

WORKPLACE WELL-BEING AND TRAVEL BEHAVIOR OF HUNGARIAN GENERATION Z: PREVENTIVE HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE DETERMINANTS

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between workplace well-being and travel behavior among Hungarian Generation Z employees. Drawing on a large-scale 2022 survey of 1,143 workers, the analysis focuses on the 568 respondents aged 18–24, representing the youngest cohort in the labor market. The study integrates workplace structures, preventive health behaviors, and lifestyle orientations into models of tourism engagement, offering a multidimensional perspective on how occupational conditions shape leisure mobility. We used a quantitative research method, conducting a structured questionnaire survey on an online platform among randomly selected Hungarian Generation Z employees. The responses were processed using analytical techniques, such as correlation and regression analysis. Descriptive results show that holiday, event, and visiting tourism are the most frequent forms of travel, while health and wellness tourism are more selective. Motivational ratings highlight tranquility, food quality, and proximity to nature as the most valued destination attributes, pointing to a restorative orientation consistent with preventive lifestyles. Exploratory factor analysis of nearly 200 workplace and lifestyle indicators yielded eleven latent dimensions, ranging from benefits and satisfaction to preventive behaviors and stress factors. Ordinal logistic regressions demonstrated that preventive health practices were the strongest predictors of participation across multiple tourism forms, while workplace benefits significantly increased engagement in holiday, wellness, and event tourism. Heterogeneity within the cohort was evident, as leisure profiles and resource constraints produced divergent travel patterns. The findings extend theory by linking workplace well-being and tourism within a unified framework and demonstrate the utility of lifestyle-integrated models. The study reveals that preventive health behaviors emerge as the single strongest predictor of tourism engagement across multiple travel types, while workplace benefits function as critical enablers—particularly for cohorts facing financial constraints—highlighting tourism as an integrated dimension of occupational well-being rather than isolated leisure consumption. Practical implications highlight the role of employers, policymakers, and tourism providers in aligning preventive health orientations with sustainable and restorative travel opportunities.

Keywords: Generation Z, workplace well-being, preventive health, tourism behavior, wellness tourism, Hungary

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism research increasingly highlights the interplay between individual well-being, workplace structures, and lifestyle practices. While classical approaches emphasized leisure, recreation, or cultural consumption, more recent perspectives show that travel choices are embedded in occupational contexts, health orientations, and generational values (Smith & Puczko, 2014; De Vos et al., 2013). For younger employees, particularly Generation Z, travel behavior cannot be separated from workplace conditions or the shifting demands of modern employment. Preferences and motivations are shaped by preventive health orientations, organizational benefits, and sociocultural trends toward sustainability and well-being. Workplace well-being extends beyond job satisfaction or salary. It is increasingly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct spanning physical, psychological, and social domains (Taris & Schaufeli, 2018). Organizational environments affect not only performance but also health outcomes, lifestyle choices, and leisure practices (Abdirahman et al., 2018). In this setting, travel functions simultaneously as a restorative outlet and a preventive health strategy. The expansion of wellness and health tourism, alongside rising demand for quiet, nature-based destinations, demonstrates that travel is a critical dimension of occupational well-being.

Generational perspective

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is entering the labor market amid economic precarity, digital transformation, and heightened awareness of health and sustainability (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Having grown up in a digitally saturated environment, they emphasize authenticity, social connection, and personalized experiences. Travel

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studies associate them with affordable but meaningful activities, often combining wellness orientation and sustainability with experiential consumption (Priporas et al., 2017). As employees, they expect workplace flexibility, inclusivity, and well-being support (Schroth, 2019). Benefits such as travel vouchers or subsidized leisure programs can expand their opportunities, while stressful or insecure working conditions may increase demand for restorative or health-related travel. Their engagement with preventive health practices—diet, exercise, stress management—further links occupational structures with tourism motivations, positioning travel as a continuation of health-conscious lifestyles.

Workplace well-being and tourism intersections

Workplace well-being influences tourism through both deficits and resources. High stress, heavy workloads, or low autonomy can create demand for compensatory leisure and wellness travel (Burkholder et al., 2010), while organizational support—such as health promotion programs, flexible scheduling, or financial incentives—enables participation in diverse forms of tourism (Molnár & Müller, 2021). Preventive health behaviors are particularly relevant, being strongly linked with wellness and health tourism (Voigt et al., 2010). Where workplaces support such behaviors, employees may extend them into their travel choices; where workplaces undermine health, travel may serve as compensation (Zhao et al., 2022). For Generation Z, whose awareness of self-care is high, these dynamics are likely amplified.

The Hungarian context

Hungary provides a unique setting for exploring these issues. The country's spa culture and medicinal waters underpin a strong tradition of health and wellness tourism (Michalkó & Rácz, 2011). At the same time, rapid labor market change—precarity, flexible contracts, and polarization between intellectual and physical work—has shaped workplace well-being for younger cohorts (Poór et al., 2013). Corporate benefits such as the SZÉP card play a central role in enabling domestic travel, especially wellness trips (Vajta, 2012; Lövei & Kalmár, 2017). Yet stress and burnout risks are rising, with younger employees frequently reporting pressure to overperform (Salavecz, 2013). These structural and cultural conditions make Hungarian Generation Z a particularly valuable case for examining how employment and lifestyle orientations converge in tourism.

Travel motivations of Generation Z

Motivational patterns show that restorative and health-oriented factors increasingly dominate among young travelers. Quiet environments, natural proximity, and healthy food are highly valued, reflecting lifestyle orientations and preventive health concerns (Lo & Chang, 2020). Entertainment and event participation, such as festivals and sports tourism, also remain central, consistent with preferences for social and experiential dimensions. This mix of motivations suggests that workplace factors may influence different types of tourism in distinct ways: benefits may facilitate holiday, wellness, or event trips, while health-related workplace programs may predict participation in health tourism. Preventive practices may underpin general engagement across holiday, event, and wellness travel, and even extend to visiting relatives or medical trips.

Research gap

Although workplace well-being, travel motivations, and generational differences have each been studied, few analyses integrate these domains for Generation Z. Prior Hungarian research largely addressed overall employee samples (Kinczel et al., 2025), while international studies tend to isolate either wellness tourism or leisure practices. The combined influence of workplace benefits, preventive behaviors, and occupational stress on young employees' travel patterns remains underexplored.

This study addresses that gap by systematically examining travel preferences of Hungarian Generation Z employees and their relationship with workplace well-being. Using a large-scale 2022 survey, we analyze how latent workplace and health dimensions predict frequency of participation in holiday, health, wellness, event, and visiting tourism. By combining exploratory factor analysis with ordinal logistic regression, the study offers both statistical associations and substantive interpretation in the context of preventive health and generational orientations.

Aim and significance of the study

The study pursues four research questions:

1. How frequently do Hungarian Generation Z employees participate in different types of tourism (holiday, health, wellness, event, visiting)?
2. What motivational factors (nature, wellness, entertainment, sports, food, quiet environment) shape their destination choices?
3. Which workplace well-being dimensions (e.g., benefits, satisfaction, preventive options) predict travel frequencies across tourism types?
4. How do these relationships reflect broader patterns of preventive health and generational orientations?

By addressing these questions, the study extends theory on the workplace–tourism nexus, foregrounding an underexplored generational cohort. Practically, it provides insights for employers designing benefits and wellness programs aligned with young employees' values, and for tourism stakeholders seeking to tailor products to Generation Z travelers. Ultimately, the analysis positions travel not merely as discretionary leisure but as an essential element of contemporary well-being, closely tied to employment structures, preventive health practices, and generational worldviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of workplace well-being and travel preferences has increasingly attracted scholarly attention, particularly in relation to younger generations. Tourism has long been conceptualized as a source of leisure and cultural enrichment, yet recent scholarship underscores its broader role as a determinant of health, lifestyle regulation, and identity

formation (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). In this expanded view, travel is situated within wider life structures, including occupational pressures, health orientations, and digital environments. For Generation Z, the first digital-native cohort entering the labor market, these linkages are especially visible. Their travel behavior reflects not only individual motivations but also the structural conditions of employment, evolving workplace expectations, and pervasive digital mediation. This literature review synthesizes insights from international and Central European research, focusing on generational differences, workplace well-being, digital transformation, safety, sustainability, and theoretical implications.

Generational differences in travel behavior

Several recent studies confirm that travel motivations, constraints, and practices differ substantially across generational cohorts. Gonda & Rátz (2023) examined responsible tourism attitudes in Hungary and found that Generation Z respondents displayed only moderate engagement with sustainable travel compared to older groups, who demonstrated stronger environmental concern and behavioral consistency. This suggests that, despite awareness of ecological issues, young adults are less likely to translate concern into concrete action. Such findings complicate common assumptions that Generation Z will automatically drive sustainable consumption in tourism.

A complementary perspective emerges from Varadzhakova & Naydenov's (2024) analysis of domestic leisure tourism in Bulgaria. Their study showed that Generation Z traveled more frequently than older cohorts, yet they were constrained by both financial limitations and lack of time. This resonates strongly with the Hungarian labor context, where young employees often combine study with part-time employment or insecure contracts. The structural challenges of precarity and restricted free time directly shape their ability to participate in travel, regardless of motivational interest.

In Romania, Popşa (2024) provided a conceptual synthesis of emerging Gen Z travel behaviors, identifying five defining features: integration of technology, reliance on social media, ecological awareness, prioritization of experiences over possessions, and personalization of consumption. Cultural authenticity and influencer-driven decision-making were highlighted as particularly important. These characteristics resonate with broader European research, which emphasizes that for Gen Z, tourism is less about standardized packages and more about self-expression and curated experiences.

Robinson & Schänzel (2019), using qualitative data from New Zealand, further reinforced this traveler-centric perspective. Their grounded theory analysis of interviews and travel blogs demonstrated that Gen Z experiences must be understood not only in terms of destination features but also across pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip phases. Global factors (e.g., sustainability discourses), destination-specific attributes, and personal-level orientations intersect in shaping their travel. This approach highlights the multidimensionality of Gen Z travel and cautions against reducing it to simple motivational categories. Together, these studies establish a coherent pattern: Generation Z is highly mobile, digitally immersed, and experiential in orientation. At the same time, they face material constraints (time and money) and demonstrate only moderate translation of sustainability values into practice. For the Hungarian context, these insights provide a crucial baseline for understanding how occupational and workplace-related factors may further modify travel choices.

Workplace well-being and generational expectations

Tourism preferences cannot be disentangled from workplace conditions, particularly for younger employees at the beginning of their careers. Leslie et al. (2021), using Q-methodology in the United States, identified three Gen Z workplace preference profiles: Social Investors (prioritizing work-life balance and social value), Chill Worker Bees (emphasizing comfort and stability), and Go Getters (focusing on advancement and achievement). Although these subtypes varied, all groups emphasized ethical employment practices. These results align with Hungarian data suggesting that workplace satisfaction, benefits, and availability of supportive services influence travel differently across subgroups of Gen Z (Kinczel et al., 2025). Parallel evidence comes from Indonesia. Dwidienawati et al. (2025) analyzed predictors of Gen Z well-being and identified resilience, extraversion, and social support as significant contributors. Surprisingly, screen time and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) did not significantly diminish well-being, challenging assumptions that digital immersion is inherently harmful. This has implications for Hungarian youth, suggesting that preventive health behaviors and social connectedness may outweigh concerns about digital overexposure when shaping travel. Both Leslie et al. and Dwidienawati et al. reinforce the importance of including workplace and lifestyle-based predictors—such as preventive health practices—in quantitative models of travel frequency.

Digital transformation and tourism decision-making

As digital natives, Generation Z demonstrates strong reliance on technology and peer networks in shaping tourism choices. Choirisa (2022), applying the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework in Indonesia, found that telepresence, focused attention, and information quality in virtual reality (VR) environments significantly increased satisfaction and strengthened visit intentions. VR previews thus operate as powerful extensions of information-seeking and decision-making. In Central and Eastern Europe, Süli & Martyin-Csamangó (2020) confirmed that social media, particularly Instagram, dominates festival tourism decision-making among Generations Y and Z in Hungary and Serbia. Hashtags, peer-generated content, and mobile-driven, real-time decisions were central in guiding participation. Their findings underline how peer validation and social sharing strongly influence Gen Z, making user-generated content an essential factor in tourism marketing strategies.

Further, Choirisa & Rizkalla (2021) emphasized that Gen Z prefers contactless services, transformative experiences, and technologically enriched travel. They reaffirmed that information quality and telepresence are key determinants of satisfaction and choice. Taken together, these studies position Hungarian Gen Z travelers within a digital ecosystem where social validation, immersive technologies, and influencer content directly shape tourism decisions. For researchers, this highlights the necessity of situating workplace and health predictors within digitally mediated environments.

Safety, sustainability, and external constraints

Beyond workplace and digital dimensions, external factors continue to influence Generation Z tourism. Rončák et al. (2021), analyzing Czech Gen Z behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, documented heightened safety concerns leading to preferences for individual travel, private accommodations, and risk-averse behaviors (Rahardja et al., 2021).

Despite these adjustments, long-term intentions to travel remained strong, demonstrating resilience in demand. These findings are highly relevant for Hungary, where post-pandemic safety consciousness may intersect with preventive health orientations, shaping preferences for quiet, nature-based, or wellness destinations.

Sustainability remains an area of ambivalence. Gonda & Rátz (2023) showed that Hungarian Gen Z travelers display weaker commitment to responsible tourism relative to older cohorts. This gap suggests that while health and wellness motivations are strong, they do not automatically translate into environmentally sustainable practices. For policymakers and destination managers, this underscores the importance of explicitly linking preventive and restorative travel with sustainability messaging and infrastructure, such as eco-friendly spas or green-certified accommodation.

Synthesis and theoretical implications

The literature converges on three interrelated dimensions shaping Generation Z travel:

1. **Workplace well-being:** Organizational resources, satisfaction, and ethics shape participation in leisure and wellness tourism (Leslie et al., 2021; Kinczel et al., 2025; Dwidienawati et al., 2025). These findings underscore that travel must be understood as partly determined by employment structures and workplace conditions.

2. **Digital mediation:** Gen Z relies heavily on technological affordances and peer validation when making decisions. VR, social media, and mobile platforms constitute not just tools but environments where travel intentions are formed (Choirisa, 2022; Süli & Martyin-Csamangó, 2020; Choirisa & Rizkalla, 2021).

3. **Generational orientations and constraints:** Young adults favor experiential and health-oriented travel but remain constrained by financial and time limitations and demonstrate only partial alignment with sustainability values (Varadzhakova & Naydenov, 2024; Popşa, 2024; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Gonda & Rátz, 2023).

This body of research provides essential grounding for analyzing Hungarian Gen Z travel. It justifies the inclusion of latent workplace and lifestyle factors (benefits, preventive behaviors, satisfaction) in statistical models, while also situating motivational drivers such as quietness, nature, and wellness within a broader societal and digital context. Crucially, it demonstrates that Generation Z tourism cannot be understood in isolation but must be analyzed at the intersection of employment structures, lifestyle orientations, digital ecosystems, and external conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data source and sample

The empirical foundation of this study derives from a large-scale survey on workplace well-being and lifestyle practices conducted in Hungary in 2022. The survey was part of a broader research initiative mapping relationships between occupational factors, lifestyle orientations, and leisure activities in the Hungarian workforce. Sampling and recruitment procedures have been documented in detail elsewhere (Kinczel et al., 2025). The original dataset comprised 1,143 employees across multiple sectors, including services, manufacturing, education, and healthcare, recruited via employer networks, professional associations, and online platforms to ensure broad representation.

For the present analysis, only the Generation Z subsample was retained, defined as respondents aged 18–24 years at the time of data collection. This yielded 568 valid cases, representing 49.1% of the overall dataset. Gender distribution was balanced, with approximately equal proportions of men and women. All participants were employed either full-time or part-time. Focusing on this group enables targeted examination of how workplace well-being and preventive health factors shape travel behaviors among young employees entering the labor market.

Measures

The survey instrument included items capturing travel behaviors, workplace conditions, health orientations, and socio-demographic characteristics. For this study, three domains were analyzed: travel behaviors, motivational factors, and workplace well-being predictors.

Travel behaviors

Respondents indicated their frequency of participation in five tourism forms. Holiday tourism referred to leisure travel for rest, recreation, or nature exploration. Health tourism encompassed medical or rehabilitative trips to sanatoria, clinics, or treatment centers. Wellness tourism was defined as travel to destinations offering relaxation, spa, or thermal services. Event tourism included cultural, sports, and festival participation. Visiting tourism referred to trips to see friends or relatives. Frequencies were measured on a three-point ordinal scale: no participation, one to two trips per year, or monthly and more frequent travel.

Motivational factors

Destination attributes were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “not at all important,” 5 = “very important”). Items included proximity to nature, availability of wellness and water services, entertainment programs, sports facilities, food quality, and the presence of a quiet environment. These motivators were selected based on prior qualitative studies and pilot testing to reflect the most salient drivers of travel choice among young Hungarian adults.

Workplace well-being predictors

A distinctive contribution of this study is the integration of workplace well-being into models of tourism behavior. Nearly 200 survey indicators spanned occupational resources, stressors, lifestyle practices, and health perceptions. To identify latent structures, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the Generation Z subsample. Eleven factors were retained based on eigenvalues >1 and parallel analysis, jointly explaining 64% of total variance.

The factors covered a broad spectrum of workplace and lifestyle dimensions. F1 captured workplace benefits and incentives (meal vouchers, allowances, SZÉP card). F2 reflected availability of workplace services (stress management, relaxation options, preventive programs). F3 measured overall work satisfaction. F4 represented stress and preventive opportunities. F5 indexed attention to health (biological, emotional, mental). F6 captured preventive lifestyle behaviors (diet, exercise). F7 described leisure-time activity profiles. F8 reflected trade-offs in workplace preferences. F9 measured perceived usefulness of health interventions. F10 combined mixed lifestyle and resource items. F11 represented residual preventive health loadings. These factors were used as predictors in subsequent regressions.

Control variables

To ensure robust estimation, covariates included gender (0 = female, 1 = male), employment status within the 18–24 cohort (student worker vs. full-time employee), and self-rated health (five-point scale, higher scores = better health). These controls account for demographic and health-related influences beyond workplace well-being.

Statistical procedures

Analysis proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive statistics characterized travel frequencies and motivational ratings across the Generation Z sample. Second, EFA with principal axis factoring and oblique rotation extracted workplace well-being factors. Eleven factors were retained, explaining 63.8% of variance, providing a parsimonious representation of multidimensional predictors. Third, ordinal logistic regressions were fitted separately for each of the five tourism outcomes, with factor scores and covariates entered as predictors. The proportional odds assumption was tested and satisfied. Predicted probabilities were calculated to aid interpretation, estimating changes in the likelihood of monthly travel when predictors shifted from the 25th to the 75th percentile. Effects were expressed as percentage-point changes in probability of the highest travel frequency category. Multiple comparison correction was applied using the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure to control the false discovery rate. All analyses were conducted in R version 4.3.3 with the psych, MASS, dplyr, and ggplot2 packages.

Tables and figures

Table 1 reports frequencies of the five tourism types; Table 2 presents mean motivational ratings; Table 3 summarizes EFA results (eigenvalues, variance explained, dominant loadings); Table 4 displays significant regression predictors after adjustment.

Table 1. Motivational Ratings (1–5 Likert Scale) (Source: Own editing)

Motivation Factor	Mean	SD	Motivation Factor
Quiet environment	4.00	0.95	Quiet environment
Healthy and diverse food	3.85	0.97	Healthy and diverse food
Proximity to nature	3.75	1.01	Proximity to nature
Entertainment programs	3.66	1.10	Entertainment programs
Wellness services	3.52	1.06	Wellness services

Figures complement the tables:

Figure 1. Distribution of travel frequency among Generation Z (stacked bar chart).

Figure 2. Mean motivational ratings for destination attributes.

Figure 3. Variance explained by the eleven EFA factors.

Figure 4. Significant predictors of travel outcomes (forest plot with odds ratios and predicted probabilities).

Together, tables and figures provide a coherent overview of descriptive, structural, and inferential findings.

Distribution of travel frequency among Generation Z respondents is shown in Figure 1.

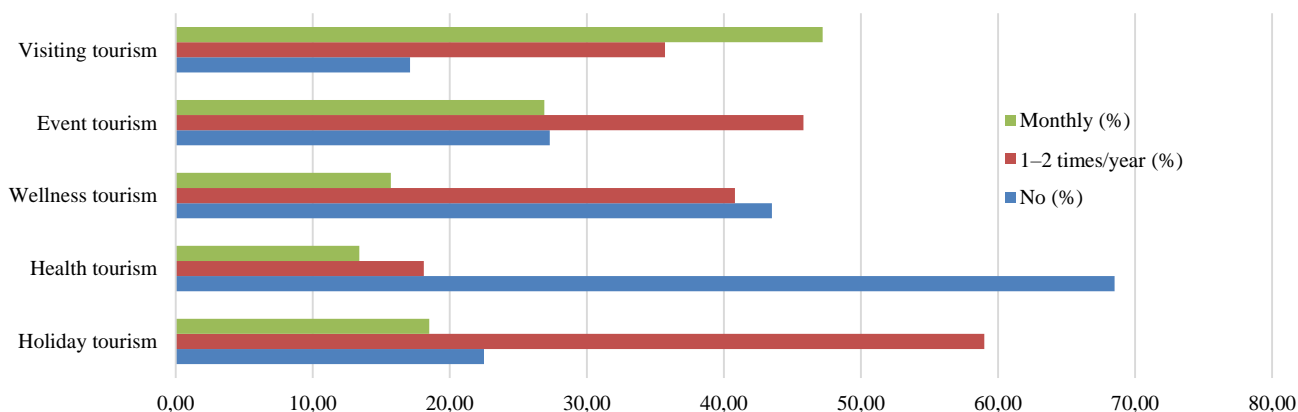


Figure 1. Distribution of Travel Frequency (%) among Generation Z (N = 568) (Source: Authors)

Methodological contribution

Methodologically, the study advances integration of workplace well-being and lifestyle predictors into tourism analysis. While prior research often examined workplace satisfaction, preventive health, or tourism motivations in isolation, few combined these domains systematically. EFA enabled condensation of extensive workplace indicators into interpretable latent constructs, while ordinal logistic regression with multiple testing correction ensured robust estimation for ordinal travel outcomes. By situating these methods in the Hungarian Generation Z context, the study provides novel insights into the multidimensional determinants of young adults' tourism engagement.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The first step in the analysis was to assess how frequently Hungarian Generation Z employees participated in different forms of tourism. The majority of respondents engaged in holiday tourism at least once per year, with 59.0% traveling once or twice annually and 18.5% reporting monthly participation. Health tourism, by contrast, was far less common: more than two-thirds (68.5%) did not engage in it at all, while only 13.4% reported monthly or more frequent trips. Wellness tourism occupied an intermediate position, with 43.5% reporting no participation, 40.8% reporting one or two visits per year, and 15.7% participating monthly. Event tourism was relatively popular, with 26.9% reporting monthly attendance at cultural, sports, or festival events. The most frequent form of travel was visiting tourism, where nearly half of respondents (47.2%) visited friends or relatives at least monthly. These differences are presented in Figure 1.

These descriptive results highlight two distinct patterns. First, holiday, event, and visiting tourism appear as mainstream practices within the Hungarian Generation Z cohort, with substantial participation at higher frequencies. Second, health and wellness tourism are more selective, appealing primarily to subgroups of health-conscious or prevention-oriented individuals.

Motivational factors

In addition to travel frequency, the study examined the motivational factors influencing destination choice. The mean ratings, shown in Table 2, reveal clear preferences for health-oriented and restorative attributes.

Table 2. Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis (Source: Own editing)

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	Factor
F1	8.24	12.1	12.1	F1
F2	5.23	7.7	19.8	F2
F3	4.71	6.9	26.7	F3
F4	4.86	7.2	33.9	F4
F5	4.20	6.2	40.1	F5
F6	3.70	5.4	45.5	F6
F7	3.00	4.4	49.9	F7
F8	3.00	4.4	54.3	F8
F9	2.53	3.7	58.0	F9
F10	1.51	2.2	60.3	F10

The most highly valued motivator was the availability of a quiet environment, with a mean rating of 4.00. Healthy and diverse food options ($M = 3.85$) and proximity to nature ($M = 3.75$) also ranked highly, underscoring the importance of restorative and lifestyle-aligned factors. Entertainment programs ($M = 3.66$) were also significant, particularly for event tourism. By contrast, wellness services ($M = 3.52$) and sports facilities ($M = 3.06$) received somewhat lower scores, suggesting that while relevant, they were not as universally valued as tranquility, food quality, or natural environments.

Taken together, these findings highlight a generational orientation toward health, balance, and restorative experiences, while still maintaining interest in social and entertainment opportunities. Findings are shown in Figure 2.

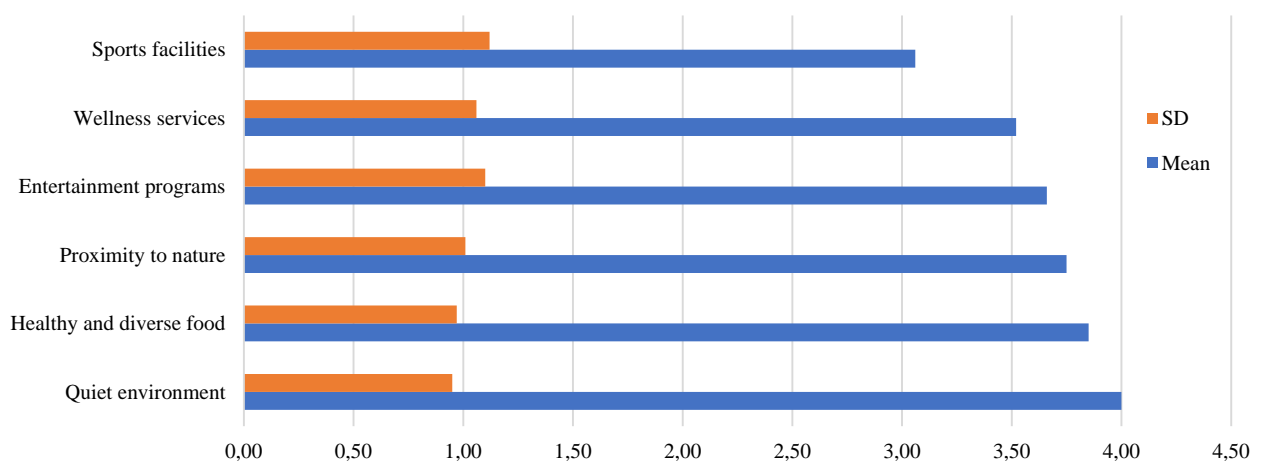


Figure 2. Mean Importance Ratings (1–5 scale) (Source: Authors)

Factor analysis

Given the large number of workplace and lifestyle indicators included in the survey, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify latent dimensions underlying workplace well-being. Eleven factors were retained, explaining 63.0% of the total variance. Table 3 summarizes the eigenvalues, explained variance, and cumulative contributions of each factor.

The dominant factors included workplace benefits and incentives (F1), workplace service availability (F2), overall work satisfaction (F3), stress and preventive options (F4), and health attention (F5). Preventive lifestyle behaviors formed F6, while leisure-time activity profiles constituted F7. Factors 8–11 captured trade-offs in workplace preferences, perceived usefulness of health interventions, mixed lifestyle and resources, and residual prevention loadings. The extraction of these eleven dimensions demonstrates the multidimensionality of workplace well-being and its potential links to leisure behavior. Variance changes by factor are shown in Figure 3.

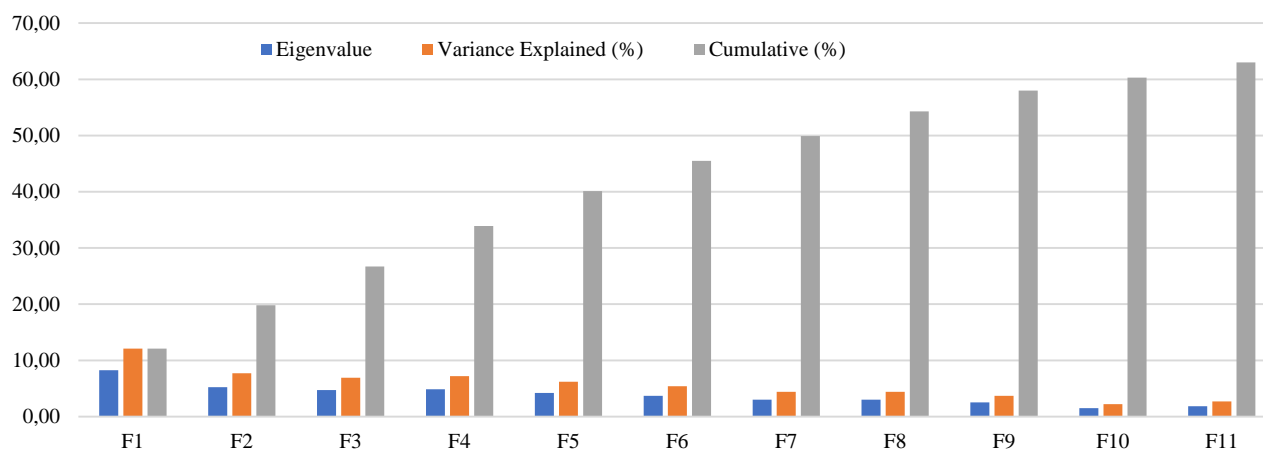


Figure 3. Variance Explained by Factors (Source: Authors)

Regression analysis

Ordinal logistic regressions were performed separately for each type of tourism, with the eleven factor scores and covariates as predictors. Table 3 presents only statistically significant associations after Benjamini–Hochberg correction, expressed in terms of odds ratios, confidence intervals, and predicted probability changes for moving from the 25th to 75th percentile of predictors. The regression results reveal several robust patterns. Preventive lifestyle behaviors (F6) consistently predicted higher frequencies of participation in holiday, health, wellness, and event tourism. This indicates that health-conscious Generation Z employees tend to integrate travel into their preventive lifestyles. Workplace benefits (F1) were also significant predictors of holiday, wellness, and event tourism, underlining the enabling role of organizational resources.

Table 3. Significant Predictors of Travel Frequency (Benjamini–Hochberg adjusted) (Source: Own editing)

Outcome	Factor	OR [95% CI]	ΔP (Q1→Q3)	Interpretation
Holiday	F1 (Benefits)	1.42 [1.17–1.72]	+7.9%	More workplace benefits increase holiday travel
Holiday	F6 (Prevention)	1.40 [1.13–1.73]	+6.4%	Preventive lifestyle habits promote holiday tourism
Health	F6 (Prevention)	2.53 [1.95–3.29]	+11.1%	Preventive lifestyle is the strongest predictor of health tourism
Health	F7 (Leisure)	0.73 [0.57–0.94]	−3.6%	Leisure-oriented profiles reduce health tourism
Wellness	F6 (Prevention)	2.14 [1.72–2.67]	+12.1%	Preventive behaviors strongly predict wellness travel
Wellness	F1 (Benefits)	1.31 [1.09–1.57]	+5.3%	Workplace benefits promote wellness participation
Event	F6 (Prevention)	1.32 [1.08–1.62]	+7.3%	Preventive orientation predicts event travel
Event	F1 (Benefits)	1.28 [1.07–1.54]	+7.8%	Workplace benefits linked to event tourism
Visiting	F10 (Mixed)	0.70 [0.56–0.88]	−10.2%	Mixed lifestyle factors negatively associated with visiting relatives
Visiting	F5 (Health attention)	1.45 [1.07–1.96]	+11.9%	Health-conscious youth more likely to visit relatives

Interestingly, some contrasting associations emerged. Leisure-time activity profiles (F7) were negatively associated with health tourism, suggesting that individuals with active leisure patterns may substitute recreational activities for medical or rehabilitative travel. Similarly, mixed lifestyle and resource factors (F10) were negatively related to visiting tourism, possibly reflecting time or financial constraints among certain subgroups. By contrast, attention to health (F5) was positively associated with visiting relatives, suggesting that socially and health-aware individuals maintain stronger relational ties through travel.

Summary of results

The findings can be summarized in three overarching insights. First, preventive health behaviors represent the strongest and most consistent predictor of travel engagement, spanning holiday, wellness, health, and event tourism. Generation Z respondents who invest in preventive lifestyles appear to extend these orientations into their travel practices. Second, workplace benefits act as facilitators of leisure-oriented travel, underscoring the role of institutional resources in broadening tourism opportunities. Third, divergence exists within the cohort: some individuals prioritize health-oriented and relational forms of travel, while others substitute leisure activities for formal health tourism.

These differences highlight the heterogeneity of Generation Z travel patterns and suggest that workplace and lifestyle factors operate in complex, multidirectional ways. Significant predictors of travel outcomes are presented in Figure 4.

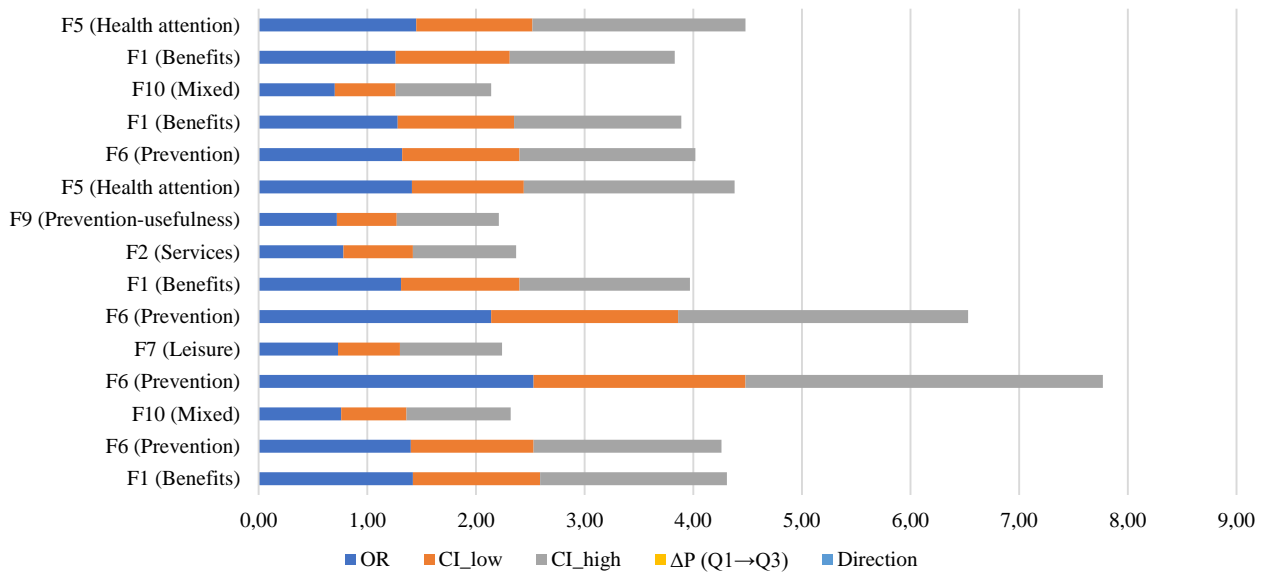


Figure 4. Significant Predictors of Travel Outcomes (Source: Authors)

Integrating workplace well-being with travel behavior

This study shows that travel among Hungarian Generation Z employees is shaped by structural as well as motivational factors. Preventive health behaviors consistently predicted engagement in multiple tourism forms, aligning with research that situates tourism within broader lifestyle orientations rather than treating it as isolated leisure (Voigt et al., 2010). For young workers committed to exercise, healthy eating, or stress management, tourism functions as an extension of preventive practice—a proactive investment in health rather than discretionary consumption.

Workplace benefits likewise facilitated travel. While typically examined in relation to satisfaction or retention (Leslie et al., 2021), the present findings demonstrate their translation into broader life opportunities. Subsidized vouchers, flexible leave, and wellness allowances expanded feasible tourism options. This supports Hungarian evidence on the SZÉP card's role in stimulating wellness travel (Vajta, 2012; Lövei & Kalmár, 2017). For early-career employees facing financial constraints, organizational support is a decisive enabler of holiday, wellness, and event tourism. The interplay of preventive lifestyles and organizational benefits reveals a dual pathway: internal motivation provides the orientation, while workplace resources supply the conditions for realization. Tourism thus emerges as a site where occupational and lifestyle domains converge, suggesting that well-being research must include travel as an outcome of workplace structures.

Generational heterogeneity

The results also highlight the diversity within Generation Z. While the cohort is often described as uniformly wellness-oriented and digitally savvy, patterns diverged across subgroups. Active leisure profiles were associated with lower likelihood of health tourism, implying that everyday recreational activity substitutes for rehabilitative travel. Mixed lifestyle and resource factors negatively related to visiting relatives, suggesting that competing demands in work or study reduce time for social travel. These contrasts echo Leslie et al. (2021), who distinguished Social Investors, Chill Worker Bees, and Go Getters as distinct workplace subtypes. Translated to tourism, Social Investors may emphasize relational or health-conscious travel, Chill Worker Bees comfort-oriented leisure, and Go Getters experiential maximization of workplace benefits. Recognizing such heterogeneity is essential for employers and tourism providers, who risk oversimplifying young employees if they adopt one-size-fits-all strategies.

Motivational orientation and restorative values

Motivational ratings indicated that tranquility, food quality, and proximity to nature are most valued, corroborating findings that quietness and authenticity underpin Gen Z tourism (Lo & Chang, 2020) and reinforcing Popşa's (2024) synthesis of experiential and personalized orientations. These preferences suggest a restorative function: travel provides recovery from workplace demands and alignment with lifestyle values.

The lower ratings of wellness services and sports facilities, despite preventive behaviors predicting participation, reveal differentiation within the cohort. Preventive individuals extend their habits into travel, but the group as a whole does not prioritize spa or sport facilities. This underscores heterogeneity, while suggesting that broad marketing should foreground quietness, food, and natural settings, with targeted promotion of wellness and sports toward health-conscious subsegments.

Workplace–travel nexus in international comparison

The Hungarian case parallels and diverges from regional patterns. In Bulgaria, Varadzhakova & Naydenov (2024) identified financial and time constraints as barriers to Gen Z travel, a pattern also evident in Hungary but mitigated by

workplace benefits. Hungary's distinct spa heritage (Michalkó & Rácz, 2011) embeds wellness and preventive tourism more deeply than in neighboring contexts. At the same time, Gonda & Rátz (2023) noted only moderate responsible tourism engagement among Hungarian Gen Z, consistent with this study's finding that sustainability was not a dominant motivator. The challenge lies in aligning preventive and restorative motivations with sustainable practices, for example through eco-certified spas or low-carbon nature travel.

Internationally, Robinson & Schänzel (2019) emphasized traveler-centric models in New Zealand, and Dwidienawati et al. (2025) in Indonesia linked well-being to resilience and social support. These parallels suggest that workplace and lifestyle determinants converge globally but are mediated by local labor structures and cultural traditions.

Digital mediation of travel decisions

Digital channels, though not part of the regression models, are critical mediators of Gen Z travel. Hungarian research shows the influence of social media on festival tourism (Süli & Martyin-Csamangó, 2020), while Indonesian studies demonstrate the role of VR and telepresence in shaping destination choice (Choirisa, 2022; Choirisa & Rizkalla, 2021). For Hungarian Gen Z, digital platforms likely bridge workplace benefits and travel practices—for instance, employer-provided wellness allowances amplified through influencer promotion of spas or events.

This resonates with Popşa's (2024) argument that personalization and influencer-driven decision-making characterize Gen Z consumption. Digital ecosystems also reinforce heterogeneity: wellness-oriented youth may follow health influencers, while others respond more to event promotion. Recognizing this mediation helps explain how structural predictors identified statistically are translated into lived choices.

Safety and resilience

Pandemic experiences continue to shape Gen Z travel. Czech evidence shows adaptation through individual travel and private accommodation (Rončák et al., 2021). Although Hungarian data were collected after restrictions lifted, residual safety concerns may underpin preferences for quiet, nature-based destinations.

These orientations align with workplace-related stress and preventive factors extracted in the EFA. Employers who provide resilience and stress management programs may indirectly support restorative travel by reducing the demand for compensatory coping. Workplace resilience thus extends beyond occupational health into lifestyle and tourism outcomes.

Theoretical implications

The findings contribute to theory in three ways. First, they extend workplace well-being research by positioning travel as an outcome variable, not just productivity or satisfaction (Taris & Schaufeli, 2018). Second, they reinforce a lifestyle-integrated perspective in which preventive behaviors operate as central determinants of travel, supporting Robinson & Schänzel's (2019) traveler-centric model. Third, they demonstrate heterogeneity within Generation Z, aligning with Leslie et al.'s (2021) typology and showing the need for segmentation in both theoretical and applied approaches.

Methodological implications

Methodologically, the integration of EFA and ordinal logistic regression proved effective for linking workplace well-being and travel. The factor structure confirmed the multidimensionality of workplace indicators, while proportional odds models with probability change estimates provided interpretable effect sizes.

This approach demonstrates how complex occupational and lifestyle variables can be distilled into meaningful predictors of tourism behavior. The focus on Generation Z within a nationally representative dataset further enhances precision by isolating generational dynamics while maintaining comparability within the broader workforce. This strengthens the relevance of findings for both tourism and occupational health research.

Practical implications

For employers, the results show that wellness allowances, vouchers, and flexible leave not only increase satisfaction but directly raise participation in tourism. Such benefits may thus serve as strategic tools for attracting and retaining young employees. For policymakers, the priority is aligning preventive and restorative travel with sustainability. Although Gen Z shows strong interest in health-oriented tourism, responsible travel commitment remains moderate (Gonda & Rátz, 2023).

Linking preventive health with eco-friendly offerings could increase alignment. For tourism providers, segmentation is critical. Broad campaigns should emphasize tranquility, food, and nature, while wellness products and event tourism can be targeted to preventive or experiential subgroups. Digital marketing, through influencers and immersive technologies, remains central for reaching this audience effectively. These findings carry direct implications for tourism marketing and human resource management practice. Tourism marketers should segment Generation Z audiences by preventive health orientation rather than assuming homogeneous preferences, positioning wellness and nature-based destinations as extensions of self-care routines while emphasizing tranquility, food quality, and natural proximity in broad campaigns.

For human resource managers, wellness allowances and subsidized travel vouchers represent strategic investments that extend beyond immediate employee satisfaction: they enable participation in restorative travel that reinforces preventive lifestyles, potentially reducing long-term health costs and enhancing retention among health-conscious young workers.

The integration of these insights suggests that tourism providers and employers could collaborate more systematically—for instance, through corporate wellness partnerships or curated destination packages aligned with preventive health values—to create mutually reinforcing ecosystems of workplace support and health-oriented travel.

Limitations and future research

The study's reliance on self-reported data introduces possible biases in health and lifestyle measures. Its cross-sectional design restricts causal inference. Furthermore, Hungary's spa heritage and specific labor context may limit generalizability.

Future research should employ longitudinal data to track changes in travel behavior as workplace structures evolve. Qualitative work could deepen understanding of heterogeneity within Gen Z, while cross-national comparisons in Central and Eastern Europe would clarify whether Hungarian patterns reflect broader regional trends. Integrating digital analytics such as social media trace data could further illuminate how workplace and lifestyle factors are mediated in practice.

DISCUSSION

Travel among Hungarian Generation Z employees is best understood as an integrated dimension of workplace well-being and lifestyle regulation. Preventive health behaviors and workplace benefits act as complementary drivers, while heterogeneity, digital mediation, and safety concerns provide crucial context. Collectively, these insights advance theoretical understanding and offer practical guidance for aligning workplace structures, health promotion, and tourism development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between workplace well-being and travel behavior among Hungarian Generation Z employees, drawing on a large-scale 2022 survey. By focusing on the 18–24 age cohort, the analysis provided insight into how young workers integrate occupational resources, preventive health orientations, and lifestyle preferences into tourism practices. Three findings stand out. First, preventive health behaviors consistently predicted engagement in holiday, wellness, health, and event tourism. Travel for this cohort operates as a continuation of self-care practices—exercise, balanced diet, and stress management—rather than as detached leisure. Second, workplace benefits emerged as critical enablers. Subsidized vouchers, wellness allowances, and flexible leave policies translated organizational resources into opportunities for restorative and experiential travel, bridging gaps created by financial or time constraints. Third, the study revealed heterogeneity within Generation Z. Some young employees extend preventive practices into travel, while others substitute daily recreation for health tourism or limit social travel due to competing commitments. This diversity cautions against assuming uniformity within the cohort.

Motivational patterns reinforced these conclusions. Quietness, food quality, and natural proximity were most highly valued, reflecting a restorative orientation consistent with preventive lifestyles. Wellness and sports facilities mattered primarily to specific subgroups, underscoring the need for segmentation in tourism development.

Theoretically, the study links workplace well-being and tourism within a unified framework, conceptualizing travel as an outcome of occupational and lifestyle orientations rather than a separate leisure domain. Methodologically, the integration of exploratory factor analysis and ordinal logistic regression provided a rigorous means of reducing complex workplace indicators to latent dimensions and modeling their influence on ordinal travel outcomes.

Practical implications span employers, policymakers, and tourism providers. For employers, wellness allowances and preventive programs extend beyond organizational boundaries, shaping lifestyle opportunities and enhancing retention potential. For policymakers, the challenge lies in aligning preventive and restorative travel with sustainability, ensuring that growth in wellness and event tourism supports environmental and social responsibility. For providers, segmentation strategies are essential: tranquility, food, and natural proximity can appeal broadly, while wellness packages and event products should be tailored to health-conscious or experiential subgroups.

Limitations remain. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, self-reports may introduce bias, and Hungary's spa heritage and labor market context constrain generalizability. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches to assess whether similar patterns emerge across Central and Eastern Europe, and how they evolve as Generation Z matures in the workforce. In sum, Hungarian Generation Z travel is best understood as a multidimensional practice at the intersection of work, health, and lifestyle. Preventive behaviors and workplace benefits jointly drive participation, while heterogeneity, digital mediation, and restorative motivations provide essential context.

Reframing travel as part of workplace well-being contributes to broader understanding of how young employees navigate contemporary pressures and opportunities, and offers actionable guidance for shaping organizational practices, policies, and tourism products attuned to the values of the newest generation in the workforce.

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