpha*

Generation Alpha is made up of purely digital natives in their first years of schooling and their education represents a great challenge. Alphas are completely familiar with

everything happening on social networks; they were born with a cell phone, a tablet or a computer in hand and they are used to a constant flow of information and content. This generation is educated in the framework of respect for human rights and non-discrimination, and shy away from stereotypes, something that manifests itself in androgynous fashion trends. They have more tools to access information, wanting everything instantaneously and to be convinced according to their particular tastes and interests. Artificial intelligence is part of their lives (Quezada and Gómez 2019).

## 2 Balancing Work, Family and Personal Life

Essentially, work-life balance reflects the equilibrium between work, family, and personal commitments. According to Kalliath and Brough (2008), it is possible to supplement work-related obligations and interests with family and personal responsibilities and interests. Debeljuh and Ordoñez (2019) and Bosch and Hernández (2020) affirm that this balance must be understood in terms of co-responsibility, that is, in terms of shared responsibility between men and women, as well as between companies and society (Bosch et al. 2014, 2016).

The family is the primary sphere of development for any human being, constituting the basis for identity construction, self-esteem development, and learning basic social norms of coexistence. As the nucleus of society, the family is a fundamental institution for the education and promotion of essential human values that are transmitted from generation to generation (CONAPO 2013). Therefore, the task of safeguarding this basic social unit makes achieving a balance between it and work necessary.

Scholars highlight the fact that the work and family spheres have significant influence on one another (Ford et al. 2007; Gattrell et al. 2013; Jain and Nair 2013; Shockley and Singla 2011; Vyas and Shrivastava 2017). Hence, most of the literature regarding this relationship has centered on two perspectives: (1) the conflict that arises between these spheres (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Frone et al. 1992) and (2) the satisfaction and enrichment achieved in them (Sieber 1974; Crouter 1984; Greenhaus and Powell 2006).

The relationship between work and family began to clash starting with increased inclusion of women in the workplace, which gave rise to a large number of couples in which both members worked, marking a clear contrast with the prevailing model in Western industrialized and urban societies until the 1950s and 1960s. In this way, with a new model emerging in society, research began to focus on studying these couples to see how they met new expectations of keeping up with job requirements without neglecting household and family tasks (Davidson and Cooper 1992; Kossek et al. 2011). Although the relationship between work and family was first approached as in conflict, in the 1990s, a more enriching perspective emerged with the suggestion that the roles in one domain improve or make easier role performance in the other domain and vice versa (Grzywacz and Marks 2000).

This mutually enriching relationship has had an impact on companies' ability to generate a humane approach at all levels, empowering people to work productively with technology, among different generations and surrounded by diversity and creating lasting value for both the company and for society in general. Organizations have proven that, by helping their members integrate their family and work lives, they can enhance people's strengths, obtain greater results and drive higher performance (Deloitte 2020). Indeed, work, family, and personal life should enrich one another; they are fundamental, inalienable, and complementary dimensions for both men and women (Debeljuh and Reyes 2016).

### **3 Work-life Balance and Generations Y and Z in the Mexican Context**

Mexico's current family dynamics are very different from prior generations given that Mexican women have entered the labor market at higher rates. Although female participation in the market economy is the lowest of any OECD country (2015), by 2017, it increased to 38% of the economically active population, although with high rates of gender inequality within what has traditionally been a male-dominated culture (Kelan et al. 2009). According to INEGI (2017), the fertility rate has decreased from 4.84 children per woman in the 1980s to 2.2 in 2016. Not only are fewer children born, but also an increasing number tends to live without both parents. Only 56.2% of households are two-parent and 17.5% are single parent, of which 27% are female-headed. In this context, children are being left in the care of someone else in the home, older siblings are left in charge of younger ones, or they are growing up in daycare centers. This combination of factors makes work-life balance in Mexico a matter of utmost importance for the current and rising workforce.

Yet, according to Morales (2020), work-life balance already represented a significant challenge for the Mexican workforce before the coronavirus crisis, which has exposed its gaping deficiencies. Among the associated problems, three especially stand out. First, a high workload—in Mexico, almost 29% of employees work long hours, one of the highest rates in the OECD, where the average is 11% (OECD 2015). Second, a gender gap when it comes to care tasks both at home and work. At home, Mexican women spend 4 more hours per day than men engaged in unpaid care of others and the home. Finally, low levels of quality free time. According to the OECD Better Life Index, Mexico has one of the lowest levels of work-life balance of 40 countries analyzed, occupying position 39 in the ranking, with a rating of 1.1 on a scale of 0 to 10 (OECD 2015).

In what follows, we discuss the methodology and results of a survey that measures work-life balance perceptions and expectations among generation Y and Z Mexican students and professionals. As indicated above, understanding them is vital for current and future talent management in Mexico.

### 3.1 *Methods*

This research is quantitative and cross-sectional. Data was collected using a semi-structured<sup>2</sup> online survey to measure research questions. The survey focuses on a representative sample of young workers in Mexico between the ages of 18 and 30. It was disseminated between July 2019 and January 2020 through a wide range of local contacts, both from academia and the business world, and through the use of social media.

The survey, hosted on the SurveyMonkey platform, consisted of 30 questions. It took respondents an average of 15 min to complete. Some questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The survey was first tested on a non-probabilistic sample in Mexico to ensure questions were well understood and that the survey was user friendly.

Statistical and machine learning techniques are used to carry out the analysis. To find the variables that best represent the data set, the Chi-square (p) analysis was applied. To carry out the analysis, a p-value is used. That is, the significance of Chi-square (p) which is a more exact measure than the Chi value itself, and therefore this data is better used to check whether the result is significant or not. Two Chi-square (p) analyzes are carried out, one with sociodemographic data and the other with the family and work environment.

### 3.2 *Model and Variables*

Three constructs were used as follows:

- I. Family environment: Questions 1 to 8 and 26
- II. Work environment: Questions 9 to 15 and 27 to 30
- III. Socioeconomic and demographic: Questions 16 to 25

The variables used in the study were as follows (see also Table 2):

1. Family as a model
2. Type of work parents engage in
3. Perceived difficulty of parents' role balance at home
4. Distribution of housework and childcare among parents
5. Most valued aspects of life
6. Intention to have children
7. Motivations for working
8. Professional development
9. Criteria for choosing a job

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<sup>2</sup>The survey was developed by specialists from the CONFYE center. It has been implemented in Argentina since 2009, and has been updated to capture new realities and for application outside of Argentina. See: <https://www.iae.edu.ar/es/ConocimientoElImpacto/Centros/Confye/Paginas/investigacion.aspx#generaciones>.



**Table 2** Work-life balance

Construct	Variables	Questions
1. Family environment	<p>(1) To measure the respondent's family as model we used the measures developed by Debeljuh and Destéfano (2015)</p> <p>(2) To measure the type of work respondents' parents are engaged in, we used the measures developed by Conlon (2002)</p> <p>(3) To ask respondents about their perception, we used the question developed by Conlon (2002)</p> <p>(4) To measure this perception, the alternatives proposed by Conlon (2002) were used</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 26
2. Work environment	<p>(5) To measure these, we used the items proposed by Kleinbeck and Schmidt (1990)</p> <p>(6) To measure the intention of having children, we used the alternatives proposed by Hernández Ruiz (2008)</p> <p>(7) To measure motivations for working, we used the measures proposed by Grant (2008)</p> <p>(8) To measure professional development, or the place where respondents would like to work, alternatives proposed by Hernández (2008) were used</p> <p>(9) To measure the criteria for choosing a job, the measurements proposed by Debeljuh and Destéfano (2015) were used</p> <p>(10) These measures were based on the items proposed by Debeljuh and Destéfano (2015), as well as by Gilbert et al. (1991)</p> <p>(11) These measures were built based on the items proposed by Thompson et al. (1999)</p> <p>(12) To measure the intention to leave the company, one item from among those proposed by O'Reilly et al. (1991), as well as by Debeljuh and Destéfano (2015), was used</p>	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 29, 30

(continued)

**Table 2** (continued)

Construct	Variables	Questions
3. Socioeconomic and demographic questions	(13) Control variables included age, gender, nationality, number of siblings, current marital status, highest level of educational attainment, current job status, type of job (contractual/self-employed), and length of time in current position	16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

Source: Authors' elaboration

10. Perspectives on work-life balance
11. Family-friendly culture
12. Intention to leave current company
13. Sociodemographic control variables

### 3.3 *Machine Learning Analysis*

To better understand the most relevant factors and correlations when it comes to work-life balance, machine learning analysis techniques were employed after normalizing the variables. To carry out the analysis, the p-value was used because Chi-squared (p) is a more accurate measure of significance than the Chi value itself.

In this case the hypotheses are:

Ho: Variables are independent of each other.

H1: Variables are not independent of each other.

- If  $p < 0.05$  the result is significant, that is, it rejects the null hypothesis of independence. We, therefore, conclude that the variables in question are dependent, i.e., there is a relationship between them. There is less than a 5% probability that the null hypothesis is true in our sample.
- If  $p > 0.05$  the result is not significant, that is, we accept the null hypothesis of independence and therefore we conclude that the variables in questions are independent and have no relationship. This means that there is more than a 5% probability that the null hypothesis is true in our sample, which we consider sufficient to accept.

The value 0.05 was established in accordance with a 95% confidence level. In this way, dependency between the variables indicates whether there is a relationship between them. The first analysis was carried out with all the variables; the most relevant dependent variable, as seen in the variable 1 column below, is age, followed by gender (Table A1). For the second analysis, and upon analyzing the different variables, the evidence shows that there is a significant relationship between family

and work environments. The most relevant variables are related to respondents' vision of work-life balance in which they expect employers to respect work within an assigned schedule, flexibility, and their personal and family life, in addition to fomenting a good work environment (Table A2).

To find the variables that best represent the dataset, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was applied. The PCA is used to identify a small number of uncorrelated variables, called "core components", from a large set of data. The goal of core component analysis is to explain the maximum amount of variance with the fewest major components that are easier to interpret and analyze than the total initial variables. The PCA was performed, after normalization of the variables, for the personal, family, and work-life expectations data set. The next step was to generate clusters based on the Machine Learning clustering technique, by grouping individuals together according to their similarities. We identified three clusters (C1, C2, C3) and the features that stand out per cluster are Family, Marriage/Couple, Schooling, Friends, Work, Free time, Religion, and Volunteering (Table A3).

## 4 Results and Discussion

### *Sociodemographic Variables*

388 people, mostly from Mexico City and the State of Mexico (91.2% of the sample), responded to the survey. 43.3% of respondents were men and 56.7% were women. 37.3% were part of generation Z, 45% were Millennials, and 7.7% were from Generation X. 71.1% of respondents were studying for a university degree. Of the total surveyed, only 15.1% were married or with a stable partner and only 4% of respondents had children. The rest of the participants were single (with or without a significant other). These data points were chosen because they most impacted perceptions of work-life balance (see Table 3).

### *Family Context*

Results point to the fact that family serves as an important model. And indeed, the home is where one learns the difference between selfishness and cooperation, where one discovers what a good person is and grows in confidence, where one learns to relate to people and get one's point of view across while respecting those of others, all of which facilitates the ability to work with people in the future (Bosch et al. 2016; Kim and De las Heras 2012). Thus, the ability to successfully combine work, family commitments, and personal life is important for the well-being of all family members; however, according to the OECD (2020), finding the right balance between work and daily life is a challenge that all workers face, especially parents.

One's upbringing and satisfaction with it influence future decisions regarding work, family, and personal life balance, including what one perceives in the home in terms of parents' work and household chore and care management. This is evidenced in the survey data, where more than 50% of the respondents said that they sought support and advice from their parents when faced with a situation characterized by

**Table 3** Respondent profiles

Gender		
Feminine	220	56.7%
Masculine	168	43.3%
Generations		
Generation X	30	7.7%
Generation Y- Millennial	175	45%
Generation Z	145	37.3%
Marital status		
Married	17	4.4%
Divorced	1	0.3%
Coupled (long-term relationship)	42	10.8%
Single (with a significant other)	114	29.4%
Single (without a significant other)	214	55.1%
Family – Children		
With children	16	4%
Without children	372	96%
Educational level		
Currently in college	276	71.1%
College complete	61	15.7%
Postgraduate	49	12.7%
High school	2	0.5%
Employment status		
Employed	275	71%
Not employed	113	29%
Housing situation		
Live with parents	261	67%
Live apart from parents	124	33%
Total	388	100%

Source: Authors' elaboration

conflict. The results show that these younger generations find highly relevant and value the family first, followed by study, and then friends/work.

Regarding their parents' work situations during their childhood and adolescence, most of the respondents' fathers were employed full time, while only 42% of their mothers were. 49% of respondents stated that their mothers took on the majority of household responsibilities, 23% stated that their parents shared the responsibility equitably, and only 2% claimed that their fathers assumed full responsibility. Regarding the level of difficulty that parents had in combining their work and family roles when they were children, both male and female respondents perceived that both their fathers and mothers found it difficult to balance work and family. This is also

reflected in the fact that families were reported to have lower levels of labor division at home between parents.

The respondents indicate that they learned how to solve problems from their parents, who support their decision-making outside of the home. In addition, faced with conflict, they seek the support and advice of their parents, however, when projecting into the future, 30% of those surveyed reject the model their parents provided them with. They see themselves as part of dual-income families in the future, are interested in supporting their partner's professional development, and are willing to make their careers more flexible to care for children or dependent elderly adults. Both women and men seek to take an active role in their own homes and care about having a social life apart from work.

#### *Work Environment*

Only 15% of respondents state that they have flexibility in their job, the remaining 44% work full time, and 41% work part-time. In terms of motivations for working, women ranked "doing good for others through work" (transcendent motivation) as their main motivation, unlike men who ranked "I enjoy working" (extrinsic motivation) first and "earning money" (extrinsic motivation) second. In the case of women, intrinsic motivation comes after transcendent motivation and before extrinsic motivation. Analyzing the responses of those who currently work, 49% of respondents state that they are very satisfied (they do not plan to change jobs), 35% are undecided and 16% openly state that they want to change jobs.

#### *Work-Related Expectations and Balance*

The aspects that these young people value most in their personal lives are reflected in their job expectations; they seek to work at and appreciate organizations/companies with the following characteristics:

- Support employees' quality of life
- Have policies geared toward work-family balance with corresponding leadership and culture
- Large companies or can freelance/have their own personal project
- Offer flexible work environments (with home office and other balance-related policies)
- Respect hours after work and weekends as personal/family time

Regarding leadership management (analyzing responses from those who currently work), we observed the following:

- 49% of these young people believe that their companies' organizational culture respects their generations' work and lifestyles.
- 65% of female respondents, and 59% of male respondents, believe that their leaders are willing to listen to their work and/or personal issues, conveying closeness, support, and giving continuous feedback.
- Both male and female respondents coincided in their belief that male leaders are more proactive in noticing improvement, communicating it, and making decisions.

## 5 Conclusion

Mexico has a huge and continuously growing market, making understanding the workforce's expectations essential for managing it more effectively. Family-oriented culture is very much a salient feature in Mexico, influencing expectations of a better balance between work and family life for young workers. This cultural and generational predisposition towards the ends of work is reflected in employment decisions. A family-oriented culture affects perceptions of work-family balance since expectations around care remain high, leading to high conflict in double-income households. Although young Mexicans, both men and women, have similar reasons for working, women still find it more difficult to achieve work-life balance and respond more favorably to balance-focused policies.

Given the diversity among generations, Mexican companies should focus on generating changes in the workplace that allow for them to interact, making that diversity a competitive advantage. This is especially true since, due to increased average life span in Latin American populations, young workers (generations Y and Z) will soon have greater intergenerational and parental care obligations.

As a future avenue for research, these new generations face two particularly great challenges posed by the informal economy and intergenerational solidarity. Mexico's economically active population continues to operate with a large number of participants in the informal labor sector (Biles 2008). Added to problems of poverty and inequality, this has enormous implications for taxes, social security, retirement, access to credit, and stability. The informal labor sector values balance as much as the formal labor sector, and therefore efforts must be made to discourage informal labor agreements. Increased trust in the formal sector will have an impact on new generations' obligations and tax burdens, and companies will have to start preparing for the demands that their current and future employees will face.

Because of the pandemic, companies and workers all over the globe switched to remote work to contain the transmission of COVID-19, which has unexpectedly served as a massive and unplanned pilot program for new ways of working that support work-family balance. Remote virtual meetings have become the norm in 2020, and economic activity has increased on a variety of digital platforms. As restrictions are lifted, we still do not know how the "new normal" will shape the organization of work or what the future will look like, but we can be sure that the desire for work-life balance that the youngest generations of workers express, combined with the remote-work social experiment brought on by the pandemic, will lead the way.

## Appendix: Machine Learning Analysis

**Table A1** Dependence between variables: work-life balance factor

	Variable	Associated variable	Chi squared	p value	Association
1.	Age	Identify _a	22.17	0.036	Dependency between variables
2.	Age	Identify _d	37.4	0	Dependency between variables
3.	Age	Imp_life_b	30.45	0.002	Dependency between variables
4.	Age	Frequency _Leave _Work	197.04	0	Dependency between variables
5.	Age	Work_sector	215.7	0	Dependency between variables
6.	Age	Seniority_work	248.75	0	Dependency between variables
7.	Age	Homework_organization	45.97	0	Dependency between variables
8.	Age	S_D	22.01	0	Dependency between variables
9.	Age	couple_work	113.15	0	Dependency between variables
10.	Age	Civil_status	91.73	0	Dependency between variables
11.	Age	Level _studies	244.78	0	Dependency between variables
12.	Gender	Gender leader	10.56	0.005	Dependency between variables
13.	Gender	Work_motivation_agreement_7	11.96	0.018	Dependency between variables
14.	Gender	Work_motivation_agreement_4	13.11	0.011	Dependency between variables
15.	Gender	Work_motivation_agreement_2	10.61	0.031	Dependency between variables
16.	Gender	Work_motivation_agreement_1	10.37	0.035	Dependency between variables

Source: Authors' elaboration.

**Table A2** Dependence between family and work environment-related variables

#	Variable	Associated variable	Chi squared	p value	Association
1.	Vision_wlk_5	World_Agreement_Work _2	139.01	0	Dependency between variables
2.	Vision_wlk_5	World_Agreement_Work _3	130.04	0	Dependency between variables
3.	Vision_wf_10	World_Agreement_Work _3	123.22	0	Dependency between variables
4.	Vision_wlk_5	World_Agreement_Work _1	111.57	0	Dependency between variables
5.	World_Agreement_Work _1	Vision_wlk_5	111.57	0	Dependency between variables
6.	Future_work_1	W_criterion _1	107.85	0	Dependency between variables
7.	Imp_life_a	Vision_wlk_8	103.71	0	Dependency between variables
8.	Vision_wlk_10	Work_motivation _agreement _2	100.41	0	Dependency between variables
9.	World_Agreement_Work _5	Work_motivation _4	98.29	0	Dependency between variables

(continued)

**Table A2** (continued)

#	Variable	Associated variable	Chi squared	p value	Association
10.	Imp_life_a	Vision_wlk_7	90.01	0	Dependency between variables
11.	Iden_b	Imp_life_c	88.04	0	Dependency between variables
12.	Leadership management agreement _2	Work_motivation _4	80.24	0	Dependency between variables
13.	Identify_b	Imp_life_a	74.23	0	Dependency between variables
14.	Identify_c	Imp_life_a	74.23	0	Dependency between variables
15.	Imp_life_a	World_Agreement_Work _5	70.25	0	Dependency between variables
16.	Vision_wlk_10	Work_motivation _8	67.29	0	Dependency between variables
17.	Future work_1	Work_motivation _3	63.45	0	Dependency between variables
18.	Identify_b	Vision_wlk_8	60.25	0	Dependency between variables
19.	Identify_b	Imp_life_e	59.46	0	Dependency between variables
20.	Imp_life_a	Work_motivation _4	59.26	0	Dependency between variables
21.	Imp_life_a	Vision_wlk_2	56.84	0	Dependency between variables
22.	Iden_c	Vision_wlk_1	54.18	0	Dependency between variables
23.	Imp_life_a	Vision_wlk_1	53.46	0	Dependency between variables
24.	Imp_life_a	World_Agreement_Work_3	53.09	0	Dependency between variables
25.	Iden_c	Imp_life_c	50.49	0	Dependency between variables
26.	Iden_d	Vision_wlk_3	47.7	0	Dependency between variables
27.	Iden_b	Vision_wlk_1	46.27	0	Dependency between variables
28.	Iden_b	Imp_life_d	44.82	0	Dependency between variables
29.	Iden_d	Vision_wlk_6	43.74	0	Dependency between variables

Source: Authors' elaboration.



**Table A3** Most important variables in clusters

Variable	Importance				
<b>Family</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	21	83	1	7	2
C2	18	128		2	
C3	17	104	1	5	
<b>Marriage/couple</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	29	54	4	24	3
C2	52	70	2	20	4
C3	36	71	3	14	3
<b>Schooling</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	35	66		12	1
C2	45	98	1	3	1
C3	45	76		5	1
<b>Friends</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	48	54	1	10	1
C2	56	80		11	1
C3	54	59		11	3
<b>Work</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	57	46		11	
C2	66	69	2	9	2
C3	61	52		13	1
<b>Free time</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	56	49		8	1
C2	62	69	1	13	3
C3	44	58	1	22	2
<b>Religion</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	26	24	18	34	12
C2	36	25	13	46	28
C3	26	29	23	30	19
<b>Solidarity activities/volunteering</b>					
Cluster	Important	Very important	Not important	Neutral	Less important
C1	33	24	7	40	10
C2	53	23	4	52	16
C3	38	17	4	50	18

Source: Authors' elaboration.

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