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Understanding workplace psychology of Gen Z: How Office Peacocking and Gamified Systems used to engage the workforce through SDT and KAHN theory

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Abstract
The study examines office peacocking and gamified systems as the engagement drivers to understand the Gen Z workplace psychology. Employing SDT and Kahn theory, the study provides a comprehensive understanding on the workplace motivations to enhance organisational commitment. It also employs Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritise the dimensions of office peacocking influencing workplace motivation. The data is collected using online questionnaires from 276 Gen Z employees working in Corporates of North India. PLS SEM was used to test the hypothesis. A significant association was observed among office peacocking, gamified systems and employee engagement. By employing SDT and Kahn theory tenets, this study has provided a significant motivational driver for engaging the modern workforce, which provides them with meaningful work, identity alignment, and association towards the workplace.

Keywords: *Office peacocking, gamified system, SDT, Kahn theory, employee engagement, organisational commitment.*

1. Introduction

In 2024, only 30% of workers were truly engaged at work, resulting in global organisations' losing $8.8 trillion in productivity (Nguyen et al., 2025). In the ESG landscape, organisations face obstacles in meeting global goals due to disengaged workforce (Yadav and Yadav, 2025). The Global employee engagement rate has declined to 20% in 2024, with managers realising the largest drop (George, 2024). This marks an alarming sign for the employers and organisations struggling with productivity. According to the Global Workplace report (2025), 85% of the workforce is not actively engaged, meaning that only 15% of employees are actively engaged. This drives the notion that either the majority of employees view their workplace negatively or do the bare minimum to complete their day, with little to no psychological attachment (Rosado et al., 2025). In the current organisational landscape, employees' engagement has been shifted from a fringe concern to a strategic imperative (Huang et al., 2022). The rising disengagement cases are fuelling workplace disruptions, a hybrid work environment, collaborative workspaces, and changing employee expectations, compelling organizations to reimagine and rethink their psychological connection with their workforce (Afrahi et al., 2022; Shen and Ren, 2023).

Office peacocking is a strategic organisational practice of embedding deliberate, visually distinctive, culturally expressive and experientially engaging physical workspaces (IE, 2024; Miao et al., 2020). As per SDT, the individuals are dependent on satisfaction of three basic psychological needs- autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2024; Ryan and Deci, 2006). Office peacocking is a strong potential contributor to the psychological needs of employees. The strategic practice has emerged as the functional and symbolic response of growing workforce expectations, especially among Gen Z (TOI, 2025; Luarn et al., 2023). The generation prioritises experiential value, which is the primary objective of new workplace dynamics, whereby the employers are serving emotionally associated environments beyond the aesthetics to serve a psychological satisfaction towards workplace engagement (Albrecht et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2022; Huda and Islam, 2024). Kahn's theory (1990) highlights the importance of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability as potential factors of employee engagement. Office peacocking inculcates an aesthetically rich, identity-reflecting environment which stimulates psychological meaningfulness (TOI, 2024). Collaborative setups and designated zones ensure the safety and the biophilic designs, a snug environment, enhancing the availability of the employees in the workspaces (Al-Dumor and Garaj, 2021; Heerwagen et al., 2004).

Highlighting the pervasiveness of SDT and Kahn's theory in employee engagement strategies, another strong contributor is gamified systems. Researchers have stated that it is a concept being used in the non-game context. Some have stated it as a shortcut for injecting a sense of purpose through games (Karimi and Nickpayam, 2017; Ciuchita et al., 2023). When employees/individuals find a sense of purpose for satisfying their psychological needs, they get emotionally engaged (Liu et al., 2024). Gamified systems are gaining popularity due to the modern workforce being disengaged by the traditional work methods that minus recognition, flexibility, and

motivation (Hamari et al., 2023). Researchers have also noted that today's generation is lacking the association and motivation towards their workplace (McAnally and Hagger, 2024).

With most focus on gamification towards employee engagement and considering gamification as an extrinsic motivator, the role of the gamified system as the enabler of intrinsic needs of the employees through the lens of self-determination theory remains largely overlooked. Since the emotional association of the employees requires a long-term effect, the sustainability of gamified interventions is still unexplored. Comprehending the workplace psychology of Gen Z is important to understand to navigate the evolving dynamics of contemporary work settings.

This study makes three important contributions. Firstly, despite the growing advancements in workplace design, researches are often limited to office aesthetics without the psychological and experiential dimensions of the environment. OP, a personalised approach to workplace engagement remains unexplored in academic literature. To fill this gap, the study emphasises its influence on engagement and also examines its dimensions using the analytical hierarchy process (AHP). Office peacocking emphasises personalisation, cultural value, and experiential learning to create an extravagant environment that can emotionally resonate with the modern workforce. Its importance lies in the fact and emotional association that caters to Gen Z and new millennials who generally seek meaningful jobs, associations, and identity alignment at their work. Understanding this phenomenon through the lens of SDT and Kahn's theory is essential to motivate the modern workforce in alignment with their workplace psychology. Secondly, exploring the gamified systems within the framework of self-determination theory offers a unique contribution to understand how the game-based systems are intervening in the workplace motivations that can inculcate sustained employee motivation and engagement. Several studies have associated gamified systems with extrinsic motivation (Bekk et al., 2022; Kam and Umar, 2018; Luarn et al., 2018) but the true potential lies in its ability to satisfy the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This study will contribute towards a psychological understanding of Gen Z to motivate them towards their work environment. Thirdly, the study is using two moderators in understanding employee engagement, employee wellbeing, and job satisfaction, though job satisfaction is a directly attributing variable of employee engagement (Gatt and Jiang,2021); therefore, we tried to prove a substantial relationship leading to organisational commitment. Furthermore, India is among the top ten contributors of services across the globe (Statista report, 2024). Due to the prominence, India's service sector is contributing 49.85% towards GDP in FY 2024-25(MLE, 2025). The Indian service sector consists of human resources, whereby the annual turnover rate is 3.1 million in FY 2024-25 (MLE, 2025) and the average time of employment is 8 months (Etherworld report, 2025). The pressing issue is prevalent among employers who are dealing with the modern workforce. Therefore, it seems quite critical to understand the psychology of the modern workforce and, importantly, to associate their sustained engagement through motivation. Additionally, Indian Gen Z is different from others as they stand apart due to their deep cultural association, sense of family values, and societal expectations, which often shape their personal and professional decisions (Ciuchita et al., 2023). Understanding the workplace psychology and engagement strategies of Gen Z is essential as employers are characterising the attribution theory whereby, they are committing the fundamental attribution errors for their engagement (Wibaselppa et al., 2025; Lallukka, 2024).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The study employs Kahn's theory and SDT. Kahn's theory purports that "work engagement refers to the level to which employees involve themselves in their assigned job by aligning personal preferences with work activities, fostering a stronger relationship between self and job, enhancing role performance" (Kahn, 1990). Kahn focuses on three dimensions: cognitive, physical, and emotional investment (Saks and Gruman, 2014; Kahn and Heaphy, 2013). Kahn (1990) also suggested that these investments require three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability of the employees. Furthermore, SDT purports "individuals strive for psychological growth, learning, and connection, but these tendencies grow only under supportive conditions" (Ryan and Deci, 2020). SDT focuses on three dimensions: autonomy (sense of ownership and control), relatedness (sense of belongingness), and competence (developing mastery and growth) (Howards et al., 2020; Deci and Ryan, 2012; Deci et al., 2017).

Combining SDT and Kahn's theory of engagement provides a robust framework for the study. SDT explains why the employees engage through highlighting three core psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Abolnasser et al., 2023), which are influenced by office peacocking through aesthetics, ergonomics, collaborative spaces, resimercial environment, and biophilic design (Grinde and Patil, 2009; ET, 2023). When these needs are satisfied, employees feel motivated, connected, and more valued in their workplace (TOI, 2024). However, Kahn's (1990) theory adjoins SDT, elaborating how fulfilled needs convert into employee engagement. Per Kahn (1990),

engagement develops when employees experience meaningfulness, safety, and availability, which is enhanced when the work environment fulfils intrinsic motivation through game-based systems. A combination of both theories stimulates motivational drivers and behavioural outcomes, making a robust framework to understand workplace psychology. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the study.

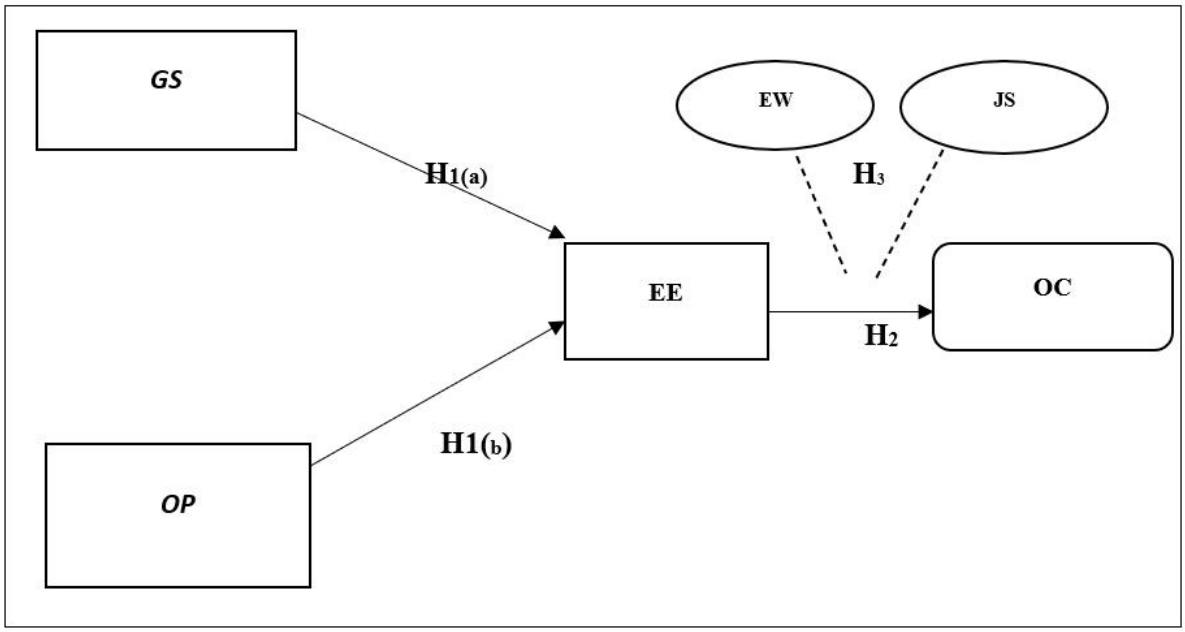

Fig 1: Conceptual framework (Source: Author's own work)

Gamified systems, office peacocking, and employee engagement

SDT is the modern social-cognitive motivation theory based on human motivation. SDT theorises the individuals' basic psychological needs in the form of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci et al., 2017). When employees feel autonomous in their roles, find capable and situate meaning in their work, they feel more likely to experience motivation (Kam & Umar, 2018). The motivation drives into higher levels of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement at work (Judge et al., 2023). Gamified systems in organisational settings are strategically designed engagement tools that cater to the psychological needs of individuals (Cigdem et al., 2024). Customising the approaches to challenges and goals induces autonomy in the employees (Chans et al., 2021). Continuous feedback, achievement-based rewards, and progression levels shape competency, team competition, leaderboard, and peer recognition, giving the relatedness among the Gen Z employees (Hamari et al., 2023). Similarly, in office peacocking, the visually appealing and personalised spaces allow employees to express their individual character in the form of autonomy (Forbes, 2024; TOI, 2025; IE,2024). The comfortable ergonomics and biophilic environment enable employees to perform effectively by reducing physical strain and enhancing productivity, building a sense of competence (Asojo and Hazazi, 2025; TOI, 2024). Furthermore, collaborative spaces encourage interpersonal connections and knowledge sharing, a sunny environment provides a homely feel and psychological freedom to escalate the way employees work in their homey environment, and stimulates relatedness (Shibata et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2023). The SDT psychological dimensions sustain engagement and urge employees to invest their physical, emotional, and cognitive energies in their workplace (TOI, 2024). Based on the literature, the hypothesis is-

H1: (a) Gamified systems and (b) Office peacocking are positively associated with employee engagement.

Employee engagement and organisational commitment

Kahn's theory establishes that employees feel more engaged when they situate psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability within the organisation (Loch and Federspiel, 2024). Kahn (1990) believed that employees engage more deeply and intensely with their environment when they feel the 'meaning' of their work, feel safe within the environment, and perceive themselves as psychologically available (Saks and Gruman, 2014; Saks, 2023). The psychological conditions tend to enhance their work roles' efficiency and foster emotional attachment and alignment (Zhu et al., 2023; Huda et al., 2024). Simultaneously, the reinforcement of engagement inculcates organisational commitment of employees (Medina et al., 2020; Huda et al., 2024). Therefore, employee engagement serves as a psychological roadmap through which employees shape loyalty and commitment.

H2: Employee engagement is positively associated with organisational commitment.

Job satisfaction, employee wellbeing, employee engagement and organisational commitment

Job satisfaction and well-being are the indirect contributors impacting employee engagement, though these factors affect contextual and affective events such as employees' experiences of work environment, interactions, and sense of belongingness (Lalluka, 2024). Job satisfaction is the positive emotional association of an individual's job conditions enhances the positivity and consistency of the engagement and promises that the satisfied employees tend to perceive their engagement as meaningful (Kwon et al., 2024). Similarly, the emotional, psychological, and physical health of the employees acts as a psychological buffer, enabling employees to maintain energy and motivation (Knight and Haslam, 2023; Abolnasser et al., 2023). Employing SDT, the strength and direction of engagement enhance commitment, suggesting engagement alone cannot be a sufficient factor unless accompanied by a supportive experiential and emotional work environment (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Based on the literature, the proposed hypothesis is as-

H3: a) Job satisfaction and b) employee wellbeing moderates the relationship between employee engagement and organisational commitment.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample was comprised of 400 Gen Z professionals working in the Indian IT industry, out of which 276 valid responses were obtained. The office peacocking scale was assessed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The measurement scales of gamified systems were Bekk et al.'s five-item scale (2022), office peacocking using Ergonomics-related five items developed by Pavlova et al. (2023), employee engagement-based six-item scale developed by Gallup (2024), physical well-being based on a five-item scale developed by Pradhan and Hati (2022), and job satisfaction based on a five-item scale developed by Spector (1985). Expert review was used to determine content validity, and a pilot survey was used to determine face validity.

3.1. Analytical hierarchy process (AHP): Saaty (1980) created the AHP approach to find the solution of complex and multicriteria situations. It helps to establish priorities among the competing and interrelated criteria by analysing their relative importance in achieving a specific decision goal, enabling trade-offs among the alternatives (Darko et al., 2019). In our study, AHP is used to find the priority among the office peacocking criteria (dimensions) and sub-criteria (sub-dimensions) as illustrated in table 1 (Podvezko, 2009). AHP consists of three stages-

Stage 1: Hierarchy development- The foremost step of AHP clarifies the decision goal through developing the dimensions and sub-dimensions.

Stage 2: Pairwise comparisons- 30 domain experts evaluated the relative importance of dimensions at each hierarchy level through pair-wise comparisons, assuming individuality and independence among the dimensions.

Stage 3: Verification of reliability - Since the results are based on expert judgements, ensuring reliability and consistency is crucial to validate the comparisons and achieve optimised decision-making outcomes.

Table 1: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of Office Peacocking with local and global values

Dimension name	Items	Explanation	Item global ranking	Item local ranking	Attribute global ranking	References
Improved aesthetics	Elegant and well-integrated decor	Creating eye-catching decorative items and design elements that reflect the company's values for the employees, media and customers.	2.55%	19.40%	13.11%	(ET, 2025)
	Strategic overhaul of office spaces	Displaying the colourful walls and workstations.	4.19%	31.90%		(Alexandersson and Kalonaityte, 2018)
	Expensive artifacts	Using unique and fresh elements	1.91%	14.60%		(Colenberg et al.,2018)
	Personalisation workspace	Filling the workstations with more emotional connections	4.47%	34.10%		(IE, 2024)
Comfortable Ergonomics	Personalised comfort seating	Providing comfortable and individual-friendly seating, depending upon the body type and body structure	15.28%	44.18%	34.59%	(Morrison and Smollan, 2020)
	Signature workspaces	Providing a personalised and unique workspace.	2.66%	7.68%		(ET, 2023)
	Quiet zone	Creating quiet areas with comfortable seating and a disturbance-free environment	4.92%	14.22%		(Ronald and Jan, 2020)
	Flexi-posture desks	Creating spaces that are convertible and used for comfortable seating	11.73%	33.91%		(Etherworld, 2024)
Collaborative spaces	Tech-enabled collaborative work areas	Integrating tech-enabled environments	8.39%	32.69%	25.66%	(Forbes, 2024)
	Flexi-meeting areas	Creating spaces for accommodating and readjusting for various meetings and conferences	1.90%	7.40%		(Etherworld, 2024)
	Informal gathering areas	Creating informal spots to promote the unprompted interactions and discussions	8.11%	31.60%		(ET,2024)
	Open pantry	Providing open pantry and lunch facilities	7.26%	28.31%		(Ronald and Jan, 2020)
Resimercial environments	Snug environment	Creating a comfortable and homely environment	6.36%	41.01%	15.51%	(Shibata et al., 2024)
	Lightning	Encouraging natural and warm LED lights	4.96%	31.99%		(ET, 2024)
	Personal touch pieces	Allowing employees to make their spaces personalised through a home-like feel	4.19%	27.01%		(Alexandersson and Kalonaityte, 2018)
Biophilic design	virtual forests	Arranging the virtual forestry	1.88%	16.93%	11.13%	(Ronald and Jan, 2020)
	Plants and Indoor Greenery	Arranging indoor plants and natural materials	2.37%	21.26%		(IE, 2024)
	Water features	Creating water elements and water décor to bring a sense of nature	1.94%	17.44%		(Shibata et al., 2024)
	Access to natural light	Arranging maximum exposure of natural light and outdoor view	4.94%	44.36%		(Shibata et al., 2024)

Source: Author's own work

4. RESULTS

4.1. AHP results

AHP depicts that comfortable ergonomics has gained the top priority (34.59%) followed by collaborative spaces (25.66%) and improved office aesthetics (13.11%). Within ergonomics, personalised comfort seating and flexi posture desks were the most influential sub-dimensions. Tech enables collaborative areas and informal gathering spaces, drives the collaborative dimension, while workspace personalisation leads office aesthetics. The findings conclude that Gen Z employees value comfort, collaboration and personalisation, making them crucial for enhancing engagement. Figures 2 and 3 depict the peacocking strategies.

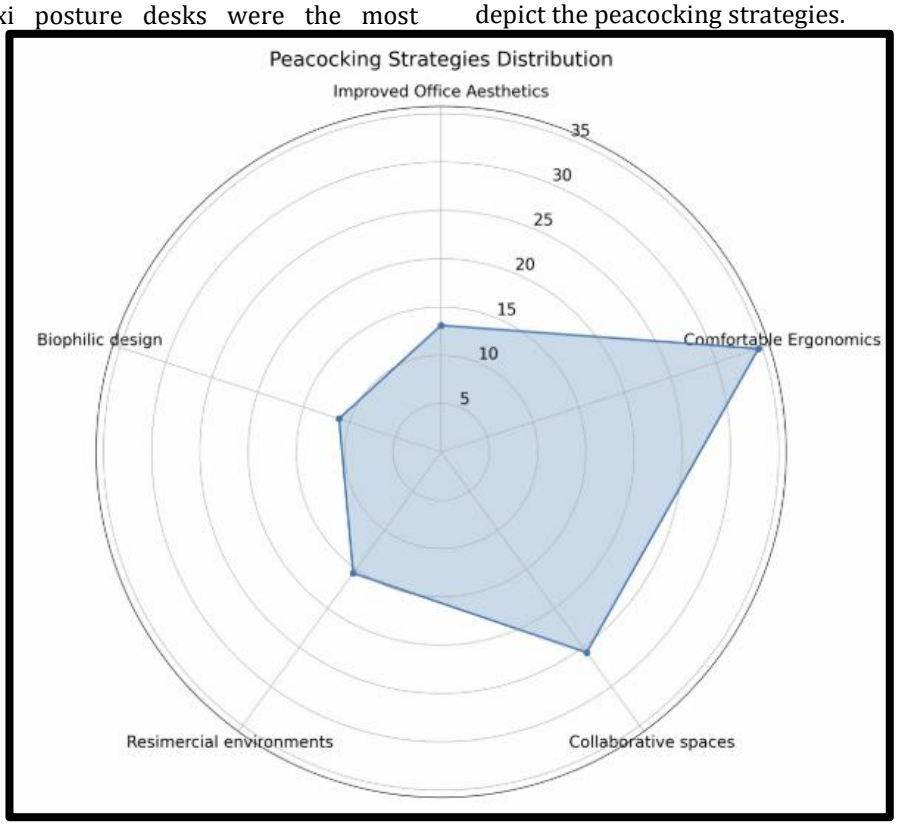

Fig 2 Source: Author's own work

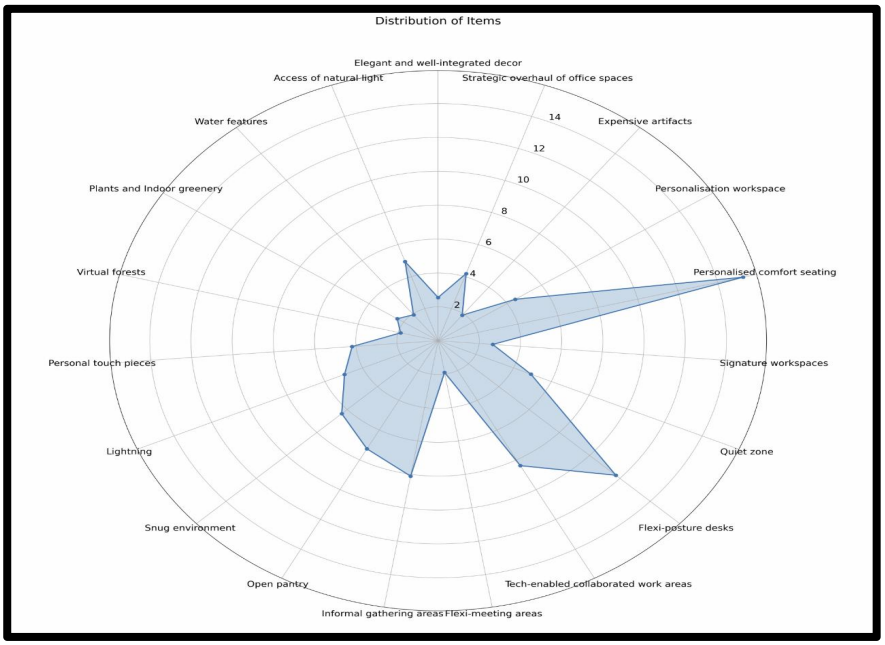

Fig 3 Source: Author's own work

4.2. Model Testing

Sample and procedure- There is an even gender distribution in Table 2 (52.7% male, 47.3% female). The majority of the respondents were younger than 25 years (35.5% less than 25; 33.5% 20-22 years), and 18.9% were aged 26-28 years, meaning that the workforce was mostly constituted of young and mid-career employees. There were sufficient heterogeneity and representativeness as the marital status included 52.1% married, 28.9% unmarried, and 19% others.

Instruments. Use of standardised questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale (where 5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree) was employed.

Analytical strategy and common method bias. Variance-based Smart PLS (v.4.0.9.5) was used to investigate the study hypotheses. Based on the theoretical background and the empirical value of the constructs, PLS-SEM was used in this study because it can provide model estimates for both explanatory and predictive purposes (Hair et al., 2021), and the PLS bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples was used to estimate the significance level of the constructs. The problem of multicollinearity was eliminated because the inner VIF values were less than 3 Table 3 (Yusoff et al., 2020). Since the data collection was done in waves, it minimised the possibility of common method bias, which is typical with one-time data collection.

Measurement model analysis: Table 3 depicts the Cronbach's alpha value in the range of 0.89 to 0.92, which is more than the suggested value of 0.7 (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Similarly, composite reliability values are more than 0.7.

Table 2: Demographic summary of the respondents in the sample

Demographics	Sub Categories	Frequency (%)	
Gender	Male	143	52.7%
	Female	132	47.3%
Age group	20 to 22 years	91	33.5%
	23 to 25 years	96	35.5%
	26 to 28 years	49	18.9%
Marital status	Unmarried	80	28.9%
	Married	144	52.1%
	Others	52	19.0%

Source: Author's own work

Table 3: Reliability, Convergent validity and item multicollinearity

Construct Name	Item Code	Construct Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
EE	EE1	0.762	0.894	0.893	0.627	2.270
	EE2	0.809				2.170
	EE3	0.786				2.194
	EE4	0.792				2.102
	EE5	0.807				2.343
EW	EW1	0.802				2.056
	EW2	0.778				2.275
	EW3	0.801				2.448

	EW4	0.784	0.890	0.890	0.618	2.070
	EW5	0.766				2.099
GS	GAM1	0.791	0.910	0.910	0.627	2.442
	GAM2	0.754				2.217
	GAM3	0.806				2.330
	GAM4	0.811				2.456
	GAM5	0.803				2.183
	GAM6	0.786				2.411
OP	PEO1	0.750	0.910	0.910	0.670	2.390
	PEO2	0.784				2.306
	PEO3	0.792				2.429
	PEO4	0.868				2.747
	PEO5	0.891				2.717
JS	JS1	0.820	0.928	0.928	0.719	2.716
	JS2	0.858				2.989
	JS3	0.856				3.058
	JS4	0.850				3.025
	JS5	0.857				2.997
OC	OC1	0.878	0.895	0.894	0.680	2.323
	OC2	0.801				2.826
	OC3	0.809				2.307
	OC4	0.808				2.484

Source: Author's own work

Tables 4 and 5 evaluate the discriminant validity in the form of HTMT ratios and Fornell/Larcker criteria. All the HTMT values were under 0.90 (Yusoff et al., 2020), and the maximum was 0.77, which shows evident construct distinctiveness. As before, square roots of AVE (Table 5 diagonal values) were greater than the inter-construct correlations, which further supports discriminant validity. Collectively, these findings confirm that the constructs are statistically different and thus provide sufficient evidence of the measurement model in structural testing.

Table 4: HTMT ratio for discriminant validity

	EE	**EW**	**GS**	**JS**	**OC**	**OP**
EE						
EW	0.576					
GS	0.770	0.575				
JS	0.396	0.673	0.526			
OC	0.651	0.577	0.743	0.569		
OP	0.721	0.631	0.747	0.552	0.680	

Source: Author's own work

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker criteria for discriminant validity

	EE	EW	GS	JS	OC	OP
EE	0.792					
EW	0.577	0.786				
GS	0.771	0.575	0.792			
JS	0.397	0.673	0.525	0.848		
OC	0.651	0.577	0.742	0.570	0.824	
OP	0.722	0.630	0.747	0.554	0.680	0.819

Source: Author's own work

Hypothesis testing: The findings based on structural model testing with PLS-SEM are shown in figure 3 and table 6. Among the control variables, gender (β = 0.207, p < 0.01) showed a significant positive impact on organisational commitment; age (β = 0.030, p = 0.384) and marital status (β = 0.000, p = 0.982) were not significant, demonstrating that only gender exerted a significant impact on organisational commitment.

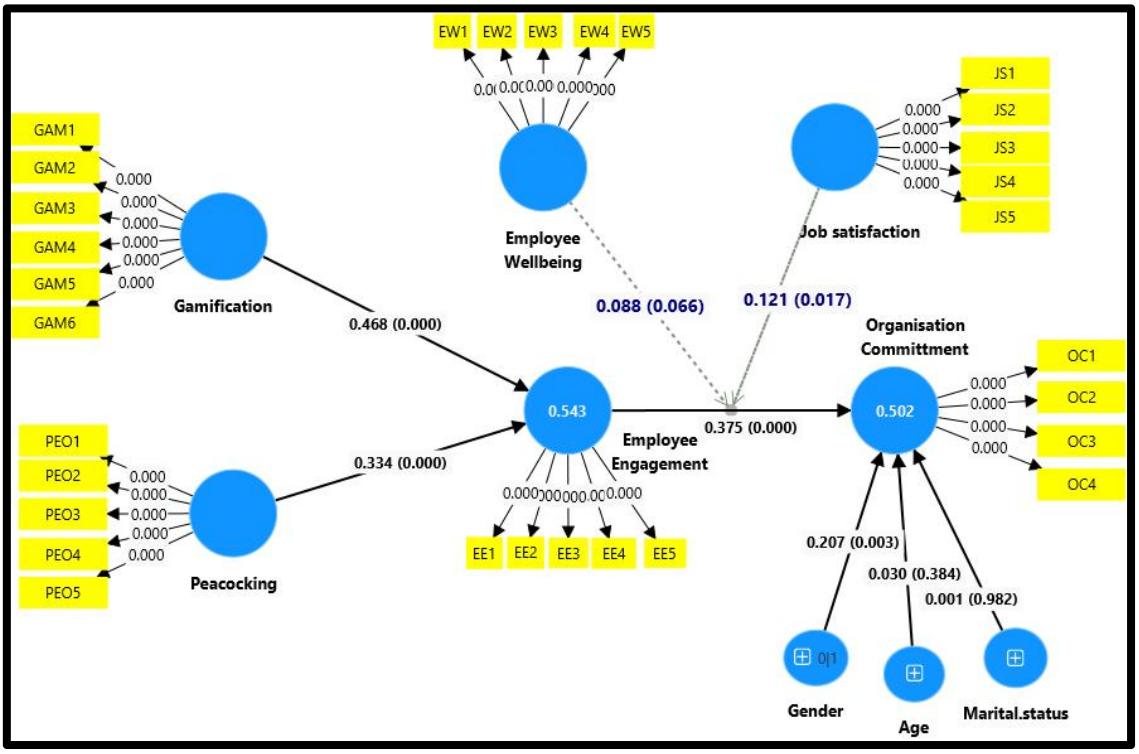

Fig. 4 Structural model; (Source: Author's own work)

When it comes to hypothetical relationships, gamified system had a significant positive effect on employee engagement (β = 0.469, p < 0.001), which accounted for 54.3% of the variance, and peacocking also became a significant predictor (β = 0.333, p < 0.001). In its turn, the presence of employee engagement had a strong impact on organisational commitment (β = 0.372, p < 0.001), which explained 50.2% of its variance, thus verifying its mediation role in the translation of the experiential drivers into organisational effects.

Table 6: Hypothesis testing using PLS-SEM

	Relationship between	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T stats	P values	R Square	Conclusion

Control variables	Age -> Organisation Commitment	0.030	0.034	0.870	0.384	--	
	Gender -> Organisation Commitment	0.207	0.069	3.017 **	0.003	--	
	Marital status -> Organisation Commitment	0.000	0.032	0.022	0.982	--	
Research hypothesis	Gamified system -> Employee Engagement	0.469	0.049	9.593**	0.000	54.3%	Supported
	Peacocking -> Employee Engagement	0.333	0.048	6.933 **	0.000		Supported
	Employee Engagement -> Organisation Commitment	0.372	0.046	8.161**	0.000	50.2%	Supported
Interaction moderation effects	Job satisfaction -> Organisation Commitment	0.288	0.051	5.588**	0.000	--	
	Employee Wellbeing -> Organisation Commitment	0.196	0.054	3.621 **	0.000	--	
	Employee Wellbeing x Employee Engagement -> Organisation Commitment	0.089	0.048	1.841	0.066	--	
	Job satisfaction x Employee Engagement -> Organisation Commitment	0.118	0.051	2.382**	0.017	--	Supported

Source: Author's own work

Organisational commitment was also positively contributed by job satisfaction (β = 0.288, p < 0.001) and employee wellbeing (β = 0.196, p < 0.01), indicating the significance of the affective and wellbeing-related variables. In the case of moderation effects, employee well-being and employee engagement were not found to interact significantly (β = 0.089, p = 0.066), implying that well-being does not reinforce the association between engagement and commitment. On the other hand, the relationship between job satisfaction and engagement moderation (β = 0.118, p < 0.05) showed that the greater the job satisfaction, the greater the positive contribution of engagement to commitment. Overall, the results support the proposed model and depict that both the gamified system and peacocking promote employee engagement, increase organisational commitment, and job satisfaction.

5. DISCUSSION

The robust empirical examination supports the research model and provides few key observations and insights to understand the workplace psychology of the Gen Z employees. Overall, three hypotheses

were formed and verified using PLS SEM. The findings support all the hypothesis. The analysis revealed that office peacocking is the enabler of intrinsic motivation of employees and is the inherent trait of human beings and is viewed as a prototype of Self-determination theory (Fishbach and Woolley, 2022). As per SDT, the individuals are dependent on satisfaction of three basic psychological needs-autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2024; Ryan and Deci, 2006). Office peacocking significantly satisfies the psychological needs of employees through creating autonomy, relatedness and competency. Also, Gen Z employees' psychology is more attracted to workplace aesthetics they can't work in traditional workspaces which provide them boredom. Therefore, office peacocking is positively associated with engagement. Further, gamified system serves the 360-degree complete package of digital association, intrinsic motivation, feedback, and achievement (Hasan and Kashif, 2021). Through game mechanics (leaderboards, badges, progress level dashboards and avatars) and dynamics (collaborations, team missions, emotions), the employers try to form the emotional engagement of the employees towards their workplaces through finding the meaningfulness, safety and availability (Ramadhan and Irawanto, 2023; Byrne, 2022). Gen Z employees are tech-savvy and more inclined with the digital tools. So, it would be optimum to suggest that modern employees are familiar with the gamified interventions, as they feel comfortable with digital equipment. The findings are corroborated with Chans et al. (2021); Bhatti (2024); Rao et al. (2024). Hence, H1a and H1b were accepted.

Subsequently, the findings support that employee engagement is positively associated with organisational commitment. This means that engagement acts as a psychological catalyst between Gen Z intrinsic motivation and their organisational commitment. When this cohort experiences autonomy, purpose and meaningfulness with their work, they tend to build higher emotional attachment and loyalty with their organisation. The findings are corroborated with Saks (2023) and Zhu et al. (2023). Hence, H2 was accepted. Similarly, the last hypothesis articulates that job satisfaction and wellbeing acts as the potential moderator between the relationship of employee engagement and organisational commitment. The findings purport that motivated employees feel the association and belongingness towards their work and develop job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2020). Satisfied employees tend to work harder and start enjoying their work. The support, encouragement, and continuous feedback make authentic results of the employees. The authenticity and confidence bring well-being to the employees (Jang et al., 2020; Judge et al., 2023). Hence, job satisfaction and wellbeing are significantly contributing to employee engagement and organisation commitment.

The study purports dual analytical approach combining Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Structural equation modelling (SEM) to generate empirical and comprehensive understanding into Gen Z workplace engagement. The AHP results enabled the prioritisation of office peacocking dimensions, wherein comfortable ergonomics and collaborative spaces emerged as the most important and critical determinants influencing employees' affective and motivational responses to workplace design. This prioritisation offers a structured understanding of workplace attributes that reinforce intrinsic motivation and physical wellbeing. Subsequently, SEM validated the proposed hypothesis among office peacocking, gamified systems, employee engagement and organisational commitment, through aligning with the SDT and Kahn theory. The integration of the two analytical techniques strengthens the robustness of the findings and filling the theoretical perspectives by understanding the workplace aesthetics and gamified engagement mechanisms to sustain long term motivation and organisational commitment among Gen Z workforce.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1. Theoretical implications

This research study provides three notable theoretical contributions. Firstly, previous studies (e.g., Ronda and Gracia, 2022; Zhu et al., 2023; Koirala and Nepal, 2022) emphasising the office aesthetics as sensory and visual appeal of workspace, our research offers a more nuanced understanding of office peacocking as a psychological and experiential dimension of the environment. Through empirical evidence regarding the role of office peacocking, our study enriches the limited literature available on office peacocking as a strategic engagement tool. By employing SDT and Kahn theory tenets, this study has provided a significant motivational driver for engaging the modern workforce, which provides them with meaningful work, identity alignment, and association towards the workplace. Through AHP, our study uncovers the prioritisation of office peacocking's dimensions to understand workplace dynamics and drive employee engagement. The five dimensions of office peacocking strategies (improved office aesthetics, comfortable ergonomics, collaborative spaces, resimercial environments, and biophilic design) are identified as the direct influencers on workplace motivation (Srivastava et al., 2024; TOI, 2025; Forbes, 2024). Our study offers a complete understanding of office peacocking dimensions through preference at the workplace. Secondly, by employing SDT tenets, our study explores gamified systems as an intrinsic engagement

driver that enhances workplace motivation. Our study offers a varied perspective, catering to gamified systems as the intrinsic motivator which satisfies the psychological needs of employees in the form of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Lastly, job satisfaction and employee wellbeing acted as the significant moderators that fulfil Gen Z's core needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness while establishing the association towards the organisation. Moreover, Kahn's theory emphasises that employees invest their emotional, physical, and cognitive energies and feel psychologically safe, supported, and valued by their organisation. Gen Z employees, who believe in mental well-being through growth opportunities and meaningful connections, prioritise a satisfying workplace and high organisational commitment. Our study is based on the Indian Gen Z workforce, where the cultural association is high, as they need psychological motivators for their sustained engagement. Though the research is based on the Indian context, the non-Indian employers and organisations can use these strategies to understand the workplace psychology of the Gen Z workforce.

6.2. Practical implications

Our study reflects a crucial contribution to the field of engagement of the modern workforce. Organisations often experience a pressing challenge for modern organisations, compelling them to continuously explore and innovate strategic solutions to encompass motivation and long-term commitment among the dynamic workforce. Our results demonstrate that employers and organisations must be sensitised about these strategies that can lead to employee engagement and long-term retention and prevent loss of talent and employee disengagement (Mishra et al., 2024). Results confirmed that employees who feel meaningful work, safety, and availability at their workplace are psychologically engaged towards their work. Subsequently, office peacocking is a strategic psychological enabler of the modern workforce that integrates Gen Z with their workplace. Our research results have also accumulated the AHP outcomes, which can help the organisations to prioritise the workspace dynamics. Our findings have demonstrated that employees will experience intrinsic motivation whenever game-based design systems, such as a leaderboard and progression level dashboard will are inculcated as a strategic engagement driver.

Talent retention is a crucial HR aspect that strongly influences employees' engagement, behaviour, retention, and commitment (Pandita and Ray, 2018; Chopra et al., 2024). Employers and organisations must ensure that HR managers introduce the gamified systems (leaderboard and progression dashboard) in the performance management through continuous feedback and real-time monitoring. Similarly, office peacocking can be used by the organisations in employer branding. The visual motivators are also based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, reflecting that the non-presence of such factors can make employees unhappy, although their presence may attract employees. (Miah and Hasan, 2022; Thant and Chang, 2021).

6.3. Limitations and future directions

The study has made noteworthy contributions in the field of office peacocking. Though there are a few limitations. First, the sample was collected in the northern region of the country; it would be challenging to claim the results will be similar in other regions of the country, where the population is high with different cultural psychologies. Future research may focus on the cultural backgrounds of their respective sample. Second, this study was experimental, and the scales of office peacocking were adopted through office aesthetics; therefore, it would be difficult to state similar outcomes of respondents with office peacocking. Further research can be done on the scale development of the office peacocking strategy. Moreover, further research can be done by employing other moderators of the study, which enhances the understanding of the workplace psychology of Gen Z.

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Appendix A

Office Peacocking (Pavlova et al., 2023)

I like the aesthetics of my office

The furniture of my office is well combined and stylish

I like the colour-combination of my office

I like the wall decoration and paintings

I feel comfortable and relaxed at my workplace

Gamified system (Bekk, 2018)

Are you aware of non-digital games e.g. Card, Board games etc

Gamification is a part of engaging employees

The motivation behind the gamification is to save the world

While playing games, you are motivated to earn points and develop skills

While playing games, you are engaging towards creativity

Employee Engagement (Gallup Q12)

I know what is expected of me at work and for that I have enough materials and equipment.

My supervisor seems to care for me as a person.

At work, my opinions seem to count.

The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

I have a best friend at work.

Employee wellbeing (Pradhan and Hati, 2022)

I am quite satisfied with my job

I enjoy meaningful work

I attach lots of value to my work

My job provides ample scope for career growth

I used to maintain a balance between work and home life

Job satisfaction (Spector, 1985)

I am satisfied with my job role.

I have sufficient resources and opportunities for career development

My work allows me sufficient balance between my personal and professional life.

I am quite satisfied with my superior communication.

My colleagues and teammates are supportive and provide me the equal opportunity.