

Generational Bridges and Gaps

Adrienn Bartha¹, Kitti Jánosi², Szilárd Malatyinszki³

¹ János Neumann University Doctoral School of Management and Organizational Sciences

² Kodolányi János University, Faculty of Economics

³ Kodolányi János University, Faculty of Economics

***Corresponding Author:** malatyinszki.szilard@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

My research aims to examine the labour market situation of Generation Z in Hungary in three main areas. First, I analyse the labour market attitudes of different generations, with a special focus on today's multi-generational workplaces. Second, I investigate the intergenerational knowledge sharing and its impact on job performance. Third, I focus on the challenges posed by digitalisation and how to address them. Modern workplaces are increasingly made up of multi-generational teams, where the exchange of knowledge between the experience of older workers and the digital skills of the younger generation improves organisational performance and innovation. These challenges include aligning the work of different generations and preparing for the arrival of Generation Alpha, while also focusing on attracting Generation Z to achieve long-term strategic goals. The role of digitalisation, which requires new skills for all generations, should be highlighted. I used an online questionnaire to explore in detail the relationship between Generation Z workers and multigenerational workplaces, including the challenges related to digitalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The results are intended to help employers understand generational differences and support the development of a more effective workplace environment..

Keywords: Intergenerational communication, Generation gap, Generational bridge, Knowledge transfer, Social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of my research is to examine the labour market situation of Generation Z in Hungary, following three questions that are important today. First, I would like to show how the generations currently active in the labour market relate to each other. On the other hand, I am interested in how knowledge sharing between generations works and what generations learn from each other. Thirdly, I would also like to address the challenges posed by digitalisation.

Modern workplaces are increasingly made up of multi-generational teams of different ages and experience. These diverse teams have a number of advantages, such as being more efficient and resilient to change than generationally homogeneous workplaces. It can be assumed that intergenerational mentoring and knowledge sharing improves workplace performance and innovation.

An obvious example is that older workers have longer work experience, from which younger workers can learn a lot. Sharing experience can also facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer and mentoring, which can contribute to individual and organisational development. However, most companies are faced with the challenge of coordinating the work of employees who may have radically different views and perceptions of work, not only in terms of age, but also in terms of values, interests and not least the image of work itself. A further challenge is that in a decade's time, Generation Z will be joined by Generation Alpha, and these two youngest generations will already outnumber Generation Y, which will be approaching retirement age, and Generation X, which will be well into retirement. Today, therefore, employers can, for a while, rely on middle-aged workers with a greater

commitment and attachment to work and the workplace, if they can, but this is only a short-term solution and if an organisation wants to achieve long-term strategic goals, and thus to think in the big picture, it must take a step now to make its company interesting and valuable for Generation Z. The future of companies in this respect is also in the hands of management. From a human resource management perspective, the challenge at the company level is twofold: how to optimally coordinate the work of different generations of employees in the workplace to achieve the best possible organisational performance, and how to position the company as an attractive employer for Generation Z.

It is also important to underline that the changes brought about by digitalisation can pose additional challenges, as different generations have different capacities to adapt to new technologies and tools. Generation Z, for example, is often more comfortable with digital tools and technologies, and other generations can learn from them through the exchange of experiences. In addition, the opportunities and challenges created by digitalisation require all generations to learn new skills, so multigenerational workplaces need to adapt to this dynamic. In fact, digitalisation and robotisation, often referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, present employers with major challenges, and technological developments in many aspects of the sector present organisations with problems that need to be addressed in order to maintain or improve market competitiveness.

Thus, in my research I aim to provide a comprehensive picture of the labour market situation of Generation Z in Hungary and to examine how they fit into multi-generational workplaces. I will analyse in detail the benefits and challenges of intergenerational cooperation and how intergenerational cooperation and knowledge sharing can help to effectively manage and benefit from digitalisation. The results will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the working habits and preferences of different generations by employers and managers, and thus to the creation of more effective and cohesive workplace communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In my research, in addition to reviewing the literature, I created and used an online questionnaire to examine in detail the relationship between Generation Z workers and multigenerational workplaces. Using this methodological approach, I gained deeper insights into the preferences and attitudes of Generation Z workers towards multigenerational jobs, the impact of knowledge sharing and mentoring on organisational performance and innovation, and the challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These data helped to achieve the objectives of the research and provided a comprehensive picture of the dynamics and challenges of multi-generational workplaces.

For my primary research, I created an online, anonymous questionnaire to ask the generations active in the labour market how they relate to other generations in their workplace, and how intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring affects employee development and organisational performance, and how it could be made more effective. I also asked how they approach and manage the rapid digital evolution. The form was available from 08.03.2024 to 31.03.2024. I shared it on my social media platform, in groups, with colleagues and asked for help from my friends to distribute it. A total of 70 completions were received, of which 55.7% (39) were female and 44.3% (31) were male, in terms of gender. The distribution of the respondents shows that nearly three quarters (72.9%) live in the capital, 17.1% in small towns and 10% in cities or municipalities with county status, of whom 68.6% (48) have a higher education or vocational qualification.

Of these, 35.7% work in multinational companies, 25.7% in large and 18.6% in medium-sized companies. The remaining 20% work in small companies, micro-enterprises and public administration.

RESULTS AND DEBATE

Introducing the Generations

"The word generation itself is of Latin origin (*generatio*), meaning generation, procreation; *genero*, *geno*: to beget, to give birth to. It is often used as a synonym for generation and generation. In a biological sense

"a period of successive offspring" (Academic Publishing House, 1972). At present, we use the word in a sociological rather than a biological sense. Generational theory was laid down by William Strauss and Neil Howe in their 1991 book *Generations*. They assert that "A generation is a group of people who share a historical time and place that gives them a collective identity" (Strauss and Howe, 1991; cited in McCrindle, 2009)." According to their theory, history repeats itself according to patterns that influence the perceptions and behaviours of each age group.

So generation is a classification based on year of birth, of which there are several versions in the public consciousness. Based on the literature we have read, they should be classified in periods of fifteen to eighteen years. To understand the theory of generations, I think it is important to understand the cycles and the events that

shape the personality and values of each generation. Different age groups react in different ways to events in their environment and these reactions shape the values and behavioural patterns that characterise them. As a result, generations interpret and react differently to the same historical period. Examining the differences and similarities between generations helps us to better understand social and cultural processes and how the life paths and social roles of each generation evolve. In this way, theories about generations can contribute to a better understanding of social changes and developments, so that we can be open to each other. At the same time, I would like to stress that we should not pigeonhole people by their year of birth, as there are always exceptions. If our situation allows, we should be open and understanding towards those around us, as we can learn a lot from each other. As the saying goes, "a wise man learns at the expense of others".

Attitudes of Generation Z workers towards multigenerational jobs

Generation Z workers' attitudes towards multigenerational jobs are varied and can be influenced by a number of factors. "According to a Deloitte survey of 2,000 Generation Z employees and 600 managers last March, Generation Z want to be better understood, supported and seen for who they are. They also want to be given the space and opportunity to fulfill themselves while finding themselves - both in their personal lives and in their professional lives." This survey highlights the importance of understanding and support in the workplace for Generation Z. The need for individual uniqueness and the search for opportunities for self-fulfilment at work and in their personal lives is also emphasised. Accordingly, managers and companies need to adopt a more flexible and inclusive attitude that supports the personal and professional development of Generation Z workers.

As a Generation Z worker, I have a positive attitude towards other generations. I have experienced first-hand what it is like to join a large multinational company at a young age. It wasn't easy for me, because I found that previous generations had a different attitude to education, for example. I often received a negative response, whether it was a position or a salary, saying "when you have a degree". You hear in many places that employers

"finished products", be young but have at least a few years of experience, which I think is normally impossible.

After countless attempts, I was given an opportunity that pushed me to prove myself and gain the trust of older colleagues and my boss, to show that it is possible to do well at a young age, even without a university degree. I think that, despite many initial difficulties and challenges, after about a year and a half, I succeeded and got the recognition I was looking for, giving me the boost I needed. I feel fortunate to be surrounded by more age groups in my workplace, I think that despite the difficulties that arise, it is a way to build more stable groups and communities. Together, the experiences, knowledge and approaches of different generations can enrich the work environment. Different perspectives can help innovation and problem solving, and create opportunities for mutual mentoring and learning. I am in the privileged position of having several senior colleagues who I can turn to for help whenever I don't understand something or get stuck on a task. The same can be said in reverse, as I am happy to help them if I can. Sometimes I don't understand what someone is saying, but I know who I can turn to to make myself understood. This has confirmed that yes, generational differences do exist, but they should be experienced as an advantage, not a problem.

However, differences between generations can also be a source of conflict. "Managing a multi-generational workforce requires flexibility, tolerance and respect for individual perspectives. Awareness of different skills and attributes is needed to understand and address generational challenges as they arise." I often find that different age groups do not have the patience to understand each other, which can lead to misunderstandings about how to work, and differences in expectations and values can create tensions. Communication between different age groups and reconciling different working styles can also cause difficulties. For example, Generation Z workers often focus on speed and innovation, while older generations may prefer to stick to traditional working styles. Most young people insist on flexible working options, which is reflected in the fact that the home office is almost a basic criterion for finding a job, with most people only coming into the office as often as they need to. Unfortunately, social media also suggests and reinforces this. There are lots of videos showing that as soon as their working hours are over, they don't stay a minute longer. This is not the case for the older generations, who typically work while the boss is in or do not need to be physically present to complete their tasks. Furthermore, they may be more inclined to work within the usual working hours in a traditional working environment and interpret their stay in the office as a sign of their commitment to the job. For them, personal presence, the office environment and face-to-face communication may be important. The majority find it more difficult to adapt to flexible working arrangements, a difference that can create differences in expectations and work culture. Those from older generations may feel that younger colleagues are not sufficiently committed or responsible, while young entrants may feel that more experienced colleagues are more rigid and less open to new ways of working and new technologies. Similarly, the perception of sick leave has also changed, but I think this has been significantly influenced by the epidemic situation. "It was common for older generations to be reluctant to take sick leave because they feared it might be perceived as a lack of commitment to their work." Whereas in the old days our parents and grandparents were reluctant to take sick leave even when they had a bad cold for fear of tarnishing

their image of commitment, today's young people are more comfortable taking sick leave when they feel the need. I think this is an example to follow, within healthy limits.

In addition, there are also differences in communication styles. I think it is very important to give constructive feedback to young people, this is one of the key factors to clarify the right communication and expectations from all parties. It's important that everyone in the workplace understands what working styles and communication tools are acceptable and how to effectively coordinate them between different generations. Younger generations prefer to communicate quickly and informally, for example by using instant messaging applications and chats rather than email. These short and concise messaging styles can contrast with the more traditional and formal communication styles of Generations X and Y. When I faced the challenges of the adult world after graduation, I found that if I wanted to communicate, whether it was on official business or work-related matters, I had to learn to communicate correctly and formally via email. Nowadays, in a better case, a young person learns to write a formal letter in language classes in high school, but in reality this was completely new to me. As soon as I got into the office community, I started frantically searching the internet for how to communicate, what the expectations are, luckily there are plenty of templates and tutorials, but of course the use of these is always situation specific. These differences can make it difficult to collaborate and communicate effectively in the workplace, but they can be overcome with the right understanding, tolerance and openness.

This is why I would highlight the importance of mentoring, mutual learning can also help to improve cooperation. Older workers have valuable experience and knowledge to pass on to younger colleagues, giving the younger generation the opportunity to learn from those with more experience and develop their professional skills. At the same time, new entrants can bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions and ideas to the workplace, and young people tend to continuously develop their skills and knowledge, with a greater emphasis on learning and personal development. They therefore look for employers who offer opportunities for professional development and learning. As a result, young people often have more up-to-date knowledge and are up-to-date with trends, which can provide new impetus to modernise workplace processes and projects. This type of interaction fosters mutual respect and trust between team members and also contributes to a stronger workplace culture. Overall, the process of mentoring and mutual learning can therefore foster collaboration in the workplace, while supporting professional development and innovation.

Despite the challenges, we can say that multi-generational workplaces have significant benefits when they are based on cooperation, patience, understanding and respect. They offer many opportunities for progress and innovation, but they can only be realised if all generations respect and understand each other and work together to achieve common goals. I believe that cooperation between different age groups can be very successful. For Generation Z workers, it is important to be open to the knowledge and mentoring of more experienced generations, while also bringing their own innovations and fresh perspectives to the workplace.

However, it is also worth mentioning what it is like when only one age group is present in a workplace, as some people prefer this and do not want to adapt. The dominance of one generation in a workplace can have many advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages, I would mention the similar work culture and value system, which helps to maintain harmony and work together more effectively. Similar life histories and experiences can facilitate communication and conflict management, and can strengthen a sense of community in the workplace. In single-generation workplaces, it can often be easier to shape leadership and organisational culture as expectations and preferences may be more similar.

However, this homogeneity can limit innovation and the inflow of fresh perspectives into the workplace. It can miss out on the benefits of diversity brought by different generations that could help generate new ideas and problem-solving. In addition, single-generation workplaces may find it more difficult to adapt to societal changes and new trends, as the lack of diverse perspectives and lifestyles may limit flexibility and adaptability.

What are the consequences, for example, if the workplace is made up only of twenty-somethings with Z?

"But in groups where only one generation is present - and we are seeing more and more examples of this in organisations today - there is a strong bias. (In such cases, the phenomenon of group separation can be amplified, where members convince each other that what they are doing is absolutely right, and when in doubt, they do not question the decision.)"

In any case, the "bias", whether positive or negative, has an impact on workplace dynamics and culture. In this environment, employees share similar life experiences and values, which can facilitate identification and cohesion. Innovation and creativity are also present in such workplaces, especially because members of the Z age group tend to embrace new technologies and trends. This is because workers with similar interests are more likely to share new ideas and solutions, which fosters innovation and development. However, in a workplace made up only of Generation Z, the experiences and perspectives of other generations may be missing. The workplace culture can be one-sided and can create difficulties in integrating with other generations in the future. In addition, such workplaces may be more difficult to sustain in the long term, for example, when the age group reaches the end of their working life, the workplace may face challenges as it may lose experienced workers and workplace culture. It

is therefore important that jobs have a mixed generational composition to ensure long-term stability and the flow of experience and innovation between generations. It is therefore important that employers pay attention to diversity and intergenerational balance in order to remain successful in the long term.

Overall, single-generation workplaces can create a stable and cohesive community, but they can also face challenges in innovating and adapting to change. Together, these disadvantages can limit workplace performance and efficiency, and make it more difficult to innovate and remain competitive in a rapidly changing market environment. It is important that workplaces seek to attract a diverse range of generations in order to take advantage of diversity and improve performance. This also depends on the attitude of management, but from what I have read I have concluded that the more diversified an organisation is, the better it can adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring

Intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring is key in life, even at work. According to an article in HVG 2019: "The need for knowledge sharing has already emerged in our country, with 70% of organisations having some kind of knowledge sharing initiative or project, according to a KPMG survey, but these are not organised on the basis of a formal strategy."

I believe that more and more companies in Hungary are realising that mentoring programmes help employees to better understand their own skills, develop their career paths and set goals, which in the long run contributes to individual and organisational success. A detailed analysis of the processes shows that they have a number of specific effects on both employee development and organisational performance. The appropriate transfer of knowledge, experience and practical skills accumulated by older workers can help newcomers to integrate and develop more effectively in the workplace. For example, workplaces with formal or informal mentoring programmes can help younger generations to acquire the necessary professional skills and knowledge that contribute to the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organisation. Mentoring is not only about transferring professional knowledge, but also about supporting personal development and career planning.

Furthermore, knowledge sharing and mentoring between generations creates opportunities for innovation and problem-solving. The different perspectives and approaches of employees of different ages and experience can stimulate the generation of new ideas and solutions in the organisation. Moreover, in addition to the more traditional knowledge and practices passed on by older generations, the fresh insights and technological skills of younger generations can also foster innovation and efficiency. Another benefit of mentoring and knowledge-sharing programmes is that they can help to retain employees and keep them motivated. Employees who participate in mentoring programmes or are supported to attend various development training sessions often feel more comfortable in the work environment and more committed to the organisation. In my view, it can be very demotivating if an employer does not provide opportunities for employees to train and develop themselves, and for many, like me, this is a key eye-port in the job search.

I consider myself lucky because learning is a priority in our company, right from day one. New starters first have to attend an orientation day, which is basically an induction day organised by the company for new recruits in the first few days. During the orientation day, new employees usually receive basic information and an introduction that will help them understand the company's operations and culture. Personally, as a new employee, this day has helped me a lot, answering a lot of questions I had. I was introduced to the company, its history, mission, values and objectives, the structure of the organisation, the different departments and their functions. On this day, new employees have the opportunity to meet representatives from other departments, teams and colleagues to understand how they relate to each other. They are introduced to company policies, guidelines and procedures, health and safety requirements. They are also given the tools and information they need to do their jobs, such as computers and access rights to company systems.

Then, after about a month, an onboarding day must be attended, although "onboarding" and "orientation" serve similar purposes, they cover different aspects. Onboarding is a period or event designed to successfully integrate and settle new employees into the company or organisation. The onboarding day is an important part of preparing and supporting new employees in their integration into the work environment. On-boarding is usually provided by the line manager or designated colleagues. A performance management system was presented, which aims to monitor agreed targets for effectiveness. In addition, new entrants will be provided with a range of interactive tutorials and examination materials. Of course, older colleagues are not forgotten either, with the opportunity to participate in a range of skills and competency development training alongside the mandatory training. There are also weekly lectures, always on a topical and interesting subject, in a structured wing-to-wing programme covering all levels of seniority. At my workplace, I have also come across a special talent development programme, specifically focused on soft skills and talent development. I also had the opportunity to meet different tutor and mentor programmes. Although very similar, they are two different processes. "The word mentor is of Greek origin, meaning "fatherly friend, patron or tutor". The word tutor is of Latin origin, meaning "guardian or

tutor, guardian, protector." Both denote a helping relationship, but with different aims and characteristics: a mentor-mentee relationship is a generally broader activity supporting personal and professional development. Although the mentoring relationship may be temporary or project-based, in many cases it is a long-term and enduring relationship. It provides an opportunity for the mentee to gradually develop and learn from the mentor's experience and advice. The mentor is usually more experienced and higher up in the hierarchy than the mentee and helps the mentee with development, learning, professional issues and career planning.

While the tutoring process is a more focused and often shorter-term relationship with specific goals. "Tutoring refers to a mode of learning in which a learner or a small group of learners receive individual, personalised instruction (Medway, 1994; cited in Fejes, Kasik and Kinyó, 2009)" A tutor-tutor relationship is a type of learning relationship where the tutor is a more experienced person or expert who helps and guides the tutored person in a particular area or subject to perform better. The tutor is the person who is learning, developing or improving in a particular area and asks the tutor for help. This relationship is usually based on personal, interactive and practical experience. The tutor usually helps the tutored person to understand the material, to set learning objectives and to develop learning strategies and methods. In addition, the tutor often provides feedback and assessment of the tutor's progress.

So mentoring and tutoring are both important, supportive relationships for learning and development, but they differ in their purpose, the nature of the relationship and the experience and knowledge of the participants. Mentoring tends to be broader in its support of an individual's skills, while tutoring is more specific, aimed at achieving shorter-term goals.

Overall, it can be said that in Hungary, too, intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring is of paramount importance for employee development and organisational performance. Building and sustaining appropriate systems and programmes is essential to achieve successful outcomes and maintain competitiveness in a changing labour market environment. It is important that these relationships are based on mutual trust and respect, and that both parties are engaged in the relationship in order to ensure a successful learning process.

The Expected Impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Work

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a term used to describe the current, latest phase of technological and industrial development. "The Fourth Industrial Revolution is an ongoing global process whereby machines, objects and the economy are concentrated in a single large information network. It is based on data and digitalisation." This revolution is a period of co-proliferation and integration of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, automation and internet-based solutions in many other areas of manufacturing, industry and society.

The first industrial revolution dates back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a period marked by the mechanisation of machinery and the emergence of steam engines and mechanical production. The second industrial revolution occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the introduction of electricity and mass production gave industry a new impetus. The third industrial revolution came in the second half of the 20th century, with the rise of electronics, computing and automation. However, unlike the previous ones, I would characterise the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution as a boom in digital technologies. The Internet, smart devices and the use of artificial intelligence are combining to create opportunities that could radically change industrial production, service delivery and social interactions.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterised by smart manufacturing and the digitalisation of production processes, the widespread use of autonomous robots and machines, and increasing interaction and collaboration between humans and machines. This revolution is transforming workplaces, the economy and society, bringing with it many new opportunities and challenges for both companies and individuals. "Our whole lives are being transformed. The technologies that mark the way are a good example: artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), self-driving cars, augmented reality, 3D printing, nanotechnology, quantum computing."

In addition to its many positive effects, I think that all this newness can also create fear in workers. People are afraid of losing their jobs because new technologies can replace them, make production processes more efficient and, in many cases, replace human labour with machines and robots. But despite the concerns, there are also positives. The transforming economy is also creating new job opportunities, for example in data analytics, artificial intelligence development and automation expertise. Those who adapt to new technologies and acquire skills in new areas may find new opportunities ahead. Retraining and restructuring play an important role in this process. People must be ready to learn and develop new skills to remain relevant in the labour market. Continuous learning and development will be key to enable individuals to adapt successfully to a changing environment. Governments and businesses also have an important role to play in supporting people to retrain and take advantage of new job opportunities. They should take action to help people acquire new skills and to stimulate economic growth and innovation.

Although general changes affect all age groups, I think the older workforce is in a unique situation. For them, adapting to new technologies and acquiring digital skills can be a challenge. Many of them lack the experience or knowledge to access and use modern technologies, which can hinder their ability to compete in the labour market. It is important to support them in retraining and developing digital skills to maintain their relevance in the labour market, as it is important to bear in mind that older workers may have valuable experience and knowledge to pass on to younger generations. This intergenerational knowledge sharing can also help companies to be more efficient and innovative in this area.

In addition to this, it is also important to consider the mental impact of the revolution. In an interview with Sándor Friderikusz, Krisztián Steigerval mentioned a good example: he used to know his friends' phone numbers by heart, but now he doesn't know his wife's number by heart either. "With the rapid development of infocommunication, the trained memory started to lose its role, people didn't value it as much as they used to." - So, the constant flood of information provided by new technologies, storage devices and the internet may be affecting people's memories too. With access to too much information and constant online presence, people have shifted to relying on short-term memory, which can have long-term detrimental effects on long-term memory and cognitive abilities. In addition, the constant distraction of new technologies and excessive participation in social media can also have a negative impact on people's mental health and memory. Constant online presence and information overload can lead to fatigue, distraction and memory problems.

Overall, while many are concerned about the job losses caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, new opportunities are emerging in a transforming economy. It is important that people and society are prepared for new challenges and opportunities, and that retraining and innovation are promoted to successfully navigate the changing environment.

Results of My Primary Research

In the first part of my questionnaire, I wanted to find out how different generations relate to each other in the workplace. I also asked whether they experience conflicts with different age groups.

More than half of the respondents gave positive feedback on the different age groups, while 20% experienced minor conflicts and tensions. The positive feedback mentioned above may suggest that many people have a good attitude towards intergenerational cooperation and value different perspectives and experiences. However, conflicts should also not be ignored and need to be proactively managed in order to create a more harmonious and productive working environment. In my opinion, a lot depends on the attitude of employees and management, and in order to reduce these tensions and conflicts, it is important to develop cooperation and empathy between different age groups.

In my next question, I tried to assess what might be the source of the conflicts, and here the vast majority voted for a different set of values. For some, this was possibly too broad a concept, but some clarified their point of view: "I think that the difference in values can be blamed on many things, e.g. saying hello/not saying hello, giving respect, etc. which are the root of the problems/frictions". The second most frequently mentioned source of conflict was different technological knowledge, and when looking at the respondents' data, this was most often mentioned by Generation Z respondents

have been nominated. I expected this response, as younger people are born into this world, it is natural that older people are a bit behind, even if there are exceptions. In third place was communication difficulties. Intergenerational communication can often be challenging, as was mentioned in the first place, the different values are also related to this statement. They may have different communication styles and preferences, for example in terms of communication tools. Despite the challenges, effective communication and cooperation between generations can be achieved if both parties are open to understanding and cooperation.

I also asked respondents whether they felt discriminated against because of their age or whether they were treated equally in terms of opportunities for development and progress. 52.9% said that there was full equality of opportunity for all generations, while the rest felt some difference.

According to an article in HR Portal 2023, "Workers over 45 are loyal, but if they decide to change, they submit CVs to more places and on average take several weeks longer to find a job than their younger colleagues." The data also suggests that Generation X and Y workers are more likely to feel discriminated against because of their age in terms of development and career progression opportunities. It is important to note as Generation Z, younger workers also face difficulties in the labour market and in building their careers. For example, inexperience makes it difficult for younger people to progress or find stable employment. I therefore think that ensuring equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination should be important for everyone, regardless of which generation they belong to. Diversity would allow everyone to use their skills and potential in the workplace.

I asked the research participants to rank their preferences. Unfortunately, this question ran into some technical problems with the feedback, so the evaluation may show slightly skewed data. However, some conclusions can be drawn. The graph shows that a large proportion of respondents prefer the issue of wages and benefits, suggesting

that financial security and benefits are more important to them than other factors. In addition, flexible working is also seen as important, which may suggest that maintaining work-life balance and flexibility of working hours is also of great importance. However, the graph also suggests that respondents are less likely to value maximising skills and expertise, as well as company culture. This may mean that they are less concerned with the development of their skills and the culture and values of the company. From these conclusions, a company may want to focus on providing competitive wages and benefits and flexible working opportunities. At the same time, I believe that firms should consider assessing and improving opportunities to leverage skills and expertise, and build a company culture that is attractive and inspiring to employees.

I have also filtered the statement by generation Z, but surprisingly it does not show a significant difference compared to the aggregate statement, although I expected a larger difference due to the different orders of values mentioned earlier.

The next part of my survey looked at knowledge sharing between generations. First, I asked them if they support the integration of young people in their workplace. The result was positive, with 70% of the respondents offering some kind of mentoring, apprenticeship or training programme for young people starting their careers. This type of support, such as mentoring, apprenticeships or training, can be a key factor for young workers. These initiatives allow them to settle in more quickly, learn about the company culture and processes, and develop their professional skills. In addition, support from mentors or more experienced workers can help newcomers to build a network within the company and build their career. This positive result can reinforce companies to further develop and expand these support initiatives to make the integration of new entrants even more effective.

Based on the available data and results, it can be said that mentoring programmes and knowledge sharing initiatives, as well as communication training and conflict management workshops, have received significant support from participants to increase the effectiveness of intergenerational communication. These initiatives can directly help to improve intergenerational communication and prevent or manage conflicts.

In addition, providing a flexible working environment can also be an important factor in promoting understanding and cooperation between generations, as it allows individual preferences and needs to be taken into account. The conclusion is that in order to increase the effectiveness of intergenerational communication, it is important for companies to pay attention to the initiatives and practices mentioned above and to build a culture that respects and values members of different generations.

I also wanted to find out how widespread mentoring is nowadays, how much mentoring is present in the workplace and whether workers can ask their colleagues for help if they get stuck. Onboarding of new workers: 84.3% - This is a very high rate of support, indicating that onboarding of new workers is effectively managed in the workplace. While mentoring is present: 55.7%, although mentoring is present, it could be further developed and extended to ensure that more workers benefit from this support. The lack of mentoring could be a problem in terms of knowledge sharing and support for integration. However, I find it very positive that 81.4% of respondents know and dare to ask their colleagues if they are stuck on something. Therefore, I also considered it essential to ask what impact, from their perspective as employees, does intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring have on employee development and organisational performance?

From the positive feedback, I conclude that, from the employees' perspective, intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring has many benefits for their development and organisational performance. It can contribute to the development of their professional skills and competences, as well as to learning new approaches and perspectives. Such support and recognition can help to increase employee engagement and satisfaction. In addition, intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring can help new employees to settle in. It can also help employees to perceive career development opportunities and progression paths within the company.

I also asked respondents how important it was to be helpful, and 59 out of 70 people voted for the option that was completely important. I also wanted to know how helpful they are when a colleague approaches them? The majority (51) are happy to help and pass on their knowledge. A further 49 confirmed that they could learn a lot from the experience of others. The results clearly show that the importance of being helpful is high in the in a work environment. But it is not always enough to turn to a colleague, sometimes you may need to develop a specific skill or ability. I think keeping up with today's fast-changing world and increasing demands is difficult, so it is crucial that employers provide and support such development opportunities.

The figure above clearly shows that a wide range of on-the-job training is available and accessible to the research participants. This is a positive sign, as the diversity of training opportunities allows workers to develop their professional skills and knowledge in areas relevant to them. Learning has long-term benefits for both the workers and the organisation. It is important that employers continuously support and encourage such training to ensure the continuous development of employees and the competitiveness of the organisation in a dynamic market environment.

Finally, I focused my research on digitalisation, firstly by assessing the level of digital literacy felt by different age groups. The vast majority of Generation X and Generation Y chose the proficient/not very proficient option, while not surprisingly, all of Generation Z confidently chose the proficient/very proficient option.

Indeed, Generation Z individuals are often more confident in the world of technology, having been exposed to it from an early age. This can give them a natural advantage in communicating online, finding information and using new tools. Older generations tend to be less skilled in these areas, which can lead to conflict situations, especially when they have to interact with people of different age groups at work or in family settings. However, I think it is important to note that although generational differences are often noticeable in terms of technological knowledge, this gap does not always manifest itself. In any case, based on further feedback, I foresee an increase in training and retraining needs. Many older individuals are able to catch up and learn how to use new tools, while some younger individuals are less knowledgeable or interested in this area. Understanding and cooperation between different generations is key to avoiding conflict and working together more effectively.

I examined the responses by age group, with Generation X and Y reporting back mixed feelings of concern and curiosity about the future of artificial intelligence and robotisation. In their case, this feeling may be because they have experienced changes in the labour market and technological developments for which they were not fully prepared. They have experienced the challenges that technological developments can bring, such as automation in the workplace and changes in job tasks. However, the reactions of Generation Z show a certain confidence and optimism about technological progress. They have grown up in the digital age and are much more natural at embracing and accepting new technologies and innovations. They see artificial intelligence and robotisation as an opportunity to make work easier and more efficient. At the same time, feedback from all three age groups was that they see technological changes and developments as the biggest challenges and opportunities for their future careers.

I therefore wanted to explore their attitudes to change and development. Overall, all age groups agreed with my statement that change is useful and necessary to do well in the workplace. Generally speaking, older generations can often be more inclined to be conservative, while younger people are more open to innovation and change. Older people's unease about change can often be linked to the unknown, uncertainty and potential discomfort. They may find it difficult to adapt to change and prefer to stick to familiar systems and methods. However, it is important to understand that attitudes to change do not necessarily depend on age, but rather on individual personality, experience and circumstances. For example, the completions also suggest that there are older workers who are open to new ideas and willing to adapt to change. Almost 90% of the survey respondents, regardless of their age, are willing to participate in training, even proactively, and agree with the need for development. I see this as a very positive result, showing that a large proportion of people are committed to their personal and professional development and recognise the importance of change, and are willing to invest time and energy in training and development in order to keep up. Learning and training are key to competitiveness and building a successful career in today's dynamic labour market.

Finally, I asked the participants to share any experiences they had with intergenerational cooperation in their workplace. Some interesting comments were received that supported the previous statements:

The comments of Generation X respondents underline the specificities of working with Generation Z. For example, they articulate the extremes between insecurity and excessive determination, as well as the lack of attitude and responsibility towards work among some young workers:

"I've experienced extremes with Generation Z: from uncertainty (do I want to do this at all) to over-determination (I don't have enough experience yet, but no one should tell me what to do or how to do it)."

"I have noticed a lack of attitude, responsibility and sense of duty in the trainees who have come to our group."

"Young people are skilful and fast, but not precise and rather sloppy. Older people are not so fast, but they are more efficient and precise."

Generation Y respondents highlighted the low level of loyalty of younger age groups and the burnout experienced by older people. They also mention the frequent job changes among young people and the lack of a stable job presence.

"Loyalty is noticeably lower among younger people. And middle-aged to older people are tired of change. Burnout."

"The attitude of the younger generation to work is sometimes difficult to tolerate. They don't stay in one place for more than six months, you can't plan with them. That's why for me it's a filter: where they've been, how long they've spent. If there is not a single place where he has been for more than 1 year, I'm not sure I'll invite him for an interview."

"I think it's the integration of Generation Z, especially those born after 2000, that is most difficult in many cases. I often feel that they are too relaxed and don't take certain things or the job itself seriously and have an overconfidence and sometimes an ego on top of that. Of course, quite a lot of colleagues are the opposite, so I don't want to generalise, but I think a higher percentage of them are like the ones mentioned above."

Generation Z respondents mainly highlighted communication difficulties and demotivating comments from members of the older generation:

"difficult to communicate"

"Demotivating comments from an older generation"

These comments underline the challenges that age differences can pose to cooperation and communication in the workplace. The results clearly show that they resonate with the most important values of the generations: X considers punctual and thorough work, Y considers commitment, and Z considers equal communication as the most important.

I believe it is important for companies and managers to understand these differences and to adopt strategies that promote better cooperation and communication between different generations. This can include mentoring, education about generational differences and conflict management training. An understanding and respect for intergenerational differences can help to create a working environment where everyone is able to perform at their best and work together successfully.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of the labour market in Hungary are changing noticeably, with different generations entering and leaving the labour market. The differences in the age range of workers available present many challenges and opportunities for companies and organisations, and I concluded from the research that we need to be open and patient with each other, not only at work but also in our personal lives.

The Baby Boomer generation, although they have already started to retire, are still in the labour market. They have the knowledge and experience gained from previous industrial revolutions and economic changes. However, they often find it difficult to adapt to new technologies and changing work styles.

Generation X, already part of the changes brought about by information technology, are often faced with challenging traditional workplace hierarchies and expectations, and finding work-life balance.

Generation Y, also known as millennials, grew up in an environment where the internet and digital technologies were commonplace. They prefer flexibility and innovation in the workplace and tend to change jobs quickly if they are not satisfied.

Generation Z is the first generation to have grown up in a world influenced by digital technologies from birth. This means they have specific expectations of employers, such as flexible working hours and the ability to use digital tools.

In addition to these generational differences and the challenges they pose, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is underway, with artificial intelligence and robotisation being a major part of it. This poses additional challenges for the labour market. Literature and feedback suggests that older age groups, while depending on their personalities, may be concerned about the impact of new technologies on their work and on future generations, but that appropriate training and intergenerational knowledge sharing can help to overcome these challenges.

Recognising and managing generational differences and adapting to new technologies is key to successful business operations and innovation. Creating the right cultural and infrastructural environment that supports intergenerational cooperation and continuous learning is essential to sustain workplace performance and competitiveness in Hungary.

My online survey of 70 people also confirmed that there are gaps between generations, but with the right attitude and openness, everything can be bridged. The feedback suggests that, in general, there is a positive attitude to cooperation between the different generations. This indicates that many people value different perspectives and experiences. According to respondents, intergenerational knowledge sharing and mentoring play an important role in employee development and organisational performance and commitment. This suggests that supporting mentoring programmes and knowledge sharing initiatives can be key to increasing workplace effectiveness. Conflict also arises and is important to address by building collaboration and empathy.

In the questionnaire, the last free-word question was the most telling, as it clearly showed the views of different age groups. These comments paint an interesting picture of the differences between generations in the workplace environment. Generation X is characterised by a commitment to working accurately and thoroughly, while Generation Y tends to highlight a lack of loyalty and burnout, and Generation Z is most characterised by difficulty communicating. This type of feedback can be important in making the work environment more effective and improving intergenerational cooperation. Being aware of the different values and attitudes of Generations X, Y and Z can help workplace teams to work together effectively and to capitalise on each other's strengths.

At the same time, the responses of Generation Z showed that they are more confident in the world of technology and adapt more easily to new technologies and innovations. Older generations are generally less skilled in these areas, but are also open-minded, so digital education and retraining can play an important role in strengthening the workforce and closing the generation gap. Although they tend to be more conservative, the results show that all three age groups agree that change is essential and necessary to improve workplace

performance. However, it is important to stress that adaptation to change depends not only on age but also on individual personality and experience. These conclusions and observations can help employers to understand and address generational differences and highlight areas where they need to improve the workplace environment and organisational performance. It can also help to improve the effectiveness of the workplace environment and communication and support the promotion of cooperation between different age groups. Thus, a flexible working environment and mentoring can be important tools for promoting understanding and cooperation between generations, while adapting to technological developments and a positive attitude to change are all important factors in creating a successful working environment.

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