

## Opportunities and Challenges of Implementing Communication Management in Organizations Managed by Gen-Z

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### Abstract

Generational shifts in the workplace present new dynamics in organizational management, particularly in the communication aspect. This article discusses the implementation of communication management, along with the opportunities and challenges in organizations managed by Generation Z (Gen-Z). With Gen-Z's inherent affinity for digital technology, communication tends to be fast, flexible, and multi-channel. This opens up opportunities for efficient internal communication, increased collaboration, and innovation in conveying organizational messages. However, on the other hand, challenges arise, such as a low preference for formal communication, a generational gap with more senior team members, and the risk of miscommunication due to excessive use of digital media. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review. The analysis shows that successful communication management in this context is heavily influenced by cross-generational adaptability, digital literacy, and the development of an inclusive communication culture. These findings are expected to serve as a reference in designing more effective and sustainable organizational communication strategies in the era of new-generation leadership.

Keywords: Communication Management, Gen-Z, Organization, Challenges, Opportunities.

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### 1. Introduction

Generation Z (Gen Z) is the term for those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. They entered the workforce with a different style than previous generations. They grew up in the digital era, accustomed to fast communication, easy access to information, and expectations of flexibility and honesty in the workplace [27]. These changes forced organizations to adapt their communication methods, especially for companies where many managers are members of Gen Z. Implementing good communication management is crucial for organizations to capitalize on Gen Z's strengths and address emerging challenges.

In today's era, Gen Z is increasingly becoming part of the workforce, even becoming leaders or managers of companies [36]. Companies managed by Gen Z have a high level of innovation, especially in adopting the latest technology. However, they also face certain challenges in communication management. Recognizing these issues is crucial for designing communication strategies that align with Gen Z's values and work styles. Gen Z is now becoming more active in the workplace not only as employees, but also as managers and organizational administrators.

The distinctive characteristics of Gen Z, such as their habit of using technology since childhood, the need for rapid feedback, expectations for flexibility and transparency, and social and fairness values, require changes in communication systems within

organizations [24]. Implementing effective communication management in organizations managed by Gen Z is crucial to capitalizing on their strengths, but organizations must also address the various challenges that arise.

Various problems arise in the communication management that Gen Z establishes within their organizations. A generational communication gap often occurs in organizations involving Gen Z and older generations such as Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Millennials [18]. Research shows that differences in communication channels, feedback styles, and technology are the main causes. Gen Z prefers fast communication and the use of digital media, while previous generations tended to use traditional methods such as email [11] [29].

Furthermore, Gen Z, despite being technologically savvy, often lacks confidence in their interpersonal communication skills. They also tend to avoid conflict and exhibit a passive communication style. In a group context, a passive communication style can lead to problems such as free-riding. Gen Z is more comfortable with digital and informal communication, but many organizations still use formal channels that are perceived as slow. Although face-to-face communication is considered important, many Gen Z members struggle to understand nonverbal cues.

Gen Z members expect organizations to be transparent and allow for participation in decision-making. They don't want to be merely recipients of instructions. If organizations remain hierarchical, Gen Z members may

feel their voices are not heard, which can lead to dissatisfaction. There are also communication gaps between Gen Z members and previous generations, such as differences in preference for communication channels and formality, which often lead to miscommunication.

This phenomenon implies that Gen Z members, with their respective backgrounds, must possess the skills to manage interpersonal communication in managing organizations. If communication between them is not managed well, it is possible that the organization they lead will not run smoothly. Based on the description above, the researcher poses the following research question: What are the implementation, opportunities, and challenges of Gen Z communication management in running an organization? This article argues that Gen Z communication management in running an organization still needs to be improved. In the communication management process, the message must be conveyed clearly. Psychological maturity plays a significant role in this communication management process.

This study aims to analyze the application of communication management in organizations led or managed by individuals from generation Z, identify strategic opportunities arising from the characteristics of Gen-Z in the context of organizational communication management, describe the main challenges faced by organizations managed by Gen-Z in implementing effective communication management, and provide strategic recommendations for optimizing organizational communication relevant to the leadership style and communication characteristics of Gen-Z. The significance of this study is academically contributing to the literature on communication management and generational leadership, especially in understanding the dynamics of organizational communication influenced by the leadership style of Gen-Z. Practically, it becomes a reference for organizational practitioners in managing internal and external communication more effectively when led by a generation that has a communication style oriented towards the values of speed, transparency, and collaboration.

## **2. Literature Review**

Several previous studies have examined the Generation Z (Gen Z) phenomenon from various perspectives. Many studies show that Gen Z has different communication characteristics than previous generations. Gen Z prioritizes instant feedback and visual styles in online communication, and is considered more responsive than Gen Y in online communication [27]. Furthermore, another study found that although Gen Z is highly accustomed to digital communication (chat, direct messages, social media), they still value face-to-face interactions due to the presence of nonverbal elements such as body language and tone of voice that are underrepresented in digital communication [29].

Other research discusses the gap between the communication styles of Gen Z and older generations (Millennials, Gen X). Differences in technology choices (communication applications), formality, and feedback models lead to misunderstandings and barriers in internal organizational communication [18]. Organizational subculture, such as how certain values are valued within a group, significantly influences how comfortable Gen Z feels in communicating. Values such as openness, flexibility, and the use of technology are important in accommodating their preferences [5].

Other research highlights communication ethics, organizational cultural support, and communication technology as important factors. Gen Z is relatively more sensitive to communication norms and expects clarity about how good communication is conducted in the workplace (including unwritten rules, informal vs. formal boundaries) [8]. Passive or passive-aggressive communication styles among Gen Z members more easily encourage free-riding (group members' lack of contribution). Assertive and clear communication can significantly reduce this phenomenon. Communication barriers within groups primarily occur when there is no clear accountability structure, a lack of written expectations, or when informal communication is inadequate [11].

Other research has found that leadership responsive to Gen Z's communication needs and an organizational culture that supports transparency significantly influence successful communication management. Gen Z expects leaders who are open, provide regular feedback, and allow for participation and new ideas. This is evident in HR literature and in studies of Gen Z job expectations, which indicate that participatory leadership styles, openness, and an inclusive culture are crucial for Gen Z to feel valued and motivated [23]. The literature mentioned above only discusses Gen Z communication in general. The novelty offered by this study is that Gen Z implements their communication management within an organizational context while identifying the opportunities and challenges inherent in implementing such communication management.

To answer the research questions formulated in this study, the researcher utilized several theories and/or concepts, including Communication Management and Generation Z. The term communication management is a combination of the words "management" and communication. Separately, management is the process of managing all components of an organization to achieve shared goals [43]. On the other hand, communication is a means for someone to convey a message to others in order to foster an understanding of the message conveyed by the sender [31].

Combined, communication management is a process that utilizes communication aspects in organizational management to achieve predetermined goals [13]. Another definition is proposed by Suriady et al., who explain that communication management essentially proposes that individuals can optimize their resources within the management aspects of an organization or

company by using a systematic communication model to facilitate management communication activities across all organizational units/companies [35]. In other words, communication management encompasses P4I (Receiving, Managing, Storing, and Delivering Information), which can help organizations manage communications effectively [26].

With communication management, communication flows are well-established, enabling solutions to emerge when disagreements arise. Implementing good communication management serves as a means of aligning perceptions across all parties. Furthermore, communication management serves as a means of mobilizing others within a company or organization [19]. The concept of management, from a communication science perspective, is essentially defined as the process of influencing others. Furthermore, the concept of communication management advises that good communication skills are not only a natural part of who we are but also something that can be learned and developed. For example, improving communication skills is essential for a credible communicator. This is where studying communication management comes in. Communication in management is likened to "lubricating oil." GR. Terry once said that management is communication. This implies the critical role of communication in management activities [38]

The concept of a generation is a group of people who share the same age, birth year, and location, while also sharing shared historical experiences and significant influences on an individual's development [25]. Generation Z is the generation that comes after the millennial generation. In terms of years, Generation Z is those born between 1997 and 2012, meaning those born after the millennial generation or Generation Y. Meanwhile, Generation Z is the group born between 1998 and 2009 [37]. Generally, these statements are considered correct, considering that Generation Z is the generation born after 1996 [4]. Currently, the majority of Generation Z members are in college, while some have entered the workforce since 2020.

Generation Z was born and grew up in a world with rapid technological development. Therefore, Generation Z is often referred to as the iGeneration or the Net Generation (the internet generation). They grew up during a time when technology, the internet, and social media were rapidly developing and even became a part of their lives. Generation Z became familiar with the internet as they grew older. They were even introduced to some social media platforms from an early age. Therefore, they are nicknamed the internet generation, also known as the iGeneration [25].

In general, there are 7 ideal characteristics of Generation Z [32], including Phygital means that Generation Z doesn't limit their activities and scope between the real world and the digital world. Time efficiency is the main reason in this context. Furthermore, the digital world and technology are two things that cannot be separated from their lives.

Hyper-customization refers to Generation Z not wanting to be labeled or stigmatized. They want to showcase their strengths or uniqueness as a shared identity, not based on religion, ethnicity, or race. Generation Z wants to maximize their identity in the eyes of society. The influence of parents (Generation X), who tend to live with a past perspective due to a life that doesn't align with their dreams, as well as the origins and natural phenomena, has led Generation Z to have low expectations for future possibilities. This isn't a skeptical view, but rather a realistic attitude.

Known as the digital generation, Generation Z gathers all information online that they deem important and useful for their work. They fear missing out on this information, which could ultimately hinder or harm their work. This is compounded by their high curiosity for the latest news. Gen Z is known as a generation living in the digital era. They frequently search online for various information they deem important and helpful in their work. Commonly known as the Sharing Economy or Weconomist, they also influence the digital industry market. They fear missing out on information because it could hinder their work or harm their results. Furthermore, they also have a very high curiosity to always stay up-to-date with the latest news. The independent digital generation, that's Generation Z. Independent here means they don't need help or supervision when they want to learn something new. Simply search for a tutorial video on YouTube, and everything can be done. Indeed, Generation Z is a realistic generation and doesn't have big dreams, but they want to bring positive change to their surroundings using the technology they currently have. They may be willing to do great things to help those in need.

### **3. Research Method**

This research uses a descriptive analytical approach. A descriptive analytical approach describes or provides an overview of the object of study through collected data or samples, as they exist, and draws generally applicable conclusions [33]. Qualitative research aims to systematically describe the facts or characteristics of a specific population, factually and accurately [34]. This approach was chosen to explore in-depth how Generation Z implements communication management in the organizations they manage, as well as to identify emerging opportunities and challenges.

In terms of data collection techniques, a literature review was used. Literature review relates to research and other references such as books, magazines, and literature. Reviewing and understanding relevant research from various sources will significantly assist researchers in determining whether they have a comprehensive understanding [33]. During the data collection process, researchers collected all data from books, scientific journals, and internet media related to Generation Z communication management in managing organizations.

The data analysis technique used in this article includes

data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification [22]. The author first collected data from various sources. The collected data relates to Generation Z's communication management in managing organizations. Afterward, the collected data was simplified by extracting the essential elements and used as analytical tools in this study. Next, the researcher classified the data to be used as supporting or primary data. This aimed to facilitate the author in determining which data was necessary and which was not for this article. Thus, the classified data could be presented in a more structured manner, facilitating analysis and generating conclusions to answer the predetermined problem formulation.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Historically, Generation Z is a group of people born between 1997 and 2012. They are the children of Generation Y or Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation X (1965-1980). Their parents, Generation Y, tend to be flexible, seek freedom, and are accustomed to the digital world. Meanwhile, Generation X places greater emphasis on work-life balance and is considered a generation that has migrated to the digital world [21].

In general, the term "generation" is used to describe a group of people born around the same time. Currently, there are several generations living in their lives, such as baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha. The world is currently awaiting the arrival of a new generation called Generation Z [3]. Generation Z desires a sense of security and stability and is highly dependent on information technology [15] [41]. They grew up amidst the internet, mobile systems [21], social networks, and cyberspace [30].

The concept of "generation" is often used to refer to groups of people who share a common educational background and historical context. However, there is no universal agreement on a precise definition of this term. While some believe Generation Z was born in a specific year, there is no general agreement on the exact year of birth of Gen Z. Most research indicates that they were born after 1995 [9]. This means they are the first generation to grow up with the internet, social media, smartphones, and other digital technologies, which have shaped their thinking and behavior [17].

Another thing that distinguishes Gen Z is the many names they receive from various sources and situations. In an article written by Jayatissa [17], he divided Generation Z into several other names. Some of the names given to them are iGen [10], Digital Natives [6], and Zoomers [40]. Each of these terms reflects a different aspect of Gen Z's identity, particularly their digital habits. For example, they are also referred to as Gen-Tech [14], Generation C [20], the Internet Generation [12], the App Generation [1], the Facebook Generation [16], the Online Generation [14], and Generasi.com [7]. Therefore, they are considered the most diverse generation [42].

Communication Management for Generation Z in Organizations. Communication is essential for every individual. Likewise, Generation Z must be skilled at managing communication among themselves, including within the organizational context. Literally, organizational communication management is the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating internal and external communication within an organization to effectively achieve organizational goals. Good organizational communication improves coordination, team effectiveness, work motivation, and conflict resolution [28]. Several communication management goals can be utilized by Generation Z, including building and maintaining work relationships, conveying information and decisions, increasing motivation and productivity, and creating a healthy organizational culture.

Generation Z exhibits diverse characteristics in their communication practices, some of which are [2] [18] [39]. Their communication is heavily influenced by advances in digital technology, social media, and global culture. Growing up surrounded by the internet and technology, Generation Z is accustomed to using platforms like WhatsApp, Discord, Slack, and social media to communicate. Therefore, Generation Z is often referred to as digital natives. Another characteristic is multichannel and speed. In this context, Generation Z prefers and prefers fast communication, using text, video, or memes rather than lengthy emails or formal documents.

Generation Z also prefers and understands visual-based information such as images, videos, and infographics, and is more interactive than lengthy text. Generation Z also prefers a transparent and authentic communication style. They prioritize honesty, openness, and a humanistic nature, aiming to avoid excessive formality. Flexible and dynamic communication, such as communication anytime, anywhere, and a tendency toward informality, are part of the communication management characteristics prioritized by Generation Z. A collaborative, inclusive, and participatory work environment is important to them. Generation Z believes that everyone has an equal voice [2] [18] [39]. In practice, in the context of organizations managed by or involving Gen Z, communication management approaches must be tailored to their characteristics. The following are commonly used approaches in managing communication, Generation Z utilizes real-time communication tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Trello, or Notion. They also frequently use digital meeting platforms and video calls for meetings within their organizations. For them, this is a common substitute for physical meetings. They utilize various tools to enhance teamwork in their organizations, including file sharing platforms, including Google Workspace, Canva, and Miro.

Generation Z feels more comfortable in a non-hierarchical communication management structure. Their communication often uses two-way communication (bottom-up and top-down). They



believe that two-way communication is more effective than one-way instruction. They also tend to want to freely express their opinions, despite differences in status/position. In the context of communication management, they also provide feedback quickly, honestly, continuously, and constructively. They don't have to wait for annual evaluations; they can provide feedback at any time. Feedback methods have also become more contemporary. They use various applications, such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or CultureAmp, and can also be conducted informally through weekly discussions.

Their communication style is more creative and tends to use visual methods. For example, when presenting presentations, ideas, and reports, they prefer visual formats, storytelling, even memes or short videos. Therefore, Generation Z is better able to absorb ideas through interactive visual content than through lengthy reports or spreadsheets. Inclusivity and transparency in meetings, idea forums, and brainstorming sessions are inherent to them and have even become part of their communication culture. Providing space for all voices to speak and listening to all voices within the organization is a key focus of their communication management

Regarding communication management carried out by Generation Z in running organizations, there are certainly several opportunities and challenges they must face and resolve. These opportunities and challenges come from various forms and fields. Here are some opportunities for communication management for Generation Z in managing organizations, including: Their high curiosity and innovation in technology and communications make it easier for them to adopt new tools. Furthermore, these new tools make the organizations they run more digital. A collaborative and open communication culture for all. This impacts a more fluid communication process, eliminating the need for formal communication while remaining productive. The high level of adaptability possessed by Generation Z provides a unique ability for their communication management to adapt more quickly to changing times. With the rapid development of technology, communications, and informatics, they are able to adjust their communication style in crisis or hybrid situations.

With these skills, Generation Z's position in the context of communication management is easier in the workplace. Their positions become more attractive as young talents. Their branding or image as future employees improves. Not only opportunities, but challenges remain in the communication management process for Generation Z in running organizations. Some challenges they must face include: The rapid flow of information often causes communication management processes to clash with other information. This abundance of information creates information overload and digital distractions. Too many channels can lead to confusion and unproductive multitasking.

Often informal communication limits their formal

communication style. Experience with formal, official communication can be problematic in formal professional environments. Differences in communication management styles and values between Generation Z and previous generations, such as Generation X and Baby Boomers, often cause difficulties and even lead to conflict and friction.

The informal communication style often used by Generation Z can appear too casual. This can be perceived negatively or sometimes even be considered unprofessional by previous generations. Excessive reliance on digital media can lead to a lack of direct verbal communication skills or face-to-face interpersonal skills. When challenges are not addressed effectively and opportunities are not fully utilized, it's not impossible that the communication management they build will deteriorate.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Organizational communication management is the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating communication within and outside an organization to effectively achieve goals. Good communication improves coordination, team effectiveness, work motivation, and conflict resolution. Communication management serves several purposes that Generation Z can benefit from, including building work relationships, conveying information, and creating a healthy organizational culture. An organizational communication management approach involving Generation Z must align with their characteristics. The use of digital platforms such as Slack and Microsoft Teams has become commonplace for them to manage the organization and communicate. A horizontal, non-hierarchical communication structure makes them feel more comfortable, as two-way communication is considered more effective. Generation Z tends to provide real-time feedback, using apps to conduct surveys and gather opinions regularly. Generation Z's communication style is more creative, utilizing visuals such as images and videos, and emphasizing engagement and openness in discussions. They encourage an inclusive communication culture, where all voices are heard within the organization. On the other hand, there are both opportunities and challenges in managing their communication. These opportunities include their affinity for technology that facilitates the adoption of new tools, productive collaborative communication, and their ability to adapt to change. However, challenges include information overload that can lead to confusion, lack of experience in formal communication, conflicts between different communication styles, and negative perceptions of overly casual communication styles. Reliance on digital media can also diminish interpersonal communication skills.

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