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*Artículos científicos*

## **Ser empleado: un orgullo del siglo XX transformado en estigma en el siglo XXI**

***Being an Employee: A Proud Statement of the 20th Century Transformed into a Stigma in the 21st Century***

***Ser funcionário: um orgulho do século 20 transformado em estigma no século 21***

**Enrique Castillo Gil\***

Universidad Americana de Europa, México

[enriquecastillogil@yahoo.com](mailto:enriquecastillogil@yahoo.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4647-1161>

**María Cristina González Martínez**

Universidad Americana de Europa, México

[mariacristina.gonzalez@unade.net](mailto:mariacristina.gonzalez@unade.net)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6250-7681>

\* Autor de correspondencia. [enriquecastillogil@yahoo.com](mailto:enriquecastillogil@yahoo.com)

### **Resumen**

Las empresas en México hoy en día compiten fuertemente por atraer y retener talento innovando constantemente en metodologías para motivar a los empleados y candidatos. Sin embargo, la capacidad de retener al talento empleado se ha ido complicando bajo las nuevas tendencias del siglo XXI. El supuesto generalizado es que esto es debido en gran parte a las diferencias entre generaciones (*baby boomers*, *Gen X*, *millennials* y Generación Z) y que los más jóvenes no tienen el compromiso necesario para ser empleados, además de ser difíciles de gestionar. Este estudio inició con el objetivo de detectar los comportamientos generacionales de los empleados y encontrar variables de motivación que permitieran



mejorar la captación y retención del talento. Se encontraron variables que afectan directamente la intención del empleado a cambiar de empresa, pero ninguna presentó correlación alguna con la edad. Los resultados señalan que el problema de atracción y retención no es de tipo generacional, sino contextual, es decir, afecta por igual al empleado indistintamente de su edad. Además, se identificó claramente una expectativa subyacente en la mayoría de los profesionistas mexicanos encuestados a volverse autónomos o empresarios en lugar de empleados. Esta expectativa afecta directamente a la empresa que tiene empleados queriendo ser empresarios, e indirectamente a las empresas que no logran conseguir talento porque este prefiere no emplearse. El problema se agravó con el desarrollo de nuevos modelos de trabajo a partir del 2020, por lo que el “ser empleado” está perdiendo su atractivo y rentabilidad.

**Palabras clave:** autoempleo, brecha generacional, empresario, motivación, recursos humanos, retención de talento.

### Abstract

Mexican companies fight aggressively nowadays to attract and retain talent, constantly innovating methodologies to motivate candidates and employees. However, the ability to retain talent has been increasing in complexity with the new trends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many assume that the problem comes from the generational differences between baby boomers, Gen Xers, millennials, and Gen Z's in the workplace. The blame is typically assigned to younger generations for not exhibiting the commitment as employees and being challenging to manage. The original goal of this study was to detect common generational attitudes and characteristics and find the motivation variables that could improve talent attraction and retention. The study found variables that directly motivate an employee to change from one company to another but found no correlation to the employee's age. The results point out that the attraction and retention problem is not a generational one but a context problem that similarly affects all generations. The study also found an underlying expectation of becoming entrepreneurs instead of employees in most Mexican professionals. This expectation affects companies directly when they have employees already wanting to become entrepreneurs. It also indirectly affects those companies that cannot fill positions because the available talent does not like to become employees. The problem also intensified with the new work models



developed starting 2020, making “being an employee” lose its attractiveness and profitability.

**Keywords:** self-employment, generational gap, entrepreneurship, motivation, human resources, talent retention.

## Resumo

As empresas no México hoje competem fortemente para atrair e reter talentos, inovando constantemente em metodologias para motivar funcionários e candidatos. No entanto, a capacidade de reter o talento empregado tornou-se mais complicada com as novas tendências do século XXI. A suposição geral é que isso se deve em grande parte às diferenças entre gerações (baby boomers, geração X, millennials e geração Z) e que os mais novos não possuem o empenho necessário para serem empregados, além de serem de difícil manejo. Este estudo teve início com o objetivo de detectar o comportamento geracional dos colaboradores e encontrar variáveis de motivação que melhorassem o recrutamento e a retenção de talentos. Foram encontradas variáveis que afetam diretamente a intenção do funcionário em mudar de empresa, mas nenhuma apresentou correlação com a idade. Os resultados indicam que o problema de atração e retenção não é geracional, mas contextual, ou seja, afeta o funcionário de forma igual independente da idade. Além disso, uma expectativa subjacente foi claramente identificada na maioria dos profissionais mexicanos pesquisados para se tornarem autônomos ou empreendedores em vez de empregados. Essa expectativa afeta diretamente a empresa que tem funcionários querendo ser empreendedores e indiretamente as empresas que não conseguem encontrar talentos porque preferem não ser empregadas. O problema se agravou com o desenvolvimento de novos modelos de trabalho a partir de 2020, de modo que “estar empregado” está perdendo sua atratividade e rentabilidade.

**Palavras-chave:** auto-emprego, gap de geração, empreendedor, motivação, recursos humanos, retenção de talentos.

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## Introduction

In the last 50 years, the expectations of the Mexican professional have changed in such a way that the industry faces a great lack of interest from many people in getting a job, especially young people. According to a report from the Young Business Talents [YBT] business simulator (2019), 65.8% of young people between the ages of 15 and 21 consider the option of becoming an entrepreneur, compared to 28.1% who prefer to be employed in a company.

According to the same YBT program, which conducted interviews with more than 8,000 young people, Mexico stands out as one of the countries with the highest percentage of young people seeking to be entrepreneurs instead of employees. It should be clarified that these interviews were made to young people with high school and university studies, who represent the next Mexican professionals.

This sounds encouraging in a country with an uncertain future. The Mexican economy has not grown since before the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Indeed, during 2019, it presented -0.1% in variation of the gross domestic product (GDP); then, in 2020, an impact of -8.3% on GDP, and now an expectation of growth that could at most return Mexico to the levels of 2019 (1,133,905 million euros). That is: a total stagnation for three consecutive years. Added to all this are immense features of insecurity, unemployment and political instability (Expansión, 2021).

Young Mexicans in the 21st century represent a force opposing stagnation. Their enthusiasm, vision and expectations drive them to search for entrepreneurship as self-realization. It may be that this radical push comes from the well-known examples of the last 40 years: Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page or Steve Jobs, who at the age of 20 to 25 decided to go in search of their dreams and are now a reference of what what it is to be a successful young entrepreneur. But it is also the effect of social networks and unlimited access to information, factors that, although they feed creativity, also exponentially increase the expectations of entrepreneurship, even to the point of making one believe that "being an entrepreneur" is equal to guaranteed success, since that, biasedly, the dissemination of success stories tends to predominate in social networks, which, in reality, are infinitely less than the number of failures.

There are a plethora of books, studies, and articles on retaining talent, motivating employees, and building engagement with the company. Many of these studies are based on



the hierarchy of needs pyramid (Maslow, 1970), which directs the individual from a mere satisfaction of their basic needs towards self-realization and transcendence. However, most studies of employee retention, motivation, and development assume that the individual seeks fulfillment as "being an employee." What happens when the basis of the interest of said individual is to be an entrepreneur? How to motivate someone to dedicate more time to the company that employs them than to their own business, dream or creation? Although being an employee and an entrepreneur are not mutually exclusive events, an employee who diversifies and becomes an entrepreneur at the same time will at some point have to decide between allocating the time he has available to his company or to his employment.

So, even though the existence of such an entrepreneurial spirit mentioned in the YBT (2019) study is very encouraging, the very high percentage of individuals wishing to be entrepreneurs in Mexico presents a controversial situation. Is this feeling of preferring to be an entrepreneur rather than an employee still repeated among people who are already employed? Is the intention of "being an entrepreneur" different between different generations working in a company? What employment factors are detrimental to employee engagement? The objective of this study carried out at the end of 2020 was to determine the parameters that most affect the professional to remain an employee, and to determine if there is a correlation between the generation to which the employee belongs and his perception of said parameters. This article delves into four relevant results of the study that open another perspective on the problem in question, and that require more attention from companies: most of the motivation methods for talent retention are based on the assumption that the individual agrees to be employed, but what if that assumption is wrong from the start?

## Method

Due to the nature of the research, an open random application survey was used. The sample, however, is of convenience, since the survey was disseminated electronically. By using electronic means for dissemination, the group of respondents is limited to those who have access to the Internet and an electronic device to answer it. The survey was not mandatory either, so the participants that make up this sample represent only those people who decided to answer it voluntarily.

The relevant answers in the research carried out on the interest in self-employment or entrepreneurship were correlated with ages and other statistics. The survey allowed to know



the opinion of the participants about the value offer of their current company, and if there is a personal desire to seek self-employment or become an entrepreneur. The survey was articulated with nine demographic data and 40 questions to record the employee's perception, divided into four sections:

- *Section I.* Statement of purpose and context. This section was purely informative to allow the respondent to understand the scope of their answers and to confirm the anonymity of their participation.
- *Section II.* Statistical data. In this section, the necessary data was collected for demographic segmentation and to identify the population generation to which the respondent belongs.
- *Section III.* Opinion about your current employer. Exclusive questions about your current employer or your last employer if you are currently unemployed.
- *Section IV.* Expectations and motivation to stay or change jobs. Among these questions was included the motivation to be an entrepreneur or set up their own business.

For sections III and IV, a Likert-type scale was used that considered six degrees instead of five, since, by giving an interval of odd options, there is a group that, when in doubt, will always prefer to be in the middle (Rositas, 2014 ). By using this interval, the participant was forced to slightly disagree or slightly agree, which reduced the subjective tendency towards centralism on the part of the interviewee.

The focus of the study was on employed or unemployed professionals in Mexico. In this regard, data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography [Inegi] (January 25, 2021) were used. The Population and Housing Census shows that Mexico is a country with 126 million inhabitants, of which 95.7 million are 15 years old or older, and 57.3 million belong to the economically active population (EAP). However, of this PEA, 31 million (54%) belong to informal employment, which does not take place within the formal company that seeks professional talent. The remaining 26 million EAPs are formal employers. These data can be compared with those of the first quarter of 2020 of the National Survey of Occupation and Employment (ENOE) 2020 (Inegi, May 19, 2020), which determines that the number of employed professionals is 9.2 million people. Even if 100% of these professionals were employed (they may be entrepreneurs), they represent only 16% of the total EAP.



The target population is employed, self-employed or unemployed professionals. The age range considered was 20 to 60 years; in the survey it was grouped by five-year periods. The sample was able to validate the response of 352 participants within the target population who completed the survey between September 2020 and February 2021. The population of professionals in Mexico, according to data from the ENOE 2020, has a gamma-type distribution (Machado , 2016).

Table 1 shows this distribution of the target population compared to the distribution of the sample obtained.

**Tabla 1.** Comparación de edades en la población objetivo y la muestra de la investigación

Edad (años)	ENOE 4.º trimestre 2020 Población	Encuesta Muestra	ENOE 4.º trimestre 2020 Población (%)	Encuesta Muestra (%)
20 a 29	5 332 686	111	35 %	32 %
30 a 39	4 720 259	85	31 %	24 %
40 a 49	3 328 713	109	22 %	31 %
50 a 59	1 986 066	45	13 %	13 %
	15 367 724	350	100 %	100 %

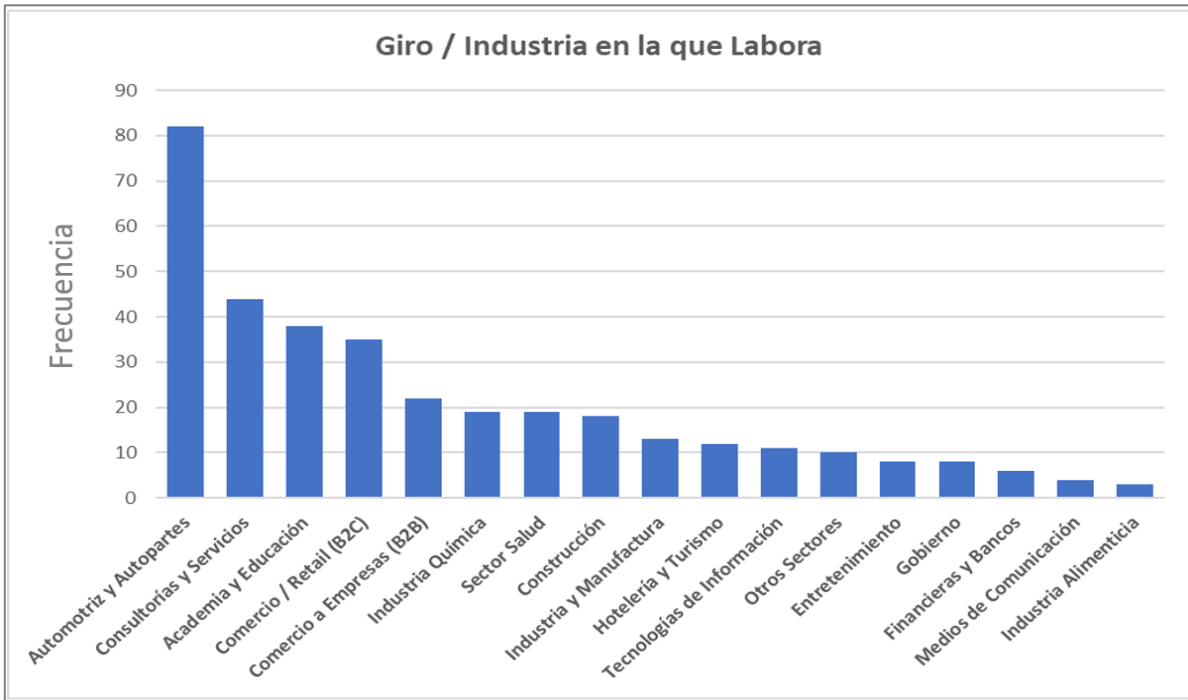
Fuente: Elaboración propia con datos del Inegi (15 de febrero de 2021)

The survey record was made by decades, but in the ENOE 2020 it is grouped by dozens. For comparison, Table 1 also grouped the survey data from the study into tens. The distribution of the sample obtained is not normal, but bimodal, however, it is more similar to the distribution of the target population than to a normal curve, with a Spearman correlation of 0.731 between the data of both (population and sample).

In addition, the gender proportion of the sample (51% female, 48.1% male and 0.9% registered as non-binary) was similar to that recorded by Inegi at the country level (although it only considers the male gender and female).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the sample in terms of the line of business in which the employee works or worked: it is very similar to the distribution of the participation of employees in industry in Mexico, according to statistical data from the Ministry of Economy.

**Figura 1.** Giro de la empresa / Industria en la que labora el encuestado



Fuente: Elaboración propia

With the results obtained, it can be inferred that the sample with which we worked is statistically representative of the target population. The calculation indicates that the size is valid and achieved a confidence level of 95% and an error of 5.25%. The results and their analysis (taking due reservations for the assumptions mentioned above) are, therefore, also representative of this group of the population.

Access was limited to people who reside and are employed or employed in Mexico. The Google Forms platform was used and promotion was carried out through social networks, especially on LinkedIn as it is a professional network in which a large part of the target population is found. The data of 37 participants were eliminated because they did not have a professional career or because they left the survey incomplete.

Because the distribution of the sample is not normal, in most of the analyzes bivariate correlations were performed by calculating the Spearman coefficient.



## Results

The motivators selected to determine the intention to change companies showed an expected correlation in all cases. Just as multiple studies and articles have mentioned it (García, Londoño and Ortiz, 2016; Herzberg, 1987; Pooja, 2006), the lack of definition of company values, the lack of authority or responsibility in decision-making, the lack of a career plan or poor leadership perceived by the employee, among others, directly affect the employee's motivation. The study verified the strong positive correlation between the absence of the mentioned motivators and the decision to change to another company.

It was also expected to show that the impact of these motivators varied depending on the generation to which the employee belongs. However, a very low correlation was found between the different generations and their preference over the motivators offered by companies. In addition, the underlying problem when trying to retain talent was highlighted: more than half of those surveyed would prefer not to be employed.

This article focuses on the relevant results related to the non-correlation between the generation to which the employee belongs and the motivators evaluated for disagreeing with the generalized perception that the problem is mainly generational.

### **Age of the respondent and motivators of permanence**

No direct correlation was found between the motivators for changing companies selected in the survey and the age of the respondents.

One of the main assumptions to investigate was the generational difference in certain behaviors. Today, terms like baby boomers, Gen-Xers, millennials, and now generation Z (called by many the glass generation) are loosely used and generalized ever since they were coined, and there are a huge number of treatises, articles, books and conferences on these generation gaps and their impact on business (Coupland, 1991; Howe and Strauss, 1991; Raphelson, October 6, 2014; Crossman, 2016; Stillman and Stillman, 2019; Twenge, 2006). In the same way, the majority, when referring to a specific generation, assign generalized behaviors to it, based on the context they lived in, although they can reach the descriptive oversimplification of that group. The summary of S. Raphelson (October 6, 2016) on the different generations is presented in Table 2.



**Tabla 2.** Línea del tiempo de las generaciones en EE. UU.

American Generations Timeline				
There is a consensus on the general time period for generations, but no agreement on the exact year that each generation begins and ends.				
Label	Born Between		Age in 2020	Characteristics
GI generation	1901	1924	96+	They were teenagers during the Great Depression and fought in WWII. Sometimes called the <i>greatest generation</i> (following a book by journalist Tom Brokaw) or the <i>swing generation</i> because of their jazz music.
Silent generation	1925	1942	78 to 95	They were too young to see action in WWII and too old to participate in the fun of the Summer of Love. This label describes their conformist tendencies and belief that following the rules was a sure ticket to success.
Baby boomers	1943	1964	56 to 77	The boomers were born during an economic and baby boom, following WWII. These hippie kids protested against the Vietnam War and participated in the civil rights movement, all with Rock'n'Roll music blaring in the background.
Generation X	1965	1979	41 to 55	They were originally called the baby busters because fertility rates fell after the boomers. As teenagers, they experienced the AIDs epidemic and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Sometimes called the <i>MTV Generation</i> , the "X" in their name refers to this generation's desire not to be defined.
Millennials	1980	2000	20 to 40	They experienced the rise of the Internet, September 11 and the wars that followed. Sometimes called Generation Y, because of their dependance on technology, they are said to be entitled and narcissistic.
Generation Z	2001	2020	0 to 19	These kids were the first born with the Internet and are suspected to be the most individualistic and technology-dependent generation. Sometimes referred to as the <i>iGeneration</i> .



Fuente: Raphelson (6 de octubre de 2016)

Both the variables of perception of the current company and those of motivation to switch to a future company that offered some other benefit were compared and compared with the age ranges included in each generation and defined in Table 2.

Spearman's coefficient was used to verify the correlation between the motivators and the age of the respondents, and because the distribution of the sample was not normal. Based on Spearman's numerical results, none of the motivation variables to change jobs or stay in the company had even a low correlation with the age of the respondent, as shown in Table 3.

**Tabla 3.** Correlación entre los motivadores y la edad del encuestado

Coeficiente de Spearman	
Correlación del motivador con la edad del encuestado	
Motivador	$\rho =$
Intención de cambiar para crecer	-0.132
Necesidad de promoción anual	-0.103
Intención de cambiar por otro jefe	0.034
Intención de cambiar por valores más afines	-0.024
Intención de cambiar por mayor responsabilidad	-0.022
Intención de cambiar por mejor nivel	-0.016
Intención de cambiar por todas las anteriores	-0.065

Fuente: Elaboración propia

It is important to clarify that the correlation in the opinions of the respondents about the motivators mentioned in table 3 with respect to the decision to change position were from moderate (0.50) to strong (0.80) in all cases, which contrasts with the low to null correlation of these motivators with respect to the age of the individual.

### **Supposedly low retention of the “new generations”**

The second point related to age and in which no correlation was found was the rate of employee turnover or permanence. The generalized perception is that new professionals have a shorter permanence time than previous generations. For this, the data related to the time of being employed, the number of companies to which they have belonged and the number of years in their last company were used.

The sample was separated into two subgroups according to the years worked as employees. Subgroup 1 (millennials) was made up of employees with 5 to 15 years of employment and Subgroup 2 (Gen X) by employees with 16 to 25 years of employment. The subgroups do not include the group made up of employees with zero to five years of employment, to which the remaining 72 respondents belong. The reason was to eliminate the bias generated by respondents with less than five years of employment, because their average length of stay is low due to the few years they have worked. The result is presented in table 4.

**Tabla 4.** Resumen de la comparación por subgrupo de estadía promedio por empresa

	Subgrupo 1	Subgrupo 2
	144 encuestados	133 encuestados
Estadía promedio por empresa	5 a 15 años de empleo	16 a 25 años de empleo
< 3 años promedio	65 %	19 %
< 5 años promedio	94 %	47 %
< 7 años promedio	99 %	65 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

This comparison presents a problem of bias, because a person with 16 to 25 years of employment is statistically more likely to have a higher average number of years per company than a person with just 10 years of employment.

In addition, these results are a linear average, and the simple average would assume that the employee has lasted the same time in each company (an interpretation that is not necessarily correct).

It is possible that this result is that people perceive that Subgroup 2 (Gen X) tends to comply with longer stays than Subgroup 1 (millennials). However, it is necessary to adjust the data to eliminate the two biases mentioned above and to bring the data closer to more realistic ones. For this purpose, a statistic called recent employment factor (FER) was generated:

$$\text{FER} = \text{Years in the last company} / \text{Total years employed}$$

The result of the FER is an index that standardizes what proportion of the employee's total time has been in his last job; an indicator of the residual time of the last change to another company by the participants is obtained. Table 5 shows the result of this calculation for both subgroups.

**Tabla 5.** Factor de empleo reciente

FER	Frecuencia en el intervalo	
	Subgrupo 1	Subgrupo 2
10 %	18 %	27 %
20 %	21 %	19 %
30 %	8 %	9 %
40 %	16 %	7 %
50 %	7 %	5 %
60 %	12 %	1 %
70 %	3 %	5 %
80 %	2 %	7 %
90 %	4 %	6 %
100 %	9 %	14 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

A low FER number (10-20%) indicates that the respondent has just recently changed jobs. (Example: If the employee is 18 years old and has a FER of 10%, they have been in their last job for less than two years [1.8]. Similarly, if an employee has only 6 years of total employment, but a FER of 80%, they have been in the same job for almost five years (4.8), which is relatively high for their total time as an employee).

The interpretation of table 5, then, describes that the retention of Subgroup 2 (mainly Gen X) is not significantly greater than that of Subgroup 1. In addition, 46% of Subgroup 2 is within an FER 20% or less, which means who had a recent job change. Said data in Subgroup 2 is greater than in Subgroup 1, 39%, which is in the same weighting.

## Need for accelerated growth

Difficulty postponing gratification is a characteristic consistently listed as a trait in millennials. They are attributed an inability to postpone the benefit of their effort: they seek immediate satisfaction to the detriment of a greater benefit that could be obtained later. This behavior is associated with the expectation of quickly rising in position and income in companies. Like any other generational trait, this varies with a person's specific personality type and temperament, but it is a characteristic that Gen Xers mention and identify in younger generations, and is believed to derive from the context of technology and immediate response in which millennials grew up (Sainz, 2018).

Within the survey, it was asked if the participant's expectation was to have a promotion at least once a year. From this question it was hoped to demonstrate the difference of opinion between generations. Excluding the results of the baby boomer generation (55 to 60 years old) of the respondents, there is a low negative correlation between age and the expectation of annual promotion. According to the results, the older the expectation of a promotion per year decreases. However, the result of the oldest generation interviewed, baby boomers, contradicts this trend, as it was the generation that was most identified with the expectation of annual promotions (even above the younger generation).

Another relevant result is that the majority of those surveyed have the expectation of having a promotion or change of position per year (from 56% to 85%, depending on the age range). This question was complemented with another questioning whether the respondent would be happy in the same position for the next three years. The response to both questions showed a high correlation (Spearman -0.811) in the sense that those who expect constant promotion negatively see waiting three years in the position they currently hold (table 6).

**Tabla 6.** Expectativa de promoción al menos una vez al año

Edad	Mi expectativa es tener una promoción o cambio de puesto al menos una vez por año						Generación	Likert 5 + 6	Likert 4 a 6
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
20 a 24	0 %	0 %	15 %	15 %	26 %	44 %	<i>Millennials</i>	70 %	85 %
25 a 29	5 %	4 %	6 %	21 %	23 %	41 %	<i>Millennials</i>	64 %	85 %
30 a 34	4 %	10 %	10 %	14 %	25 %	37 %	<i>Millennials</i>	62 %	76 %
35 a 39	3 %	6 %	14 %	23 %	11 %	43 %	<i>Millennials</i>	54 %	77 %
40 a 44	15 %	2 %	8 %	23 %	25 %	27 %	<i>Gen X</i>	52 %	75 %
45 a 49	11 %	12 %	21 %	12 %	21 %	23 %	<i>Gen X</i>	44 %	56 %
50 a 54	14 %	3 %	14 %	21 %	24 %	24 %	<i>Gen X</i>	48 %	69 %
55 a 60	6 %	13 %	0 %	6 %	25 %	50 %	<i>Baby boomers</i>	75 %	81 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

### **Being an employee or employer**

The fourth factor to include in this article is the question about the interest of continuing to be an employee or to become an entrepreneur or entrepreneur. When making the correlations between the answers and the ages, the result is table 7.

**Tabla 7.** Expectativa de ser emprendedor o empresario

Edad	Expectativa del encuestado a ser empresario						Generación	Likert	Likert
	1	2	3	4	5	6		5 + 6	4 a 6
20 a 24	7 %	7 %	0 %	7 %	11 %	67 %	<i>Millennials</i>	78 %	85 %
25 a 29	11 %	5 %	12 %	8 %	11 %	54 %	<i>Millennials</i>	64 %	73 %
30 a 34	10 %	2 %	18 %	20 %	20 %	31 %	<i>Millennials</i>	51 %	71%
35 a 39	6 %	6 %	9 %	24 %	32 %	24 %	<i>Millennials</i>	56 %	79 %
40 a 44	13 %	2 %	10 %	19 %	21 %	35 %	<i>Gen X</i>	56 %	75 %
45 a 49	2 %	5 %	21 %	12 %	11 %	49 %	<i>Gen X</i>	60 %	72 %
50 a 54	0 %	3 %	10 %	7 %	31 %	48 %	<i>Gen X</i>	79 %	86 %
55 a 60	6 %	13 %	13 %	13 %	0 %	56 %	<i>Baby boomers</i>	56 %	69 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

In general, regardless of age, at least 50% of the respondents in each five-year period had a positive Likert response towards the expectation of being an entrepreneur (Likert scale 5 + 6), and no more than 19% are satisfied with being employed ( Likert scale 1 + 2). Again, age does not seem to be a determining factor in this factor. If there is a difference in the five-year periods between 30 and 45 years, where there is a dilution of security in the decision (going from six to five or four on the Likert scale), however, the response of 70% or more of respondents are strongly inclined to be entrepreneurs over being employees.



## Discussion

### The so-called generation gap

The correlation analysis that was carried out on all the variables of the study shows that the motivation variables examined for the attraction and retention of talent do not present a marked generational difference. Although the motivation variables that were postulated (Company Values, Growth, Consistency, Responsibility) did result in a high positive correlation when deciding to stay or hire in the company, none presented an identifiable correlation with the age of the respondent.

There is a low correlation that indicates that younger generations have a higher expectation of having frequent promotions (this is not a variable evaluated in the employee's decision to change). In the five-year-old from 45 to 49 years old (Gen X), only 56% agreed with the expectation of having at least one annual promotion. In the five-year-olds from 20 to 24 and from 25 to 29 years old, 85% were positive towards the same expectation. Based on these results, although the majority of those surveyed showed the positive inclination towards this expectation, the perception of a Gen X of the five-year period between 45 and 49 years old would be that young people between 20 and 29 years old present 50% more times the expectation of a annual promotion (which validates the generalized opinion on the part of the Gen X generation, but not because the other generations do not present it, but only because it is greater in comparative proportion).

The intention of the research was to precisely confirm the existence of these differences between generations with respect to their expectations and perceptions of employees with the company. The results show that, although the previous generations assign generic behaviors to the new ones, all the surveyed generations exhibit a similar distribution in the expectations analyzed.

It may be a phenomenon in which the comparison in the present time is biased by the memory of previous times. Traits are identified and assigned to the new generations (which do have them) but they are compared against previous generations when they were the same age or at that point in their trajectory.

In other words, the traits of two different generations are compared when they were the same age. Definitely the 20-year-old professional (A) when he was 1990 does not look like the 20-year-old professional (B) in the year 2020. The context, technology, society and others are not similar between 1990 and 2020 either. comparison is not correct. The young person (B)



of 20 years in the year 2020 must be compared with the same person (A) of 50 years in the year 2020. Said person (A) will have an influence of the same context in which the young person (B) lives. . Even if they are not identical, the two people will exhibit many more similar traits.

The premise of this analysis is that the adaptability of human beings is not being taken into account when comparing generations. The older generations have had to learn to adapt to the new era, so much so that they seem to be adopting traits generally assigned to the younger generations, thus closing the generation gap.

The impact of this premise on the labor issue lies in not looking for different motivation models depending on the generation to which the talent belongs. As an example: the well-known formula of the twentieth century for the motivation and retention of talent used to be relatively simple: a good salary, recognition and the opportunity to make a career in the company. At the beginning of the 21st century, companies increased what is called emotional salary: flexible hours, rest areas, welcome packages and many other benefits, sometimes intangible, to encourage the employee. Twenty years after these changes, the result of the study indicates a repeal of the perception of "being an employee" in more than half of the employees interviewed, but the invalidity of the formulas of the 20th and 21st centuries is not only for the new generations , all generations of employees are requiring an adjustment in the employee-employer relationship.

The so-called generation gap does exist, but the current context is experienced by all generations. The increase in the rate of professional graduates has increased in Latin American countries, and with it the competition for a limited number of jobs (Canales and De los Ríos, 2007). Professional study is no longer a guarantee of better economic remuneration, and individual motivators are becoming more specific. Although there are different generations working in the company, the context affects everyone. That is why the company must focus on responding to this context, not to the generational traits that are assigned to one or another group of employees.

In order for the company to be able to compete for the best available talent (and willing to be employed), it needs to make tailored offers, not like before, when a standard offer was made for a similar group of professionals. (González *et al.*, 2020).



## **Being an employee is less attractive than entrepreneurship and self-employment**

The traditional face-to-face job offer competes today with the options of virtual-remote employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. These options are available to anyone, promising a (supposed) freedom and autonomy; That is why it is critical to define a methodology and analysis for talent retention in the company (Dychtwald, Erickson, and Morison, 2007).

The fact that professionals prefer entrepreneurship and underestimate employment is not abnormal. But the study carried out shows a large number of participants with that preference, which is worrying. More than half and up to three quarters of the employees of the companies are “passing through” them, thinking about when to start their business and clearly determined to leave the company to start their own, which confirms the information in the report of YBT of 2019.

This is where one of the main difficulties to motivate emerges. It is necessary to delve into the reason for this thought (at least in Mexico, in that population group). What does the employee think they are going to get, or give up, when they are an entrepreneur instead of an employee? Is the employee aware of the needs and risks when starting a business? Is there something that the company can offer in exchange for the employee to change his desire to be an entrepreneur or self-employment to better be an employee?

Within the possible solutions for the company in the 21st century, virtual or remote employment is emerging as a competitive proposal to increase the intention to be employed instead of undertaking. Studies such as the one by Stone, Horan and Flaxman (2018), even before the pandemic, show tangible benefits in terms of commitment, efficiency and performance in individuals working remotely.

Some critical points to understand the current preference of employees to leave include:

- a) The search for a balance between work and private life. This requires the company to be aware of the individuality and particularity of the personal situations of its employees in order to adapt its offer as appropriate (Golik, 2013).
- b) Systems and accessibility have increasingly allowed young people to undertake new ideas without the need for work experience (Valencia, 2012). Examples such as Michael Dell, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates have served to



motivate and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit, to the detriment of the image of an employee, enslaved to a routine, schedule, structure and remuneration capped by the market segment to which the company belongs. industry or professional. The employee experience has never been put to the test like it is now (Cid, 2020).

- c) The ever-evolving cyber systems for creating, marketing and promoting goods and services from home are now easily accessible. All this without the need to have a direct employer, or work only for one company. The cybernetic era and the Internet have allowed the growth of a self-employment category that directly threatens the value offer of employer companies (Castells, April 10, 2002).
- d) The covid-19 also accelerated in 2020 all the digitization and remote work processes, changing consumption patterns both for the products demanded and for the supply chain (Lamothe and Lamothe, 2020). This, in turn, brought with it a sudden change that is forcing all companies to rethink their business model and their relationship with human resources, whom they allowed (in many cases) to work remotely, putting to the test the paradigms of the last decade on the feasibility of remote work.

The impact on the aversion to employability is already appearing, but it is not to work, but to the traditional model of being employed. The original expectation of the study on which this article is based was to determine motivators that would allow the company to design strategies to improve employee retention. However, the results stress the importance for the company of determining new models of employment or collaboration between the available talent and the company.

The availability of options for people to generate income has increased dramatically, the risk and complexity of self-employment and entrepreneurship have largely decreased, and with the forced experiment of remote employment stemming from the 2020 pandemic, the company lost its arguments to deny the remote work in many types of employment.

The next line of research of greater relevance will be to identify different models of wealth generation, and develop a methodology to weigh the real, economic and emotional value of

the different options that the individual has to obtain their well-being (economic wealth, life-life balance). work, physical and mental health).

## Conclusions

The fact is that external factors are affecting all generations that coexist at work, not just the youngest. This study makes it possible to verify that, at least for those who made up the sample, the motivators found similarly affect all generations, and that the greatest difficulty in retaining an employee is the expectation of said employee not being one. It would be useful for the company to transform itself considering the motivators of all its employees and candidates, with consistency and adaptability, regardless of the generation to which they belong. Above all, it would be a competitive advantage for the company to understand the expectations of those who yearn to be businessmen or entrepreneurs, and to find a balance in which said expectations are met even though they are employees, if possible. Even in the specific case of the existing correlation between age and growth expectations, the oldest generations of employees continue to present a preponderant hope to continue growing in the company, so the solution that the company seeks to attract and retain employees younger people should consider benefiting the rest of the generations in the company.

The fact that the retention or attraction of talent is mainly affected by the aforementioned motivators and not by the age of the individual, eliminates the paradigm of the generation gap to which the current problem of rotation and lack of attraction is attributed so much. The problem exists, but the main cause is not the new generations, but a significant change in the value generation models to which the individual has access, which compete against "being employed".

Entrepreneurs need to review the value offer towards the available talent, and accept that they are competing against new options (remote employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship), some more attractive and profitable, others simply more balanced and satisfactory. As success stories of young entrepreneurs spread, and technology simplifies creative processes, the idea of being employed will continue to lose its appeal. Those companies that manage to adapt their model and adopt a more holistic approach to the talent-company relationship are the ones that will have the best chance of being victorious in this 21st century.



## **Future lines of research**

The results of this work will be enriched later by delving into two areas that were identified during the original research process, but were outside the scope of this.

### **Knowledge of the individual about the options to generate an income, its benefits and harms**

The research detected four possible value generation structures (face-to-face employment, remote employment, entrepreneur and self-employment). The intention not to be employed is evident in much of the sample, but the reasons for this were not analyzed. These reasons can be extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendent; but they can also be realistic or unfounded fantasies.

It is proposed to carry out an investigation that distinguishes the reasons (real or apparent) why the individual prefers any of these four structures. The investigation could clarify if it is a problem of lack of knowledge and unrealistic expectations, or if the decision is rational and analyzed based on clear grounds of cost/benefit or preferences. With this new research, it may be possible to redesign the motivation mechanisms to increase the recruitment and retention of talent in the company.

### **Socioeconomic and cultural distinction**

The research was limited to a group of the Mexican population with professional studies (university and postgraduate). This group represents a low percentage of the total EAP, so the perception of "being employed" that was obtained from the original sample may vary considerably (in appreciation and expectation) compared to that of individuals with medium or higher educational levels. low economic/cultural positioning.

It is proposed to carry out this analysis in the groups of employees without professional studies, and to detect if there are different motivators in different generations. This new research can help determine if there is such a generation gap in those who normally hold operational and technical positions for the creation of tools together with the company to reduce turnover rates at operational levels.

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Rol de Contribución	Autor (es)
Conceptualización	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Metodología	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Software	N/A
Validación	Enrique Castillo Gil
Análisis Formal	Enrique Castillo Gil
Investigación	Enrique Castillo Gil
Recursos	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Curación de datos	Enrique Castillo Gil
Escritura - Preparación del borrador original	Enrique Castillo Gil
Escritura - Revisión y edición	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Visualización	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Supervisión	Enrique Castillo Gil (Principal) – Maria Cristina González Martínez (apoyo)
Administración de Proyectos	Enrique Castillo Gil
Adquisición de fondos	Enrique Castillo Gil