



Training and Preparing Gen Z for Labor Market

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Abstract

This paper aims to present an approach, from many others, regarding the generational aspect of today's activities.

Better said, the training in higher education, as a first workplace simulation and, then, background for the workplaces in different economic and social activities is essential in this enterprise.

We are focused on Gen Z, the generation that comes strongly from behind and will influence our lives and activities (they already done it). It is a Generation digitally native, with abilities and skills from early days, aspect that give it a superiority in understanding and using efficiently the new digital technologies.

Using information from companies operating with HR problem, like KPMG, Deloitte, doubled with my own experience, based on the discussions with students and graduates from Gen Z, we tried as it was possible, to capture features and possibilities of adaptation and integration of Gen Z in study and work communities.

The findings show that the features have to be known and, punctually on each and every community, management tactics to be used.

Keywords: Generations, Gen Z, higher education, corporations, added value co creation.

GEN Z FACING LABOR MARKET THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

We labeled this title for the chapter, taking into account also the training and the learning stage in higher education.

Zers represent young people born between 1997-2010/2012 and a group that has held the media spotlight for the past three years (this generation will represent 30 %, by 2020, from the global workforce entered the labor market.

This Generation is different or not from the other ones? We see below the main characteristics of each and every Generation after the WWII (Walden University):

- a. *Gen Z* 1996/1997-2010/2012 is the newest generation in the labor market and that one which interests us. These workers are open to feedback and frequently interact with their supervisors or bosses. It is digitally natives, permanent in step with the IT results and may become, from this source cited, *the best-educated generation yet* (our emphasis, because it is an opposite opinion regarding Gen Z and education).
- b. Millennials, born between 1981-1996, called even Gen X, is the largest generation not only in US, but also in Europe and other regions. This is a generation who, 80 % of the cases, sustains that is open to changes, embraces training and is involved in meaningful works.
- c. Generation X, born between 1965-1980 have entrepreneurial tendencies and prefer, in more often

occasions to work independently than the other colleagues. Also, they like to work in entities which offer growth opportunities in the career.

- d. Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964 are dedicated to work, they have a conservative education, maybe, called even “workaholics” and, in some interactions with the younger colleagues, an often expression disliked by the others being “in my days, it was harder to work, not like today”. They are loyal, optimistic and may question authority.

We must precise that this study is focused, mainly, on the U S labor market, but it is important to see that it is a wide range of opinions regarding this issue.

A characteristic of Gen Z, expressed in some opinions (see QuadC, 2023) is that of social responsibility and focus on culture and environment inclusive and diverse, but also the intention to acquire the proper skills and handy.

Cui prodest /who benefits from knowing these traits/ characteristics? First of all, the persons working directly with them: teachers in the activity of learning and practicing. Then, the HR managers, because they are the responsables for the quality of manpower hired within a firm/corporation/ organization and think that the generational diversity is good for the entity. And, thirdly, the CEOs, different other managers, even entrepreneurs, who have to arrange these persons, as possible, into right positions, taking into account

their training/graduated studies (if any), knowledge, skills and abilities in the respective domain.

For the purpose of this paper and, for the most part it is so, Gen Z has reluctance regarding the necessity of career development through higher education. Why? Because, a first reason exposed by specialists and having my support, is that one of preparing this people for *community* (of course students, MAs, firms/corporations/organizations) and then specified activities they, Zers, are going to do in businesses (Feger, 2023).

However, we must emphasize that Gen Z is the generation learned and prepared for life alone, during lockdown. This means more anxiety and intention to do works alone, only by technical devices (Quad C, 2023).

Career preparation, even for a higher wage, must be prioritized, taking into account the desired domain, the possibilities to get skills and abilities, even for quick changes of jobs (by quiet quitting, by resignation and so on).

These people, with asound theoretical and practice background from the higher education, will be capable to be prepared to innovate, to add value, to improve programs and services, BUT altogether with the other employees/workers.

As an average situation to be considered, even they are intend to get more money or less, to be satisfied for the job they're hiredto, Gen Z puts on the first place of the training and career the values and *human connections* within organizations (see Chirciu, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

A systematic review has been conducted of the literature based on these aspects of modern life, focusing on the management area, finance-accounting and, even, marketing. Also, we considered my own experience, working with the students and with entrepreneurs/managers from diverse fields.

Outside the domains already mentioned, Education is considered also, because learning to use new technics and instruments start from the pre-university education, developing and improving in higher education. And Health care isimportant, both sectors supporting the Human Capital and, by consequence, the value added in each and every entity/organization.

From these direct and indirect sources, including the main institutions in this field, like Deloitte, KMPG,, we tried to separate/ to highlight the defining aspects of digitalization, the benefit of human activity, especially in the professional field.

A fact we want to highlight is that one of a wide range of opinions about Gen Z, its role, its features and specific actions in current days.

This research, doubled by our own experience, is beneficial in order to highlight the lines of actions for an efficient running of a business, putting at work all the resources of the entity, especially the human resources, represented by representatives from more Generations.

GEN Z OR ZERS IN TRAINING AND WORKING

We want to present an outstanding example of the inderdependence between higher education and the labor market. The managers, entrepreneurs try to avoid to hire recent college graduates, chosing older persons, but professionals (Maer, 2024).

Most of the graduates of Gen Z has no adequate capacity to adapt to corporative life and activity.

And, another argument is that Deloitte, PWC, KPMG are amongst big firms that said Gen Z employees who graduated during the pandemic, for example, are struggling to practice basic communication skills and office etiquette. In fact, the basic requirements for a skilled and prepared person in the field.

At the workplace, from Zers is the interest to communicate especially with the senior colleagues, to be open mind with the managers/bosses, in order to avoid ipocrit words regarding how hard is to work, or how hard, or how many days, in older times, someone had to work.

But, as we already said and it is necessary to strenghten the idea, we see opposite opinions from the above-mentioned one. For example, according to a Harris Poll for Fortune, the vast majority of Gen Z says they have no idea what to talk about with their co-workers (Gherghiță, 2024). In some cases, they become annoying.

We already saw in the first chapter that Gen Z has a little trust in what higher education can give, accordingly to its goals and how it perceives the environment in which to learn and work.

We agree that this generation is digitally native, has abilities and skills how to work with new technologies, mainly how find solutions using the new technologies, including AI.

Independent research has shown that media multitasking—that is, using digital devices during physical, classroom lessons—affects students' attention and memory. As a result, grade point averages, test performance, reading comprehension, and note-taking ability decline. In addition, excessive use of technology also has an impact on children's overall health.

What to do? We think that, both in higher educatuion and workplace, the integration of the Gen Z has to be in double ways: from one part, the workers who must follow the rules, the decisions and to act relying on their credo, knowledge, abilities and even handy and, on the other part, the managers, the CEO, the entrepreneur, who are mandatory to watch step by step the actions of the employees, to homogenize goals, thus, in the final the tasks of the entity to be accomplished.

Therefore, Gen Z expect from HigherEd and research institutions to provide tailored learning and practice experiences, but to align or fold on its goals, interests. Even, the existence of new courses, new disciplines at master's level, taking into account propositions, suggestions for courses with impact in life and work.

And an aspect that cannot be neglected is that Gen Z is free to choose their desired studies (meaning Higher education) following their own instincts and passions.

Recent answers given by the Gen Z members reveal the fact that, if it's possible to finish their studies in 2 (two) years. They are eager to be on the labor market, actively and efficient from their job approach.

A mandatory pre-action is that managers to know the generational structure of the workers, in order to act efficiently. We think this seems to be alike the old system of an alarm clock, in which nails were inserted into the candles and fell at the set intervals, calculated a priori, on a metal plate, producing noise.

A very good example, in practice this time, is *IKEA case*, in which, especially online activity, the customers can start designing their own new furniture, in interaction with specialists on websites' functioning. Who else than the Gen Z to be more appropriate to do this activity, of re-branding IKEA products.

In fact, it is also an example of co-creation within an organization, one specific aspect of Gen Z activity. This is the role of Gen Z: with, or without outstanding salary, members of this generation are needed to use their native or gotten skills in practice to improve the programs and activities towards getting profit and a well-functioning of the respective entity.

CONCLUSIONS

We are dealing with a quite wide range of opinions regarding what is and, much more, what Gen Z is going to do in our days.

Gen Z seems to be at day with the IT and other modern technologies, also seems to be flexible and social oriented, but it is needed an extra effort (from HigherEd, for example)

to tailor the behavior, in order for a smooth integration within the corporative culture and environment.

We support the idea that it is beneficial for Gen Z and for interested in this problem, to shift the approach from Student Success to Student Experience. The latter is important for managers or for recruitment departments or institutions.

BUT, don't ignore the fact that Gen Z can leave a job without regrets, if they feel that the work environment is not favorable, if there are no career prospects.

Furthermore, as you can see, higher education will need to shift the needs and expectations of this very unique generation. This will require, not only a deep understanding of what makes this generation different, but also programs and services that respect and support these key differences within the organizational culture and environment.

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