

WORK VALUES OF Y AND Z GENERATIONS AND THEIR ADAPTATION IN NEW WORKPLACES IN THE SERVICES SECTOR IN LATVIA

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ABSTRACT

The population of the world is divided into generations by age, global events experienced during their life, tendencies in the epoch, and scientific achievements. Influenced by these factors, individuals representing a certain generation develop common understanding of the world, traditions, experiences and culture, which facilitates development of similar values and skills. Upon hiring a new employee, the aim of every company is to have as short an on-boarding period as possible and to start using their knowledge and skills within the shortest times possible. To make this essential part of the working process bilaterally valuable, adaptation of the employee needs to take place within the company, and it should also include finding out the values of the new employee. The young people of today represent the future workforce. The research topic is of significance because a new and scantily researched generation, called the Z generation, is currently entering the Latvian labour market. The purpose of the research study is to find out the work values and aspects of adaptation of the Z generation as well as identify the differences between the work values and aspects of adaptation of the Y generation and those of the Z generation. The key research question are the following: Are there differences in the evaluation of the factors of adaptation between the Y and Z generations, are there differences in the work value indicators between the Y and Z generations, are there statistically significant differences within the demographic data groups in the work value and adaptation in a new workplace indicators? The methods used in the research study: A survey regarding work values, a value orientation test, and a survey developed by the authors regarding factors of adaptation. The results of the study revealed that the employees of the Z generation find it important to be proud of their place of work and be able to recommend it as a good place of employment to their friends. Furthermore, the respondents representing the Y generation find the relationships with the colleagues and the direct supervisor important. The most substantial difference between the Y and Z generations can be seen on the Adaptation scale, and this suggests that the factors of adaptation have more influence on the Y generation than on employees representing the Z generation. Each generation has their own attitude towards certain work values. For individuals representing the Y generation, the relationships with the superiors are of a higher value than for the employees representing the Z generation. Regardless of the fact that individuals representing generations Y and Z are young people, there are difference in the orientation of the work values between the generations. Regarding the factors of

adaptation in a new workplace, the authors found out that adaptation in a new place of work was important for a new employee regardless of their age.

Keywords: Work Values, Y and Z Generations, Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

A generation is more often defined as an identifiable group with a similar year of birth, age, location and the significant events in life at critical points in their development [1]. A generation is characterised by belonging to certain time [2]. The concept of generation allows to consider the historical dimension of time [3]. Those born in the 80-ies and later are called the Y generation or the millennials [1]. It is the first generation of the new millennium whose life is significantly distinguished from the previous ones by the use of new information and communication technologies [4]. Technologies have had an immense influence on this generation [5]. The contemporary youth rely on their own experience and evaluation of it, shape their lives as an ongoing project, free from previously placed road signs [6]. The Z generation, in its turn, is called the online generation, which has been growing up and is online 24/7. This where the opinion that people of this generation tweet more than they meet their friends in person comes from. Technologies are the labelling of this generation [7]. Considering that the people of the Z generation are currently 18 - 20 years old and younger, the most important events which influence the development of the generation are still ongoing [5].

Adaptation means inclusion of a person into a new thematic and social life. When a person goes to work, they are included in the system of internal work relationships, taking several positions at the same time. The employee sets requirements to the organisation regarding the working conditions, payment, cooperation, career opportunities, social environment [8]. The essence of adaptation is the mutual adaptations of the individual and the environment, both material and social. Before they can work efficiently in accordance with the new requirements, they need some time to accommodate to the new place or the new organisation[9]. The professional aspect of adaptation is acquisition of abilities and skills, certain personal qualities which are necessary for a new place of work[10].

Milton Rokeach defined values as enduring conviction that certain behaviour or the result attained through certain action is personally or socially welcome [11]. One of the first authors who started researching work values in particular was Donald Super. He explained that “work values show the individual's attempt to fulfil their psychological or physical needs” [12]. Work values develop in interaction with other people [13]. If the particular work values of the individual are not satisfied at work, the employee will not feel satisfied with their work, and it will influence the results of work [14],[15].

The services sector can be considered as one of the fastest-growing sectors in Latvia in the last few years which plays a more and more significant role in the economic development of Latvia and facilitates improvement of welfare. The services sector has the largest number of employees. The purpose of the research study is to find out the work values and aspects of adaptation of the Z generation as well as identify the differences between the work values and aspects of adaptation of the Y generation and those of the Z generation.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

The authors used 3 methods for the collection of the data: M. Rokeach's value orientation research method which is based on a terminal and instrumental values. A survey developed by the authors regarding adaptation at a new place of work, where the statements were divided into 5 scales: Adaptation; Job responsibilities; Relationship with colleagues and immediate superior; Working conditions and working environment; Place of work. The third method was Super's Work Values Inventory. The Work Values Inventory contains the total of 45 statements covering 15 values which people believe to be essential in their work, i.e., altruism, aesthetic values, prestige, economic advantages, professional stability or security, working atmosphere, relationship with superiors, relationship with colleagues, lifestyle, creativity, management of other people, professional achievements, independence, diversity and intellectual stimulation. The total number of respondents in the research study was 364, including 182 respondents representing the Y generation and 182 respondents representing the Z generation. The respondents were employed at the time of completing the survey. The key research questions are the following: Are there differences in the evaluation of the factors of adaptation between the Y and Z generations, are there differences in the work value indicators between the Y and Z generations, are there statistically significant differences within the demographic data groups in the work value and adaptation in a new workplace indicators?

DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluation of the results of the survey designed by the authors shows that the availability of adaptation at a new place of work is an essential factor for the employees of the Y and Z generations. The scale working conditions can be highlighted in the overall analysis of the results. It is important for a new employee that the premises at the place of work have all amenities and that they are satisfied with the availability of the technology, tools and materials necessary for work. The employees of the Z generation have a higher score on the place of work scale which includes statements regarding the image of the employer, the reputation of the company etc. Furthermore, the respondents representing the Y generation find the relationships with the colleagues and the direct supervisor important. The employees of the Z generation find it important to be proud of their place of work and be able to recommend it as a good place of employment to their friends. It is essential to have a sense of responsibility for the overall performance of the company. The employees of the Y generation, in their turn, find it easier to adapt themselves in a new team, and they can describe their

relationship with the colleagues as good. The employees of the Y generation find it more important to be aware of their performance and receive support from their direct superior. The summarised data table (see Table 1) shows that there are statistically significant differences between the scales adaptation, job responsibilities and relationship with direct superior. The representatives of the Y generation find it more important to feel welcomed at the new place of work, and it is important for them that the initial impression about the company corresponds to the actual situation. The respondents representing the Y and Z generations noted that it was essential for them to get to know their job responsibilities during the first week of employment. The employees of the Z generation find it important to have their performance evaluated after having worked for one month, but the employees of the Y generation need it evaluated after two months of work.

Table 1. *The results of the study of the differences in the adaptation survey designed by the authors*

	Adaptation	Job responsibilities	Relationship with colleagues and immediate superior	Working conditions and working environment	About place of work
Mann-Whitney U	10924.500	13118.000	14375.000	16354.500	16231.500
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.028	.833	.740
Z generation	2.8591	2.8487	3.1222	3.3407	3.2013
Y generation	3.1194	3.0391	3.3508	3.4890	3.1826

The analysis of the results of Super's Work Values Inventory shows that the employees of the Z generation give the highest priority to the working atmosphere aggregate of values. This means that the employees of the Z generation find a pleasant environment as one of the most essential work values. The next work value the employees of the Z generation have high ratings for is the relationship with the colleagues. The employees of the Z generation find it important to know they are team members. The above shows the social activity and communicability of the Z generation. It should be noted that the Z generation has the lowest ratings for the work value of managing people, power over others. The authors think that the reason for such a result might be that the Z generation still does not have enough job experience to organise and manage the work of others.

Table 2. *The results of the study of the differences in Super's Work Values Inventory*

	Lifestyle	Professional stability	Relationship with colleagues	Aesthetic values	Prestige
Mann-Whitney U	12560.500	14965.000	12095.000	11863.500	12571.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.103	.000	.000	.000
Z generation	3.0128	3.3174	3.2534	2.9242	2.9216
Y generation	3.4125	3.2805	3.4748	2.6096	3.0912

There are statistically significant differences on the scales: lifestyle, relationship with colleagues, aesthetic values and prestige. The employees of the Z generation find it important to use their creativity in work, to have the beautiful as their contribution to the world, and to make an attractive product. There is a high rating for the work value lifestyle. The authors think that, because of their age, the employees of the Y generation focus on creating their family and therefore pay more attention to their lifestyle and spending time outside work. The data analysis shows that the respondents have high ratings on the scale professional stability, which is being certain about having a job forever. The lowest rating is on the scale aesthetic values which is the possibility to use creativity at work, contribute the beautiful to the world. Working atmosphere is given as the most significant work value by the representatives of the Z generation, and this suggests that young people find it important to have a pleasant environment. Another important aspect is that the employees of the Z generation find it essential to have an ergonomic and ecologic place of work. The most significant difference is on the scale lifestyle. The employees of the Y generation pay more attention to their lifestyle as “work – life balance”. Compared to the respondents representing the Y generation, the representatives of the Z generation find the aesthetic values, i.e., the visual appeal of the content of work, more significant.

The analysis of the results of the Rokeach Test shows that, compared to the Y generation, the Z generation has a more significant difference on aim to achieve public recognition, i.e., recognition and respect from the surrounding team members. The aim of the Y generation, in its turn, is materially secure life, i.e., life without material difficulties. The representative of the Y generation have the top priority for cognition, which suggests that the employees of the Y generation strive for an opportunity to widen their education, mental outlook. The above is confirmed by the fact that interesting work comes second. The representatives of the Z generation have freedom in the first place, i.e., the employees of the Z

generation strive for autonomy and independence in their judgements and action. Furthermore, materially secure life comes second in the list of goals of the individuals representing the Z generation. The representatives of the Y generation have the lowest rating for the value high standards for themselves and life. For the representatives of the Z generation, in their turn, willpower is in the first place, i.e., the skill of achieving what they wish, not surrendering to hardships. Overall, the generations have differences between the work values.

Table 3. Rokeach Value Orientation Test sample – The goals people strive for

	Interesting work	Cognition	Happy family life	Materially secure life	Public recognition
Mann-Whitney U	10144.000	11679.000	12652.500	11058.000	12207.500
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Z generation	7.8352	8.0165	6.3242	9.3681	10.4725
Y generation	10.5549	10.7582	4.9286	5.8956	12.7697

The representatives of the Z generation have higher ratings for the statement regarding self-control and not putting up with own imperfections. The individuals representing the Y generation are the ones who put up with own imperfections more easily and forgive imperfections of others more easily, and this allows to state that the employees of the Y generation are less interested in correcting any errors in their work. Considering that Rokeach views the general listing of values which provides more evidence for the personal qualities of a person, it should be considered as an additional tool in the study to better understand the differences between the generations.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the fact that individuals representing generations Y and Z are young people, there are difference in the orientation of the work values between the generations. Regarding the factors of adaptation in a new workplace, the authors found out that adaptation in a new place of work was important for a new employee regardless of their age. The personnel department should take care that the new employee understands their role in the company, their job responsibilities and the structure of the company management as well as accepts the values, models of behaviour and traditions of the organisation. The employees of the Z generation find it important to be proud of their place of work. It is essential to have a sense of responsibility for the overall performance of the company. The respondents representing the Y

generation find the relationship with the colleagues import. It is important for the employees of the Y generation to know that they do good work, i.e., the sense of satisfaction is essential for them, and the employees of the Y generation strive for results of work to a higher extent. The employees of the Y generation pay more attention to their lifestyle. The representatives of the Y generation strive for a happy family life more than the Z generation. The employees of the Y generation find it important to know that there are various things to do at work instead of doing the same things over and over again each day as well as to know that the employee of the Y generation can expect changes at work in some time, such as changes in the content of work, the salary or work schedule. The employee of the Z generation who starts a job find it important to have a pleasant working environment. The employer should find an opportunity for having the first day of work of the new employee as an informative day during which the new employee would receive valuable information about the company, the internal procedures, the informal rules, the traditions within the team, and also make sure that the information provided to the employee is perceivable and understandable. Particularly when the new employee is a representative of the Y generation. Furthermore, it is important to familiarise the new employee with the colleagues and the direct superior on the first day of employment. In case the direct superior does not participate in the job interview, the superior should have a brief job interview with the new employee on the first day of employment. Since cognition is a priority for the representatives of the Y generation, the employer may use the rating for drawing up an incentive programme for the employees to offer the new employee training, career development courses as well as a system of bonuses (offering the employee to attend cultural events or seminars for good performance). The priority for the Z generation is freedom, so the employer should allow the employees of the Z generation to have more liberty in making decisions. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the employees of the Z generation strive for freedom with regard to their hours of work, so the employer may use this to offer the employees of the Z generation as flexible working hours as possible. The employer may use the rating in such a way that, when motivating the employee of the Y generation to stay at the place of work during the adaptation period, they should emphasise what further perspectives and positive changes in the material sense the new employee may expect and inform them what system of bonuses the company has. A representative of the Z generation may be given opportunities for improving their education, widening their mental outlook, raising the overall level of their culture and intellectual development, and having an interesting job. The employer having a new employee of the Y or Z should consider the work value factors which characterise each generation and influence the employees, as well as the adaptation factors which should be taken into account as factors influencing the work of the employee.

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