

Effective Workplace Communication: Organizational Subcultures and Communication Preferences for Gen Z's

Daniel Aswani^{1*} & Josephine Otiende²

¹Daystar University, Kenya (daswani@daystar.ac.ke)

²Daystar University, Kenya (josephineotiende@daystar.co.ke)

*Corresponding Author: daswani@daystar.ac.ke

<https://doi.org/10.62049/jkncu.v5i1.234>

Abstract

In today's evolving workplace, understanding Generation Z's unique communication preferences within organizational subcultures is essential for fostering effective collaboration and maximizing productivity. This study explores how Gen Z interacts within organizational subcultures and how their communication styles contribute to or challenge established workplace norms. By examining the generational characteristics that shape Gen Z's approach to information sharing, collaboration, and engagement, this paper highlights the unique impact of this cohort on workplace communication dynamics. Drawing from theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and case studies, this research identifies key strategies to bridge communication preferences between Gen Z and other generational cohorts. By understanding and leveraging Gen Z's distinctive communication preferences, organizations can enhance intergenerational collaboration, promote adaptability, and cultivate an innovative, inclusive culture that aligns with modern workforce expectations. The objectives include identifying and understanding the existing subcultures within organizations as they relate to Gen Z, including their values, communication styles, and work preferences. Secondly, this paper assesses how organizational subcultures, and generational differences influence the effectiveness of workplace communication for Generation Z, particularly in terms of collaboration and engagement with other cohorts. Thirdly, it investigates the unique communication preferences of Generation Z in the workplace, examining how these preferences compare to those of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, and how they shape interactions within diverse organizational settings. This paper adopted a descriptive research design to systematically describe the characteristics and behaviors of organizational subcultures, Generation Z's communication preferences, and workplace interactions. The paper employed secondary research, commonly referred to as desk research, to analyze existing data from reputable sources. The findings reveal that Generation Z's entry into the workforce is reshaping organizational culture by introducing values centered on freedom, independence, and flexibility, contrasting with older generations' more structured, status-oriented preferences. Their preference for open, transparent, and technology-driven communication fosters collaboration but also highlights potential generational gaps that, if not managed effectively, could hinder workplace communication. Organizations that embrace digital tools, inclusivity, and flexible communication strategies can enhance intergenerational collaboration and align with Gen Z's expectations for innovation, purpose-driven engagement, and continuous learning.

Keywords: National Cohesion, Culture Week Activities, Cultural Competence, Goal Consciousness, National Social Integration

Background

In contemporary workplaces, effective communication is essential for organizational success and employee satisfaction (Adu-Oppong et al., (2014). However, a significant challenge arises from the diversity of organizational cultural backgrounds among employees, leading to varied communication preferences (Ems & Gonzales, 2016). The impact of cultural differences on workplace communication preferences remains an understudied area, hindering the development of tailored communication strategies (Taras, et al, 2011). Without a clear understanding of how cultural backgrounds shape communication preferences, organizations may struggle to foster a conducive work environment, potentially leading to misunderstandings, decreased productivity, and employee dissatisfaction.

Culture, as articulated by Samovar (2020), encompasses the accumulated reservoir of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religious inclinations, perceptions of time, roles, spatial relations, conceptions of the universe and material possessions acquired by a community over successive generations through the collective efforts of individuals and groups. It is also a set of fundamental assumptions created, unearthed, or evolved by a specific group (Schein, 1985a). In essence, culture is passed on to new members as the appropriate framework for perceiving, thinking, and feeling in connection with those challenges.

Organizational success greatly hinges on its culture, with a robust culture potentially leading to an 85% boost in net profit within a five-year timeframe. Moreover, enterprises fostering vibrant cultures and robust workplaces, according to Gardner (2023) communities, witness a 66% reduction in employee burnout, a remarkable 456% increase in the likelihood of perceived inclusion, and a 63% extension in employee tenure. A "subculture" within the realm of cultural studies of communication refers to a collective of individuals who are characterized as deviating from or existing at the margins of societal norms due to their distinctive interests and behaviours, as well as the specific contexts in which they engage in these activities (Gelder, 2005). The impact of subcultures within an organization on choosing and utilizing communication channels can significantly influence overall communication effectiveness (Srinivasan, 2012). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for organizations that foster effective communication across diverse subcultures.

As Generation Z enters the workforce, their unique values, communication styles, and work preferences are reshaping organizational subcultures, influencing workplace dynamics and interactions. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z prioritizes flexibility, transparency, and digital communication, challenging traditional workplace norms and requiring organizations to adapt (Lifintsev et al., 2019). In the context of generational diversity, Generation Z's unique characteristics introduce distinct communication preferences and styles. These differences add layers of complexity to organizational subcultures, requiring tailored approaches to communication to ensure cohesion and effectiveness (Glass, 2007).

Recognizing this generational cohort's specific needs and preferences within diverse subcultures is a crucial step for organizations committed to creating workplaces that capitalize on the strengths inherent in generational diversity.

Statement of the Problem

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Gen Z is expected to comprise roughly 30% of the Workforce by 2030 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2009, as affirmed by Twenge (2023), now comprises around 2 billion people globally and is projected to form 27 percent of the workforce by 2025 (McCrindle, 2024). This shift could transform the workplace as employers look to draw in and keep this emerging talent with effective communication.

Effective communication is essential for organizational success and employee satisfaction in modern workplaces. (Bakirbekova & Suleimenova, 2018).). However, a substantial challenge arises from the diversity of cultural backgrounds among employees, leading to varied communication preferences (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021).). As organizations embrace diversity and witness the coexistence of multiple generational cohorts, the influence of subcultures within these entities becomes a critical aspect of communication strategies.

Navigating a workplace comprised of diverse subcultures poses a distinctive organizational challenge for leaders, managers, and HR professionals (Glass, 2007). These subcultures, represented by generations such as Baby Boomers (ages 55-73), Generation X (ages 39-54), Millennials (23-38), and Generation Z (age 22 and younger), bring a tapestry of perspectives, experiences, values, and goals into the professional landscape that can cause communication inefficiencies (Sevitz, 2022).

The diversity of these generational perspectives within an organization can contribute to forming subcultures, each with its own set of values, communication preferences, and work-related behaviours. That is why managing effective communication within any multigenerational workforce requires understanding how subcultures influence the choice of communication preferences across multi-generations and the consequences on overall workplace communication (Hirsch, 2021).

The generational cultural diversity of different generations at the workplace concerning their values, norms, language, and communication preferences can be a source of conflict if not well handled. Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y have different cultural preferences regarding communication channels and preferences (Woodward & Vongswasdi, 2017). Understanding these generational differences is crucial for effective communication, as it influences how individuals within subcultures interact and work.

Despite the recognized importance of effective communication in achieving organizational goals, there is a limited understanding of how subcultures, characterized by distinct norms, values, and communication preferences, contribute to or hinder effective workplace communication. This knowledge gap poses a critical challenge for organizations aiming to enhance communication effectiveness (Sumsakaya et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a pressing need to systematically examine the intricate interplay between subcultures and communication preferences across multiple generations, specifically Gen Z, to unveil underlying dynamics and consequences, ultimately providing insights that can inform strategies for fostering more cohesive and efficient organizational communication.

This paper examines the impact of organizational subcultures on effective workplace communication, specifically focusing on Generation Z's communication preferences. It aims to identify Gen Z's unique communication styles and how these preferences interact with existing organizational subcultures and other generational cohorts to enhance or hinder effective workplace communication.

Objectives

1. To identify and understand the existing subcultures within organizations as they relate specifically to Generation Z, including their values, communication styles, and work preferences.
2. To assess how organizational subcultures and generational differences influence the effectiveness of workplace communication for Generation Z, particularly in terms of collaboration and engagement with other cohorts.
3. To investigate the unique communication preferences of Generation Z in the workplace, examining how these preferences compare to those of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, and how they shape interactions within diverse organizational settings.

Significance of This Paper

The significance of this paper lies in addressing a critical gap in understanding the dynamics of subcultures and communication preferences across multi-generations within organizations and their impact on overall communication effectiveness.

1. By recognizing and understanding subcultures, organizations can tailor their communication approaches to align with the preferences of different groups, leading to improved information flow and collaboration.
2. The paper aims to go beyond identifying challenges and explore opportunities for leveraging subcultural diversity to enhance communication strategies. Organizations can learn to capitalize on different subcultures' strengths, fostering innovation and creativity in communication approaches.
3. Given the generational diversity present in contemporary workplaces, the paper's focus on effective workplace communication in the context of organizational subcultures and communication preferences for Gen Z is particularly relevant. This understanding can help organizations bridge the gap between generations, reducing potential conflicts and improving intergenerational communication.
4. In summary, this paper is significant because it offers a comprehensive exploration of Effective Workplace Communication about organizational Subcultures and Communication Preferences for Gen Z. The ultimate goal is to guide practitioners and academics toward developing more effective and inclusive communication strategies that align with Gen Z's preferences while bridging generational gaps within organizational subcultures, thus fostering a more cohesive and effective workplace communication environment.
5. By highlighting Generation Z's distinct communication styles and preferences, the paper aims to foster a better understanding of how to bridge generational divides, enhance collaboration, and create an inclusive organizational culture that supports productivity and employee satisfaction.

Organizational Subcultures, Multi-Generational Communication Preferences, and Communication Effectiveness

Navigating a workplace comprised of diverse subcultures poses a distinctive organizational challenge for leaders, managers, and HR professionals (Glass, 2007). These subcultures, represented by generations such as Baby Boomers (ages 55-73), Generation X(ages 39-54), Millennials (23-38), and Generation Z (age 22 and younger), bring a tapestry of perspectives, experiences, values, and goals into the professional landscape that can cause communication inefficiencies(Sevitz, 2022).

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Baby boomers grew up during a period of significant social and economic change. They witnessed the rise of large corporations, establishing traditional office environments, and developing clear hierarchies. (Sevitz, 2022). As a result, they may be more accustomed to and comfortable with these structures. (Espinoza et al., 2010). Their preference for face-to-face communication suggests a desire for personal connection and direct interaction, possibly reflecting the era in which they came of age when digital communication tools were not as prevalent.

Baby Boomers appreciate a corporate subculture that values teamwork, personal relationships, and a sense of purpose. (Sevitz, 2022). They may thrive in organizations with a clear mission and a focus on interpersonal relationships. Established corporations or organizations with a strong company culture may appeal to them. Baby Boomers value organizational subcultures with traditional workplace structures, including hierarchical organization and a focus on loyalty, respect, and obedience. This preference might align with a more conservative or traditional work culture.

Generation X (1965-1980)

Despite not being digital natives, Generation X employees exhibit a high level of comfort with technology in the workplace, with the majority identifying as tech-savvy (Sevitz, 2022). Gen X individuals are crucial in leadership, managing larger teams, displaying greater job tenure, and handling more substantial workloads (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Unlike Millennials, they tend to stay in the same positions longer, with only 37% considering leaving for career advancement (Lovely & Buffum, 2007). These professionals seek technology that aids their professional development and prefer receiving coaching from external consultants or trainers rather than their managers. (Sevitz, 2022).

Generation X values an organizational subculture of independence, flexibility, and a work-life balance (Alsop, 2008); They prefer organizations that offer cultures of autonomy, innovation, and a less hierarchical structure (Chen & Choi, 2008). Start-ups or companies with a more relaxed and informal culture may be attractive to Generation X (Schullery, 2013; Strauss & Howe, 1991). This type of generation prefers organizational culture that is often characterized by a focus on collaboration, innovation, and a more relaxed approach to traditional work structures. This generation also values an organizational culture that emphasizes outcomes and results over strict adherence to office hours and values the integration of work with other aspects of life attracts them.

Millennials (1981-1996)

Millennials exhibit a distinct preference for workplaces that prioritize technology. Having weathered economic instability during their formative years, this generation tends to embrace job flexibility and frequently transitions between roles and careers. Their workplace expectations are characterized by a preference for adaptability and mental health prioritization (Sruk, 2020). Mobile technology is pivotal in Millennials' professional lives, particularly in fostering collaboration and teamwork (Dannar, 2013). Notably, they spearhead the adoption of cloud-based technologies within the workplace. Unlike previous generations, Millennials don't automatically pledge unwavering loyalty and obedience to a company; instead, their commitment is contingent on ongoing support from the organization.

Their influence is particularly evident in rejecting traditional control and coercion methods, with a preference for inclusive and meaning-driven work environments (Zhao, 2018). This underscores the transient nature of their career outlook and the importance they place on employers providing ongoing support for their professional and mental well-being (Chillakuri et al., 2018). Millennials often seek an inclusive, diverse, and socially responsible workplace culture. (Chillakuri et al., 2018). They appreciate innovation, flexibility, and a strong sense of purpose. Organizations focusing on employee development, social impact, and a tech-savvy environment may appeal to Millennials (Sruk,2020).

Generation Z (born after 1996)

Generation Z values diversity, technological innovation, and a dynamic work environment (Lifintsev et al., 2019). They may thrive in organizations that embrace change, foster creativity, and offer opportunities for continuous learning. Start-ups or tech-driven companies with a collaborative and tech-friendly culture attract Generation Z. Gen Z has grown up in a digital age, so they are often comfortable with technology (Sun & Cheng, 2018). An organization that embraces and integrates the culture of the latest tech tools and platforms will likely be appealing. Gen Z values work-life balance and flexibility. Companies that offer cultures of flexible work hours, remote work options, and a focus on outcomes rather than strict schedules attract and retain Gen Z employees.

Diversity and inclusion are crucial for Gen Z. An organizational culture that values and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion will likely be more attractive to this generation. (Bencsik et al., 2016). Gen Z often seeks purpose and meaning in their work. Organizational cultures with a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and ethical business practices will likely resonate with this generation. Gen Z appreciates open and transparent communication. Companies that foster an environment of open dialogue, where feedback is valued and acted upon, are likely to create a positive work culture (Li,2017). A commitment to ongoing learning and development is important for Gen Z (Chica et al., 2021). Organizational cultures that provide opportunities for skill-building, mentorship, and continuous learning will likely be more attractive to this generation.

Gen Z is known for its entrepreneurial spirit (Jeraj & Aydin, 2021). Companies that encourage innovation and creativity and allow employees to take on entrepreneurial roles or projects within the organization may appeal to this generation. Gen Z appreciates recognition for their contributions. An organizational culture that acknowledges and rewards employees for their hard work and achievements can be appealing, whether through traditional rewards or newer forms of recognition. Recognizing and addressing mental health concerns is crucial for Gen Z (Paulyne, 2023). An organizational culture prioritizes employee well-being and offers mental health support programs, creating a more supportive and appealing work environment, and enhancing effective workplace communication by promoting openness and trust.

Theoretical Framework

Henri Tajfel and John Turner developed Social Identity Theory (SIT) in the 1970s. (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The theory is based on the premise that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding organizational subcultures and communication preferences across generations within the context of workplace communication. Employees often identify with subcultures within the organization, such as departmental

teams, professional groups, or interest-based networks, which influence their communication styles, values, and interactions with colleagues.

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), SIT acknowledges the role of social context in shaping identity. In a workplace context, generational differences can contribute to distinct social identities and influence communication dynamics.

In essence, then, understanding these differences through the lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT) can enhance effective workplace communication by helping organizations tailor their communication strategies to align with Generation Z's preferences and foster a more inclusive organizational culture.

Applying SIT to organizational communication involves recognizing the impact of social identity on employees and the possibility of promoting inclusivity, reducing intergroup biases, and fostering a shared organizational identity that transcends subcultures and generational differences.

In summary, Social Identity Theory provides a framework for understanding how employees' generational identities influence their communication preferences and behaviours. This allows organizations to develop more effective communication strategies that acknowledge and bridge the gaps between different subcultures, particularly in accommodating the unique needs of Generation Z in the workplace. Applying this theory to organizational contexts involves recognizing and navigating subcultures and generational differences to promote effective communication and collaboration in the workplace.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Kothari (2004) defines descriptive research design as a type of research design that is used to describe the characteristics, behaviour, or conditions of a particular phenomenon or group of individuals. A descriptive research design was used in this study because the researcher wanted to obtain information about the current status of a particular situation or phenomenon which is organizational subcultures, communication preferences, Gen Z's, and workplace communication. Descriptive research aimed to describe what had happened without attempting to explain the causes or reasons behind it.

This study employed a secondary research approach, commonly referred to as desk research, to analyze existing data from various reputable sources. Secondary research was selected due to its reliance on pre-evaluated and systematically filtered data, ensuring reliability and credibility. As noted by Yin (2014), secondary research is advantageous when utilizing established sources, as it enhances the trustworthiness of the findings. The study specifically curated and analyzed relevant data to align with the research objectives. Additionally, secondary research was deemed appropriate due to time constraints, as it allowed for the efficient use of pre-existing data, thereby optimizing both time and resources while maintaining methodological rigor.

Access to historical data from existing literature in academic journals, social media, articles, and research papers provided a wide range of data on organizational subcultures and communication preferences, which helped track trends and compare data. Data sources were also from prior studies on Organizational Subcultures and Communication Preferences for Gen Z' for Effective Workplace Communication, using quantitative and qualitative data. This study gathered and collated all this data to produce a new secondary dataset.

Secondary research was ideal in this study as it was conducted by third-party researchers who were not invested in the outcome of the research. Secondary data was also useful for exploratory research, as it was used to identify areas for further investigation. The existing data sets typically had large sample sizes obtained using well-detailed sampling plans.

Thus, these resources were used to create estimates that were characteristic of large populations of interest. The advantage of secondary research is that researchers using this method can replicate findings using similar analyses (David & Sutton, 2004).

The criteria used to select secondary sources of data were:

1. **Relevance:** The information gathered was relevant to the research topic or question. The data collected was related to the specific study area and addressed the research question.
2. **Validity:** The accuracy and reliability of the information were verified and credible sources were used. The information was not manipulated or biased. The researcher documented all their sample features, characteristics, methods and procedures.
3. **Currency:** The information was up-to-date and relevant to the current research problem of organizational subcultures and communications preferences across generations for effective workplace communication. The publication date was recent and relevant.
4. **Scope:** The scope of the research was defined. The type and quantity of information that was required to answer the research question was used in the study
5. **Accessibility:** The data and information sources were accessible and available. The information sources were identified and accessible, credible, and available.
6. **Key themes and words:** The secondary data used contained meaningful and relevant answers to this study's research questions. Key themes that matched organizational subcultures, communication preferences, and workplace communication were selected. Correlations and relationships between the different sets of data were identified.

Secondary data analysis, which involved reviewing existing literature from books, articles, websites, and research papers, was used. The study used content analysis, which involved analyzing and interpreting the content of written materials, such as documents, media, journals, and articles, to obtain information about Effective Workplace Communication: Organizational Subcultures and Communication Preferences for Gen Z's. The data collected through these methods were analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns or trends in the data.

Data Analysis

Themes Identified in Secondary Data Analysis

Following Creswell's (1998) description of the systematic coding data process of research, the responses were grouped and coded to look for patterns in the data. Codes, categories, and themes emerged through the inductive analysis of this data, allowing the researcher to capture the essence of the subject's experiences. In the study done by Lazazzara (2016) that was based on Rethinking Organizational Culture: The Role of Generational Subcultures, several themes were realized:

i. Organizational Subcultures

The interconnectedness between organizational subcultures, generational differences, and workplace communication was observed (Lazazzara, 2016). These factors influenced overall workplace dynamics. The three models—Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Schwartz—employed different methodologies to understand and characterize cultural dimensions. Geert Hofstede conducted a large-scale study for the Hofstede Model between 1967 and 1973, collecting 117,000 questionnaires from employees in a multinational company (IBM). The initial study involved 40 nations and was later extended to 53 cultures.

The model identified four primary subcultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity. Values were measured through questionnaires focusing on work-related values in a structured organization.

A questionnaire presented hypothetical situations to elicit responses on organizational behaviour and general contexts. The model in Lazazzara (2016) identified seven cultural dimensions: universalism-particularism, achievement-ascriptive, individualism-collectivism, affectivity-neutrality, specificity-diffuseness, internal-external control and time orientation.

Shalom H. Schwartz developed the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values in the 1990s. The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) was the primary instrument to measure organisational culture and values based on the theory. The model and SVS were cross-culturally validated using data from diverse samples in 82 countries. There was the identification of ten basic values, according to Lazazzara (2016), organized into a circular structure reflecting two bipolar dimensions- openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence. Values were measured through the SVS, and the model reflects identical patterns of associations among values.

In Hofstede's Model, cultural dimensions, such as power distance and individualism-collectivism, were highlighted, influencing the development of subcultures within organizations. It highlighted that in a high-power-distance culture, there might be a hierarchical subculture, while in a collectivistic culture, a team-oriented subculture may emerge.

In the Trompenaars Model, Trompenaars' dimensions, including universalism-particularism and individualism-collectivism, contribute to forming distinct subcultures. Organizations might exhibit universalistic values in one department and more particularistic values in another. In Schwartz's Theory, the emphasis was on openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence. This model provided insights into the values dominating different organisational subcultures.

The models mentioned—Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Schwartz—were related to organizational subcultures and communication preferences across generations in the context of effective workplace communication. The impact of organizational cultural dimensions on organizational communication enhanced understanding of how workplace colleagues from different generations approach communication within the workplace. These models used various data collection methods, including large-scale questionnaires, hypothetical scenarios, and cross-cultural validation, to identify and define cultural dimensions and values. Each model provided a unique perspective on understanding and comparing cultures, contributing to the field of cross-cultural research and effective workplace communication.

ii. Communication Preferences Across Generations

According to Lazazzara (2016), generational diversity's impact on organizational dynamics was also recognised. There was also an analysis of the preferences of various generations regarding workplace communication and understanding the unique communication styles and expectations of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

Socio-economic and physical conditions shape communication preferences across generations during their formative years. For instance, Lazazzara (2016) affirms that generations who came of age during periods of insecurity and war tend to embrace modernist survival values such as economic determinism, rationality, materialism, conformity, and respect for authority at work. This alignment is noticeable in the values commonly associated with the Baby Boomer generation.

On the other hand, those who grew up in times of socio-economic security, such as Generation X and Generation Y, tend to adopt postmodernist values and subcultures (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). These subcultures and values include egalitarianism, individualism, interpersonal trust, tolerance of diversity and self-transcendence. Generation Z adopts a tech-driven culture, autonomous and independent culture. According to research by Egri and Ralston (2004), there's an observed cultural cross-convergence in value orientation when comparing personal values across generational cohorts. In the context of organizational subculture, these generational value differences become crucial to understanding the dynamics within the workplace. Recognizing and acknowledging these distinctions can inform effective communication, collaboration and organizational cohesion strategies.

Key Outcomes and Results

In the study done by Lazazzara, A. (2016) that was based on Rethinking Organizational Culture: The Role of Generational Subcultures, several outcomes and results were realized that aligned with the topic of 'Effective Workplace Communication: Organizational Subcultures and communication Preferences for Gen Z's.

1. The information highlighted key characteristics of three generations in the workforce—Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y—and their associated work values, communication preferences and attitudes. Understanding these generational differences was crucial for managing organizational subcultures and fostering effective workplace communication.
2. With regards to organizational subcultures, Baby Boomers have a strong work ethic, high job involvement and are competitive, self-interested and loyal. They value authority, hierarchy and respect based on experience. Generation X values an organizational culture of personal freedom, challenging work, and work-life balance. This group is sceptical of authority, independent and less loyal toward employers. They also embrace change and diversity and are oriented toward work-life balance, informal work environments and technology. They are optimistic, intrinsically motivated and prioritize growth opportunities over external rewards.
3. In essence, these generational differences in values and attitudes contribute to forming distinct organizational subcultures. Leaders must recognize and accommodate these diverse subcultures to ensure a harmonious work environment.
4. Regarding communication preferences across generations: Baby Boomers respect authority and hierarchy. They also prefer formal communication, are team-oriented, optimistic and loyal.

Generation X on the other hand value autonomy and challenging work. They also prefer direct and transparent communication and are comfortable with change and diversity. Generation Y embrace technology, prefer informal communication channels and are intrinsically motivated and seek growth opportunities.

Understanding and managing generational differences in work values, communication, and attitudes are crucial for preventing conflicts, fostering innovation, and promoting a positive organizational culture.

Findings

The findings highlight that as new generations enter the workforce, they bring distinct values that can shift organizational culture. This specifically applies to Generation Z, as their entry into the workforce introduces new perspectives on values (freedom-related vs. status-related) and work preferences. The rise of Generation Z is leading to a shift in organizational culture, which is central to understanding their unique subculture, values, and communication preferences. Their inclination towards freedom, independence, and flexibility, in contrast to older generations' more status-oriented or structured values, directly relates to the objective of this study which is to identify and understand the existing subcultures within organizations as they relate specifically to Generation Z, including their values, communication styles and work preferences.

Generational differences can affect communication dynamics, as each generation may prioritize different values in the workplace. Specifically, Generation Z's work preferences, which may differ from Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, could influence how they collaborate and engage with other cohorts. If individual cultural inclinations and generational values aren't effectively managed, workplace communication could become ineffective. The need for synergy among cultural perspectives is crucial to understanding how these subcultures affect collaboration and communication between generations.

Generation Z prefers open, transparent, and technology-driven communication in the workplace. They thrive in environments that foster open dialogue, where feedback is valued and acted upon (Li, 2017). Their digital upbringing makes them comfortable with tech-based communication tools, and they gravitate toward organizations that integrate the latest platforms seamlessly (Sun & Cheng, 2018). Flexibility in communication—such as asynchronous messaging, collaborative digital platforms, and remote-friendly interactions—aligns with their work-life balance expectations. Additionally, Gen Z values inclusivity and purpose-driven discussions, appreciating workplaces that promote diversity, mental well-being, and recognition (Bencsik et al., 2016; Paulyne, 2023). Their entrepreneurial mindset also favors communication styles that encourage creativity, innovation, and continuous learning (Jeraj & Aydin, 2021; Chica et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, firstly, the diverse characteristics and preferences of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z necessitate a strategic approach to organizational subcultures and communication strategies. Secondly, organizational cultures, subcultures, and values are crucial in job selection and person-organization fit. Different generations may be attracted to organizations with values that align with their cultural preferences and leaders in workplace environments need to know how to handle each generation. Lastly, leaders who recognize and embrace these differences can create an inclusive and effective workplace communication environment, enhancing organizational success and employee

satisfaction. Differences in values among generational groups can lead to intergenerational conflict. Conflict, while potentially disruptive, can also be a functional way to stimulate organizational learning and change.

References

- Adu-Oppong, A. A., & Agyin-Birikorang, E. (2014). Communication in the workplace: Guidelines for improving effectiveness. *Global Journal of Commerce & Management Perspective*, 3(5), 208-13.
- Alsop, R. (2008). *The trophy kids grow up: How the millennial generation is shaking up the workplace*. San Francisco.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 20–39.
- Bakirbekova, A. M., & Suleimenova, A. R. (2018). Effective communication in the organization personnel management. *Central Asian Economic Review*, (1), 60-72.
- Bencsik, A., Juhász, T., & Horváth-Csikós, G. (2016). Y and Z generations at workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 6(3), 90–106. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2016.03.06>
- Chen, P., & Choi, Y. (2008). Generational differences in work values: A study of hospitality management. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20(6), 595–615.
- Chica, Ó. D., Fernandez, D. S., & Lazo, M. M. (2021). Creativity in Z generation according to its social media activity. *Fonseca, Journal of Communication*, 22, 231-253.
- Chillakuri, B., & Mogili, R. (2018). Managing millennials in the digital era: Building a sustainable culture. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 26(3), 7-10.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Dannar, P. R. (2013). Millennials: What they offer our organizations and how leaders can make sure they deliver. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 6(1), 3.
- David, M., & Sutton, C. D. (2004). *Social research, the basics*. Sage Publications.
- Egri, C. P., & Ralston, D. A. (2004). Generation cohorts and personal values: A comparison of China and the United States. *Organization Science*, 15, 210–220.
- Ems, L., & Gonzales, A. L. (2016). Subculture-centered public health communication: A social media strategy. *New Media & Society*, 18(8), 1750–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815570294>
- Espinoza, C., Ukleja, M., & Rusch, C. (2010). *Managing the millennials: Discover the core competencies for managing today's workforce*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Gardner, R. (2023, October 31). 12 types of organizational culture you should know. AIHR. <https://www.aihr.com/blog/types-of-organizational-culture/>
- Gelder, K. (2005). *The subcultures reader*. London.

- Glass, A. (2007). Understanding generational differences for competitive success. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 39(2), 98-103.
- Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2007). The next 20 years. *Harvard Business Review*, 85, 41-52.
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change and democracy: The human development sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jeraj, M., & Aydin, G. (2021). Entrepreneurial curiosity among Generation Z: A multi-country empirical research. *Advances in Business-Related Scientific Research Journal*, 12(1).
- Kathryn, H. (2011). *The expansion of ecotourism in Tanzania and its implications for the Maasai*. The Ohio State University.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International.
- Lazazzara, A. (2016). Rethinking organizational culture: The role of generational subcultures. *Understanding Cultural Traits: A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Cultural Diversity*, 249-271.
- Li, L. (2017). Collaborative me. Explorative study to create desirable collaborative experience for Generation Z in the coming workplace.
- Lifintsev, D., Fleşeriu, C., & Wellbrock, W. (2019). A study of the attitude of Generation Z to cross-cultural interaction in business. *Information & Media*, 86, 41-55.
- Lovely, S., & Buffum, A. (2007). *Generations at school: Building an age-friendly learning community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- McCrindle Research Pty Ltd. (2023, November 28). Gen Z and gen alpha infographic update. McCrindle. <https://mccrindle.com.au/article/topic/generation-z/gen-z-and-gen-alpha-infographic-update/>
- Niemetz, H., De Kinderen, S., & Constantinidis, C. (2013). Understanding the role of subcultures in the enterprise architecture process. *Proceedings of the 21st European Conference on Information Systems*.
- Paulyne, P. (2023, March 23). What are gen Z's work ethics and values? Deskbird. <https://www.deskbird.com/blog/gen-z-work-ethics-values>
- Samovar, L. A. (2020). *Intercultural communication: A reader*. Cengage Learning.
- Schein, E. H. (1985a). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schullery, N. M. (2013). Workplace engagement and generational differences in values. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(2), 252-265.
- Sevitz, E. (2022, September 7). How to improve communication across generations at work. iOFFICE. <https://www.iofficecorp.com/blog/improve-communication-workplace>
- Srinivasan, R. (2012). Rethinking digital cultures and divides: The case for reflective media. *The Information Society*, 28(1), 24-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2011.630775>

Stahl, G. K., & Maznevski, M. L. (2021). Unraveling the effects of cultural diversity in teams: A retrospective of research on multicultural work groups and an agenda for future research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(1), 4.

Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1991). *Generations: The history of America's future, 1584 to 2069*. New York.

Sruk, B. (2020, April). How Millennials are changing organizations and business models—New values, new principles, new culture. *DIEM: Dubrovnik International Economic Meeting*, 5(1), 101-108.

Sumskaya, A., Sumskoy, P., & Solomeina, V. (2020). Subcultures of the “analogue” and the “digital”: Prospects of intergenerational communication. *Communication Trends in the Post-Literacy Era: Polylingualism, Multimodality and Multiculturalism as Preconditions for New Creativity*, 550–572. <https://doi.org/10.15826/b978-5-7996-3081-2.38>

Sun, J., & Cheng, D. (2018). *China's generation gap*. New York.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel (Ed.), *Psychology of intergroup relations, 2nd ed.*, 7–24. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall Publishers.

Taras, V., Steel, P., & Kirkman, B. L. (2011). Three decades of research on national culture in the workplace: Do the differences still make a difference? *Organizational Dynamics*, 40(3), 189-198.

Twenge, J. M. (2023). *Generations: The real differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and what they mean for America's future*. Simon and Schuster.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024, September 13). Demographic characteristics (CPS). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm>

Woodward, I. C., & Vongswasdi, P. (2017). More that unites than divides: Intergenerational communication preferences in the workplace. *Communication Research and Practice*, 3(4), 358–385. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2017.1275259>

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.

Zhao, Y. (2018). Managing Chinese millennial employees and their impact on human resource management transformation: An empirical study. *Asia Pacific Business Review*.