

Motivations of generations: The importance of leadership and communication styles at the workplace

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Abstract: Generational differences shape technological preferences and fundamentally influence workplace motivation and interactions. Our research aims to examine in detail how different generations assess the importance of workplace communication and leadership styles and how these diverse preferences impact workplace motivation and commitment. In our analysis, we studied the behavioral patterns of four generations—Baby Boomers, Generations X, Y, and Z—through anonymous online questionnaires supplemented by in-depth interviews conducted with a leader and a Generation Z employee. To verify our hypotheses, we employed statistical methods, including the Chi-Square test, Spearman’s rank correlation, and cross-tabulation analysis. Our results clearly demonstrated that different generations evaluate the importance of applied leadership and communication styles differently. While Generations Y and Z highly value flexible, supportive leadership styles, older generations, such as the Baby Boomers prefer more traditional, structured approaches. The study confirmed that aligning leadership and communication styles is crucial, as it significantly impacts the workplace atmosphere and employee performance. Our research findings hold both theoretical and practical significance. This research highlights how understanding generational preferences in leadership and communication styles can enhance workplace cohesion and efficiency. The results provide specific guidance for leaders and HR professionals to create a supportive and adaptable environment that effectively meets the needs of diverse generations.

Keywords: assertive communication in teams; cross-generational workplace motivation; flexible leadership approaches; interpersonal communication styles; motivation through communication alignment; workplace motivation dynamics

1. Introduction

Generational differences have a significant impact on workplace motivation, as well as on preferred leadership and communication styles, fundamentally shaping the employee experience and performance. Through a review of the literature, we examine various aspects of motivation, focusing on the roles of external and internal factors in shaping individual and organizational behavior. Motivation plays a central role in achieving goals, and its various forms—such as financial incentives or personal satisfaction—affect employees in distinct ways. Understanding the specific motivational preferences of each generation is essential for enhancing workplace commitment and performance. Leadership styles also play a crucial role in fostering motivation. Different generations respond differently to leadership approaches: younger employees, especially members of Generations Y and Z, tend to prefer supportive, flexible leadership styles, while older generations, such as Baby Boomers, often favor more structured, traditional approaches. Recognizing these differences

offers leaders the opportunity to better adapt to team needs, thereby enhancing workplace motivation and engagement. Our study also examines generational preferences in communication styles. Baby Boomers typically prefer personal communication, whereas Generations X and Y are more open to using digital tools. For Generation Z, immediate feedback and direct communication are particularly important. Taking into account these diverse communication preferences can greatly contribute to improved collaboration and satisfaction in multi-generational workplaces.

The study aims to explore generational differences in workplace preferences regarding leadership and communication styles and to understand how these differences influence employee motivation and engagement.

2. Literature review

2.1. Generations

As a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, motivation plays a crucial role in shaping human behavior. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), motivation determines the direction, initiation, and persistence of behavior, which forms the basis of many psychological theories. Motivation is essential for achieving individual and organizational goals, as it drives action (Bakacsi, 2004; Kőmüves et al., 2024; Nasri, 2022; Saga et al., 2017). Extrinsic motivation, such as financial rewards or social recognition, and intrinsic motivation, such as self-actualization or satisfaction, are distinguishable from each other and help understand what motivates people (Ariely, 2016; Diseth et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Zimbardo et al., 2019). Recent studies, such as those by Kálmán et al. (2024a), underscore the significance of intrinsic motivation in sustainable tourism, linking motivational factors to pro-environmental behaviors and community engagement in geoparks. Understanding the differences between forms of motivation is crucial for enhancing individual and organizational performance (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Workplace motivation may vary depending on generational characteristics (Lee et al., 2022). From baby boomers to Generation Z, each age group values different motivational factors, significantly influencing workplace performance and engagement (Mahmoud et al., 2021). For the baby boomer generation, career development, workplace relationships, and work-life balance are priorities (Díaz-Sarmiento et al., 2017; Fronstin and Helman, 2015). This generation appreciates a stable work environment and workplace recognition (Buford, 2015; Grenčíková et al., 2024). Members of Generation X favor workplace autonomy, flexibility, and technological innovation (Díaz-Sarmiento et al., 2017). They value respect for individual opinions and the interesting nature of tasks (Fishman, 2016; Yang and Guy, 2006). The motivation of Generation Y is defined by career development opportunities, flexibility, and social responsibility. They appreciate using technological tools and creative work execution (Hradský and Sadílek, 2020; Kian and Yusoff, 2012; Murphy, 2010). Finally, members of Generation Z, as children of the digital age, are primarily motivated by clear goals, workplace flexibility, and a diverse work environment (Harb and Trad, 2023; Mahmoud et al., 2020; Vach, 2021). Further research has linked flexibility and diverse environments with improved financial inclusion and corruption reduction, particularly in emerging markets (Kálmán et al., 2024b). After reviewing generational differences, we turn to how

leadership and communication styles influence workplace motivation across different age groups.

2.2. Leadership style

The extensive examination of leadership styles receives prominent attention in organizational psychology, particularly in the context of employee motivation and commitment (Ding et al., 2023; Ogunmokun et al., 2022). Furthermore, leadership attitudes can contribute to the development of social responsibility. Research suggests that management can enhance green activities, education and training programs to promote employee confidence and mindset (Miah et al., 2024a), which contributes to employee commitment (Miah et al., 2024b, Szabó-Szentgróti et al., 2024). Maqbool and colleagues highlight the impact of abusive leadership styles, which intensify counterproductive behaviors among employees, especially when they feel that their psychological contracts have been breached. However, employees with strong ethical principles respond less negatively to this type of leadership, underscoring the importance of ethical, supportive leadership approaches in enhancing workplace satisfaction (Maqbool et al., 2024). Chen and colleagues point out that a workplace culture promoting gratitude can increase employees' creativity and organizational citizenship behaviors. This positive effect is particularly significant for employees who are less satisfied with their work. This research aligns with findings that younger generations are more open to positive feedback and a grateful work atmosphere, which stimulates creativity and improves performance (Chen et al., 2020). The servant leadership style fosters innovation and intrinsic motivation within the service sector, especially among employees who identify with their leaders. This approach proves particularly effective for younger generations, who highly value supportive and flexible leadership styles. The study's results confirm that empathetic leadership can significantly contribute to increased workplace engagement (Su et al., 2020). The findings of Chinese leadership theories highlight that local cultural and philosophical traditions profoundly influence leadership styles. These theories, which prioritize an ethical and holistic approach, help address the complex and dynamic challenges of today's business environment, with particular attention to ethical issues and diversity management (Song et al., 2024).

Chipunza and colleagues (2011) observed that the transformational leadership style effectively enhances motivation and commitment among employees in the banking sector. Bronkhorst and associates (2015) reached similar conclusions in their research at a Dutch municipality, where they noted the positive impact of transformational leadership on workplace motivation. Altheeb (2020) highlighted that both paternalistic and transformational styles significantly improve employee motivation, whereas the authoritarian style is less effective in this regard. Recent studies indicate that perceived corruption can impact the effectiveness of leadership styles, suggesting that more transparent and transformational leadership practices could help mitigate corruption-related demotivation in the workplace (Kálmán et al., 2024c). Conversely, Ali and Abbasi (2022) emphasized that leaders must carefully consider which leadership styles they employ in order to optimize employee motivation and performance. Research conducted by Xue and colleagues (2022)

showed that ethical, leader-member exchange, servant, empowering, and abusive supervisory styles are variably and differently associated with intrinsic motivation. Positive management practices, such as servant and empowering leadership, increase motivation, while negative practices, such as abusive supervision, decrease it. Employees belonging to Generation Y demand greater transparency and more input into decision-making processes, and they prefer flatter hierarchies over the authoritarian leadership methods of older generations (Heuss et al., 2021). Research in the fields of education and healthcare pays special attention to the benefits of democratic and transformational leadership styles, which are particularly advantageous as they encourage employees to achieve higher objectives and improve the overall workplace atmosphere (Mokretsova, 2021; Musinguzi et al., 2018). Democratic leadership may also impact employee perceptions of financial security, as recent research highlights dual perspectives on financial security's role in promoting workplace motivation (Németh et al., 2024). Wolor and colleagues (2021) examined five different leadership styles to identify the most suitable one for the millennial generation. Their analysis recommended an integrated approach combining transformational, transactional, relational, ethical, e-leadership, and participative leadership methods. This approach is designed to meet the specific needs of the millennial generation, such as interest in technology, desire for workplace autonomy, and adherence to ethical values.

2.3. Communication style

The role of communication styles is emphasized in numerous studies. Effective communication is fundamental to fostering employee workplace satisfaction and motivation (Mikkelsen et al., 2015; Smama'h et al., 2023; Sivricova and Moiseeva, 2018). Open and honest communication and positive feedback are crucial for motivating colleagues and maintaining a productive work environment (Burgulya and Somogyvári, 2007). Hicks (2020) examined managerial communication styles and their impact on organizational health. The results highlight that effective communication is essential in relationships between leaders and employees, motivating employees, and successfully managing organizational changes. The study analyzes extroverted, conversational, and person-centered communication styles, emphasizing the necessity for ongoing development and adaptation in communication skills.

Research has shown that organisational size has a differential effect on communication effectiveness. In smaller organisations, the relationship between managers and employees may be closer, which may affect employees' attachment to the organisation. In large organisations, however, the effectiveness of internal communication in properly communicating organisational goals is more important in retaining employees because of size (Gelencsér et al., 2024, Ton et al., 2022).

Different generations prefer communication in varying ways. For example, baby boomers favor face-to-face communication, whereas Generation X and Y are more inclined to use digital communication tools and social media (Hannay and Fretwell, 2011). Raslie (2021) examined the similarities in preferences and habits between Generations Y and Z. The findings indicated no significant differences in

communication styles between the two generations. Both groups valued teamwork and honest feedback and considered it essential that their opinions be taken into account. Heuss and colleagues (2021) analyzed communication patterns among doctors in Swiss hospitals. Compared to older employees, younger doctors required greater transparency and a more active role in decision-making processes and preferred a less hierarchical work environment.

3. Methodology

The research aimed to explore the preferences of four generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y, and Z—with particular emphasis on the importance of workplace leadership and communication styles, individual style preferences, and key motivating factors. Respondents evaluated three leadership styles (democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire) and three communication styles (passive, aggressive, and assertive) based on the frameworks provided by Agarwal (2019) and Tiwari (2021). Ratings were given on a scale from 1 to 7, indicating the perceived importance of each style in the workplace. Using convenience sampling, 203 respondents from various regions in Hungary and Slovakia were invited to complete the questionnaire. In Hungary, data collection took place in Pest, Győr-Moson-Sopron, and Vas counties, while in Slovakia, it covered the areas of Komárno, Nitra, and Bratislava. Respondents' demographic characteristics—age, gender, and educational background—were diverse, although the sample is not representative. Therefore, our findings serve as hypotheses that may provide a foundation for further research. Data collection was conducted anonymously through online questionnaires from 15 February to 30 April 2023.

Several methods were applied to test our hypotheses in statistical analysis. The Chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between generational affiliation and the importance attributed to leadership styles. At the same time, Spearman's rank correlation was employed to identify preferences for communication styles. Cross-tabulation analysis was also performed to investigate generational differences, offering deeper insight into the evaluation of communication styles. Calculating statistical significance levels helped provide a reference point for future studies based on representative samples. Two in-depth interviews complemented the quantitative data analysis, allowing us to collect direct feedback on participants' workplace experiences. One interviewee was a leader, and the other was a Generation Z employee; the purpose of these interviews was to shed light on generational expectations and preferences. These interviews provided valuable insights, adding a direct, practical perspective to the interpretation of the quantitative results. For our study, we formulated the following two hypotheses:

H1: Members of Generations Y and Z place a higher value on the applied leadership style compared to members of the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

H2: The most crucial aspect for the Baby Boomer generation is the communication style between leaders and subordinates, indicating that this generation has the strongest commitment to the quality of communication.

The chosen statistical methods specifically enable the quantification of preferences and differences between generations, thereby providing a precise answer

to how different generations evaluate leadership and communication styles. Including in-depth interviews complements the quantitative data by providing direct feedback on participants' workplace experiences, offering a comprehensive view of the practical applicability of generational preferences, which is essential for confirming the hypotheses.

3.1. In-depth interviews

During our research, we conducted in-depth interviews to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the generational differences in leadership and communication styles. Our first interviewee holds a leadership position at a large corporation and favors a democratic leadership style. Throughout his career, he has encountered numerous leadership styles, shaping his approach. Initially, we clarified the various definitions of leadership and communication styles to ensure our interviewee was fully aware of their meanings. A former mentor played a crucial role in shaping their leadership style, reinforcing the importance of active team member participation in decision-making through exemplary leadership. According to our interviewee, open communication and collaborative decision-making not only facilitate project success but also promote personal development and commitment among staff members. When they first became leaders, aligning the needs and expectations of different generations presented a significant challenge. Their team represents multiple generations, from Baby Boomers to Generations X, Y, and Z, and they believe it is essential to apply different communication and motivational techniques with each. Particularly, Generation Z requires prompt feedback and innovative work methods, while Baby Boomers prefer well-structured workflows. To manage generational differences, our interviewee organizes regular team meetings where everyone can freely share their opinions and suggestions and conducts personalized one-on-one conversations to address individual team members' motivational and career aspirations. In conflict resolution, they adopt a solution-oriented approach, viewing conflicts as opportunities for team development. They maintain open and honest communication and encourage their colleagues to express their concerns and suggestions openly. Motivating staff and improving performance are crucial for our interviewee, who emphasizes positive reinforcement and the provision of development opportunities. They conduct individual performance reviews, strive to create an inspiring and supportive work environment, and have introduced project-based reward systems to recognize outstanding performance. Future plans include further developing leadership skills, with a particular focus on managing generational differences and implementing innovative leadership techniques.

Our next interviewee is a 27-year-old Generation Z employee who recently joined an international technology company. During the interview, they emphasized the importance of having a leader who is open and supportive, as this significantly contributes to their job satisfaction and motivation. They experienced an autocratic leadership style at a previous job, which they did not favor because they felt their work was less appreciated in that environment. In contrast, they find that a democratic leadership style fosters a more productive and committed approach to work. Our

interviewee highlighted that an ideal leader for them is empathetic, supportive, and provides regular feedback. These qualities help them adapt more easily to the work environment and collaborate more effectively with colleagues. They believe that such leadership facilitates learning and professional development. The young employee also shared that it is crucial for their future career to work with leaders who recognize and support their personal and professional growth. They added that a good leader does not merely oversee work processes but actively participates in team development, thus promoting workplace harmony and the achievement of common goals. Finally, they noted that an open, direct communication style enhances information flow and the swift resolution of issues among employees, which is vital in a dynamically evolving technology company where quick decisions are made daily.

4. Results and discussion

The distribution of respondents by gender (46.8% male and 51.2% female) shows a slight predominance of women (**Table 1**). The generational breakdown reveals that Generation Z is the most represented in the sample at 36.9%, followed by Generation Y at 29.6% and Generation X at 26.6%, with Baby Boomers constituting only 6.9% of the sample, indicating the dominance of younger age groups. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents have a high school diploma (27.1%), followed by those with vocational qualifications (19.7%) and college degrees (22.2%), and finally, those with university degrees (11.8%). Regarding income, the majority of respondents, 58.6%, have an average income, while those earning above-average incomes constitute 22.7%, with lower-income groups present in smaller proportions. Based on the distribution by place of residence, the vast majority of respondents live in villages (37.9%) and small towns (32.0%), with city dwellers at 24.1%, and capital city residents at only 5.9%. Nationally, the sample is almost evenly divided between Slovakia (51.2%) and Hungary (48.8%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics.

Gender	Generation		
Male	46.8	Baby Boomer (1946–1964)	6.9
Female	51.2	Generation X (1965–1979)	26.6
Prefer not to disclose	2.0	Generation Y (1980–1994)	29.6
Education		Generation Z (1995–2009)	36.9
Primary School	7.4	Income	
Vocational Qualification	19.7	Well below average	2.5
High School Diploma	27.1	Below average	15.3
Advanced Professional Degree	11.8	Average	58.6
College Degree (BSc)	22.2	Above average	22.7
University Degree (MSc)	11.8	Well above average	1.0
Settlement		Country	
Village	37.9	Slovakia	51.2
Small town	32.0	Hungary	48.8
Large city (at least 100,000 inhabitants)	24.1		
Capital city	5.9		

We examined four generations – the Baby Boomers, and Generations X, Y, and Z—to determine their preferences regarding different leadership styles (Table 2). Interestingly, responses among the Baby Boomer generation are divided. Most respondents (35.7%) selected a rating of 6, while 14.3% chose the ‘very important’ option. This suggests that while leadership style is fundamentally important to this generation, it is not critical for everyone. Among Generation X, the ‘very important’ category received the most emphasis (27.8%), indicating that leadership style is considered highly significant in this age group. Additionally, the ratings of 6 and 5 also enjoy significant support (both 18.5%), further reinforcing those members of Generation X value good leadership practices. The responses from Generation Y clearly show that leadership style is critical for them, with the highest proportion of ‘very important’ ratings (56.7%). Although the responses from Generation Z also have a high proportion in the ‘very important’ category (44.0%), the results are more evenly distributed, particularly focusing on the middle values. The proportions of ratings 6 (21.3%) and 5 (16.0%) are also notable, indicating that while leadership style is important to them, they are somewhat more flexible towards different approaches.

Table 2. Generational differences in leadership style preferences.

Generations	Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6	Very important
Baby boomer (1946–1964)	0.00%	0.00%	14.30%	28.60%	7.10%	35.70%	14.30%
X generation (1965–1979)	11.10%	3.70%	7.40%	13.00%	18.50%	18.50%	27.80%
Y generation (1980–1994)	3.30%	5.00%	3.30%	11.70%	8.30%	11.70%	56.70%
Z generation (1995–2009)	1.30%	6.70%	4.00%	6.70%	16.00%	21.30%	44.00%

The Chi-square value (32.913) and the associated degrees of freedom (18) suggest a significant relationship between generations and their preferences for leadership styles. The *p*-value of 0.017, well below the accepted threshold of 0.05, further confirms the significance of this correlation.

Table 3. Correlation between generational affiliation and the importance of leadership style.

Spearman’s rho	Generation	Importance of leadership style
eneration	Correlation Coefficient	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01
	N	203
Importance of leadership style	Correlation Coefficient	0.180*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01
	N	203

Table 3 contains the Spearman correlation analysis, which compares the views of respondents from different generations on the importance of leadership styles. The correlation coefficient of 0.180, though modest, is statistically significant. This value suggests that expectations of leadership styles vary depending on the respondents’ generation. The *p*-value of 0.01 indicates a significant relationship between the

variables studied. The results show that although the correlation is not strong, there is a notable trend in which younger generations X and Y place more emphasis on leadership style than older generations. Based on these findings, our first hypothesis can be considered confirmed.

According to **Table 4**, the importance of leadership style to respondents is associated with specific leadership styles. Respondents prefer the democratic style, which shows the strongest positive correlation. Although they are less dominant, autocratic and laissez-faire styles can also be important under certain circumstances. This suggests that employees' preferences for leadership styles can vary, and leaders should consider these preferences to facilitate effective collaboration.

Table 4. Correlation between leadership styles and their perceived importance.

		Observability of the autocratic leadership style	Observability of the democratic leadership style	Observability of the laissez-faire leadership style
Importance of leadership style	Pearson Correlation	0.211**	0.241**	0.192**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.001	0.006

According to the data in **Table 5**, the evaluation of the importance of communication style between leaders and subordinates varies among different generations. While all generations consider effective communication important, the preferences and priorities of each group are not identical. A decisive majority of the Baby Boomer generation, 71.4%, deems the appropriate communication style completely important. In comparison, 21.4% marked it as moderately important, indicating that this generation particularly values communication processes within the organization. Representatives of Generation X have formed a more nuanced opinion. 53.7% consider the communication style completely important, while 31.5% chose the moderate importance level. This may suggest that although they also prioritize communication, their generation's characteristic pragmatic approach and flexible thinking make them more open to individual differences and context-specific communication styles. Generation Y also places great emphasis on the quality of communication. 61.7% see it as completely important, while a high percentage, 28.3%, reflects a moderate importance level, mirroring their search for a balance between formal and informal communication methods. Responses from Generation Z show the most significant variance. 42.7% rated it as completely important, but a higher proportion of moderate ratings also exist. This suggests that Generation Z may feel less obliged to adhere to strict hierarchies and formal communication, preferring interactivity and direct, open communication channels. Thus, we can consider that our second hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 5. Generational preferences in workplace communication styles.

	Not important at all	2	3	4	Very important	Total
Baby boomer	0.00%	0.00%	7.10%	21.40%	71.40%	100.00%
X generation	1.90%	1.90%	11.10%	31.50%	53.70%	100.00%
Y generation	0.00%	1.70%	8.30%	28.30%	61.70%	100.00%
Z generation	0.00%	6.70%	13.30%	37.30%	42.70%	100.00%

Through cross-tabulation analysis, we investigated the correlation between the significance of workplace communication and various communication styles. Based on the findings presented in **Table 6**, it is evident that the importance attributed to workplace communication exhibits a negative correlation with aggressive communication styles while showing no significant association with passive communication styles. This indicates that workplaces placing a greater emphasis on communication importance tend to experience fewer instances of aggressive communication behaviors. Moreover, the positive correlation observed with assertive communication styles suggests a preference for this mode of communication in settings where the quality of communication is highly valued. Assertiveness, characterized by directness and effectiveness, aligns with a heightened appraisal of communication significance.

Table 6. Correlation between the communication style and the importance of communication.

		Observability of the passive communication style	Observability of the aggressive communication style	Observability of the assertive communication style
Importance of the communication style	Pearson Correlation	-0.108	-0.148*	0.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.126	0.035	0.003

We summarized the results of our research in **Table 7** and **Figure 1**.

Table 7. Summary of hypotheses.

No.	Hypothesis	Fulfillment
H1	Members of Generations Y and Z place a higher value on the applied leadership style compared to members of the Baby Boomers and Generation X.	✓
H2	The most crucial aspect for the Baby Boomer generation is the communication style between leaders and subordinates, indicating that this generation has the strongest commitment to the quality of communication.	✓

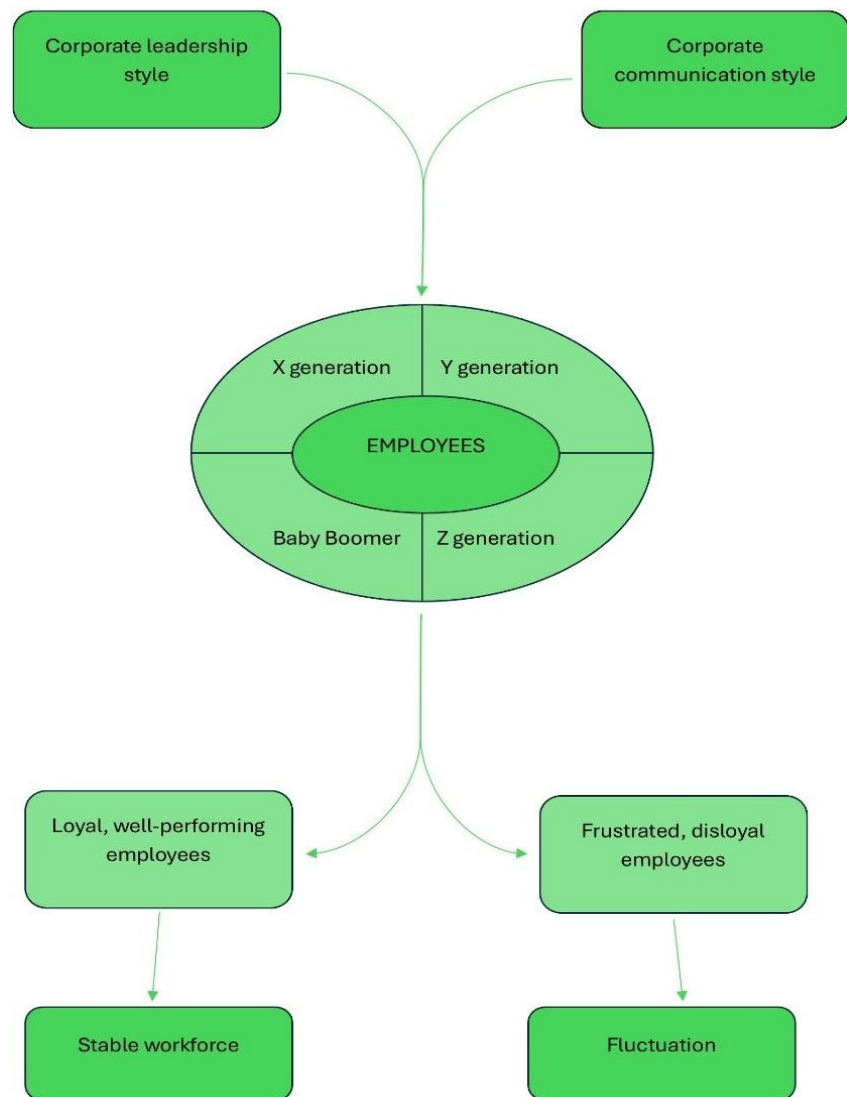


Figure 1. Research model.

Our research findings clearly underscore that different leadership and communication styles have varying impacts on employee motivation and commitment, particularly generational differences (Tóth et al., 2024). The literature consistently highlights that transformational, democratic, and servant leadership styles significantly enhance workplace motivation and commitment, especially among younger generations (Chipunza et al., 2011; Mokretsova, 2021). Our results support this, as Generations Y and Z highly value flexible and supportive leadership approaches. In contrast, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles, which tend to emphasize hierarchical structures and limited guidance, proved to be less effective, particularly for older generations.

Communication styles—such as assertive, aggressive, and passive—also play a crucial role in enhancing workplace satisfaction and performance (Mikkelsen et al., 2015; Rouco et al., 2021; Salisbury et al., 2016). Our findings indicate that Baby Boomers place particular importance on applying appropriate communication styles, aligning with the observations of Deal, Altman and Rogelberg (2010), who noted that older generations emphasize interpersonal trust and clear communication. In contrast,

Generation Z applies a more flexible approach to communication, preferring interactive and direct channels that support rapid information flow and dynamic work processes. Our research further revealed that democratic leadership styles and assertive communication approaches foster active participation and open communication, positively impacting workplace satisfaction and performance. This aligns with the findings of Clipa (2018) and Jiang and Jia (2018), who noted that such leadership and communication styles enhance the workplace atmosphere and increase commitment. Based on our results, assertive communication offers clear advantages over aggressive or passive approaches, facilitating more effective collaboration within teams. The literature suggests that considering generational differences is essential for successful workplace strategies and effective organizational functioning (Horváth and Feketéné, 2014). Our findings reinforce this thesis, as different generations exhibit distinct preferences regarding leadership and communication styles. Our research illustrates that younger generations (Y and Z) place high importance on timely feedback and collegial leadership, whereas older generations seek stability and a structured environment.

Overall, our findings emphasize that refining workplace culture, leadership, and communication styles is critical to enhancing workplace satisfaction, performance, and long-term commitment. Our results encourage workplace leaders to consider generational differences and adjust their leadership approaches accordingly, thereby contributing to the organization's sustained success.

5. Conclusion

The results highlight that considering generational differences is essential for developing effective leadership and communication strategies. Different generations prioritize distinct motivational factors and leadership preferences, which fundamentally influence employee satisfaction and long-term commitment in the workplace. Our study aimed to understand the extent to which the importance of various leadership and communication styles affects workplace interactions across generations. While the literature places significant emphasis on preferred leadership and communication styles, few studies explore how these preferences impact the expectations and satisfaction of each generation. Our research seeks to fill this gap, providing new perspectives and deeper insights into how generational differences shape organizational culture and workplace performance.

One limitation of the study is the geographical and cultural focus of the sample, which is concentrated primarily in Hungary and Slovakia. Consequently, the results may not be fully generalizable to other regions or cultural contexts. Future research should expand the study to different industries and additional countries to gain a more accurate global understanding of generational preferences and the effects of leadership styles. It would also be beneficial to examine external factors, such as economic and social influences, which may affect generational differences. A deeper analysis of these factors could help refine leadership and communication practices, thereby supporting leaders in responding more flexibly to the specific needs of each generation. The practical significance of our research is particularly high for leaders and HR professionals, who can develop personalized leadership approaches by considering

generational preferences. For instance, Generations Y and Z members value supportive and democratic leadership styles that encourage collaboration and innovation in a fast-paced work environment. In contrast, Baby Boomers prioritize stability and predictability, making a structured, traditional leadership style potentially more effective. Recognizing and understanding these preferences enables leaders to improve the workplace atmosphere, increase motivation, and strengthen overall organizational effectiveness.

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