

For Generation X, it's all work and no kids, study finds

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When the term Gen X first emerged (thanks, Douglas Coupland) its members were characterized as slackers moaning about their McJobs. Now, a new study says, in fact, they're working so hard they're delaying or rejecting at least one major life experience: parenting.

According to research by the Center for Work-Life Policy in the United States, 43 per cent of women born between 1965 and 1978 - they're 33 to 46 today - have put off having kids or will have none. This is also true for 32 per cent of Gen X men.

Gen Xers should be at the prime of their lives and careers, stepping into crucial leadership roles and starting families, according to a release by the researchers. But that's not the reality - and it means they are the first generation who will not match their parents' living standards.

The reasons include extreme work schedules - nearly a third of high-earning Gen Xers work 60-plus hours a week - strong career ambitions of both genders, current economic challenges and a shift in societal norms, suggests the researchers.

The Work-Life authors suggest Gen X "might be called the 'wrong place, wrong time' generation."

Although they are considered the smallest generation, "they were hit by an economic triple whammy: college-related debt, multiple boom and bust cycles (including the 1987 stock market crash, occurring just as Gen X entered the work force), and the housing slump."

Add to that the fact that boomers are bucking retirement and working an average of nine years longer than anticipated, Gen Xers are "feeling stalled in their careers and dissatisfied with their rate of advancement." For many, that means it's not the best time to add a baby into the mix.

A similar trend to delaying mother is happening in Canada, too. Statistics Canada recently found that the number of older mothers with a pre-school child or children has more than doubled in the last 20 years.

It's not all bad news, though. The researchers are telling employers that Gen Xers offer "unexpected benefits" to the workplace.

"Having been front and center for every major economic crisis of the past 30 years, Xers possess exactly the sort of resilience that organizations need as they face an uncertain future."