

# GENERATION Z THROUGH THE PRISM OF MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract** The main theme of this article is to examine how the characteristics of Generation Z will be reflected when members of this generation are in leadership positions. The authors will touch on situations that have been experienced during growth and which have influenced the formation of the behavioural pattern of and established values of Generation Z. Emphasis will also be placed on communication and the way younger generations communicate. The authors of this article are interested in how this generation behaves in the workplace, while the central research problem is to evaluate how young people will behave in leadership positions. The aim of this article is to determine the characteristics and behaviour of Generation Z and how these characteristics and behavioural patterns will reflect in leadership positions. The exploratory method was used in the research, because it is still a relatively unexplored problem and it allows methodological deviations. A descriptive method was also used, on the basis of which the authors determined the current state or characteristics and already proven facts of Generation Z. The cognitions of the article highlight the discussion on how Generation Z will behave in leadership positions.

**Keywords:**

Generation Z,  
workforce,  
values,  
communication,  
leadership,  
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## 1 Introduction

Generation Z is the generation born after the abolition of communism and the superior growth of China in terms of the global economy and is considered to be the most ethnically diverse generation. Between 1995 and 2010, a new generation of young people was born, who will soon displace the previous generation of millennials in the labour market. Members of this generation are already quite active in the labour market and are also entering the global consumer scene. For the most popular generation, it can be said without hesitation that it is a generation with specific goals and perspectives in the field of education and career. They are very aware of how to distinguish and define success in their private life and success in the workplace (Gomez et al., 2020). This is a generation that, unlike previous ones, is most focused on goals and success and is ethically and morally oriented, but at the same time is very prone to depression and anxiety and under constant stress (Schenarts, 2020; Pichler et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the young generation is fighting for the equality of all and defending speech democracy (Pichler et al., 2021).

The consequences of the great financial crisis they witnessed put them on real ground. Given the fact that many of their parents may have lost their jobs and were pushed to the brink, Generation Z also has an interest in education. Enrollment in study programmes increased sharply among members of Generation Z. The great financial crisis and related factors have helped Generation Z to develop frameworks of behaviour and views on work (Tolstikova et al., 2021). They have also been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, which has caused many older people to lose their jobs – whether full-time or students – which has resulted in major financial deficits. It is not uncommon for them to value financial independence more than personal satisfaction (Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2018).

Generation Z's entry into the labour market will be rapid and profound, and their efficiency and multi-tasking capability will quickly prove useful in the workplace. Generation Z is the first generation not to know a world without the internet and mobile phones (Tolstikova et al., 2021). As technology has been laid in their cradle, so to speak, their interest in technology and innovations in this field is constantly growing. Modern technologies are capable and can be effectively included in any work or activity in order to facilitate the implementation of work or activities.

The emerging literature about Generation Z speaks a lot of about the characteristics of the generation, while there is a considerable lack of discussions on how Generation Z will fit into the working environment. In this context, the existing literature does not provide answers to how members of Generation Z will act and behave in leadership positions (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Janssen & Carradini, 2021). This question is interesting, as this generation brings with it new patterns of behaviour compared to previous generations (Nedelko et al., 2022). Therefore, through this draft research, the authors want to outline how members of Generation Z will act in leadership positions in organisations.

## **2 Theoretical background**

Older generations are gradually leaving their jobs, so companies will be increasingly looking to hire Generation Z. In order to introduce the new generation into organisations, it is inevitable that managers will have to understand the needs and behaviour of members of this generation in the workplace.

Looking through the prism of values, Generation Z is at the forefront of different values, therefore it makes sense to talk about different set of norms and values, which will be in the forefront with Generation Z (Schroth, 2019; Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). It is essential for managers to understand the system and the value of the values in that system. Among the most important values are money, empathy, career, tolerance, self-expression, mutual help and public recognition or position in both wider and narrower society (Tolstikova et al., 2021). It could be said that the system of values listed above is paradoxical, as it lists values that are contradictory. They value self-expression, which tends toward individualism, while at the same time valuing mutual help, which is a collectivist-oriented value. Important values include the digital environment, freedom (in the full sense of the word) and monetary success (Tolstikova et al., 2021).

Turning now to the specifics of Generation Z, its members represent a major recruitment challenge for organisations (Bulut & Maraba, 2021; Racołța-Paina & Irini, 2021). Unlike previous generations, young people are very picky when choosing a job and are not ready to accept every job. They are aware of their knowledge and skills, and they want to work in a company with which they will be able to identify. They tend to switch jobs because they believe there is always someone who will appreciate them more and pay them better for their efforts. Some

organisations have started to introduce career personalisation in order to employ the generation that is inevitable for all employers, as they are convinced that this will make it easier to attract members of Generation Z and keep them in the workplace. However, this solution contradicts the older generations, who have been established in companies for some time. The fact is that the salary for Generation Z is extremely important, however, other benefits are also important, such as a good work-life balance, etc. Thus, organisations should satisfy employees and offer them adequate pay and the other benefits required by Generation Z. It is therefore essential for employers to understand the behaviour and goals of members of Generation Z, as they want to be treated differently in the workplace than previous generations (Gomez et al., 2020).

Members of Generation Z may have problems in jobs that require more communication, as they are used to communicating through information and communication technology. They prefer to keep relationships and communication behind the walls of the worldwide web (Schroth, 2019). Such a way of communication may be questionable in the workplace, as many problems need to be solved live, i.e. face to face. As a result, Generation Z may lack communication skills on both the verbal and non-verbal side.

Regardless of the form of the problem, young people in companies will prefer to use wire communication, hence managers should gradually introduce and present other method of in-company communication and state the reasons why communication through information and communication technologies is not suitable for use (Schenarts, 2020; Tolstikova et al., 2021). It is also important that managers properly present the forms of formal and informal communication and when is the right time to use them. Emphasis should be placed on informal communication, where it is necessary to properly explain which components are inappropriate and illegal. In written communication, it is necessary to clarify when and how uppercase and lowercase letters are used, and it is necessary to emphasise the sense of using emoticons, which young people use almost instead of words.

It makes sense that members of Generation Z prefer to work in organisations whose values and behaviour are in line with that of their private lives, in terms of ethics, morals and social responsibility (Bulut & Maraba, 2021). Adolescents will remain loyal to a company that provides adequate pay and job security. It is teamwork that

may cause them problems, as they are basically not team-oriented and prefer individual work, as they like to be independent in their work (Gomez et al., 2020).

### **3 Generation z in organisations**

Generation Z is still largely being educated and is therefore only just entering the labour market. Members of this generation are convinced that they have inherited values such as loyalty, responsibility and goal-orientation from their parents, however, they are nevertheless very different from previous generations (Schroth, 2019). Intergenerational differences in organisations can be poorly accepted, but Generation Z undoubtedly brings them to companies, therefore their arrival is a big challenge for human resources management departments.

As members of Generation Z are entering into organisations, sooner or later they will also start to work in managerial positions (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Therefore, an important management challenge is how to successfully integrate Generation Z into leadership positions and balance possible differences that may occur with the different leadership preferences of this generation.

As previously mentioned, Generation Z is an extremely educated generation that successfully implements modern technology to its advantage and at the same time uses it as the main communication channel (Janssen & Carradini, 2021). Due to the work experience gained by members of this generation when studying, they are extremely self-confident and consequently also rank high in companies. They want to be in management positions because they find it harder to transfer authority and they think it makes sense that they are sufficiently experienced and suitable candidates for management positions, given their work experience and level of education. Since members of Generation Z are creative and see solutions to problems, they work best when they are alone in the workplace.

According to current data, 67% percent of the members of Generation Z want their careers to have a greater and more significant impact on the world, which reflects the fact that they want to assert themselves in higher positions in organisations. They want to reach this status through social networks, and the consequence of this desire is the modern profession of an influential person. They are careful when managing their private and brand profiles. A special characteristic of members of Generation

Z is that they feel obliged to settle their duties and debts. They are independent and constantly looking for ways to prove themselves (Schenarts, 2020).

#### **4 Discussion**

The authors of this paper would like to emphasise that very little is known about Generation Z and it is almost impossible to merge its members into one mould. The fact is that Generation Z represents a new workforce that will replace the older generations, and it is one on which the labour market depends. Since little is known about the current generation, this is a big problem for managers, as they will have a hard time figuring out how to please and keep this extremely ambitious and capable, yet at the same time demanding, generation in companies. It makes sense that managers are expected to start working on developing a Generation Z employment strategy and motivators to retain such young employees.

This is a generation that expects good pay from employers, the possibility of promotion, the relationship between work and private life, trust and job security. All these expectations seem reasonable given the current situation and the time in which the pace of life is accelerating. However, problems may arise when a large number of individuals think they deserve such working conditions because they have a high opinion of themselves, while they are extremely selfish (Schenarts, 2020). The question therefore arises as to whether, as managers or leaders, members of Generation Z will meet the expectations of their subordinates in the same way they do towards employers and organisations. It is questionable whether in the roles of superiors, members of this generation will meet the current expected needs and desires of subordinates.

Based on the findings to date in relation to the characteristics of Generation Z, it can be affirmed that, on the one hand they most likely have good organisational and managerial competencies and would be good leaders in this regard, while on the other, they have no sense of fellow human beings and are selfish, as they would most likely not be well received by subordinates (Bencsik et al., 2021; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Since members of this generation are impatient, they want to rise to leadership positions in an extremely fast time, which can hinder them.

The negative qualities listed above, such as impatience, selfishness, excessive self-confidence and a great desire to advance, are most often a burning issue in leadership positions. The problem is not only non-acceptance by employees, but also in terms of leadership and management. Every manager needs to be confident, albeit within normal limits, as excessive self-confidence can blind a person. Selfishness can be a problem especially when negotiating, either with business partners or with employees. Selfishness is the enemy of drive, as such a manager would find it difficult to compromise. Doing business and solving problems can quickly weaken a company's business. Managers must take time to tackle some of the problems in companies and identify and weigh up all the possibilities to solve the problem without grabbing the first fairly favourable solution.

Another issue to this end is communication, which is inevitable in managerial positions and must be as clear and formal as possible, and often also face to face. As previously mentioned, Generation Z prefers to avoid live communication. The COVID-19 crisis has also helped members of this generation to them escape from direct communication, as a result of which people lost physical contact for a long time and only socialised via the internet or classic phone calls, which further paralysed their communication skills.

## **5 Conclusions**

The main aim of this draft paper was to highlight the issue of how members of Generation Z will act and behave when they are in managerial positions. Based on the authors' research, it can be emphasised that Generation Z is extremely demanding. Previous generations were happy to have a job, whereas members of Generation Z do not value jobs and tend to change jobs quickly if the working conditions do not suit them. It can be concluded that Generation Z, like every generation, has both positive and negative characteristics. Ingenuity and creativity are welcome in leadership, while research to date shows that these characteristics are not outlined as very important for the considered generation. This could hamper successful leadership. Given the above findings, it is right to ask whether this new generation is really ready to take over the highest hierarchical levels in organisations. This draft paper offers a next logical research step, i.e. to empirically examine how the characteristics of Generation Z relate to their characteristic leadership style.

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