

## LEADERSHIP FROM THE MULTIGENERATIONS PERSPECTIVES

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*ABSTRACT: The Romanian workforce is more diversified than ever in terms of generations. The diversity of generations and their vision of leadership has created a conflict over how to lead organizations whose employees have a very different view from generation to generation. Each generation has a set of values, attitudes and beliefs that can influence the way leaders of organizations lead their people. When we talk about the diversity of generations we refer to 4 of them: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and the latest Generation Z.*

*Companies have a huge opportunity in terms of the Millennials generation, right now, because this is the generation that will take over the workforce. These individuals are among the few people who were born in an age where information can be accessed in seconds with the help of technology. Compared to other generations, their level of literacy and digitization is much higher than we can imagine. Businesses can capitalize on their potential for better workplace efficiency and positive outcomes.*

*This study aims to find the best qualities in terms of leadership and to raise awareness between the leaders to be more flexible regarding the leadership styles and to adapt to the needs of the employees.*

*Keywords: Leadership; leadership styles; generations; leaders;*

### 1. Introduction

Romania's labour market is more diverse now than ever before in terms of generations of individuals. The diversity of generations and their views on leadership has created a conflict about how to lead organisations whose employees have very different views from generation to generation. Each generation has a set of values, attitudes and beliefs that can influence how leaders of organisations lead their people. When we talk about generational diversity we refer to 4 generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and most recently Generation Z.

Companies have a huge opportunity when it comes to Millennials right now, as this is the generation that will take over the job market. These individuals are among the few people who were born in an age where information can be accessed in seconds with the help of technology. Compared to other generations, their level of literacy and digitalisation is much higher than we can imagine. Businesses can harness their potential to make their workplaces more efficient and achieve the best possible positive results.

According to a study by Monster, businesses will need to review their recruitment strategies. It has been estimated that millennials will take over about 50-75% of the job market in about 10 years. Some of them as I write this paper are entering the job market. As far as individuals of this generation are concerned, they have the talent of multi-tasking hence the term "multi tasking" such as answering the phone and sending emails

I am of the opinion that if you want to attract the workforce in terms of Millennials or other people who are part of the technology age, you have to do more than that. From an HR perspective, I'm of the opinion that you have to know how to sell yourself as a company, to show why you are a good fit for them. For the majority of individuals in this generation, work needs to be interactive because they are not attracted to a sedentary workplace where you don't have the opportunity to grow professionally. They want to have fun at work and enjoy themselves without neglecting their responsibilities. In order to create a fun or even enjoyable environment, HR managers need to come up with innovative ideas such as a recreation area where people can relax when

they are very stressed, coffee shops where people from all over the company can meet and chat to take their minds off their daily work, charity events where employees can develop interpersonal relationships with other colleagues. People in HR departments should take more interest and encourage work-life balance by investing in centres where people can practice sports or meditation. Because technology has been in people's lives for so long, the careers of people who advance with technology look very different from those of their parents and are characterised very much by flexibility.

With so many choices of employers they are as picky about where they work and under what conditions they work as they are about food, they want to work with a purpose, being part of an organisation whose values and cultures align with their own. The generational theory is based on the idea of groups of people with certain beliefs and attitudes experiencing similar problems and sharing similar experiences over a period of time. Each generation is shaped by powerful external forces (i.e. not intrinsically linked to each member's personality): media, economics and social events, popular culture, values shared by families and friends and used as guidance in everyday life, etc. These forces create unique sets of values that help researchers understand differences between generations.

Existing research results encourage us to say that young people in Romania have similar values to those in the US or Europe. Recent research shows that young Romanians feel that they share certain things with individuals of their generation around the world (Florina-Magdalena Pinzaru). However, there are elements specific to the local context that influence the way these young people think and act and perhaps the most important of these factors is in the area of technology use, because if we compare how other individuals live in Western countries and how they live in Romania, we can see discrepancies and this can greatly influence the thinking of young people. The aim of this paper is to identify the right qualities that should be found in a generational leadership style for an efficient workforce.

## 2. Research methodology

The aim of this research was to identify the right leadership style for each generation in order to make the best use of human resources.

With this objective in mind, the following hypotheses were developed:

1. There are significant differences between baby boomers and generation Y in terms of leadership styles.
2. There are significant differences between baby boomers and Generation Y in terms of work independence.
3. There are significant differences between new employees and older employees in terms of employee independence.
4. Generations seek to have their opinions heard and be more involved in decision making by leaders.

The research we conducted covers 3 of these generations, namely baby boomers, X and Y, which we formulated by age demarcations. Those aged 20-39 are part of generation Y, those aged 39-55 are part of generation X, and those aged 56-74 we have demarcated as Baby Boomers. We have not included Generation Z because they do not yet represent a major labour force in the labour market.

We conducted a quantitative study, using sociological survey as a method and questionnaire as a research instrument. We developed a questionnaire that consists of 18 questions, with multiple choice answers, from 1 representing very little, to 5 representing very much. The questions are closed-ended, positively worded, with 4 dimensions (autocratic style, democratic style, laissez-faire style and transformational style).

We applied the questionnaire online to 104 respondents, and as delimitations, we used gender, age which we grouped according to generations, but also seniority in the company, because seniority in the company is an important factor in terms of respondents' autonomy and can influence their answers, for example an older employee may be more independent than a newer one, who may depend more on his superior.

The data collection was conducted online, on social media, between 11.05.2023 - 01.06.2023.

### 3. Analysis and interpretation of results

**Assumption 1:** There are significant differences between baby boomers and Generation Y in terms of leadership styles (table 1).

Following the T-test, I tried to identify whether there are statistically significant differences between baby boomers and Generation Y with regard to leadership styles.

between generation Y (M=4.011, SD=0.691) and baby boomers (M=3.917, SD=1.036),  $t(21,49)=3.05$ , for  $p=0.006<0.05$ .

Thus following statistical operations and interpretations, we can state that the hypothesis that there are statistical differences between generation Y and baby boomers is confirmed (Table 2).

Following the frequencies carried out on the Democratic style dimension, we can see from the table that generation Y opts for this style in

**Group Statistics** **TABLE 1**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Democratic style	20-39	68	4,1360	,52977	,06424
	40-55	17	3,8382	,90113	,21866
Autocratic style	20-39	68	3,7684	,57840	,07014
	40-55	17	3,7353	,94568	,22936
Laissez faire style	20-39	68	3,3500	,58893	,07141
	40-55	17	3,2471	,81710	,19818
Transformational style	20-39	68	4,0118	,69186	,08390
	40-55	17	3,9176	1,03696	,25150

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Autocratic style	Equal variances assumed	17,337	,000	4,244	85	,000
	Equal variances not assumed			2,913	20,349	,008
Democratic style	Equal variances assumed	18,948	,000	5,459	85	,000
	Equal variances not assumed			3,801	20,521	,001
Laissez faire style	Equal variances assumed	9,140	,003	3,104	85	,003
	Equal variances not assumed			2,388	21,965	,026
Transformational style	Equal variances assumed	9,507	,003	4,093	85	,000
	Equal variances not assumed			3,057	21,493	,006

In terms of the size of the autocratic style, it appears that there are statistical differences between generation Y (M=3.768 SD=0.578) and baby boomers (M=3.735, SD=0.945),  $t(20,34)=2.91$ , for  $p=0.008<0.05$ .

In the case of the Democratic style dimension, there were statistical differences between generation Y (M=4.136, SD=0.529) and baby boomers (M=3.838, SD=0.90),  $t(20,52)=3.80$ , for  $p=0.001<0.05$ .

Regarding the extent of laissez-faire style, it appears that there are statistical differences between generation Y (M=3.350, SD=0.588) and baby boomers (M=3.247, SD=0.817),  $t(21,96)=2.38$ , for  $p=0.026<0.05$ .

Regarding the size of the laissez-faire style, it appears that there are statistical differences

a proportion of 64.7% to a large extent, 29.4% to a very large extent, generation X has a percentage of 41.2 to a large extent, 35.3% to a very large extent, while the baby boomers have a percentage of 15.8% to a large extent and 21.1% to a very large extent (Table 3).

Following the frequencies carried out on the autocratic style dimension, according to the table generation Y opts for this style in a proportion of 66.2% to a large extent, 10.3% to a very large extent, generation X has a percentage of 58.8% to a large extent, to a very large extent 17.6%, while the baby boomers generation has a percentage of 21.1% to a large extent, and to a very large extent 10.5% (Table 4).

Democratic style **TABLE 2**

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39 Valid	to a small extent	1	1,5	1,5	1,5
	neither to a small nor a large extent	3	4,4	4,4	5,9
	to a large extent	44	64,7	64,7	70,6
	to a very large extent	20	29,4	29,4	100,0
	Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55 Valid	to a small extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
	neither to a small nor a large extent	2	11,8	11,8	23,5
	to a large extent	7	41,2	41,2	64,7
	to a very large extent	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
	Full	17	100,0	100,0	
56-74 Valid	to a small extent	6	31,6	31,6	31,6
	neither to a small nor a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	63,2
	to a large extent	3	15,8	15,8	78,9
	to a very large extent	4	21,1	21,1	100,0
	Full	19	100,0	100,0	

Aristocratic style **TABLE 3**

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39 Valid	to a small extent	1	1,5	1,5	1,5
	neither to a small nor a large extent	15	22,1	22,1	23,5
	to a large extent	45	66,2	66,2	89,7
	to a very large extent	7	10,3	10,3	100,0
	Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55 Valid	to a small extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
	neither to a small nor a large extent	2	11,8	11,8	23,5
	to a large extent	10	58,8	58,8	82,4
	to a very large extent	3	17,6	17,6	100,0
	Full	17	100,0	100,0	
56-74 Valid	to a small extent	2	10,5	10,5	10,5
	to a large extent	4	21,1	21,1	31,6
	neither to a small nor a large extent	7	36,8	36,8	68,4
	to a large extent	4	21,1	21,1	89,5
	to a very large extent	2	10,5	10,5	100,0
Full	19	100,0	100,0		

Following the frequencies carried out on the autocratic style dimension, according to the table generation Y opts for this style in a proportion of 66.2% to a large extent, 10.3% to a very large extent, generation X has a percentage of 58.8% to a large extent, to a very large extent 17.6%, while the baby boomers generation has a percentage of 21.1% to a large extent, and to a very large extent 10.5% (Tab5).

Following the frequencies carried out on the transformational style dimension, we can see from the table that generation Y opts for this style in a proportion of 42.6% to a large extent, 32.4% to a very large extent, generation X has a percentage of 35.3% to a large extent, 35.3% to a very large extent, while the baby boomers have a percentage of 31.6% to a large extent and 10.6% to a very large extent.

Laissez faire style

TABLE 4

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39	Valid	to a small extent	4	5,9	5,9	5,9
		neither to a small nor a large extent	37	54,4	54,4	60,3
		to a large extent	26	38,2	38,2	98,5
		to a very large extent	1	1,5	1,5	100,0
		Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55	Valid	to a small extent	4	23,5	23,5	23,5
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	35,3	35,3	58,8
		to a large extent	7	41,2	41,2	100,0
		to a very large extent	17	100,0	100,0	
		Full	2	10,5	10,5	10,5
56-74	Valid	to a small extent	5	26,3	26,3	36,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	7	36,8	36,8	73,7
		to a large extent	5	26,3	26,3	100,0
		to a very large extent	19	100,0	100,0	
		Full				

Transformational style

TABLE 5

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39	Valid	to a small extent	1	1,5	1,5	1,5
		neither to a small nor a large extent	16	23,5	23,5	25,0
		to a large extent	29	42,6	42,6	67,6
		to a very large extent	22	32,4	32,4	100,0
		Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55	Valid	to a small extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	3	17,6	17,6	29,4
		to a large extent	6	35,3	35,3	64,7
		to a very large extent	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
		Full	17	100,0	100,0	
56-74	Valid	to a small extent	2	10,5	10,5	10,5
		to a small extent	3	15,8	15,8	26,3
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	57,9
		to a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	89,5
		to a very large extent	2	10,5	10,5	100,0
Full	19	100,0	100,0			

**Assumption 2:** There are significant differences between baby boomers and Generation Y in terms of work independence (Table 6)

Regarding job independence, there are statistical differences between generation Y ( $M=3.69$   $SD=1.040$ ) and baby boomers ( $M=2.79$ ,  $SD=1.228$ ),  $t(85)=3.209$ , for  $p=0.002<0.05$ . Thus we can state that the hypothesis that there are statistically significant

differences between baby boomers and generation Y with respect to work independence is confirmed (Table 7).

From the frequencies, we can see from the table that generation Y opts for independence 38.2% to a large extent, 23.5% to a very large extent, generation X has 29.4% to a large extent, 35.3% to a very large extent, while baby boomers have 15.8% to a large extent and 10.5% to a very large extent.

**Group Statistics** **TABLE 6**

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
It offers independence in the activity that they undertake	20-39	68	3,69	1,040	,126
	56-74	19	2,79	1,228	,282

  

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
It offers independence in the activity that they undertake	Equal variances assumed	,651	,422	3,209	85	,002	,902	,281
	Equal variances not assumed			2,921	25,662	,007	,902	,309

**To offer independence in the activity they undertake** **TABLE 7**

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39 Valid	to a small extent	2	2,9	2,9	2,9
	neither to a small nor a large extent	7	10,3	10,3	13,2
	to a large extent	17	25,0	25,0	38,2
	to a very large extent	26	38,2	38,2	76,5
	Full	16	23,5	23,5	100,0
40-55 Valid	to a small extent	68	100,0	100,0	11,8
	neither to a small nor a large extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
	to a large extent	4	23,5	23,5	35,3
	to a very large extent	5	29,4	29,4	64,7
	Full	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
56-74 Valid	to a small extent	17	100,0	100,0	15,8
	neither to a small nor a large extent	3	15,8	15,8	15,8
	to a large extent	5	26,3	26,3	42,1
	to a very large extent	6	31,6	31,6	73,7
	Full	3	15,8	15,8	89,5
		2	10,5	10,5	100,0
		19	100,0	100,0	

**Assumption 3:** There are significant differences in job independence between old and new employees (Table 8).

Following the T-test, I tried to identify whether there are statistically significant differences between baby boomers and Generation Y with respect to leadership styles.

As far as job independence is concerned, it turns out that there are no statistical differences between new employees (M=3.43 SD=1.061) and old employees (M=3.51, SD=1.283),  $t(68,97)=0.327$ , for  $p=0.74 > 0.05$ . Thus we can state that the hypothesis that there are statistical differences between new and old employees in terms of job independence is invalidated.

**Assumption 4:** Generations seek to have

their opinions heard and to be more involved in decision-making by leaders (Table 9)

According to the above table we can see that the percentage of Generation Y people is 27.9% to a great extent and 48.5% to a very great extent. We can say that for this generation it is very important to be consulted on decisions that impact the whole team. The same is true for Generation X, where the percentages are roughly similar, 29.4% to a large extent and 47.1% to a very large extent. As far as the baby boomers are concerned, we can say that they are more independent and impartial in decisions that affect the whole team. They have a percentage of 31.6% neither to a small nor a large extent, and to a very large extent they have a percentage of 26.3% (Table 10).

**Group Statistics** **TABLE 8**

	Seniority in company	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
To offer independence in the activity they undertake	1-3 ani	49	3,43	1,061	,152
	Peste 5 ani	37	3,51	1,283	,211

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
To offer independence in the activity they undertake	Equal variances assumed	1,473	,228	-.336	84	,738	-.085	,253	-.588	,418	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.327	68,975	,745	-.085	,260	-.603	,433	

**Consult with the team on decisions with a major impact on members** **TABLE 9**

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
20-39	Valid	to a very small extent	2	2,9	2,9	2,9
		to a small extent	1	1,5	1,5	4,4
		neither to a small nor a large extent	13	19,1	19,1	23,5
		to a large extent	19	27,9	27,9	51,5
		to a very large extent	33	48,5	48,5	100,0
		Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55	Valid	to a small extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	2	11,8	11,8	23,5
		to a large extent	5	29,4	29,4	52,9
		to a very large extent	8	47,1	47,1	100,0
		Full	17	100,0	100,0	
50-74	Valid	to a very small extent	3	15,8	15,8	15,8
		to a small extent	3	15,8	15,8	31,6
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	63,2
		to a large extent	2	10,5	10,5	73,7
		to a very large extent	5	26,3	26,3	100,0
		Full	19	100,0	100,0	

According to the above table we can see that the percentage of Generation Y people is 27.9% to a great extent and 48.5% to a very great extent. We can say that for this generation it is very important to be consulted on decisions that impact the whole team.

The same is true for Generation X, where the percentages are roughly similar, 29.4% to a large extent and 47.1% to a very large extent. As far as the baby boomers are concerned, we can say that they are more independent and impartial in decisions that affect the whole team.

They have a percentage of 31.6% neither to a small nor a large extent, and to a very large extent they have a percentage of 26.3% (Table 11).

According to the table above regarding the decisions made by leaders, generation Y and generation X with a percentage of 52.9% and 41.2% respectively are of the opinion that the

**Take into account the views of the team following consultations** **TABLE 10**

Age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-39	Valid	to a very small extent	1	1,5	1,5	1,5
		to a small extent	1	1,5	1,5	2,9
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	8,8	8,8	11,8
		to a large extent	29	42,6	42,6	54,4
		to a very large extent	31	45,6	45,6	100,0
		Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55	Valid	to a very small extent	1	5,9	5,9	5,9
		to a small extent	1	5,9	5,9	11,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	4	23,5	23,5	35,3
		to a large extent	4	23,5	23,5	58,8
		to a very large extent	7	41,2	41,2	100,0
		Full	17	100,0	100,0	
56-74	Valid	to a very small extent	2	10,5	10,5	10,5
		to a small extent	5	26,3	26,3	36,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	68,4
		to a large extent	3	15,8	15,8	84,2
		to a very large extent	3	15,8	15,8	100,0
		Full	19	100,0	100,0	

**To consider the proposed amendments** **TABLE 11**

Age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-39	Valid	to a small extent	2	2,9	2,9	2,9
		neither to a small nor a large extent	9	13,2	13,2	16,2
		to a large extent	36	52,9	52,9	69,1
		to a very large extent	21	30,9	30,9	100,0
		Full	68	100,0	100,0	
40-55	Valid	to a small extent	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	2	11,8	11,8	23,5
		to a large extent	7	41,2	41,2	64,7
		to a very large extent	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
		Full	17	100,0	100,0	
56-74	Valid	to a very small extent	2	10,5	10,5	10,5
		to a small extent	5	26,3	26,3	36,8
		neither to a small nor a large extent	6	31,6	31,6	68,4
		to a large extent	3	15,8	15,8	84,2
		to a very large extent	3	15,8	15,8	100,0
		Full	19	100,0	100,0	



improvements that are made to the team individually should be taken into account, while the baby boomers with a percentage of 31.6% show that they are not interested in whether or not their decisions are taken into account.

#### 4. Conclusions

Given the hypotheses we started from after interpreting the results we concluded that each generation opts for more than one leadership style. As far as the baby boomers are concerned, they tend to opt more for the transformational and laissez-faire styles, both generation X and generation Y opt for the autocratic and democratic styles.

To increase work productivity and increase

employee satisfaction, leaders need to be flexible and adjust their leadership style according to the generations and their needs, they cannot have just one leadership style for all generations.

Another important conclusion regarding generations is independence, where we can see from statistical analysis that for some generations independence is a more important quality than for others. For generation X and Y, independence is more important than for baby boomers.

We should not forget that an important factor for generations is their involvement in decision-making, both leaders and generations need to be in close communication and be involved together in the decision-making process, as well as having their opinions or improvements on their work taken into account.

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