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Declaration Page

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Project Submission Sheet

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AI Acknowledgement Supplement

[Dissertation]
[Understanding the differences in work-related behaviours and expectations between Generation Y and Generation Z employees: An exploration of values, motivations, and behavioural drivers in the contemporary workplace.]

Your Name/Student Number	Course	Date
Joanna Kempa / 23141832	MBA23	25/08/2025

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Maria Batishcheva. Her support kept me focused, encouraged me to think critically, and helped me maintain high academic standards throughout the process.

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Dissertation

Abstract

This study examines the workplace experiences, values, and expectations of two generational cohorts: Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Zoomers). It is focusing on motivation, communication, leadership, career growth, and intergenerational collaboration. Workplace demographics are shifting. This study asks whether cohorts differ in meaningful ways and how those differences might shape management approaches.

Theories such as Generational Cohort Theory (Mannheim, 1952; Smola and Sutton, 2002), Schwartz's Value Theory (1992), and Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) underpin this study. A qualitative survey design was employed, combining open-ended responses analysed thematically with closed items summarised descriptively. The effective sample comprised Generation Y (n = 22) and Generation Z (n = 15). The sample included 52 participants and allowed for comparison between Generations Y and Z. Thematic analysis identified trends in open responses, while descriptive statistics summarized closed questions.

The results indicate distinct patterns within each generation. Generation Z demonstrates a preference for autonomy and prompt feedback, whereas Millennials prioritize structured environments and sustained career advancement. Nevertheless, the study identifies substantial similarities between the cohorts. Both generations emphasize the importance of purposeful work, opportunities for professional development, and fair leadership practices. These findings challenge prevailing assumptions regarding generational conflict and underscore a high degree of intergenerational openness and collaboration.

These findings advance the critique of reductive generational stereotypes. The results indicate, that workplace initiatives should prioritize shared values and individual circumstances rather than rigid age-based classifications. The report recommends implementing adaptable communication methods, comprehensive leadership development programs, and customized career progression strategies, that account for generational diversity.

Although the sample size is limited, this study provides detailed insights into generational distinctions in the workplace. It offers specific recommendations for enhancing the management of multigenerational teams.

1. Introduction

The contemporary workplace is experiencing significant transformation due to the convergence of multiple generations, each characterized by distinct expectations, values, and approaches to work. Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Zoomers) now constitute the core of the workforce. This demographic shift presents both challenges and opportunities for organizations.

Although both generations demonstrate digital fluency and value workplace flexibility, their distinct formative experiences under varying economic, social, and technological contexts have resulted in differing perspectives on communication, leadership, collaboration, and career development.

Understanding these generational dynamics is crucial for modern organisations and is aiming to attract, retain, and engage new talents. Misalignment between generational preferences can contribute to miscommunication, as well as reduced productivity, and high employee turnover.
Millennials tend to value professional aspects like purpose-driven work, continuous feedback, and inclusive leadership, whereas Generation Z often seeks autonomy, job stability, and frequent digital interaction. These differences are not only anecdotal as we may think but reflect deeper behavioural and motivational patterns. We could say, that they are shaped by life-stage experiences and broader socio-economic forces.

Although existing research has explored generational traits, much of it remains descriptive or focused on either Generation Y or Z in isolation. There is limited empirical insight into how these generations interact within the same organisational context, and how their work values and behaviours affect team dynamics, learning preferences, and communication norms. Moreover, there is a lack of integrative studies, that apply theoretical frameworks to explain why these differences exist and how they can be addressed in practice.

This dissertation examines four interrelated constructs motivation, communication, feedback, and collaboration as central dimensions of workplace behaviour. Engagement, productivity, and retention are directly shaped by these constructs. They offer a clear way to compare Generation Y with Generation Z.
The contribution of this study lies in addressing a current gap in the literature: while much research describes generational traits in isolation, few studies integrate theory to provide a comparative, actionable perspective. This study connects generational differences with key theories: Generational Cohort Theory, Schwartz's Value Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. It offers an academic contribution and practical

recommendations to help managers adapt leadership, communication, and development for multigenerational teams.

Problem Statement

This dissertation addresses a key gap in the literature by critically examining how Generation Y and Generation Z differ in terms of three key aspects
1. work values,
2. communication styles, and
3. motivational drivers.

While numerous studies acknowledge generational diversity in the workplace, few offer a comparative analysis grounded in theory and with practical relevance for organisational leaders. Understanding these differences is essential for designing inclusive management strategies, especially in a post-pandemic work environment marked by hybrid teams, rapid digitalisation, and rising employee expectations.

Research Aim

This study compares the work behaviours and expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z. It looks at their values and communication preferences, and how these shape workplace interactions and outcomes.

Methodological Overview

To address aims of this paper, the research will adopt a qualitative survey data. This design allows for both breadth and depth in understanding generational behaviours. It will examine patterns in communication preferences, learning styles, and motivational priorities. Participants will be drawn from a range of industries, targeting professionals aged 25–40 (Gen Y) and 18–24 (Gen Z), ensuring demographic and contextual relevance.

Research Question(s):

Understanding the differences in work-related behaviours and expectations between Generation Y and Generation Z employees: An exploration of values, motivations, and behavioural drivers in the contemporary workplace.

Research questions and corresponding objectives

RQ1. What defines the work styles of Generations Y and Z?

Objective 1.1: To explore and contrast the work-related values, individual characteristics, career orientations, and communication preferences of Generation Y and Generation Z employees.

Objective 2.1: To analyse how each generation's communication preferences such as face-to-face interaction, digital verbal exchange, and written digital communication affect their workplace behaviour.

Objective 3.1: To explore how Generation Y and Generation Z use workplace technology differently. It also looks at how each group prefers to develop job-related skills, such as through self-directed study, collaboration, or digital training tools.

RQ2. How do these generations differ in their perception of teamwork and collaboration?

Objective 2.1: To evaluate how Generation Y and Z employees conceptualise effective teamwork and collaboration, focusing on their approaches to group interaction, task-sharing, and team communication.

Objective 2.2 : To assess how variations in communication styles, leadership expectations, and feedback-seeking behaviours between Generation Y and Generation Z influence team interaction processes and overall team performance.

Objective 2.3 : To explore whether digital collaboration tools are perceived differently by Gen Y and Z in terms of trust, engagement, and productivity.

RQ3. How do socio-cultural, educational, and economic factors shape the work motivations, attitudes, and expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z employees?

Objective 3.1: To explore how Generation Y and Generation Z use workplace technology differently. It also looks at how each group prefers to develop job-related skills, such as through self-directed study, collaboration, or digital training tools.

Objective 3.2: To investigate how differences in education systems (e.g. emphasis on collaboration, digital literacy, and individual achievement) and cultural exposure (e.g. globalisation, diversity, and social media influence) have shaped the career expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z employees.

Objective 3.3: To examine whether awareness of global social and environmental issues shapes the career choices and behaviours of Generation Y and Generation Z. Particular attention is given to ethics, social responsibility, and organisational loyalty.

2. Literature Review

Generational Cohorts in the Workforce

Research widely makes suggestions, that Generation Y and Generation Z differ in how they perceive work, however there is limited agreement on why these differences occur. For instance, (Twenge, 2023) suggests that Gen Z tends to be pragmatic and risk-averse, likely shaped by economic and social instability in their formative years. Another study instead highlights their wish for meaningful work and personal growth traits often linked to Millennials as well. This raises questions whether the differences are generational or simply developmental.

(Mannheim, 1952) Generational Cohort Theory suggests, that generational behaviour is shaped by shared historical and social events. (Twenge, 2017) build his theory on this idea by examining how such formative experiences influence attitudes and behaviours across different generational groups in the workplace. However, (Dimock, 2019) aware against over-relying on arbitrary cut-off years, and suggests, that differences within generations may be as significant as those between them. This draws attention to a methodological gap in the literature due to many research papers generalise results without considering life-stage or socioeconomic factors. It is important to notice, that there is a lack of longitudinal research to separate all generational traits from age or career-stage effects.

Comparing Generational Theories

Schwartz's Value Theory (1992) is a strong framework for studying motivation across cultures and age groups. When applied to generations, it is best understood alongside broader theories such as Mannheim's and the Strauss–Howe Generational Theory (Strauss & Howe, 1992). Schwartz's model identifies ten (10) universal human values, like for example: self-direction, security, conformity, and achievement. These values are in turn organized into higher-order categories. This order clarify the motivations underlying individual and group behaviours. Although originating from psychological point of view, the theory has also been applied in generational studies to demonstrate how dominant values shift across cohorts (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Now, if we take a look at Mannheim's seminal work, that has introduced the concept of generational consciousness. We can notice positing, that cohorts are socially constructed through shared historical experiences, that shape their worldview. In comparison to Schwartz (who classifies a stable motivational values), Mannheim adopts a sociological and dynamic perspective. Generations are formed not solely by birth year but through exposure to pivotal socio-political events during their adolescence years and experiences. This framework explains why individuals born only a few years apart may exhibit completely different workplace expectations, particularly during periods of technological or cultural transformation.

The Strauss–Howe model adds another layer by proposing recurring generational archetypes on an 80–100 year cycle, categorising cohorts such as Millennials (as "Heroes") and Gen Z (as "Artists") within a historical and cultural rhythm (Strauss & Howe, 1992). While this model has gained popularity in business and education for its predictive elements, it has been criticised for its determinism and lack of empirical

rigour (Aziz, et al., 2018). This view offers useful cultural narratives, that align loosely with the motivational themes found in Schwartz's values. For instance, Gen Z's reported emphasis on security and benevolence aligns with their "adaptive" role in Strauss–Howe's framework.

When these theories are compared, Schwartz's framework is most useful for identifying values that shape decision-making and workplace preferences. Mannheim and Strauss–Howe instead add socio-historical context, showing how values play out differently across generations. This dissertation will show, that Schwartz's model offers the most applicable lens for analysing individual value-based workplace expectations, while insights from (Mannheim, 1952) and Strauss–Howe can help contextualise generational traits observed in the findings section.

Work Values and Motivational Drivers

In many studies we can find a general agreement, that Millennials value purpose driven and autonomous opportunities, while Gen Z prioritises job security, flexibility, and mental well-being. For example, (Fuchs, et al., 2024) aligns Millennials with Schwartz's values of self-direction and universalism, whereas (Widodo & Maghfuriyah, 2024) associate Gen Z with tradition and security. (Pasko, et al., 2020) dares to challenge this binary by showing, that both generations rank salary and career growth among their top priorities, that in-turn indicate more similarity than difference.
On the other hand Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) helps explain this tension. It describes how motivation leads to better performance (expectancy), performance leads to rewards (instrumentality) and, that those rewards are valued (valence). It highlights how perceived links between effort, outcome, and reward shape work-related behaviour and decision-making (Vroom, 1964). (Dharta, et al., 2024) identified Gen Z to be extremely reward-driven while (Schroth, 2019) contends, that Millennials are inherently motivated by progress. Other research (such as (Twenge, 2023)) show, that Gen Z likewise searches for significant influence. This paradox implies, that motivating differences are not fixed but rather show a context-dependent relationship.. Research often simplifies motivational profiles, ignoring how organisational culture, reward systems, or industry type may influence generational behaviours.

Communication Preferences

Generational preferences in communication are a consistent theme, though findings diverge. (Dolot, 2018)suggests Millennials favour a mix of digital and face-to-face interaction, valuing relationship-building and collaborative dialogue. In contrast, (McCrindle & Fell, 2019) finds, that Generation Z prefers visually oriented digital communication such as emojis, memes, and tools like Slack, which aligns with their preference for autonomy, speed, and efficiency in workplace interactions. (McKeever, et al., 2021) is presenting a more nuanced view and argues, that Gen Z still values human connection, particularly when seeking feedback or support. This contrasts with (Hysa, 2016), who portray Gen Z as entirely comfortable with a non-verbal interaction. These inconsistencies suggest an oversimplification in some generational studies and underline the need for research around hybrid communication

preferences. This is need as only few studies examine how generational communication styles evolves in hybrid or remote work settings, which is an increasingly relevant context post-COVID.

Attitudes Toward Teamwork

Many people say, that working together is a core value for Millennials. (Twenge, 2017) and (Fuchs, et al., 2024) say, that they are open to everyone who is focused on relationships, and who is driven by feedback. According to (Vieira & Santos, 2024), Gen Z is practical and individualistic bunch of people, and they like clear roles and digital coordination. According to (Pefanis Schlee, et al., 2020), Gen Z's preference for independence is not about avoiding teamwork. Instead, they worry about not contributing equally, particularly in school or work environments.
This idea fits well with "Self-Determination Theory", which says, that people are motivated by how much their actions are self-motivated and self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It shows, that Gen Z wants independence and competence, but not at the cost of being connected to others. So, looking at their teamwork only through the lens of efficiency might miss their psychological needs. Some people think, that Gen Z doesn't care about working together, while others think, that they are redefining what it means to work together (for example, in a modular, digital, or non-hierarchical way).

Learning and Skill Development

Millennials are often described as structured learners who value mentorship and formal training over a self-directed methods of gaining new skills (Fuchs, et al., 2024). In contrast, (Janssen, 2020) and (McCrindle & Fell, 2019) find, that Gen Z prefers informal, on-demand learning through platforms like YouTube and LinkedIn Learning.
Yet, (Dolot, 2018) reports, that Gen Z still values guidance in the early stages of a role, suggesting their preference is not for autonomy alone but for *control over the learning process*. This supports Vroom's model, where perceived effort-to-reward links shape motivation. If Gen Z sees traditional training as slow or irrelevant, they will disengage not due to generational defiance, but because of an unfavourable expectancy calculation. Many corporate training programmes remain designed around Millennial preferences, risking disengagement from Gen Z employees who expect mobile-first, bite-sized, personalised learning content.

Organisational Loyalty and Social Expectations

Most experts agree, that both generations are less loyal to their organisations than Gen X or Boomers. (Twenge, 2017) say, that this is a change in culture, that will last for an extended period of time. (Chillakuri, 2020) says, that Gen Z is disloyal and quick to change jobs, but (Fuchs, et al., 2024) say, that Gen Z is loyal as long as employers follow ethical, inclusive, and socially responsible practices.
The above opinion fits well with Schwartz's theory, which says, that there are ten universal human values, that guide people's behaviour across cultures:
- self-direction,

-stimulation,
-hedonism,
-achievement,
-power,
-security,
-conformity,
-tradition,
-benevolence,
-and universalism.
Values like universalism and benevolence can affect how people feel about their jobs. At first glance, Gen Z can seem purely business-focused. In reality, their loyalty is shown differently. Instead of staying with one employer for years, they align themselves with organisations whose purpose matches their own values.

In general, the literature gives us a lot of information about how different generations behave at work, but it's not all in one place. There isn't much empirical work, that combines these theories to give explanatory insight, not just descriptive insight. However, theories like Generational Cohort Theory, Schwartz's Value Theory, and Expectancy Theory can be also very useful.
There are still a few contradictions and gaps:
• Are the differences between Gen Y and Z caused by their age, their generation, or the situation?
• How do hybrid and remote work settings change the traits of different generations?
• Why do patterns of motivation and loyalty change even within the same group?
This dissertation tries to fill in these gaps by giving a theory-driven, mixed-methods look at the expectations of Millennials and Gen Z in the workplace. It looks at not only what their preferences are, but also why they come up and what is most important - how organisations can respond.

Integrated Conceptual Model

This dissertation draws together three key theoretical perspectives to explain how generational differences translate into workplace behaviours. The model integrates contextual influences, motivational mechanisms, and behavioural outcomes:

1. **Contexts** – Following Mannheim's Generational Cohort Theory (1952) and Smola & Sutton (2002), generational values and behaviours are shaped by formative experiences such as education systems, technological environments, and economic conditions. For example, Millennials' entry into the labour market during the 2008 financial crisis contrasts with Gen Z's early career development amid COVID-19 and digital hyperconnectivity.
2. **Mechanisms** – Schwartz's Value Theory (1992) highlights the underlying motivational values (e.g., self-direction, security, benevolence), that orient individuals toward particular behaviours. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) explains how motivation is enacted through expectancy (effort → performance),

instrumentality (performance → rewards), and valence (the subjective value of rewards). These mechanisms clarify why similar contexts may produce divergent workplace expectations.

3. **Outcomes** – Together, contexts and mechanisms shape preferences in four workplace constructs central to this study: **motivation, communication/feedback, collaboration/teamwork, and career orientation.** These constructs influence how employees engage with leadership, interact with colleagues, and pursue professional development.

This framework not only anchors the analysis but also ensures a coherent thread linking the Literature Review, Findings, and Discussion.

Generational Characteristics: A Comparative and Critical Perspective

Although Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z share many surface-level similarities such as digital proficiency and a desire for flexibility their formative experiences have led to significant differences in work values, career expectations, communication preferences, and motivational drivers. A closer analysis, grounded in Generational Cohort Theory (Mannheim, 1952), reveals how historical and social, and economic events have shaped these generations in few different dimensions. This section critically examines those differences and contradictions, linking them to this study's central research questions particularly RQ1 (work styles) and RQ3 (motivational drivers shaped by socio-cultural context).

Workplace Values and Career Priorities

Many scholars are in mutual agreement, that Millennials place strong emphasis on purpose, career development, and work–life balance (Schroth, 2019) and (Twenge, 2017). According to Schwartz's Value Theory (1992), these align with values such as self-direction, universalism, and achievement. In contrast, Generation Z is often described as more pragmatic, prioritising job security, mental well-being, and clear career pathways values associated with security, conformity, and tradition (Dolot, 2018) (Dharta, et al., 2024).

However, this distinction is not universally supported. For example, (Lowe, et al., 2018) found, that salary remains a strong motivator across both generations, while (Pasko, et al., 2020) suggest, that Millennials prioritise job satisfaction and purpose over financial compensation. Meanwhile, (Stiglbauer, et al., 2022) report, that Gen Z may in fact place *more* importance on salary than their predecessors, challenging assumptions about their prioritisation of non-financial benefits. While Gen Z is often labelled as less materialistic, empirical findings indicate, that their financial motivations may be stronger than typically assumed particularly in contexts of economic instability.

Learning, Feedback, and Progression

Analysing features of "Learning, Feedback, and Progression" preferences among both groups we can read, that Millennials generally prefer structured career progression supported by mentorship and formal feedback (Fuchs, et al., 2024), reflecting a desire for clarity and direction in their long-term goals. Growing during the 2008 financial crisis heightened their appreciation for stability, despite their idealism around purpose (Twenge, 2017). By contrast, Gen Z is more inclined toward self-directed learning and short-term gains. Platforms such as MOOCs, YouTube, and LinkedIn Learning have shaped their expectations for flexible, immediate, and on-demand development (Hysa, 2016) (McCrindle & Fell, 2019). It is safe to agree, that both generations embrace continuous learning, Gen Z's approach is more individualised and driven by the technology. They are expecting more frequent and informal feedback rather than following traditional hierarchies or long-term promotion paths (Zelma, 2024). Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) is supporting this view.

Millennials' preference for intrinsic rewards (autonomy and/or growth) aligns with high-valence outcomes in Vroom's model, while in comparison Gen Z may place greater emphasis on the expectancy-instrumentality link seeking visible rewards for their effort.

Work Styles and Communication Preferences

Another important difference is how people communicate with each other. Millennials, who started working when email and instant messaging were only becoming popular, tend to mix digital and face-to-face communication and like working in groups where they can give and get feedback (Dolot, 2018) (Twenge, 2017). Gen Z, on the other hand, prefers visual-first, asynchronous communication through platforms like Slack, emojis, or short videos. These methods let people do more than one thing at once and make quick decisions (McCrindle & Fell, 2019).

It is worth to notice, that some studies raised doubt on the idea, that Gen Z doesn't want to interact with other people. (McKeever, et al., 2021) say, that Gen Z likes personalised communication, especially when it includes feedback or recognition.

This indicates a gap in the literature, as Generation Z's preference for technology-mediated communication is frequently mischaracterized as emotional disengagement. Organizations should implement a combination of communication strategies, that address the efficiency-oriented preferences of Generation Z and the face-to-face interaction favoured by Millennials, particularly in intergenerational workplace contexts.

Attitudes Toward Employment and Loyalty

It is often seen, that people think, that Millennials are only loyal to companies, that offer them chances to grow and are in line with their values (Easton & Steyn, 2022), and Gen

Z group is perceived as less loyal or job-hopping because they have high expectations and are always on the move (Chillakuri, 2020). Yet (Fuchs, et al., 2024) report, that Gen Z can show strong organisational loyalty when their values are respected and when they feel support from the management. It's interesting to note, that 39% of Gen Z respondents in, that study said they would rather stay with the same employer for a long time, which goes against the stereotype of being disloyal. Gen Z may not be disloyal, but they are selective about who they work for. They tend to pick companies, that support diversity, flexibility, and making a difference in the world. This fits with Schwartz's values of kindness and universalism, which are now deeply ingrained in Gen Z's sense of self (Dharta, et al., 2024).

Social Identity, Diversity, and Global Outlook

Both generations are values-driven, but they express these values differently. Millennials tend to support corporate social responsibility as well as inclusion and diversity as guiding principles (Twenge, 2017), whereas Gen Z demands visible, authentic action on issues like diversity, equity, and environmental responsibility (McCrindle & Fell, 2019).
Generation Z's identity is global, mobile, and digitally mediated. They are more likely to seek work environments, that allow them to express their identity, collaborate with diverse peers, and shift between real and virtual professional spaces (Zarczynska-Dobiesz & Chomatowska, 2014). (Dharta, et al., 2024) says, that about 91% of group prioritise fair treatment in hiring and leadership (Dharta, et al., 2024), however much of the existing literature is still catching up with Gen Z's integrated identity model. Also noticing, that work, values, social causes, and digital fluency are inseparable.

Conclusion

While Generation Y and Generation Z may share some traits like for example a digital orientation, their differences are far more profound when examined through the lens of theory and context. Millennials are motivated by growth, recognition, and purpose, where's Gen Z seeks authenticity, agility, and immediate impact. These generational characteristics are not just cultural preferences but rather they are reflections of structural change in the economy, technology, and society.
By critically applying Generational Cohort Theory, Schwartz's Value Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory, this study positions these differences within a coherent analytical framework, linking them clearly the research questions (1&3). Understanding these nuances is essential for organisations aiming to foster intergenerational cohesion and future-ready leadership strategies.

What Defines the Work Styles of Generations Y and Z?

The work styles of Generations Y and Z reflect more than their shared digital fluency; they are shaped by distinct social conditions and developmental influences. Although both cohorts embrace technology and demand adaptability in the workplace, they differ significantly in how they engage with leadership, learning, collaboration, and goal-setting. This section offers a focused, comparative analysis of these generational styles

without repeating previously explored content on motivation, communication, or values.

Decision-Making and Goal Orientation

One big difference between the two groups is how they set and work towards their goals. Millennials often think about the long term results and prefer jobs, that help them grow. They often make professional choices based on their targets and how well they fit with the culture of the organisation (Twenge, 2017). Gen Z, on the other hand, tends to think more about short-term goals and outcomes. They like clear goals and quick progress, and they don't like things, that aren't clear in their daily work (Dharta, et al., 2024).

Millennials are generally okay with changing goals and getting feedback on their work, but Gen Z wants clear deliverables, specific performance indicators, and quick reinforcement. This is particularly true in teams, where Gen Z prefers to divide tasks into smaller parts rather than work together in a more flexible way, which is what Millennials like to do.

The difference may not just be in values, but also in how Gen Z grew up using agile project systems and real-time performance tracking, which in turn have shaped their expectations for quick, organised work.

Task Ownership and Independence

Both cohorts value autonomy, but they differ in how they exercise it. Millennials often view autonomy as the ability to explore new ideas, exercise creative problem-solving, and contribute to broader organisational goals (Pasko, et al., 2020). Gen Z interprets autonomy more narrowly, favouring independence from micromanagement and the ability to complete tasks efficiently and on their own terms.

Unlike Millennials, who frequently seek collaborative brainstorming and shared responsibility, Gen Z prefers to work individually within clear project frameworks. They tend to prioritise control over their time and tasks rather than shared ideation. This distinction is essential for understanding generational dynamics in cross-functional teams. Whereas Millennials seek collaborative autonomy, Gen Z appears to value **operational autonomy** independence from unnecessary oversight rather than a desire to co-create solutions.

Learning Preferences and Knowledge Application

While learning behaviours have been addressed earlier, the application of knowledge in day-to-day work is a distinguishing factor in generational work styles. Millennials generally favour learning as a journey and appreciate mentorship-based growth, often using acquired knowledge to improve systems or contribute to team innovation.

Gen Z, on the other hand, is more likely to apply new knowledge immediately and transactionally. Their self-guided learning preferences are driven by a desire to resolve specific problems or fulfil immediate work requirements, rather than personal

development alone. Employers designing upskilling initiatives must consider, that while Millennials may appreciate developmental roadmaps, Gen Z responds better to on-demand, purpose-tied microlearning directly linked to active responsibilities.

Risk Tolerance and Work Stability

Millennials are willing to take some risks in order to find meaningful work and grow over time. A lot of people from this group began working during or right after an economic downturn. They still looked for new jobs and moved around within their companies. Gen Z is more likely to base their decisions on "what might happen" displaying their proactive approach to life decisions. Naturally they are very careful not to take on too many roles, and often looking for multiple sources of income as this helps them to feel more secure (Widodo & Maghfuriyah, 2024). It is important to notice, that both generations expect employers to be flexible. However, Gen Z is more likely to see the workplace as a portfolio environment where skills, mobility, and well-being are more important than loyalty to the company. This method might help them perceive each assignment as a way to improve their general employability, rather than only a step on one career path. Gen Z prefers "stackable experience" and exposure to a variety of projects over traditional hierarchy. This shows, that modular work design and rotating structures are needed.

Leadership Expectations and Interaction Style

When analysing Leadership Expectations and Interaction Style, we can read in the literature, that Millennials prefer leaders who give them a sense of purpose and guidance while also giving them room for autonomy. They highly respect leaders who build teams, that are open to inclusive and diverse environment and stress shared values. Gen Z likes leaders who are open and focused on getting results. They value clarity, fairness, and predictability over inspiration or charisma (Zelma, 2024). Their interactions with leaders are more transactional in nature. They often question unclear orders and want quick, useful feedback. Millennials may see feedback as a way to improve themselves, but Gen Z often sees it as a way to confirm their performance and move up in their current job. Mutual preferences of both generations require leadership styles, that are responsive to both groups. Millennials benefit from developmental coaching, but Gen Z wants to be held accountable for their performance with as little story framing as possible.

The work styles of Generations Y and Z reflect not only their values and motivations, but also their assumptions about the structure and purpose of work itself. Millennials often bring a holistic, purpose-oriented approach to the workplace, while Gen Z favours modular, pragmatic, and performance-based engagement. These contrasts are shaped by different exposures to risk, leadership, learning technologies, and social expectations not merely generational personality traits.
Understanding these dynamics is critical for employers seeking to build multigenerational teams, that are both cohesive and adaptive. By recognising how each

cohort defines autonomy, contribution, and accountability, organisations can better design work environments, that foster engagement and performance across generational lines.

Digital Behaviours and Learning Approaches of Generations Y and Z

In modern workplaces shaped by digital technology, how employees interact with tools and acquire new skills reflects more than just technical ability it also reveals their underlying learning habits, priorities, and attitudes toward self-development. While both Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z are considered digitally fluent, they approach workplace technologies and learning environments in noticeably different ways. These generational distinctions don't just affect training outcomes they also influence how knowledge is shared, how adaptable teams become, and how well organisations retain talent over time.

Digital Technology Use at Work

Millennials entered the workforce during a period of substantial digital transformation, which led to proficiency in both traditional and digital work practices (Fuchs, et al., 2024). For this generation, technology serves as a critical instrument for coordinating teamwork, scheduling, and ensuring workflow consistency. In comparison, Generation Z began their careers when mobile applications and cloud-based platforms were already prevalent. Digital platforms such as Slack, Notion, and Trello are inherently familiar to Generation Z and are utilized for communication, task management, performance monitoring, and automating repetitive tasks (Hysa, 2016). For Generation Z, digital tools are integral to effective task completion. At this stage it is expected, that systems must fast, intuitive, and fully integrated and tend to become quickly frustrated by delays or outdated software. To simplify this view we can say, that Millennials may view digital tools as supportive, Gen Z is more likely to see them as the actual workspace. The practical consequences of these changes in thinking are, that older workers may be able to deal with systems, that don't work well, but younger workers may lose interest if tools don't match their needs for speed and clarity.

Learning Modalities and Skill Acquisition

Millennials group usually respond well to the structured development opportunities such as mentorship, formal training, and professional certifications. They are used to long-term development plans and often regard skill-building as part of broader career progression (Twenge, 2017).
Self-paced, informal, and purpose-driven learning, often outside traditional HR-led formats, that allow to consume a big chunk of knowledge from social media are preferred by the second cohort - GenZ. Main ways of learning and upskilling they use are

online tutorials or short video explainers (McCrindle & Fell, 2019) (Janssen & Carradini, 2021). They also tend not waiting for formal onboarding or learning pathways, they prefer to learn as they go, often driven by immediate task demands.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory supports this view, that Gen Z's preference for on-demand learning stems from a strong link between effort and short-term outcome they invest only when the reward is visible and timely.

Attitudes Toward Formal vs. Informal Training

If it comes to the attitude towards formal vs informal training we can clearly notice in the literature, that Millennials are more likely to value company-provided development schemes, particularly those tied to promotion or leadership tracks. Their engagement with formal learning reflects their trust in long-term organisational structures (Pasko, et al., 2020).

Gen Z is more sceptical toward top-down training systems, but this is related directly if the content appears generic or outdated, and I would say, that they are more likely to customise their own learning experience, combining employer resources with external platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn Learning, or Coursera. This independence allows them to move faster but may also lead to uneven knowledge integration, depending on individual initiative.

Critical observation: While Millennials seek structured competence, Gen Z demands personalised relevance. Organisations often fail to reconcile these needs in a single L&D strategy, leading to disengagement from one or both groups.

Information Processing and Application

There is another important difference, that must be addressed and it is - how each generation applies what they learn. Millennials tend to process new knowledge reflectively, often aiming to understand systems and align learning with broader objectives. It seems, that Gen Z on the other hand tend to apply learning immediately and expects tools to be actionable in real-world settings.

This contrast affects not only training effectiveness but also how both groups contribute to innovation and performance., that said, the reality might be more complicated if we think just because where Millennials may wait to master a system before innovating, Gen Z may prefer to experiment and iterate. As a result sometimes producing results more quickly, but at the risk of superficial depth or missed context.

Few longitudinal studies examine whether these divergent learning strategies affect long-term retention, decision quality, or cross-functional problem-solving effectiveness.

Conclusion

Generations Y and Z are both highly proficient with technology, but their engagement with digital tools and learning systems reveals key behavioural and attitudinal differences. Millennials favour structured development supported by guided mentorship and integrated tools. Gen Z, by contrast, seeks immediate, intuitive, and self-guided learning, that directly serves task execution.

These differences hold major implications for knowledge management, onboarding, and talent retention. Understanding these generational learning profiles equips organisations to design inclusive, multi-format development systems supporting both strategic depth and agile adaptability.

Teamwork and Collaboration between Generations Y and Z

We have to admit, that recognition of the importance of the collaboration in modern workplaces is perceived similarly by both generations, however the difference is in the way of engagement with teams and definition of the effective cooperation. These differences are often result of the generational attitudes toward structure, accountability, and interpersonal engagement.

Team Engagement Styles

(Dolot, 2018) (Twenge, 2023) have noticed, that Millennials generally approach teamwork as an opportunity for mutual growth, as they tend to value inclusion, peer dialogue, and participatory processes often preferring brainstorming sessions, regular meetings, and group reflection. For Millennials, collaboration is often linked to identity and purpose; it fosters belonging and shared ownership. In contrast, Gen Z tends to favour task-oriented collaboration, where responsibilities are clearly defined and meetings are minimised unless necessary (Hysa, 2016). Their inclination is particularly towards autonomy within a structure. But this is where things go tricky they expect, that all individuals participate concurrently and integrate results effectively typically via digital collaboration platforms rather than synchronous dialogue. Millennials associate teamwork with engagement and cohesion; Gen Z associates it with functionality and performance delivery.

Group Roles and Accountability

There are also clear differences in how people see their own versus those of the group accountability. Older people (read Millennials) often support flexible, rotating leadership within teams, simply because they think, that authority should be based on expertise rather than hierarchy (Fuchs, et al., 2024).
Gen Z, on the other hand, often prefers fixed roles with clear accountability. This approach stems from their heightened awareness of fairness and aversion to perceived free-riding. Gen Z might think, that unstructured team roles are unfair or inefficient, while Millennials might think, that rigid frameworks are limiting or make people less trusting.

Preferred Tools and Modes of Interaction

In this section I will show differences in the preferences in the tools and modes of interaction. While Millennials often choose in-person interaction with digital tools for

teamwork, they still value physical presence in team-building activities and collaborative tasks. Others take a different stance and are more comfortable with asynchronous communication via Slack or other communicators (Vieira & Santos, 2024).

Unfortunately this divergence can lead to tension in multigenerational teams, as Gen Z might opt for Slack updates over Zoom calls, while Millennials might see the absence of real-time engagement as a disrespect. In my opinion workplaces need to combine few models of interaction to ease the friction between both generations.

Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making

Digging deeper into conflict resolution it has been evident, that Millennials typically prefer consensus-driven decision-making, where feedback loops and inclusive processes lead to group alignment, and in turn they are more likely to seek resolution through dialogue and collective input even if it slows down the process (Dimock, 2019). Gen Z, in contrast, tends to prioritise outcome over consensus. They are more likely to advocate for rapid decision-making with minimal procedural overhead. When conflict arises, they may expect quick resolution rather than prolonged negotiation often escalating concerns through formal channels if needed, rather than informal mediation (MĂRGINEAN, 2021).

Without intentional communication frameworks, Millennials may interpret Gen Z's speed as abruptness, while Gen Z may perceive Millennial dialogue as lack of decision making process.

Attitudes toward Team Contribution and Recognition

Both generations want their hard work to be noticed, but they have different ideas about how to do, that in a team setting. Millennials like to get public praise and narrative feedback. They often see working together as a way to show their values and make a difference.

Gen Z likes clear credit attribution, which is often done through peer-review or analytics systems. They want fairness and they want to be able to measure their performance, so they are more sensitive to perceived unfairness in effort or recognition (Smola, 2002). It is possible to use the Expectancy Theory in this case, namely: Gen Z's focus on seeing results shows, that they believe, that effort must lead to real results, while Millennials often find motivation in the experience of working together. Whereas Millennials often derive motivation from the collaborative experience itself.

Conclusion

Generations Y and Z have very different ideas about teamwork. It's not, that they don't value working together; it's how they define, do, and measure it. Millennials work together in a way, that is relational and welcoming, while Gen Z works together in a way, that is lean, role-based, and focused on results.

To help people of different generations to work together, organisations need to take these differences into account on a stage when they set up teams. They should make sure, that people can join in on their own terms., that they can track their contributions clearly, and use a mix of communication styles.

Exploring whether digital collaboration tools are perceived differently by Gen Y and Z in terms of trust, engagement, and productivity.

The adoption and perception of digital collaboration tools such as Slack, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams differ notably between Generation Y and Generation Z, especially in terms of trust, engagement, and productivity.

Generation Y generally views digital collaboration tools as resources needed for teamwork, but not a substitute for human interaction. Trust for Millennials is often built through face-to-face interaction, so while they accept digital tools, they may still prefer hybrid settings, that include regular video meetings or in-person contact (Dolot, 2018) (Twenge, 2017). When companies use a performance engagement systems, that offer continuous feedback, team visibility, and social elements like chat or recognition features, involvement of this age group tends to grow (McKeever, et al., 2021). Despite these findings, practical realities may differ, simply because Millennials want appropriate training and organised integration, productivity-wise they favour platforms, that enable cooperative project monitoring, like Webex or Teams. If digital technologies are seen as substituting real conversation or bombarding individuals with notifications, they are more likely lower their involvement. Their ease with digital channels means they often see tools for cooperation as extensions of their personal communication practices, and thank to this lowering obstacles to participation (McCrindle & Fell, 2019), choosing simple, fast-response platforms like Slack over conventional email or even video conferences; they demonstrate great trust in tools, that offer quick communication and transparency.

Productivity-wise, Gen Z prefers technologies, that facilitate independent work, modular input, and quick feedback qualities fit their multitasking and mobile-first behaviours (Hysa, 2016). They also more likely incorporate unconventional technologies into their processes.

Gen Z craves simplified digital autonomy while Gen Y looks for humanised technology for productivity and relationship building. This distinction affects how every generation participates in virtual teams and how companies have to balance platforms for efficiency and inclusiveness.

Socio-Cultural and Economic Influences on the Work Expectations of Generations Y and Z

Generational identity is not just about how old you are; it also has to do with the larger historical, social, and economic contexts. For generations Y and Z, things like faster

technology, changing education systems, unstable economies, and more awareness of global issues have changed how they think about work, leadership, purpose, and personal growth. This part looks closely at these contextual drivers and how they affect career behaviours and motivation, which supports Research Question 3.

Socio-Cultural Norms and Identity Formation

Millennials were shaped by the rise of globalisation, early digitalisation, and an expanding discourse on diversity and inclusion. These influences encouraged a collaborative worldview, where cultural sensitivity, ethical employment, and purpose-driven work became professional priorities (Easton & Steyn, 2022) (Twenge, 2023). Millennials generally seek roles, that allow them to align personal values with organisational missions.

Generation Z, by contrast, was raised amid climate anxiety, digital hyperconnectivity, and social movements amplified through social media. Their socio-cultural reality has fostered expectations of radical transparency, immediate accountability, and institutional activism. For them, diversity, inclusion, and mental health are not aspirational values but non-negotiable standards (Dharta, et al., 2024) (McCrindle & Fell, 2019).

While both generations care about ethical alignment, Millennials express this through loyalty to values-driven organisations, whereas Gen Z expects visible, measurable impact and may disengage quickly if ideals are not upheld.

Educational Influences and Learning Expectations

Millennials experienced educational systems centred around structured instruction, group projects, and liberal arts foundations. This nurtured a preference for cooperative learning, formal mentorship, and progressive career development models (Fuchs, et al., 2024).

In contrast, Gen Z entered education systems increasingly shaped by individualised learning, digital platforms, and standardised assessments. They are accustomed to personalised content delivery, skill-based metrics, and self-directed research leading to expectations of flexible, tech-enhanced professional development in the workplace (Janssen, 2020).

Employers offering traditional L&D models may appeal to Millennials, while Gen Z requires adaptive learning environments, that mirror the autonomy and immediacy of their educational upbringing.

Economic Conditions and Career Strategy

The economic conditions at workforce entry strongly influence generational behaviour. Millennials were affected by the 2008 financial crisis, rising student debt, and job market contractions driving them toward stable but meaningful employment and careful career planning (Twenge, 2017).

Generation Z have entered the adulthood during a period of global instability like for example the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and housing crises. As a result, they are more inclined toward financial pragmatism and alternative career paths (e.g.

freelancing, entrepreneurship), and non-traditional income strategies. Job loyalty is conditional on perceived fairness, progression, and wellbeing (Widodo & Maghfuriyah, 2024).

While Millennials are often cautious optimists in their career navigation, Gen Z are strategic risk minimisers selecting work arrangements, that balance autonomy, mental health, and financial security.

Global Issues and Social Responsibility

Both generations are acutely aware of global challenges, but their responses differ in intensity and expression. Millennials value companies, that demonstrate social responsibility, particularly through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, sustainability practices, and inclusive branding (Vieira & Santos, 2024).

Gen Z takes a more activist stance, often expecting organisations to be agents of change. Their awareness of performative ethics has fostered low tolerance for greenwashing or superficial diversity efforts (Dolot, 2018). They are more likely to hold employers accountable on social media, opt out of misaligned cultures, and favour companies, that prioritise wellbeing, equity, and climate resilience.

Schwartz's Value Theory helps explain these distinctions Millennials score higher on universalism and self-direction, while Gen Z places emphasis on security, conformity, and fairness, conditioned by precarity and exposure to global risk.

Socio-cultural, educational, and economic contexts play a pivotal role in shaping generational differences in workplace behaviour. Millennials are shaped by ideals of inclusion, mentorship, and stability in a rapidly evolving world, while Generation Z emerges with a mindset of urgency, autonomy, and social vigilance. Their expectations about work are not static preferences, but deeply conditioned responses to the environments in which they were raised.

These findings reinforce Research Question 3, illustrating how formative experiences shape not just what each generation wants from work but how they pursue, evaluate, and define success within it.

Conclusion

The theme of this dissertation is to explore how Generations Y and Z differ in their work styles, the values they share, their communication preferences, learning behaviours, and collaborative approaches within the modern workplace. Through an interdisciplinary analysis supported by Generational Cohort Theory (Mannheim, 1952), Schwartz's Value Theory (Schwartz, 1992), and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), the study offers a multi-layered understanding of how these cohorts operate, interact, and expect to be led in professional settings.

The findings confirm, that although both generations are technologically fluent and value workplace flexibility, their behaviours and expectations are shaped by deeply contrasting socio-economic, cultural, and educational experiences (Fuchs, et al., 2024) (Twenge, 2017). Millennials tend to be relational, purpose-driven, and developmental in

orientation favouring collaborative engagement and long-term growth (Easton & Steyn, 2022) (Pasko, et al., 2020). Generation Z, in contrast, approaches work more transactionally and pragmatically, prioritising clarity, autonomy, and psychological safety (McCrindle & Fell, 2019) (Dharta, et al., 2024).

This study demonstrates, that intergenerational challenges in the workplace, often attributed to communication breakdowns or motivational gaps, are more accurately explained by incompatible expectations regarding structure, speed, and recognition. (Vieira & Santos, 2024) (Zelma, 2024). As an example we can take Generation Z's preference for immediate feedback and clearly defined outcomes may conflict with Millennials' tendency toward iterative dialogue and mentoring. (Schroth, 2019) (McKeever, et al., 2021). If these are not managed intentionally, some of the misalignments can disrupt performance, and reduce engagement, however, when these differences are recognized and addressed, they can provide complementary strengths. Generation Z's operational focus and digital expertise can make things go more smoothly if they are managed well. Millennials' collaborative approach and emphasis on values can reinforce organizational culture and drive innovation (Janssen & Carradini, 2021) (Widodo & Maghfuriyah, 2024).

The application of theory has helped to move beyond descriptive generalisations. Generational Cohort Theory explains how shared formative experiences influence values and behaviours (Mannheim, 1952). Schwartz's Value Theory clarifies the motivational underpinnings of workplace attitudes (Schwartz, 1992) (Fuchs, et al., 2024). Expectancy Theory and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) reveal why feedback, autonomy, and role clarity affect generational motivation in different ways (Pasko, et al., 2020) (Pefanis Schlee, et al., 2020).

Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. Much of the existing literature is based on Western contexts, with limited cross-cultural validation (Hysa, 2016). Furthermore, research on Generation Z remains relatively emergent, often relying on self-reported or perception-based data rather than longitudinal performance studies. Future research should explore how generational behaviours evolve over time, particularly as Gen Z matures into leadership roles. Comparative studies across industries and national cultures would also help to identify how context shapes the expression of generational traits in different organisational environments.

In sum, this dissertation contributes to a more critical and theoretically grounded understanding of generational diversity at work. It encourages organisations to reject one-size-fits-all engagement strategies and instead embrace generational intelligence as a tool for inclusive, adaptive, and high-performing teams.

Propositions for the Study

Building on the integrated conceptual model, a set of propositions was developed to guide the empirical analysis. These propositions translate the theoretical mechanisms of Schwartz's Value Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory into expected generational

patterns of workplace behaviour. They also serve as a thread connecting the Literature Review with the Findings and Discussion chapters.

- **P1.** If *autonomy* is a prioritised value (Schwartz: self-direction), Generation Z will prefer rapid, two-way feedback loops, that reinforce independence, whereas Generation Y will accept slower, developmental feedback linked to mentoring.
- **P2.** If *stability and achievement* are prioritised (Schwartz: security, achievement), Generation Y will prefer structured leadership support and clear progression pathways, while Generation Z will favour modular experiences and short-term, tangible rewards (Vroom: expectancy–instrumentality).
- **P3.** Both cohorts will converge on purposeful work (Schwartz: universalism, benevolence), but they will diverge in their expectations of how it is enacted Millennials through inclusive, collaborative cultures, and Generation Z through transparent, measurable organisational action.

These propositions provide a structured lens for analysing the empirical findings. In subsequent chapters, each theme is interpreted in relation to these propositions, highlighting where the data confirms, extends, or challenges the expected generational patterns.

3. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to investigate the generational differences between Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z in the workplace. It provides a comprehensive overview of the research philosophy, design, methodological choices, data collection techniques, and methods of analysis. The discussion also acknowledges the limitations of the study. To ensure a systematic and transparent research process, the study adopts the 'Research Onion' model developed by (Saunders, et al., 2019), which serves as a guiding structure for making informed decisions at each stage of the research. The layers of the onion ranging from philosophical positioning to data collection techniques offer a logical progression, that supports the overall coherence of the research design. As (Creswell, 2007) notes, such a structured approach is essential for establishing the integrity and direction of qualitative research.
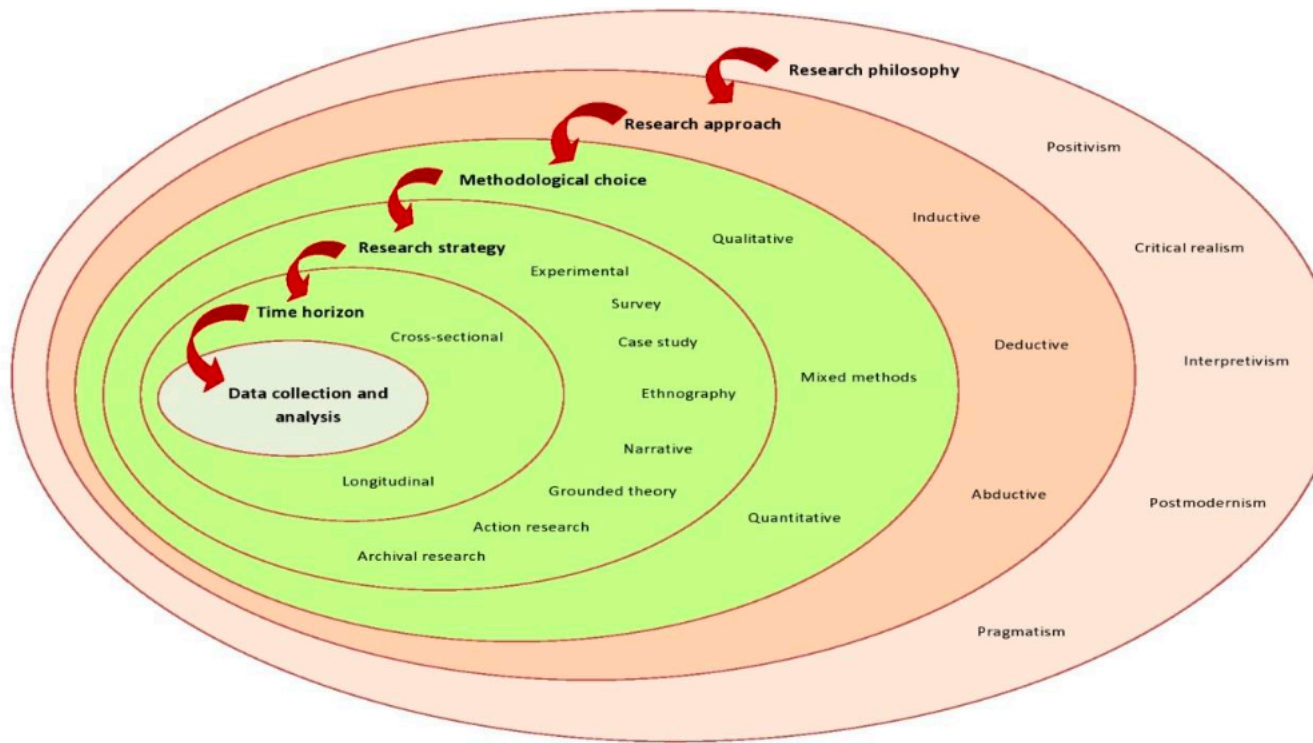
Figure 1: The Research Onion

Source: Developed from *(Saunders, et al., 2019)*

Research Rationale

During the review of the existing literature, it became clear, that employment of the qualitative research methods will be most appropriate to explore the complex and subjective experiences of individuals across generational cohorts. Given, that this research aims to understand how Generation Y and Generation Z employees perceive and experience aspects such as communication, motivation, and work expectations, a qualitative design was deemed most suitable, therefore a qualitative survey was chosen as the primary method of data collection. It enables gathering structured and open-text responses as well as it allows participants to articulate their workplace experiences in their own words. This approach supports the exploration of patterns while preserving the richness of individual narratives. The method is consistent with existing studies, that have sought to uncover interpretive, experience-based insights into workplace behaviour (Creswell, 2007) (Saunders, et al., 2023).

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the assumptions and beliefs, that guide the creation of knowledge (Saunders, et al., 2019). A researcher's philosophical positioning is crucial, particularly in qualitative research, where reflexivity plays a central role. As highlighted by (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020), reflexivity involves critically evaluating one's own beliefs, assumptions, and positionality throughout the research process. To enhance this self-awareness, the researcher applied the HARP tool developed by Bristow and Saunders,

which supports the articulation of personal values and ontological and epistemological leanings (Saunders, et al., 2019).

Central to research philosophy are the concepts of **ontology** the nature of reality and epistemology the nature of knowledge. Ontology addresses what constitutes reality within a particular context, while epistemology concerns the means through which knowledge is acquired and validated (Creswell, 2007) (Saunders, et al., 2019). In the context of this study, the aim was not to test an objective truth but to explore the diverse and individual perspectives of participants from different generational backgrounds. Two contrasting epistemological stances are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is rooted in objectivity, measurability, and empirical testing characteristics more aligned with quantitative research (Quinlan, et al., 2019) (Saunders, et al., 2019). In contrast, this study adopts an **interpretivist** stance, which is grounded in the belief, that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the meanings people assign to their experiences (Tanh & Tanh, 2015).

Interpretivism places emphasis on understanding human behaviour through narratives and individual interpretation. This philosophical approach is particularly suitable for research involving in-depth engagement with participants, allowing for the exploration of subjective insights related to generational differences in values, communication styles, and workplace expectations. Since the goal of this study is to uncover how members of Generation Y and Z make sense of their professional environments, an interpretivist philosophy provides the most coherent and contextually appropriate foundation for the research.

Research Approach and Design

The research approach taken in this study is grounded in an interpretivist philosophy, which recognises, that individuals construct meaning based on their personal experiences and social context. This paradigm is particularly appropriate for exploring workplace behaviours and values, as these are inherently shaped by individual perceptions, generational identities, and socio-cultural influences (Saunders, et al., 2019).

An abductive approach was adopted to reflect the complexity of the research topic as well as the need to move between theory and empirical insight. In comparison to a deductive reasoning, which tests hypotheses derived from theory, or inductive reasoning, which builds theory from observation, abduction allows for a dynamic interaction between theory and data. Timmermans and Tavory highlight, that abductive approach is well-suited for studies, that aim to explore emerging patterns while remaining anchored in established frameworks (Tavory & Timmermans, 2012).

Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, that are focused on values, communication, motivation, and generational identity a qualitative design was selected. This design provides flexibility and enough depth, to enable participants to articulate their experiences and preferences in their own words, as the study employed a qualitative survey combining both structured and open-ended questions. Thanks to

this approach we allowed for the collection of rich narrative data alongside pattern-based comparisons across generational cohorts.

The design was guided by key themes of this dissertation, that have been identified during the literature review.
This include: communication preferences, feedback expectations, approaches to learning and teamwork, and views on organisational values. Thanks to this alignment we ensured, that the survey instrument not only captured individual perspectives but also reflected broader theoretical constructs such as Schwartz's Value Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. By using a qualitative survey format, the research design accommodated both breadth and depth reaching a diverse sample while generating detailed, meaningful responses.

Research Method

The research method in general refers to the practical technique used to collect data. Usually is determined by the nature of the research questions and the type of data required (Quinlan, et al., 2019). The three main approaches to data collection are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, each selected based on the goals and context of the study. As per Saunders a qualitative method is particularly appropriate when the aim is to explore the emotions, perspectives, and lived experiences of participants .

Given, that the focus of this study is to explore how members of Generation Y and Generation Z perceive motivation, communication, and workplace values, a qualitative method was selected. Understanding subjective interpretations across generational cohorts will require a flexible approach, that allows participants to articulate their views in their own words as well as choosing from the multi choice options.

To achieve this, a qualitative survey featuring open-ended questions was developed and distributed using Google Forms. This method supports the collection of rich, narrative data while offering participants the convenience of responding in their own time and environment. The survey was carefully structured to prompt reflection on key areas such as career expectations, communication preferences, and sources of motivation, while allowing respondents to prioritise what they personally consider most relevant (Clifford, et al., 2010).

The decision to use this method is supported by recent literature on generational research, where qualitative tools are commonly used to investigate complex and context-dependent social behaviours (Saunders, et al., 2019). Additionally, the use of open-text responses aligns with the interpretivist philosophy underpinning this study, which values individuals' subjective meanings and the contextual richness of their experiences.

Sample Selection

This study employed a purposive sampling strategy to identify suitable participants for the qualitative survey. Purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of individuals based on specific characteristics or relevance to the research topic (Saunders, et al., 2019). This method allows the researcher to target participants who are most likely to provide meaningful insights aligned with the study's objectives (Yin, 2016).

As the research focuses on understanding how members of Generation Y and Generation Z experience and interpret workplace values, communication, and motivation, it was essential to recruit participants who self-identify with either generational cohort and are currently active in the workforce. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure, that the respondents would be able to reflect on their lived experiences within contemporary work environments. This technique is consistent with similar studies in the reviewed literature, that explore generational differences through qualitative means.

The **inclusion criteria** for participants were as follows:

- Must identify as either Generation Y (born 1981–1996) or Generation Z (born 1997–2012).
- Must be currently employed in any sector or industry.
- Must be fluent in English to ensure clarity in responses.

To reach a diverse range of participants, the survey was distributed via social media channels (including LinkedIn and Facebook) and through internal communication within the researcher's workplace. This multi-channel approach was intended to maximise reach and encourage participation from individuals across different industries and locations.

While purposive sampling can introduce an element of researcher bias due to the deliberate selection process, this risk was mitigated by ensuring, that participants were drawn from a broad pool beyond the researcher's immediate professional network. Participants were also not required to disclose their specific workplace, which further reduced any potential for bias or influence related to organisational context.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the qualitative survey were analysed using a thematic analysis approach, as outlined by (Brown & Clarke, 2006).

This analysis is well-suited to exploratory qualitative studies, as it allows for the identification, interpretation, and comparison of patterns within rich textual data. Chosen approach is aligning well with the abductive research strategy adopted in this

study. Method moves iteratively between theoretical concepts and empirical data to build plausible explanations for observed generational differences.

The analysis was guided by combination of deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes were derived from the existing literature as well as from the survey's thematic structure (like: "feedback preferences," "motivation," "teamwork," "communication styles," and "value alignment"). Inductive codes emerged from participants' own language and reflections. This dual approach allowed for the integration of pre-defined theoretical constructs combined with new insights grounded in participant narratives.

All responses from the open-ended survey questions were exported from Google Forms into Excel. In the next step they were read and analysed to gain familiarity with the data. Initial codes were manually applied to short phrases or sentences, capturing key ideas such as "desire for recognition," "importance of flexibility," or "preference for structured communication." These codes were then grouped into broader themes, which were compared across generational cohorts to identify areas of convergence and divergence.

The process followed (Brown & Clarke, 2006) six steps:

1st step: Familiarisation with the data by reading through all responses multiple times to understand the content holistically.
2nd step: Generating initial codes to allow for labelling relevant features of the data systematically across the dataset.
3rd step: Searching for themes, this was conducted by collating codes into potential themes and sub-themes.
4th step: Reviewing themes by refining the themes to ensure they accurately represented the data.
5th step: Defining and naming themes to allow for clear description of each theme's relevance to the research questions.
6th step: Producing the report by integrating themes with theoretical interpretation and participant quotes.
To ensure clarity and reliability, themes were cross-checked by the researcher at multiple points in the process. Where ambiguity existed particularly in overlapping areas such as motivation and communication, participant responses were re-examined in context to avoid misclassification.

The five dominant themes, that emerged were:

1) Workplace Values and Motivators – including financial security, purpose, recognition, and growth
2) Communication and Feedback Preferences, this theme focused on style, frequency, and digital vs. face-to-face formats
3) Learning and Upskilling – like attitudes toward self-directed learning, mentoring, and digital tools
4) Teamwork and Role Clarity – showing generational differences in collaboration expectations
5) Alignment with Organisational Ethics – covering sustainability, fairness, and diversity

These themes were then mapped against theoretical frameworks to enhance interpretation. As an example we can mention, Vroom's Expectancy Theory was particularly relevant in explaining Generation Z's preference for frequent, specific feedback and rapid rewards.

Schwartz's Value Theory also helped explain how participants' core values such as security, achievement, and benevolence shaped their expectations of employers. Gen Z responses often referenced job stability, mental wellbeing, and ethical practices as "non-negotiables," consistent with a prioritisation of security and conformity. Generation Y, meanwhile, reflected stronger emphasis on purpose-driven work, innovation, and work-life balance aligning with self-direction and universalism values.

Throughout the analysis, Generational Cohort Theory offered a comparative lens to contextualise how shared formative experiences (e.g. the 2008 financial crisis for Gen Y, COVID-19 and digital hyperconnectivity for Gen Z) influenced participants' attitudes.

Although not all responses neatly conformed to generational patterns, the thematic analysis made it possible to observe clear trends in how values, communication, and motivation manifest across the two cohorts. These patterns form the basis of the findings presented in the next chapter.

Survey Distribution Plan

In order to ensure a diverse and relevant sampling, the qualitative survey was distributed through both professional and social networks.
The distribution strategy was designed to reach as many as possible individuals from Generation Y (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012) who are currently active in the workforce and meet the study's inclusion criteria.

The survey was produced and hosted via Google Forms, which made it easy for people to take part at their convenience and on any device. Along with the survey link a brief message was added to explain what the research was for and how it would be kept private as well as, that the participation was optional. It was also made it clear, that responses were anonymous and may be taken back at any time before they were sent in.

Distribution Channels:
1. Facebook groups: The survey was posted in community and support groups where many working-age multinational professionals engage.
2. Internal workplace communication: Distributed via email and Slack within the researcher's organisation, with appropriate permissions.
3. WhatsApp: Shared informally within peer networks to encourage wider reach.
In order to encourage balanced participation from both generational cohorts, the researcher monitored response patterns and periodically re-shared the survey in

targeted forums. The survey remained open for three weeks, during which reminder posts were made to maintain momentum.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and no incentives were offered. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the option to provide their contact details if they were open to potential follow-up (though no further data collection was conducted).

This multi-channel, low-cost distribution method supported broad reach while maintaining methodological consistency with the study's qualitative and interpretivist framework.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect the data for this qualitative study, the researcher has developed a self-administered Google Forms survey. Survey was carefully designed to gather narrative responses on number of aspects like: workplace perceptions, values, and experiences among individuals from Generations Y and Z.
It consisted of a series of open-ended questions structured the way to encourage participants to reflect on key aspects such as communication preferences, motivation, and career expectations. All question topics are aligned with the research objectives and the theoretical frameworks, that guide the study.
This method conforms to qualitative research standards, as open-text surveys are acknowledged as effective instruments for gathering rich, descriptive data from a diverse participant base across various geographic and demographic contexts (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Google Forms was selected due to its accessibility, ease of use, and compatibility with thematic analysis procedures. As (Saunders, et al., 2019) note, online qualitative surveys are particularly useful when time, anonymity, or location may limit the feasibility of interviews or focus groups.

Before full survey was launched, a pilot test was conducted with a small number of participants (n = 7) who matched the study's inclusion criteria. The goal of this trial was to make sure, that the language was clear, the arrangement of the questions was suitable, and the form was easy to use overall. Feedback from the pilot test has led to small changes in the survey. Researcher has reworded some of the questions, that were unclear and making the transitions between sections better to keep participants interested.

The final version of the survey was then sent out through a number of channels to make sure, that the sample was both varied and relevant. These included professional and community-based social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as internal communications inside the researcher's own company. Along with the survey link was a short message, that explained the purpose of the study, the ethical issues involved, and, that participation was completely voluntary.

The data collection period lasted for three weeks, during which [insert number] completed responses were gathered. Participants remained anonymous, and no

identifying information was collected. Responses were exported into a secure file for further analysis and stored in accordance with data protection guidelines and ethical research practices.

Instrument Mapping

To ensure transparency and theoretical alignment, each construct in the study was mapped directly to the survey instrument, research questions, and relevant theoretical frameworks. This mapping is presented in **Table 2**, demonstrating how the survey operationalised abstract constructs into concrete items.

Construct	Survey Item(s)	Research Question(s)	Theoretical Rationale
Motivation / Values	Q8. *What motivates you most at work, and why?* (open) Q8a. *Please explain your top choices.*	RQ1, RQ3	Vroom's Expectancy Theory (effort → reward); Schwartz's Value Theory (self-direction, achievement, security).
Employer Priorities	Q9. *What aspects of a job are most important when choosing an employer?*	RQ3	Schwartz (values alignment with organisations). Cohort theory (labour market entry conditions).

Recognition	Q10. *What makes you feel valued or recognised at work?* Q11. *Describe a time you felt recognised.*	RQ1, RQ2	Vroom (recognition as reward valence); Schwartz (benevolence, achievement).
Work–Life Balance	Q12. *How important is work–life balance to you?*	RQ1, RQ3	Schwartz (hedonism, security); cohort generational context (Gen Y burnout vs Gen Z boundaries).
Communication	Q13. *How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues/managers?* Q13a. *Why do you prefer this?*	RQ1, RQ2	Cohort theory (digital fluency); Vroom (communication as pathway to effectiveness).
Feedback	Q14. *What type of feedback do you find most helpful?* Q14a. *Why does this feedback style work best?*	RQ1, RQ2	Vroom (feedback = expectancy reinforcement); Schwartz (achievement, recognition).
Interaction Mode	Q15. *Do you prefer face-to-face or digital communication for important conversations?*	RQ2	Cohort theory (tech shaping preferences).
Learning & Development	Q16. *How do you prefer to learn new skills?* (select up to 3) Q17. *Have you used digital learning tools?*	RQ1, RQ3	Vroom (instrumentality of training → career outcomes); cohort experiences with digital education.
Teamwork / Collaboration	Q18. *What does effective teamwork look like?* Q18a. *Describe a time teamwork went well/poorly.* Q19. *Do you prefer defined roles or flexible structures?* Q19a. *Explain.*	RQ2	Schwartz (benevolence, conformity); Vroom (expectancy of teamwork outcomes); cohort-shaping contexts.
Intergenerational Issues	Q20. *What challenges have you experienced*	RQ2	Mannheim's cohort theory (shared

	when working with other generations? Q20a. *Example.*		formative experiences).
Organisational Values	Q21. *How important is employer commitment to social/environmental issues?* Q21a. *Example.* Q22. *Have your values (diversity, inclusion, ethics) influenced where you work?* Q22a. *Explain.* Q23. *What values do you expect your employer to uphold?*	RQ3	Schwartz's Value Theory (universalism, benevolence, tradition); cohort differences in ethics/socialisation.

Table 1:Mapping of Constructs, Survey Items, Research Questions, and Theoretical Links

Sample & Response Patterns

A total of 52 responses were collected through the online survey. Of these, 22 were from Generation Y (ages 25–40) and 15 from Generation Z (ages 18–24), based on self-reported age at the time of participation. The remaining 13 responses were excluded because they did not meet the cohort inclusion criteria or were incomplete, resulting in 37 usable responses for the final analysis. Item-level non-response was present in a small number of cases, particularly for open-ended questions, that required extended narrative reflection. To maintain analytical transparency, all figures and tables in the Findings chapter report item-level sample sizes (n) rather than the overall response count. This approach ensures consistency between participant totals and figure-level data.

Reflexivity Memo

As the researcher, I occupy a dual role: both as an MBA student with professional experience in corporate environments and as an individual embedded within the generational context under study. This positionality carries potential benefits and limitations. On the one hand, my professional background and familiarity with generational debates enhanced my ability to design survey items, that resonated with

participants and to interpret responses within an organisationally relevant frame. On the other hand, my own generational identity (Generation Y) and personal views on workplace values may have shaped the questions I prioritised and the way I initially interpreted data. To mitigate this risk, I adopted a structured coding process, documented decisions in a codebook, and actively searched for negative or contradictory cases, that challenged my assumptions. This reflexive stance acknowledges, that while interpretation is inevitably shaped by the researcher's perspective, transparency and systematic procedures strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This study was designed in compliance with the ethical norms established by academic institutions, as ethical integrity is a crucial feature of performing human-centered research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Due to the qualitative character of the research, participants were requested to contemplate potentially sensitive situations including job motivation, communication, and generational identity. To uphold ethical standards, all participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the study's objective, as well as the voluntary aspect of their participation and the use of their data.. Before initiating the survey, participants were required to give explicit consent by selecting a confirmation checkbox on the Google Forms interface.

To protect participant confidentiality, the researcher did not collect names, email addresses, or employer details at any point of the research. The survey was completely anonymous by design, and respondents could withdraw at any time by exiting the form before submission. As recommended by (Denscombe, 2010), transparency about data use was maintained throughout, also including assurances, that all responses would be stored securely and used solely for academic research purposes.

Data was collected and stored in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards. Access to raw data was restricted to the researcher only and is password protected. All research data will be securely deleted after the completion and examination of the dissertation.
No identifiable information was shared in the dissertation findings or during the analysis process.

By ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and responsible data handling, the researcher upheld the core ethical principles of respect, integrity, and accountability as defined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data collected through open-ended questions in the online survey was analysed using thematic analysis, which is well-suited for identifying patterns in participants' narratives (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The method allowed the researcher to interpret subjective experiences across Generation Y and Generation Z in relation to work values, communication, and motivation.

At the beginning responses were reviewed through a process of familiarisation, during which the researcher read through all entries multiple times to develop a holistic understanding of the data. This was followed by initial coding, where recurring concepts and expressions were manually tagged in a spreadsheet. Codes were directly informed by participant responses to specific survey questions for instance, those related to motivation ("What motivates you most at work, and why?"), recognition ("Can you describe a time when you felt genuinely recognised or appreciated at work?"), and teamwork ("Can you describe a time when teamwork went well or poorly?").

In the next step, codes were clustered into broader themes. For example:

Responses regarding autonomy, flexibility, and work-life balance were categorised under - "Need for Autonomy and Balance".
Responses, that emphasised peer support, collaboration, or conflict within teams were categorised under "Teamwork Dynamics".
Insights regarding rewards, verbal praise, and public acknowledgement contributed to the theme - "Recognition and Feedback".
Varied perspectives on email, instant messaging, and face-to-face communication played a significant role in shaping "Generational Communication Preferences".
Insights related to long-term objectives, development, and frequent job changes shaped the theme - "Career Outlook and Expectations".
Each theme underwent a thorough review to confirm both consistency and distinctiveness, with participant quotes chosen to effectively illustrate the key points. This process allowed for a comparison of findings between Generation Y and Generation Z participants, highlighting both similarities and differences in their experiences and interpretations of the workplace.

The above analysis followed the (Clarke & Braun, 2013) six-phase framework and was guided by interpretivist assumptions, placing value on participants' unique perspectives (Nowell, et al., 2017). A reflexive approach was maintained throughout, with ongoing memoing and documentation of decisions to ensure transparency and trustworthiness in the analytical process.

Limitations of the Study

While every effort was made to ensure the highest quality of this research. It is vital to acknowledge several limitations. These limitations relate to the methodology, data collection format, and scope of participant responses.

While the implementation of an online qualitative survey through Google Forms facilitated wider accessibility and participant convenience, it concurrently constrained the depth of individual responses in comparison to face-to-face or semi-structured interviews. According to (Clarke & Braun, 2013), although qualitative surveys can efficiently collect theme data, they do not facilitate probing or explanation of participant meanings, thereby limiting the depth and interpretability of specific responses.

Secondly, the study utilised purposive sampling and depended on voluntary involvement, largely via the researcher's professional network and social media. This increases the likelihood of self-selection bias, as those with more pronounced viewpoints or particular experiences may have been more inclined to engage (Saunders, et al., 2019). There is possibility, that data may not comprehensively represent the wider population of Generation Y and Generation Z employees across various industries.

Thirdly, although the open-ended questions were meticulously aligned with the research aims, the lengths of responses varied significantly, with some participants giving succinct replies and others providing more elaborate details. This diversity influenced the equilibrium of insight throughout the sample and may have impacted theme saturation in specific categories.

Also, even though the researcher was self-aware and followed a systematic coding procedure, qualitative data analysis is inherently subjective. In this particular case it means, that there is a chance of interpretative bias (Nowell, et al., 2017). The researcher reduced this risk by keeping track of the analytical judgements and making sure, that the analysis process was open.

Finally, the study only examined two generational cohorts, Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z, and did not incorporate cross-generational opinions from previous generations such as Baby Boomers or Generation X. As a result, the data should be interpreted as reflecting only these two specific cohorts, rather than the total workforce.

Despite these limitations, the study offers useful insights into how two major generational groups view and experience work, notably in terms of motivation, recognition, communication, and career expectations.

4. Findings

This chapter explores the results of the primary research, which examined the professional experiences, values, and expectations of Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Zoomers). Data was gathered through a qualitative survey, that employed open-ended questions. It was collected through the Google Forms survey and communicated to the respondents through social media and the

researcher's workplace.

A total of 52 valid replies were obtained, where only those from Generation Y and Generation Z were included in the analysis.

This framework of this chapter is arranged around important themes obtained from the data and framed by the earlier specified research questions like:

What drives the motivation of Generation Y and Generation Z in the workplace?

What are the distinctions between the ideals and expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z in a professional setting?

What are the primary obstacles and opportunities in promoting collaboration between Generation Y and Generation Z within multigenerational teams?

3. What year were you born?
52 responses

- 1946 – 1964 Baby Boomer
- 1965 – 1980 Generation X
- 1981 – 1996 Generation Y (Millennials)
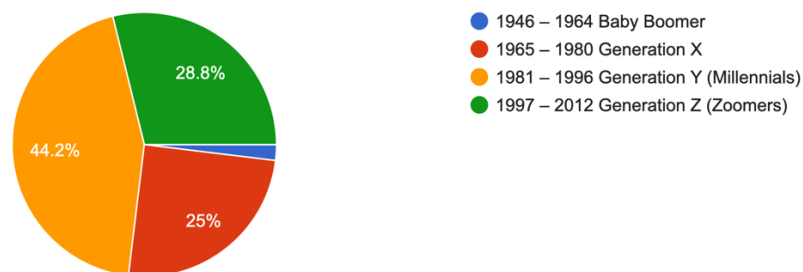- 1997 – 2012 Generation Z (Zoomers)

Figure 2: Age Distribution Chart derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header). Representative quotes from both cohorts are provided in Appendix D

Workplace Motivation

Questions 8 (What motivates you most at work, and why (write below)?) and 8a (Please explain your top choices in the box below) related to motivation part of this research. The analysis of responses indicated clear motivational differences between the two generations. Generation Y participants predominantly prioritised stability, accountability, and prospects for advancement. Statements like "Stable/secure job to have fewer concerns" and "I take pleasure in acquiring new skills and advancing professionally over time" underscored their aspiration for security and meaningful employment. The findings align with prior studies indicating, that Millennials desire structure, professional growth, and significant contributions in their positions (Ng, et al., 2010).

In comparison, Generation Z prioritised autonomy, acknowledgement, and skill development. Expressions like "Receiving autonomy enhances my sense of worth" and "Facilitates my development for subsequent projects" indicated their aspiration for independence and rapid learning opportunities. This aligns with

the conclusions of Francis and (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), that Generation Z employees are motivated by adaptability, creativity, and self-improvement.
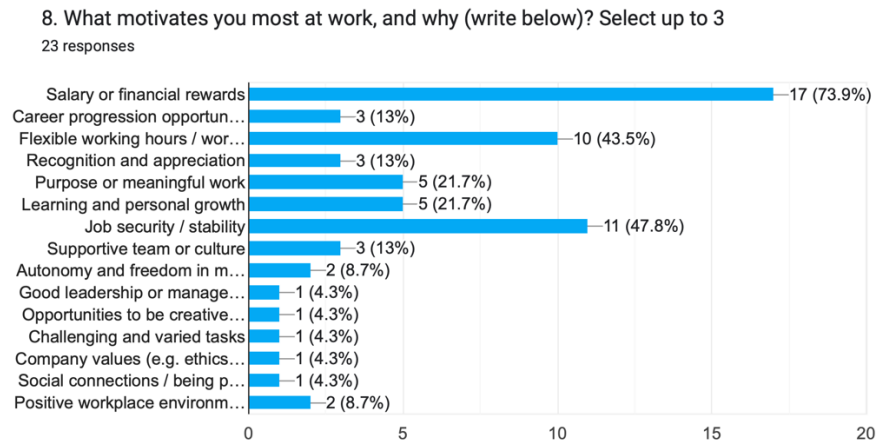
8. What motivates you most at work, and why (write below)? Select up to 3
23 responses

Figure 3: Motivation Preferences by Generation Y based on survey data (n=23) derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header). Representative quotes from both cohorts are provided in Appendix D

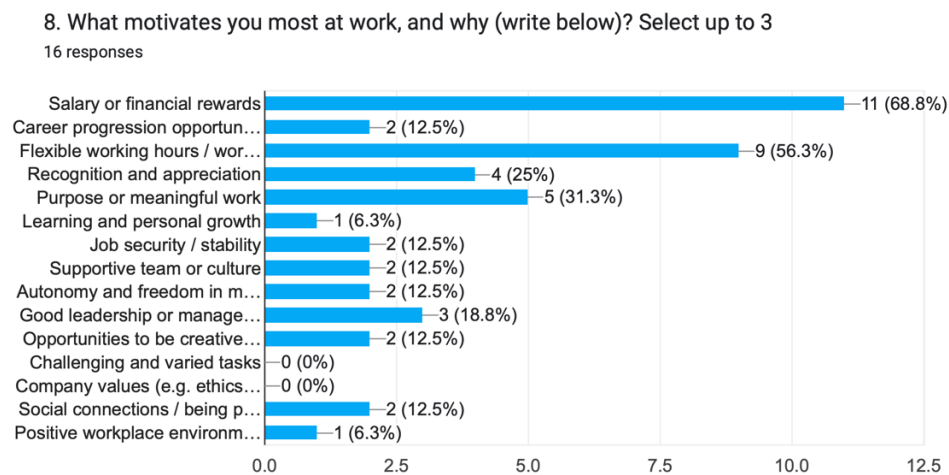8. What motivates you most at work, and why (write below)? Select up to 3
16 responses

Figure 4: Motivation Preferences by Generation Z based on survey data (n=16) derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header). Representative quotes from both cohorts are provided in Appendix D

Communication Preferences

In replies to Questions 13 (How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues or managers? (e.g., email, messaging apps, meetings)) and 13a (Why do you prefer this method?), all generations recognised the significance of effective communication yet favoured distinct techniques. Generation Y favoured formal, written communication, with email identified as the preferred medium because of its traceability and organisation. A respondent remarked, "Email communication provides structure and allows for reflection." This inclination signifies a propensity for professionalism and clarity, which (Saunders, et al., 2023) link to more organised working cultures.

Generation Z had a distinct inclination towards instant messaging services and informal verbal contact. Statements like "I find informal discussions and verbal acknowledgement more instinctive and motivating" indicate a preference for rapid, casual exchanges, that facilitate collaboration. This aligns with the findings of Williams et al. (2018), who contend, that Generation Z employees favour frequent, real-time communication with a less hierarchical structure.

13. How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues or managers? (e.g., email, messaging apps, meetings)
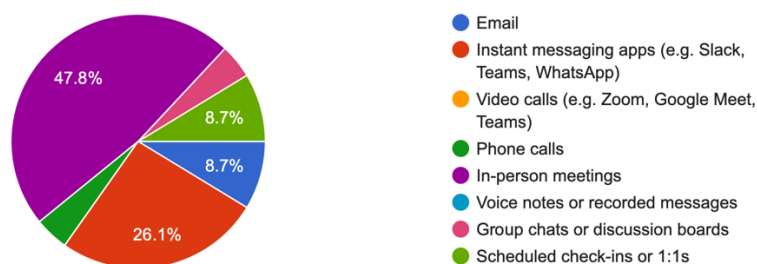
23 responses

Figure 5: Communication Preferences of Generation Y derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header). Representative quotes from both cohorts are provided in Appendix D

13. How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues or managers? (e.g., email, messaging apps, meetings)
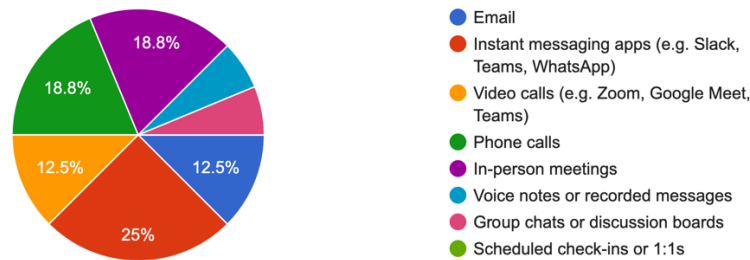
16 responses

Figure 6: Communication Preferences of Generation Z derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header). Representative quotes from both cohorts are provided in Appendix D

Preferences for Feedback

Q14 (What type of feedback do you find most helpful?) and Q14a (Please explain why this feedback style works best for you) focus on feedback preferences and clearly exhibited generational variation. Generation Y participants preferred constructive criticism presented in written or organised formats. This method was regarded as more contemplative and pragmatic. A participant remarked, "Only specific examples can provide an overview of a particular situation." These preferences align with the findings of (Saunders, et al., 2023) and (Quinlan, et al., 2019), who emphasise the Millennial inclination towards clarity and developmental feedback mechanisms.

In contrast, Generation Z preferred prompt, vocal feedback conveyed in a cooperative manner. One respondent stated, "I perceive informal conversations and verbal acknowledgement as more instinctive." Others valued motivational prompts, indicating a preference for positive reinforcement and dialogic coaching. This corresponds with the findings of (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), who underscore Generation Z's requirement for ongoing communication and validation.

14. What type of feedback do you find most helpful?
23 responses

Legend:
- ● Formal performance reviews (e.g. quarterly or annual appraisals)
- ● Real-time or immediate feedback duri…
- ● Informal chats and verbal recognition
- ● Written feedback (e.g. via email or rep…
- ● Constructive criticism with specific exa…
- ● Regular check-ins or 1:1 meetings
- ● Peer-to-peer feedback
- ● Feedback through digital tools (e.g. Sl…
- ● No preference – depends on the situat…
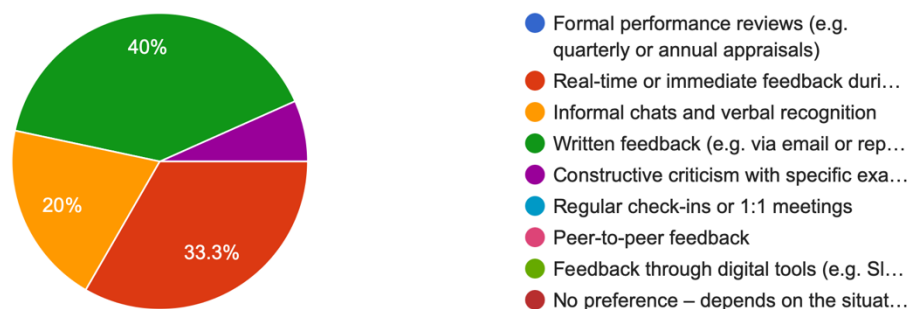
Pie values: 21.7%, 13%, 39.1%, 8.7%, 17.4%

Figure 7: Feedback Preferences of Generation Y derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header)

14. What type of feedback do you find most helpful?
15 responses

Legend:
- ● Formal performance reviews (e.g. quarterly or annual appraisals)
- ● Real-time or immediate feedback duri…
- ● Informal chats and verbal recognition
- ● Written feedback (e.g. via email or rep…
- ● Constructive criticism with specific exa…
- ● Regular check-ins or 1:1 meetings
- ● Peer-to-peer feedback
- ● Feedback through digital tools (e.g. Sl…
- ● No preference – depends on the situat…

Pie values: 40%, 20%, 33.3%

Figure 8: Feedback Preferences of Generation Z derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header)

Leadership Anticipations and Team Configuration

Responses to Questions 19 (In team settings, do you prefer clearly defined roles or a more flexible structure?) and 19a (Please give more details on your last answer) indicated generational disparities in leadership expectations. Generation Y valued delineated roles and hierarchical transparency, highlighting advantages such as explicit accountability and effective planning. The statement, "I understand my roles, duties, and responsibilities, thus I am more accountable for my actions," illustrates a clear desire for structure. (Ng, et al., 2010) and (Twenge, 2023) assert, that Millennials prioritise leadership, that offers

guidance and acknowledges individual efforts.

Generation Z exhibited more adaptability. Some individuals valued clearly defined positions, whereas others favoured a collaborative and flexible team structure. One participant remarked, "A flexible structure fosters creativity," while another noted, "It mitigates micromanagement by other employees." These comments indicate a preference for autonomy rather than hierarchy, aligning with the aspirations of Gen Z as articulated by (Schroth, 2019), who contends, that younger employees desire trust-based leadership and flexibility.
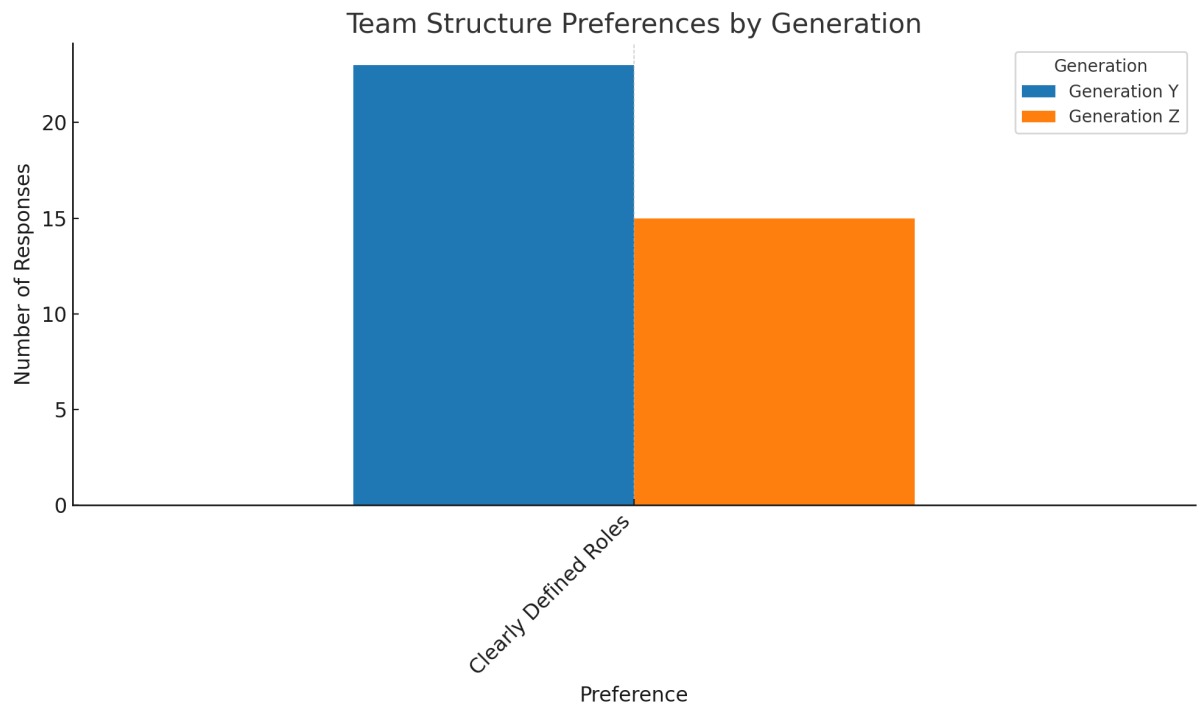

Figure 9: Team Structure Preferences by Generation derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header)
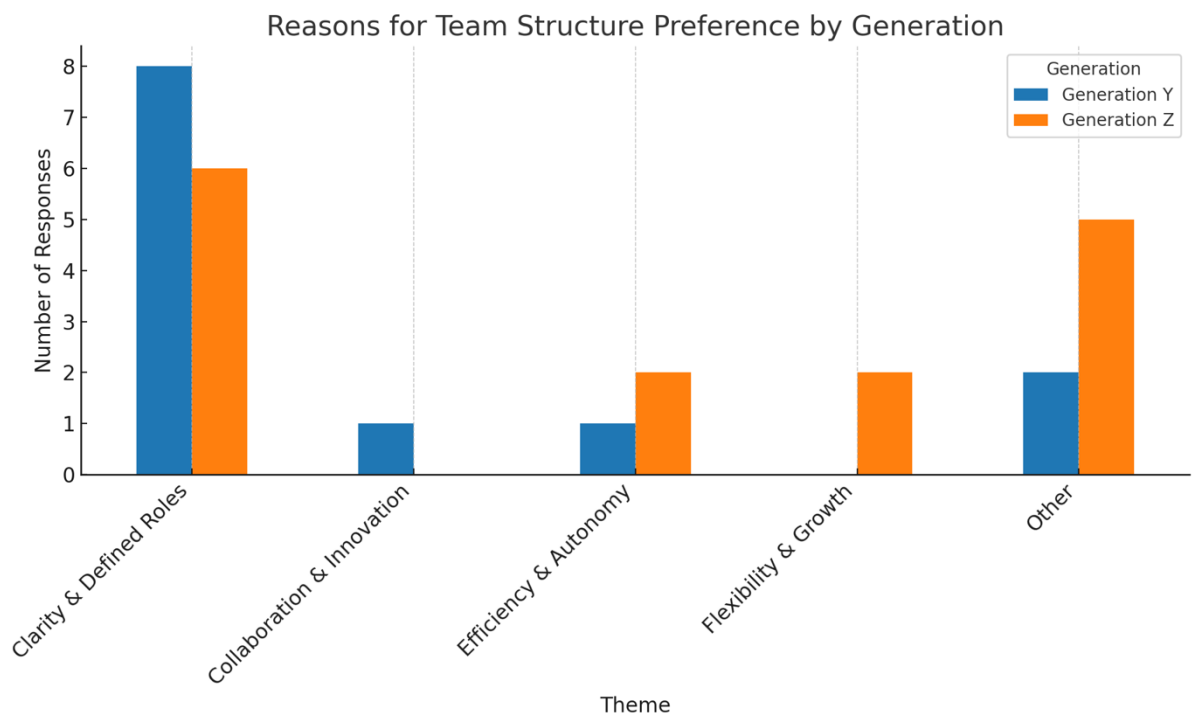
Figure 10: Reasons for Team Structure Preference by Generations derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header)

Preferred Learning and Development Approaches by Generation

The survey responses revealed clear generational differences in preferred learning methods. Generation Y tended to prefer structured training and hands-on experience, while Generation Z demonstrated a greater openness to informal, self-paced formats such as video tutorials and digital content. This aligns with findings by (Bencsik, et al., 2016), who note, that digital-native generations value flexibility and autonomy in development. Survey responses indicate clear generational differences in how employees prefer to develop skills and acquire knowledge. Generation Y (Millennials) predominantly favoured structured methods such as formal training sessions and on-the-job experience. These individuals described learning as most effective when it involves defined progression, real-time application, and expert-led instruction. This aligns with the literature suggesting, that Millennials tend to value organised learning environments with clear objectives and outcomes (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010).

In contrast, Generation Z (Zoomers) showed a broader preference spectrum. While many respondents also appreciated learning through doing, a significant proportion expressed a strong inclination toward informal, self-paced learning. This includes methods such as short video-based tutorials, digital platforms, and experiential activities, that enable them to explore knowledge independently. These preferences reflect the digital-native background of Gen Z, which has shaped their expectations for instant access to information and autonomy in their learning paths (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

Interestingly, Gen Z respondents were also more likely than their Gen Y counterparts to mention mentorship and coaching as effective development tools. This suggests a hybrid preference where independence is balanced with guidance and feedback   a trait also reflected in recent generational workforce studies (Burger, et al., 2021).

These findings highlight the importance of adapting learning and development strategies in multigenerational organisations. Employers aiming to attract and retain younger talent should ensure, that development programmes are not only structured and role-relevant but also flexible, engaging, and accessible across various digital formats.
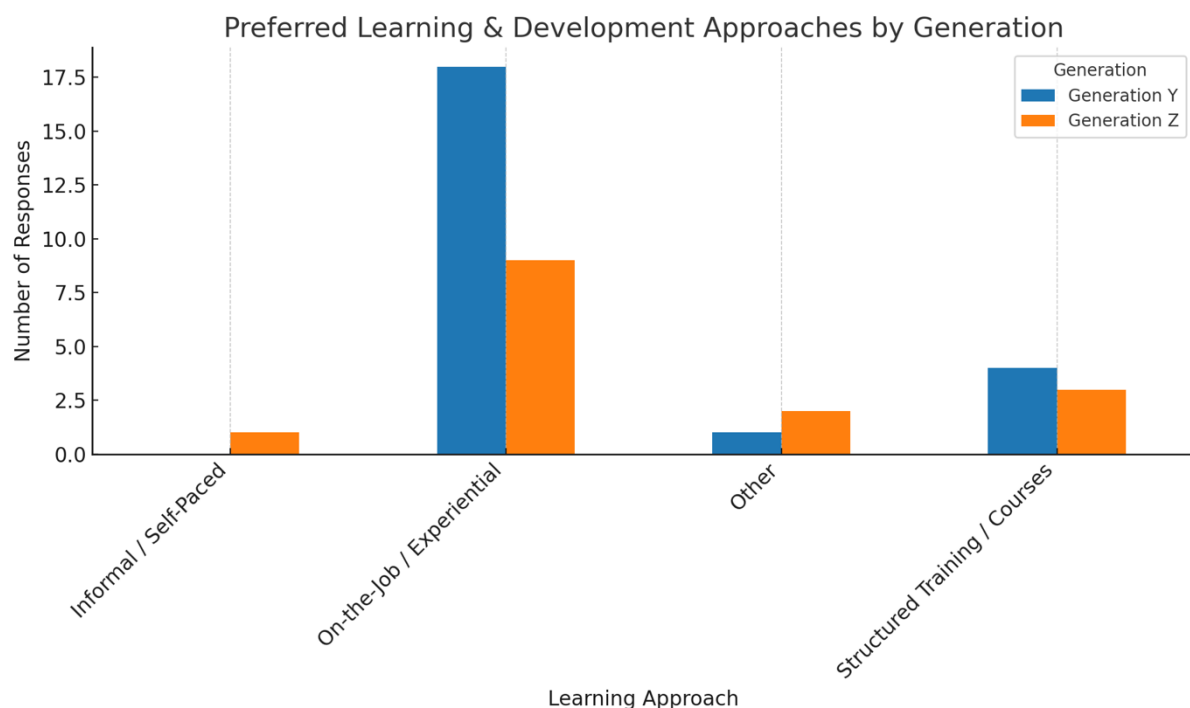

Figure 11: Preferred Learning & Development Approaches by Generation derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform? usp=header)

Deducted Professional Aspirations

While professional aspirations were not directly asked, implicit indications surfaced from the answers to Questions 8a, 14a, and 19a. Generation Y participants frequently cited stability and personal growth. One participant remarked, "I take pleasure in acquiring new skills and advancing professionally over time." These assertions underscore the notion, that Millennials prioritise job stability and systematic advancement (Ng, et al., 2010).

Generation Z responses exhibited a heightened emphasis on growth, ambition, and future-oriented objectives. For example, "Compensation and advancement as a full-time college student" and "Embracing challenges, that extend beyond my comfort zone" demonstrated a motivation for progress and influence.

(Francis & Hoefel, 2018) corroborate these findings, emphasising Generation Z's aspirations for rapid career advancement and performance-driven growth.

Intergenerational Issues

In Questions 20 (What challenges have you experienced when working with colleagues from other generations?) and 20a (Can you provide an example?), participants were prompted to contemplate the difficulties encountered while collaborating with colleagues from diverse generations. Generation Y participants frequently identified communication difficulties, reluctance to adapt, and value discrepancies. One participant stated, "Certain younger employees desired recognition on social media." I favour private, genuine acknowledgement. Others observed difficulties in adjusting to technology and collaborating across generations, in accordance with (Saunders, et al., 2023). Responses from Generation Z were more varied. Although some expressed apprehensions over value conflicts and opposition to innovation, numerous individuals found no substantial problems. Assertions like "No challenges – I collaborate effectively with all generations" and "Diverse work values or priorities, but nothing significant" indicate a more flexible and inclusive perspective. This corroborates Schroth's (2019) findings, that Generation Z tends to value diversity and anticipates dynamic workplace relationships.
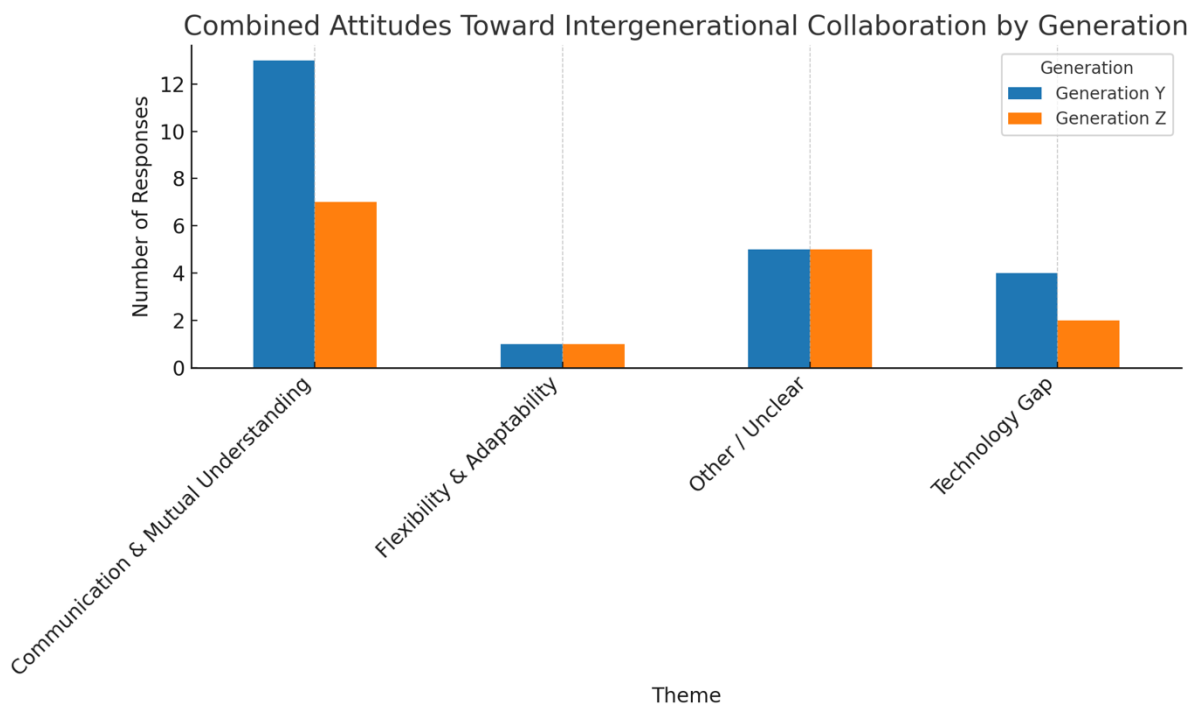

Figure 12: Combined Attitudes Toward Integrational Collaboration by Generation derived from the Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchCxpo6_N2IoleCHz1iTQvTmhRLVtll4bSPDB5nmjPdRL2qw/viewform?usp=header)

Summary of Key Findings

Theme	Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z (Zoomers)
Motivation Drivers	Stability, personal growth, sense of responsibility	Autonomy, recognition, skill development
Communication Style	Structured, written, and regular	Fast, informal, and tech-enabled
Feedback Preferences	Written, example-based, constructive	Verbal, motivational, and frequent
Leadership Expectations	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	Flexible team structures and independence
Career Expectations	Stability and steady development	Progression, challenge, and rapid learning
Intergenerational Dynamics	Communication and tech resistance noted	Fewer perceived challenges, adaptable to differences

Table 2: Summary of Key Findings

These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the generational differences in workplace behaviours, values, and expectations. Generation Y emphasises structure, stability, and role clarity, while Generation Z seeks flexibility, feedback, and growth opportunities. This nuanced insight enables the development of tailored management strategies suited to multigenerational teams. The next chapter will interpret these findings in relation to the academic literature and propose actionable recommendations for managers navigating generational diversity in the workplace.

5. Discussion

Introduction

This chapter critically analyses the primary data collected through the survey, interpreting the results in light of the research questions and the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review. Drawing on Generational Cohort Theory (Smola, 2002) (Mannheim, 1952), Schwartz's Value Theory (1992), and Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), the findings are evaluated to determine whether generational differences between Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Zoomers) manifest in their workplace expectations. The discussion identifies areas where the data aligns with previous studies, as well as areas where it diverges or offers new insights. It contributes a more nuanced perspective to the discourse on generational differences in the workplace.

Motivation at Work

The findings revealed some alignment with existing literature. Millennials generally prioritised job stability, personal development, and accountability (Ng, et al., 2010) (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Generation Z respondents, on the other hand, more frequently referenced autonomy, recognition, and rapid professional growth. However, these distinctions were not absolute. Several Millennials indicated a preference for autonomy and purpose-driven roles, while some Gen Z participants expressed concern about job security and long-term career stability.

These overlaps suggest, that workplace motivation is influenced not solely by generational identity, but also by broader contextual factors such as economic conditions and organisational culture. This reflects Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which posits, that motivation is determined by the perceived relationship between effort, performance, and reward. While Gen Z's expectations for rapid recognition may be shaped by their digital upbringing, their desire for meaningful work aligns with Millennials' pursuit of personal fulfilment and development. This challenges the deterministic view of generational traits and supports a more flexible, context-sensitive understanding of employee motivation.

Communication and Feedback Preferences

The literature often positions Millennials as favouring structured, documented communication, whereas Gen Z is seen as preferring fast, informal, and technology-driven feedback (Schroth, 2019) (Williams, et al., 2010). While these trends were evident in the data, they were not as polarised as the literature suggests. Participants across both cohorts valued clarity, consistency, and empathy in communication.

Some Gen Z respondents appreciated formalised feedback, while some Millennials embraced digital and informal feedback mechanisms. These results point to a convergence in communication expectations, highlighting, that individual preferences and organisational context may carry more weight than generational differences alone.

Thus, the findings advocate for flexible communication strategies tailored to

employee needs, rather than rigid approaches based on generational assumptions.

Leadership and Team Structure Expectations

Both generations expressed a strong preference for transparent, competent, and emotionally intelligent leadership. Generation Z respondents showed a stronger inclination toward collaborative environments and flatter hierarchies, while Millennials appreciated structure and clearly defined roles. However, both groups shared a common desire for psychological safety, fairness, and trust in leadership.

These findings align with Schwartz's Value Theory (1992), particularly in relation to the values of benevolence, self-direction, and universalism. They also suggest, that the differences in leadership expectations between generations may be more nuanced than previously assumed.

Rather than adopting leadership styles based strictly on generational stereotypes, organisations should focus on developing adaptable, value-driven leadership practices.

Career Expectations

In accordance with existing literature, Millennials in the study tended to prioritise long-term progression and work-life balance (Twenge, 2010). Generation Z participants emphasised rapid learning, development, and roles aligned with personal values. However, some Gen Z responses reflected uncertainty about career progression and a desire for greater stability an unexpected finding given their characterisation in the literature as short-term oriented and constantly seeking change (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

This suggests, that economic insecurity and recent global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, may have influenced the expectations of younger workers across both cohorts. These findings indicate, that traditional generational models are increasingly inadequate in capturing the complexity of career aspirations today.

Therefore, career development strategies should consider both personal and situational factors, rather than relying solely on generational categories.

Intergenerational Collaboration and Tensions

While the literature frequently emphasises intergenerational tension in the workplace (Twenge, 2017) (Lyons, et al., 2015), the survey responses revealed a more balanced view. Many participants expressed openness to collaboration and acknowledged the value of learning from colleagues of different generations. Some Millennials described positive experiences mentoring Gen Z employees, while Gen Z respondents appreciated guidance and institutional knowledge. This challenges the dominant conflict narrative and suggests, that much of the perceived tension may stem from stereotypes rather than actual behavioural differences. The findings support the implementation of initiatives such as reverse mentoring, cross-generational collaboration, and team-building focused on shared goals.

By fostering a culture of mutual respect, organisations can mitigate generational friction and promote greater inclusion and engagement.

Summary

Overall, the findings from this research demonstrate, that while generational differences exist, they are often nuanced, overlapping, and context-dependent. The study adds value to the existing literature by revealing the limitations of cohort-based assumptions and emphasising the importance of individual values and experiences. It supports a shift towards more flexible, inclusive, and adaptive workplace strategies, that focus on shared human needs rather than generational divisions.

The next chapter will synthesise these insights into practical recommendations for managers and outline areas for future research.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations
Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusive summary of the research study and reflects on how the findings addressed the core research questions. It evaluates the significance of the results in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks, outlines practical recommendations for workplace management, and highlights the study's limitations. It concludes by proposing avenues for future research to expand the understanding of generational dynamics in professional environments.

Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to explore the workplace experiences and expectations of Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Zoomers), with a focus on five key areas: motivation, communication, leadership, career expectations, and intergenerational collaboration.

The findings confirmed, that while some generational trends are observable such as Gen Z's preference for immediacy and autonomy and Millennials' inclination toward stability and structure these are neither universal nor static. Both cohorts demonstrated shared values such as a desire for purpose, development, and respectful leadership, suggesting, that generational identity alone is insufficient to predict workplace behaviour.

Several key findings diverged from established literature. For example, both generations expressed similar expectations around feedback and career development, contradicting the assumption of stark communication or commitment differences. Furthermore, openness to intergenerational collaboration was much higher than anticipated, challenging dominant narratives of generational conflict (Twenge, 2010; Lyons and Kuron, 2014).

Addressing the Research Questions

RQ1: What are the workplace motivations of Generation Y and Generation Z?
Both cohorts are motivated by personal development, purpose, and autonomy. However, Gen Z places slightly more emphasis on recognition and speed of progression. The findings reveal, that motivation is less determined by generational cohort and more influenced by contextual factors such as economic conditions and digital fluency (Francis and Hoefel, 2018; Vroom, 1964).

RQ2: How do communication and feedback preferences differ across generations?
The data indicates convergence rather than division. Both groups value clarity, empathy, and regularity in communication. This challenges generational stereotypes and supports a flexible communication approach tailored to individual preferences (Schroth, 2019; Williams et al., 2018).

RQ3: What are the leadership and team structure expectations across generations?
Participants across both generations appreciate transparent, inclusive leadership. Gen Z slightly favours flatter hierarchies, while Millennials value defined roles. However, both prioritise leadership based on values and trust, reflecting Schwartz's (1992) universal value dimensions.

RQ4: What are the career expectations of Gen Y and Z?
Contrary to assumptions, Gen Z does not universally reject long-term planning. While they desire fast growth, many respondents also showed concerns about job security and stability traits typically attributed to Millennials. This suggests, that career expectations are shaped more by socio-economic context than generational identity alone.

RQ5: Are intergenerational tensions affecting workplace collaboration?
While communication style differences exist, both generations expressed a willingness to collaborate and learn from each other. Most perceived tension stemmed from assumptions rather than lived experience. These findings suggest, that shared purpose can bridge generational gaps more effectively than rigid cohort divisions.

Theoretical Implications

This study challenges the explanatory power of Generational Cohort Theory (Mannheim, 1952; Smola and Sutton, 2002) in isolation. While generational patterns exist, they do not sufficiently account for the complexity of workplace behaviour. Instead, integrating context-sensitive theories like Schwartz's Value Theory (1992) and Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) provides a more robust understanding.

By revealing overlaps and contradictions within generational expectations, this study contributes to the growing body of research questioning the validity of generational stereotypes in HR and management practices.

Practical Recommendations

To translate the findings into actionable guidance for managers, the recommendations are presented in Table Y. The table summarises each recommendation, identifies its primary target (Gen Y, Gen Z, or both), links it to supporting evidence, and rates the expected effort and impact.

Recommendation	Target Cohort	Supporting Evidence	Effort Level	Expected Impact
Implement rapid, two-way digital feedback	Generation Z	Findings: Feedback Preferences (Fig. 7 & 8; Quotes P08, P14)	Low	Higher engagement and quicker performance adjustment
Maintain structured mentoring and appraisal	Generation Y	Findings: Learning & Development (Fig. 11; Quotes P12, P19)	Medium	Stronger retention and career progression
Use hybrid communication (face-to-face + digital)	Both	Findings: Communication Preferences (Fig. 5 & 6; Quotes P05, P21)	Low	Reduced miscommunication and smoother collaboration

Develop modular, micro-learning programmes	Generation Z	Findings: Learning Approaches (Fig. 11; Quotes P09, P17)	Medium	Faster skill acquisition and adaptability
Emphasise purpose, fairness, and inclusion	Both	Findings: Organisational Values & Collaboration (Fig. 12; Quotes P07, P16)	High	Increased organisational loyalty and culture alignment

Table 3: Recommendations by Cohort, Evidence, Effort, and Expected Impact

This study offers key insights for organisations aiming to foster intergenerational engagement and retain talent from both Generation Y and Generation Z. Based on the survey findings and literature, the following recommendations are proposed:

Tailor Communication Approaches

Communication preferences vary significantly between the two cohorts. Generation Y (Millennials) prefers structured, formal, and well-documented channels, whereas Generation Z values instant, casual, and tech-integrated feedback mechanisms. Implement a blended communication strategy: use structured emails and regular team meetings for Millennials, and tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or even short video updates for Gen Z (Bencsik, et al., 2016). Encourage frequent feedback loops, especially for Gen Z, who expect ongoing performance input and recognition (Ng, et al., 2010).

Adapt Leadership Styles to Generational Needs

The findings suggest Gen Y employees thrive under leaders who provide clear frameworks and autonomy, while Gen Z employees value empathy, inclusivity, and personalised guidance. Train managers in situational leadership and generational awareness to help them flex their style based on team composition (CIPD, 2023). Assign Gen Y employees to project-based leadership roles where they can mentor younger peers, supporting cross-generational cohesion.

Modernise Learning & Development

Both generations value upskilling, but with differing learning styles: Gen Y seeks formal development opportunities, while Gen Z prefers interactive, digital, and self-paced content. Introduce microlearning platforms such as LinkedIn Learning or Coursera with personalisation options. Incorporate gamification and bite-sized learning into onboarding and training, especially to appeal to Gen Z's digital-native mindset (Mishra & Kesari Jena, 2025).

Facilitate Meaningful Intergenerational Collaboration
Despite generational differences, both cohorts value diversity of thought and mentorship. Launch reverse mentoring programmes where Gen Z can share digital skills and Gen Y provides business knowledge. Set up intergenerational project teams to foster knowledge transfer, respect, and innovation (Iden, 2016).

Promote Purpose-Driven Work and Inclusion
Both generations seek meaningful work, but Gen Z especially expects workplaces to reflect their values on diversity, sustainability, and mental health. Develop and publicise clear ESG policies, inclusion initiatives, and employee wellbeing supports. Create safe feedback mechanisms for younger employees to express concerns, supporting psychological safety (CIPD, 2023).

Customise Retention Strategies
Retention incentives must be generation-sensitive. For Gen Y, career progression and autonomy are key, while Gen Z seeks continuous feedback and flexibility. For Gen Y: Offer career path mapping, coaching, and autonomy in how goals are achieved. For Gen Z: Provide flexible work arrangements, immediate recognition, and participation in decision-making.

Limitations of the Study
This study is based on qualitative data collected through a self-administered survey disseminated via social media and the workplace of the researcher. While rich insights were gained, the findings are not generalisable to all workplaces or populations. Additionally, only two generational cohorts (Y and Z) were analysed, with other generations excluded from the final comparison.
The research also relied on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias or individual interpretations of the questions.

Suggestions for Future Research
Future studies could benefit from a larger, more diverse sample, that includes Generation X and Baby Boomers for broader comparison.
Longitudinal studies to explore how generational expectations evolve over time.
Case studies or interviews to deepen understanding of motivations and team dynamics in practice.

Cross-cultural comparisons to assess whether findings hold across national or cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown, that while generational identity can offer useful context, it should not be the primary lens through which workplace behaviours are analysed. Motivation, communication, and career expectations are shaped by a range of factors including personal values, economic conditions, and organisational culture.

The insights provided by this research call for a shift in managerial practice from viewing generational cohorts as rigid categories to understanding them as fluid, evolving, and context-sensitive. Ultimately, people and not generations should be the focus of inclusive, adaptive, and future-ready workplaces.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey Questionnaire

* Indicates required question
1. I have read the above and agree to take part in this study.
2. What is your gender
3. What year were you born?
4. What is your current job industry/sector?
5. How long have you been working professionally?
6. What is your highest level of education?
7. Does your current job align with your field of education?
8. What motivates you most at work, and why (write below)? Select up to 3
8a. Please explain your top choices in the box below
9. What aspects of a job are most important to you when choosing an employer? Select up to 3
10. What makes you feel valued or recognised at work? Select up to 3
11. Can you describe a time when you felt genuinely recognised or appreciated at work?
12. How important is work–life balance to you?
13. How do you prefer to communicate with colleagues or managers? (e.g., email, messaging apps, meetings)
13a. Why do you prefer this method?
14. What type of feedback do you find most helpful?
14a. Please explain why this feedback style works best for you
15. Do you prefer face-to-face interactions or digital communication for important conversations?
16. How do you prefer to learn new skills at work? Select up to 3
Check all, that apply.
17. Have you ever used digital learning tools (e.g., LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, YouTube) to support your development?
18. What does effective teamwork look like to you? Select up to 3
Check all, that apply.
18a. Can you describe a time when teamwork went well or poorly?
19. In team settings, do you prefer clearly defined roles or a more flexible structure?
19a. Please give more details on your last answer
20. What challenges have you experienced when working with colleagues from other generations? Select max 2
20a. Can you provide an example?
21. How important is it to you, that your employer demonstrates commitment to social or environmental issues?
21a. Can you give an example of what this might look like in practice?
22. Have your values around diversity, inclusion, or ethics influenced where you've chosen to work?
22a.Please explain how these values influenced your decision
23. What values do you expect your employer to uphold?
24. Would you be open to a short follow-up interview to explore your answers further?

Appendix B – Participant Information and Consent

Workplace Experiences and Expectations Across Generations.
Welcome!
Thank you for participating in this research project exploring how different generations experience and approach the modern workplace. This survey is part of an academic dissertation for a postgraduate degree.

What's involved:
- The survey contains 23 open-ended questions and should take approximately **10–15 minutes**
- There are no right or wrong answers please answer honestly based on your personal experience
- Responses are **anonymous** unless you choose to provide your email for a follow-up (optional)

Your rights:
- Participation is completely **voluntary**
- You may exit the survey at any time
- No personally identifying information is required

Data protection:
- Responses will be stored securely and used solely for academic purposes
- No individual will be identified in any report or publication
- This research complies with **GDPR** and university ethics standards

By continuing, you confirm you are over 18 and consent to your anonymous responses being used for academic research.

Appendix C – Codebook Snapshot

Theme	Definition	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Workplace Values & Motivators	References to purpose, recognition, financial rewards, or growth opportunities.	Any mention of drivers of effort or commitment.	General job satisfaction statements without detail.
Communication & Feedback Preferences	Comments on preferred communication channels or feedback style/frequency.	Explicit mention of feedback speed, mode, or detail.	General relationship comments not about comms/feedback.
Learning & Upskilling	Discussion of training, mentoring, or skill development approaches.	Mentions of courses, mentors, or digital learning.	Vague mentions of "support" without detail.
Teamwork & Role Clarity	Views on collaboration, team roles, or collective work.	Examples of teamwork successes/challenges.	Individual motivation unrelated to teamwork.
Organisational Ethics & Values	Expectations of employer fairness, sustainability, diversity, or responsibility.	Any mention of ethics, inclusion, CSR, sustainability.	Comments only about pay/benefits with no value link.

Appendix D – Representative Quotes by Theme

Theme	Generation	Quote
Motivation	Gen Y	"A clear career path motivates me most I want to see long-term opportunities." (P11)
	Gen Z	"Purpose and impact matter more than pay; I want to feel my work contributes to something bigger." (P09)
	Gen Y (neg.)	"At this stage, salary is my key motivator everything else is secondary." (P06)
Communication	Gen Y	"Email remains my preferred channel it feels professional and traceable." (P14)
	Gen Z	"Messaging apps like Teams or WhatsApp are faster and make collaboration smoother." (P07)
	Gen Y (neg.)	"I prefer phone calls for clarity too many messages get lost." (P18)
Feedback	Gen Y	"I value detailed, scheduled feedback from my manager every few weeks so I know where I stand." (P12)
	Gen Z	"Quick feedback via Teams or Slack helps me adjust instantly before small mistakes grow bigger." (P08)
	Gen Y (neg.)	"I actually prefer not to be interrupted too often I like to work independently and review later." (P05)
Teamwork & Leadership	Gen Y	"Defined roles help avoid confusion and ensure accountability." (P19)
	Gen Z	"I prefer flexible teams where we can rotate roles and learn from each other." (P10)
	Gen Z (neg.)	"In my last team, I actually wanted stricter leadership flexibility felt chaotic." (P16)
Learning & Development	Gen Y	"Formal training sessions with clear materials are best for me." (P08)
	Gen Z	"I learn fastest with online tutorials and self-paced modules." (P13)
	Gen Y (neg.)	"I dislike online learning I prefer hands-on experience with a mentor." (P04)
Organisational Values	Gen Y	"I expect fairness and transparency leaders must lead by example." (P15)
	Gen Z	"Diversity and sustainability are essential; if an employer ignores these, I won't stay." (P09)
	Gen Y (neg.)	"I rarely think about ethics or sustainability at work my focus is on performance." (P02)