

The Role of Managerial Adaptation in Motivating and Communicating of Generations

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Abstract— This study examines the impact of intergenerational differences in the workplace on leadership, with a focus on motivation, communication, and leadership styles. It highlights how Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y, and Z differ in values, work attitudes, and motivational needs, posing complex challenges for leaders. The study emphasizes the importance of situational and adaptive leadership, coaching, emotional intelligence, and flexible approaches. Effectively managing generational diversity not only reduces conflicts but also fosters collaboration and enhances organizational performance. This study also serves as a preparation for a primary research project. The secondary literature review on how leaders manage, motivate, and communicate with different generations has supported the development of a questionnaire intended to be distributed among business owners, as well as senior and middle managers. In our next work, we will continue our research by processing and evaluating the primary data.

Keywords- Human Resources, Human Resources Management, Labor Market, Leadership, Motivation, Generations

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main workplace challenges of our time is employee motivation and performance enhancement. The issue is further complicated by the growing generational diversity within workplaces today. Baby Boomers, currently between the ages of 61 and 79, are still present in the labour market. They find it difficult to step away from work, yet they possess extensive professional experience and expertise. Alongside them, Generation X employees, now aged between 44 and 60, have long contributed to the world of work. They are known for their diligence, though this often comes at the expense of a healthy work–life balance. Members of Generation Y, who are currently between 30 and 43 years old, tend to have lower lexical knowledge, but they place great importance on community and social relationships. The often-discussed Generation Z has also been part of the workforce for some time now; they are between 15 and 29 years old and are known as *digital natives*. Employers continue to explore the most effective ways to motivate this generation. Gradually, Generation Alpha is also entering the labour market, they are expected to challenge the power structures built by the Boomers and to shape an entirely new society.

Research suggests that the perception of a generational gap is a real phenomenon, and that perceived generational differences can often lead to workplace conflicts. Such conflicts frequently arise when people judge others based on their own assumptions and expectations. Given these factors, traditional leadership styles are no longer viable. When managing collaboration among different age

groups—each with its own motivations and perspectives—it is no longer possible to rely on a single leadership approach. When Kurt Lewin developed his theory of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles in 1938, such generational differences did not yet exist. Today, this model can no longer be applied to the management of a modern workplace community, and even the later Blake–Mouton (1978) managerial grid model may not provide clear guidance for contemporary leadership.

To manage generational differences and especially their contrasting mindsets a differentiated leadership approach has become necessary. In situations where hierarchy-driven Boomers must work alongside Generation Z employees, who are fundamentally questioning and reshaping those hierarchies, standardized leadership practices and uniform motivational strategies simply cannot function effectively.

II. THE IMPACT OF GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON LEADERSHIP

Let us examine the distinct values and attitudes toward work characteristic of different generations. Generational differences have a significant impact on leadership and workplace cooperation, as each age group possesses its own system of values, work attitudes, and motivational needs. These characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

The *Baby Boomer generation (1946–1964)* is typically loyal, persistent, and values stability, hierarchy, and traditional organizational structures. For them, security and recognition are the most important motivational factors, and in terms of leadership style, they tend to prefer traditional, authority-based approaches. Their life philosophy can be summarized by the saying: “*Hard work pays off.*”

Members of *Generation X (1965–1981)*, by contrast, are more independent and pragmatic. They take a responsible approach to work but also place great importance on maintaining a healthy work–life balance. They are primarily motivated by opportunities for development and the ability to work autonomously. Their motto might be: “*Work smart, not just hard.*”

The *Generation Y (1982–1995)*, consists of flexible, goal-oriented employees who actively seek challenges. They are motivated by meaningful work, continuous feedback, and opportunities for growth and personal freedom. Their guiding belief could be expressed as: “*My work should have purpose.*”

The youngest group, *Generation Z (1996–2010)*, were born into the digital age. They adapt quickly, value self-expression, and use technological tools naturally in their work. For them, flexibility, creativity, and authentic leadership are of particular importance. Their attitude is best summarized by the idea: *"I work, but my job doesn't define who I am."*

Table 1.: Generations' relationship to work and motivational characteristics (*own editing*)

Generation	Season	Attitude to work	Motivation	Key phrase
Baby boomer	1946–1964	Loyal, persistent, values stability and hierarchy.	Safety, recognition, traditional driving.	"Hard work pays off."
Generation X	1965–1981	In-dependent, responsible, practical.	Work-life balance, development.	"Work smart, not just a lot."
Generation Y	1982–1995	Flexible, goal-oriented, looking for challenges.	Meaningful work, feedback, freedom.	"My work should have mean-ing."
Generation Z	1996–2010	Digital, fast, self-expressive.	Flexibi-lity, creativity,a uthentic leader-ship.	"I work, but work should not define who I am."

A. Maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications

As shown in Table 1, the key statements characterizing each generation differ significantly, which in itself carries the potential for collaboration challenges. These differences clearly illustrate how the diverse mindsets of generations can pose challenges for leaders. Managing cooperation among different age groups is a complex task, as leaders must be able to apply various motivational strategies to address distinct needs. While Baby Boomers are primarily motivated by recognition, members of Generation X value autonomy and professional responsibility. For Generation Y, providing meaningful goals and opportunities for personal and professional growth is the most effective way to inspire them, whereas members of Generation Z feel most engaged when they can express their creativity and enjoy technological freedom. All of this highlights that, in a multigenerational workplace, leaders must adopt a flexible and personalized approach to managing employee needs in order to build effective and harmonious teamwork. Due to these differing motivational perspectives, a leader working with multiple generations must tailor their motivational techniques accordingly. Boomers respond best to recognition, Generation X values independence, Generation Y seeks meaningful objectives and growth opportunities, while Generation Z is driven by creativity and digital freedom.

Table 2.: Communication and motivation of generations from the point of view of workplace leadership (*own editing*)

Generation	Communi-cation style	What can motivate	Key leadership task
Baby boomer	formal, personal	recognition, appreciation	Evaluation of their experience

Generation	Communi-cation style	What can motivate	Key leadership task
Generation X	Straightfor-ward, logical	independence, flexibility	Trust and clear goals
Generation Y	Open, interactive	development, meaningful goal	Coaching and inspiration
Generation Z	digital, fast	credibility, creativity	Authentic, technology-friendly driving

As illustrated in Table 2, the communication styles, motivational factors, and leadership expectations of different generations fundamentally determine the success of leadership within an organization. Generational diversity has become increasingly characteristic of modern workplaces, posing complex challenges for leaders. Different age groups represent varying sets of values, expectations, and communication preferences. Generational differences are evident not only in values and motivation but also in communication styles and expectations toward leaders. Understanding these features on a systemic level has become one of the key challenges of modern leadership, as the labour market currently includes Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z each shaped by distinct social, technological, and cultural contexts. Therefore, the leader's core task is not merely direction and control, but rather the harmonization of generational differences in communication and motivation, as well as the creation of an organizational culture in which every generation can find its place and value.

The *Baby Boomer generation* prefers formal, face-to-face communication, which is closely tied to traditional organizational hierarchies and requires the leader to demonstrate loyalty and recognition of experience. In contrast, *Generation X* values straightforward, logical communication and rational reasoning, with trust and clear goals at the center. For Boomers, leadership authority symbolizes organizational stability, while Generation X finds motivation in partnership rather than subordination. Consequently, for leaders this means that paternalistic management patterns must increasingly give way to trust-based, goal-oriented cooperation.

Generation Y, which seeks purpose and growth in their work, demands a more open and interactive style of communication. For them, the key role of a leader is to act as a coach and source of inspiration rather than as a controller. Effective collaboration with Generation Y therefore requires psychological safety and the joint definition of meaningful goals.

The emergence of *Generation Z* further expands the dimensions of leadership. Having grown up in the digital era, they respond best to fast, visual, and authentic communication. The leader's key task in this case is to develop an authentic, technology-friendly leadership style that not only accepts but also integrates the digital competencies of younger employees into the organization's functioning. For this generation, leadership success depends on authenticity and partnership, as they value personal integrity and inspirational example over formal authority.

Overall, the characteristics presented in the table clearly demonstrate that leadership priorities evolve from generation to generation: while earlier cohorts valued hierarchy, recognition, and respect for experience, newer generations place emphasis on trust, personal development, creativity, and authentic communication. For leaders, this means that the key to success lies in adaptive leadership—developing a flexible leadership style capable of

balancing stability with innovation, and experience with digital openness.

In multigenerational workplaces, leadership is no longer about control but about coordination, inspiration, and value creation, this is the defining task of 21st-century leaders. The most important responsibility of a leader in such an environment is to develop a flexible, personalized leadership approach. A successful leader recognizes that different generations communicate in different ways and are motivated by different factors and adjusts their leadership strategy accordingly. Leadership, therefore, is not merely a function of direction but an act of alignment and integration aimed at strengthening intergenerational cooperation, fostering mutual understanding, and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Baby Boomers prefer personal, face-to-face communication, and expect their leaders to provide tasks or praise through direct personal interaction. Generation X values logical reasoning and clear objectives, whereas Generation Y prefers interactive communication and responds best to coaching-based leadership. Generation Z, being technology-oriented, is comfortable with digital and even chat-based exchanges. These diverse expectations make it clear that leadership approaches cannot be uniform.

This is further confirmed by our earlier research [1], which found that leaders value different aspects of workplace behaviour, although certain shared elements appear in relation to motivation and skills. Similar conclusions were drawn by Szabó-Szentgróti [2], who found that *“intergenerational conflict can often be traced back to the misapplication of leadership and HR functions.”*

In the following section, we will examine the specific leadership application challenges that arise from these generational differences and explore possible solutions for addressing them.

III. TYPICAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: MANAGING STEREOTYPES AND GENERATIONAL SENSITIVITIES

A. Stereotypes

Just as in everyday life, workplace cooperation and leadership are also shaped by patterns and stereotypes. A **stereotype** is a simplified and generalized belief or assumption applied to members of a particular group (for example, based on gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, education, etc.) [3]. A related concept is the phenomenon of stereotype threat, which occurs when individuals fear confirming a negative stereotype about their group—leading to stress and decreased performance [4]. One common stereotype in the context of generational differences is the belief that Generation Z is lazy or uninterested in the world of work. However, this is not the only example. According to Szabó's research [5], *“members of Generation X tend to cling to familiar forms, solutions, and values, and they find it difficult to change their way of thinking. The most strongly perceived stereotype was that they considered their own generation to be superior to the current one.”* It can therefore be assumed that deeply rooted stereotypes influence cooperation among generations. From a leadership perspective, this means that adapting to generational diversity is essential. Effective collaboration requires that task allocation not be based on generational affiliation, but rather on individual capabilities and preferences. Leaders should strive to identify common ground, foster points of connection, and establish a shared language among team members.

In social psychology, the theory of relative deprivation [6] highlights that dissatisfaction does not necessarily stem from a lack of material goods. During intergroup comparison, members of

relatively advantaged groups can also experience frustration. The need for recognition often outweighs the desire for material rewards.

Generational differences are particularly relevant in the context of workplace motivation and satisfaction, as each generation demonstrates distinct values, communication styles, and expectations for recognition. The concept of relative deprivation shows that dissatisfaction arises not merely from material inequality, but from how individuals perceive their position relative to others. This mechanism is especially relevant in intergenerational leadership, as different generations vary in their sensitivity to social comparison and recognition. For instance, Baby Boomers value acknowledgment of their experience and stability; if they perceive that younger colleagues receive preferential treatment, they may experience relative deprivation. For Generation X, providing autonomy and clear objectives reduces frustration and builds trust in leadership. Generation Y employees are motivated by development opportunities and meaningful goals; therefore, leaders should apply a coaching-oriented and feedback-rich approach. For Generation Z, authenticity, creativity, and technological freedom are vital—the leader must serve as an authentic role model with strong digital competence. Leadership, therefore, is not merely hierarchical direction but an adaptive, individualized intervention that takes into account generational sensitivities to social comparison. The conscious management of generational sensitivity is thus a fundamental prerequisite for effective, motivating, and sustainable leadership in today's workplaces.

B. Segregation

A key objective in managing generational diversity is to avoid the formation of isolated generational clusters within the organization. Generations should not operate as separate entities, as this would only reinforce divisions and intensify intergroup tensions. Instead, collaboration should be built on shared goals, a common language, and mixed team composition. When boundaries within a team become more pronounced such as when a “young versus old” dichotomy emerges and this is reflected in communication or decision-making, it inevitably undermines trust and cooperation. To prevent such dynamics, leaders should aim to strengthen group cohesion, while maintaining flexibility and fairness in their approach. Generational differences can become a *source of strength* when the leader consciously integrates team members, applies transparent systems (in terms of goals, roles, and feedback), and manages motivational differences in a goal-aligned yet personalized way.

- “The leader consciously pairs team members.” This principle emphasizes the deliberate formation of *intergenerationally mixed teams*, allowing diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives to complement one another. For example, in a project team, the expertise of *senior employees* can be combined with the digital proficiency and innovation of *younger colleagues*.
- “The leader uses transparent systems (goals, roles, feedback).” Effective intergenerational collaboration requires clarity. The leader must *define objectives, roles, and feedback mechanisms clearly* so that each generation understands what is expected of them, minimizing the risk of misunderstanding or rivalry.
- “The leader addresses motivational differences through goal-aligned but personalized methods.” Each generation responds to different motivational factors. Baby Boomers value stability, Generation Y seeks meaningful work, and Generation Z desires creative freedom. The leader must employ *individualized motivational tools* that align all members toward a shared goal, while respecting personal preferences. This may involve *differentiated feedback styles, flexible working arrangements, or personalized task assignments*.

IV. The Concept of Differentiated Leadership

The differentiated (situational) leadership approach is grounded in the principle that leadership style should not be fixed but adapted to the follower's level of competence and commitment.

- Situational leadership means that the leader adjusts their approach according to the employee's developmental level and needs.
- Each employee has a unique motivational profile, reacting differently to factors such as recognition, growth opportunities, security, or innovation.
- Thus, it is not the leader's style that remains constant, but rather the follower's competence and engagement that determine how they should be led.

According to Rodic [7], drawing on Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, most effective leaders prefer to adapt their leadership style to fit the specific context.

The Hersey–Blanchard model, a classical framework, identifies two key variables (Table 3.):

- Competence: the knowledge and practical experience relevant to the task
- Commitment: the motivation and confidence to perform the task

Combinations of these two dimensions yield four typical developmental (maturity) levels, each requiring a distinct leadership style.

Table 3.: Hersey–Blanchard model [7]

Subordinate position level	Characteristics	Matching style	What does a leader do?
D1 – low competence, high enthusiasm	New to the task	S1 Controller	Specific instructions, close follow-up
D2 – increasing competence, decreasing confidence	"I know how hard it is"	S2 Coach/Coaching	He explains, teaches, gives a lot of feedback
D3 – good competence, fluctuating commitment	He is capable of it, but he is uncertain	S3 Supporter	Encourages, involves you in the decision, shares responsibility
D4 – high competence and commitment	Independent expert	S4 Delegator	Agrees on goals, gives space, less frequent control



Fig.1.: Hersey – Blanchard Situational leadership styles [7]

The situational leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard assumes that there is no single ideal leadership style, as employees differ in their levels of competence and maturity. The effectiveness of a leader depends on their ability to adjust their behaviour according to the follower's competence and motivation.

The model distinguishes four developmental levels (Fig.1.):

- **D1:** Individuals at this level possess *low competence but high enthusiasm*. They require *directive leadership (S1)*, where the leader provides clear instructions, close supervision, and explicit guidance.
- **D2:** At this stage, subordinates show *growing competence but declining confidence*. The most effective approach is *coaching-style leadership (S2)*, combining direction with emotional support and feedback to foster development.
- **D3:** This level is characterized by *adequate competence but fluctuating commitment*. Here, a *supportive leadership style (S3)* is appropriate, involving the employee in decision-making and strengthening their confidence through encouragement and participation.
- **D4:** At the highest maturity level, employees demonstrate *high competence and strong commitment*. The leader should adopt a *delegating style (S4)*, agreeing on objectives but allowing significant autonomy in how the work is carried out.

Generational differences, particularly in attitudes toward work, motivational patterns, and communication preferences, can be effectively mapped onto this situational leadership framework.

Younger generations, such as Generation Z and Generation Y, often exhibit the characteristics of D1–D2 levels, especially at the beginning of their careers, when they seek feedback, learning opportunities, and meaningful goals. For them, a coaching or developmental leadership style (S2) is the most effective, as it combines structure with mentoring and growth-oriented feedback.

In contrast, members of Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation typically display D3–D4 maturity, reflecting experience, accountability, and autonomy. They are best motivated through supportive or delegating leadership (S3–S4), which acknowledges their competence and provides independence while maintaining trust and open communication.

Thus, leadership flexibility across generations is a critical factor in organizational success. Effective leaders in a multigenerational environment recognize that age, experience, and motivational background not only create different needs but also require distinct leadership approaches. The situational leadership model therefore provides a conceptual framework for managing generational diversity constructively, enabling personalized support, targeted motivation, and the intentional development of individual career paths.

- Situational Leadership and the Practical Management of Generational Differences

A practical example of this approach is demonstrated by Magyar Telekom's leadership development program, which applies a personalized system of development and motivation tailored to different generations. The company recognized that younger employees respond most positively to professional growth opportunities, technological challenges, and flexible working arrangements, while older colleagues are primarily motivated by recognition, opportunities to share their expertise, and involvement in decision-making processes. Accordingly, Telekom's leaders employ a differentiated leadership toolkit: they conduct coaching and mentoring processes with younger employees, while involving more experienced generations in strategic decision-making. The Telekom example clearly illustrates that situational leadership is not merely a theoretical model but a practical guide for managing generational diversity. Such a leadership mindset fosters intergenerational trust

and learning, reduces conflicts arising from group boundaries, and strengthens organizational cohesion. Generational differences, therefore, should not be perceived as obstacles but as strategic resources, provided that leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to the maturity and motivational levels of their subordinates.

Ultimately, the leader's key task is to recognize what gives meaning to work for everyone. This awareness helps to mitigate stereotypes and reduce the phenomenon of separation among generational groups. In social psychology, this aligns with the contact hypothesis [8], originally formulated by Gordon Allport, which posits that prejudices and tensions between groups can be reduced when members of different groups engage in regular, direct, and positive contact under certain conditions. Even partial or indirect contact can lessen stereotypes if the interaction is associated with positive emotional experiences.

In the workplace, the contact hypothesis implies that structured collaboration among generations, based on shared goals and equality, can significantly reduce biases (for example, against younger or older employees). Therefore, the leader's role is to create an environment where different generations work together toward common objectives, learn from one another, and build trust, empathy, and cooperation through continuous interaction.

- Communication and Motivational Differentiation in Practice

In a previous study [1], we recorded the opinions of leaders from the Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y cohorts regarding leadership role models, leadership skills, and leadership motivation.

In the field of communication, notable generational differences can be observed. For Baby Boomers, a personal, respectful, and formal tone is preferred. Generation X values a pragmatic, direct, and results-oriented style, while Generation Y expects continuous feedback and two-way communication. The Z generation, in contrast, relies primarily on digital, concise, and visual messages, and appreciates quick responses. These distinctions indicate that even at the most fundamental level of interaction communication itself collaboration can be challenging due to differing expectations and communication norms.

Examining the deeper emotional dimensions of motivation, the Baby Boomers are primarily driven by stability, loyalty, and prestige. For Generation X, key motivators include autonomy, flexibility, and efficiency. Generation Y finds motivation in personal growth, meaningful work, and a sense of community, whereas the Z generation is inspired by innovation, technology, and social impact. These generational patterns highlight the importance of communication and motivational differentiation in leadership practice. Effective leaders recognize that each generation interprets respect, engagement, and success differently, and therefore tailor their communication style and motivational strategies to align with these diverse expectations.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF KEY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

It is evident that significant diversity exists in both communication and motivation across generations. To ensure effective collaboration among different generational groups, we argue that several key leadership competencies are indispensable.

- Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

The importance of emotional intelligence in leadership has been documented in previous research [9]. Motivational theories further support the notion that components of emotional intelligence are closely linked to employee motivation. Effective leaders leverage their internal resources and take into account the emotional states of their employees, thereby facilitating higher performance and engagement.

- Flexible Leadership Style – Conscious Adaptation to Situations

The combination of various leadership styles, along with the application of situational leadership, enables leaders to adapt effectively to generational differences. By consciously adjusting their approach to the competence, motivation, and needs of individual team members, leaders can foster a more inclusive, productive, and harmonious work environment.

Developing active listening and a "feedback culture"



Fig.2.: Culture of Feedback [10]

A feedback culture encompasses dialogue, openness, continuous feedback, employee engagement, collaboration between employees and employers, striving for performance improvement, and employee motivation. Establishing such a culture is essential for sustaining productive and cohesive teams, particularly in multigenerational contexts (Fig.2.).

VI. Managing Multigenerational Teams

The knowledge of diverse social and relational systems, and the ability to integrate this understanding with management skills, is extremely important. The capacity to lead multigenerational teams is not innate but must be developed and learned. Leaders need to acquire a thorough understanding of generational differences and relate this knowledge to their leadership competencies.

The key to leadership effectiveness is adaptability: leaders must be able to adjust their style to the needs and experience of their followers. This approach aligns with Heifetz's theory of adaptive leadership [11], which views leadership as a dynamic, context-dependent process. Simultaneously, leaders must consciously avoid bias and discrimination in any form.

To manage intergenerational tensions, targeted strategies are recommended. For instance, if a conflict arises between employees from different age groups, it can be beneficial to involve intergenerational mediators (so-called *cuspers* or *tweeners*), who can bridge differing perspectives. An effective leader is committed to continuous learning, personal development, and the flexible adjustment of practices to enhance organizational performance [12].

The importance of leadership attitude is also supported by Kajtár [15], who highlights motivational leadership and a stimulating workplace environment as key factors influencing employees' workplace preferences and overall engagement.

A. Practical Experience

From personal experience at a large service corporation, where Generation Z employees make up approximately 10% of the total workforce, the company employs multiple strategies to engage newly entering employees. Orientation days, organized excursions, and active integration into the corporate culture are all designed to facilitate effective collaboration.

The company reflects the typical challenges of an aging workforce, with Baby Boomers and Generation X being the most prevalent. These groups were socialized within a hierarchical organizational culture, which at times can be difficult to reconcile with the flexibility and autonomy preferences of Generations Y and Z. With the arrival of younger generations, traditional corporate hierarchies have begun to loosen, creating opportunities for intergenerational mentorship. Boomers and Generation X members frequently act as mentors, guiding Y and Z employees through their

career paths. Special recognition is provided for mentorship work, thereby incentivizing collaboration. Such joint efforts often lead to strong interpersonal bonds across generations.

It is also characteristic that younger employees do not strictly follow the established paths of older generations; they introduce technological innovations, which gradually modify traditional practices within the company. One of the company's major objectives is to enhance collaboration across generations, with a key driving factor being the identification of shared goals. According to interviews conducted with employees from different generations, work outcomes serve as a common point of alignment, which acts as a bridge between generations [13].

The leadership example of Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo, illustrates successful approaches to leading multigenerational teams. Under Nooyi's leadership, diversity and inclusivity were prioritized, ensuring that employees from different backgrounds and experiences felt valued. To promote intergenerational collaboration, younger and more experienced employees worked together in cross-functional teams, allowing fresh ideas to merge with established knowledge. Nooyi's leadership style emphasized openness and accessibility: she communicated personally, listened to feedback, and fostered an inclusive environment focusing not only on hierarchy but also on collaboration.

These efforts combined business success with human performance. They were not merely "good practices"; they contributed to employee satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately tangible business results.

VII. CONCLUSION

Workplace conflicts between generations often arise because individuals rely on stereotypes, tending to notice and remember information that confirms preexisting beliefs. Raising awareness of generational stereotypes can influence behaviour and interactions with employees. However, leaders should focus not on stereotypes, but on the perspectives, needs, and talents of individuals.

The sources of intergenerational workplace conflict frequently lie in differing assumptions, values, and expectations. Older employees typically value seniority and professional experience, while younger generations tend to prioritize technological proficiency and innovation. Consequently, both explicit and implicit generational biases can affect workplace communication and collaboration.

For leaders, it is therefore essential to strive for a deeper understanding of generational perspectives and experiences, clearly communicate expectations, encourage accountability, and ensure opportunities for individual development and regular, constructive feedback. Such practices contribute to the establishment of a trust-based and inclusive organizational culture.

Differentiated leadership does not divide generations but connects them. This connection enhances performance and fosters an understanding of differences. The contact hypothesis suggests that structured, meaningful interaction reduces stereotypes and increases cooperation. Effective leaders recognize that while the goal may be shared, the path to achieving it must be personalized. They consider generational differences and apply management approaches accordingly.

Currently, only a small proportion of organizations approximately 10% integrate a multigenerational approach into leadership development programs, even though most leaders (over 75%) recognize generational differences as relevant for leadership style. Leadership development is therefore most effective when coaching competencies are enhanced alongside generational awareness. These competencies include self-awareness, cultural openness, reflective observation, interpersonal relationship building, and adaptive leadership behaviour [14]. It is important to note, however, that generational training alone does not necessarily reduce biases and may, in some cases, reinforce them. Thus, creating a

workplace environment that promotes open communication, mutual understanding, and collaboration is essential.

Generational differences are not problems but resources when consciously managed. These differences can be transformed into added value if leaders intentionally organize work to leverage them. To activate these resources, several key competencies are indispensable, including emotional intelligence (EQ), a culture of feedback, and a flexible leadership style. Achieving performance growth requires a combination of tools to bridge the diverse perspectives and values of different generations. A central leadership task is the ability to adapt to situational needs, mitigating stereotypes and assumptions while enhancing the effectiveness of collaboration.

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