



Here comes Generation Z: Millennials as managers



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KEYWORDS

Millennials as managers;
Managing Generation Z;
Generational differences in the workplace;
Leader-member exchange;
Generational cohort theory;
Work values framework

Abstract As the workplace continues to change, a new generational cohort—Generation Z, sometimes referred to as iGen—is beginning to enter the workforce. At the same time, millennials are now progressing in their careers and will be challenged with managing these incoming workers. The purpose of this article is to provide a contextual overview that identifies and illuminates some of the defining work-related characteristics of these two youngest generations in the workplace to increase understanding of the potential intergenerational conflict between these cohorts and develop leadership strategies that can be utilized to increase employee morale and productivity. This article analyzes the millennial supervisor-Gen Z subordinate relationship based on generational cohort theory, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, and the work values framework.

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1. Shifting generations in the workplace

For several years, researchers, management consultants, and writers have discussed changes in the workplace due to the influx of workers from the Millennial Generation (e.g., Espinoza & Ukleja, 2016; Kaifi et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2017; Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Numerous books and articles look at the unique challenges created in organizations by millennials, and prescriptions have

been offered to help managers deal with the needs, wants, and expectations of individuals from this generation (e.g., Twenge, 2006; Zaslow, 2007; Zemke et al., 2013). At present, millennials (those born in 1981–1996) make up the largest single generational cohort in the U.S. workforce, outstripping both Baby Boomers (those born in 1946–1963) and Generation X (those born in 1963–1981; Pew Research Center, 2018). Given the size of this group, it is perhaps not surprising that much effort has been devoted to understanding them and seeking to improve their effectiveness as workers.

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What seems to have escaped attention is that the first of the millennials turned 39 years old in 2020. These early millennials will be entering their 40s in the coming decade. The “late millennials” (born in 1996) are now entering their mid-20s. Given the nature of organizations, many of these millennials are no longer entering the workforce; indeed, many are now first-line supervisors or are entering mid-level managerial positions through natural career progression. We have moved beyond asking “How should we manage millennials?” as millennials have become managers themselves.

Who do these millennials manage? In many cases, the early millennials are managing the late millennials. As early millennials move into their 30s, they become mid-level managers and are managing the later millennials, who are in their mid or late 20s or even early 30s. This is as should be expected given the natural progression of individuals and generational cohorts through careers and organizations.

But there is another group now entering the workforce. Called Generation Z, these persons—born between 1995 and 2012—have been referred to as iGen to reflect the internet generation. They have always had the internet as part of their lives. Their cell phones have always been “smart.” Their homes and schools have generally had personal or laptop computers. The first of the Generation Z cohort started graduating from high school in 2013 and college in 2017. With approximately 74 million in the cohort, these persons are the next generation to enter the workforce.

As Generation Z enters the workforce, in many cases their first-level supervisors and/or superior managers are millennials. While much was written, researched, and recommended to Baby Boomers and Generation X regarding leading and managing millennials, presently there is a relative scarcity of similar offerings for millennial managers on how to manage the newest generational cohort: the Generation Z workers. This is the next logical progression in the demographic composition of organizations, and millennials will likely encounter challenges in managing this newest cohort just as Baby Boomers and GenXers faced when dealing with the millennials. Since the entry of Generation Z is a relatively recent event in most organizations, this might be expected; after all, millennial managers have only had to deal with Generation Z workers for a few years.

Recognizing this, in this article we use certain existing frameworks to examine the relationship between millennials as managers and supervisors

and those being supervised as the newest generation in the workforce: Generation Z workers. We use leader-member exchange theory and the work values framework as a basis for conducting an initial inquiry into the alignment of millennial managers and Generation Z workers. We then use this analysis as a basis for providing recommendations for researchers and practitioners for understanding and managing the workplace interactions between these generations.

2. Generational cohorts in the workplace

A generation is a group of people of the same age in a similar social location experiencing similar social events ([Mannheim, 1952](#)). Articles and books focus on the assumed clash and collision of generations in the workplace with the belief that generations differ in values, attitudes toward leadership, and behavior, and that a lack of understanding among the generations regarding these differences leads to intergenerational conflict and detrimental effects on communication and working relationships ([Dittmann, 2005](#)). One of the possible conflicts among generations in the workplace lies in the area of management and leadership. That area both influences and is influenced by differences among the generations in retention, values, motivation, work style preferences, and the perception of what it means to be a leader as well as the concept of what it takes to be a good leader ([Arsenault, 2004](#)). In this article, we focus on the two youngest generations in the workforce, millennials and Generation Z.

2.1. Millennials as managers

Millennials—sometimes referred to as Generation Y or GenY—are individuals born between 1981 and 1995; in the U.S. they number about 80 million people. They are called millennials because they were raised in the digital age, a sign of the upcoming new millennium. Millennials have officially become the largest generation in the population as of 2018, and represent the largest percentage of the workforce ([Pew Research Center, 2018](#)). As a whole, millennials have been described as well-educated, optimistic, collaborative, sociable, and open-minded ([Raines, 2003](#)).

Millennials were raised during the “decade of the child,” during which time parents were actively engaged in the child-rearing process. During their formative years, millennials experienced the culture wars that included fights for

equal rights for homosexuals and the debate on abortion rights as well as racial and ethnic diversity; millennials were often sheltered because of concerns about child safety and security (Pew Research Center, 2018). As a result of a parental and social upbringing that tended to emphasize building self-esteem through praise, recognition, and positive feedback, millennials have been referred to as the “most praised” generation (Zaslow, 2007). Research suggests that the results of their upbringing have led millennials to feel confident and assertive, and entitled to praise and recognition (Twenge, 2006).

Because there is a growing power vacuum as managers from older generations leave or climb even higher, millennials are the most plentiful candidates to fill the positions (Alton, 2018). The Millennial Generation in the workplace has received increasing attention as it has been shown that millennials demonstrate different attitudes, values, beliefs, and aspirations in the workplace compared to previous generations (Zemke et al., 2013). Millennials thrive on challenging work, caring more about creative expression than leadership roles in organizations (Ng et al., 2010). They are entrepreneurial thinkers who relish responsibility, demand immediate feedback, expect a frequent sense of accomplishment, and have a high need for organization engagement and support (Twenge et al., 2010). Although millennials have an urgent sense of immediacy, they adapt well to new people, places, and circumstances and can thrive in environments with consistent change (Martin, 2005). While there will always be exceptions, millennial managers can be described using the following terms: collaborative, flexible, transparent, casual, and balanced (Karsh & Templin, 2013). They have been identified as idealistic, taking pride in their behavior, confident, and having high levels of personal scrutiny (Chen & Choi, 2008).

The shift to millennials as managers has been noted in current popular press and media outlets. Various internet posts have recognized that millennials are beginning to move into managerial and leadership positions and have speculated on the impacts of this shift for the workplace. This has led to some notable observations:

- Millennial managers are more prone to delivering consistent, ongoing feedback and more adept at virtual teams and digital communications; they value collaboration over competition and want to work for companies that reflect their values (Lulla, 2019).
- Millennial managers tend to be purpose-driven, emphasizing the need to make a difference in society and their organizations. They work to develop a flexible management style with an emphasis on agility (Taylor, 2020).
- Millennial managers are viewed as generalists rather than specialists—they have a broad knowledge base. They are team-centric, wanting to build strong, cohesive teams with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. They are comfortable using multiple modes of communication and tend to be more data-driven in decision-making (Grossman, 2018).

As millennials move into managerial positions, they will take the results of their life experiences and their early work experiences with them in developing their managerial approaches and methods. They also have been influenced by the world in which they came of age, with globalization, political unrest, economic turmoil (many were working or graduating during the Great Recession of 2008–2009) having shaped their world view. Despite these observations, to date there has been relatively little academic research that has examined the attitudes, behaviors, and practices of millennial managers in a rigorous, empirical manner. This may be due in part to the fact that millennials in managerial positions are a relatively new organizational phenomenon. Ten to 15 years ago, books and articles began to appear counseling Baby Boom and GenX managers on how to manage the millennials; to date, there have been few attempts to help millennials who are becoming managers deal with the responsibilities of managing in the modern workplace. Unlike their managers, who had a wealth of material to use as a reference and guide, millennials at present have relatively little systematic theory-based or empirically based content as they approach a similar problem: managing the next generation entering the workforce.

2.2. Who will millennials manage? Generation Z enters the workplace

Generation Z is the demographic cohort following the millennials born after 1995. Early benchmarks show post-millennials on track to be the most diverse, best-educated generation yet (Pew Research Center, 2018). Generation Z is just now entering the labor market and employers need to prepare for their arrival because, by 2030, almost every entry-level role in the U.S. will be filled by a

member of Generation Z (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). While Generation Z shares many traits with the Millennial Generation, they also bring in new patterns of behavior (Iorgulescu, 2016). Their managers today not only have to understand how to best manage these youthful, inexperienced employees but also the unique characteristics of the generation shaped by their experiences. This generation is first and foremost looking for the best cultural fit for them at their future workplace (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). They are looking for a company where they are not just a number, but are in a position and place to make a significant contribution. The top aspect Generation Z looks for is a fun place to work, with a flexible schedule and paid time off also ranking high. They are not looking at climbing the ranks quickly. Like millennials, they are interested in getting value quickly. But many will need to be trained on the skills that earlier generations and millennials take for granted, like handling calls and writing emails. That is because Generation Z has been less about face-to-face communications. They more commonly communicate via text, emoji, and video. They want to be socially connected with everyone, even with their boss. They also need feedback regularly (Turner, 2015).

3. Analyzing millennial managers and Generation Z workers

3.1. Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory

Employee performance is one of the major determinants of organizational success. It is affected by many factors arising within and outside of the organizational context. The supervisor-subordinate relationship is the primary relationship articulated by the organization and the supervisor's role is critical in an employee's immediate working environment. According to the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Dansereau et al., 1975), employees and organizations benefit from the development of satisfying supervisor-subordinate relationships. Gomez and Rosen (2001) have suggested that high-quality LMX predicts employees' experiences of psychological empowerment, including autonomy. This is because LMX argues that over time, the quality of social exchanges leads to a diverse quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Effective supervisor-subordinate relationships (high-quality LMX relationships) are characterized by a high level of mutual support, trust, and respect (Mueller & Lee, 2002), increased

information and resource flows, as well as empowering relationships (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Employees reporting lower-quality LMX relationships tend to experience fewer organizational perks and outcomes and are more likely to leave the organization (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Nearly four decades of research on LMX substantiates the importance of the supervisor-subordinate relationship in achieving high performance in the workplace (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Dulebohn et al., 2012). A meta-analytic review by Martin et al. (2016) provided support for the positive relationship between LMX and both task performance and organizational citizenship performance, and a negative relationship with counterproductive performance. Recent research on the LMX relationship dynamics has noted the importance of memory and emotion in determining the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Masterson et al., 2020; Pathki et al., 2020). Additional factors that have been found to moderate the LMX-performance relationship are trust, motivation, empowerment, and job satisfaction (Martin et al., 2016).

Given the importance of the supervisor-subordinate relationship on performance in organizations, it seems logical to inquire about the preferences of millennials and Generation Z employees regarding the supervisor-subordinate relationship. To the extent that there is alignment between the preferences of the leader and the followers, LMX theory suggests that workplace performance will be enhanced. If millennial managers and Generation Z subordinates' preferences are consistent, it would be logical to assume that organization performance will be positively impacted.

3.1.1. Millennials

Millennials perceive that the supervisory relationship is the second most important work value (Chen & Choi, 2008). According to Omilion-Hodges and Sugg (2019), millennials prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, listen carefully, and give personalized attention and frequent communication. Dulin (2008) also found that millennials' leadership preferences are mostly depicted by interpersonal relations. In line with these results, Faller and Gogek (2019) found that millennials seek leaders who care about them and leaders who can be trusted.

At the same time, since millennials are more individualistic, engaging in high-quality LMX is difficult. Millennials' focus on work-life balance and extrinsic rewards are also thought to make millennials less likely to be involved in developing

LMX (Anderson et al., 2017). Similarly, cross-temporal increases in self-entitlement and rejection of authority (Laird et al., 2015) are cited as the source of employees' decreased interest in being led by others, which, in turn, is assumed to lead to the re-definition of traditional leader-follower relationships and to prompt reformulation of leadership theory to fit these shifts. However, high-quality LMX can still be obtained; for example, by using a two-way communication approach or when the subordinates interact more often with their managers.

3.1.2. Generation Z

There is evidence in the literature to suggest that Generation Z will have a high degree of alignment with millennials' leadership preferences and it is speculated that the generally preferred leadership style will be transformational (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Generation Z has communicated that a positive attitude is very important for leadership to exhibit (Universum, 2017). They expect to be offered internal growth opportunities as well as development (Adecco, 2016). An organization's impact on the environment will influence their decision to follow or work for the organization. However, these predictions are challenged as being highly speculative because Generation Z is just beginning to enter the workforce.

According to research by McGaha (2018), Generation Z prefers a leader who (1) is a strong and effective communicator; (2) drives a positive and inclusive culture; (3) demonstrates high levels of emotional intelligence; (4) provides ongoing mentorship; (5) has an involved and engaged personality; (6) is highly competent, and (7) promotes equality. Her research suggested that Generation Z strongly prefers the transformational leadership style (more so than transactional leadership). A study by Grow and Yang (2018) explored Gen-Z's expectations of future managers. Gen Z respondents described their ideal boss as having fair and confident leadership, soft skills, and being friendly and open-minded. In addition, 77% of Gen Z respondents indicate they would prefer to have a millennial manager rather than a Gen Xer or Baby Boomer.

Gen Z is unique in growing up with a culture of safety where overprotective parenting inadvertently took away their opportunity to learn life skills (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2019). This interfered with their social, emotional, and intellectual development, making it difficult for them to become autonomous adults, able to navigate the

challenges of life, let alone the workplace. Becoming autonomous involves learning how to make responsible decisions and take actions in ambiguous and uncertain situations. Schroth (2019) notes that Gen Z cites the fear of failing in a leadership role (34%) and a lack of confidence required to lead (33%) as the main reasons they would not take on more leadership responsibility in their roles.

3.2. Work values

Dose (1997) proposes a comprehensive definition of work values and a structural framework that reflects the central elements of the construct and reduces confusion over its conceptual boundaries. In this vein, she proposes the following definition: "Work values are evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is right or assess the importance of preferences" (Dose, 1997, pp. 227–228). Because each generation has its set of unique values, skills, and characteristics, having employees from different generations has created challenges and opportunities for managers (Gursoy et al., 2008). According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), work values are the source of most significant differences among generations and a major source of conflict in the workplace (SHRM, 2009). However, studies also suggest that if managed well, those differences can be a source of significant strengths and opportunities (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Therefore, managers need to understand the underlying value structure of each generation and differences in values among those generations if they want to create and maintain a work environment that fosters leadership, motivation, communication, and generational synergy (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

We know of only a few studies that have attempted to examine generational differences in work values over time. Smola and Sutton (2002) sought to determine whether generation or age contributed more to differences in work values by comparing their 1999 data with data from a 1974 study conducted by a different author. They found that work values are influenced more by a generation than by maturity or age,

Although there are many different typologies of work values, three categories have been consistently identified in past research: first, intrinsic work values, which pertain to the inherent psychological satisfactions of working, such as

interesting work, challenge, variety, and intellectual stimulation; second, extrinsic work values, which relate to material aspects of work, such as pay, benefits, and job security; and third, social work values, which pertain to relations with co-workers, supervisors and other people; and the desire to help others and make a contribution to society (Ng et al., 2010). According to research, millennials place the greatest importance on extrinsic work values, followed by intrinsic, social work values (Kuron et al., 2015). Additionally, Twenge et al.'s (2010) research suggested millennials value leisure and extrinsic rewards more and social and intrinsic rewards less than the previous generation, GenX. Because Twenge and colleagues collected data across time, their analyses isolated generational differences from age differences. Because they are so relatively new to the workplace, Generation Z has not yet been systematically assessed.

4. Comparing millennial managers and Generation Z employees

4.1. Intrinsic work values

Based on these frameworks, we have attempted to summarize in Table 1 a comparison of the supervisor-subordinate relationship and the work values of millennials and Generation Z. given the centrality of the LMX relationship in workplace performance and the differences in values and expectations, we seek to identify areas of high exchange with areas of potential conflict. While millennials and Generation Z share many work values such as work-life balance, achievement, having a supportive environment, and professional development through frequent feedback, these generations differ in some important values, which might cause workplace conflict between a

millennial manager and a Generation Z subordinate. The table indicates our main findings with an evaluation of how critical the individual value discrepancies are for the working relationship.

4.1.1. Achievement

Both generations share very similar approaches to intrinsic values. Generation Z is the most achievement-oriented generation (Barna Group, 2018). Generation Zers want to participate in decision-making and have their ideas valued (Patel, 2017). They are entrepreneurial and not afraid to leave the known track and forge their own path because they are agile, adaptive, and able to transition quickly to new platforms. Millennials are also goal and achievement-oriented and expect a frequent sense of accomplishment in their pursuit of changing the status quo, making a difference, and thriving in environments with consistent change (Martin, 2005).

4.1.2. Development

Both generations desire ongoing professional development through continuous learning, advancement, and using one's abilities. Many members of Generation Z are motivated by opportunities for professional advancement, therefore nearly 50% of Generation Z students are participating in internships (Schawbel, 2014). Additionally, Generation Z is fortunate to have websites where they can teach themselves new skills. The top learning method for 59% of Generation Z is YouTube (Pearson Higher Education, 2018). When it comes to on-the-job development, Generation Zers want their managers to become private mentors and help subordinates with personal advancement (Patel, 2017). Millennials share this need with their younger counterparts. They have a high need for organizational engagement and support through training and development (Martin, 2005).

Table 1. Key work values: Millennials and Generation Z

Value typology	Value indicator	Millennials	Gen Z	Aligned?
Intrinsic work values	Achievement	Achievement-Oriented		Yes
	Development	Desire ongoing professional development		Yes
Extrinsic work values	Job security and salary	Purpose – Optimistic – Risk-takers	Security – Pragmatic – Risk aversion	No
	Feedback	Frequent	Constant	Yes
Social work values	Teamwork	Collaborative	Competitive	No
	Social interaction	Sociability	Messaging	?
	Work-life balance	Desire balanced life		Yes

4.2. Extrinsic work values

4.2.1. Job security and salary

Generation Z is a pragmatic and realistic generation. They care about making a difference but are ultimately motivated by ensuring they have a secure life outside of work. (Patel, 2017). Tulgan (2013) highlighted Generation Z's need for security, explaining that members of this cohort grew up in a recessionary period. Seeing the impact of the recession on their parents made Generation Z money conscious and focused on saving and job security (Patel, 2017). Moreover, Generation Zers experience stress as they graduate due to skyrocketing student debt and a rocky labor market. More than half of Generation Z are either somewhat or very worried about the future (58%), and nearly half (4%) of Generation Z say their biggest financial concern is student debt. The cost of a college degree has increased by 1,120% in the last 35 years (Randstad, 2016). Thus, Generation Z likes to play it safe. Their expectations are lower, they are not as confident as millennials (Twenge, 2017).

On the other hand, beyond money, millennials want a sense of purpose. They are optimistic about their contribution to making a better world (Patel, 2017). Millennials truly believe in the experimental approach and that the biggest problems can be solved using the trial and error method and taking risks (Thompson, 2018). Millennials' positive attitude toward risk is predetermined by the economic and social situation this generation was in during their teenage years. Millennials grew up during an economic boom and enjoyed the advantages of that financial opportunity.

4.2.2. Feedback

Generation Z demands feedback regularly. Having been raised in an instant-reaction world (with likes and other social media rewards), 40% of Gen Z want daily interactions with their boss and if they do not get it, they often think they have done something wrong (Center for Generational Kinetics, 2018). According to a study by Randstad (2016), feedback needs to be frequent and actionable or Generation Z "checks out". Since they want to improve at their jobs, they can handle direct and constructive criticism. For millennials, who also proactively seek feedback, and need it often, feedback is an almost critical ingredient in performance and job satisfaction (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

4.3. Social work values

4.3.1. Teamwork

Generation Zers want to manage their own projects so their skills can shine through. They do not want to depend on others to get their work done for them (Patel, 2017). Some research (Adecco, 2016) indicates that Generation Z prefers independent work and tends to be reluctant to get involved in teamwork. This fact can be determined by Generation Z's propensity for communicating in a virtual environment, using an abbreviated language that affects their listening, interpersonal, and socialization skills (Tulgan, 2013). Moreover, as Generation Zers developed in a competitive environment, a survey conducted by Robert Half (2015) indicates that almost 80% of the members of Generation Z expect to work harder than the generations older than them so they can carve out a successful professional path; they do not want to risk the failure caused by a less ambitious team member.

By contrast, millennials believe in partnership, collaboration, and relationships and are more loyal to the team than the organization (Casey, 2015). Millennials prefer to work in teams because they perceive group-based work to be more fun. In effect, these two generations that are closest to each other can least work together. Millennials can work together with the older generation for a common goal, but Generation Zers want to achieve success alone (Adecco, 2016).

4.3.2. Social interaction

Workers' social interaction effectiveness depends on their ability to read, understand, and control social interactions, and it is related to job performance (Deming, 2017). Tulgan (2013) notes that Generation Z representatives report a strong need for social connections. Nevertheless, Generation Zers are more comfortable using technology in their social interactions to communicate. By relying on text messaging primarily for their interaction, Generation Zers have missed out on learning some vital rules of conversation. This includes how to listen, ask questions, interject in a way that is seen as respectful to others, build relationships, solve problems in real time, and resolve conflicts (Pew Research Center, 2012). While potentially effective at delivering messages, brief and informal correspondence such as that frequently received in emails, web memos, text messages, social media, and e-bulletins will

decrease the opportunity for a high-quality relationship such that they do not allow for the establishment of mutual trust and can be perceived as disrespectful (Lau & Cobb, 2010). Additionally, they are also the least likely to have worked when they were young and most likely to suffer from depression and anxiety (American Psychological Association, 2018), thus they might miss social skills and traits needed for successful professional interactions.

Millennials, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the face-to-face social aspects of work and the working environment (Duxbury & Higgins, 2005). Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2019) suggested that sociability with colleagues is the most important workplace need of millennials. They enjoy being part of a community with strong relations that can be called their "work family" (KPMG, 2017).

4.3.3. Work-life balance

Work-life balance is the most important factor for Generation Z when choosing a job (Workforce Institute at Kronos, 2019). They stated that events like the September 11 terrorist attacks have helped influence a shift toward more work-life balance. Millennials, who are family-focused, also seek flexible hours and schedules that lead to a better work-and-life balance (Karsh & Templin, 2013). This generation grew up with an emphasis on family, which has created a shift in the workplace (Andert, 2011). Having seen their parents go through economic layoffs and divorces, millennials prefer focusing on their private lives as opposed to their careers (Ng et al., 2010).

5. Implications for managerial practice

5.1. Leadership style

This review of the literature suggests that millennials' traits and skills meet Generation Z's needs and leadership style preferences. Specifically, Generation Z subordinates want a positive, communicative leader who provides mentorship and other developmental opportunities for ambitious team members. This is exactly what millennials are expected to deliver. It can be expected that conceptually, the leadership style preferences of the millennial superior and the Generation Z subordinate would align and enhance the leader-member exchange relationship.

However, hoping that first-time managers will excel in their managerial and leadership skills would be naive. Research by Randstad (2016)

indicates millennials may simply not be prepared, nor equipped, with the emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) and soft skills required to manage others effectively. Millennials have not had the opportunity to develop their much-needed skills in the areas of navigating corporate politics, leadership, and team building. According to the Randstad study, millennials named corporate politics as the second biggest obstacle getting in the way of their work performance. And only 27% of millennials rate their personal skills as very good. Millennials will need managerial training to effectively perform and succeed in their roles.

5.2. Job security and salary (motivation)

To resolve different prioritizing of extrinsic rewards, millennials should consider the use of motivational factors that do not align with their personal views such as rewards, job stability, and security (instead of a dynamic environment or purpose), and offer a variety of engagement opportunities. Millennial managers should avoid pushing their Generation Z team members to risky projects and rather support their conscientiousness, attempts to lower uncertainty, and risk mitigation. Millennials are advised to leverage a pragmatic approach and accept criticism and unwillingness to accomplish unrealistic strategies by Generation Z. It can even help decrease costs and enable firms to budget more effectively.

5.3. Teamwork

Given Generation Z's individualistic preferences, millennial managers should provide autonomous projects and foster a competitive but friendly atmosphere in the workplace. Competition can help to drive innovation and encourage accountability. As long as Generation Zers are not micromanaged and given autonomy, they are likely to get things done (assuming that they were given adequate onboarding and training).

5.4. Social interactions

Millennial managers need to understand that some of the Generation Z employees are likely to lack appropriate interpersonal skills. Generation Z employees may need help and guidance to improve their social interactions. The development of social skills increases a worker's self-esteem, autonomy, and more importantly for Generation Z, their ability to cope with stress while also reducing anxiety, depression, and frustration. Millennial managers can help address these issues by offering

opportunities to Generation Zers to socialize with other colleagues and organizing team-building events. These events are likely to help Generation Zers to feel like they are part of a bigger family. Finally, millennials also need to adapt to new ways to collaborate and communicate, including Generation Z's preferred computer-mediated communication.

Overall, listening, understanding, sharing stories, and then setting some developmental goals together can make a big difference not only in the quality of the leader-member relationship but in effort, attitude, and quality of work performed.

6. Implications for organization research

Early research on Generation Z has tended to examine the attitudes and beliefs of this generational cohort, in anticipation of having these individuals enter the workforce. We have used some of this research as references in this article and in providing background material for our analysis. Based on our assessment, there are two major immediate needs for high-quality research to be conducted.

The first is research on early attitudes and beliefs of Generation Z as these persons begin their careers and work lives. Much of the existing research has been on students, and to be sure many in the Generation Z cohort are still in high school and college as this is written. However, as we have noted, the leading edge of this cohort is now entering the workplace. Initial research using employee survey data opportunities might provide insights into how these first movers are adapting to the work environment. What are their attitudes toward work? Toward the company? Toward their supervisors? Much work needs to be done to begin to discern the values, beliefs, and attitudes that will influence the behavior of these newest employees in the organization.

The second opportunity for meaningful research is in examining the initial behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of millennials as these persons begin to take on managerial roles and responsibilities in their organizations. How do millennials prefer to be managed, and how do they manage others? What are their attitudes toward their subordinates, in particular toward Generation Z? How do these beliefs translate into managerial practices? What types of training or education programs do millennial managers perceive as most valuable, and how can organizations provide such training? These and many similar management issues will need to be examined and reviewed with

high-quality theoretical and empirical efforts to assist organizations in making the transition to the next generational cohort.

7. Conclusion

Generation Z represents a very significant generational shift in the workplace. As Generation Z starts to enter the labor market, the need to better understand its characteristics has become more important. As a result, this article has attempted to provide a contextual overview of the defining work-related characteristics of the two youngest generations and create a set of recommendations for millennial managers who currently are or soon will be responsible for their Generation Z subordinates' work performance.

Both of these generations share many similarities in work values and leadership preferences. However, we draw attention to those aspects that might cause subordinate-supervisor conflict because of work value characteristics. Based on the existing literature it can be suggested that the reason for these perceived differences is often explained to be the succession of defining moments in the lives of these generational cohorts.

We have identified four areas where there is a higher risk of a work conflict. These areas are leadership style, motivation, teamwork, and social interactions. We have offered leaders some recommendations to address these discrepancies that millennial managers should not only be aware of but also know how to apply in their organizations. These suggested tactics cannot be used all of the time, though. At the end of the day, the answers to questions about how to manage Generation Z lies with the employees themselves. Millennial managers need to make the effort to talk to their subordinates, engage Generation Z to identify what they want, and seek to accommodate these wants in the organization and in work life whenever possible.

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