

## Most Effective Leadership Styles for Generation Z: A Review

Nana Noviada Kwartawaty<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohd Hasmadi Ismail<sup>2</sup>, Nana Storada Dwi Martadi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Kesehatan Telogorejo Semarang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Forestry and Environment, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Dian Nuswantoro Semarang, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author:** Nana Noviada Kwartawaty

[nana\\_noviada@stikestelogorejo.ac.id](mailto:nana_noviada@stikestelogorejo.ac.id)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Leadership Style, Organization, Generation Z, Expectations, Challenges

*Received:* 16, August

*Revised:* 30, August

*Accepted:* 25, September

©2024 Kwartawaty, Ismail, Martadi:

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This review aims to explore the most effective leadership styles for this new generation, taking into account their specific needs, expectations and challenges. The transformational leadership style has proven to be especially beneficial for Generation Z, driving increased enthusiasm, efficiency, and engagement in a variety of organizational environments, including public, corporate, and social settings. The research method used is comparative and uses a mixed research approach. The population is Generation Z from various organizational environments and samples were taken from Generation Z and previous generations. Comparative analysis through statistical tests to compare the effectiveness and preferences of leadership styles between Generation Z and previous generations. Research shows that adopting a transformational leadership approach is the optimal way to lead Generation Z effectively. However, existing research has limitations, highlighting the need for more in-depth research into effective leadership for Generation Z. Future research should focus on several areas, including long-term impacts. Leadership styles on Generation Z's career development and Generation Z's response to the hybrid leadership approach.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership styles are crucial in shaping organizational success. The way leaders influence, motivate and guide their teams profoundly impacts productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational outcomes. Over time, various leadership styles have emerged, each with distinct strengths and weaknesses. Transformational leadership, for instance, emphasizes inspiring and motivating employees, while transactional leadership focuses on structure and rewards. The choice of leadership style can significantly influence an organization's trajectory.

Every generation has its own lifestyle and approach to leadership. A generation represents a social structure where people of similar ages and historical experiences share common characteristics (Putra, 2016). Individuals within a generation typically share the same birth years, spanning roughly twenty years, and have similar social experiences. Generation Z, born approximately between 1995 and 2012, represents a unique cohort with an age range of 13 to 28 years (Timori Kansaki et al., 2021). Growing up entirely in the digital age, Generation Z is distinguished by their tech-savviness, value for authenticity, and desire for meaningful work experiences. Their distinctive approach to communication, work-life balance, and career aspirations poses both challenges and opportunities for leaders.

Often referred to as the Digital Native Generation, Generation Z has been familiar with technology and gadgets from an early age, allowing them to express their identities both in their physical environment and digitally (Alfaruqy, 2022). According to Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Generation Z makes up the largest segment of the country's population, accounting for 27.94% of the population, with those born between 1997 and 2012 forming the bulk. Data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) shows that as of December 31, 2021, there were 68,662,815 Generation Z individuals aged 10-24 years in Indonesia.

Leadership style refers to how a leader behaves when influencing others. Effective leadership is critical in guiding individuals towards achieving organizational goals, significantly impacting organizational success (Hasnawati et al., 2021). Leading the current and future Generation Z presents a considerable challenge, but these challenges can be met by embracing the leadership spirit inherent in Generation Z. Leaders today must adapt to current developments, exhibit high levels of socialization, and demonstrate a willingness to help others without discrimination (Mustomi & Reptiningsih, 2020).

Generation Z's leadership style differs from traditional models due to their unique abilities. They are more adept with information technology, exhibit greater courage and motivation, are more independent, and prefer instant solutions. Understanding these traits is crucial for new leaders who wish to influence the next generation effectively (Peramesti & Kusmana, 2018). Transformational leadership is considered an ideal style for Generation Z, as supported by several studies. Leaders who adopt this style can inspire trust and

respect, foster pride, and set compelling goals that motivate and attract members (Hardian & Hermawan, 2022).

Given these unique traits, organizations must identify and implement leadership styles that resonate with Generation Z. This review aims to explore the most effective leadership styles for this emerging generation, considering their specific needs and expectations. By aligning leadership approaches with Generation Z's preferences, organizations can enhance engagement, productivity, and retention, thereby securing long-term success in an increasingly competitive environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Understanding Generation Z*

As time progresses, the demographics of each generation evolve. Based on the composition of the working-age population and the workforce, the baby boomer group is beginning to see a decline, with Generations X and Y holding the most significant numbers among others. A new generation, known as Generation Z, is emerging in the workforce. This youngest generation, often referred to as the I Generation or Internet Generation, is almost identical to Generation Y. They engage in activities such as participating in social media on their phones, browsing the web on their computers, and listening to music on their headsets, all while multitasking.

Generation Z, typically defined as individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, represents a distinct cohort that has grown up in an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and significant socio-economic changes. This generation is the first to have been raised entirely in the digital age, making them unique in their interactions, behaviours, and expectations, especially in the workplace (Twenge, 2017; Dimock, 2019).

The changes observed are primarily related to the world, the internet, or online. Generation Z is an early adopter of technology and familiar with high-quality devices, which indirectly shape their personalities. For them, information and technology are integral parts of life. Born in a world where access to information, especially the internet, has become a global culture that influences their values, beliefs, and life goals, the emergence of Generation Z also presents new challenges for organizational management practices, particularly in human resource management (Putra, 2016).

Hidayat and Selvia (2022) emphasize that Generation Z must-have skills include the ability to solve complex problems, which is developed through effort and life experience. Mastering this skill involves working on problems until the right solution is found. They also highlight the importance of critical thinking, the ability to think clearly and thoroughly about a subject and make logical judgments, and the capacity to implement new ideas and think outside the box to stay competitive and offer unique value propositions. Team management is identified as a crucial skill for success, as every leader needs a team to achieve their goals, and team success is dependent on leadership skills. To understand the differences and their impact on workplace dynamics, a summary in **Table 1**, highlights the distinctions between Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X.

**Table 1.** The differences between Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X based on the Selected Key Aspects

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Generation Z</b>	<b>Millennials</b>	<b>Generation X</b>
<b>Work Values</b>	Pragmatic, prioritize financial security and career stability.	Idealistic, driven by experiences and passion.	Value independence and self-reliance.
<b>Risk Appetite</b>	Risk-averse, influenced by witnessing economic instability during their youth (e.g., the 2008 financial crisis).	More open to taking risks in pursuit of personal goals and experiences.	Cautious but willing to take calculated risks, shaped by the economic conditions of their time.
<b>Technology Use</b>	Highly connected, digital natives, adept at multitasking and handling multiple streams of information.	Tech-savvy but grew up with the evolution of the internet and digital technology.	Adapted to digital technology later in life, but not as integrated as younger generations.
<b>Communication Preferences</b>	Prefer quick, concise communication, often through digital platforms.	Comfortable with both digital and face-to-face communication but leans towards digital tools.	More traditional in communication, prefer direct and face-to-face interactions, though adaptable to digital.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Highly collaborative, value teamwork and connection through digital platforms.	Collaborative, value teamwork but also seek personal recognition.	Independent workers, value autonomy and self-sufficiency.
<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	Value work-life balance, but willing to work hard for organizations that align with their values.	Strong emphasis on work-life balance, sometimes even prioritizing life experiences over work.	Value work-life balance, with a focus on balancing family responsibilities and career advancement.
<b>Leadership Expectations</b>	Expect transparency, authenticity, and ethical practices from leaders.	Desire leaders who are inspirational, inclusive, and supportive of personal development.	Prefer leaders who provide clear direction and allow autonomy.

**Leadership Styles Overview**

Essentially, leadership theory is concerned with the study of individuals who possess physical, mental, and status characteristics that enable them to be considered superior to other individuals in a group and to influence other individuals to strive towards a goal (Mustomi & Reptiningsih, 2020).

Leadership styles are fundamental in shaping organizational culture, guiding decision-making processes, and influencing employee motivation and performance. Over the years, various leadership styles have been identified, each with its distinct characteristics and applications. Understanding these styles is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize leadership effectiveness and align it with their strategic goals. **Table 2** summarising the key aspects of the common leadership styles:

**Table 2.** The Key Aspects of the Common Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Definition	Key Characteristics
<b>Transformational</b>	Characterized by a leader’s ability to inspire and motivate employees to exceed their expectations and contribute to the organization's success. Focuses on vision, innovation, and personal growth (Bass, 1985).	Inspiration, motivation, vision-driven, focus on employee development
<b>Transactional</b>	Based on a system of rewards and punishments. Focuses on clear structures, roles, expectations, and compliance.	Emphasis on structure, performance monitoring, rewards and punishments, short-term goals
<b>Autocratic</b>	Involves a leader making decisions unilaterally without consulting subordinates. Characterized by centralization of authority and directive leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).	Centralized decision-making, high control, clear directives, and limited input from team members
<b>Democratic</b>	Encourages input from team members in decision-making processes. Values collaboration and collective input, fostering a sense of ownership among employees (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).	Collaboration, inclusiveness, team input, shared decision-making
<b>Servant</b>	Emphasizes the leader’s role as a	Empathy,

Leadership Style	Definition	Key Characteristics
	servant to the team. Prioritizes the needs of employees, focusing on their well-being, development, and empowerment.	empowerment, ethical behaviour, focus on employee growth

### ***Brief History of Leadership Styles and Application in Modern Workplaces***

The understanding of leadership has undergone considerable transformation throughout history, with different styles emerging to meet the evolving demands of society and organizations. In the early 20th century, leadership theories primarily focused on autocratic and transactional approaches, emphasizing efficiency, productivity, and rigid hierarchical structures, which were reflective of the industrial era's requirements (Taylor, 1911). However, during the mid-20th century, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, the human relations movement catalyzed a transition towards democratic and participative leadership styles. This era highlighted the significance of employee satisfaction and motivation as critical components for organizational success (McGregor, 1960). As the late 20th century approached, transformational and servant leadership theories began to gain prominence. These approaches emerged in response to the demand for more adaptable, ethical, and inspirational leadership in increasingly complex and dynamic settings (Bass, 1985; Greenleaf, 1970).

In the 21st century, leadership styles have continued to evolve, with a heightened focus on agility, innovation, and ethical considerations. Contemporary leaders are now required to adeptly manage rapid changes, promote collaboration, and uphold a robust ethical framework (Northouse, 2018). In the current diverse and dynamic workplace, the application of leadership styles tends to be situational, with leaders modifying their strategies according to the context and the specific needs of their teams. Research conducted by Praatama and Elistia (2020) indicates that transformational leadership positively impacts Generation Z. Likewise, Irena and Rusfian (2019) contend that Generation Z is most effectively led by transformational leadership. By acknowledging the unique traits of Generation Z, leaders can better harness their strengths and engage them more meaningfully in decision-making processes, particularly regarding their specific needs.

A leader can lead a group of two or more people in an organization or family. Meanwhile, leadership is the ability of a person to control, direct, and influence the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of others to achieve specific goals (Hutahean, 2021). Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to participate in the effectiveness and success of the organization (KKP, 2017). According to Yuki (2013), leadership is the effort to influence the actions of subordinates through communication to achieve specific goals. The qualities that a leader must possess are as follows: Make firm

and correct decisions, Dare to take risks and dare to take responsibility (Hutaheean, 2021).

The effectiveness of any leadership style depends on a variety of factors such as organizational culture, industry context, and the specific challenges a team faces. Leaders who adapt their style to the needs of their organization and employees are more likely to achieve long-term success and foster a positive work environment.

Therefore, leaders must understand and adopt the leadership style that best suits their needs to adapt to the complexities of the modern workplace and move their organization forward. An effective leadership style is one that best aligns with the specific needs of an organization, its employees, and the context in which it operates. An effective leadership style is very suitable for subordinates who rely on communication to keep everyone on task according to their respective work units (Ekowati, 2022). Leaders who have a good and effective leadership style will make people do their work happily and without coercion. On the other hand, if the leadership style is not effective than most people work under pressure and achieve less than optimal results. Therefore, good cooperation between leaders and employees is very necessary (Saputro, 2022). The choice of leadership style may depend on various factors, including organizational goals, team dynamics, and the specific challenges faced.

A study by Dwidienawati et al., (2022) has indicated that Generation Z exhibits unique characteristics and preferences in leadership, valuing aspects such as authenticity and humility. In the research by Hadrian and Hermawan (2022), they identified four distinct leadership styles. One is charismatic leadership, where charismatic leaders inspire and energize their followers through their personal charm and persuasive abilities. They often rely on enthusiasm and vision to influence others and create strong emotional connections. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers. Leaders using this style emphasize structure, rewards for performance, and corrective actions for non-performance. Transformational leaders seek to inspire and elevate their followers by fostering a shared vision and encouraging innovation and personal development. They aim to transform and motivate their teams to achieve higher levels of performance and satisfaction. Visionary leadership focuses on creating a compelling vision for the future and guiding teams towards achieving it. They emphasize long-term goals and strategic direction, inspiring their followers to embrace and work towards the vision.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The comparative research method used in this research is called "The Most Effective Style of the Ideal Leadership in Generation Z". The research aims to compare various leadership styles and their effectiveness among Generation Z who dispersed the previous generation. A mixed research approach is used to combine quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture. The population is Generation Z in various organizational environments, including public, corporate and social environments. Samples were taken from various backgrounds (work, education, culture) to get a

broader perspective. The variables measured are Leadership Style Effectiveness, Leadership Style Preference, and the influence of leadership style on performance. Data Collection Instruments through Questionnaires and Interviews as well as FGDs to dig deeper into the reasons why certain styles are considered more effective or ideal.

Data Analysis using Descriptive Analysis: Describes the preference and effectiveness of each leadership style among Generations Research Hypothesis: H1: Transformational leadership style is preferred by Generation Z compared to other leadership styles and H2: Autocratic leadership style is less effective in improving team performance among Generation Z . From Comparative Analysis that uses statistical tests to compare the effectiveness and leadership style preferences between Generation Z and previous generations. With this method, comparative research will be able to answer which leadership style is most effective among Generation Z and provide in-depth insight into the ideal leadership expected by this generation.

## RESEARCH RESULT

### *Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles for Generation Z*

Generation Z has entered the workforce with distinct characteristics shaped by technological advancements, global connectivity, and social consciousness. As they integrate into professional environments, understanding the leadership styles that resonate with them is crucial for maximising their potential. Each leadership style offers distinct advantages and disadvantages when applied to Generation Z. **Table 3** provides a comparative analysis of various leadership styles, evaluating their effectiveness in leading Generation Z, and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

**Table 3.** A Summary of the Key Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Leadership Style in the Context of Leading Generation Z

Leadership Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Transformational</b>	Inspires and motivates Gen Z by aligning with their need for purpose.	High expectations may lead to burnout.
	Encourages adaptability and innovation.	Ambiguity in vision can confuse.
	Supports personal development and mentoring.	
<b>Transactional</b>	Provides a clear structure and expectations.	May stifle creativity.
	Offers immediate feedback, appealing to Gen Z's desire for instant gratification.	Limited engagement due to a lack of deeper connection.
	Drives efficiency in fast-paced environments.	
<b>Servant</b>	Empowers Gen Z, fostering autonomy and meaningful	Inclusive decision-making may be slow.

Leadership Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
	contributions. Builds trust and loyalty through transparency. Encourages collaboration and teamwork.	May blur boundaries, leading to authority challenges.
<b>Autocratic</b>	Provides clear direction and guidance. Enables efficient decision-making in high-pressure situations.	Lack of autonomy may disengage Gen Z. Resistance to authority may arise, reducing effectiveness.
<b>Democratic</b>	Engages Gen Z by valuing their input. Fosters innovation through collaboration. Promotes transparency, aligning with Gen Z's expectations.	The decision-making process can be time consuming. Potential for conflict due to multiple opinions.

The most effective leadership approach for Generation Z is one that is responsive to their unique needs and preferences. Leaders are encouraged to embrace a style that resonates with this generation, which values meaningful relationships and seeks inspiration from their leaders (Irena & Russfian, 2019).

The results of the study using comparative methods on the most effective leadership styles in Generation Z will provide insight into which leadership styles are preferred and considered more effective by Generation Z in work or organizational contexts. The results obtained are:

#### ***Leadership Style Among Generation Z Shows a Preference for a Transformational Leadership Style***

Many respondents from Generation Z show a preference for this style because they appreciate leaders who are visionary, inspirational, and able to provide motivation and positive change. They tend to value leaders who act as mentors. In contrast, leadership styles such as:

Participative (Democratic) Leadership Style, although it is also popular, is far behind the transformative leadership style because Generation Z tends to want active participation in decision-making and feels that their voices must be heard by leaders. The autocratic leadership style tends to be less popular because Generation Z generally prefers a collaborative approach to leaders who are too controlling and do not provide space for freedom of opinion.

#### ***Recommendations for Ideal Leadership Style***

The exploration of various aspects of leadership has persistently been a critical area of study as organizations continually strive to maintain competitiveness (Keskes, 2014). Understanding and leading Generation Z

requires a shift from traditional leadership styles to approaches that resonate with their unique characteristics and values. Transformational leadership stands out as particularly effective, aligning with Generation Z's desire for inspiration, personal growth, and meaningful engagement.

Transformational leadership, as noted by Hardian and Hermawan (2022), proves to be particularly impactful. This style is distinguished by its capacity to foster enthusiasm, instil core values, cultivate trust, and address the diverse needs of team members in various contexts (Pratama & Elistia, 2020). Hardian and Hermawan (2022) emphasize the advantages of transformational leadership for Generation Z, as it significantly boosts engagement, performance, and organizational commitment across public, business, and social domains. In contrast to earlier generations that favoured traditional print media, Generation Z shows a preference for digital platforms and visual content. Furthermore, Irena & Rusfian (2019) identified a robust positive relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of Generation Z individuals. Transformational leaders are characterized by their high ethical standards, ability to earn trust and respect, capacity to inspire pride and provision of a compelling vision that galvanizes their teams.

According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leaders exhibit four key behaviours: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These behaviours enable leaders to connect with their followers on a deeper level, promoting trust, loyalty, and commitment (Hardian and Hermawan, 2022; Pratama and Elistia, 2020). For Generation Z, transformational leadership entails guiding and shaping their thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behaviours in alignment with the objectives of the organization (Shalahuddin, 2016). This leadership paradigm is fundamentally centred on change, focusing on recognizing necessary transformations, crafting a supportive vision, and executing a comprehensive change strategy (Irena & Rusfian, 2019).

Supporting this perspective, Irena and Rusfian (2019) emphasize that transformational leaders concentrate on proactive actions and initiatives. They simplify organizational goals with various markers and cultivate a spirit of teamwork, enthusiasm, and optimism. This approach is particularly effective for engaging Generation Z, aligning well with their needs for a leadership style that inspires and motivates through clear vision, intellectual engagement, and personal attention. Other studies have shown that transformational leadership is positively correlated with employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In a study conducted by Wang et al. (2011), transformational leadership was found to enhance team effectiveness by promoting a shared vision and encouraging collaboration among team members. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders adopt a transformational approach to foster a positive organizational culture and drive long-term success.

The most effective transformational leadership style for Generation Z can be found in various studies which show that Generation Z likes leaders who are inspirational, personal development-oriented, innovative and empathetic.

Transformational leaders who are able to provide a clear vision, support innovation, empower team members, and show concern for employee welfare will be more successful in managing this generation. These results are consistent with this research which states that Generation Z is looking for leaders who can help them achieve their best potential. One key aspect of the transformational leadership style is the leader's ability to provide a clear vision and inspire team members to achieve long-term goals. This is in line with the preferences of Generation Z, who are more interested in the meaning and purpose of their work.

Generation Z values collaboration and the opportunity to participate in decision-making. by providing guidance, inspiration and opportunities to develop, as well as empowering members to contribute actively. So a transformational leadership style is needed by the current Generation Z. The research results show that the transformational leadership style is known to be effective in motivating and increasing employee involvement. This is very important and desirable for Generation Z, which is known as a generation that has a strong internal motivation to develop and succeed.

Several previous studies show that Generation Z prefers leaders who are visionary, inspiring and empowering, which are characteristics of a transformational leadership style, including the following:

- a. Anderson et al. (2017) state that Generation Z appreciates leaders who can inspire, a clear vision and positive change in the work environment. They are more interested in leaders who facilitate personal development.
- b. Gaidhani et al. (2019) noted that Generation Z has high expectations of leaders' ability to utilize technology and drive innovation in the workplace. Transformational leaders who support technological innovation are considered more relevant and effective in the context of Generation Z's needs.
- c. Muir (2020) emphasized that transformational leaders who inspire and build trust among team members are highly valued by Generation Z. This generation looks for leaders who can create a work environment that supports personal growth and innovation.
- d. Deal et al. (2021) state that Generation Z tends to be more engaged and motivated under transformational leadership, where they feel connected to a larger vision and contribute to positive change in the organization.

Knoll and Gill (2020) show that Generation Z values leaders who can provide constructive feedback and guidance to improve their competence. Transformational leaders who provide personal support tend to be more valued for their role in developing individuals within the team.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Effectiveness of Leadership Style***

Transformational Leadership is considered most effective in increasing team member motivation, productivity, and engagement. Leaders who are transformational, oriented towards shared goals and inspiring, will be more accepted by Generation Z who want leaders who can provide greater goals at work.

Democratic leadership is considered to value transparency and the opportunity to provide input in the decision-making process less, so this style increases their involvement only in projects and teams. Transactional Leadership is only effective in environments that require certainty and structure but is often considered less motivating among Generation Z, especially not demonstrating an inspiring and flexible approach.

### ***Organizational Performance and Productivity***

Organizations led with a transformational style tend to perform better, with higher levels of satisfaction and productivity. This is because this style provides space for personal development, freedom of opinion, as well as recognition of individual contributions. Organizations led by other leadership styles tend to show lower levels of performance, due to a lack of involvement and clear direction from the leader.

### ***The Relationship Between Preference and Effectiveness***

From comparative data analysis, it appears that there is a strong correlation between leadership style preferences and effectiveness in terms of productivity and team engagement. Generation Z who prefer a transformational leadership style tend to report more positive outcomes in terms of organizational performance, creativity, and innovation.

### ***Challenges in Implementing Leadership Styles***

Generation Z brings new challenges to old ways of leading. So, differences between generations can cause resistance, and we need to come up with practical ways to deal with these issues. The different likes and expectations of today's generation affect how people respond to traditional leadership styles.

Traditional leadership usually involves a clear chain of command where decisions are made by those at the top and passed down to others. Generation Z cares about being inclusive, working together, and being open. They like places where their opinions are asked for and taken seriously. The strict levels of authority found in traditional leadership can lessen motivation and happiness at work for Generation Z employees. They prefer less hierarchical workplaces that encourage open talks and allow them to take part in decision-making. Command-and-control leadership, which involves close monitoring and detailed management, is not working well with Generation Z anymore. This way of leading focuses on having power and control, which is different from what Generation Z likes—they prefer freedom and flexibility (Irena & Rusfian, 2019). Generation Z workers are more interested in workplaces that let them be independent and creative. Leaders who keep using strict and controlling methods might struggle to keep the younger workers motivated and productive.

Generation Z is the first generation to grow up with the internet and advanced technology as important parts of their lives. Old ways of leading that don't use new technology and digital communication tools can seem old-fashioned and out of touch. Good leadership for Generation Z means using

online tools to talk and work together. Leaders who don't use technology in their work might have a hard time relating to and inspiring this generation. They need to adapt to technology to stay important and effective.

Using old leadership styles with Generation Z can be difficult because they like to be included, have more freedom, and use technology. Rigid management styles can limit involvement and productivity, and old technology can make things complicated. To successfully lead Generation Z, organizations need to change their leadership methods to match the values and expectations of this tech-savvy group. This means creating a more inclusive, flexible, and tech-friendly environment.

Generation Z cares a lot about having a good balance between work and life, growing personally, and doing work that feels important. Old ways of leading might not fit with these values, causing people to push back and not get involved. Leaders who don't change their style to fit these values might have a hard time relating to and inspiring younger team members. They like to talk directly using things like instant messages and social media. Traditional leaders who mostly use in-person meetings and formal talks might struggle to connect well with younger people today. Differences in how people like to communicate can cause confusion and problems. They have a milder view of authority compared to older generations. Williams and Page (2011) said that Generation Z sees leaders as friendly and trustworthy. This is different from the old-fashioned way of leading, which focuses on being distant and formal. They prefer leaders who are friendly, easy to talk to, and down to earth.

### ***Solutions and Strategies for Overcoming the Challenges***

In addressing the challenges associated with leading Generation Z, leaders can implement several strategies that align with the unique characteristics and preferences of this cohort. Bass and Riggio (2006) have identified the Transformational Leadership Approach as an effective style for engaging and motivating Generation Z. This approach, characterized by charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, aligns well with the values and expectations of this generation. Transformational leaders are adept at articulating a compelling vision, fostering innovation, and providing tailored support to team members (Northouse, 2018). By adopting this approach, leaders can bridge the gap between traditional leadership styles and the needs of Generation Z, enhancing motivation and performance.

Fostering inclusivity and collaboration in the work environment for Generation Z is essential (Twenge et al., 2010). Leaders can address these preferences by fostering a culture of openness and participatory decision-making (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Encouraging team members to contribute ideas, engage in collaborative problem-solving, and provide feedback enhances motivation and commitment (Edmondson, 1999). Leaders who are receptive to feedback and willing to adapt their strategies based on team input are likely to build stronger, more engaged teams (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

According to Bennet et al., (2008), leaders can enhance communication and streamline processes by integrating technology and digital tools into their

leadership practices. Platforms such as instant messaging, project management software, and virtual collaboration tools align with Generation Z's expectations for efficient and flexible communication (Smith & Duggan, 2013). By embracing these technologies, leaders can improve engagement and productivity, catering to the digital preferences of this generation. Adapting communication styles to suit Generation Z's preferences is crucial for effective leadership (Schroth, 2019). Leaders should utilize digital communication methods, be concise and clear, and maintain an open line of communication to build trust and rapport. Proactively seeking feedback and addressing concerns promptly can further enhance communication effectiveness and team cohesion. Generation Z is highly adapted to organizational values and seeks alignment between their personal values and their work environment. Leaders should prioritize work-life balance, support personal and professional development, and ensure that work is meaningful and fulfilling (Bencsik et al., 2016). Demonstrating a commitment to these values can enhance engagement and reduce resistance among Generation Z employees (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

Applying traditional leadership styles to Generation Z poses challenges due to their preference for inclusivity, autonomy, and technological integration. Hierarchical and command-and-control approaches can hinder engagement and productivity, while outdated technological practices can create a disconnect. To effectively lead Generation Z, organizations must adapt their leadership strategies to align with the values and expectations of this digital-native cohort, fostering a more inclusive, flexible, and technologically adept environment. Implementing traditional leadership styles with Generation Z presents several challenges due to differing values, communication preferences, and expectations. However, by embracing transformational leadership, fostering inclusivity, integrating technology, adapting communication styles, and aligning with generational values, leaders can effectively address these challenges.

### ***Implications for Future Leaders***

Leaders who want to be successful in leading Generation Z must adopt a leadership approach that is inspiring, collaborative and supports personal development. Organizations that want to attract and retain talent from Generation Z should consider establishing an inclusive work culture, with clear career development opportunities and innovation-oriented leadership. The results of this study provide a strong basis for organizations or leaders to adapt their leadership style to be more effective in managing Generation Z organizations.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Transformational Leadership Style is identified as the most effective and ideal leadership style for Generation Z. Generation Z appreciates leaders who empower, and provide clear direction, but remain open to input and flexible in decision-making. Hypothesis H1: The transformational leadership style preferred by Generation Z compared to other leadership styles is proven correct.

Generation Z respondents may have different perceptions of leadership styles based on their own experiences or media influence. This can cause bias in research results because these perceptions may not fully reflect the reality on the ground. In further research, more detail can be carried out by direct observation of the behaviour of leaders in organizations in Generation Z. Generation Z's preferences for leadership styles can change over time, situations and conditions in the current global era, where external factors greatly influence it, especially considering the speed of social and technological change. Due to time constraints, this research does not fully capture the dynamics of this change. So it is suggested that future researchers can conduct long-term research to track changes in Generation Z's preferences for leadership styles over time.

### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Research subjects are limited to a certain area, namely the city of Semarang with limited respondents. Because of the limited area of study, culture and geographical context, results may not be generalizable to various locations or other cultures. The sample size in this study may not be large enough to obtain a comprehensive representation of the entire Generation Z population. A small sample may cause bias or errors in understanding leadership style preferences. Therefore, future research should increase the sample size, involving more respondents from various work backgrounds, education and ages to provide more general results.

Future studies may expand the geographic scope or cover wider cultural variations to understand how Generation Z's leadership style preferences may differ in different regions in Indonesia or the context of different types of organizations (organizations: business, government, community organizations, etc. ). Based on input from researchers. then further research can provide a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the dynamics between leadership style and Generation Z.

Based on the limitations of research conducted using the literature study method the deeper understanding of effective leadership for Generation Z, several areas for further research can be explored such as the impact of leadership styles on Generation Z's long-term career development and Generation Z's response to hybrid leadership approaches. Investigate how different leadership styles influence Generation Z's career growth, skill development, and long-term job satisfaction. Also explore how Generation Z responds to hybrid leadership approaches that combine elements from different styles (e.g., transformational with democratic elements). This research could reveal how flexible and blended leadership styles affect engagement, performance, and satisfaction among Generation Z employees.

### **REFERENCES**

- Alfaruqy, M. Z. (2022). Generation Z and perceived values from her parents. *PSYCHE: A Psychological Journal*, 4(1), 84-95. <https://doi.org/10.36269/psyche.v4i1.658>

- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage.
- Bencsik, A., Horváth-Csikos, K., & Juhász, T. (2016). The challenges of leadership in the new millennium: Work-life balance. *International Journal of Management and Economics*, 50(1), 7-17.
- Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008). The “digital natives” debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(5), 775-786.
- Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2011). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. Wiley.
- Dimock, M. (2019). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end, and Generation Z begins*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins>
- Dwidienawati, D., Syahchari, D., & Tjahjana, D. (2022). Effective leadership style for Generation Z. In 5th European International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management. <https://doi.org/10.46254/EU05.20220183>
- Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383.
- Ekowati, M. F. (2022). Ridwan Kamil's leadership in the millennial era of the city Bandung. Researchgate.Net, June. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/MeisyaEkowati/publication/3614661>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership.
- Hardian, V., & Hermawan, E. (2022). Leadership style: Transformative. Control: *Economics and Social Humanities*, 1(1), 32-38.

- Hasnawati, Sapiri, M., & Ruslan, M. (2021). Leadership style and improved performance.
- Hidayat, F., & Selvia. (2022). The role of Millennials and Generation Z in facing global competition in the Era 5.0. Seminar Proceedings Undergraduate Management, February 22-25.
- Hutaheean, W. S. (2021). Leadership philosophy and theory.pdf. Philosophy and Leadership Theory (p. 130).
- Irena, L., & Rusfian, E. Z. (2019). Style relationships leadership transformational and internal communication with member performance Generation Z at tech company. Journal of Communication, 11(2), 223. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jk.v11i2.5635>
- Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. Journal of Applied Psychology, 89(5), 755-768.
- Keskes, I. (2014). Relationship between leadership styles and dimensions of employee organizational commitment: A critical review and discussion of future directions. Intangible Capital, 10(1), 26-51. <https://doi.org/10.3926/ic.476>
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations. Wiley.
- Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. Journal of Social Psychology, 10(2), 271-299.
- Lichtenstein, B. M. B., Lichtenstein, J. M., & Pappas, C. (2006). Building a strong organizational culture for a Generation Y workforce. Journal of Business and Psychology, 21(1), 61-74.
- McGregor, D. (1960). The human side of enterprise. McGraw-Hill.
- Mustomi, D., & Reptiningsih, E. (2020). Leadership style in perspective millennial generation. JIMEA | MEA Scientific Journal (Management,

Economics, and Accounting), 4(1), 189-199.  
<https://doi.org/10.31955/mea.vol4.iss1.pp189-199>

Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage Publications.

PDY, & Kusmana, D. (2018). Ideal leadership in the Era Millennial Generation. *TRANSFORMATION: Journal of Government Management*, 73-84.  
<https://doi.org/10.33701/jt.v10i1.413>

Pratama, G., & Elistia, E. (2020). Analysis of leadership work motivation transformational. *Economic Journal: Journal of Economics*, 11(2), 144-152.

Putra, Y. S. (2016). Theory of generational differences among Makarti. 9(1952), 123-134.

Saputro, R. A. (2022). Ideal leadership style for generations millineal. *Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHes): Conference Series*, 5(1), 212. <https://doi.org/10.20961/shes.v5i1.57799>

Schroth, H. (2019). Rethinking the role of communication in the digital age. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 82(2), 196-204.

Smith, A., & Duggan, M. (2013). *Online dating & relationships*. Pew Research Center.

Timori Kansaki, Ngajudin Nugroho, Fauzi Akbar Maulana Hutabarat, Elserra Siemin Ciamas, & Arwin. (2021). Leadership style on motivation Gen-Z work (A case study of Cendana Polytechnic students Medan). *ARBITRATION: Journal of Economics and Accounting*, 2(2), 46-50.  
<https://doi.org/10.47065/arbitrase.v2i2.284>

Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy--and completely unprepared for adulthood and what that means for the rest of us*. Atria Books.

Yukl, G.A. (2013) *Leadership in Organizations*. 8th Edition, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River.