



How's the Self-concept and Adaptation-Interaction Challenges of Generation Z in the Workplace?

Mailani Fadilah^(✉), Prahastiwi Utari, and Mahendra Wijaya

Master of Communication Science, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia
mailani.fadilah@student.uns.ac.id

Abstract. Research on Generation Z is more specific about self-concept and adaptation interaction in Generation Z carried out in the workplace. This article is to determine and describe the effect of the post-millennial (Generation Z) in the future and to explain self-concept in generation Z employee communication on the work environment. The review involved articles published from 2016–2021. The method is a systematic literature review with 18 articles researched. Generation Z has different characteristics from the previous generation in accordance with the development of technology and communication. Managers in an organization must be able to provide guidance for Generation Z to be able to have a strong character in dealing with dynamics or situations that sometimes do not match their personalities.

Keywords: Self-concept · Adaptation-interaction · Generation Z

1 Introduction

Today's workforce has been dominated by Generation Z. According to the Pew Research Center, this generation is the first to be truly “digital native”, and its members are more educated than previous generations [28]. Symbolic interaction theory shows that it has three assumptions according to Ralph La Rose and Donald C. Reitzes (1993) in [1] underlying interactions, including (1) The importance of meaning for human behavior; (2) The importance of the concept of self; and (3) the relationship between individuals and society. One of the important things is to understand that self-concept is important in everyday life, one of which is in the workplace. According to [2], self-concept is a picture of self-perception in the form of beliefs, feelings, and attitudes about values that are recognized by individuals as their characteristics. The composition of self-concept is formed from various experiences gradually.

According to a recent report from Bank of America (BofA), Gen Z will be the most disruptive generation in history. They are now entering the workforce for the first time, and BofA says their income will surpass that of millennials by 2031. Their income will increase with ‘The Great Wealth Transfer’ from the older group. But it will only make them more consumptive [29]. Burke's study for the Society for Human Resource

Management found that 58 percent of human resource management (HR) professionals in organizations with 500 or more employees reported conflict between younger and older workers, due to their differing perceptions of work ethics and life balance requirements work [3].

The global workplace will evolve dramatically from the current generational makeup to one where older generation continue to retire end masse, allowing Generation Z, the youngest generation of this century, to participate. It is important not only to forecast but also to understand this anticipated demographic transformation, including how dynamic these changes are, their implications for workplace interactions between generations, and how work will be organized in the future[4]. Understanding the generation gap is critical to understanding employee engagement, motivating adversity, and job expectations[5].

A survey conducted by Mind Share Partners, SAP, and Qualtrics shows that around 50 percent of millennials (ages 23–38) and 75 percent of Generation Z (ages 18–22) choose to leave the workplace if work makes them anxious and depressed. This is in contrast to the older generation, aged 55–73, for whom only 10 percent opted out for reasons of mental health aspects. The survey also found a close link between mental health and work productivity. About 61 percent of the participants involved said mental health had an effect on work performance. Then, 37 percent of participants reported that their social environment affected their mental health [31].

The report, published in the Harvard Business Review, showed 60% said they had experienced symptoms of a mental health disorder in the past year. However, only 20% of all respondents said they left their jobs because of it. Millennials are three times more likely to experience anxiety and Gen Z are four times more likely, compared to baby boomers [33]. As many as 76.7% of Gen Y only choose to stay 1–2 years in their workplace before deciding to change jobs. In contrast, Gen Xers have a much higher level of loyalty to their jobs. Different from gen X and Y, gen Z employees have the lowest level of loyalty to their jobs, A total of 57% [27].

PR Newswire with Monster Worldwide conducted a 2016 survey of multigenerational people in the United States in terms of looking at careers and jobs, including Generation Z. One of the conclusions, money and ambition are the engines that drive Gen Z. in looking at work and their own career. Interestingly, if Millennials prioritize performance improvements such as playing facilities, sleeping, and other stress relievers to be in the office, Gen Z shows different symptoms. There are three priorities that Gen Z sees in their workplace: health insurance (70%), competitive pay (63%), and a respectful boss (61%). Meanwhile, on average, all generations prioritize health insurance (68%), competitive salary (59%) and respect from the boss (60%).

For generation Z opportunities to change jobs, Gen Z enjoys face-to-face interactions at work, even in the digital age. When asked to choose from a selection of “names” to best describe their generation, a plurality (29%) chose “digital generation”, but more than half (44 percent) also prefer to interact with their team or co-workers face-to-face, and 75 percent prefer to receive feedback from their manager directly. Only 17% like to get comments using technology. When compared to text (16%) or email (9%), 39 percent prefer to communicate with their team or company in person. Hands-on training and in-person first-day orientation are preferred by 43% [6].

Melisa Soentoro as Principal, Advisory, Korn Ferry Indonesia said the survey results show that two-thirds of respondents or 60% believe that Gen Z is more optimistic about the future compared to the millennial generation. [32]. Gen Z is not a different “species” from previous generations who have entered the workforce. However, they work in a completely different way from the previous generation [7]. Generation Z seems to have different demands and motivators from previous generations. When this generation enters the workforce, it will bring its own set of needs. It is very important for organizations to understand what is important to Generation Z before building a corporate culture and workplace to gain a distinct advantage in the hunt for talent from Generation Z, which in turn will sustain the growth of the organization and ensure that the organization remains at its best [8].

2 Method

The strategy utilized in this study is a systematic literature review based on Kitchenham’s [9] original criteria. In the years 2016 to 2021, researchers did a manual search for conference proceedings and journal papers. This is because academics are interested in learning about the conditions over the previous several years as a result of the advancement of Gen Z research. Table 2 lists a number of journals and conferences. The publication was picked because it has used empirical research methodologies and is credible enough to be used as a source for additional research. Researchers have reviewed existing journals and proceedings and found them to be possibly relevant.

2.1 Data Collection Technique

The method used by researchers in collecting data is as follows:

1. Search for journal articles on Google Scholar;
2. Perform validation based on pre-determined criteria;
3. Researchers will enter the journal articles and proceedings into the Mendeley application if they meet the requirements.

2.2 Types of Research Questions

Researchers make the following types of research questions:

- RQ1 How is Generation Z’s self-concept and adaptation in the workplace?
- RQ2 What are the problems between Generation Z and other Generation?
- RQ3 What are the challenges of Generation Z in the future?

2.3 Search Strategy

Researchers conducted a manual search process for proceedings from certain conferences and journal papers in 2016–2021. This is because researchers want to know the conditions for the last few years from the development of research on Gen Z. Selected journals and conferences are shown in Table 2. The journal was chosen because it has used research methods with empirical studies and is reputable so that it can be used as a source for further research. Existing journals and proceedings have been reviewed by researchers and are potentially relevant.

Table 1. Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	No	Description
Inclusion	1	The data to be used are journal articles and proceedings published in 2016–2021
	2	Data is taken from international reputable journals and/or accredited by SINTA
	3	Data obtained through scholar.google.co.id/
	4	Journals obtained by keywords related to Generation Z
Exclusion	1	The communication sought is self-concept and interaction adaptation
	2	The sector under study is the communication sector
	3	Thesis and Thesis are not included in the reviewed literature

Table 2. Research Results on Generation Z

Research Title	Results
Workplace Preference of Generation Z: A Review and Research Agenda [10]	Recruitment and retention of this generation without proper understanding will affect the sustainable progress of the organization.
Phenomenology of Communication of Generation Z in Pekanbaru [11]	In Pekanbaru, they use informal intonation nonverbally, follow the latest fashion trends, and use social media to express themselves.
Generational Differences in values and attitudes within the workplace [5]	Failure to understand generational differences in the workplace may have negative organizational effects such as inefficient communication, intergenerational conflict, poor attitudes towards coworkers, and decreased morale, productivity, and civic behavior.
Factor Influencing Gen Z Preferred Working Environment in Malaysia [12]	Organizations should promote the concept of learning in the workplace, where people learn while doing their jobs. Second, create a plan for organizational learning that encourages people to master learning. Finally, build a flexible and organic learning structure within the organization.
Y and Z Generations at Workplaces [13]	The cooperation of different age groups can provide not only conflict, but also positive results for the organization, where the implementation of additional HR has an important role.
Differences in Work Expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z: An Empirical Investigation in Croatia [14]	Generations Y and Z will eventually work together in the same office, so understanding each other's hopes, ambitions and backgrounds will be critical to their effective collaboration.

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Research Title	Results
Generation Z work values: A cross-national analysis [15]	When it comes to Gen Z's preference and value for jobs, country is an important factor. The learnings and visible results seem to appeal to almost everyone; however, there is significant variation in which all other work scores are assessed among the four country groups.
Bridging the Gap: How the Generations Communicate [16]	A generation does not have a negative perception of one another, but a fear that they will be viewed negatively by future generations and act accordingly.
Understanding the Attitude of Generation Z Towards Workplace [8]	Generation Z seems to have different needs and motivations from previous generations. Gen Z attitudes and preferences from the existing literature can anticipate and develop a suitable work environment for them so that it will improve organizational performance.
How to Incorporate Technology in The Workplace for Gen Z Employees [17]	The impact that Gen Z has on their workplace, as well as the future of the company and employee engagement, depends on several things, including: 1) providing them with professional career guidance; 2) Facilitating communication by keeping communication channels open; 3) Recruit and retain Generation Z employees.
Generation Z and Its Perception of Work [18]	Generation Z does not like working alone and prefers to work in groups in open offices. Generation Z is always looking for ways to improve, expects to be mentored by superiors, and wants to build positive working relationships. In addition, Generation Z has strong security demands, which can be seen from their desire for stable jobs with good compensation.
Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Internal Communication with Generation Z Employee Performance at Tech Company [19]	Company leaders can use a transformational leadership style by setting ethical examples in their behavior, earning the trust and respect of their employees, instilling pride in them, and communicating a vision that attracts and inspires them.
Are You Ready for Gen Z in the Workplace? [20]	Managers must now understand not only how to best manage inexperienced young employees, but also the characteristics of the generation affected by their experience. Understanding their behavior and the unique needs they have at work will result in greater integration and mutual success for new employees.

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Research Title	Results
Changes in Communication Behavior of Millennials and Generation Z in the Digital Age [21]	The behavior of the millennial generation and Gen Z, which was originally interactive before using communication devices, has become passive after using communication devices, thus hampering effective communication between them.
Generational Effects of Workplace Flexibility on Work Engagement, Satisfaction, and Commitment in South Korean Deluxe Hotels [22]	Employees are more engaged and satisfied with the organization and their work when they are aware of workplace flexibility, which leads to organizational effectiveness; Employee engagement in the workplace has a beneficial impact on satisfaction; and Employee happiness has a beneficial impact on employee commitment.
Intergenerational Cooperation at the Workplace from the Management Perspective [23]	Organizations fear that if they do not manage generations adequately, tensions will arise among generations of employees, resulting in the departure of younger individuals (loss of potential) and rejection of older employees.
How Millennials, Gen Z, and Technology are Changing the Workplace Design? [24]	The entry of young people into the workforce has a greater impact on business setting, communicating and running a business. There is a responsibility in workplace design to respond to these changing needs in an environment that empowers both individuals and companies.

2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

At this stage, several criteria will be determined from the data that has been found previously so that it can produce quality data. Journal articles that meet the requirements are included in the Inclusion Criteria, and those that do not are selected in the Exclusion Criteria.

2.5 Quality Rating

In SLR research, evaluation of the data that has been found can use the quality assessment criteria as below:

Qa1 Are the journal articles and proceedings used as sources an international reputable journal and/or SINTA accredited?

Qa2 Is the article a communication research?

Qa3 Is the article related to the concept of self and the adaptation of interactions in it?

2.6 Data Analysis

Journals that have been obtained by researchers will go through analytical procedures to produce answers to research questions that have been made previously. The articles to be analyzed are in the following scopes:

1. Self-concept and adaptation of Generation Z interactions in the workplace;
2. An overview of the problems of Generation Z in the workplace;
3. Challenges that Generation Z will face in the future.

3 Result and Discussion

Researchers searched for data sources through Google Scholar. The journals that the researchers managed to collect were 40 journals. The publication year of publication ranges from 2016 to 2021. After going through the selection process in inclusion and exclusion as well as quality assessment, the remaining journals are 17 journals.

3.1 Generation Z Interaction Problems with Other Generations at Workplace

Gen Z will not respect their manager if they feel they are not valued. Not appreciating means not listening to or belittling their ideas. They will also perceive employment decisions as unfair if they do not fully understand the processes and procedures used to make those decisions, such as project assignments and promotions. This is not new to Gen Z, as research in the field of procedural justice shows that perceived procedural fairness and how one is treated greatly influences one's job satisfaction, performance, commitment and trust, and self-esteem [20]. Generation Z norms are different from the norms of previous generations. Generation Z was born in the world of technology and they feel comfortable in that world, so it is very important for them to be surrounded by that environment. The virtual world is a natural thing for them, but many of them are unable to adapt their online life to their offline life. They feel that there is an irreconcilable gap between reality and desire, and they feel an uncertain state [13].

Lack of experience in interpreting verbal communication that occurs because most rely on social media makes them somewhat less able to speak directly (oral). Meeting many people at an event even makes them uncomfortable because they tend to prioritize privacy, live on social media, take selfies without caring about their surroundings, even laugh to themselves while eating at restaurants. Furthermore, verbally, this generation tends to use informal language and has difficulty in expressing their intentions. They usually speak unconventionally and like to abbreviate words and phrases. Nonverbally, Generation Z has a lot of slang [11].

3.2 Generation Z's Future Challenges

Different generations have different preferences for jobs and workplaces. It is very important to understand the preferences of Generation Z so that appropriate communication channels can be developed and a positive work atmosphere can be established [25]. A

generation needs to take care of its employees. They should strive to make employee schedules as flexible as possible at the organizational level, and establish practical policies. Concrete regulations, such as providing training for the division of work between two or more employees, empowering members to manage flexible schedules and opening up easy communication channels are needed [22].

Other research conducted by [26] shows that millennial employees (Generation Y) have many of the same expectations and demands as their older coworkers. Gen Y employees won't be the only problem businesses will face in the workplace. Employees of the post-millennial generation (Generation Z), as well as other factors such as global economic challenges, political issues, and the fourth industrial revolution, all cause upheaval in different workplaces. The findings of research conducted by [15], this exploratory study reveals that nationality is a significant differentiator in terms of Gen Z work value preferences and attractiveness. Learning and visible outcomes seem to appeal to almost everyone; however, there was significant variation in how all other work scores were assessed across the four country groups. These findings highlight the need to manage diversity in multinational companies, as well as a complete understanding of value variations across global employees.

4 Conclusion

Generation Z currently dominates the number of employees in the current workforce. They work at a time when technology and communication are developing. Therefore, managers in an organization must be able to provide guidance for Generation Z to be able to have a strong character in dealing with dynamics or situations that sometimes do not match their personalities. Gen Z has a personality that is quite good at dealing with change. However, they still need to be nurtured in terms of responsibility and risk. So that they will remain strong in the face of competition in the future.

Acknowledgments. The authors would like to thank Sebelas Maret University for the support.

Authors' Contributions. Mailani Fadilah contributed writing, Prahastiwi Utari contributed correcting, editing, read and Mahendra Wijaya approved the final manuscript.

References

1. R. West and L. H. Turner, *Introduction of Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*, Fourth Edi. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.
2. E. B. Hurlock, *Personality Development*. New York: McGraw-Hill Kogakusha, 1979.
3. J. Cogin, "Are generational differences in work values fact or fiction? Multi-country evidence and implications," *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.*, vol. 23, no. 11, pp. 2268–2294, Jun. 2012, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.610967>.
4. Y. Kapil and A. Roy, "A Critical Evaluation of Generation Z at Workplaces," *Int. J. Soc. Relev. Concern*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 10–14, 2014, [Online]. Available: https://ijournals.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/IJOURNAL_CAMERA_READY.pdf.

5. M. Abdullah, O. Ali, and R. B. Alias, "Generational Differences in values and attitudes within workplace," vol. 57, pp. 1496–1503, 2020.
6. Kronos Incorporated, "Full Report : Generation Z in the Workplace Part One : Meet Gen Z The next generation is here : Hopeful , anxious ," pp. 1–32, 2019.
7. K. Gomez, T. Mawhinney, and K. Betts, "Welcome to generation Z," *Deloitte*, 2021, [Online]. Available: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/consumer-business/welcome-to-gen-z.pdf>.
8. B. K. Gaidhani, S., Arora, Lokesh & Sharma, "Understanding the Attitude of Generation Z Towards Workplace," *Talent. Heads*, vol. IX, no. 2804, pp. 2804–2812, 2019, [Online]. Available: <http://www.talentedheads.com/2013/04/09/generation-confused/>.
9. B. Kitchenham *et al.*, "Systematic literature reviews in software engineering-A tertiary study," *Inf. Softw. Technol.*, vol. 52, no. 8, pp. 792–805, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2010.03.006>.
10. D. P. V. C. Afshan Zoya, "Workplace Preference of Generation Z: A Review and Research Agenda," *Psychol. Educ. J.*, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 10163–10167, 2021, [Online]. Available: <http://psychologyandeducation.net/pae/index.php/pae/article/view/3987>.
11. M. Tika, "Phenomenology of Communication of Generation Z in Pekanbaru," *Komunikator*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2019, doi: <https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.111015>.
12. F. Aziz, M. Anom, A. Rashid, M. Noor, A. Othman, and I. R. Ismail, "Factor Influencing Gen Z Preferred Working Environment in Malaysia," *Turkish J. Comput. Math. Educ.*, vol. 12, no. 7, pp. 2727–2733, 2021.
13. A. Bencsik, T. Juhász, and G. Horváth-Csikós, "Y and Z Generations at Workplaces," *J. Compet.*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 90–106, 2016, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2016.03.06>.
14. S. Chareewan, M. Grünhagen, N. P. Vokić, and J. Dlačić, "Differences in Work Expectations of Generation Y and Generation Z : An Empirical Investigation in Croatia," *J. Business, Ind. Econ.*, vol. 25, pp. 1–32, 2020.
15. P. De Boer, P. Bordoloi, J. Dallmann, and L. Hengshen, "Generation Z work values: A cross-national analysis," *Cross-Cultural Bus. Conf. 2021*, pp. 1–10, 2021.
16. H. Downs, "Bridging the Gap: How the Generations Communicate," *Concordia J. Commun. Res.*, vol. 6, no. 6, 2019, [Online]. Available: <https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/comjournal>.
17. R. Gupta, "How To Incorporate Technology In The Workplace For Gen Z Employees," *Eur. J. Mol. Clin. Med.*, vol. 7, no. 10, pp. 3699–3707, 2020.
18. M.-C. Iorgulescu, "Bucharest University of Economic Studies GENERATION Z AND ITS," *Cross-Cultural Manag. J.*, vol. XVIII, no. 1, pp. 47–54, 2016.
19. L. Irena and E. Z. Rusfian, "Hubungan Gaya Kepemimpinan Transformasional Dan Komunikasi Internal Dengan Kinerja Karyawan Generasi Z Pada Tech Company," *J. Komun.*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 223, 2019, doi: <https://doi.org/10.24912/jk.v11i2.5635>.
20. H. Schroth, "Are you ready for gen Z in the workplace?," *Calif. Manage. Rev.*, vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 5–18, 2019, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619841006>.
21. S. F. Zis, N. Effendi, and E. R. Roem, "Perubahan Perilaku Komunikasi Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z di Era Digital," *Satwika Kaji. Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sos.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 69–87, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v5i1.15550>.
22. H. S. Jung and H. H. Yoon, "Generational effects of workplace flexibility on work engagement, satisfaction, and commitment in south korean deluxe hotels," *Sustain.*, vol. 13, no. 16, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169143>.
23. Ž. Veingerl Čič and S. Šarotar Žižek, "Intergenerational Cooperation at the Workplace from the Management Perspective," *Naše Gospod. Econ.*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 47–59, 2017, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ngoe-2017-0018>.
24. M. T. Latkovikj and M. B. Popovska, "How millennials, gen z, and technology are changing the workplace design?," *CEUR Workshop Proc.*, vol. 2789, no. Stpis, pp. 53–59, 2020.

25. A. P. Singh and J. Dangmei, "Understanding the Generation Z: the Future Workforce," *South-Asian J. Multidiscip. Stud.*, no. July, pp. 1–6, 2016.
26. J. O. Otieno and S. M. Nyambegera, "Millennials and Generation Z Employees are here : Is your Organization ready ?," *J. Lang. Technol. Entrep. Africa*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 68–85, 2019.
27. Vina A. Muliana (2017, March 07). Gen X, Y, and Z, Which Is The Most Loyal At Work?. Retrieved at <https://www.liputan6.com/bisnis/read/2875395/gen-xy-dan-z-mana-yang-most-faithful-di-place-work>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
28. Habib, May. _____. How Gen-Z May Change Workplace Communication for Good This generation is changing how we communicate at work-- and that's a good thing. Retrieved at: <https://www.inc.com/may-habib/how-gen-z-may-change-workplace-communication-for-good.html>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
29. Danang Sugianto. (2020, Dec 28). Lebih Parah dari Milenial, Gen Z Generasi Paling 'Boros'. Retrieved at <https://finance.detik.com/berita-ekonomi-bisnis/d-5312779/lebih-parah-dari-milenial-gen-z-generasi-paling-boros>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
30. _____. (2021, August 13). Sering Tertukar, Ini Perbedaan Generasi Z dan Milenial di Dunia Kerja. Retrieved at <https://m.tribunnews.com/parapuan/2021/08/14/sering-tertukar-ini-perbedaan-generasi-z-dan-milenial-di-dunia-kerja>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
31. Benedikta Desideria. (2019, Oct 15). Kesehatan Mental Tersiksa, 50 Persen Generasi Milenial Memilih Resign. Retrieved at <https://www.liputan6.com/health/read/4085860/kesehatan-mental-tersiksa-50-persen-generasi-milenial-memilih-resign>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
32. Dewi Aminatuz Zuhriyah. (2019, Oct 29). Ternyata Gen Z Lebih Ambisius Mengejar Karier Ketimbang Milenial. Retrieved at <https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20191029/12/1164469/ternyata-gen-z-lebih-ambisius-mengejar-karier-ketimbang-milenial>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)
33. _____. (2019, Oct 10). 50% Milenial Pilih Minggat dari Perusahaan Perusak Mental. Retrieved at <https://www.gatra.com/detail/news/449996/milenial/50-milenial-pilih-minggat-dari-perusahaan-perusak-mental>. Accessed: (2021, Oct 13)

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

