

# Leadership from Millennials to Generation Z Transformed

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**Abstract**—This paper aimed at identifying if the leadership style from era of millennials to generation Z transformed. To start the project the idea was analyzing the historical aspect and evolutions of leadership styles, generations and workplace and, crossing them, understand which characteristics were important to define which style of leadership and management was more successful. After that, with some analyses of generation Z, trending for the market and the workplace, this project will propose the appropriate leadership style of generation Z. The method used to validate this idea was case study and analyses with quantitative and qualitative approach. To obtain the data a survey applied with 68 teenagers between 14 and 24 years old. Most of the teenagers were female (70%), with a median age of 17 years. The result obtained at the end of this project in terms of personal traits, workplace characteristics and leadership preferences were very varied which draws the conclusion that the leader should be able to lead simultaneously different types of employees, with different characteristics, skills, values and behaviors, it's not being possible defined a single leadership style to leader in the future.

**Index Terms**— Leadership style; workplace; generation Z

## I. INTRODUCTION

The world is facing the most modern revolution, bringing a new era, called the Information era. The world changed and developed too fast during the last 20 years, like it was never seen in history. This new revolution is marked by automation, robotics, machine learning, remote control, cloud bases, cyber-physical systems, real time, virtual reality, devices that answer through voice command and everything completed integrated, systems and people around the whole world at the same time. One more detail, pay attention and be prepared, because these things are changing in questions of seconds!

In addition, a new generation comes up: Generation Z. Also, called iGen, those who were born 1996 and later, this is the first generation that came after the Internet was invented, so they have already born connected, which developed in this generation many different characteristics until now, creating in future years new unique workers.

The President of Northeastern University well described this context when he mentioned that a “new

generation of Americans is on the rise: highly entrepreneurial, pluralistic, and determined to take charge of their own futures, and those of us in higher education must listen to this next generation and enable them to chart their own paths, gain valuable experience, and become the leaders of tomorrow.” (News, 2014)

### A. Problem Definition

Many studied to understand the generation and make connections with Leadership style were already developed, however those previous researches didn't focus on the newest generation, the Generation Z. Most of them, stopped at Millennials, which is safe to affirm that Millennials was one of the generations with more studies performed until now.

So, to continue the studies of the relationship between leadership styles and generations, and to try to fill gaps from previous researches, this paper is prioritizing the generation Z, answering the research question: What will be the leadership style from Millennials to generation Z?

### B. Purpose of this study

Considering all those points, one important question should be brought up: What will be the more appropriate Leadership style to lead the Generation Z? Leadership style from millenniums to generation Z transformed? This is the purpose of this paper: to answer this question through the deep study of generations, work environments, a survey and qualitative and quantitative analyses.

### C. Research Question

The main objective for this study is to answer the research question: Leadership style from Millennials to Generation Z transformed. However, to achieve this macro objective, the following milestones should be considered:

- Which are the characteristics of each generation?
- Which are the characteristics and evolution of workplaces and structures?
- Identify the most appropriated leadership style for each generation until Millennials? and
- Through analyzing qualitatively and quantitatively Leadership styles from Millennials to generation Z transformed?

Once, those small objectives were achieved, it was possible to analyze, formulate and answer the research question.

#### D. Organization

This paper was divided in seven chapters, starting with the explanation on why we decided to discuss this topic on Literature review (Chapter 2- Literature review) and finishing with the final analysis and conclusion, answering the research question and achieving the main objective of this project (Chapter 7- Conclusion).

To support our discussion, in Chapter 3 (Generations: evolution and characteristics), this paper is focusing in understanding how the generations evolved and what are the characteristics of each generation, starting with the Silent Generation and progressing through the years until Generation Z. While in chapter 4 (Workplace through generations) the idea is to understand how the workplace and structure changed to adapt for each generation. Once, we understood the evolution of each generation and the respective workplaces and structures, it's possible to study how the leadership style changed through time and what were the most appropriate for each generation until Millennials, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Leadership styles through Generations).

After the deep study of Generations, Workplaces and Leadership of previous generations, using this knowledge, it's time to answer the research question: What will be the leadership style for Generation Z? This is discussed in Chapter 6 (What to expect for leadership styles of generation z). Also, in this chapter, the paper is describing the methodology applied to validate the answer.

#### E. Methodology

In addition, to having data and more input for the analyses, this case study research used a survey and working with the mix methods, the qualitative and quantitative approach. A survey was designed and was applied in a stratified random sampling way with just who born after 1997. After data collection, some analyses about age, gender, preferences, statistical aspects, conclusions and inferences were made to answer the research question.

#### F. Data Collection Plan

A survey was designed and applied in a stratified random sample of teenagers considered as belonging to Generation Z, in another word, considering just those who were born after 1994/1995. To collect the data two plans were established, the first plan was: to print the survey and hand it for an Institute instructor, who has in class contact with generation Z individuals, and who will ask them to answer it. The second plan was: to post the survey online, sharing a link on a website sending it through social media to two teenagers, and they undertook the responsibility of sharing with their friends from different groups. To guarantee the reflexivity and ethical considerations the researcher didn't have any relationship or affiliation with the respondents and didn't ask them to fill their name.

The online tool used to obtain answers for the survey is called "Onlinepesquisa". This software allowed us to define different types of questions and provided us a link which could be shared with the eligible respondents.

Each answer has an ID number which is helpful to identify different observations.

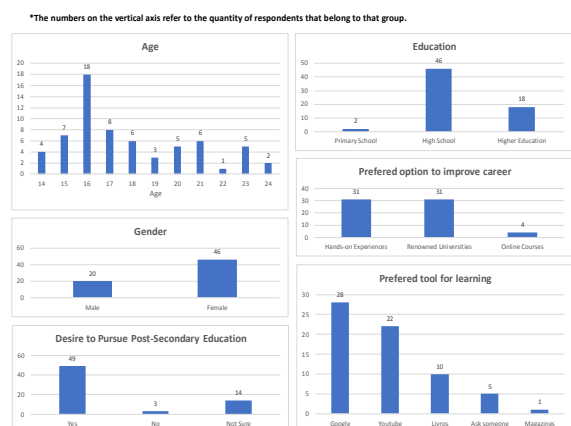
About the survey (Appendix A), 10 questions were created and divided in 5 groups of analyses: standard characteristics, professional development, personal traits, workplace characteristics and leadership preferences. The standard characteristic was formed by questions to help us characterize the sample and to identify whether there are distinct patterns among these group such as age, gender and education level.

The professional development contains multiple choice question asking if they have plan to continue their study, what is their favorite source to learn something and what is the best way they expect to improve their career. The idea of this group is to understand what their concerns about their future are and how they expect technology to influence their learning processes.

On personal traits and workplace characteristic there was a checkbox question where they should select characteristics that describe themselves and characteristic of workplace that they would like to work at. And, the last group, leadership preferences, was formed by two questions: a checkbox question where they should select which characteristics they are looking for in a leader and an open question asking who they admire as a leader.

With regards to the check box questions about personal traits, workplace characteristics and leadership preferences, the objective is to understand whether a specific option, for generation Z, can be considered as: intrinsic, averse or independent. For that, 2 bounds were subjectively set by this paper's author: one at the 20% level and another at the 80% level. The objective is to classify characteristics chosen by more than 80% of the respondents as intrinsic to that generation, and below 20% as characteristics which this generation is averse to. Any characteristic that remains between the 20% and 80% levels is considered as independent of that generation, since the likelihood of observing as are neither too great nor rare. To quantitatively validate these statements, 95% confidence intervals for these probabilities were inferred.

#### G. Findings and Summary



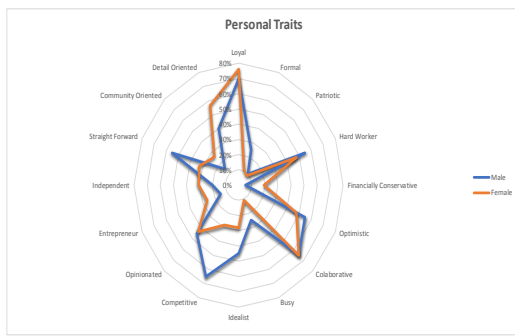


Figure 1. Personal Traits Percentage by Gender (Radar Chart)

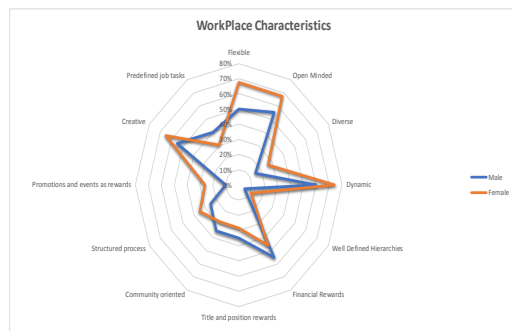


Figure 2. Workplace Characteristics Percentage by Gender (Radar Chart)

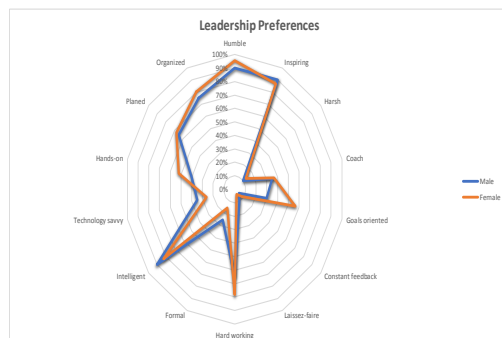


Figure 3. Leadership Preferences Percentage by Gender (Radar Chart)

The 3 radar charts above were also plotted using excel and are considered self-explanatory. It was important to include these graphs in the analysis since most of the respondents were female, hence it was important to understand if this factor could influence on the characteristics analysis that will follow. In case it did, this factor should be controlled, and the differences tested on whether they are statistically significant or not.

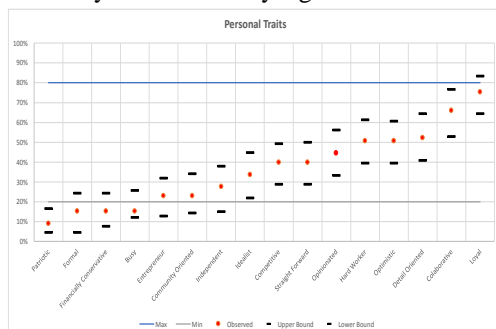


Figure 4. Personal Traits Percentage with 95% Confidence Intervals

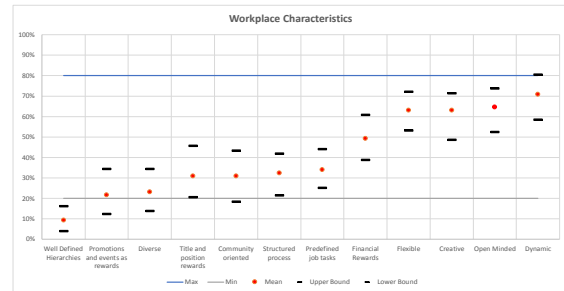


Figure 5. Workplace Characteristics Percentage with 95% Confidence Intervals

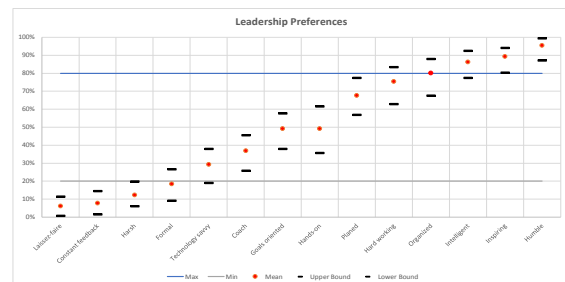


Figure 6. Leadership Preferences Percentage with 95% Confidence Interval

## II. CONCLUSION

“There is a huge need and a huge opportunity to get everyone in the world connected, to give everyone a voice and to help transform society for the future. The scale of the technology and infrastructure that must be built is unprecedented, and we believe this is the most important problem we can focus on.” This quote by Mark Zuckerberg illustrate and summarize the new era that are moving the world. And this scenario brings with it a new generation, IGen, Generation Z, Generation Me.... or whatever name it may be in the future.

A generation marked by many different characteristics until now, creating in future years, new unique workers. This paper studied this generation through research, review and survey, highlighting some important point in order to draw the conclusion:

- Pursue a degree and acquire hands-on experience are options presenting to be a real dilemma for generation Z in the future;
- The migration from books and magazines to other technologies are notorious, since they now have “faster”, “easier” and more “to the point” ways to learn;
- There’s no exact leadership standard or profile that this generation admires or follow;
- A leader has to be skilled enough to lead different kinds of employees, under different circumstances in the future.

Therefore, it’s quite possible to affirm that there is no specific and most appropriate leadership style to lead Generation Z. The leader should be able to lead simultaneously different types of employees, with different characteristics, skills, values and behaviors, it’s not being possible defined a single leadership style to

leader in the future. So, Leadership from Millennials to generation Z has some similarities, but also the most important conclusion is that has been transforming to cope with the mix of characteristic and manifold.

"I'm here to tell you finding your purpose isn't enough. The challenge for our generation is creating a world where everyone has a sense of purpose [...]"--*Mark Zuckerberg*

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Dr. Bateh was appointed as the Interim Chair of the Fashion Department at the Larry I. Luig School of Business® in September 2018. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Bateh was a full-time Professor of Management & International Business. In addition to teaching International Trade and Marketing, her areas of expertise also include Business Strategy, Entrepreneurship, Integrated Marketing, Global Supply Chain Dr. Bateh obtained her Ph.D. in International Economics from Columbia University completing her doctoral dissertation on Healthcare Improvement in Third World Countries- A Focus on Egypt and both her M.B.A. and B.A. from Jacksonville University in her hometown, Florida.

Prior to becoming a professor, Dr. Bateh worked for 15 years in the Pharmaceutical Industry focusing on cardiovascular health. She is also the co-founder of the American-Egyptian Aid Foundation, a United Nations NGO. Earlier in her career, Dr. Bateh worked in logistics with United Parcel Service focusing international trade in

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