

# Chapter 12

## Navigating Generational Dynamics in Women's Career Development under a Human-centric Management Approach

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### 12.1. Introduction

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The focus of this chapter is on generational perspectives and practices in women's career development. This serves as a continuation of the themes related to different generations, which were initiated in Chapter 7, dedicated to adapting HRM practices to the needs of Generation Z. This continued in Chapter 8, addressing the unique needs of this generation and creating innovative solutions in the areas of HRM and leadership. Subsequently, the previous Chapter 11 focused exclusively on diverse personal definitions of career success. This progression underscores the importance and relevance of the issues being addressed.

Currently, one of the main challenges for human resources managers is the effective management of employees from different generations – those present in the labor market (Generation X and Generation Y) and those just entering their professional careers (Generation Z), who have different approaches to life and career. Dynamic changes in the labor market mean that traditional professions are losing their importance and new ones are emerging, which forces changes in the employment structure and employers' expectations towards employees. The new approach to a professional career assumes that the employee is responsible for shaping it and treats it as his or her "career capital" (Wilk, 2023). A professional

career is closely related to a life career, including education, developing competencies and subsequent job positions. It is important that these changes bring satisfaction and fulfillment to the employee, correspond to his or her predispositions and aspirations, and are consistent with the surrounding environment (Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013). Creating extensive professional development opportunities for employees can bring many benefits to the company, such as increasing job satisfaction, improving the company's operating efficiency and stabilizing employment, especially among talented, creative employees (Tworzewska-Lipiec, 2018). Moreover, as evidenced by empirical research findings, multiscope employee development (MED), which includes career development as one of its components, has a positive impact on company performance results in finance, innovation, and the quality of products and services (Stor, 2023a).

The relationships between the professional careers of generations X, Y and Z and the aspect of women's careers are complex and are influenced by many social, cultural and economic factors (Rajahonka and Villman, 2022). Many Gen Xers grew up at a time when women were entering the workforce in greater numbers than ever before. For many Gen X women, the challenge was balancing career and family life, which often led to conflict and compromise. For Generation Y women, gender equality in the workplace was already more visible, and many of them thrived in a culture that encouraged equality and diversity. However, many Generation Y women still face challenges related to gender discrimination and a lack of equal career opportunities (Sullivan and Ariss, 2021). Little is known yet about what career challenges women from Generation Z will face, but what is particularly important to them at the moment is creating gender equality in the workplace.

The issue of generational differences in career and work is widely discussed in the literature. Benson et al. (2018) analyzed how generations transform satisfaction with career development into organizational commitment or work neglect. Cho et al. (2018) devoted their study to determining Generation Z's motivation for volunteering and the relationship between it and attitudes and results at work. Gong et al. (2018) studied millennials and their organizational citizenship behaviors, including the role of job crafting and career anchoring in service. The aim of the research by Mičík and Mičudová (2018) was to check whether organizations build the image of an attractive employer for potential Generation Y employees and to what extent companies can attract employees among millennials. Zaharee et al. (2018) examined expectations towards employers and workplace features that attract employees of the youngest generations at the beginning of their careers. Maloni et al. (2019) studied the work values of Generation Z business students. The aim of Martínez-Buevas and Jaramillo-Naranjo's (2019) study was to check whether there are significant differences in the perception of the quality of work life among employees of three generational cohorts and to propose some HRM strategies to manage these differences. Duxbury and Ormsbee (2020) examined the experiences of Generation X that shape their position in the labor market. Holtschlag et al. (2020) analyzed the indirect effect of protean career orientation on changes in employee turnover intentions through personal work goal progress in a sample of millennial employees. Gabrielova and Buchko (2021) made a review that identifies and highlights some of the characteristic features

related to the work of the two youngest generations in the workplace – Generation Y and Z. Raišienė et al. (2021) examined how Millennials, Xennials, and Generation X deal with working from home. Barhate and Dirani (2022) aimed to examine the professional aspirations of people belonging to the Generation Z cohort, and Benitez-Marquez et al. (2022) focused on Generation Z employees, in the context of the environment and workplace. Bishu et al. (2003) examined the careers of women public managers and their professional needs across generations.

Due to such a diverse approach to the topic of generations and professional careers, there are few studies relating to generational differences in women’s careers, and even fewer studies in this area are based in selected regions of Poland. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to explore this subject further through research. Additionally, this need is underscored by the ongoing shift towards human-centric management, which emphasizes viewing employees not just as parts of a system but as central figures with unique needs and contributions. This paradigm shift makes it imperative to deepen our understanding of how generational differences impact women’s career development, to effectively adapt human resources management (HRM) activities and strategies that respect and leverage these differences in pursuit of organizational success and employee fulfillment. This exploration is essential for crafting HRM practices that align with the evolving ethos of human-centric management, thus enabling organizations to remain competitive, innovative, and inclusive in a rapidly changing global environment.

In the above context, **the main goal of this chapter** is to identify and juxtapose generational perspectives and practices in women’s career development, and to interpret the identified phenomena from the perspective of the human-centric management paradigm. Additionally, based on these findings the chapter aims at formulating practical recommendations for organizations that want to be perceived as human-centric organizations.

## **12.2. The Theoretical Framework for the Study**

In exploring the nuances of human-centric management, it becomes imperative to appreciate the unique and varied tapestries woven by the life experiences and historical contexts of different generational cohorts. Each generation brings a distinct set of values, expectations, and work behaviors that have been shaped by their socio-economic environments, technological advancements, and cultural milestones. Understanding these generational characteristics allows organizations to tailor approaches that honor the diversity of their workforce, ensuring that strategies are not only inclusive but also profoundly aligned with the intrinsic needs and aspirations of each group. This sensitivity to generational diversity serves as a cornerstone for building a truly human-centric workplace, where each employee’s potential can be nurtured and harnessed effectively.

Generation X is made up of people born between 1965 and 1980. Growing up in the 1970s, they witnessed the transformation of the world, which gradually shifted from post-industrial to post-modern. Their professional path began at a time when the economy was

still adapting to the new reality, which meant that they had to confront challenges that previous generations had not experienced to such an extent (Czyczerska et al., 2020). The beginnings of their careers were often marked by employment instability, which forced them to be flexible and adapt to changing market conditions. Unemployment and temporary contracts were often a reality they had to face, which made them value job stability and job security. Despite these difficulties, Generation X demonstrated a strong sense of determination and perseverance in pursuing professional success. They often engaged in hard work and took on challenges to achieve their career goals. Their pragmatism and ability to make decisions in difficult situations were valued by employers who appreciated their ability to cope in a dynamic business environment (Hysa, 2016). Gen Xers are also described as responsible, conscientious and dedicated workers. Although they may be skeptical and distrustful of institutions and authorities, they are loyal to their work and team. Their ability to work in a team and the ability to build professional relationships make them sought after as leaders and mentors for younger employees. As they achieved professional success, many of them also became involved in social activities and volunteering, showing their commitment not only to professional life, but also to society. Their experiences with difficulties on the labor market have also made them politically and socially active, striving to change the system for the better. As a result, Generation X is not only a group of employees, but also leaders and innovators who have influenced the shaping of today's world of business and society. They were the first to grow up in the media age, which means that they are usually well versed in new technologies and trends, which translates into their effectiveness in today's work environment that is increasingly based on technology and innovation (Chip, 2016).

The characteristics of Generation X lead to the conclusion that human-centric management must prioritize creating environments that value stability and provide clear paths for growth and security. This Generation X's experiences with job instability and economic shifts mean that they highly value and respond well to environments that offer job security and recognition for their loyalty and dedication. For human-centric organizations, the challenge is to integrate these needs with flexible, innovative practices that also cater to younger generations. Encouraging Generation X's involvement in mentoring programs can leverage their skills effectively, fostering a culture of continuity and resilience within the organization.

Generation Y, also known as Millennials, is a group of people born between 1981 and 1994 who grew up in the era of widespread access to the Internet, personal computers and globalization. Their professional path is closely intertwined with dynamic changes in technology and society, which influenced the formation of their values and professional preferences (Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013). Representatives of Generation Y are characterized by high self-esteem, self-confidence and awareness of their rights and social problems. They are mobile and flexible in making career decisions, as well as open to new technologies. The value for them is the balance between private and professional life, which is why they attach great importance to flexibility during working hours and expect opportunities for personal and professional development (Stachowska, 2012). Generation Y does not accept the "rat race" or fierce competition at work. When choosing a future employer, he is guided primarily by the

company's prestige and development opportunities. Is not loyal to one organization, prefers to work in places that meet his expectations. Is ready to get involved in projects, but expects specific remuneration and compensation. In negotiations with employers, they set high salary requirements, which may be the result of their high self-esteem and self-confidence. However, they are willing to work on inspiring projects that develop their creativity and skills. They share values such as innovation, equality and diversity, which makes them sensitive to the atmosphere in the workplace and engage in activities aimed at changing the organization for the better. Millennials are known for being open to changes and not afraid of challenges. It is no accident that they are called the "flip-flop and iPod generation", because they prefer communication via modern technologies rather than face-to-face meetings. Their work in teams is based on cooperation and exchange of information, which translates into their effectiveness in implementing projects (Kroenke, 2015). However, representatives of Generation Y are also criticized for certain features, such as narcissism, lack of loyalty to employers and difficulties in direct relationships. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm, commitment to projects and ability to adapt to new working conditions make them valuable employees in today's business environment, which is constantly changing and developing (Chip, 2016).

From the traits of Millennials, it is evident that human-centric management needs to focus on flexibility, purposeful work, and rapid career progression to engage this generation effectively. Millennials' high self-esteem and demand for balance between personal and professional life challenge organizations to rethink traditional work structures and reward systems. Human-centric organizations must craft roles and opportunities that are adaptive and progressive, aligning with Millennials' expectations for transparency, social responsibility, and technological integration. This requires a shift from strict hierarchical structures to more fluid and dynamic team configurations that allow Millennials to feel valued and integral to the organizational mission.

Generation Z, defined as people born after 1995, is growing up in the era of universal access to mobile technologies and the Internet. Their lives involve constant interaction with the Internet and social media, which are an integral part of their everyday life. Online communication is natural for them, and face-to-face contact may seem less comfortable. With deeper immersion in the digital world, Generation Z experiences new challenges, such as constant stress related to being constantly online, image control on social media and fear of lack of access to information (FOMO – Fear of Missing Out) (Chomicka et al., 2022). Even though they are well integrated with technology, they often experience a decline in happiness, which may be related to excessive use of electronic devices. As they enter the workforce, Generation Z is showing an interest in careers and making money, often more than previous generations. Feedback plays an important role for them, especially specific and substantive information, which may result from their activity on social media. However, despite looking for a career, they do not expect immediate success. Although they are sometimes accused of lack of loyalty to companies, it turns out that they are ready to stay in one organization, provided that the work is satisfactory for them (Czyzcerska et al., 2020). Generation Z demonstrates the ability to function in two parallel worlds – reality and virtual. They can transition seamlessly

between them, but may also experience difficulty concentrating and analyzing information, which may affect their communication skills in the real world. In the work environment, managing Generation Z requires understanding their needs and preferences. Employers must be ready to adapt to changes and open to new ideas and experimentation. Generation Z values diversity and eagerly seeks work in a group, preferring flexibility and mobility. For them, work is not only a way to earn money, but also an opportunity to develop and explore new areas (Anisiewicz, 2023).

The entry of Generation Z into the workforce signifies that human-centric management must emphasize technological integration and mental well-being more profoundly than ever before. Their digital nativity and the high value they place on social and ethical issues mean that organizations must not only provide advanced technological tools but also uphold strong values of diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability. The challenge lies in managing their expectations for quick feedback and professional growth without contributing to the burnout culture. Human-focused organizations need to develop robust support systems that facilitate continuous learning and mental health support, ensuring that work remains a source of personal fulfillment and not just financial necessity for Generation Z employees.

As we delve deeper into the multifaceted profiles of different generational cohorts, the rich tapestry of experiences, values, and aspirations they bring to the workplace becomes evident. These insights are instrumental in forging pathways that not only resonate with diverse generational needs but also strengthen the foundational principles of human-centric management. In fostering an environment that is keenly attuned to these variances, organizations can craft a culture that is not only adaptive and resilient but also profoundly supportive of each individual's professional journey. This approach underscores the critical role that a nuanced understanding of generational characteristics plays in the sustained success and dynamism of modern organizations. This is particularly crucial when considering the career development of women across different generations, where tailored strategies can significantly impact their empowerment and success within the professional landscape.

### **12.3. The Methodics of the Conducted Empirical Research**

The empirical research aimed to gather data that would provide insightful perspectives into various aspects of women's careers across different generations, focusing on their behaviors, preferences, and opportunities in professional development. Consequently, the research was designed so that the collected information would span sectors of employment, job positions held, income levels, the importance of career to each generation, professional development activities undertaken, and generational attitudes towards work and negative behaviors in the workplace.

In order to collect empirical data, quantitative research was conducted using the survey method and the CAWI technique. This study used an online survey questionnaire, created using the Google Forms platform, which used single- and multiple-choice questions and an open-

-ended question format. Some of the questions used a five-point Likert scale, consisting of the answers: “definitely not”, “rather not”, “difficult to say”, “probably yes”, “definitely yes”. The survey consisted of questions about professional career and personal details. The research was conducted over 9 months (February 2022 – October 2022) in the form of disseminating an appropriate link to an online survey on the Google Forms platform. First of all, the focus was on organizations and women working in them, to which the author had direct access. Then, using the “snowball” effect, women participating in the study were asked to further share the survey in other organizations, thus inviting additional respondents to participate. At the same time, the author popularized the study through e-mails containing an invitation to participate in the study, sent to organizations that met the assumed sample selection criteria. The organizations were selected on the basis of rankings of medium and large enterprises prepared by portals such as: <https://nowiny24.pl/> (Golden Hundred of Companies 2021), <https://www.observatorium.malopolska.pl/> (500 List), and <https://www.forbes.pl/> (Forbes Diamonds 2021).

The research sample consisted of professionally active women (n=511), currently working in medium-sized or large enterprises, living in two voivodeships: Lesser Poland and Podkarpackie. The choice of these voivodeships was dictated by their economic diversity, socio-cultural conditions and economic differences. The Podkarpackie and Lesser Poland voivodeships are located in the southern part of Poland, which is characterized by a diversified economic structure and level of development. Moreover, the choice of the Podkarpackie and Lesser Poland voivodeships was also due to the small amount of previous research on women’s professional careers in these regions.

After collecting the empirical material, the data were subjected to statistical analysis, which included descriptive characteristics and tests of intergroup comparisons – the variables analyzed in the study were two types of data: quantitative and categorical. Quantitative variables included all answers provided by respondents on a five-point Likert scale, and their characteristics included, among others: arithmetic mean, standard deviation, median, first and third quartile values, and minimum and maximum values. After making comparisons, those results that turned out to be statistically significant were selected for presentation and discussion. In order to select three study groups – Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, a division was used based on an open question regarding the age of the respondents. Then, individual age ranges were adopted according to the scheme presented in Table 28.

**Table 28.** The structure of the research sample by age

Category of generation	Age intervals	Cohorts by date of birth	Sample size	
			Frequency	Percentage
Generation X	42 – 57	1965 – 1980	152	29.75
Generation Y	27 – 41	1981 – 1994	265	51.86
Generation Z	under 27	since 1995	94	18.40
<b>Total</b>			<b>511</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own empirical research.

## 12.4. The Empirical Research Findings

Representatives of Generation X most often worked in organizations of public administration (18.4%), education (20.4%) and health and social welfare (15.8%), while Generation Y also worked in public administration (20.4%) and education (13.2%), but also in organizations of financial and insurance activities (12.8%). The youngest female respondents surveyed were employed in organizations engaged in activities related to culture, entertainment and recreation (9.6%), wholesale and retail trade (10.6%) and information and communication (7.4%). However, the largest percentage of Generation Z women worked in other service activities (22.3%), and this activity profile showed the greatest variation with respect to the other two generations (X – 4.6% vs. Y – 8.7%). Generation Z women were also more likely than the others to work in medium-sized organizations (X – 59.9% vs. Y – 58.5% vs. Z – 74.5%).

The surveyed women in each generation most often worked in executive positions with intellectual work (X – 42.7% vs. Y – 49.2% vs. Z – 43.6%). The greatest discrepancies between the positions held were found among low-level managers (X – 8.4% vs. Y – 7.5% vs. Z – 2.1%) and executive positions with mixed work (X – 14% vs. Y – 7.5% vs. Z – 24.5%) and physical (X – 6.3% vs. Y – 4% vs. Z – 16%).

The surveyed generation range of PLN 4,500-6,000 gross per month (30.3%). Accordingly, most women from Generation Y earned PLN 3,000-4,500 gross per month (40.8%), while those from Generation Z earned less than PLN 3,000 gross per month (44.7%).

Nearly 87% of the surveyed women declared that their professional career was important to them. However, the group that was most certain about this statement were Generation Y women (41.9% of “definitely yes” responses). Generation Z women had the greatest difficulty in determining the degree of importance of their career – 12.8%, while the answer “difficult to say” was given by 7.9% of Generation X women and only 2.3% of Generation Y women.

As part of their career development, the women surveyed undertook various activities (see Table 29). The most common form among all women, regardless of generation, was to undertake studies. However, there is a noticeable tendency of younger generations to undertake them more often (X – 63.8% vs. Y – 79.2% vs. Z – 87.2%). Significant differences also occurred in other forms of career development. Generation Y women invested more often than others in learning foreign languages (X - 30.9% vs. Y - 42.3% vs. Z - 30.9%), while they developed networking less often (X – 4.6% vs. Y – 1.5% vs. Z – 6.4%), which was one of the least frequently used forms of career development. So were trips to foreign internships, which were generally not used by Generation Z women (X – 5.9% vs. Y – 4.2% vs. Z – 0%). Significant differences also occurred with regard to participation in training. In both those provided as part of their work in the organization (X – 54.6% vs. Y – 59.2% vs. Z – 27.7%) and those provided independently of the organization (X – 45.4% vs. Y – 35.8% vs. Z – 25.5%), generation Z women were the least likely to participate. However, a greater number of women chose internal training, with generation Y women the most likely to take advantage of it. External training, on the other hand, was most often chosen by women of generation X.



**Table 29.** Activities undertaken by women as part of their career development

Types of activities	Categories of generations		
	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Undertaking studies	63.8%	79.2%	87.2%
Learning foreign languages	30.9%	42.3%	30.9%
Developing networking	4.6%	1.5%	6.49%
Taking trips to foreign internships	5.9%	4.2%	0.0%
Participating in training provided by the employer	54.6%	59.2%	27.79%
Participating in training independent of the employer	45.4%	35.8%	25.5%

Source: own empirical research.

Generation Z women were less likely than their older counterparts to base their careers on the activities of the organization where they work (mean X – 3.6 vs. Y – 3.5 vs. Z – 3.21). At a similar high level as women of generation X, they showed a desire for development, but it was the women of generation Y who declared it more strongly (mean X – 4.29 vs. Y – 4.49 vs. Z – 4.26). For generations X and Y, work experience was a more important career resource than for generation Z (mean X – 4.01 vs. Y – 3.97 vs. Z – 3.71). A similar relationship occurred with regard to hard skills (mean X – 4.19 vs. Y – 4.25 vs. Z – 4.03) and the importance of education level as a career resource (mean X – 4.01 vs. Y – 3.83 vs. Z – 3.53). Among the significant generationally differentiating aspects of the women surveyed, we can point to actions in the organization that hindered the communication process (e.g., interrupting speech, criticizing, using verbal and written threats) and actions that negatively affected social relationships (e.g., physically and socially isolating, disrespecting and ignoring, avoiding contact and conversation). Both the former (mean X – 2.29 vs. Y – 1.94 vs. Z – 1.9) and the latter (mean X – 2.23 vs. Y – 1.91 vs. Z – 1.83) were experienced least frequently by Generation Z women, and most frequently by Generation X women.

Generally, it can be said that Generation Z seems to be more inclined to work in the service sector and earn lower wages than generations X and Y. Although Generation X was more likely to earn in the range of 7,500-9,000 PLN per month, most were still in the 4,500-6,000 PLN range. This suggests that despite high salaries in some cases, some Generation X women may be filling lower-level positions. Generation Y women show the greatest commitment to career advancement and a more positive attitude toward work experience. Generation Y appears to be the most willing to invest in professional development and competency acquisition, which may suggest that they have strong aspirations and ambitions for their careers. Generation Z was more likely to work in a variety of industries, suggesting greater flexibility and openness to cultural diversity in the workplace compared to generations X and Y, which were more likely to focus on traditional sectors such as public administration and education. There are clear differences between the generations in attitudes toward forms of professional development and experiencing negative behavior in the workplace. Although

Generation X women experience more negative behavior in the workplace, there is a need to understand why this is the case and what factors influence these intergenerational differences. Perhaps this is because younger generations are increasingly aware of the importance of equality and it is an important aspect for them when choosing a workplace.

## 12.5. Summary and Final Conclusions

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**The main goal of this chapter** was to identify and juxtapose generational perspectives and practices in women's career development, and to interpret the identified phenomena from the perspective of the human-centric management paradigm. Additionally, based on these findings the chapter aimed at formulating practical recommendations for organizations that want to be perceived as human-centric organizations. Regarding these generational perspectives and practices, it can be considered that the goal in this respect has been achieved. As for their interpretation and guidelines for organizational practice, they will be provided here.

The research results show that women from Generation X have demonstrated a unique blend of resilience and adaptability, born out of navigating early career instability and significant economic changes. They value stability and security highly, often seeking job environments that offer clear pathways for professional growth. This generation's approach to career development has been marked by a strong work ethic and a pragmatic approach to career challenges, making them valuable mentors and leaders in the workplace. From a human-centric management perspective, the resilience and adaptability exhibited by Generation X can be viewed as critical assets that enhance organizational stability and continuity (*c.f.* Pekerti and Arli, 2017). Their preference for stable, secure job environments aligns with a human-centric approach that prioritizes the well-being and long-term career satisfaction of employees. Moreover, their experiences and developed competencies position them uniquely to mentor younger generations, fostering a culture of learning and mutual respect within the organization. Organizations aiming to embody the principles of a human-centric organization should actively create roles that leverage the strengths of Generation X, such as their resilience, leadership, and mentoring capabilities (*c.f.* Weerathne et al., 2023). Developing targeted mentorship and leadership programs where Generation X employees can pass on their knowledge and experiences can help cultivate a supportive and collaborative work environment (*c.f.* Chaudhuri and Ghosh, 2012). This is particularly important as empirical research demonstrates that organizational talent management significantly impacts company performance results (Stor, 2023c). Implementing policies that ensure job security and career growth opportunities can also reinforce their loyalty and satisfaction, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance and stability.

In contrast, Generation Y, or Millennials, exhibit a distinct set of values that emphasize flexibility, work-life balance, and a desire for meaningful work. Their careers are closely intertwined with advancements in technology and a shift towards more dynamic, project-based work environments. Millennials are keen on workplaces that not only provide personal

and professional development opportunities but also align with their strong values on social responsibility and equality. This generational cohort has reshaped how organizations think about engagement, with a clear preference for diversity and innovation. From a human-centric management perspective, the values and career aspirations of Millennials underscore the importance of flexibility and adaptability in organizational structures (*c.f.* Sessoms-Penny et al., 2023). Their emphasis on meaningful work and life balance necessitates a shift in traditional management styles to accommodate more fluid work arrangements, such as remote working, flexible hours, and project-based tasks (*c.f.* Capnary et al., 2018). Emphasizing these aspects can help organizations attract and retain Millennial talent, who are likely to thrive in environments that respect and support their need for a balanced life. It's crucial to note that empirical studies confirm that effective staffing—specifically attracting, recruiting, and selecting employees—markedly influences company performance results (Stor, 2024a). Furthermore, to become truly human-centric, organizations should focus on creating a workplace that reflects the values important to Millennials. This includes implementing robust diversity and inclusion programs that not only talk about equality but also put it into action. Providing continuous learning and development opportunities that align with their desire for personal and professional growth is also critical. By doing so, companies can harness the innovative potential of Millennials, leveraging their comfort with technology to drive change and modernization in workplace practices. Additionally, adopting transparent communication (*c.f.* Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010) and feedback mechanisms can further enhance engagement among this cohort. It's worth noting here that shaping employee work engagement and job satisfaction, as scientific studies demonstrate, has a significant impact on company performance results (Stor, 2024b). Anyway, from the perspective of the Millennial cohort, this is also important as it ensures that their voices are heard and valued in shaping the organization's future.

Generation Z women, the most recent to enter the workforce, bring with them a digital-first approach and are significantly influenced by the technological landscape they grew up in. They value immediate feedback, flexibility, and opportunities for rapid professional growth. Their career expectations include a strong emphasis on organizational culture and ethics, aligning their work with their personal values. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z is more likely to pursue careers that allow for a seamless blend of personal and professional interests, challenging organizations to adapt to their high digital and ethical standards (*c.f.* Chang and Chang, 2023). From a human-centric management perspective, Generation Z's digital-first approach and high ethical standards call for a profound transformation in how organizations design work environments and define work ethics. This generation's preference for immediate feedback and flexibility can be leveraged to create more agile and responsive work processes, integrating technology in ways that enhance efficiency and satisfaction (*c.f.* Jiang et al., 2024). Emphasizing ethics and culture in organizational practices not only aligns with Generation Z's expectations but also fosters a sense of purpose and commitment among these younger employees. To effectively embrace a human-centric approach with Generation Z, organizations should invest in creating a digitally enriched workplace that allows

seamless integration of technology in daily work. This includes offering state-of-the-art tools for collaboration and communication and developing policies that support flexible work arrangements like telecommuting and flexible scheduling (*c.f.* Niemczynowicz et al., 2023). Furthermore, instituting robust ethical practices and promoting a transparent and inclusive culture will resonate deeply with Generation Z, encouraging them to engage fully and remain loyal to the organization. Encouraging a culture where feedback is frequent and constructive can also help in continuously aligning organizational goals with the personal and professional aspirations of Generation Z employees, ensuring mutual growth and development. This means that employee performance systems must be constructed in a more flexible manner, not necessarily relying on long periods of providing feedback where the annual review is the primary filter. This has particular significance from a company perspective as well, since empirical research proves that employee performance appraisal significantly impacts organizational results (Stor, 2023b).

Together, these generational insights reveal a shifting landscape in women's career development, from the structured, stability-focused approach of Generation X to the flexibility and purpose-driven careers of Millennials and Generation Z. Organizations aiming to adopt a human-centric management approach must consider these diverse generational needs and preferences to effectively engage and retain talented women across all age groups. This adaptive strategy is crucial not only for fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace but also for aligning organizational practices with the evolving expectations of the workforce. By integrating these insights into their human-centric frameworks, organizations can ensure that they are not only responsive to the changing dynamics of the workplace but are also leaders in promoting a culture that values and nurtures diversity in career aspirations and personal values across different generations.

However, the research conducted is not free of limitations. First of all, it should be pointed out that the results obtained can only serve to demonstrate differences in the studied group and there is no basis for generalizing them. Also, the studied aspects do not exhaust the subject of generational variation in careers, and represent only a certain section of it, which can be treated as an introduction to the full research. This limitation, however, indicates a possible direction for future research, which can be focused on a deeper understanding of the professional characteristics of each generation and the study of generational differences across the country.

Despite these limitations, the results obtained are immensely valuable as they provide a nuanced glimpse into the distinct career development trajectories and preferences of different generations of women. This initial exploration not only highlights the unique challenges and needs of each generation but also serves as a crucial stepping stone for future, more comprehensive studies. By focusing on specific generational insights within the human-centric management framework, organizations can begin to tailor their strategies to better support and engage a multi-generational workforce. This targeted approach is vital for developing a workplace culture that not only respects diversity but actively leverages it to foster innovation and inclusivity, ensuring that all employees, regardless of their generational affiliation, feel valued and understood.

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## The Comprehensive Overview of the Monograph's Key Findings

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**The primary focus of this monograph** was to place humans at the center of organizational management, reflecting a significant paradigm shift in contemporary organizational practices. **The goal of this monograph was** to explore and analyze this paradigm shift towards human-centric management, offering insights into how organizations can balance the increasing demands for efficiency and innovation with the need to support and understand their employees as integral and unique components of a dynamic organizational ecosystem. This included examining the evolving perspectives of employees as resources or capital, the impact of digitization and automation, the importance of well-being, mental health, diversity, inclusion, and the role of sustainable development and social responsibility in modern organizations.

The insights and findings presented in this monograph collectively affirm that this goal has been achieved. Through theoretical discussions and empirical research across various topics, this work provided a comprehensive understanding of the human-centric approach in organizational management.

The exploration revealed that organizations have increasingly recognized the importance of viewing employees not merely as resources or capital but as integral human beings with unique skills, aspirations, and needs. This paradigm shift was evidenced by the adoption of individualized and diverse approaches to people management, moving from transactional to relational models. Specific topics covered in the monograph include the critical role of employee well-being and mental health, the unique management needs of different generations, and the impact of technological advancements on HR practices. The emphasis on dialogue, trust, respect, responsibility, and cooperation has become central to modern HRM practices, highlighting the necessity of creating supportive environments that foster creativity, innovation, and employee engagement. Additionally, the discussion on diversity and inclusion, and the strategic importance of sustainable development and social responsibility, underscored the multifaceted approach required to effectively manage and support a diverse workforce.

The research also highlighted the significant impact of digitization and automation on the nature of work and the required competencies from employees. With the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0, there has been a growing emphasis on human-centric approaches, focusing on collaboration between humans and machines. This shift aims to leverage advanced technologies to enhance human creativity and well-being within the workplace. For instance, AI-enhanced recruitment and selection processes and E-HRM solutions were explored as methods to support these new management practices. Additionally, the growing popularity of remote and hybrid work models has underscored the need for flexibility and adaptability in management practices, emphasizing the importance of mental health support and employee development programs tailored to these new working conditions.

The monograph's findings emphasized the increasing importance of well-being and mental health in organizational effectiveness. As awareness of these issues has grown, organizations have begun to prioritize creating supportive environments that foster employee engagement,



satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty. This approach has been shown to translate into better work quality, higher productivity, and greater organizational innovation. For example, initiatives such as mental health days, employee assistance programs, and wellness workshops have been implemented to address these needs. Additionally, providing flexible work arrangements and ensuring a healthy work-life balance have proven critical in supporting employee well-being.

Furthermore, the research underscored the crucial roles of diversity and inclusion, sustainable development, and social responsibility in attracting and retaining talent. These factors have become key components of modern HRM strategies, ensuring that organizations remain competitive and socially responsible. Efforts to create inclusive workplaces that value diverse perspectives, such as diversity training programs and inclusive hiring practices, have been highlighted as essential. Moreover, commitment to sustainable development through eco-friendly initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs has been shown to enhance the organization's reputation and appeal to socially conscious employees.

In line with the title of this monograph, the discussions also centered around the visions, realities, and challenges of implementing a human-centric approach in contemporary organizations. The visions explored in this monograph highlighted an ideal organizational environment where employees are valued as integral human beings with unique contributions. This vision encompasses workplaces that foster creativity, innovation, and well-being, leveraging advanced technologies and supportive management practices to enhance both employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

These visions also include a strong emphasis on employee retention, loyalty, and performance, recognizing that a committed and motivated workforce drives organizational success. Additionally, the vision entails the integration of comprehensive mental health and wellness programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and sustainable development strategies as critical components. The ideal human-centric organization adapts to the evolving needs of its workforce, ensuring that remote and hybrid work models are effectively managed to maintain productivity and engagement. Innovative HRM practices, such as AI-enhanced recruitment and selection processes, are envisioned to support these goals, along with personalized employee development plans that cater to individual career aspirations and foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The realities, however, often presents a more complex picture. While many organizations have made strides towards adopting human-centric practices, the monograph revealed that the transition is often gradual and fraught with obstacles. Real-world examples from various chapters illustrated that despite the recognition of the benefits of human-centric management, actual implementation can be inconsistent. Challenges such as integrating new technologies, aligning diverse teams, and maintaining a supportive culture amidst economic pressures were frequently cited. Organizations often struggle with balancing the immediate need for efficiency with the longer-term investments required for developing comprehensive well-being programs. Moreover, maintaining employee engagement and loyalty can be challenging in environments where remote and hybrid work models are becoming the norm. Despite the intent to support diversity and inclusion, many companies face difficulties in achieving genuine inclusivity, often due to entrenched cultural biases and inadequate training. Furthermore, the empirical evidence highlighted discrepancies between organizational intentions and employee perceptions, indicating a gap that

needs to be addressed to realize the full potential of these approaches. Issues such as inconsistent application of HRM policies, lack of continuous support for professional development, and the underutilization of advanced HRM technologies also emerged as significant barriers.

The challenges of implementing a human-centric approach are multifaceted. One significant challenge is the integration of advanced technologies like AI and E-HRM solutions in a way that genuinely supports human-centric goals without compromising the human element. For instance, the adoption of AI in recruitment and selection processes must be carefully managed to avoid depersonalization and to ensure ethical standards are upheld. Leveraging AI to enhance human capabilities while preserving the personal touch crucial for understanding a candidate's fit within the organizational culture is a delicate balance. Additionally, the shift towards remote and hybrid work models has introduced complexities in maintaining employee engagement and cohesion. Organizations must develop strategies to support mental health and well-being remotely, such as through virtual wellness programs and regular check-ins. Ensuring that employees feel connected and valued, even when not physically present, is a significant hurdle. The discussions in the monograph also underscored the ongoing need for robust mental health and well-being programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and sustainable development practices, all of which require continuous commitment and adaptation. Creating an inclusive workplace that genuinely values diverse perspectives involves overcoming deep-seated biases and implementing comprehensive diversity training programs. Moreover, sustainable development initiatives must be integrated into the core business strategy to be effective, requiring significant shifts in organizational culture and operations. Furthermore, the challenge of aligning HRM practices with the specific needs of different generational cohorts, such as Generation Z, highlights the necessity for adaptable and personalized HRM strategies. This includes addressing their preferences for flexible work environments, rapid feedback, and meaningful work that aligns with their values. Navigating these generational expectations while ensuring consistency in HRM policies across the board is critical.

In conclusion, the monograph successfully explored and analyzed the paradigm shift in organizational management towards placing humans at the center. The comprehensive examination of theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and practical applications highlighted the benefits and challenges of implementing a human-centric approach. From a social perspective, human-centric management fosters a more inclusive and supportive workplace, improving employee well-being and satisfaction. From a managerial perspective, it enhances organizational culture and employee engagement, leading to higher productivity and innovation. Economically, it reduces turnover costs and improves overall organizational performance. The findings demonstrated that this approach is essential for fostering environments where employees feel valued, supported, and integral to the organizational mission, ultimately leading to sustainable organizational success. This monograph provided a thorough examination of the visions, realities, and challenges of human-centric management, offering a nuanced understanding that while the vision of a fully human-centric organization is compelling, the path to achieving it is complex and requires sustained effort and strategic alignment across all organizational levels.

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