

# Delving into the Generational Spectrum: Internal communication of leaders with Gen Z in the Corporate Context

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**Abstract** - This study investigates the internal communication strategies employed by workplace leaders to bridge the communication gap with Generation Z within organizational settings. Using semi-structured interviews with 15 corporate leaders until data saturation was achieved, the research captures leaders' evolving perspectives on engaging with Gen Z employees. Findings reveal that while many leaders are transitioning from traditional communication methods toward approaches that resonate with Gen Z, certain areas of Gen Z's communication expectations remain unmet. Addressing these gaps is critical as Gen Z increasingly shapes the workforce, necessitating an understanding of their distinct communication styles and values. This study uniquely contributes to the discourse on generational communication within organizations, highlighting the role of effective leader-Gen Z interaction in fostering a cohesive work environment.

**Keywords:** Current Internal Communication, Effective Internal Communication, Generation Z, Workplace Leadership,

## I. INTRODUCTION

Profound insights into emerging generations in the workplace will enable highly engaging organizational leadership to navigate a multigenerational culture. In a context where a new generation is initially engaging, leaders' performance will be critical to drive the organization to its maturity. Thus, it is the leader's responsibility to guarantee the proactive participation of all the employees in the organizational processes disregarding the generational disparity since employees and leadership together will execute the overall organizational efficacy and credibility (Bekiari & Ntakou, 2018). Hence, organizational leaders should comprehensively grasp the authenticity of a particular generation and tactfully manage them. Therefore, for an organization that is aiming the success, it is vital to have better leadership.

On the other hand, in an organizational landscape, effective internal communication is paramount in fostering a cohesive working environment. Thus, communication is a vital factor to strengthen the relationship between employer and employees particularly in important events. Besides, it assists when employees expect transparency from their leaders (Mazzei et al., 2019). Since communication is an integral aspect of maintaining the bond between leaders and employees, leaders need to have an in-depth understanding of their subordinates and the background they are coming from, comprising the divergences between generations.

As the occupational domain welcomes the Gen Z into the fold, leaders are delving deeper into adopting the rhythm of the communication which aligns with the newbie generation. Besides, this generation is known as the first digital native generation (Francis, 2018), employers must undergo a novel experience with them. Thus, considering the present circumstances, identifying Gen Zs, and adjusting leaders' internal communication is a major requisite for an organization to enhance the productivity with acquiring the most effective communicational elements such as strategies, channels, methods, styles,

etc. However, as Gabrielova and Buchko (2021) stated, despite there are studies have conducted to emphasize leaders to cope with previous generations, there is a knowledge deficiency in managing Gen Zs. On the contrary, researchers have discerned from pilot research with corporate leaders, that there is an actual performance discrepancy where they encounter challenges to manage Gen Z employees since it is a novel experience for them. Consequently, this endeavour is chiefly directed at facilitating the connectivity between leaders' communication and Gen Z expectations which researchers identified through the pilot study and pre-existing information for leadership transformation to communicate with the digital natives.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study concentrated on conducting a literature review on the internal communicational relationship between leaders and Gen Z employees to attain the objective of fulfilling the generational gap that exists in the current corporate world in the aspect of internal communication. There are three major topics as workplace leadership, current internal communication, and Gen Zs which contains past findings within the last ten years that relate to the key point of the study.

### **A. Workplace Leadership**

The term "leadership" can be delineated as "the process of influencing a group of individuals to achieve a vision or desired outcomes" (Bekiari & Ntakou, 2018). Employees and leaders impact the organizational efficacy, ethos, and overall ambiance (Bekiari & Ntakou, 2018). Leadership is the most integral participation of an organization that would aid in profit acquisition and meantime, organizational maturation will rely on the leadership style which would enhance the workplace ecosystem (Puni et al., 2014). Correspondingly, subordinates' achievements would be holistically built on the leadership's effects on the organization as pros and cons (Wen et al., 2019). Consequently, effective leadership drives to garner employee productivity, employee satisfaction, effective engagement, revenue as well as overall organizational advancement.

By identifying the criticality of effective leadership researchers have been inclined to ascertain leadership styles and how their communicational patterns will diverge. Hence, researchers introduced a portion of leadership types and styles according to their congruence. An inclusive leadership style is the most important style that needs to be adopted for the dynamic workplace as these leaders respect the employees and value equality even when they are communicating, also these leaders esteem the efforts of the employees, on the other hand, these leaders communicate in a way that can empower the workforce to achieve organizational goals successfully (Qi et al., 2019; Randel et al., 2018). Task-oriented behaviour and relationship-oriented behaviour are other categories that have been identified based on the effectiveness of the leaders' behaviours toward their subordinates. Task-oriented in the sense, that leaders are concerned more with task completion rather than employees' expectations and perspectives. On the other hand, relationship-oriented is the opposite side of task-oriented where leaders are more concerned with employees' perspectives and well-being rather than tasks (Wikaningrum et al., 2018). Primordially, researchers have found three main leadership styles that will manifest three different communication styles to influence their subordinates. First authentic leaders' communication styles, they are leveraging very strict supervisory strategies that are less desired and less esteemed by employees as they will become exceedingly burdensome and overwhelming (Chan et al., 2013). Second, democratic

leaders' communication style, will enhance employee desirability as these leaders encourage their employees to express their notions and responses and empower them to perceive as essential assets to the workplace (Puni et al., 2014). Third laissez-faire leaders give freedom to their employees to execute assigned tasks according to their optimal comfort.

Since it is imperative to maintain a concord between employers and employees to achieve overall organizational goals and objectives effectively, the leadership style that would encourage employer-employee communication is the most efficient in the organization (Johnson, 2018). Kelly and Macdonald (2016) discovered that leaders should focus on prioritizing an improved communication background rather than focusing on training programs. Therefore, leaders should recognize the precision in communication and influence subordinates for mutual satisfaction, as leaders' effectiveness hinge on their capability to wield influence their subordinates.

### ***B. Current Internal Communication***

Communication is a critical element for a workplace, as it combines all the information and all the dynamics into one place and communicating effectively becomes proficiency in a such situation. Thereby, researchers have directed attention to the essentiality of effective internal communication of the organizational crew (Andersson, 2019). Researchers have proved that employee communication plays a key role in fostering a better atmosphere and work engagement and cohesive supporters to promote the reputation of an organization. Consequently, the essentiality of effective internal communication among workplace employees, especially the relationship between employees with their managers, is being spotlighted (Mazzei et al., 2019). Considering the external perspective, to maintain a better reputation and to attain a competitive edge, employee communication is indispensable and circulating proper information about the company by employees through effective communication brings the consideration of the external stakeholders to the company (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Mazzei, 2014). It is vital to attend on ways to improve internal communication, especially through social media as same as understanding the employees' rights to have a voice while foremost facilitating them with a sense of the bond they have with the organization (Kelly & Macdonald, 2016). Also that, workplace leaders should enable employees to feel that they are living within the innovative environment (Linke & Zerfass, 2011). Thereby leaders can achieve effective internal communication within the organization by upholding communicational elements such as strategies, methods, styles, channels while considering the preferences and performances of each employee of an organization.

***1) Communication Strategies:*** Communication strategies are frameworks designed to convey information effectively to the audience. It is the structure shared by everyone when communicating with internal and external stakeholders. Mazzei (2014) introduced seven internal communication strategies for employee engagement. First, establishment of a specific communication path that facilitate clear comprehension of the communication types that exist around them. Second, upgradation of interactive communication that maintains integrity between two parties. Third, the employee-employer relationship should be founded on trust. Fourth, leaders should be effective communicators. Fifth, instigation of accountability among members. Sixth, the establishment of the three pillars of the framework of communication as employees, society, and the future. Finally, organizations must treat communication as a significant

element where the importance of communication for the well-being of an organization is well articulated. Researchers have found numerous communicational strategies across various categories. Floredu and Cabiddu (2016) have introduced six social media communicational strategies as egocentric strategy which shares details through social media platforms but does not maintain any personal relationships, conversational strategy which develops personal relationships with the audience, selective strategy which considers only positive comments, openness strategy which consider all the comments without segregating positive and negative, secretive strategy which manage all the circumstances through another private channel and the last supportive strategy which communicate all the information to the audience without any filtering. Furthermore, researchers introduce two main strategies verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Mancl & Penington, 2011). According to the author's illustrations, the importance and differentiation of communicational strategies is evident. The proper communication strategy will gain effective employee productivity that essential to the company's growth.

**2) Communication Channels:** Numerous communicational channels have currently been used in organizations. Lipiäinen et al. (2014) introduced communicational channels in two categories as non-digital channels and digital channels. Notice boards and notes on the tables constitute non-digital channels while intranet, emails, instant messages, blogs are incorporated into digital channels. Furthermore, mentioned intranet is the quintessential information-sharing method and email is the most user-friendly channel that is currently used in organizations. In addition, (Deepa & Baral, 2022) channels are divided into two segments as mass communication which means sending the message to a large audience through posters, events, and blogs, and interactive communication which means sending the message to a specific person or a group through emails, team meetings and one-to-one sessions. Furthermore, researchers have categorized these communication channels into three parts as rich media includes team meetings, video chats, and meetings; moderate media includes blogs, corporate social networks, town hall meetings, organized chats from top management, and specially developed applications and lean media includes printed newsletters, memos, digital newsletters, meetings including all the employees, posters, boards, Liquid Crystal Display, or other screens and mail sent to home (Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020).

Researchers recommend face-to-face communication is the best way to connect with employees in the workplace (Deepa & Baral, 2022; Lipiäinen et al., 2014; Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020). Further, it is the best way to build faith and accountability between employees and employee relationships. Moreover, if face-to-face opportunity is not available telephone calls (Lipiäinen et al., 2014) are the second-best way to maintain good communication relationships.

However, in the current context, communication channels are blended with both traditional and digital platforms and are constantly changing and evolving according to the workplace environment and technology enhancement. However, communicational channels should be aligned with the stakeholders' preferences, enabling more effective interaction within the organization (Oltarzhovskyi, 2019) while also aligning with employee satisfaction otherwise employee satisfaction will diminish, and it will adversely affect the overall productivity since communicational preferences of Gen Z is a new cohort, leaders should get a clear understanding to connect with them effectively.

**2) Communication Styles:** Communication styles are the way that someone articulates their opinions in verbal or non-verbal interactions which includes actions, words, and body language. These attributes describe a person's authenticity, the way they want to show themselves to others, interpersonal dynamics, and the ways they need others to understand their own opinions (De Vries et al., 2009). According to Hartman and Mccambridge (2011), communication styles introduce dual concepts of style-typing and style-flexing, which are important for creating effective relationships. These two concepts contribute to the advancement of interpersonal communication skills, aiding effective communication. Further he introduced some styles as analytical style individuals who rank tasks and are less reactive; driver styles who are task-oriented and determined; amiable styles who are responsive and emotionally bonded; and expressive styles who are interpersonal and enthusiastic. These styles are further evaluated based on strategies such as speed of communication, priority, reactivity, and assertiveness. A proper understanding of these styles can gain effective communication and interpersonal growth. Moreover, the non-assertive style is characterized by a passive and avoidant approach. Individuals who have this communication style tend to be introverted, reluctant to express their opinions, feel shy, and often prioritize others' opinions. The aggressive style of individuals prioritizes their own opinions while disregarding others' opinions. The manipulative style blends passive and aggressive elements, including manipulation and working behind the scenes to foster personal ideas without clear acknowledgment. Assertive-style individuals have self-validation skills and express their ideas clearly and honestly without undermining the ideas of others (Urea & Muscalu, 2012). Furthermore Luo et al. (2016), have introduced interconnected aspects of communication styles within the framework of organizational change. These aspects include hope orientation, where managers demonstrate a promising and achievable communication style; reality orientation, characterized by clear, consistent, and down-to-earth communication; subordinate orientation, where leaders seek benefits from both parties' organization and subordinates; and finally support orientation, where leaders provide their immense support and encourage the improvements of their subordinates.

Nevertheless, these communication styles differ from person to person, and regardless of the communication style that a person has, all individuals should be able to respect other parties' communication styles as it is the individual accountability, especially in an organizational environment. As Gen Z is a digital native generation who was born in a digitalized world, they might have unique communication styles as they are keener on technological aspects. Therefore, leaders should understand their communication styles and should maintain a better relationship with them.

**3) Communication Methods:** When building up an effective communication bridge with the new generation, it is imperative to understand communication methods as well. Yuan et al. (2016) presented two aspects of communication methods as traditional communication methods which include landline telephone calls, face-to-face communication, and internet-based communication methods. On the other hand, (Nguyen et al., 2020) have introduced some digital communication methods such as text messaging, and voice calls. Social media, video calls, email, etc. However, to create an effective communication network specifically in an organization it is essential to be concerned about stakeholders' preferences who are engaged within a particular communication environment and creating valuable relationships among stakeholders and that will enhance the overall productivity of an organization.

### **C. Gen Z**

Gen Z, also known as post-millennials, that are currently entering the cooperative world, has unique characteristics, hence leaders should be prepared to welcome this new cohort (Schroth, 2019). Even though there is no specific age classification for Gen Zs like baby boomers, for analytical purposes, researchers defined Gen Z's generational boundary between 1997 to 2012 (Dimock, 2019). Gen Z shows a challenging impact on the other cohorts through their unique characteristics and also brings potential changes to the organization (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). As per the Lanier (2017) illustrations, described five main characteristics on Gen Zs. First, Gen Z is the first real “Digital native” generation as they were born in the digitalized era. Second, Gen Zs are keener on connecting with diverse individuals that are from different cultures, and backgrounds through social media. Third, this generation is the more pragmatic generation when compared to the other cohorts, they are more concerned with stability, security, logic, and safety, and focused on traditional aspects of flourishing their stability. Fourth, Gen Z tends to possess plenty of innovative ideas compared to other cohorts and is more oriented on entrepreneurial perspectives. Fifth, even though Gen Zs are technophiles and digital enthusiasts, they tend to maintain their communication with their leaders face-to-face. In a certain way, identifying the importance of tech natives in the workplace is essential for leaders, as this generation has the potential to change the future of workplace transformation since technology enables them to explore fresh knowledge and enlarge connectivity.

On the other hand, Gen Z is described as a cohort of cooperative spirit, moving forward, interactive, and willingly sharing ideas (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Besides, they are more into informal communication yet straightforward and tend to communicate their viewpoint (Gaidhani et al., 2019). Since this generation has an open and friendly communication style yet is novice to the work setting, the leaders must get a comprehensive grasp of their culture to recruit the best and retain them for a time without facing serious challenges (Schroth, 2019). If not, it would be a major hindrance for the entire organizational growth. Because research shows that if Gen Zs sensed the work setting is incongruent with expectations and characteristics, there is a risk of them rush resignations (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Further, researchers show that this generation prefers well-structured onboard systems to attain transparent insights of the company including vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Therefore, it is the responsibility of their leaders to foster transparent internal communication to interact with this generation (Chillakuri, 2020). Gen Z favours regular development and is curious learners for their career stability, hence they expect leaders' support in the workplace (Iorgulescu, 2016). They are practiced in multitasking and if they have repetitive tasks, they will easily get bored (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). This is evident that they expect a more friendly and collaborative relationship with their leaders. In this case, discerning Gen Z is a vital element in the current work context especially, since leaders have a critical responsibility of cultivating a fair atmosphere inside the work setting where this newbie generation can be adjusted and work productively.

When considering the current work setting, a significant volume of the workforce including first-level superiors to senior managers is grouped into the millennial category. Hence with the arrival of Gen Z to the work setting, researchers have approximated the risk of arising conflict between these two generations. Thus, they have identified four major high-risk areas where a conflict would have emerged; leadership style, motivation,

social interaction, and teamwork (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Even though there is a potential conflict escalation, and much research conducted to identify how to deal with millennials, it indicates that there is a lack of knowledge to identify how to interact with Gen Z, especially for leaders.

Effective workplace leadership plays a crucial role in organizational success as it is the vertebrae of employee productivity as well as the overall organizational productivity. Leaders' effectiveness will be determined based on their ability to influence their subordinates (Wikaningrum et al., 2018). Effective internal communication is an integral part of an organization to establish a sustainable working environment. The need of effective communication has become a fundamental skill to each member of an organization (Andersson, 2019). Gen Z alias I Gen who are entering to the corporate world as newbies shows unique traits, characteristics and behaviours (Kumarasena et al., 2023). According to the Chillakuri and Mahanandia (2018), illustrations Gen Z could be a formidable generation to other generations as their behaviours are diverse and will bring potential changes to the workplace. Hence, leaders facing lots of challenges on recruiting and retaining these newbies to the workforce. (Schroth, 2019). Therefore, researchers recommend to managers to engage with these newbies in proactive way and to communicate with them to understand their uniqueness. (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Furthermore, contemporary understanding has been covered apprehending millennials uniqueness and given recommendations to baby boomers on how to deal with them. But there is a lack of knowledge on advising millennials on how to deal with Gen Zs. In conclusion, as there is inadequate knowledge on grasping these newbies in an organizational context. To bridge the communicational generation gap researchers identified communicational relationship between leaders and Gen Z employees to give a knowledge on Gen Zs on their communicational aspect.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***A. Study Design***

This study is qualitative research with the ultimate objective of exploring how workplace leadership communicating with their Gen Z employees. Pertaining to this study, researchers have been able to conduct semi-structured interviews with workplace leaders until the data saturation point.

#### ***B. Participants***

Insights were collected from leaders who work in companies that are recognized as multinationals or key players in the cooperate sector. Semi-structured interviews were carried out on both physical and virtual platforms to ensure a convenient and smooth process of data collection.

In the context of this study, researchers have used the snowball sampling method to approach the workplace leaders as well as Gen Zs. Researchers contacted and gathered data from leaders who voluntarily shared their insights (e.g. Assistant Managers, Managers, Senior Managers, Assistant Directors, Directors, etc.) belonging to top revenue-generated companies. Furthermore, they recognized and interviewed for positions above 'Assistant Manager' as the workplace leadership.





and their generation.” “Gen Zs are advanced generation. They live with technology so that they can work beyond the limit.” Therefore, Gen Zs conform to the technological implementations in the workplace. “When introducing some new app Gen Z adapts to that technology more quickly than other generations. They use quick options and they do experiments through technology.” In multigenerational workforce, Gen Zs emphasize as a remarkable cohort with their technological literacy.

Subsequently, leaders emphasized that Gen Zs are effortless when performing their tasks. “When they are working, they don’t have self-commitment as much as we had with us. They need decisions then and there.”

“They don’t keep anything for themselves. So, when I have discussions with them, they open-up and tell me their expectations and we can communicate freely and get their opinions because they don’t like most of the time, 90 percent of the employees don’t keep anything behind they just open and give their opinions. So that’s one of the best things when it comes to transitions and transformations of the organization.” This clearly emphasizes that Gen Zs communicate and openly express their ideas and opinions within the workplace.

“They are highly goal-oriented they always give their opinion regardless they are from the executive level or junior level they are brave enough to come with up opinions. And always challenged the management so I mean always company going through transitions they value things of Gen Z because they are very transparent, and they have opinions all the time rather than like just following up that superiors said they want to communicate in more in a clear manner.” Leaders acknowledge their talent and the above highlighted scenario provide and prove that Gen Zs are goal-oriented cohort.

Further, they highlighted both positive aspects such as, Gen Zs’ adaptability, Friendly and they recognized them as a well-organized cohort in workplace.

### **B. Leaders’ Ongoing Practices**

Below **Error! Reference source not found.**, generated by researchers with a word cloud to identify the most relevant ongoing communication practices used by the leaders when communicating with Gen Zs.

**Figure 2. Leaders' Insights - Leaders' Ongoing Practices**



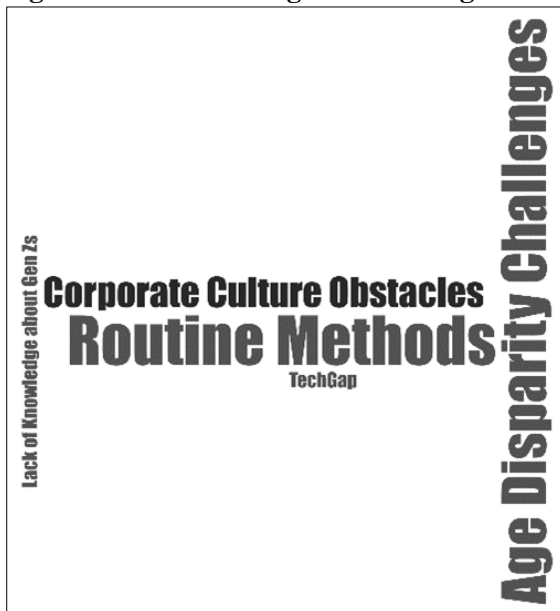
Source: Authors compilation.

Among the participants, they have highlighted “WhatsApp Messages” as a strong communication method used to communicate with Gen Zs. Furthermore, Gen Zs are mostly using short messages rather than using formal communication channels or methods. *“They do not like emails right, they like WhatsApp and Teams kind of short messages rather than emails, because if you write an email that should be more formal right even if they apply a leave they put a short text, not a proper email.”*

### C. Evolving Challenges

Leaders mentioned some challenges that they are currently facing when they are dealing with Gen Z employees as depict in the **Error! Reference source not found.** All the c hallenges categorized under five aspects as: routine methods, age disparity challenges, Tech gap, corporate culture obstacles and lack of knowledge on Gen Zs.

**Figure 3. Leaders' Insights - Evolving Challenges**



Source: Authors compilation.

Leaders indicated that challenges they face when dealing with these newcomers in daily operations. *“They prefer with short messages, and they don’t like to write lengthy emails, but if you working with the technicalities which I am working with you have to be with the facts and need to be communicating very clearly. What I noticed in these guys is that they try to be very short sometimes even when they use social media animations in emails. In such cases the clarity of their email drop.”* Further, since Gen Zs are technical natives, they are prone to search all work-related information through devices and try on to come up with solutions through search engines likewise. *“Maybe that is because they deal with the internet and chat GPT or anything, they try to put that question to Google or to chat GPT, they extract the information and just put the email and send it out. When it comes to the practical content of that particular issue or the scenario and the behaviour in the operation flow may be somewhat different from the literature. These guys try to extract the information, they try to be more online rather than practical.”*

Furthermore, leaders emphasized some considerable challenges that they encounter while mentoring the Gen Z employees. *“When something is not as expected by the business or leadership or me, then we try to help them and try to advise them, and then they feel offended sometimes. They think their approach, or the method is right we are trying to put them on a different path which is much difficult”*; *“They also need to change their end also, because they need to understand we are having bigger picture and need to check what is based on my actions and my duties what is the expectations of the company.”*

*“They don’t have self-commitment as much as we had with us. They need decisions then and there. Actually, that was a big challenge for us at the beginning”*; *“We should facilitate self-learning for them otherwise If we go instruct them word by word, they will tire of the work.”* The reason for this matter leaders elaborated that this generation is newcomers to the corporate world as well as they are lacking experience in organizational aspects. *“If these guys work with us for two to three years, finally they realize their performances and knowledge. All the thing is first six months is very difficult part they don’t realize it because their influence comes from universities and society and puts them in a placement. If they pass these six months and continue for one to two years, they will become very much oriented and will be familiarized with our system.”*

Further whenever the leaders are aggressive or not very much adapted to this new generation, Gen Zs do not share their any concerns or suggestions, they easily get dissatisfied and leave the company. *“We must be very patient with them. I am speaking to them very nicely otherwise I know they are very reluctant to support us”*; *“Sometimes their behaviour, very incorporative”*; *“Some leaders they more aggressive so their subordinates don’t tell their problems to the leader and try to solve them themselves. So, most of the time in such cases problems will be increased”*. Leaders committed that *“If we don’t adjust with them, we can’t get the work done by them at all, which means can’t expect a productivity or else can’t build up the team spirit”*.

*“There can be challenges faced by quite late 40s, or 50s because of the generational and age gap”*; *“Our culture is basically hard-working like workaholic culture, yet Gen Zs are basically from a modern Era. So, when working with this modern era, if we won’t go and adjusted to them, they will not be retained in the company.”* Likewise, leaders elaborated the challenge they are facing with the new generation either way in age disparity and the generational gap.

*“I see some managers like senior managers do not feel comfortable when employees are not around.”* Gen Zs are expecting flexibility within the workplace especially flexible hours and work from home facility. But previous generations are practised to work within the company. Hence, in here it creates a gap between leaders and Gen Z employees.

In the matter of some leaders emphasised age disparity challenges has created because of the lack of awareness about this new generation. *“Generation X who is at a very top level doesn’t understand these new guys' expectations in some cases not all the time, they find it difficult to digest these new behaviours.”*

*“So, for the companies that have not adapted to the change, it will be good for them to adapt to a forward culture and a new way of working”*. When a company more concern on traditional aspects, do not try to improve the things within the digitalized world Gen Zs easily get dissatisfied with the company as they are digital native who born in the digitalized world. Therefore, leaders recommended to embrace the new culture and should adapt with these newbies.

As Gen Zs are keener on technology, tech gap is main challenge that currently facing by the leaders, as their technological proficiency comparatively less refined than Gen Zs. *“Many previous generations don’t even know that something like Google Drive exists. So that’s a real problem. There is a gap exit between generations when comes to technological knowledge.”*

**D. Leadership Transformation**

Leadership transformation is a powerful theme enabling to identify how leaders adapt with the expectations of Gen Zs. During the interviews leaders have expressed that they have identified some disparities in between the perspective of Gen Zs and current practices in the workplace highlighting the challenges they face as leaders owing for this problem. Concurrently, they have mentioned some of the solutions and how they are transmitting as below **Error! Reference source not found..**

**Figure 4. Leaders' Insights - Leadership Transformation**



Source: Authors compilation.

Hence, most of the leaders have stated that understanding them as a valuable asset to the company and inspiring them is a wise leadership initiative. Accordingly, they have expressed it as *“we should let them understand that we are considering their ideas. We let them feel that there is an impact from their side to the organization. We give them responsibilities”*. From this statement it proves that leaders are not only striving to consider them as an asset but also, they empower Gen Zs with responsibilities. *“We need to give lots of experience to them, we need to show the bigger picture. They also need to understand why are we working, what is the end goal and how we are supporting to meet that end goal”* here it indicates that leaders are aiming to cultivate Gen Z’s perfection with positive experiences and inspire them get the instil commitment.

On the other hand, it signifies that leaders have already grasped the fact that they should collaboratively guide the new workforce in order to foster a better atmosphere inside the organization and leaders have mentioned it as *“We here provide the opportunity for them to communicate from bottom to top in the hierarchy. So, they can communicate any concern in the meetings as well. so, from that they can build trust upon the company. And they will get on-the-job training”*. They have further elaborated this as *“I get feedback from them and tell them what area to be developed as well as I ask in what area that we should be developed”*. These statements prove that there is a conviction among leaders where collaborative guidance may significantly affect on Gen Zs productivity.

Further, a significant trend has emerged in leadership transformation as fostering friendship in between leaders and Gen Zs. Leaders have described this transformational trend in several times as *“we need to understand their behaviour and we need to inculcate the friendly culture because they don’t like bosses and workers concept”, “If you are closer to them, they are communicating everything. But if you have some gap between leaders and them, they will not convey all the feedback to us. So always we need to handle care very much and we need to have good connection with them”, “if you are willing to build the relationship at a peer-to-peer level then it is easy to communicate well. So that’s the most important. So, whatever the change that must happen should come from the leader. If you can put your feet on the ground and say okay, we are on the same level we maintain that relationship then it’s very comfortable to work and communicate with Gen Z employees. If you maintain that gap like you are the boss right and everyone else should be ten feet down under, then there can be problems in communicating and there will not be healthy communication relationships with the Gen Zs”*. Hence, it substantiates that leaders have proceeded to mitigate the gap between leaders and Gen Zs and foster a strong and friendly relationship by understanding it as a duty of them. *“If I am asking top of that with the pressure these guys will over-pressurized. So, what I am normally doing in three to six months I always ask them about how they feel, how is the organization, whether is it okay, whether transport is okay, and how things happening. Very friendly communication is going on once a week at least”* leaders have mentioned that they are endeavouring to maintain informal relationship with Gen Zs to foster more closeness with them.

Conversely, leaders have emphasized several times that solely fostering friendship will not necessarily make easier to address challenges they are facing with Gen Z employees, but also, they have identified that frequency of the interaction plays a critical role in strengthening the bond and it foster a conducive environment for Gen Zs to work. *“We have to frequently communicate with them. I personally use a strategy as; I take one and one sessions at least once a month”* this statement validate that leaders are transforming by collaborating frequently with Gen Z employees in the workplace. *“We can communicate through WhatsApp and also we can have small meetings the pocket meetings and we can convey the message as this is the importance, this is how you have to work and this is the expectations on the outcomes”, “Then collect feedback from the leaders and give training sessions according to their knowledge”, “Always have to have interaction with them and we need to remind them as this is our targets, this is our deadlines, this is expectation and these should be achieved. We need to communicate very frequently”* leaders expressed the importance of not only just interaction but effective interaction and how they convey the importance and train Gen Zs while collaborating with them.

Through that leaders have emphasized the essentiality of managing this cohort adeptly while fostering a comfortable working environment for them as *“I think so, as long as you keep them comfortable, engaged, and motivated they will become highly productive”* and monitoring them in a productive manner by stating *“we need to closely monitor them. We set some targets, and see whether they are meeting and how, because we should not give how they should reach their targets they can go their own way, but I think they have lot of energy and we can get lot of positive impact to the organization if we correctly handle them”*. Thus, leaders have addressed their transformation from traditional leadership to leadership that is adoptable with the new generation, referencing

trends such as monitoring, providing guidance, embracing innovation, encouraging communication, and more.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its exploration of the evolving dynamics between organizational leaders and Generation Z employees, particularly in the context of internal communication. By conducting semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders, the study unveils critical insights that can support organizational effectiveness, especially in leadership interactions with Gen Z. The findings highlight four key trends: leaders' perspectives on Gen Z, current leadership practices, emerging challenges, and leadership transformation.

First of all, leaders have discussed about how they have identified Gen Zs as the new cohort they are involving with. Thus, researchers have primarily identified in alignment with what Lanier (2017); Francis (2018) stated, that Gen Zs are technology literate cohort. Which was substantiated with what organizational leaders have stated. Leaders have exposed their transformation into the inclusive leadership style to adopt the trends in this new cohort by empowering them with tech-related operations in the organization where leaders tend to seek tech-related advices from Gen Z employees intermittently. Similarly, researchers recognised that in the communicational aspect leaders incline to adopt the inclusiveness with essence of expressive communicational style, empowering Gen Zs by giving them value in the working context. Corresponding to Gaidhani et al. (2019), researchers discovered from interviews that leaders are more tend to keep their communication with Gen Zs more informal and bridging their relationship upon a strong friendship.

Even though Gen Z is a tech-savvy generation, according to Lanier's explanation in 2017 this generation is more prone to have face-to-face communication among all the other technological communication methods. Yet comparing with the leader's opinion, researchers unearthed there is a subtly divergent perspective where leaders believe that Gen Zs more preferred on conversations through WhatsApp, based on the fact that this generation is a technology literate generation. Hence, this discrepancy between leader's perspective and Gen Z's authenticity which built upon communication channels potentially directing to a tumultuous relationship between them. Therefore, maintaining an equitable communication channel in the working context would be prudent.

Conversely, in conformity with the statement of Ozkan and Solmaz (2015), depicted the notion which Gen Zs might get tired of their working context, if there is an incongruity with their expectations and characteristics. Besides, in 2018 Chillakuri and Mahanandia have explained that Gen Z employees might be tired with their work setting if they have to bonded with repetitive tasks since they are practiced to be multitaskers. Contrastingly, information gleaned from interviews illustrate the idea that leaders have grasped the fact that Gen Zs are multitaskers. Yet the viewpoint of leaders about Gen Zs is that they might be detached from the excessive advices and perceived assertiveness of leaders. However, when considering all these statements it emerges the circumstance which Gen Z will not be secure in a place which not be compatible with their characteristics and expectations. In case, as the decision makers organizations leaders must be aware about this and it is leaders' responsibility to make flexible decisions where Gen Zs can be adopted to. Besides, as leaders are aware about the multitasking skill of this generation and majority of leaders have admitted that Gen Zs are educated generation, leaders have the possibility to lead the organization to the success with the assistance of

Gen Z by managing them skilfully. If such scenario occurs, leaders could presume to alleviate the volatility of this generation it will help to overcome the associated hindrances as well.

However, assessing the holistic landscape, researchers discern that leaders are currently striving to assimilate Gen Zs and attempting to embrace their culture. Yet, it is imperative not only to view them in leaders' lens but also to understanding them by taking into account the expectations held by Gen Zs. Thus, this study is limited to endeavour the communication aspect in an organisation between leaders and Gen Z employees. Yet, researching on overall behaviour and characteristics about Gen Z and how they are expecting to engage not only with leaders but also with their colleagues in the working context would be mindful to upgrade the efficiency of the organization.

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