

Making Work or Making it Work: Generation Z Redefines the Hustle Culture

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Abstract

The 'hustle culture' is a phenomenon that is embraced by Generation Z. Generation Z is hustling for economic survival, but those who are in their early careers are also choosing to take part in by the so-called 'quiet quitting' movement (disengaging) to pursue their own passion projects on the side. What this 'hustle culture' entails from an entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship point of view is unclear. This paper aims to explore 'hustle culture' as it relates to Generation Z and their entrepreneuring to make recommendations for entrepreneurship education. A qualitative approach was used to explore 34 media sources that were trending between 2020 and 2023 around the 'hustle culture' of Generation Z. Two main themes were identified from the data set: 1) making work and 2) making it work. Findings indicate that Generation Z is redefining 'the hustle' to make their work-life balance work for them and also to create meaningful jobs. Implications for entrepreneurship education are that skills and competencies around problem solving that enable students to innovatively balance work and life may be required for current and future entrepreneuring.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The 'hustle culture' is a phenomenon that started trending after the global pandemic in 2020 (Anwar, Ong'iro odeo & Otieno, 2023). According to popular media, 'to hustle', means to grind and master several streams of income (Moussa, 2022). Furthermore, people often have a side hustle to supplement income or to fulfil a need to realise passion projects (Upton-Clark, 2023). Although this phenomenon became more prominent due to the global pandemic in 2020, it was recorded that in 2022, Google searches for the term "side hustle" have steadily increased over the past five years, peaking at the beginning of January 2023 (Google trends.com). The 'hustle culture' therefore seems like a phenomenon to explore and according to Katz, Ogilvie, Shaw and Woodhead (2022) seems especially important for Generation Z.

Generation Z, also known as the Zoomers due to their constant online presence and 'always on' availability, have side hustles for several reasons (Katz, et al., 2022). Moreover, it seems that Generation Z employees starting their careers, are at the forefront of disengaging at work which is referred to as the quiet quitting movement (Tayfun, Çentiner & Yurdakul, 2023). This means that in the jobs they keep, quiet quitting is viewed as doing the bare minimum at work and pursuing other side hustles (Tayfun, et al., 2023). Quiet quitting therefore seems to have a strong link to hustle culture and quiet quitters have reasons for their behaviour that might be worth exploring.

Many quiet quitters from Generation Z have side hustles to supplement income and to take care of themselves by dedicating some of their work time to follow own interest (Upton-Clark, 2023). There are others of Generation Z who are not even willing to take on full time jobs and prefer to have several contracts or 'gigs' as this allows more work-life balance (McKee-Ryan, 2021). The implication is that no initiative or any extra effort is put into their full time job, while creativity and inspiration may be applied to pursue their own interests. An argument may be made that quiet quitting can be perceived as negative especially by older generations because these generations may see initiative and innovation as ways to solve problems in the workplace as it is typically a requirement for intrapreneurship.

Furthermore, the very nature of entrepreneurship is described as a process of problem solving by applying creativity to innovative solutions while pursuing or creating new opportunities (Danish, Asghar, Ahmad & Ali, 2019; Shu, Ho & Huang, 2020). Generation Z however, with their quiet quitting and hustling seems to be in the process of re-defining what it means to hustle and what it means to be entrepreneurial. Anwar, Ong'iro odeo and Otieno (2023) are of opinion that in Africa, hustling is not positive and these authors seem to think that it is not entrepreneurial but rather about survival and a way to eventually burn out.

1.2. Problem Statement

The ‘hustle culture’ is a phenomenon that Generation Z is a major part of. Although hustle culture seems to have entrepreneurial elements, it is unclear how it fits within entrepreneurial thinking in terms of opportunity creation which is one of the main aims of entrepreneurship. The reasons for hustle culture and how Generation Z in particular is responding to it could link to how members of Generation Z is viewing it. To the best of our knowledge, the ‘hustle culture’ is not yet conceptualised within the entrepreneurial domain from a theoretical point of view. Therefore, exploring the phenomenon may enable academics to understand the implications for entrepreneurship education as they are currently engaging students from Generation Z on tertiary level but also need to be aware of any shifts in the discipline as Generation Z is currently transforming the world of work (including opportunity finding for entrepreneurs). This paper is therefore an exploratory paper to unpack the phenomenon ‘hustle culture’ under Generation Z from an entrepreneurial perspective.

1.3. Research objectives

The main objective of this paper is explore the ‘hustle culture’ phenomenon with reference to Generation Z’s entrepreneuring.

Two sub-objectives emerged from the main objective:

- a) To explore the ‘hustle culture’ phenomenon in terms of job creation (making work)¹ with reference to Generation Z (in order to make recommendations for entrepreneurship education).
- b) To explore the ‘hustle culture’ phenomenon in terms of problem solving (making it work) with reference to Generation Z (in order to make recommendations for entrepreneurship education).

This paper commences with a literature review on the generational theory and a focus on Generation Z as well as entrepreneuring. It then continues to the methodology section followed by the findings and discussions. Implications and conclusions with limitations and recommendations for entrepreneurship education are offered towards the end of the paper.

2. Literature Review

The literature review firstly unpacks the generational theory with a focus on Generation Z. The next part of the review is dedicated to entrepreneuring in entrepreneurship education as it is the closest academic term to hustling that could be identified in the literature at this point in time.

2.1 Generational Theory

The Generational Theory is often used in studies on consumers in an attempt to make sense of the behaviour of generational groups (Eger, Komárková, Egerová & Mičík, 2021). Knight (2009) has

¹ Making work and making it work were two themes that emerged from the data set. Hence the two sub-objectives were induced from the data set.

written on the Generational Theory and highlights the importance of the theory to understand cultural changes. One of the seminal authors on Generational Theory is Karl Mannheim (1952) and he referred to the values of generational groups shaped by experiences of an age group and the history of people of this group. Mannheim's (1952) work therefore emphasises the importance of historical events and the 'zeitgeist' (spirit of the time) when analysing or trying to understand different generations and cultural changes.

In line with a lens on historical events and change, Strauss and Howe (2009) offer, a Generational Theory in their work on the 'Fourth Turning'. According to Strauss and Howe (2009) there are various history blocks that each generation go through over approximately 80 years. These authors point out that history has turnings/changes about every 20 years within an 80 year block. In short the theory upholds that every history block (80 years) with cycles that last approximately 20 years before it turns. The first 20 years of an 80 year block offers a high in which a particular leading generation has a period of confidence and expansion. This period is followed by an awakening which enables the next generation to explore spiritually and rebel against a certain aspect that the generation before them put into place. The next phase is the 'unraveling phase' which enables individualism and lastly there is a phase of crisis which leads to the fourth turning. The fourth turning, however is different and more transformative than the other turns/changes. It is important to understand Strauss and Howe's (2009) link to generations within these phases as well.

The generations currently relevant can be viewed as: Boomers (born between 1946–1964), Generation X (born between 1965–1979), Generation Y (born between 1980–1994) and Generation Z (born between 1995²–2012) (Berkup, 2014). It is argued that those born in a particular phase will probably experience the times differently from their generational predecessors. Although Strauss and Howe's work on this historical patterns was published in 2009, it did predict a global pandemic and a further crisis phase in the current time up to approximately 2030. It is important to note that Strauss and Howe (2009) write on American history in particular and a western viewpoint is provided. However, whether the work of Strauss and Howe (2009) offers a scientific theory is not the main issue in this paper. What is however more important for this paper is Strauss and Howe's (2009) notion of the crisis phase and a drastic turning point.

In the current time one may argue that there is a crisis with an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, as it has a global impact on food security, economy as well as the environment (Lin, Li, Jia, Feng, Huang, Huang, Fan, Ciais & Song, 2023; Rawtani, Gupta, Khatri, Rao & Hussain, 2022). Moreover, the 'zeitgeist' (spirit of the times) presents various other challenges such as global warming (Forouharfar, 2019), youth unemployment (Fergusson & Yeates, 2021) and an ongoing tension about

² Some sources make reference to 1997 as the starting point of Generation Z but for the purposes of this paper it is also correlated with the "Born Free's" in South Africa which refers to the post-apartheid time and hence 1995 was used as an appropriate indicator for generational change

the role of the human in the future workplace in relation to Artificial Intelligence (Nazareno & Schiff, 2021). This current crisis is probably most relevant for the youngest generation that will be the future leaders namely: Generation Z.

2.2.1 Generation Z

Generation Z is viewed as a new generation because they are the first true digital natives who do not know a world before the internet (Hameed & Mathur, 2020). Generation Z begun to exhibit notably different characteristics, values, and attitudes from the known norm in tertiary institutions as well as in the workplace (Kirchmayer & Fratrièová, 2020). This implies that they think differently from their predecessors and their transformative role in tertiary institutions have been noted (Spencer, 2019). Sidorcuka and Chenovicka (2017:809) reported that Generation Z will spend their youth and adult years “in an era of economic and social renewal”. It should be fair to say that this prediction was true to a large extent and that this notion is at least to some extent in line with the ‘turn’ needed in the crisis phase mentioned by Howe and Strauss (2009).

Seemiller and Grace (2016) documented a study on Generation Z as tertiary students and a larger study was later done by Seemiller et al. (2019) with comparative data. Spencer (2019) also did a study on tertiary students of Generation Z in the United States. From these studies the characteristics of Generation Z are summarized and supplemented by other sources which may include other countries:

- Generation Z is thoughtful about others which also links to an affiliation for their community. In this regard it is important to note that their community can be global as they are connected to various people around the world via social media and the notion of such online communities is confirmed under Polish students by Dolot (2018).
- They are open-minded probably due to their exposure to the thinking of various culture groups. According to Pichler, Kohli and Granitz (2021) it is believed that this is the most diverse and multicultural generation that the world has seen so far.
- Generation Z is a responsible generation. This responsibility is not limited to financial responsibility but also includes political responsibility and environmental responsibility. In this regard Pintér, Bagó, Berényi, Molnár, Deutsch and Pintér (2021) confirm that the Hungarian Generation Z is financially responsible and invests money. However, Spencer (2019) point out that the American Generation Z do not care so much for making money through a single career and most students in this study reported that they will rather work for employers who have the same values. They also indicate that they would like to perform meaningful work and that money is a secondary need.
- They are determined and driven to solve complex problems in society and they are willing to apply creative ways to solve these problems. Ironically enough, students report in the Seemiller et al. (2019) study that they do not see themselves as creative. In the study by Spencer (2019)

in particular, it is also noted that Generational Z tertiary students seem to be determined to yield change by addressing root-causes and not symptoms of the world's problems and although they may not view themselves as imaginative (Seemiller et al., 2019), they certainly are focused on problem solving.

The study by Seemiller, et al. (2019) is important as it gives a comparative view between compared American and Brazilian Generation Z students. The study suggests that the character strengths of both groups were: honesty, kindness, fairness, and judgment (all having a focus on positively interacting with or impacting others). Moreover, it is important to note that in the same study preferred learning styles were identified and both groups prefer logic, followed by experience, practicality, and only last they selected imagination. On their own, both groups in the study of Seemiller et al. (2019) indicate that they prefer to learn through: doing, followed by thinking, relating, and then leading. Mahesh, Bhat and Suresh (2021), concur that Generation Z in India is a hands-on generation who think deeply about their actions. One may argue that 2020's need for hybrid learning due to the global pandemic probably only enhanced these learning preferences.

The one thing that is clear from the above studies is that Generation Z enjoys doing though thinking and it seems that they might be thinking through their doing. What drives their hustling and/or entrepreneurship is not so obvious from typical entrepreneurship lenses and this could be important for entrepreneurship education of the future.

2.2 Entrepreneurship as an acknowledged process in entrepreneurship education

The doing and thinking while hustling of Generation Z may have some parallels to entrepreneurship (process of performing entrepreneurial acts). Entrepreneurship can be viewed as a process of creating, developing and managing business ventures with the aim to make profit and contribute to economic growth as well as the development of society (Ahmed, Chandran, Klobas, Liñán & Kokkalis, 2020). It is also important to note that entrepreneurship is about process (Verduyn, 2015) and requires creativity and innovation (Thukral, 2021). In higher education, entrepreneurship as a construct in curricula became popular in the 2000's as application of entrepreneurship in higher education grew wider than only in the business disciplines (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020). Various changes in higher education around entrepreneurship education has been identified but the systematic review of Hägg and Gabrielsson (2020) offers a comprehensive summary from 1980 up to 2018 and is summarised as follows:

- 1980's teacher centered approaches mainly on what entrepreneurship is all about
- 1990's process centered on how to become more entrepreneurial
- 2000's context centered where entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation is also acknowledged as important aspects of entrepreneurship education
- 2010's learner centered approaches where agency becomes the key and all kinds of aspects around 'the entrepreneurial' is acknowledged in all disciplines

Tselepis (2021) offers a conceptual work that builds on the review of Hägg and Gabrielsson (2020) predicting a way forward in entrepreneurship education. Her work offers a focus on action oriented creative problem solving as an approach that may involve communities or groups of people and interdisciplinary thinking for the future. Her argument is that entrepreneurship education is becoming more complex and requires students of all disciplines to go beyond their own contexts (disciplines) and actively engage with problem solving processes in creative and innovative ways.

It is also worth noting that there were authors such as Rindova, Barry, Ketchen (2009) who noted entrepreneuring as a process of emancipation in the early 2000's already. The notion of agency was important in their work as well as the notion of contexts.

It would be fair to state that authors in entrepreneurship education in particular, seem to be in agreement that entrepreneuring, entrepreneurial orientation, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship cannot be without the application of creativity and some form of innovation through a process (Shi, Yuan, Bell & Wang, 2020). Moreover, the driving force of South African entrepreneurship education up to this point certainly was strongly linked to opportunity creation (by applying creativity and innovation), or identifying the new in problem solving (Tselepis & Lavelle, 2020). This focus is due to the high unemployment rate that calls for the creation of new opportunity especially in BRICS economies (Udimal, Luo, Liu, & Mensah, 2020).

From a theoretical point of view, the above implies that hustling is only entrepreneuring if it contains the skills of creativity and innovation in order to create or transform something into something new. The question is whether hustling does have some of these entrepreneurial components and what that means for Generation Z students, entrants in the workplace and eventually entrepreneurship education of the future.

3. Research Methodology

This section provides the strategy that was implemented to answer the exploratory research question: What does the 'hustle culture' entail for Generation Z in terms of entrepreneuring?

A phenomenon ('hustle culture') was explored in this study. The phenomenon is a currently a Google trend as mentioned in section 1, therefore, it was deemed important to start with popular media (newspapers, social media, and industry reports) to explore this global phenomenon with a specific focus on Generation Z. Phenomenology in research is applied when the researcher seeks to describe the meaning for individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study the phenomenon is the 'hustle culture' and the researcher was interested in understanding it from Generation Z's point of view. Moreover, the context is entrepreneuring and therefore the phenomenon of 'hustle culture' under Generation Z was explored within the broader context of entrepreneurship. To explore a phenomenon, a qualitative research approach was applied.

In this regard, Wojnar and Swanson (2007) recommend a qualitative approach when the researcher wants to understand the way humans experience a phenomenon and make meaning. In this paper the researcher therefore aimed to understand the hustle culture of Generation Z particularly within the context of entrepreneurship. The underpinning research philosophy is therefore interpretivist, which according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) involve a process of meaning making in a subjective way.

3.2 Sampling

Google was used as it is a powerful searching tool and globally relevant to identify popular media that also referred to secondary research reports. The search items that were used were: 'hustle culture', (gig economy and side hustle were also linked as this were recommended related search items). Furthermore, Generation Z was added to the search to ensure material had relevance to this group. The time parameters at the time of the Google search were between 2020 and 2023. The reason for only searching from 2020 onward pertains to the trending due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Many sources prior to 2020 did not report the trend (although the term as evident from 2018). Google trends, however indicated that the trend in 2022. The latest material for this paper was only up to 10 June 2023 at the time of searching. Forty one pieces on Hustle Culture were identified by the search engine in the first Google search. Seven of the 41 were eliminated due to one or more of the following reasons:

- a) they were before 2020 despite the parameters that were searched (two pieces were reporting on 2018), and would not reflect the impact of the global pandemic which is relevant
- b) the pieces did not report on Generation Z but only on Generation Y (five pieces were eliminated due to this reason)

Thirty four (34) pieces (including media reports, social media reports, industry reports and opinion pieces by experts) were therefore analysed for the purposes of this paper.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The suitable 34 sources were analysed by firstly reading all the pieces to understand the 'hustle culture' as a real world phenomenon. Next the researcher firstly embarked on an open ended coding process in which key phrases, were identified in a systematic way. In this regard Creswell and Poth (2018) are of opinion that qualitative data analysis is an ongoing process involving continuous reflection of about data while asking critical questions that can enable the systematic analysis. The critical questions relevant in this study were:

- 1) What is hustling/side hustling /hustle culture according to the source?
- 2) Who is telling the story and/or what is the context of the story?
- 3) What is the underlying tone about hustle culture?
- 4) How do the identified constructs/key phrases relate to entrepreneuring/entrepreneurship (creativity, innovation, opportunity finding and creation)?

From the above critical questions, the systematic analysis offered key terms and phrases (identified with open codes) that enabled two prominent themes to emerge. The described process of data analysis required inductive reasoning that is an acknowledged way to make sense of data in qualitative research and identify prominent themes (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2011).

To identify the main themes and sub-themes, the four critical questions guided the way in which the researcher could arrange the open coded data (making meaning). The open coding is presented in the findings as key phrases, and/or words on side hustling or hustling while the themes of ‘making it work’ or ‘making work’ emerged.

From the data sources it was clear that there were two main tones in the written pieces: one tone was positive about hustle culture, while the other seemed to have a negative connotation to hustle culture. Both tones were included to yield a balanced view on the phenomenon. The two main themes that were eventually identified in the data set for this paper were validated as follows:

Making work is about an active attempt to make change and actively creating opportunity or choosing the hustle and ‘making it work’ indicates that hustling is more of a survival strategy or a rebellion and not necessarily a choice. Phrases from the media sources and themes were coded and validated by a colleague in entrepreneurship education to enhance the trustworthiness of the themes.

The following table offers a summary of the operationalisation applied to the data analysis:

Table 1: Operationalisation of data analysis (own compilation)

Critical questions to guide sense making of data	Various dimensions in the data set	Themes identified
What is hustling/side hustling/hustle culture according to the source?	Codes relating to key phrases and/or key words in sources (in bold in data source: Table 2)	Making it work and/or Making work
Who is telling the story and/or what is the context of the story?	Person or context to put phrases into perspective	
What is the underlying tone about hustle culture?	Positive of negative tone or balanced	
How do the identified constructs/key phrases relate to entrepreneuring or entrepreneurship?	Evidence of creativity and/or innovation, opportunity finding or creation	

3.4 Ethics

No ethical clearance was required for this paper as public information was used as data sources, however, the researcher was still sensitive to eliminate any names from the data set in reporting. Contextual detail in some cases are provided to justify the credibility of a source or to give context for interpretation

purposes. Names and identifiers were removed from the reported findings in this paper, but the numbers of the data sources are hyperlinked to the original public sources for referencing purposes.

4. Results and Findings

Data reported in Table 2 are grouped into two themes but reflect the critical questions mentioned in the methodology section to systematically analyse data. The two prominent themes that emerged from the data set were:

- Making Work (entails a choice to hustle and actively doing as a preference to anything else)
- Making it work (entails reference to Generation Z’s survival strategy or rebellion against a current system or hustling)

In some sources the author offered the narrative on both themes. In such cases, both themes are indicated in one source.

Table 2: Data analysis in terms of Generation Z who uses hustle culture to making it work and/or making Work (own compilation³)

Year 2020 and 2021		
Source links	Key phrases and/or words on side hustling or hustling from data	Making work and/or Making it work
1 2 3 4 5	Keywords of the five sources (collectively) in 2020 and 2021: “Societal change; self-navigation; expression; community, freelance, online shops, create online content, ignore previous norms, personal growth”	All 2020 sources: Making work One 2021 source: Making it work
Year 2022		
Source link <i>voice</i>	Key phrases and/or words on side hustling or hustling from sources	Making work and/or Making it work
6 <i>American</i>	Climate change concern, Global focus Online content watching and creating; Investing (crypto)	Making work
7 <i>Data engineer gen X</i>	Side hustles is nonsense (loosing focus)	Making it work
8 <i>HR perspective</i>	Burn out at work; Resigning from their job and hustling to survive	Making it work
9 <i>European</i>	quickly complete tasks at work “the generation that looks at their day jobs as their part-time jobs, and living life as their full-time jobs. ” discerning and intentional about finding a sense of purpose in their	Making it work

³ Some direct quotes from popular media will be evident. The source is hyperlinked In the number)

	work	
<u>10</u> <u>Bloomberg</u> <u>report</u>	“social activists; transparency” Job security does not worry them as much as job fulfilment does. Work-life balance , the ability to work remotely and flexible leave are very important to them.	Making it work
<u>11</u> <u>SA perspective</u>	“hybrid working environment , has made it significantly easier for people to do extra work without losing too much time in their day.”	Making it work
<u>12</u> <u>SA Millennial</u> <u>Blogger</u>	Quiet Quitting refers to giving just the bare minimum to your job: “acting your wage” . Struggle , undervalued , checking out mentally People are overworked, underpaid and undervalued...people checking out mentally instead.	Making it work
<u>13</u> <u>Millennial Hustler</u> <u>voice</u>	“The romanticism of work and the mindset that you should constantly be working and being productive have negative mental and physical health consequences.” “Hustle culture creates unrealistic expectations, fosters an unhealthy lifestyle, and encourages unhealthy competitiveness and burnout.”	Making it work
<u>14</u> <u>Report Gallup</u> <u>survey (diverse)</u>	“82 percent of Gen Z members said that doing the bare minimum to keep their jobs is... appealing.” The other 15% said that this is already what they are doing” Generation Z is “sticking it to their bosses”	Making it work
<u>15</u> <u>Indonesian</u>	Gen Z fighting the system through “quiet quitting” . “...rebel against the soul-crushing pressure of the professional world.”	Making it work
<u>16</u> <u>Gen Z voice from</u> <u>Kenya</u>	hustle culture causes people to suffer from exhaustion “I now do only the things that in my job description and surprisingly, in terms of income, I am making just as I was before,” Gen Z are more likely to view work as a means to an end than a source of purpose. Some “quiet quitters” say they're simply reprioritising work-life balance	Making it work
<u>17</u> <u>Daily Maveric on</u> <u>Henley report</u>	the sentiment around a four-day working week is prominent “Generation Z calls for greater autonomy in the workplace; to have the right to use their own equipment, whether cell phone or lap top, and to dress as they wish ... change in the approach to work and careers across the board.”	Making it work
<u>18</u> <u>SA on Deloitte</u> <u>report</u>	Gen Z is reporting the highest rates of burnout and driving the “great resignation.” The youngest workers are struggling to cope with the rising cost of living and stagnant salaries. Gen Z might not have the choice to work one job.	Making it work
<u>19</u> <u>LinkedIn survey</u>	Having flexibility , whether in choosing where or when you work; Great resignation 80% of Gen Zs want to work for an employer that aligns with their beliefs. 40% of Gen Z workers are willing to accept a 5% pay cut to work in a position that offers career growth opportunities.	Making Work
<u>20</u> <u>Futurist on</u> <u>LinkedIn</u>	a culture of hustle has previously been the toxic norm . Unlike any generation before them, Gen Z is taking a stand against ‘hustling’ . They are transforming the hustle “Gen Z are not only fitting their hustle around their 9-5 and but they are also choosing to hustle from a place of passion and interest” .	Making work

<u>21</u>	Hack this world “ Slashies ” (manage more than one career) “They simply find a way “to make it work” ”	Making it work
<u>22</u> <u>SA experts</u> <u>(SUN)</u>	Generation Z are setting boundaries with quiet quitting to recalibrate work-life balance and protect their mental health. quiet quitting could be seen as a passive-aggressive way of achieving this trend	Making it work
<u>23</u> <u>UK on Microsoft</u> <u>report</u>	Generation Z bring new ideas into the employment models with hustle, money making, freelancing Need the extra income rather than out of choice (inflation)	Making it work
<u>24</u> <u>SA report</u> <u>Mckinsey senior</u> <u>partners</u>	Having more time to work on a side hustle is answer about how respondents would like to change how they spend their time Gen Z that is really spearheading the growing movement primary reason to having a side hustle being economical , with many Gen Z and millennials stating that they live from paycheck to paycheck. Another reason they seek extra work is increased job satisfaction	Making work Making it work
<u>25</u> <u>SA report</u>	Gen Z is determined to create a better future , this generation wants to see ongoing social impact Taking their future in their own hands , more than their older counterparts, “ Gens Z & Y have a side hustle (55%) and dream about starting their own business one day (84%). ” Gen Z is closing in on Gen Y when it comes to financial investments. Fight injustices with “ clictivism ”	Making work
Year 2023		
Source link <i>Voice</i>	Key phrases and/or words on side hustling or hustling from sources	Making work and/or Making it work
<u>26</u> <u>SA</u> <u>Futurist</u>	They are fully armed with what matters to them from their future employer. Gen Z workers often dubbed the ‘ hustle generation ’ due to their willingness to take on various entrepreneurial ventures, such as crypto, social media, event management, and vintage clothing sales. prioritising opportunities for learning, development, and career growth has been cited as equally important for this generation; purpose-driven generation that seeks meaningful work and wants to know how their contributions impact their organisation's overall mission. Diversity Equality Inclusivity (DEI) generation	Making work
<u>27</u> <u>Netherlands on</u> <u>Deloitte survey</u>	Gen Z doesn't believe in the promise of the 9-5 corporate job ; Gen Z respondents were juggling multiple side hustles at once. reinventing their own ways to earn an income "having side jobs and jobs on top of jobs" is due to economic concerns; Gen Z has Passion Projects on the side to “reclaim their time”	Making work and
<u>28</u> <u>USA statistics</u>	Gen Z insisting that the most liberating —and lucrative path to financial freedom is that you do not even have to get out of bed. You need a laptop and smartphone	Making work
<u>29</u> <u>SA</u> <u>Gen Z writer</u>	“ Hustle culture is breaking us ” struggle to make ends meet. “everyone is feeling the pressure to hustle and grind, just to get by ”	Making it work
<u>30</u> <u>Kenya</u>	Welcome to the new world of social media influencers. need for attention; celebrity culture in Kenya This is because, by the look of things, some of these young people (Gen	Making work

	Z) are on the verge of completely dropping out from mainstream society and its responsibilities to become permanent digital natives	
<u>31</u> <i>Forbes</i>	Side hustle and gig culture are growing partly due to the younger generation’s skepticism of a past blueprint of work. Work-life balance and freedom. Gen-Z leads the pack with 62% starting a side gig to make ends meet (increase of 13% after Covid). Choosing to opt out of these old-fashioned working ideas , and for many, the perfect way to do that is through the side hustle.	Making it work and Making work
<u>32</u> <i>SA news paper</i>	“quiet quitting” (doing nothing than job description) Escape hustle culture of suffering Operate as independently as possible	Making it work
<u>33</u> <i>SA on Deloitte report</i>	“The new four-day work week. A number of South African companies are set to take part in a six-month pilot of the four-day work week in 2023.” “Quiet quitting correcting hustle culture” “The rise of the side hustle: doing what it takes to make ends meet; Companies can create a work environment that encourages entrepreneurialism”	Making it work
<u>34</u> <i>Asia</i>	“hustle culture is rooted in capitalism , but it also has its cons, like when a person’s worth and importance are merely measured by the productivity and progress they make at work.” Gen Zs, are more likely to be reactive due to their lack of life experiences.	Making it work

From Table 2 the phenomenon of ‘hustle culture’ among Generation Z is confirmed in popular media industry reports and social media. This culture is engaged by the Generation Z people who have entered the workplace as well as those who are still in higher education studying towards a qualification. What is also evident is that the ideas around hustle culture in 2020 and 2021 seems to be very positive and becomes more balanced (with positive and negative views) in 2022 and 2023. The two themes: “Making work” and “Making it work” is offered accordingly.

4.1 Making work

In this theme it is evident that Generation Z seems to prefer jobs where they have flexibility, autonomy and there is a general sense of “doing things on own terms”. Opportunity creation is evident in terms of investments (particularly in Crypto currencies), content creation, online shops and freelancing or contracting. There is also a view that there lies more promise (opportunity) in taking jobs that align with their values and beliefs or selecting jobs that enable them to grow and no desperation around finding jobs as these Generation Z members are making work by themselves. The literature on the preference for meaningful jobs rather than the highest payed job by Spencer (2019) is therefore confirmed in the data set.

There is however a notion of change that is yielded through the hustle and how Generation Z is engaging with it. Data Source 27 summarises it well:

“Generation Z is reinventing their own ways to earn an income...having side jobs and jobs on top of jobs”. “Gen Z has Passion Projects on the side to “reclaim their time”

The statement above certainly testifies to how liberating the hustle can be as Data Source 26 points out. This liberating feeling seems to come from technology that enables Generation Z to complete their work faster and hence having the time to explore their own interests (Data Source 20). It seems that technology enables the ‘always on’ generation to do more of what they like to do.

South African Data Source 26 makes mention of a “purpose driven” generation *“that seeks meaningful work and wants to know how their contributions impact their organisation's overall mission.”*

The above statement confirms the positive social impact that Generation Z aims to achieve and it seems to link to their inclusivity as well as what Seemiller et al. (2019) talk about in the literature as a genuine concern for others.

From the above synopsis of the theme ‘Making work’ it is not clear how creative those are who are making work through the hustle culture, but their motivation seem clear. Bearing in mind that creativity is a component of entrepreneuring in order to create jobs (Verduyn, 2015), there certainly is reference to content creation which is a creative way to make/create work or opportunity. The other jobs as such are not detailed, but sales and the gig culture might require some innovation if one is to succeed it in a highly competitive field. Hustling online beyond physical borders (Data Source 6), may also involve some form of innovation. Innovation is certainly part of the process of entrepreneuring (Verduyn, 2015). Nevertheless, it could well be that the innovation in this instance is about creating work-life balance (Data Source 10). This is especially what the next theme is about.

4.2 Making it work

This theme in the hustle culture has a darker side as it also contains viewpoints on the negative aspect of the hustle culture. Hustle culture is in some instances viewed as entrapment rather than a chosen path. Hacamo and Kleiner (2022) refer to necessity entrepreneuring as forced entrepreneurship. Data Source 13 summarises a negative sentiment of many from Generation Z who take part in hustle culture due to necessity:

“Hustle culture creates unrealistic expectations, fosters an unhealthy lifestyle, and encourages unhealthy competitiveness and burnout.”

The reason for the hustling in such cases are confirmed to be necessity driven in terms of economic survival as Data Source 33 indicates:

“...to make ends meet [economically]”.

This economic reason is spelled out by a South African Generation Z blogger who shares in Data source 29:

“everyone is feeling the pressure to hustle and grind, just to get by”.

These sentiments are echoed in other Data Sources from UK, USA, Kenya and Indonesia.

There may be more to this as Data Source 8 from a human resource perspective suggests. It is as if Generation Z in some cases have to choose between the lesser of two evils: a job on the one side and hustling on the other. In Data Source 8 it is reported that members of Generation Z who are unable to cope with their job pressure, start side hustling while keeping the fulltime job. The sub-theme that emerged in the hustle culture phenomenon under Generation Z is ‘side hustle’ that is done out of necessity as a way to supplement income linking it to economic survival.

However, the sub-theme “*Quiet Quitting*” (Data Sources 12, 15, 32 & 12) links to a sentiment around “*acting one’s wage*” and the four-day work week (Data Source 12). This is the movement that suggests that people should only do the minimum in their jobs and no more because of “*Burn Out*” (Data Source 29). Any extra time is used to pursue other interests and in this way balancing work and life is pursued. In this regard, one might argue that entrepreneuring is again not a choice or preference, but a way to survive mentally and emotionally. In contrast the existing literature seems to offer more studies on the positive aspects and positive emotional aspects of entrepreneurial people who start entrepreneurial endeavours (Robinson & Gough, 2020; Su, Liu, Zhang, & Liu, 2020).

However, it seems that through hustling on the side in a quest to create a positive mindset, something has got to give to maintain a much desired work-life balance. Thus there needs to be a compromise on time and energy either in terms of the side hustles or the full time job. In this regard a former Kenyan hustler wrote on her blog that she stopped side hustling as it was not worth it:

“I now do only the things in my job description and surprisingly, in terms of income, I am making just as much as I was before” (Data Source 16).

In an Asian Data source 34, an expert comments on Quiet Quitting that is spearheaded by Generation Z and mentions that “*Gen Zs, are more likely to be reactive due to their lack of life experiences*”

South African insight into quiet quitting (Data Source 33) when it comes to Generation Z, is that it is a rebellion and: “*Quiet quitting is correcting the hustle culture*”

In this regard, correcting the ‘hustle culture’ seems to refer to no longer hustling as part of a struggle but a passion instead. This passion is performed whilst keeping a full time job in which one also has strong time boundaries (Data Source 22).

The narrative seems confusing and in cases contradicting up to this point because it seems that the data indicates that Generation Z is burned out due to various streams of income, yet some keep their full-time jobs and do the minimum whilst pursuing passion projects on the side. In this regard South African Data Source 24 sheds light on the matter by highlighting that for Generation Z, side hustles and quiet quitting is not just about making ends meet economically but:

“...another reason they seek extra work is increased job satisfaction.”

This implies that those in Generation Z who pursue a part-time hustle while working a full-time job, might be making it work at work for themselves when employers do not.

It seems that this sub-theme of quiet quitting might be passive aggressive and it would make sense that a Generation Z who is also social activists through “*clicktivism*” (Data Source 25) is indeed “*transforming the hustle*” (Data Source 20). If one argues that work and life is a problem that future entrepreneurs need to solve (it certainly looks that way from the data set), then it might be fair to argue that transforming the ‘hustle culture’ is indeed a form of innovation. Whether this is entrepreneurship as the literature describes it is another debate and something worth exploring further.

5. Implications for Entrepreneurship Education

From the findings it is evident that Generation Z is indeed a generation with different ideas around what entrepreneurship and managing/owning businesses mean. Their innovation and creativity seem to be linked to how they reclaim their time to perform what is referred to as “passion projects” and create work-life balance and meaning to solve problems in society. Moreover, it is evident that members of Generation Z may simply quit quietly (disengage) when they are not satisfied or not coping with the jobs or the various projects that they do. Technology however enables them to go beyond time boundaries as well as create their own multi-cultural communities as Spencer (2019) points out in the literature to engage with such projects in a different way.

The implication for entrepreneurship education seems to point towards lecturers asking themselves: which problems are the students of Generation Z trying to solve? From the data-set it would seem that although Generation Z has intentions to solve serious problems like climate change, they also need the skills and competencies to deal with the complexities and demands of the dynamic work environments in relation to their own well-being and time management. Moreover, members of Generation Z who are ‘making work’ seem to tap into investment particularly crypto currencies to make their money work for them. Considering the Generational Theory of Strauss and Howe (2009), there does seem to be some sort of crisis that this generation needs to deal with, but at least they seem determined to engage with in their own way.

It is therefore recommended that skills and competencies around problem solving that involves doing and thinking while incorporating the awareness of skills on self-mastery and well-being be incorporated in all kinds of assessment to add value to students from Generation Z in higher education. Interdisciplinary project based learning still seems to be relevant for Generation Z students who crave variety. The role of creativity should not be neglected in entrepreneurship education and may be explored through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), as students of Generation Z will probably not have problems to engage with international students and the multi-cultural perspectives may be a point of departure to spark innovation. Lastly, a four day learning week might be considered

to enable students to deal with their side hustles as ‘making it work’ at tertiary education stage may become ‘making work’ by the time they enter the workforce.

6. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This study set out to explore the phenomenon of the ‘hustle culture’ and its relevance to Generation Z particularly from an entrepreneurship point of view. The two main dimensions of this phenomenon highlighted in this paper is that Generation Z is re-defining the hustle by ‘making it work’ (with elements of rebellion against typical norm of work and surviving) and ‘making work’ (hustling on their own terms that involve a choice for the flexibility and autonomy). A main conclusion is that hustle culture might get a new name but the principle of multiple streams of income is probably going to be around for a few years. Generation Z seems to be engaging it in their own way and transforming the way others did before them thought the hustle. Their consciousness about well-being seems valid and perhaps the real hustle for Generation Z is balancing work and life and figuring out how to innovatively do so.

The limitations of this study are that the phenomenon is explored from various public sources that were selected within a particular timeframe and these are not homogeneous. Moreover, the data set also reflected various voices about the experience of hustle culture from the workplace and although this provides an indication of what students can be prepared for, it does not always reflect student voices. A future research study on the ‘hustle culture’ in South African Universities is launched in 2024 as this phenomenon needs further exploration in a more focused way.

To end this paper the educators in entrepreneurship is left with the flowing reflective question: could hustling become a form of emancipation and innovative transformation for the next generation?

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