



Are Generational Psychological Traits Basic in the Practice?

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Abstract

We are dealing with a very important and sensitive issue of our days, the generational differences and characteristics within businesses. In fact, it's about a qualitative presentation of HR within the Theory of the Firm. Knowing the characteristics of each generation, altogether with appropriate skills and know-how, both employees and entrepreneurs/CEOs, the positive results are granted, prosperity and return are achieved. Qualitative analysis is used, due to the fact we face psychological traits and behaviours based on them. Discussions, interviews, papers in media are used, along with my own expertise in higher education. Research sources mean, essentially, the opinions and training papers of some-well-known consultancy firms in the field, such as McKinsey, Deloitte, KPMG, which present sound materials, courses, based on the empirical observations of what is happening in HR field nowadays. As conclusions, generational traits mean vectors for employees' careers and for performance and returns for the firms/companies. The proper skills and abilities are required both for the staff and managers in order to reach a state of balance and trust, acting like real vectors within entities.

Keywords: Generations, Entity, HR function, Wellbeing, Returns

The Issue Approach

Yes, the answer is categorical in the favour of knowing the psychological traits in hiring staff in each and every entity.

This issue is treated many years ago, for example Twenge and Campbell¹ who analyzing data from 1930 to the present put in discussion how generational differences, attitudes, behaviours impact the workplace, mainly today.

In this analysis, we are dealing with the following generations involved in the current businesses, especially focused on US labour market (www.walden.edu):

- *Baby Boomers* (born between 1946-1964) are dedicated to work, even called "workaholics" and *they are very loyal to their employees* (our emphasis);
- *Generation X* (b. between 1965-1980) intends to work independently and has tendencies to be entrepreneurs. They have technical skills, aim organization which offers development opportunities. Also, a large part of Xers declares they are loyal to employees;

- *Millennials* (b. between 1981-1996) are considered, not only in US, the fastest growing cohort at the workplace. Also they are looking for job opportunities for growth and for *meaningful works*, as Jung said in one of his basic pillars (we'll see this few paragraphs down). From different interviews, $\frac{3}{4}$ from Millennials declared they are open to changes and capable to adapt to new challenges;
- *Gen Z* (b. between 1997-2012) are digitally natives and committed to keeping in step with the new trends and discoveries in virtual technologies. They are looking for jobs with a favourable climate for them, contrary they quit, available for feedback. Gen Z is inventing vlogs and consumers of SnapChat.

Also, we face a contradictory situation regarding Gen Z: a part of them intends to get more money, even with 6 figures, that is the financial ground is priority, and on the other hand, a recent Gallup poll, in US, shows that *the purpose/scope in life is more important than money, for happiness* (our emphasis).²

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Factually, this paper is a part of a series of such papers regarding the importance to know the generational traits and values which make-up the functioning of firms/companies/organizations, in order to highlight the necessary skills to an efficient team work, wellbeing for people and incomes and profits for entities.

One example in this respect is Kinza Yasar who developed his ideas regarding the inter-actions of generations within firms, especially focused on tech savvy.³

One perspective offered is that of easiness of recognition of useful information amongst the "avalanche" of it and attempts of non-orthodox branding, but also for a better understanding of the situations.

Continuing to argue for Gen Z, now we present a significant trait for this Generation, which gives substance to the present issue, *the pursuit of ensuring a balance between individual/family life and professional activities*.

Why this analysis? Because, outside the interest in knowing the specific traits of each generation at work, the interest is also in how to motivate and to lead the labour force towards reaching the targets, in the benefit of both parties involved in: the firm/entity and the employees altogether with entrepreneurs and CEOs.

Regarding the most important factor of production, the workforce, the training and motivations are the determinants. Especially the motivation, both financial and the inside resort, is necessary to push the human complex system forward.

In this respect, we think that the Carl Gustav Jung's opinion¹ about the 5 (five) pillars for a better life. For the present paper approach, only one pillar has to be highlighted. The fourth one, leading to happiness, is about *A reasonable standard of living and satisfactory work*.⁴ As physical and mental health, work and income seem more related to eliminating unhappiness than increasing happiness.

On the other hand, the unemployment is a sure source of depression, altogether with the work only from home. In fact, this pillar tells us about *meaningful work*, for themselves, firstly and for the others (at workplace for example). And, to make a link between unemployment source (in fact, losing the jobs) and depression, this action of firing/laid off, forcing to retirement, the simple losing of jobs become a pressure for that person, especially from the financial point of view, and over the mental health and relations within family and society.^{5,[1]}

We consider that also the other four pillars are important to complete the picture and the next developments:

- Good physical and mental health;
- Good personal and intimate relationships such as marriage, family and friendship;

- To see beauty in art and nature;
- A philosophical or religious view, that encourages resistance, resilience.

As we'll see in the third part, these are, mainly for Gen Z, elements in pursuing to a balance between individual/family life and professional activities.

We want to point out why the accent is put on Millennials and Gen Z. Because, together are the most numerous on the earth and, of course, in businesses. On a short time, Zers will surpass Millennials as the most populous generation on Earth (www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/).⁶

And, another aspect revealed by different studies, such as Ipsos in collaboration with Global Institute for Women Leadership from King's College London⁷ is that the younger generations are not more progressive regarding the gen stereotypes. Therefore, also this aspect is good to be analyzed within entities and not only, because there are significant generational differences in perceptions of the progress of the gender equality.

That's why we insist in the present analysis on Gen Z, mainly, along with the other important generations in action. Pay attention to the newcomers on the labour market, the Zers, who dive into their individual behaviours, attitudes, preferences and follow to fulfil their dreams, including mental health, career aspirations, motivating salary.

And, add another characteristic for Gen Z, even in the process towards entrepreneurship, is an overly cautious attitude towards risks. And risk is the middle name for an entrepreneur.

Methodology

We use a qualitative methodology, meaning to capture information, even a survey, from media in this respect, researchers' opinions, but mainly, the opinions expressed by different people I am working to, students, MAs, let's call them a kind of interviews. All these sources revealed even contradictory opinions regarding characteristics of generations, especially Gen Z.

Though, our goal is to establish a *modus vivendi* within entity, even if we speak in this case of an entity preparing *the Human Capital*, to get the planned targets. That is profitability, sustainability on the market and wellbeing/happiness for the staff.

The answer to this sensitive question depends on the willingness of all parties involved in to do the right things/activities, with motivation, trust, and understanding.

How to Deal with these Generations

As we have seen, Gen Z is involved as much as the Millennials. In facing with this generation, for a better and smooth interactions within entities, no matter their dimensions or type, it has to be

¹Carl Gustav Jung, a famous Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist, former Sigmund Freud's collaborator (1875-1961).

considered that the Gen Z is addicted to the Internet, they look for any information on the Internet, finding themselves constantly between reality and virtual, between online and offline life. Many studies have shown that this fact has negative effects on their sense of happiness and contentment.⁸ Also, for the mental health, aspect highly appreciated by Gen Z.

Even, within parties or anniversaries, most of them, indeed, are on their phones or other devices, in the Internet and virtual world, forgetting to socialize with each other.

And, another possible breakdown in the entity functioning is that of resignations (maybe not at the level of "the Great Resignation"), because employees are no longer in the desired and accepted environment, the environment that ensures the achievement of their goals and hopes.

We face now, in these new challenges' impacts, to a new trend within the activity of labour force: after the Great Resignation from 2021 and Quiet Quitting in 2022, in this moment we assist to the phenomenon of *Career Cushioning*.⁹ Briefly, this means the employees' concern about job securities, reflected in the recent waves of layoffs started by the social media and tech industries globally. Thus, an increasing number of companies lay off employees as they prepare for a recession caused by high inflation and rising interest rates existing in the world.

The psychological sense, which is not new, can be translated into the logo *You before the Job*. This aspect is an approach *only from the employees' point of view* (our emphasis), employees who are searching for a new job, while they are working already.

Ok, your person first, but you entered into a professional community, with an organizational culture and with a specific climate of spending the time. A recent Harris Poll for Fortune¹⁰ reveals that about 65 % of Gen Z has no idea what to talk about with their co-workers. This is what is called a *social anxiety*. Probably enlarged, taking into account the fact that Gen Z is dependent on the devices for a virtual/online communication. For this particular case, the social communication inabilities and mal-reception of the professional indications and tasks can lead to an opposite result: they may not be able to get a raise or a promotion.

And, thus, another difficult task for the manager: to put in relationships/communications the Gen Z with the elder employees, because without communications the entity cannot function, go forward.

Focused on this approach, based on my observations and on others' qualified persons in this matter,¹¹ Gen Z, as expected, are more likely to have independent jobs, to be their own bosses, even founders, while Millennials to be in charge and run the businesses, in this moment they are around 50 % of the world workforce. At the same time, as other specialist say, this generation will reshape the workplace¹² (www.pwc.com/co/es/publicaciones/assets/).

Some of the interviewed people belonging to Gen Z asked me not to pronounce the name of their generation. Is it good? Is it bad? The answer and, at the same time, the key-idea of this paper is the fact that no important the name is, But important is who he/she is and what he/she is doing good on his own behalf and of the entity.

But, to understand how they can contribute directly to the company's mission and indirectly to the wellbeing of society, as well as what is the added value they bring to the team, to the organization.

The firm/company, at its turn, has to assume the commitment for social values such as sustainability, climate change, poverty. That's why the importance of entrepreneurs/CEOs and HR managers (who earn over 100,000 dollars a year) employees' selection and put them into the right place.

We saw some examples of employees' re-actions towards a better climate within entities, to get more knowledge and skills, for acquiring self-esteem, more external locus of control.

Conclusion

Each and every generation has positive and negative traits, BUT we have to understand that putting in common the positive ones as possible, even by leaving the least beneficial ones, we may create the favourable climate to work and to motivation in life. We are living within an uncertain life, and we have to cope by many methods to this situation never more so than today.

Generational diversity on workplaces is a very good situation. All depends on gropings and mutual renunciations and, on the other hand, the ability of entrepreneurs and CEOs/managers to reunite this heterogeneous human system towards positively results and performance.

To be relevant to Gen Z, companies need new attraction, on boarding and development strategies that put young people at the core of their efforts.

My opinion in this complex issue is that the terms of collaboration to be put straight at the beginning: tasks, goals, working climate. After that, I agree, both entrepreneurs/managers and employees search for a fine tuning and prompt corrections for possible failures or mistakes, accordingly to each generation's characteristics.

The basic such characteristics become vectors for people within entities to move the entire system towards the scopes and adequate benefits arising from the achievement of the proposed goals.

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Conflict of Interest

Regarding the publication of this article, the author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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